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16 Koreans to form unified ice hockey team, march together



Amir, Trump discuss ties, key issues, regional developments

Qatar sheikh 'detained' in UAE flies to Kuwait

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a call yesterday from US President Donald Trump. In the phone conversation, they discussed distinguished relations between both friendly countries, issues of mutual interest and the latest regional developments. The US president wished HH the Amir well-being and Kuwait and its people more development and welfare under the Amir's wise leadership. The Amir appreciated the US president's contact, which reflects historically close relations between both friendly countries, wishing him good health and the US and its people everlasting progress and prosperity.

Separately, a controversial member of Qatar's royal family who accused the United Arab Emirates of detaining him has flown to Kuwait, his family said Tuesday. Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali Al-Thani, who emerged as a key figure in the dispute between Gulf states in the weeks after Riyadh and Abu Dhabi cut ties with Doha last June, left the UAE with his daughters. Kuwait is one of the Gulf states to remain outside the conflict and has acted as a mediator during the eight-month long dispute.

"My father is on his plane to Kuwait with his two daughters," said his son Ali bin Abdullah Al-Thani. "After

arriving in Kuwait and checking his health, he will decide to return to Qatar or travel abroad for treatment." Sheikh Ali added that his father's health was "not stable" and he was suffering from heart disease and diabetes.

Sheikh Abdullah, seen by some as a potential challenger to the Qatari leadership, had posted a video online on Sunday saying he was detained in the UAE and "afraid something could happen to me that will be blamed on Qatar". The UAE denied Sheikh Abdullah was being held against his will, with state news agency WAM reporting he was in the country "at his own behest". It also said he was "free to leave".

In August, Sheikh Abdullah met powerful Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to mediate on reopening a land border to allow Qatari pilgrims to perform the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah. It was the first public high-level encounter between the two nations since the diplomatic crisis erupted. The spat over Sheikh Abdullah was the latest row in the ongoing political crisis between rival Gulf states. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain severed ties with Qatar on June 5 over allegations it supported Islamist extremists and had close ties to regional rival Iran. Doha denies the accusations. — Agencies

Inaugural air show gets off to flying start

By Nawara Fattahowa

KUWAIT: Kuwait yesterday welcomed spectators from the Gulf region and beyond to its inaugural aviation spectacle. The first Kuwait Aviation Show is being held from Jan 17-20, 2018 at Kuwait International Airport with the participation of 150 international aviation companies.

Sheikh Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah, Head of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), noted the aviation show has great participation of GCC and international companies. "The aviation industry in Kuwait has witnessed great progress with mega projects to develop the infrastructure, especially since the airport is the face of Kuwait. We have adopted global safety and security standards to provide the best services in the aviation sector," he pointed out.

Strategic projects are ongoing at Kuwait International Airport. "These projects

will improve the operational sector and improve the services provided for passengers in the next phase. Currently, the new terminal (T2) is under construction and will serve 25 million passengers annually. It will be launched in 2022. We are also working on a supporting terminal (T4) that will be ready by the middle of this year with a capacity of 4.5 million passengers per year. Furthermore, we are working on two new runways in addition to building a control tower equipped with the latest technology," Sheikh Salman said.

The staff of DGCA have made great efforts that resulted in record achievements in safety standards. "The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) evaluated Kuwait International Airport with a high rating of 78.18 percent, which is a high rating in regional and international standards," he emphasized.

British Ambassador to Kuwait Michael Davenport stated that this event is an international show and has great participation with a strong British interest from both the government and private companies. "Big and small British companies are participating in this event with many technological products including training, IT and electronic security. The UK is strong in the aviation sector and even small

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KUWAIT: Smoke in the shape of a heart is seen in the sky above a Qatar Airways plane during the Kuwait aviation show yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Demand enables market to absorb rising oil output

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: The global oil market can absorb increased production resulting from the expected upturn of shale oil exports in the near future, Kuwait's Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rashidi said in a press conference with OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo yesterday. A recent Reuters report suggested that the United States is set to increase its oil output to more than 10 million barrels per day this year as a result of surging oil production, and up to 11 million barrels a day by late 2019, a level that would rival Russia, the world's top

producer. The report also said US energy exports now compete with Middle East oil for buyers in Asia.

But Rashidi believes that demand is still too high to suggest that more US exports could hurt OPEC members' share of the market. "We expect an increase in global demand in 2018 by 1.5-1.6 million barrels a day, which exceeds our expectations," he said. "Therefore, I believe that the increased demand can allow the market to absorb all production, either from conventional or unconventional sources such as shale oil."

Barkindo is visiting Kuwait to discuss preparations for the next Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC) meeting to be held in Muscat in March. "The meeting will focus on reviewing the technical committee for the agreement, in addition to reviewing the market situation," Rashidi said. And while indicating that prices will not be on the meeting's agenda, explaining that all members are com-

mitted to the agreement until the end of 2018, the minister noted that they have agreed to "review the situation by June".

OPEC and Non-OPEC members agreed during a meeting in Vienna in Dec 10, 2016 to limit oil output in reaction to a drop in oil prices at the time. In November, oil ministers from OPEC and non-OPEC member nations agreed to extend output cuts for the duration of 2018. The agreement has helped oil prices recover to nearly \$70 per barrel today, but JMMC members say that their main focus is establishing stability in the market rather than setting a specific price rate for oil.

This policy helps protect the global oil market from being drastically affected by political factors; which affect prices more than they do production, Rashidi explained. "The market now is stable enough to accommodate any issues that do not have a major impact on supply and demand," he said.

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KUWAIT: Kuwait's Oil Minister Bakheet Al-Rashidi (left) and OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo attend a press conference yesterday. — KUNA

Indian expats dismayed over new color code for passports

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: A decision by the Indian government to issue passports in two colors - blue and orange - and leave the address page of the document blank has created a lot of consternation among Indian expats in Kuwait. According to new rules, Indians who require emigration clearance (ECR) - those who have not passed 10th grade - at airports, will now carry orange passports, while those who do not need emigration clearance (ECNR), will carry the blue ones. The government has also decided to keep the last

page of the passport blank in accordance with the recommendations of a committee set up to look into requests by single mothers that the name of the father not be mentioned in their child's passport.

Many expats Kuwait Times spoke to said this decision will widen the social and economic divide in India and lead to discrimination against poor and illiterate workers. "This is an ill-conceived idea. If the decision is implemented, it will render millions of Indians second-class citizens. An orange passport will in effect become a license to harass an Indian migrant worker in a foreign country," said Sam Painummoodu, a social worker, writer and a member of the newly-constituted Loka Kerala Sabha (LKS). According to Painummoodu, the decision will practically divide citizens and as such it is 'unconstitutional'.

While the government claims that the new orange passports are expected to protect vulnerable laborers from exploitation abroad, it is feared that that the orange and blue color cod-



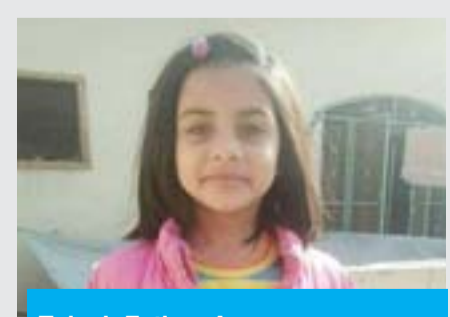
ing will only lead to discrimination against migrant workers abroad. Many fear that the color coding will lead to the treatment of Indian citizens as 'equal but separate'.

India is the world's largest exporter of migrant labor. According to estimates, one in 20 migrant workers worldwide are Indian-born - a number that has rapidly risen over the past 25 years. Currently, more than 900,000 Indians are residing in Kuwait, of

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Fears of serial child killer in Pakistan city

KASUR, Pakistan: The rape and murders of a dozen children by a suspected serial killer have terrified parents in central Pakistan, and prompted soul-searching over how the country fails to protect its most vulnerable. The killing of six-year-old Zainab Fatima Ameen became the tipping point last week when her body was found on a rubbish heap near her home in the city of Kasur. Candlelight vigils were held across the country and the hashtag #JusticeForZainab trended on social media, with celebrities, opposition



Zainab Fatima Ameen

politicians and outraged web users demanding action.

But grief spilled over into anger in Kasur, a city already infamous for child abuse after a massive pedophilia ring was exposed in 2015. Zainab, officials said, is the 12th child found raped and murdered in the city within

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Amir receives Head of National Security Apparatus, new aides

Amir invited to attend festival in Saudi Arabia



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Director of National Security Apparatus Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives an invitation from Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, delivered by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Director of National Security Apparatus Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. Sheikh Thamer presented to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Fawaz Mishaal Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Abdullah Mubarak Al-Hajraf and Abdulaziz Khalaf Al-Salem on the occasion of their new posts as assistant undersecretaries of the apparatus. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended the meeting. Sheikh Thamer later introduced the new officials to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received an invitation from Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to attend the final ceremony of King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Riyadh on February 1st. The invitation was handed to His Highness the Amir by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez. The reception was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives Director of National Security Apparatus Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, and newly appointed officials.

Deputy Foreign Minister heads Iraq's rebuilding conference committee

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah yesterday headed the meeting of the Foreign Ministry's committee tasked with preparing for Iraq's reconstruction conference due in Kuwait on February 12-14. Officials of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and International Islamic Charity Organization were present at the meeting. Steps taken for the event were discussed during the meeting.

On Tuesday, Iraqi parliament speaker Salim Al-Jubouri praised the Kuwaiti initiative to host the Iraq reconstruction conference slated for next month. Speaking at the 13th session of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC member states (PUIC) conference in Tehran, Jubouri said Iraq is living in victorious atmospheres after defeating the so-called Islamic State and liberating the country's land from IS militants.

These atmospheres will be enhanced by the world's support for the country's reconstruction process whose first phase will begin with Kuwait's hosting of the reconstruction conference to be held on February 12-14, he stressed. He commended the Kuwaiti efforts



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah heads the meeting of the Foreign Ministry's committee tasked with preparing for Iraq's reconstruction conference. —KUNA

in this regard, saying that the State of Kuwait has made endeavors, which are highly appreciated.

Jubouri noted that Iraq continues coordination with all parties in order to maintain security and stability of the region. He affirmed that Iraq would also continue coordination and consultation with Muslims and Arabs as well as all effective international powers in order to

find solutions to the region's crises.

This keenness is based on Iraq's belief in the necessity of maintaining stability in the region, he pointed out. He called on all parties to continue efforts to preserve the Islamic and Christian character of the holy city of Jerusalem, and protect the sanctity of Al-Aqsa Mosque and other Islamic sanctities.

The top lawmaker emphasized Iraq's backing to all serious initiatives seeking to develop the joint Islamic action in all domains, and to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to play an effective role on international arena. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani inaugurated the conference earlier in the day. —KUNA

Speaker says core of Jerusalem reveals political truth

CAIRO: Understanding the very essence of the holy city of Jerusalem is key to political certainty, Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday. Addressing the 'Al-Azhar International Conference to Support Jerusalem', Ghanem spoke of Kuwait's tireless pursuit of justice, in reference to Palestinian aspirations for statehood.

"Amid the uproar over the Jerusalem issue, we should never overlook the struggle and adversity facing the Palestinian people," Kuwait's chief lawmaker told a packed audience comprising political and religious figures from across the world. On "a highly emotional Jerusalem issue," he said that it "has tugged the heart-strings of people," stressing that even the most subtle of actions would go a long way in supporting Palestinian resistance. "Understanding the nature of Jerusalem would help explain the meaning this holy city holds," Ghanem underlined, exclaiming, "Palestinians would



CAIRO: Kuwait's National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Egyptian President Abdelattah Al-Sisi in Cairo yesterday. - KUNA

ultimately emerge victorious."

Later yesterday, Ghanem met with Egyptian President Abdelattah Al-Sisi, who acknowledged the 'robust' Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations, and expressed gratitude to the efforts of the state of Kuwait, led by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, towards supporting Egypt politically and economically. —KUNA

Used books bazaar open to public at Kuwait National Library

KUWAIT: A second-hand and rare books bazaar kicked off at the National Library of Kuwait on Tuesday as part of the Al-Qurain Cultural Festival's various activities and functions. The three-day event, co-organized by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature and Kuwaiti Writers Association, includes rare and priceless books across a wide array of topics. It gives the public the opportunity to take a first-hand look at these rare treasures and buy them for "extremely reasonable" prices, the library's director-general Kamel Al-Abduljaleel said in a statement. Opening times are spread across morning and evening hours, said the director, in order to attract as many visitors as possible. The event is not targeting financial gain, stressed Kuwaiti Writers Association secretary general Talal Al-Rumaidhi, but rather to achieve a com-



KUWAIT: Visitors examine books at a used books bazaar which opened to the public at Kuwait National Library. —KUNA

munity goal of spreading culture. The association will host its own second-hand book bazaar at its main office in Al-Adailya on January 28, which will last one week. —KUNA

Local



ZAIN deputy board chairman and Al-Kharafi Group CEO Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi with participants at the 4YFN exhibition in Barcelona.

ZAIN: Contributing to social and economic development leads to the enhancement of society's prosperity

Zain takes the capabilities of business pioneers towards new horizons of innovation in the year 2017

KUWAIT: Zain, the largest telecommunications company in Kuwait, supporting the social and economic sustainability fields in the country and beyond, intensified its corporate sustainability initiatives during 2017.

The company's commitment to its corporate values was again the motive to adopt numerous influential initiatives that had an impact on the community it proudly serves. These ranged from social, economic, cultural, sports, and health programs as well as projects that were aimed at humanitarian work.

Zain launched many charitable and humanitarian initiatives during 2017, that included strategic partnerships with many international, regional and local entities including United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Kuwait Red Crescent Society, Kuwait Relief Agency, Kuwait Food Bank and others.

Zain's strategy during 2017 relied on a series of initiatives that came within the joint framework with private and public educational establishments in the state with the aim to develop youth's abilities and skills, including the strategic partnership with the Youth Empowerment Symposium, Kout Market, Loyac program, Injaz Kuwait, the Electronic Taleb Program, Zain youth network program and others.

Zain enhanced its joint cooperation with various pioneering health establishments in Kuwait, be it public or private, through strategic partnerships with the Health Ministry, Central Blood Bank, Salam International Hospital, Dasman Diabetes Institute, Zain Hospital and others, besides launching initiatives that serve environmental fields. Among the initiatives that Zain Kuwait supported include:

Zain Great Idea

Zain believes in the integral role information and communications technology plays in present-day life, given the country's bulging youth and tech-savvy ambitious population. Recognizing the necessity to support these business pioneering youth in achieving their ambitions, Zain launched its 4th edition of Zain Great Idea.

This popular accelerator program includes the support, development, preparation to work, and building capabilities of innovative and business-minded youth. Since launching the first edition of the program seven years ago in 2010 until today, the Zain Great Idea Program has become one of the largest integrated programs that cares for cradling and launching startup technological projects at the Kuwait level, as Zain attracted hundreds of business pioneers who have promising innovative ideas, and an ambition to enter the business environment through small projects. It harbored and provided them with rich training content according to the highest international standards in the world of business pioneering through it.

4YFN Barcelona

Zain sponsored eight aspiring young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs to attend the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona at its pavilion at the 4YFN exhibition for digital startup innovators. The forum is one of the most notable international events, gathering leading startup entities from across the globe.

This initiative aimed at supporting and introducing startup projects in technological fields and projecting the abilities of Kuwaiti youth in one of the largest international



Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi with young national talents selected in the Generation Z Program.

gatherings of major manufacturers, programmers and operators in the information technology field. During the event, the Kuwaiti young entrepreneurs displayed the ideas of their projects, liaising with and showcasing to the international investment society.

Memorandum of understanding with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees

Zain, within its strategic partnership with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, participated in a field visit to Al-Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan within its humanitarian campaign #Zain_with_refugees.

This initiative aims at participating in improving the living, social and health circumstances for refugees and any other individuals whom the commission assists, through providing basic needs, food, healthcare, education and other things. It said this step personifies the cooperation spirit between the private sector and the international establishment at the humanitarian level.

Zain had previously launched an official electronic gateway zain.unhcr.org to allow those who wish to donate to its humanitarian campaign #zain_with_refugees in cooperation with the commission, which aimed at improving the living circumstances for thousands of refugees in the region who are suffering from tough living conditions as the bitter cold of winter was approaching. Donations were collected to secure seasonal cash and winter clothes as well as heaters and other basics families need during the winter season.

Social Responsibility Award

Zain won the gold medal with a certificate of distinction

in the field of social responsibility at the Arab region level on the sidelines of a regional symposium and annual celebration held by the Arab Organization for Social Responsibility during its 12th meeting in Dubai.

The prize won for the fourth time was in appreciation of its efforts in the sustainability fields in 2017, which included a number of initiatives and projects it launched and adopted in various vital fields in the society. That besides the strategic partnerships with various establishments both in the public and private sectors to contribute to the development of the society and serve its members.

The Arab Organization for Social Responsibility designated this annual award to shed light on the pioneering establishments and companies in the sustainability fields at the regional level as the celebration witnessed the participation of an elite group of leaders who represent various pioneering entities from both public and private sectors from across the Arab world.

Zain Al-Shuhour Campaign

Zain launched its Ramadan campaign with "Machla Ramadan" during which its voluntary team distributed basic foodstuff to needy families in Kuwait before the arrival of the holy month. Zain volunteers prepared the machla boxes at the company premises, then distributed them to several needy families in various areas of Jahra governorate, in addition to delivering them to Zakat House and KRCS to distribute them to the needy in Kuwait.

Zain launched its annual initiative "iftarsaem" which continued until the last day of Ramadan during which the company distributed meals to the needy during the holy month in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Khaitan, covering the

most populated areas.

Zain strengthened its strategic partnership with various establishments at the Kuwait level in both public and private sectors in order to achieve its sustainable goals towards the society, which includes its partnership with Zakat House, KRCS, Interior Ministry, Social Affairs and Labor Ministry, Sabah Health Zone Hospitals, Women's Cultural and Social Society, Najat Charity Society, Kuwait Food Bank and other pioneering entities in Kuwait.

Zain held the Qirqian activity at the Social Care Home that belong to the Social Affairs and Labor Ministry in order to share with orphans, the elderly, and those with special needs the joy of the holy month in cooperation with the home's administration.

Zain joined sick children in hospitals to celebrate Qirqian during the holy month of Ramadan through the distribution of candy and gifts to sick children, their parents and nurses who are taking care of them in Zain, Amiri, Razi, Ibn Sina and National Bank of Kuwait hospitals.

Generation Z

Zain launched the second edition of its training project for young graduates "Generation Z" in 2017, which aims at investing in young national talent in order to qualify and present a new generation of pioneers to the business environment. Zain selected five young and high-caliber Kuwaiti graduates to join the "Generation Z" program after completing a strict evaluation process that followed several standards that ensures the ideal environment for business pioneers.

The "Generation Z" program concentrated on developing their personal skills in order to strengthen the spirit of



ZAIN executive administration visiting Za'tari Syrian refugees camp in Jordan with the UN.



ZAIN CEO, Iman Al-Roudhan on concluding Al-Roudhan Ramadan Soccer Tourney.

Local



Bader Al-Kharafi with a number of ZAIN female employees during the International Women Tamkeen Forum.

cooperation and boost team spirit, in addition to the development of the innovation and creativity spirit.

The "Generation Z" program represents another link in Zain's programs to support young national talent as it previously launched the "Zainers 2.0" program for graduate youth, which proved successful as many Kuwaiti graduates were appointed in full-time jobs.

The strategic partnership with Injaz

Zain participated during 2017 in the Injaz program for the administration of professional work for school students as Zain employees participated in directing students of the intermediate stage in a professional atmosphere, which contributed to the development of their skills within Zain's strategy for social responsibility and sustainability, through which it contributes to the development of the youth and education sectors.

Through its strategic partnership with Injaz, Zain seeks to educate and support youth who look forward to developing their ideas and projects according to international standards through a selection of training programs that are organized all year round for university and school students and continually seeks to provide a suitable environment for youth innovations so that they grow and achieve results that add value to the society.

The competition aims at giving students of the university and secondary stages in Kuwait the opportunity to present their ideas and innovative projects that serve various fields, as students learn how to grasp suitable opportunities in the work environment and how to launch products and conduct studies and research before launching the products.

Injaz Kuwait presents educational programs that enhance leadership and organizational skills in the business environment since its establishment in 2005, in order to educate and inspire the next generation in business management. Injaz Kuwait has inspired more than 54,000 students with the help of more than 3,000 volunteers from the Kuwaiti private sector in more than 100 schools and universities.

Kuwait Diving Team

Zain welcomed the Kuwait Diving Team of the Environmental Voluntary Foundation in its main premises,

and honored the company for its efforts to safeguard Kuwait's environment on the occasion of completing 800 sea missions the team carried out onboard the boat the company presented to them in 2003. The missions included the resurfacing of sunken ships and boats as well as removing abandoned fishing nets, in addition to carrying out projects of monitoring coral reefs and removing environmentally harmful debris.

Ramadan Donation Campaign

Zain launched its charity initiative for the second consecutive year through which it donated 500 fils to a charitable organization from every paid bill during the month of Ramadan, as the company donated more than KD 45,000 in the name of its customers for relief efforts and humanitarian activities in cooperation with Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society.

Al-Roudhan Tournament

Zain was the diamond sponsor of the 38th Ramadan Abdullah Meshari Al-Roudhan soccer tournament for the second consecutive year, which was held under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Zain showed through its sponsorship of this tournament its keenness on supporting youth and Kuwait sports, which are considered among its strategic priorities in implementing its plans of sustainability and social responsibility, as the tournament of the late Abdullah Meshari Al-Roudhan is the most notable sports event in Kuwait during Ramadan each year.

Women Empowerment

Zain launched the Women Empowerment Initiative in 2017 which aims at taking true steps towards imbalance between the two genders in the business environment and supporting the female element so that women have an effective role in developing and leading the establishment towards achieving its strategic goals.

This initiative was adopted by Vice Chairman of the Board and Group CEO of Zain Bader Nasser Al-Kharafi. This program is of enormous interest to Zain and Kharafi, given that today women account for less than 25 percent of Zain's workforce - a situation that led him to conclude that decisive action needed to be taken in this area.

Championing gender diversity at Zain will create competitive differentiation and ultimately improve the company's bottom line.

This initiative was revealed during a symposium held by Zain at Symphony Hotel in Kuwait and gathered nearly 300 women from all its operations in the Middle East and Africa with high-ranking leaders headed by Bader Al-Kharafi and a number of executives in Zain companies.

Breast Cancer

Zain organized an awareness activity for its employees at the company's main premises in Shuwaikh, which is within the framework of its annual campaign to spread awareness of breast cancer, at the start of October. The campaign has continued for the past 10 years and is considered an indivisible part of Zain's strategy of social responsibility and sustainability. It comes in the international month of breast cancer awareness that is marked in October every year.

The child rescue line

This campaign aims at shedding light and awareness on violence against children, as Zain sought through this initiative to provide a communication line to face this problem in cooperation with the Health Ministry and the National Program for the Protection of the Child. The 147 hotline was designated to receive calls about any violence against children.

In Arabic Initiative

Zain sponsored the activities of the In Arabic initiative that was organized by Kuwait National Library in cooperation with Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Foundation for Knowledge, represented by the UAE embassy in

Kuwait, on the occasion of the World Arabic Language Day, which falls on December 18 every year.

The activity was attended by Zain Kuwait CEO Eaman Al-Roudhan and the Executive Director of Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Foundation Saif Al-Mansouri and Director General of Kuwait National Library Kamel Al-Abdeljaleel. Zain's sponsorship was out of its keenness on supporting various activities that care for cultural concerns.

Kout Market

Zain entered in a partnership for the fifth consecutive year with Kout Market that aims at gathering local talents in the field of organic agriculture, nutrition and handicrafts that was launched at Shaheed Park. This partnership came within the framework of Zain's strategy of social responsibility and sustainability towards encouraging local talents to contribute to present a generation of Kuwait youth that is able to share in developing the national economy efficiently.

Marathon 642

Zain sponsored the Gulf Bank Marathon 642 held at Souk Sharq in cooperation with UNHCR. Over 6,000 people of various age groups attended. The platinum sponsorship of the marathon came as an extension of Zain's strategic partnership with UNHCR, which attended as a main partner in the activity to spread awareness about the campaign of voices of refugees the commission had launched to collect donations through the Internet for Syrian refugees.

The company aims at supporting noble goals and works hard towards supporting many charitable and humanitarian initiatives as an influential economic entity in the country.



ZAIN's PR & Communications executive Waleed Al-Khasti with Injaz Establishment team.



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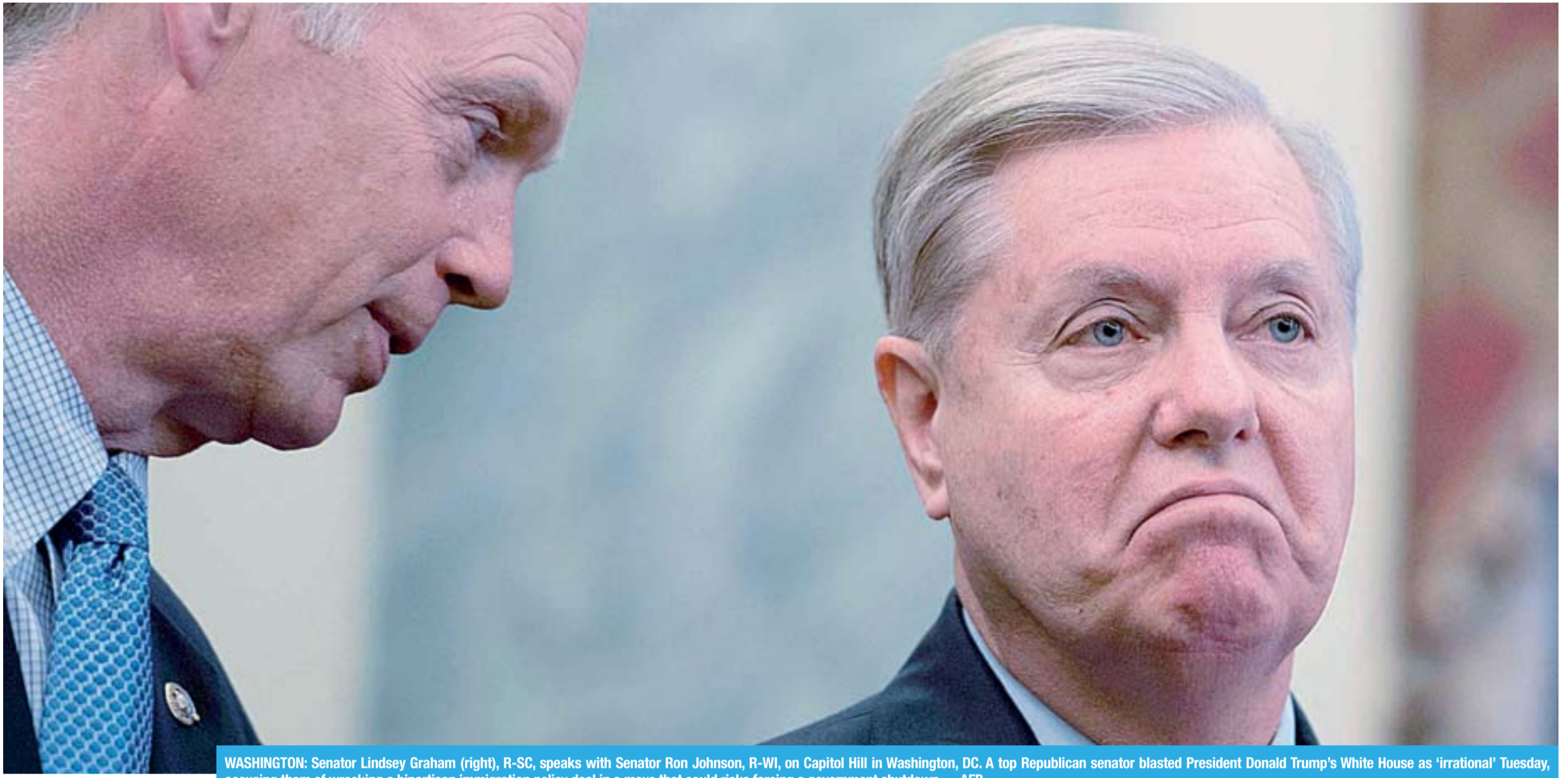


Rakhine's clash exposes combustible ethnic mix

Survey points to rising risk of war; Trump heads to Davos

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WASHINGTON: Senator Lindsey Graham (right), R-SC, speaks with Senator Ron Johnson, R-WI, on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. A top Republican senator blasted President Donald Trump's White House as 'irrational' Tuesday, accusing them of wrecking a bipartisan immigration policy deal in a move that could risks forcing a government shutdown. —AFP

US government shutdown looms

Immigration a threat to national security, Trump warns

WASHINGTON: Partisan finger-pointing over immigration policy on Tuesday left the US Congress and the White House stumbling closer to a possible federal government shutdown by the end of the week, although Wall Street held out hopes for a deal to prevent that. Republicans who control Congress are expected to try to push another stopgap funding bill and get it to President Donald Trump's desk before tomorrow's midnight deadline. But there are perils. Conservatives want a large increase in defense spending that such a bill would not provide. Many Democrats might withhold their support unless immigration policy is addressed. Meanwhile, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell warned that a government funding bill should not be held "hostage" to the immigration debate. And the White House director of legislative affairs, Marc Short, told reporters there was "no artificial timeline" for a deal on so-called Dreamers and that it would be "herculean" to get it done by this week.

The negotiating climate has become increasingly poisonous after a sudden halt last week in talks toward a deal to shield the Dreamers - immigrants brought into the country illegally as children - from deportation. The Republican president rejected a bipartisan agreement reached by a group of senators. Divisions between Republicans and Democrats then deepened amid an uproar over Trump's reported use of the word "shithole" when speaking about African countries last week. Trump has denied using that word.

Meanwhile, a new fissure among Democrats opened on Tuesday, as the head of the influential Congressional Hispanic Caucus expressed her opposition to the bipartisan Senate deal, although she said she had not seen its text and noted it had some

positive aspects. "In its current form I'm probably a no," Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham said in an interview. She said she will back a narrower bipartisan House of Representatives bill. The Senate approach, Lujan Grisham said, would reduce the parents of Dreamers to "second-class citizens" because they would receive temporary protections and no pathway to citizenship, as well as other problems. Republican Senator Lindsay Graham on Tuesday blamed White House staff for altering Trump's positive view on the Senate bipartisan agreement on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that protects the Dreamers. "I will say I don't think the president was well-served by his staff," Graham said. House Republicans were scheduled to huddle on Tuesday night to try to figure out how best to avoid a government shutdown, congressional aides said. If a temporary "continuing resolution" to keep the government operating results, it would be the fourth such measure since the 2018 federal fiscal year began on Oct 1, a sign of Washington's serious struggles to pass spending legislation. These stopgap measures have become routine, with 112 of them passed since 1998, according to the Peter G Peterson Foundation, which advocates

fiscal responsibility. Analyst Ed Mills at financial firm Raymond James said another short-term extension is expected. "This is likely to be a week of brinkmanship and the potential of a government shutdown is elevated. Should a shutdown occur, we do not expect much of a market reaction," Mills noted.

'Kick the can'

No 2 House Democrat Steny Hoyer said Democrats have not decided whether they will support another continuing resolution and "can kick the can down the road one more time." The slim Republican margin of control in the US Senate means Trump's party will need some Democratic support to resolve the government funding stand-off. Democrats have said they want a spending bill that protects the Dreamer immigrants, mostly Hispanic young adults.

Talks also continued on related issues, including how to fund a children's healthcare program and to establish higher spending caps for the US military and other domestic programs. House Energy and Commerce Chairman Greg Walden was pushing for a six-year reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to be passed this week, possibly as part of a

stopgap spending bill, a House Republican aide said.

Trump and Democratic Senator Dick Durbin have traded accusations over the collapse of the immigration talks. Durbin intends to introduce the bipartisan agreement as legislation, spokesman Ben Marter said. But it was not yet clear whether Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell would schedule it for a floor debate and vote. Trump said in September he was terminating the DACA program, launched by his Democratic predecessor Barack Obama, effective in March. Congress has until then to pass legislation to protect the roughly 700,000 Dreamers from deportation and give them work permits.

President Trump said Tuesday that America's current immigration system weakens national security, as his administration sought Supreme Court backing to lift protections shielding 700,000 "Dreamer" immigrants from deportation. Days after Trump sparked an international uproar by reportedly complaining about immigration from "shithole" countries, his administration sought to refocus the debate by tying a series of current immigration programs to terror threats.

A new report from the Justice and Homeland Security Departments said that nearly three-fourths of the 549 international terror-related convictions in US courts since the September 11 attacks in 2001 involved foreign-born individuals, including 148 granted citizenship after arriving in the United States. It also said it had blocked many hundreds more potential terrorists who tried to enter the country both legally and illegally. Trump tweeted out a link to the report Tuesday evening, in support of White House efforts to end programs like the green card lottery and family-based migration. —Agencies



Negotiating climate become increasingly poisonous

protects the Dreamer immigrants, mostly Hispanic young adults.

UK appoints 'minister for loneliness'

LONDON: Britain appointed a "minister for loneliness" yesterday to tackle what Prime Minister Theresa May described as "the sad reality of modern life" affecting millions of people. Tracey Crouch, a junior minister for sport and civil society, will take on the role as part of a broader strategy to combat loneliness in Britain. "For far too many people, loneliness is the sad reality of modern life," May said. "I want to confront this challenge for our society and for all of us to take action to address the loneliness endured by the elderly, by carers, by those who have lost loved ones—people who have no one to talk to or share their thoughts and experiences with," the prime minister added.

More than nine million people say they are always or often lonely, out of a population of 65.6 million, according to the British Red Cross. The charity describes loneliness and isolation as a "hidden epidemic" affecting people across all ages at various moments in their life, such as retirement, bereavement or separation. The ministerial appointment follows a recommendation from a committee in memory of Jo Cox, a lawmaker for the opposition Labor party who was murdered by a far-right extremist.

"Jo experienced and witnessed loneliness throughout her life especially as a new student at Cambridge University and separated from her sister Kim for (the) first time," the Jo Cox Foundation wrote on Twitter. "She would be delighted by Tracey Crouch's new job as minister for loneliness and would be saying 'let's get to work!'" the Foundation added. The prime minister was to host a reception on Wednesday to celebrate the legacy left by Cox, whose killing just days ahead of the 2016 Brexit referendum shocked the nation. Britain's loneliness initiative will see a strategy published later this year, with input from national and local government, public services, the voluntary sector and businesses. —AFP

Fake medicines flourish in Africa despite killing thousands

ABIDJAN: There's nothing covert about Roxy—a huge market in Abidjan selling counterfeit medicine, the scourge of Africa and the cause of around 100,000 deaths annually on the world's poorest continent. Located in the bustling Adjame quarter of Ivory Coast's main city and commercial hub, the haven for fake medicine has been targeted time and again by authorities and stockpiles burnt. But it resurfaces every time.

"The police hassle us but they themselves buy these medicines," said Mariam, one of the many mainly illiterate vendors who hawk everything from painkillers and antibiotics to anti-malaria and anti-retroviral treatments. "When we are harassed we always come to an arrangement with them to resume our activities," she said. Fatima, another hawker, said: "Many people come here with their prescriptions to buy medicine, even the owners of private clinics."

She said there was a "syndicate" controlling the sector that held regular meetings to fix prices and supply levels. Fake medicines bring about some 100,000 deaths a year in the continent, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The illicit sector has a turnover of at least 10 percent of the world pharmaceutical business, meaning that it earns tens of billions of dollars a year, the Switzerland-based World Economic Forum estimates, adding that the figure has nearly tripled in five years. "To sell fake medicines, you need a clientele. The ailing poor are more numerous in Africa than anywhere in the world," said Marc Gentilini, an expert on infectious and tropical diseases and a former head of the French Red Cross.



ABIDJAN: This file photo taken at the cemetery of Abobo district of Abidjan shows fake medicine bearing Chinese character as people unload boxes of counterfeit drugs from a truck. —AFP

Double-edged crime

Gentilini said some meningitis vaccines sent a few years ago after an outbreak in arid Niger were fake. The disease kills thousands every year in the arid west African nation. The WHO estimates that one out of 10 medicines in the world is fake but the figure can be as high as seven out of 10 in certain countries, especially in Africa. The American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene estimated in 2015 that 122,000 children under five died due to taking poor-quality antimalarials in sub-Saharan Africa, which, along with antibiotics as the two most in-demand, are the medicines most likely to be out-of-date or bad copies. Interpol in August announced the seizure of 420 tons of counterfeit medicine in West Africa in a massive operation that involved about 1,000 police, customs and health officials in seven countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo. Geoffroy Bessaoud, the head of anti-counterfeit coordination at French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi, said fake medicines were the biggest illicit business in the world. "This

phenomenon is spreading: its financial attractiveness draws criminal organizations of all sizes," he said.

"An investment of \$1,000 can bring returns of up to \$500,000 while for the same kind of investment in the heroin trade or in counterfeit money the amount will be around \$20,000." Ivorian authorities in May burnt 40 tons of fake medicines in Adjame, the biggest street market for fake medicines in West Africa which accounts for 30 percent of medicine sales in Ivory Coast.

Offenders go unpunished

Offenders remain largely unpunished worldwide and are mainly targeted for breaching intellectual property rights instead of being responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, the Paris-based International Institute of Research Against Counterfeit Medicine says. Experts have called for a global fight against the scourge. Sanofi said it had in 2016 helped dismantle 27 clandestine laboratories, including 22 in China and the rest in Indonesia, Ukraine and Poland. —AFP

International

Barred from election, Navalny vows to fight 'emperor' Putin

Kremlin top critic slams March election as sham

MOSCOW: The Kremlin's top critic Alexei Navalny has slammed Russia's March presidential election, in which he is barred from running, as a sham meant to "re-appoint" Vladimir Putin on his way to becoming "emperor for life". With two months to go before Russians vote in polls that are all but guaranteed to hand Putin a historic fourth term, the 41-year-old opposition leader and anti-corruption campaigner spoke to AFP Tuesday in his campaign headquarters. "This is not an election and my role will consist of explaining to people that this procedure, which they call an election, in fact is only held to re-appoint Putin," he said. "We will prove this and convince people that it's impossible to recognize either these polls or this regime."



It's impossible to recognize either polls or the regime

Navalny last year mounted a national campaign, meeting thousands of people in cities across Russia, but in December the Central Election Commission said he could not take part due to a controversial embezzlement conviction which the opposition leader calls fabricated. He is now ready to channel the force of his campaign into persuading Russians to boycott the polls, calling his first major protest of this year on January 28. "Putin wants to be emperor for life. His entourage, people who became billionaires and the world's richest individuals, they want the same thing," he said, vouching to continue his "political fight."

'Putin fears me'

Navalny's rise to the top of Russia's opposition in recent years has seen him tone down his previous nationalist rhetoric. Focusing on corruption, he mounted two major protests last year which drew tens of thousands of participants across Russia and resulted in hundreds of arrests. Ignored by most media, notably government-controlled television, Navalny has been highly visible online.

A video he posted about Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's alleged secret wealth has received 25 million views since March. Despite constant pressure from the authorities, Navalny has built a considerable support base, and many of his campaigners are young people. In 2017 he had three stints in jail and his sup-

porters are also frequently arrested and attacked. Putin "fears me and he fears the people I represent," Navalny said. "I created the biggest political movement in Russia's recent history with over 200,000 volunteers." These volunteers, spread through offices in most Russian regions, will now be organized to support a "voters' strike", he said. "We are not going to vote, we are seeking to convince everyone that they should not vote, and we will monitor the election to prevent the authorities from falsifying turnout," including in the Caucasus region, known for publishing dubious figures of over 90 percent.

Putin's popularity has hovered above 80 percent since Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, according to several pollsters. Among his rivals on the ballot are Communist candidate Pavel Grudinin, the longtime leader of the Liberal-Democratic party Vladimir Zhirinovskiy and liberal candidates Ksenia Sobchak and Grigory Yavlinsky. None of them are currently polling at more than eight percent. A successful election will see the 65-year-old Putin return to the Kremlin for another six-year term. That would extend his rule until 2024, making him the country's longest serving leader since dictator Joseph Stalin.

'Authoritarian state'

Navalny said Putin's popularity was artificially high in a non-competitive atmosphere. "These ratings only exist in conditions where (authorities) don't let certain candidates participate and only allow people they have personally picked," he said. He accused Putin of having "turned Russia into an authoritarian state" with instability manifesting itself in acts of terror and falling quality of life while he "made corruption the core of his rule." "Corruption made our country - a country very rich with oil-poor!" he said. "We are fighting for our country, our future," he said. A father of two, he added that he understands the risks to him and his family but does not let that stop him. "I know what actions the Kremlin is capable of," he said, mentioning the murder of opposition politician Boris Nemtsov in 2015. "Of course I am, as a normal person, worried about the safety of my family." —AFP



MOSCOW: Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny works on his laptop at the office of his Anti-corruption Foundation (FBK) in Moscow yesterday. The Kremlin's top critic Alexei Navalny has slammed Russia's March presidential election, in which he is barred from running, as a sham meant to 're-appoint' Vladimir Putin on his way to becoming 'emperor for life'. —AFP

Catalan MPs elect separatist speaker

BARCELONA: Catalan lawmakers yesterday elected a separatist as parliamentary speaker, the first stage of a plan by pro-independence deputies to get regional leader Carles Puigdemont, in self-exile in Belgium, back into power. As MPs met for the first time since a failed bid to break from Spain, protesters waving separatist flags gathered outside the assembly in Barcelona where pro-independence parties are in the majority after winning regional elections on December 21. With 70 out of 135 deputies, they largely favor Puigdemont, sacked by

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy along with his cabinet on October 27 after the regional parliament declared unilateral independence, as candidate for president.

Despite being in Belgium, Puigdemont wants to make a comeback and govern the deeply divided region. For separatist lawmakers, the first step towards this was to secure control of parliament by getting one of their supporters elected as speaker. They did precisely that yesterday, with 65 lawmakers voting for Roger Torrent, a member of the leftwing separatist ERC party, against 56 who cast their ballot for an anti-independence candidate. Separatists will also attempt to get a majority of their supporters elected as deputy parliamentary speakers. These make sure assembly rules are respected and will decide whether Puigdemont and others are allowed to be lawmakers while remaining out of the country. Including the former Catalan president, five separatists are abroad and risk arrest on charges of rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds for their role in the failed independence bid if they come back to Spain. —AFP

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International

Seven ethnic Rakhine killed as Myanmar's police fire on riot

Rakhine clash exposes Myanmar's combustible ethnic mix

YANGON: Seven ethnic Rakhine Buddhists died after Myanmar police opened fire on a crowd trying to seize a government office, officials said yesterday, in fresh violence in a febrile state already scarred by ethnic and religious hatred. The incident unfolded as around 5,000 Buddhists gathered late Tuesday for a nationalist ceremony in Mrauk U, a town that has so far remained unscathed by the military's crackdown on the region's minority Rohingya Muslim community. It was not immediately clear why the rally descended into violence. But ethnic Rakhine, many of whom are poor and marginalized, have a long-standing enmity with the Myanmar state which is dominated by ethnic Bamar.

The clashes came on the same day that a repatriation agreement was signed between Myanmar and Bangladesh to start the return of some 655,000 Muslim Rohingya refugees from squalid camps over the border. Rakhine say the Rohingyas are illegal "Bengali" immigrants to a Buddhist land. A police spokesman blamed the crowd for "starting the violence" by throwing stones and barging into a district administrative office and hoisting the Rakhine State flag. "Security forces asked them to disperse and fired warning shots with rubber bullets... but they didn't stop, so police had to use real bullets," spokesman Colonel Myo Soe said.

"Seven people were killed and 13 injured," he said adding more than 20 police were wounded by the crowd, who were calling for the "sovereignty of Rakhine state". Photographs showed bodies laid out on the floor of a makeshift mortuary in Mrauk U on Wednesday, the clothes of the victims stained with blood. The shootings further raise the temperature in an already combustible area of Myanmar. "It's not forgivable that they used guns," Mrauk U lawmaker Oo Hla Saw of the Arakan National Party said, confirming the death toll and labeling the police action "a crime".

The deaths of seven ethnic Rakhine Buddhists in Myanmar's north has cast fresh light on the complex swirl of religious and ethnic tensions in one of the country's poorest and most troubled regions. Rakhine state usually makes the news because of the Rohingyas, a stateless Muslim minority who have fled to Bangladesh in an army crackdown against insurgents that has been classified as ethnic cleansing. But most of the population in the state is ethnic Rakhine, a group whose grievances are a key part of the conflict but often go unheard.

Fresh violence in a febrile state scarred by religious hatred



Who are the Rakhine?

Like nearly 90 percent of Myanmar's population, the Rakhine people are Buddhist, but a shared faith masks deep-

er divides. Unlike the Rohingya Muslims who live in the same state, the Rakhine are recognized by the government as an ethnic group but are often marginalized under a system that favors the dominant Bamar (Burmese). Like other ethnic groups, they harbor longstanding grievances against the central government that date back to British colonial rule, but the 18th century subjugation of their own kingdom by the Burmese has also not been forgotten. A deadly riot on Tuesday in Mrauk U occurred on the anniversary of the fall of the kingdom. "Mrauk U is the former capital of the kingdom of Arakan so it is an area where autonomist, regionalist claims are strong," said Alexandra De Mersan, an expert from the French School of Oriental Studies. There are around two million Rakhine—twice as many as the Rohingyas before their recent exodus.

Why are they clashing?

Communal violence between Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslim communities has deep roots and pivots on a dispute over who belongs in the state. But Rakhine antipa-



MRAUK U: People grieve the death of one of the seven ethnic Rakhine Buddhists that died after Myanmar police opened fire on a crowd trying to seize a government office yesterday. —AFP

thy towards the government and the Burmese military is also strong. Civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi is not as popular in the state as she is in the rest of the country. While the world's attention has focused on attacks by Rohingya insurgents, security forces have been fighting Rakhine rebels in a nearly decade-long war that has gone largely unnoticed outside Myanmar. An AFP tally from Myanmar media reports indicates that the Arakan Army, the main rebel group, killed scores of members of the security forces from late 2015 to late 2016. "It would not be unreasonable to speculate that AA cadres or supporters might have been involved in whipping up a protest that turned violent fairly quickly," security analyst Anthony Davis said of Tuesday's clash.

The impact on Rohingya

The riot occurred just days before Myanmar and Bangladesh are slated to begin repatriating some of the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslim refugees who fled last year.

Observers are worried the recent violence may morph into fresh tensions between Rakhine and Rohingya—and complicate the return process. The repatriation deal covers more than 750,000 Rohingyas who have fled over the border to Bangladesh. "Things can get mixed up," Oo Hla Saw, a lawmaker with the Arakan National Party. "Hatred and incitement could increase as well," he said.—Agencies

Chinese carrier group sails through Taiwan Strait amid tension

TAIPEI: A Chinese carrier group has sailed through the narrow Taiwan Strait that separates the self-ruled island from its giant neighbor but no unusual activity was detected, Taiwan said yesterday, amid heightened tension with Beijing. Beijing has taken an increasingly hostile stance towards Taiwan since the election two years ago of President Tsai Ing-wen of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party. China suspects Tsai wants to push for formal independence, though she has said she wants to maintain the status quo and is committed to ensuring peace.

In recent months, China has stepped up military drills around Taiwan, alarming Taipei. China says the exercises are routine, but that it will not tolerate any attempt by the island to declare independence. Taiwan's Defense Ministry said a group of Chinese ships led by the Liaoning aircraft carrier entered the southwestern part of the Taiwan Strait in the early hours of Tuesday, though it stayed on the Chinese side of the waterway.

As of midday yesterday the carrier group had left Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone heading in a northerly direction, the ministry said, adding it had monitored the group's movements throughout. "While the group was passing through the Taiwan Strait there were no abnormal activities, and people can rest easy," it added. China's Defense Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but the Soviet-era Liaoning, China's first aircraft carrier, has passed through the Taiwan Strait before on its way to and from exercises in the South China Sea.

While heavily travelled by commercial shipping and flights, the Taiwan Strait is also a sensitive military zone. This month, Taiwan complained about China launching a



HONG KONG: Photo shows China's sole aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, arriving in Hong Kong waters. —AFP

new air route for civilian flights that runs close to two groups of Taiwan-controlled islands off the Chinese coast in the strait, saying it threatened regional security and aviation safety. China does not need Taiwan's permission to open new air routes, a government spokesman said yesterday, denying there was a safety risk.

Taiwan said on Friday the new flight path was so close to the middle line of the Taiwan Strait that it would affect

Taiwan air force exercises and other flight operations. "The planes can come very close to each other," an official added, referring to other connecting routes that China has opened and where Taiwan civilian flights already operate. "It becomes a very dangerous situation if we do not consult with each other." China, which considers Taiwan a wayward province, snapped official communication with its government after Tsai took office.—Reuters

What does US freezing Palestinian aid mean?

RAMALLAH: The US government has frozen tens of millions of dollars in contributions to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA. What is UNRWA and what will the impact be?

What is UNRWA?

The United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) was established following the war surrounding the creation of Israel in 1948, in which more than 700,000 Palestinians either fled or were forced from their homes. It provides aid for these people and their descendants. Around five million Palestinians across the Middle East, including in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, are eligible. Much of this is in the form of education—UNRWA employs more than 20,000 teachers—but also health and financial support.

What has Trump suspended?

The United States is the largest single donor to UNRWA, providing more than \$350 million last year. The next largest, the European Union, donated less than half that

figure. On Tuesday, it announced it would freeze \$65 million, while allowing \$60 million through to keep the agency running in the short term. This was the first set of payments for the year and it is not clear if later payments would be similarly affected. State Department officials insisted the decision was not taken to pressure Palestinian leaders, but because the US wants other countries to help pay for and reform UNRWA.

Israeli politicians say UNRWA's existence perpetuates the conflict and think refugees in neighboring countries should be incorporated into those societies. Palestinians say UNRWA is a crucial lifeline for impoverished people across the region and is necessary until a final resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is found. They also point out the United States provides more than \$3 billion a year in military aid to Israel.

Why now?

Relations between the US administration and the Palestinian leadership have all but broken down in recent weeks following Trump's controversial December 6 recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The Palestinians, who see the eastern part of the city as the capital of their future state, reacted furiously to the decision, freezing ties with Trump's administration and saying the US can no longer be the mediator in peace talks with Israel.

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas is expected to shun Vice President Mike Pence when he visits the region next week. On January 2, Trump on Twitter accused the



RAFAH: A Palestinian woman and a child leave after collecting food aid provided by the UN agency for Palestinian refugees at the Rafah refugee camp yesterday. —AFP

Palestinians of rejecting negotiations with Israel. "We pay the Palestinians HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS a year and get no appreciation or respect," Trump wrote. Abbas shot back on Sunday using a common Arabic expression of frustration, saying to Trump "may God destroy your house. When have we rejected (negotiations)?" While the State Department said the freeze was only intended at reforming UNRWA, Trump also faces domestic political pressure to please his right-wing base.

What will it mean?

UNRWA already faced desperate and chronic financial shortages before Trump's announcement. In 2015, the agency nearly closed all its schools due to financial shortfalls, and the organization carried over a deficit of tens of millions of dollars last year. The fear is that the cut will lead to schools and even hospitals closing for Palestinians, though UNRWA's head Pierre Krahenbuhl said the \$60 million would enable them to keep them open in the short term at least.—AFP

News in brief

Former CIA agent arrested

WASHINGTON: US authorities said Tuesday they had arrested a former CIA agent, Hong Kong resident Jerry Chun Shing Lee, after discovering he had an unauthorized notebook that had the identities of undercover US spies. Lee, a naturalized US citizen also known as Zhen Cheng Li, was arrested late Monday after he arrived at JFK International Airport in New York. The Department of Justice said Lee, 53, grew up in the United States and served in the US Army before joining the Central Intelligence Agency as a case officer in 1994. He served in unnamed overseas locations and left the agency in 2007, later apparently taking a job in Hong Kong. In a complaint filed in a New York federal court, the Justice Department said that in 2012, FBI agents with court-ordered warrants secretly searched Lee's luggage while he was travelling in the United States and found he was carrying top secret materials he was not authorized to have.

Aliens, apocalypse, lightning?

MICHIGAN: A bright meteor briefly swept across the sky over parts of the US Midwest and Canada on Tuesday, weather and geology agencies said, and then caused a powerful explosion that rattled homes and onlookers. The meteor was seen across the region in places such as Ohio, Michigan and Ontario at about 8 pm local time and registered a 2.0 magnitude tremor about 4 miles east of Saint Clair Shores in Eastern Michigan, the United States Geological Survey said on its website. The National Weather Service (NWS) confirmed it was not a meteorological event but more likely a meteor. "The NWS can confirm the flash and boom was NOT thunder or lightning, but instead a likely meteor," the NWS in Detroit said on Twitter. The meteor sighting lit up social media with people posting videos and reaction. "I can't believe there was a Meteor! It shook our house and made a large bang! We thought someone hit our house."

Venezuela rebel pilot killed

CARACAS: Venezuela's government announced Tuesday that rogue pilot Oscar Perez was among seven "terrorists" killed during a bloody police assault to arrest him the day before. Police swooped on Perez and his armed group holed up outside Caracas on Monday, setting off a fierce gunbattle in which two police officers were also killed. It was initially unclear whether the 36-year-old-Venezuela's most wanted man had been killed or captured. His family had pleaded for news of his condition from the government, until Tuesday's announcement drew a line under the latest bloody chapter of efforts to unseat President Nicolas Maduro. Perez had been wanted since he used a stolen helicopter to bomb Venezuela's Supreme Court at the height of anti-government protests last June. Maduro had accused him of attempting a "coup" and being in the pay of the CIA.

Second US winter storm

NEW YORK: A second winter storm in as many weeks is causing hundreds of flight cancellations across the United States, airlines reported on Tuesday, potentially dealing a further blow to carriers' first quarter outlooks. As the storm sweeps across southeast Texas and up the East Coast dumping snow, sleet and freezing rain, airlines have already canceled flights into Wednesday in anticipation of difficult conditions. American Airlines, the world's largest airline by passenger traffic, had canceled some 270 flights between Tuesday and yesterday as a result of the storm, it said. Rival Delta Air Lines, the No 2 US carrier by passenger traffic, said it had canceled about 275 Tuesday flights and expected additional cancellations in New York and Boston as the storm tracked north. The third-largest US carrier, United Airlines, said it had canceled more than 700 flights on Tuesday.

International

Survey points to rising risk of war as Trump heads to Davos

Extreme weather seen as top risk for 2018

BERLIN: The risk of political and economic confrontations between major powers, including outright military conflicts, has risen sharply, according to a survey released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) days before its annual gathering in Davos. The Global Risks Report highlighted several top risks for 2018, including environmental threats from extreme weather and temperatures, economic inequalities and cyber attacks.

But most remarkable was the surge in geopolitical concerns after a year of escalating rhetoric between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that has arguably brought the world closer to a nuclear conflict than it has been in decades.

Trump is due to give a speech on the closing day of the WEF, an annual event in the Swiss Alps which runs from Jan 23-26 and will attract 70 heads of state and government, as well as celebrities, CEOs and top bankers.

The survey of nearly 1,000 experts from government, business, academia and non-governmental organizations showed 93 percent expect a worsening of political or economic confrontations between major powers in 2018, including 40 percent who believe those risks have increased significantly. Some 79 percent see a heightened risk of state-on-state military conflict. In addition to the

threat of a conflict on the Korean peninsula, the report pointed to the risk of new military confrontations in the Middle East. It cited a rise in "charismatic strongman politics" across the world and said political, economic and environmental risks were being exacerbated by a decline in support for rules-based multilateralism.



Overwhelming share of experts say risks of conflict have risen

direction," said John Drzik, president of global risk and digital at the consultancy Marsh, which helped compile the report. While geopolitical worries rose sharply, the environment topped the list of concerns, with extreme weather events seen as the single most prominent risk in 2018 after a year of unusually frequent Atlantic storms, including Hurricane Maria, which devastated Puerto Rico.

With global growth recovering, concerns about the economy were down sharply. Still, the report described income inequality as a "corrosive problem" in many countries and warned against complacency over the economic

Wrong direction

The report pointed to Trump's decisions to withdraw from the Paris climate accord and the TPP trade agreement and his threat to pull out of a deal between Western powers and Iran designed to curb its nuclear program. "The risks we are trying to grapple with here require multilateral solutions but we are moving in the other



DAVOS: This file photo shows the ski resort of Davos on the eve of the opening day of the World Economic Forum in Davos. —AFP

environment given high debt levels, low savings rates and inadequate pension provisions. "A widening economic recovery presents us with an opportunity that we cannot afford to squander, to tackle the fractures that we have

allowed to weaken the world's institutions, societies and environment," said Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the WEF. "We must take seriously the risk of a global systems breakdown." —Reuters

Nepalese farmers grow bananas to avert floods

KATHMANDU: Nepali farmer Bhoj Raj Paudel had just left home to visit his parents when a hill above it collapsed, destroying his ranch and a paddy field and flooding a swathe of land downstream. The landslide was 19 years ago, but he remembers it vividly. "I am happy my family survived but whatever I owned was gone forever," the 53-year-old

father of three told the Thomson Reuters Foundation from Simalpani, a small town on the foothills of the Himalayas some 200 km west of Kathmandu.

Simalpani and neighboring villages - which sit on a geological faultline - have been struck by 16 massive landslides over the last 50 years, aid workers said. Rising global temperatures have shrunk Nepal's glaciers, with meltwater forming lakes that flood regularly, causing widespread destruction. But farmers clearing forests for agriculture are also to blame, experts say. About 80 percent of Nepal's 28 million people rely on agriculture for their living, many using destructive traditional slash and burn techniques.

For decades, villagers walked into the forests and indiscriminately cut trees for cooking, heating and fodder. "An intervention was urgently needed to stop this and save resources vital to the livelihood of the people," said Dhruba Gautam, executive director of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Centre Nepal. Since 2010, the charity has been teaching 14,000 families in 28 villages in the Banganga basin, a river of religious significance for Hindus in Nepal and home to an important wetland, to change their farming habits.

Farmers have persuaded each other to adopt practices that protect forests, soil, rivers and wetlands, as well as earning a bet-

ter living. Mapping data shows that slash and burn farming in the area has fallen by 80 percent since the project began, Gautam said. It won the Solution Search award for innovative conservation in November, and \$30,000 to scale up the project, which Brett Jenks, president of Rare, the US-based charity behind the prize, said could be "accessible for other communities".

Earning more

Women are on the frontline of the campaign to persuade farmers to adopt soil-friendly crops like legumes, bananas and pineapples, whose roots help control erosion on slopes. Sita Khanal, a housewife in Thada village, 10 km west of Simalpani, heads a team of a dozen

villagers tasked with persuading their neighbors to abandon their destructive practices and use forest products without depleting them. Only unwanted, fallen or overgrown trees are cleared. "The villagers were initially hesitant to abandon old approaches but they embraced the changes," she said, adding that they earn more from the new crops.

Locals have also been trained to monitor rainfall and temperatures, with villagers upstream warning those downstream of impending floods by text message. "We have seen how disasters have gone down since we changed old farming practices that caused them," said Jum Bahadur Magar, 40, a farmer in Thada. —Reuters

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Cartoon for the Soul



How 'impact investing' can make money - and do good

Rural families in Africa who need access to power and investors seeking a decent return on their money are getting together so everyone prospers. The cherry on the cake? It's good for the environment too. British investors are funding solar kits for households in East Africa with no access to electricity. As families pay for the kits over two or three years, investors recoup their stake with interest three times that offered by high street banks.

"There are environmental benefits and social benefits so it seemed like a no brainer. It's also a chance to address inequality between rich and poor countries," one small-scale investor, James Harman, 24, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Harman has invested 500 pounds (\$690) in projects in Uganda and Kenya and could make 5 percent interest annually for two years if repayments on the kits stay up to date. "You put the money in, accept you might lose some of it and see what happens," Harman said. Other risks include currency fluctuations, political upheaval or natural disasters.

The investment scheme, Energise Africa, is one example of so-called impact investing, where both financial and social returns - making improvements in people's lives - are created. Previously the domain of corporations and the wealthy, impact investing is now available to anyone with small amounts of cash to spare - with investments in community cinemas, affordable housing or low cost gyms - from as little as \$70.

Demand is strong on both sides. In rural Uganda for example, only 7 percent of households in rural areas have access to electricity so off-grid schemes like Energise Africa can be transformative. And with advanced economies experiencing low interest rates since the global financial crisis of 2008, new ways of generating returns have increasing appeal.

Energizing Africa

A joint venture between Britain-based investing platforms Ethex and Lendahand, Energise Africa raises funds from individual investors that are then used by solar companies working locally to provide solar kits to rural families in Uganda, Kenya and Mozambique. As well as the solar panel, the kits, typically costing about \$400, comprise three solar lights, a mobile phone charger and a rechargeable torch and radio. The kits are covered by five years warranty and servicing.

The upfront cost means the technology is unaffordable for families. But, with overseas money providing solar companies with working capital, they can afford to offer payment plans to customers. The interest paid by those purchasing the systems is used to pay investors their return. Father of five Hajji Ssenkere Umaru, 81, is a farmer living in Kyazanga District, a rural area of central Uganda. He grows tomatoes, cabbages and matoke, a type of banana, on his small farm, which is about the size of a soccer pitch.

He used to spend 150,000 Ugandan shillings (\$40) a month - 15 percent of his salary - to fuel a water pump which irrigated his fields. The pump also incurred frequent repair costs. These expenses made it difficult for him to pay school fees of nearly \$200 a year in the months outside of the harvest. He purchased a solar kit and waterpump in October and will pay for it over two years. When it's paid for, he'll be saving \$50 per month. He is also able to charge his neighbors to use the pump, which brings in an additional \$11 per week.

"Before we got solar we suffered from the kerosene smoke. It created lumps in our throats and smoke got in our noses and was everywhere," Umaru said by email to the Thomson Reuters Foundation. As well as the cost savings, Umaru said his children now had more hours in which they could read. He also appreciates being connected to the outside world as he can power a television.

Access to Finance

Interest rates vary for customers depending on the kind of solar kit they want. "It's affordable, it's not extortionate," said Lisa Ashford, CEO of Ethex. "People might start off with a small solar kit but can upgrade in order to power a computer or television." "People are paying off the lower cost product and, as they gain in confidence about the affordability, they tend to upgrade sooner and faster which I think indicates that people are able to afford this and can budget quite well," Ashford said.

Those providing the life-changing investments come from all walks of life, she said. "Energise Africa investors are everyday people - gardeners, campaigners and bankers - from millennials to families or retirees. They all share a common motivation to invest their money in a way that generates social and financial impact."

Such initiatives are much needed as countries strive to meet United Nations development goals, aimed at ending poverty and fighting inequality. A report published last year, for example, found there is not enough finance for energy access to meet one of the goals - sustainable energy for all - by 2030. "There needs to be more range of financing available to get this done," said Rachel Kyte, CEO of Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), which published the report.

Harman, the young investor in Energise Africa, said the issue of global inequality was one of his motivations. "Much as I'm not a rich person, I'm very conscious I'm in the top three percent of the world's population in terms of income. I do feel a bit guilty about that," said the data analyst, who earns nearly \$50,000 annually. His first investment - a microloan to a businesswoman via the website Zidisha - was promptly repaid and he went on to invest in two Energise Africa projects. "I want to help people. I want to put my money somewhere with a decent return on investment and I want to help reduce reliance on fossil fuels," he said. —Reuters

Trump still indistinguishable from business

A year ago Donald Trump ceded control of The Trump Organization to his adult sons, but refused to divest his assets, sparking a furious backlash from political opponents and ethics experts. Today his golf clubs in Florida and New Jersey, where he spent more than 80 days in 2017, provide a backdrop to his presidency. His opponents complain bitterly and lawsuits have mounted up against opaque ties between the White House and the company.

A prime example of this contentious cocktail of business and politics is the Trump International Hotel in Washington, a six-minute drive from the White House. If some doubted whether transforming Washington's old post office into a luxury Trump hotel would spell success, today its rooms, restaurants and conference rooms swarm with foreign diplomats and lobbyists.

"The hotel is kind of a separate White House where you can buy a \$27 margarita and where you can talk to people who will talk the next day to the president," says Austin Envers, executive director of American Oversight, a non-profit bankrolled by Democratic donors to expose ethical violations of the Trump administration. "It's a way to get access to people who work in the administration that regular Americans don't have."

Stays by Saudi and Malaysian delegations were questionable, says Envers, so too an event held by a group representing e-cigarette makers. A little while later, the administration froze a regulation requiring stricter oversight of the sector. Trump's habit of making surprise visits to his properties, which has continued in office, has handed them only greater publicity and captivated guests. "Exceptional service," wrote one recent guest from Australia who gave his name only as David in an online review at Booking.com. "The extra bonus was when POTUS and FLOTUS showed up standing a couple of feet in front of my wife and me."

Poor minorities left behind in Indian city boom

Arun Kumar, who heads a Mumbai charity, works with his team in some of the poorest neighbourhoods in the city, helping residents lobby officials for civic amenities such as water, toilets and public health centers. This can take 10 to 15 years. But even after 25 years Kumar's team has been unable to exit one area in the city's northeast: M-East Ward, where nearly three-quarters of the more than 600,000 residents live in slums close to the city's biggest landfill.

They are mostly Muslim, city data shows. Besides lacking civic amenities, the area also lags in social indicators such as life expectancy and infant mortality. "Is it a lack of development or a deliberate denial of development to a certain section of the population?" said Kumar of the charity Apnalaya, which works with slum residents. "The ward gets the same allocation in the city's budget as every other ward, but very little money is actually spent. There's apathy, and a lack of political will to do anything."

M-East Ward is just one example of how, as gleaming office towers, luxury apartments and multi-storied malls mushroom in Indian cities, millions of poor Muslims, migrants and lower-caste Dalits are increasingly confined to squalid slums because of their religion or caste, analysts said.

"Our cities were always quite unequal because of wealth, and divisions on the lines of caste and ethnicity. Now, caste and religion are even bigger markers, ghettoization has increased and the segmentation looks set to get worse," said Anasua Chatterjee, a researcher at the Delhi University. "The (city) government is complicit in the reorganization of urban space along the lines of religion, resulting in closed and restricted neighborhoods for Muslims," said Chatterjee, who has written a book on Muslim neighborhoods in Kolkata city.

POTUS bonus

But neither is the presidency necessarily an automatic meal ticket either. The Trump Organization refused to comment to AFP, but in a recent interview with The New York Times, Eric Trump said the company had decided to focus on existing properties, which include 16 golf courses, a winery, seven hotels and commercial real estate. As part of the deal made public before the inauguration, the company vowed not to seek new foreign deals while Trump was in office.

In New York, the group has also cut ties with Trump Soflo, which had been boycotted by celebrities

“The (Trump) hotel is kind of a separate White House”

and now operates as The Dominick Hotel. According to US media, several properties in Democratic majority cities such as Chicago and New York have suffered declining interest. Prior to the 2016 election, the company said it was launching a slightly more affordable hotel chain Scion, a name notable for its lack of obvious connection to Trump. The first is due to open in Cleveland, Mississippi, a Republican town later this year. But growth or not, there is a problem, opponents of the president say.

Riots

A Mumbai city official denied there was segregation or a deliberate denial of amenities in M-East Ward. "We have budgeted for water, drainage and other amenities, and we are providing them as per the city's development plan," said Shrinivas Kilje, an assistant commissioner. "There are constraints, but it's an exaggeration to say there are no amenities or that the area is neglected," he said.

Most of such neighborhoods came about after the partition of India in 1947 as Muslims made their homes in certain areas or clustered together according to their profession, such as weavers, tanners or potters. Some neighborhoods in northern and western cities such as Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad sprung up in past decades in the aftermath of Hindu-Muslim riots, as Muslims came together for greater security or were pushed out of mixed neighborhoods.

Muslims, who make up 13 percent of India's population, face bias when buying or renting properties, analysts say. The deep-rooted biases are eroding the multi-cultural nature of India's booming cities, creating neighborhoods which perpetuate the communal divide. The divided spaces exist because of a fear of violence, and also because labor is increasingly divided in cities, with officials tacitly encouraging the segregation through discriminatory urban planning and governance, according to experts. Some states like Gujarat, which witnessed some of the worst communal riots in the country in 2002, even have laws that restrict Muslims and Hindus from selling property to each other.

Alienation

"They do not just segregate themselves: cities are hubs of capital accumulation and profit making, so the poor are discriminated against. Muslims are among the poorest," said Ghazala Jamil, an assistant professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. "There is no intervention by the state to end the segregation, as it is a mode of governance, a way to manage inequality," said Jamil, citing data from her recent book on Muslim neighborhoods in Delhi. About a third of India's population of 1.25 billion lives in cities, with tens of thousands leaving their villages every year in search of better economic

'More we don't know'

The sheer fact that Trump could profit from his presidency and that foreign governments could patronize The Trump Organization to curry favor, is enough to create innumerable conflicts of interest, said Evers. In a lawsuit filed in June, nearly 200 Democratic members of Congress cited examples of favors accorded by foreign governments to the Trump Organization, including long-sought trademarks approved in China.

They demand that any foreign income or contract should be submitted to Congress for approval, in keeping with the emoluments clause of the US Constitution. "If President Trump believes that his receipt of foreign emoluments raises no corruption concerns, he simply needs to present them to Congress - which his party controls - and get approval before he accepts them," said Connecticut's Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal, who spearheaded the lawsuit. "The fact that he has refused to take that step - thumbing his nose at the Constitution - raises serious questions about what he is trying to hide."

The Trump Organization is a family firm, is not listed on the stock exchange and as such does not release its earnings. Trump has also always refused to release his tax returns, meaning that much is unknown about deals and finances. Disclosures published in June by the Office of Government Ethics showed that Trump brought in around \$600 to \$650 million in assets and income over the last year. His income at Mar-a-Lago, his Florida private members club nicknamed the "Winter White House," was up from \$30 to \$37 million. "There is every reason to believe there is much more we don't know about, and it is probably the things we don't know about that are the most troubling," said Blumenthal. —AFP

opportunities, largely as construction workers, domestic helpers and security guards. In Mumbai, India's financial hub, more than half the population lives in slums and informal settlements. Most residents are Muslims and lower-caste Hindus. The ghettoization exacerbates their poverty and alienation, with even job applications and requests for bank loans often rejected because of where they live, Chatterjee said, citing interviews and data from her book. "Even those who have the means to move from these neighborhoods usually find it hard to get a place because of their religion," she said. "Whether the confinement is imposed directly or indirectly, it deepens the divide between Muslims and Hindus," she said.

Sensitive Planning

An ambitious Smart Cities plan to upgrade cities risks marginalizing the poor further, as affordable housing options become increasingly scarce. "Urban neighbourhoods are a manifestation of labor markets, so it is a sort of economic exploitation and containment of the poorest communities including Muslims," said Jamil. "They are often limited to the dirtiest, lowest paid jobs, and don't have much bargaining power or the ability to move elsewhere," she said. This is the case in Mumbai, a magnet for migrants from across the country. The divide in the city grew after bloody Hindu-Muslim riots in 1992-93. But it is also true of smaller cities such as Meerut, where Hindu residents recently forced a Muslim family to give up a house they had bought in a predominantly Hindu neighborhood, according to local news reports. Sensitive urban planning could be a way to reduce the impact of segregation, but powerful real estate developers often lobby against integrating neighborhoods, said Chatterjee.

In time, the dominant communities begin to stereotype and turn the culture of minority communities into a commodity, with these neighborhoods even marketed as tourist attractions for their distinct cuisine or type of architecture, said Jamil. "Going to eat or shop in the Walled City in Delhi or the Old City in Hyderabad may seem cool, but it is perpetuating the division," she said. "As long as cities continue to be centers of capital accumulation, we will see dispossession of the poor and the powerless, who will continue to be pushed to the margin." —AFP

News

Fears of serial child killer...

Continued from Page 1

a two-kilometer radius in the last two years. The discovery of her body sparked riots in Kasur, with thousands swarming police stations and setting fire to politicians' homes, accusing authorities of inaction. At least two demonstrators were killed after police opened fire on the crowds.

A spokesman for the government of Punjab province - where Kasur is located - said the suspect was likely "a lunatic with psychological disorders". "The perpetrator involved in the murder is a serial killer," Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan told AFP. In six of the cases, investigators have found the same DNA. Kasur district hospital chief Dr Nazir Ahmed told AFP. Another doctor said the bodies of the children bore similar injuries. Dr Fareed Khan said the victims showed signs of "strangulation, burn marks, scarring and wrist cuts." Television stations have repeatedly broadcast chilling CCTV footage purportedly showing the young girl walking hand-in-hand with an unidentified male in what may have been her last moments.

Kasur is notorious for such heinous crimes. In 2015, officials uncovered a huge pedophilia ring in the city. At least 280 children were sexually abused on camera by men who later blackmailed their families, threatening to leak the footage. Police conspicuously failed to act despite pleas from parents, only making arrests after clashes between relatives and authorities

dragged the issue into the spotlight. From January to June 2017, there were 129 cases recorded in Kasur - including rape and murder - according to Sahil, an aid group that works on child protection issues.

Parents interviewed by AFP appeared overwhelmed once again by their powerlessness. "The district police chief told us if they can't arrest the culprit then what can they do," said Muhammad Ayub, whose eight-year-old niece was raped and killed in July last year. Just one child is believed to have survived an attack. The six-year-old girl has spent months in intensive care, paralyzed from the neck down and unable to speak after being raped, tortured and left for dead at a garbage dump in November. "Cameras should be installed in the streets on every turn for protection of the children... how can mothers accompany their children all the time?" asked the survivor's aunt.

"How can I be satisfied... we don't know what's happening," raged Zainab's father Ameen Ansari at his home, where he blasted the police for inaction. "They have not shown any interest at all." Authorities, however, remain confident. "I'm pretty sure that within a few days maybe we will present the main accused," said district police chief Zahid Nawaz Marwat. Such assurances are not enough for the people of Kasur. "We have been forced to lock our kids inside our homes," said resident Ghulam Fareed.

Pakistan criminalized child sexual abuse for the first time in 2016, after the initial pedophilia scandal broke. But with sex education nonexistent in the conservative Muslim country, experts fear that an untold number of abuse cases continue to go unreported. "Always the powerful are abusers and the weak are the victims," said Manizah Bano, the executive director of Sahil. — AFP

Warnings of fallout after US freezes UNRWA funding

RAMALLAH: The UN agency for Palestinian refugees warned yesterday it faced its worst funding crisis ever after the White House froze tens of millions of dollars in contributions, a move Palestinian leaders decried as cruel and blatantly biased. The agency provides Palestinian refugees and their descendants across the Middle East with services including schools and medical care, but Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has long accused it of hostility toward Israel and called for its closure. Some five million Palestinians are eligible for its services.

On Tuesday, the United States held back \$65 million that had been destined for the agency, two weeks after President Donald Trump threatened future payments. The United States is the largest contributor to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA).

"The US has announced it will contribute \$60 million to the program budget. There is for the moment no other indication of possible funding," UNRWA spokesman Chris Guinness told AFP. "This dramatically reduced contribution results in the most severe funding crisis in the history of the agency." He added that "stability in the Middle East is what we are talking about and the potential impact of UNRWA being destabilized is very likely to be widespread, profound, unpredictable and catastrophic."

Senior Palestinian officials reacted with outrage to what they see as another move against them by Trump's White House following his declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Hanan Ashrawi, a senior member of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said the freeze amounted to "cruelty" toward a "vulnerable population". The Palestinian envoy to Washington, Husam Zomlot, said: "Palestinian refugees and children's access to basic humanitarian serv-

ices, such as food, health care and education, is not a bargaining chip but a US and international obligation."

Palestinian officials also accused Trump of chipping away at issues long considered up for negotiation as part of a comprehensive resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the status of Jerusalem and the plight of refugees. Around 500 people protested in the Gaza Strip yesterday against the freeze. "Of course this decision will have negative effects and the reduction of the aid will impact our health, our education," Ibtisam Al-Sisi, in her 50s, said at the protest. France meanwhile said it "regrets" the US move and was in contact with Washington about it.

The funding freeze comes with relations between the Palestinians and Washington already on the brink. On Sunday, Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas denounced Trump's peace efforts as the "slap of the century", while Palestinian leaders have threatened to suspend their recognition of Israel. US State Department officials insisted the decision to freeze the funding was taken not to pressure Palestinian leaders but to encourage other countries to help pay for and reform UNRWA.

But the call came after a behind-the-scenes tussle between hawks who want to cut all aid to Palestinians and officials concerned about the humanitarian and diplomatic fallout. The State Department said \$60 million of what had been a planned \$125 million package would go through to keep the agency running, but the rest will be withheld for now. UNRWA chief Pierre Krahenbuhl expressed alarm and immediately called on other UN members to contribute. Krahenbuhl said the \$60 million would keep schools and hospitals open for now, but noted that it was dramatically less than the \$350 million Washington paid during 2017.

The State Department's position raised skepticism in the light of tweets sent by Trump on Jan 2, at the time when the \$125 million contribution had been due to be paid. "We pay the Palestinians HUNDRED OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS a year and get no appreciation or respect," Trump said. "They don't even want to negotiate a long overdue peace treaty with Israel," he protested, adding: "Why should we make any of these massive future payments to them?" — AFP

Indian expats dismayed over...

Continued from Page 1

which more than 60 percent are unskilled laborers. "We are dismayed by the decision. Whatever may be the intention behind the move, it will only lead to further exploitation of expat laborers. Moreover, all Indians must be treated as one people," said B S Pillai, General Secretary of the Overseas Indian Cultural Congress, Kuwait.

Presently, the last page of an Indian passport lists the names of father/legal guardian, mother, spouse, address, and whether the holder is in the 'Emigration Check Required' category. With the last page blank, passports will most likely cease to be proof of valid address, and under the changed system, those with ECR status will be issued orange passports.

"It is an unfair decision. For an expatriate, a pass-

port is not just a travel document alone. It is important that a passport must contain such relevant information," said Sharafuddeen Kanneth, an expat social worker and a member of the LKS. He also said the decision to issue blue and orange color passports to Indians is 'discriminatory'.

According to the government, unskilled migrants are required to get clearances from the Indian government before traveling to a number of countries and the orange passports for ECR category migrants are devised to ensure protection for them.

Anand Kapadia, Vice Chairman of the Indian Business Council, however, sees no serious problems emanating out of the government's decision. "In most Western countries, the passports do not carry names of the parents, relatives or spouse. The home address is also not mentioned in the passport. It works fine because the biometric system is foolproof and fine," he commented. However, Kapadia said it is discriminatory that the government issues orange passports to the ECR category of citizens and blue ones for the ECNR category. He hoped that the decision will not lead to major inconvenience or chaos.



GAZA CITY: Palestinians take part in a protest against aid cuts outside the United Nations' offices yesterday. — AFP

Inaugural air show gets off...

Continued from Page 1

companies can provide cutting-edge technologies that customers need. The companies are looking for partnership with Kuwaiti companies, as we have very close relations and interests," he told the Kuwait Times.

"British exports to Kuwait in 2017 rose by 27 percent compared to 2016, so overall trade for 2017 was more than \$2.5 billion. There are a lot of investments in both directions. We are working on direct investment opportunities that now exist in Kuwait," added Davenport.

"The British government is supporting some of the companies that are launching a new technology (GECO) designed by aviators and used in the UK. It is a very cost-effective way for the pilots to have all the information they need electronically available rather than the plans, books and maps that they used to have. They can reach the cockpit very quickly by using this portable device. It is displayed here at the show and visitors can come and see it," said Fleur Thomas, Regional Director Africa, Europe, Middle East, Central and South Asia of the Defense and

Security Organization.

One of the main participants, Inzpire, is offering various products and services including GECO. "We have displayed the GECO electronic cockpit organizer at the Kuwait Aviation Show for the first time. It's an electronic tablet the size of a small paper bag - it's in frontline operational use with British Forces and internationally in over 15 aircraft types, and is used in Jordan and Indonesia. It is designed by pilots for pilots to enable the air crew to have all the information immediately at their fingertips," said Si Gilbert, Business Development Executive, Inzpire.

"It enables older airplanes to upgrade their cockpits with digital standards relatively cheaply when compared to completely ripping out the cockpit for a new digital cockpit. It's designed to be used by military forces and civilian pilots as well, as the principle is the same. It has a long battery life, and it has a spare battery and high-grade GPS, and can be custom-designed. It can also link to a communication system, and can be also used on the ground or at sea. It's secure against cyber threats as well," Gilbert added.

The first day of the show was for VIPs, the second day is for public bodies and companies, and the last two days are open to the public. The Kuwait Aviation Show includes various activities and daily aerial displays by the airplanes of the Kuwait air force, Solo Turk, Saudi Falcons, Extra Qatar and others.

Demand enables market to absorb...

Continued from Page 1

"Control of production will insure stability of the market more than any factor such as relations between countries." A stable market also gives producers and consumers a clear mechanism to adopt their strategies and projects in the energy field, Rashidi said. "The goal of this agreement isn't to increase prices, but the stability of the oil market - which is a key objective for both producers and consumers," he noted.

Devising an exit strategy for the JMJC members in the future will not be discussed during Muscat's meeting, as they continue to show full commitment to the agreement going forward, according to Rashidi. "This is evident by the 106 percent total compliance rate showed by OPEC and non-OPEC members to the agreement in 2017," Rashidi said, noting that commitment reached 125 percent in December alone. "All indications point out that JMJC members are committed to the agreement, which targets stability of the market so that it would be protected from price fluctuations, while leaving prices to

market factors such as supply and demand." Asked how oil prices affect Kuwait's future projects, Rashidi said Kuwait has long-term projects that are not affected by price rates. "Kuwait's 2020 strategy targets increasing output to four million barrels a day, and those plans are still ongoing in light of the current prices," he indicated.

Separately, Barkindo said that the drop in the size of investments in oil industry over the last year threatens future supplies. Barkindo said in a statement to KUNA that the oil market that has been out of balance since the autumn of 2014 would gradually return to its equilibrium in 2018. Barkindo confirmed that 2018 will witness a balanced market that will bring back a reasonable price of oil which will be fair to both consumers and producers, as well as reenergizing investments in the industry.

Barkindo hailed the high level of commitment to this adjustment brought by last November's agreement to extend the deal, adding that there is no reason to doubt that the participating countries will continue with this level of commitment through 2018. He stressed that the OPEC agreement to cut production is not related to a specific price, but aims to achieve a number of objectives, the most important of which is to reach stability in the global oil market and withdraw surpluses. The OPEC chief praised the agreement for cementing long-term cooperation between the two groups to rebalance the markets in case of any disruption in the future.

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Sports

Kuwait's Hamad Al-Namshan, Eman Al-Shamma and Abdallah Al-Rasheedi bag three gold

Kuwait's medal tally rise to six gold medals



Group photo shows Abdallah Al-Rasheedi (fourth right) with officials.



KSSC Treasurer Essa Butaiban with the 10m air pistol women winners.

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait's medal tally rose to six gold medals as the trio of Hamad Al-Namshan, Eman Al-Shamma and Abdallah Al-Torqi Al-Rasheedi won three gold medals yesterday during the competitions of IHH the Amir Seventh International Shooting Grand Prix.

Hamad Al-Namshan won the gold medal in the 10m air pistol with 237 points ahead of Oman's Ismail Al-Arabi who had the same score, while Ala Al-Othmani from Tunis ended in third place with 212 points.

Meanwhile Eman Al-Shamma took the skeet gold medal with 56 hits ahead of Kazakhstan's Olga who scored 53 hits and Bahrain's Maryam Hassani had third place with 42 points. Abdallah Al-Rasheedi won the skeet gold medal for men with the score of 56 followed by his teammate Abdelaziz Al-Faihan who scored 56 and third place went to Italy's.

Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations, Tournament Manager Obaid Al-Osaimi said the current Grand Prix in which an elite group of shooters, witnessed strong competitions, and they proved they are

ready to compete for top spots in this Grand Prix which is being held under the patronage of IHH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He said the 10m air pistol competition was very strong between Tunis's Olfa Shimi and Bulgaria's Maria Grozdova who won second place.

Tournament Treasurer Essa Butaiban said he was satisfied with the level of IHH the Amir Seventh International Shooting Grand Prix, which is to be concluded today. He said organization was up to the task and the championship came out at its best as far as the, technical and administrative levels are concerned. He said Kuwait shooters winning of several gold medals reflects the vast improvement of Kuwait shooting and the major role the Board of Directors is playing in order to maintain Kuwait's good reputation.

Tunis head of delegation Samir Chouchan lauded the efforts of KSSC officials in organizing the tournament. He said that President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi, Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi and the rest of officials succeeded in providing all the necessary support for participating in the tournaments held in Kuwait.



Hamad Al-Namshan.



Eman Al-Shamma.

Sweden stun Croatia to advance in European handball championship

ZAGREB: Sweden will carry a maximum four points into the European handball championship main round after a 35-31 win over hosts Croatia who also advanced on Tuesday. The result helped Serbia progress from preliminary pool A as they beat Iceland 29-26 in the early fixture but would have been eliminated had Croatia beaten the Swedes.

World champions France charged through from Pool B with a perfect record after a 32-25 win over Belarus as right back Dika Mem rifled in nine goals and playmaker Nikola Karabatic got six.

Norway won 39-28 against eliminated Austria to join France and Belarus in a new group of six, which also contains Sweden, Croatia and Serbia, with the top two reaching the semi-finals. With Macedonia, Germany, Spain and Denmark already through to the other second-stage group of six from Pool C and D respectively, the last two berths will be decided today.

Croatia coach Lino Cervar's decision to rest first-choice goalkeeper Mirko Alilovic backfired spectacularly as his replacements Ivan Pestic and Ivan Stevanovic were left clutching thin air in Split's Spaladium Arena. Sweden pierced through almost at will and never looked back after turning an early 4-3 deficit into a massive nine-goal advantage thanks to effervescent long-range shooting and quick ball movement in attack.

Earlier on Tuesday, Serbia rallied from a four-goal deficit midway through the second half to beat more fancied Iceland, who made an early exit after falling apart in the last 15 minutes. Iceland's 38-year old winger Gudjon Valur Siggurdson put on a majestic one-man show with a game-high eight goals but Serbia fired on all cylinders when the chips were down.

Norway controlled a high-scoring contest against Austria as Kristian Bjornsen capped a fine evening with nine goals. The top three from each of the four pools who advance to the main round carry over points won against each other.

France and Sweden will start with four points each, Croatia and Norway have two while Serbia and Belarus have none. — Reuters

Bastareaud out of France 6 Nations squad after homophobia ban

PARIS: Mathieu Bastareaud was first included and then hours later dropped from France coach Jacques Brunel's Six Nations squad announced yesterday after he was banned over a homophobic slur.

Although initially included, Bastareaud received a three-week ban from European Professional Club Rugby (EPCR) yesterday which ends a day after France's opening tournament match against Ireland on February 3.

Bastareaud's selection was no surprise as Brunel had defended the Toulon back on Tuesday following the controversial comment used by the 29-year-old in a match against Treviso on Sunday that was heard on live television. Brunel had said on Tuesday that he would "punish" Bastareaud by not selecting him and that he hoped the powerful runner would escape a ban, claiming "I don't believe he could have acted in such a way".

Bastareaud was heard on live television, and later apologised on Twitter for calling Treviso's Sebastian Negri a "faggot", seemingly in response to a similar insult. There had been fears he could receive a longer ban that would see Bastareaud miss the whole of the Six Nations but he will now be available for the trip to Scotland on February 11. He was replaced by Stade Francais centre Jonathan Danty-in physiological terms a like-for-like substitute. In

Jones extends England 'dream job' until 2021

LONDON: England coach Eddie Jones has extended his contract until 2021, abandoning previous plans to leave the job after the 2019 World Cup, the RFU said yesterday. The Australian's successor will be named by the end of the 2019-2020 season and Jones will work with them to ensure "a smooth coaching transition", the Rugby Football Union said. Jones had been due to step down after next year's World Cup in Japan but having overseen a run of 22 wins from 23 Tests, his employers have decided to lengthen the 57-year-old's reign. However, Jones's new contract does include a break clause which can be activated if England's performances at Japan 2019 fail to live up to expectations. That will enable the RFU to cut the former Australia and Japan coach loose should England suffer a similar fate to their wretched 2015 World Cup campaign when they became the first tournament hosts to exit the competition



PARIS: French Rugby Union national team head coach Jacques Brunel gives a press conference to announce a squad of 31 players for the Six Nations, yesterday in Paris. — AFP

his first squad selection as head of the French team since taking over from sacked veteran Guy Noves last month, Brunel recalled experienced Clermont half-back Morgan Parra for his first inclusion in two years.

Brunel dropped out-of-form Montpellier No.8 Louis Picamoles and Toulon fly-half Francois Trinh-Duc, who has lost his place at both club and country to young star

Anthony Belleau. Parra had not played for France since their crushing 62-13 defeat to New Zealand in the 2015 World Cup quarter-finals.

But while Noves constantly tinkered with his half-back pairing—he picked nine different combinations in his first 19 matches—Brunel seems to have opted for a measure of stability in recalling Parra.— AFP

at the group stage—a result that led the RFU to get rid of then coach Stuart Lancaster and bring in Jones.

Jones, who had often talked about watching cricket—his other great sporting passion—in the Caribbean after the 2019 World Cup as a way of signalling that the tournament would mark the end of his time with England, explained his change of heart by saying: "I did not presume I would be asked to stay on but, once the conversations started very recently, it was not a difficult decision to make.

"Coaching England is a dream job for me, and I was delighted to be asked to stay on after Rugby World Cup 2019," he added. "I have been completely focussed on developing a team capable of being the number one rugby team in the world and winning the World Cup in 2019," added Jones, who was the coach of the Australia side that lost to England in the 2003 World Cup final in Sydney.

"These are exciting times for English Rugby, with a focussed and committed squad who are full of potential and determined to win. I will continue to work as hard as I can to make England the world's best rugby team."

RFU chief executive Steve Brown said Jones' results "speak for themselves". "Under Eddie's leadership, we have risen from eight to second in the world — and Eddie won't be satisfied until we are number one. "He has a 95 percent win rate at the helm, and has been a galvanising



LONDON: File photo taken on November 09, 2017 shows England's head coach Eddie Jones attending a training session in Bagshot, southwest of London. —AFP

force for the RFU, bringing focus, clarity and extraordinary commitment to the role." Now the RFU will hope to avoid the disruption and indeed cost of having to engage in wholesale changes of coaching staff at the end of every four-year World Cup cycle.— AFP

Sports

Davis scores 45 as Pelicans defeat Celtics in OT thriller

DeRozan fined for referee rant

NBA results/standings

Boston 113 New Orleans 116 (OT); Portland 118 Phoenix 111; Denver 105 Dallas 102; Orlando 108 Minnesota 102.

Eastern Conference

	W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	34	11	75.6	-
Toronto	29	13	69.0	3.5
Cleveland	26	17	60.5	7
Miami	25	18	58.1	8
Washington	25	19	56.8	8.5
Indiana	24	20	54.5	9.5
Milwaukee	23	20	53.5	10
Detroit	22	20	52.4	10.5
Philadelphia	20	20	50.0	11.5
New York	20	24	45.5	13.5
Charlotte	17	25	40.5	15.5
Chicago	17	27	38.6	16.5
Brooklyn	16	28	36.4	17.5
Orlando	13	31	29.5	20.5
Atlanta	12	31	27.9	21

Western Conference

Golden State	36	9	80.0	-
Houston	30	12	71.4	4.5
San Antonio	29	16	64.4	7
Minnesota	29	17	63.0	7.5
Oklahoma City	24	20	54.5	11.5
New Orleans	23	20	53.5	12
Denver	23	21	52.3	12.5
Portland	23	21	52.3	12.5
LA Clippers	22	21	51.2	13
Utah	17	26	39.5	18
Phoenix	16	29	35.6	20
LA Lakers	15	28	34.9	20
Dallas	15	30	33.3	21
Memphis	14	28	33.3	20.5
Sacramento	13	30	30.2	22

LOS ANGELES: Anthony Davis scored 45 points as the New Orleans Pelicans jolted the Boston Celtics 116-113 in an overtime thriller at the TD Garden on Tuesday. Davis, who before the game had brushed off reports linking him to a possible move to Boston, gave the home fans a glimpse of what they might be missing with a virtuoso performance.

The 24-year-old power forward was in sensational form, also chipping in with 16 rebounds and two assists, as the Pelicans improved to 23-20 to go into sixth place in the Western Conference standings. Davis was backed with 23 points from Jrue Holiday while DeMarcus Cousins added 19. Ian Clark added 15 from the bench as the Pelicans held their nerve in overtime to close out the win. The Celtics meanwhile remain firmly in charge at the top of the NBA's Eastern Conference at 34-11.



Magic stun Timberwolves

but saw a seven-game winning streak come to an end with the loss. Kyrie Irving led the scoring for Boston with 27 points but the Celtics were left ruing an inability to close out the win after leading 101-96 with two minutes left in the fourth quarter.

Davis had provided the inspiration for New Orleans, producing two nerveless free throws to put New Orleans 104-102 ahead as the buzzer ticked closer. But Irving conjured a driving layup with 11.8 seconds left to force overtime at 104-104.

Marcus Smart made a 10-foot pullup jumper to help Boston take a 113-110 lead with just over two minutes left in overtime. But Cousins hit back with a two-point-er before Holiday made it 114-113. Holiday then sunk a 13-footer to make it 116-113 and the Pelicans held on.

Elsewhere Tuesday, Evan Fournier starred for the Orlando Magic in a 108-102 upset of the Minnesota Timberwolves in Florida. The Magic went into the con-



BOSTON: DeMarcus Cousins #0 of the New Orleans Pelicans dunks against Marcus Morris #13 of the Boston Celtics yesterday at the TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts.—AFP

test languishing at the foot of the Eastern Conference with the worst record in the division. But a career-high scoring display from France's Fournier, who finished with 32 points, helped the Magic stun the Timberwolves, who have the third best record in the Western Conference at 29-17.

D.J. Augustin posted 18 points from the bench on a night when six Magic players cracked double digits. Aaron Gordon had 14 points while Bismack Biyombo produced a towering defensive display with 10 points, 16 rebounds and five blocks.

Jimmy Butler led the scoring for the Timberwolves with 28 points while Taj Gibson chipped in with 18 points and Karl-Anthony Towns 15.

Toronto Raptors forward DeMar DeRozan has been fined \$15,000 (12,200 euros) for criticising the officiating during his team's loss to the Golden State Warriors at the weekend, the NBA said.

A frustrated DeRozan let rip at officials after the Raptors lost a thriller 127-125 on Saturday, complaining that the Warriors had received more decisions in their favour. "I mean, it's frustrating being out there feeling like you playing five on eight," DeRozan said after the game at the Air Canada Centre. "It's just what it feel like. Period. Some of them calls was terrible. Period."

The Raptors are second in the Eastern Conference standings with a 29-13 record, trailing leaders Boston who are at 34-10.—AFP

Basketball mourns Celtics legend Jo Jo White

LOS ANGELES: Boston Celtics great Jo Jo White, a two-time NBA champion and Olympic gold medalist, died Tuesday aged 71, his family said. "We are deeply saddened by the loss of an incredible husband and father," the White family said in a statement. "He was a Hall Of Fame basketball player but an even better man."

White's daughter Meka White was quoted by The Undeclared website as saying the former basketball star had died following an illness brought on by dementia. "My dad died from complications (pneu-

monia) from dementia that was brought on by the removal of a benign brain tumor in May 2010," White said. White, who won an Olympic gold medal with the US team in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, won two NBA crowns with the Celtics in 1974 and 1976. He spent a decade with the Celtics between 1969 and 1979 before short spells with the Golden State Warriors and Kansas City Kings at the end of his career.

The Celtics paid tribute to White in a statement on the team's website. "We are terribly saddened by the passing of the great Jo Jo White," the Celtics statement said. "He was a champion and a gentleman; supremely talented and brilliant on the court, and endlessly gracious off of it."

"His contributions to the team's championship legacy may have only been surpassed by the deep and lasting impact that he had in the community," The thoughts and sympathies of the entire Celtics organization are with the White family." —AFP



Jo Jo White

Stanley Cup winner Jim Paek returns to Korea

MOSCOW: Jim Paek, head coach of the South Korean men's national ice hockey team, is a man of two Olympic nations. The Korean-born former National Hockey League defenceman who won Stanley Cups with the Pittsburgh Penguins in 1991 and 1992 has been helping develop ice hockey in South Korea, the host nation of the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

Paek moved to Canada as an infant and would go on to become the first player of Korean descent to play in the NHL. He left a coaching job in the American Hockey League in 2014 to join the South Korean team to prepare for the Olympics on home ice.

"Being born in Korea and always dreaming of being an Olympian as a player—I don't play anymore—but being a coach and representing the country where you were born, that pretty much was a no-brainer," the 50-year-old told Reuters.

South Korea, ranked 21st in the world, find themselves in an Olympic group with Canada, Switzerland and Czech Republic, countries with a long ice hockey tradition and whose squads—although depleted by the NHL's decision not to send players to the Games—are certain to be stronger than Paek's.

South Korea, home to more than 50 million people, has only 2,675 ice hockey players and 30 indoor rinks, according to the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF). Canada has more than 630,000 players and 3,300 arenas.

Despite lacking the resources of established ice hockey nations, Paek has told his team to simply focus on "getting better everyday" and they have already caused some shocks. At the 2017 IIHF Championship Division I Group A tournament in Ukraine, South Korea finished second and qualified for the world championship.

At a pre-Olympic tournament in Moscow in December, South Korea took a 2-1 lead in the first period against Canada before going on to lose 4-2. "This is a great learning experience for us," Paek told reporters after the loss. "I think we were a little awestruck in a way because Canada is Canada. They're a real powerhouse hockey nation. Now we have to work even harder."

South Korea will have the opportunity to redeem themselves when they play Canada again at the Olympics on Feb. 18. "At one time I did play for the Canadian national team" in 1990-91, Paek told Reuters. "But I'm here as a Korean and this is my heritage."

Facing a dearth of homegrown talent, the country has recruited several North American players from the South Korean teams in the Asia League, including several Canadians without any Korean heritage.—Reuters

Shiffrin faces Italian test in Cortina

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO: Mikaela Shiffrin's sensational World Cup pace will be put to the test this weekend with Lindsey Vonn and the in-form Italian women skiers looking to impress at Cortina d'Ampezzo before next month's Winter Olympics. Shiffrin, the reigning Olympic and three-time world slalom champion, has been building momentum towards the Pyeongchang Games in South Korea, but the Italian women showed they are hitting form with Sofia Goggia leading a podium sweep last weekend in Bad Kleinkirchheim, Austria. Two downhill-including one replacing the cancelled Val d'Isere leg in the French Alps—are scheduled on the slopes in the Italian Dolomites on Friday and Saturday with the Super-G on Sunday. Shiffrin charged to a remarkable eighth win in nine World Cup races in Flachau, Austria before taking last weekend off to train. The 22-year-old American has won nine of her last 10 races, including five in succession in the World Cup, putting her at the top of the competition standings.

She has already set herself up as favourite to take three golds in South Korea. By contrast Vonn—the 2010 Olympic downhill gold medalist—has been taking no chances this season as injury ended the 33-year-old's title defense in Sochi four years ago.

"It's not February so I'm not stressed. I've been waiting for these Olympics for 8 years so being healthy is my #1 priority. Next weekend is Cortina. Should be a little easier on my knee," she wrote on Twitter. Vonn's cautious run saw her trail in Bad Kleinkirchheim as she slammed a bumpy surface that turned races into a "rodeo". By contrast the Italians were in sizzling form with Goggia leading an unprecedented World Cup triple by her countrywomen. Goggia—runner-up in both the downhill and Super-G in Cortina last year—won ahead of Federica Brignone and Nadia Fanchini. The podium sweep followed Brignone's victory in the Super-G the day before. And Goggia warned that she is



Mikaela Shiffrin

beginning to hit top form "technically and physically". Swiss Lara Gut won last year's downhill in Cortina, and returns hoping to pick up her first win since, but Slovenian star Ilka Stuhec, winner of the Super-G a year ago, has

been ruled out this season because of injury. Tina Weirather of Liechtenstein, who sits top in the downhill standings after placing fifth in Bad Kleinkirchheim, will also be competing in Italy.—AFP

Sports

Debutant Ngidi leads S Africa to series victory over India

Kohli says team must reflect on S Africa defeat

PRETORIA: Debutant Lungi Ngidi took six wickets as South Africa defeated India by 135 runs to claim victory in the second Test in Pretoria yesterday and also win the series with an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match contest.

Seamer Ngidi, 21, recorded figures of 6-39, his best in first class cricket, as South Africa bowled out India for 151 just before lunch.

India are the top-ranked side in test cricket according to the International Cricket Council (ICC) rankings with South Africa second, though the Proteas will not be able to overhaul the sub-continent side even with a 3-0 series win.

The third Test starts at the Wanderers in Johannesburg on Jan. 24.

"It took a lot of hard work and was one of the harder Test matches in terms of what you had to put in," South Africa captain Faf du Plessis said at the post-match presentation.

"Bowling was tough, batting was tough, but over the five days I thought we were on top most of the time." India resumed the final day on 35 for three chasing a victory target of 287, having been dealt a huge blow the evening before when Ngidi bagged the wicket of captain Virat Kohli (5).

Their slender hopes were dealt a further set-back when Cheteshwar Pujara (19) became the first Indian player ever to be run out twice in a Test.

Ngidi had a hand in that too as he chased the ball down to the boundary and stopped a four, with his cut-back to AB de Villiers allowing for a bullet throw to wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock that saw Pujara short.

Pujara had also been run out first ball in the first innings and has now been involved in six of India's last eight run-outs in tests.

It would start a procession of wickets as Parthiv Patel (19) picked out Morne Morkel on the fine leg boundary off Kagiso Rabada (3-47), with the big fast bowler pulling off a magnificent catch on the run.

Hardik Pandya (6) was caught by De Kock off Ngidi, before the seamer also induced an edge from Ravichandran Ashwin (3) to the wicketkeeper to leave India reeling at 87 for seven.



Lungi takes first class career best 6-39

Rohit Sharma (47) took the attack to the bowlers before he was magnificently caught at fine leg by De Villiers off Rabada attempting a hook.

The innings wrapped up quickly after that, as Mohammed Shami (28) was caught by Morkel off Ngidi and Jasprit Bumrah spooned a catch to Vernon Philander at mid-off to hand the youngster his sixth wicket and debut match figures of 7-90.

"We thought the wicket was really flat to play on, it was quite surprising," Kohli said. "We tried our best but South Africa were better than us in every department, especially fielding."

Kohli wants his team to reflect on their decision-making and commitment after a 135-run second Test defeat handed the hosts an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. Kohli cut a visibly disappointed, and at times irritated, figure after his side failed to chase down 287 for victory, losing seven wickets in the morning session. "We have not come here to play the way we have done," Kohli told reporters at the post-match news conference.

"That is something that we need to definitely speak about. We need to be hard on ourselves. We need to ask ourselves if we are giving 120 percent for the team every time we bowl a ball or play a ball or field a ball."

"That is something individuals need to reflect on themselves, but as a team we are definitely going to lay out these things in the open. We will ask the guys to be honest about what they were feeling at particular stages in the game."

"Unless you speak about it and lay it out in front of everyone, there is very little chance of improving. The mistakes that we made have been really about not putting attention to detail at important stages of the game."

Kohli appeared particularly irritated when quizzed on team selection and whether the right XI had been selected for the second Test, saying he and the selectors had picked a side they believed could win the Test. "What's the best XI?" he said. "You are telling me we could have played the best XI. So you tell me the best XI and we'll play that. I'm saying the loss obviously hurts. But you make one decision and you back it."



CENTURION: South African bowler Lungi Ngidi (L) celebrates the dismissal of Indian batsman Hardik Pandya (not pictured) during the fifth day of the second Test cricket match between South Africa and India at Supersport cricket ground yesterday in Centurion. — AFP

"We certainly don't sit here and say, 'Oh, if you fail in one game you are not good enough to be at this level."

"We played with teams before that have looked really strong and have lost as well." — Reuters

SCOREBOARD

CENTURION, South Africa: Final scores on the fifth day of the second Test between South Africa and India at SuperSport Park yesterday.

South Africa, first innings, 335
India, first innings, 307
South Africa, second innings, 258

India, second innings
M. Vijay b Rabada 9
L. Rahul c Maharaj b Ngidi 4
C. Pujara run out (De Villiers) 19
V. Kohli lwb b Ngidi 5
P. Patel c Morkel b Rabada 19
R. Sharma c De Villiers b Rabada 47
H. Pandya c De Kock b Ngidi 6
R. Ashwin c De Kock b Ngidi 3

Mohammed Shami c Morkel b Ngidi 28
I. Sharma not out 4
J. Bumrah c Philander b Ngidi 2
Extras (b4, w1) 5
Total (50.2 overs) 151

Fall of wickets: 1-11 (Vijay), 2-16 (Rahul), 3-26 (Kohli), 4-49 (Pujara), 5-65 (Patel), 6-83 (Pandya), 7-87 (Ashwin), 8-141 (R. Sharma), 9-145 (Shami)

Bowling: Philander 10-3-25-0, Rabada 14-3-47-3, Ngidi 12.2-3-39-6, Morkel 8-3-10-0 (1w), Maharaj 6-1-26-0.

Result: South Africa won by 135 runs
Series: South Africa lead the three-match series 2-0



Motul clinch 2017 GT500 title with Lexus Tom's KeePer

TOKYO: The No.37 Lexus Tom's KeePer car partnered by Motul has clinched 2017 GT500 championship title

Ryo Hirakawa and Nick Cassidy rounded off the season with a second-place finish to become the youngest champions in the series' history at just 23 years old, and awarded the Lexus marque with its third championship. This also represents 5th year in a row championship for Motul supported team.

The winning team use products from Motul's Motorsport Line as well as experimental lubricants that are specially developed by Motul. As a leader in its field of

lubricant technology, Motul is honored to be involved with different motorsport teams, championships and events around the world. Few have been as fruitful on such a regular basis as the highly competitive Super GT series in Japan. Motul works closely with the most of the Japanese manufacturers to constantly upgrade and improve the lubricant technology available to its teams. One of the World's Leading Brand of Lubricants, Motul is the first lubricant manufacturer to use the ester technology for the formulation of its 100% synthetic car oils by capitalizing on an innovation first invented for the aeronautical industry.

Being an official supplier to leading racing teams and other leading automobile manufacturers, Motul is collaborating with them for further technological development. ALSAYER Engineering, a subsidiary of ALSAYER Holding is the authorized distributor of Motul oil in Kuwait. Products from Motul are available through ALSAYER Engineering's wide network of five centers for tires, oils and paints as well as in authorized dealers, co-ops, garages and Auto-repair shops across Kuwait.

Chatara grabs four as Zimbabwe edge Sri Lanka

DHAKA: Fast bowler Tendai Chatara claimed four wickets to help Zimbabwe edge Sri Lanka by 12 runs in the second one-day international of the tri-nation tournament in Dhaka yesterday. Chasing 291 for victory, Sri Lanka were bowled out for 278 in 48.1 overs despite a fighting 37-ball 64 by Thisara Perera. Opener Kusal Perera top-scored with 80. Zimbabwe batsmen Hamilton Masakadza and Sikandar Raza set up the win with half-centuries that took the team's total to 290-6 after being put into bat first.

In reply, Thisara Perera, hitting five fours and three sixes, fought a lonely battle after Sri Lanka slipped to 181-5, but his departure spelt doom for the islanders. Chatara, who returned impressive figures of 4-33 in 8.1 overs, ran through the Sri Lankan tail including the prized wicket of Thisara Perera.

Sri Lanka captain Angelo Mathews made 42 and Dinesh Chandimal added 34 runs to show some fight but Zimbabwe bowlers made regular breakthroughs to keep them in the contest. Earlier, opener Masakadza gave Zimbabwe a solid start with his 73-run knock before middle-order batsman Raza added an unbeaten 81 off 67 balls-his second successive ODI fifty.

Raza, who hit eight fours and a six during his innings, also took one wicket after opening the attack with his off-spin bowling for Zimbabwe. He was named man of the match. Skipper and leg-spin bowler Graeme Cremer and paceman Kyle Jarvis took two wickets each to contribute to Zimbabwe's comeback win after losing the opener to Bangladesh.

It was Zimbabwe's fourth win over Sri Lanka in their last six matches. Sri Lanka now face hosts Bangladesh in the third ODI in Dhaka on Friday. — AFP



DHAKA: Zimbabwe wicketkeeper Brendan Taylor (R) breaks the stumps of the Sri Lanka cricketer Danushka Gunathilaka (L) during the second One Day International (ODI) cricket match of the Tri-Nations Series between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

DHAKA: Scoreboard of the second match of the tri-nation one-day international tournament between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka yesterday:

Zimbabwe	U. Tharanga c Moor b Jarvis	11
H. Masakadza c Sub b Gunathilaka	K. Mendis c Cremer b Chatara	0
S. Mire c Mendis b Perera	A. Mathews c Raza b Muzarabani	42
C. Ervine c Mathews b Lakmal	D. Chandimal b Jarvis	34
B. Taylor b Perera	A. Gunaratne st Taylor b Cremer	4
S. Raza not out	T. Perera c Raza b Chatara	64
M. Waller c Tharanga b Gunaratne	W. Hasaranga c Moor b Cremer	11
P. Moor c Dananjaya b Gunaratne	A. Dananjaya c Cremer b Chatara	8
G. Cremer not out	S. Lakmal not out	5
Extras (lb4, w1)	Chameera c Sub b Chatara	1
Total (six wickets, 50 overs)	Extras (b4, lb3, w9, nb2)	18
Did not bat: K. Jarvis, T. Chatara, B. Muzarabani	Total (all out: 48.1 overs)	278
Fall of wickets: 1-75 (Mire), 2-85 (Ervine), 3-142 (Masakadza), 4-169 (Taylor), 5-226 (Waller), 6-287 (Moor)	Fall of wickets: 1-46 (Tharanga), 2-47 (Mendis), 3-132 (K. Perera), 4-157 (Mathews), 5-181 (Chandimal), 6-194 (Gunaratne), 7-224 (Hasaranga), 8-261 (Dananjaya), 9-275 (T. Perera), 10-278 (Chameera)	
Bowling: Lakmal 10-0-70-1 (w2), Dananjaya 10-0-67-0, Perera 10-0-43-2 (w2), Chameera 10-0-51-0 (w5), Hasaranga 3-0-18-0, Gunaratne 7-0-37-0 (w1)	Bowling: Raza 10-0-54-1(w1), Jarvis 8-0-56-2, Chatara 8.1-0-33-4(w3), Muzarabani 9-0-47-1(nb2, w1) Cremer 10-0-62-2(w1), Waller 3-0-19-0 (w3)	
Sri Lanka	Result: Zimbabwe win by 12 runs	
K. Perera c Muzarabani b Raza	Man of the match: Sikandar Raza	

Stokes available for England despite charge

LONDON: Ben Stokes will now be considered for England selection again and is set to return next month despite being charged with affray, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced yesterday.

Stokes was suspended from international duty by the ECB following his involvement in an incident outside a nightclub in September that reportedly left a man with a fractured eye socket. As a result, the Durham all-rounder

missed the whole of England's 4-0 Ashes series defeat in Australia. Although England are currently involved in a one-day international series in Australia, the ECB said Stokes was expected to return to the England squad in his native New Zealand for February's triangular Twenty20 series that is being co-hosted with Australia. Afterwards, England will remain in New Zealand for five one-day internationals and two Tests.

Yesterday's announcement leaves the ECB in an awkward position given they banned Stokes when he had not been charged with any offence and have now made him available for England duty just days after prosecutors brought charges against him on Monday.

But following a board meeting, in which they said "all considerations were taken into account", the ECB said it had been agreed that Stokes "should now be considered for England selection". The ECB said Stokes's intention to contest the charge had been crucial in its decision to

allow him to resume an England career that currently comprises 39 Tests, 62 one-day internationals and 21 Twenty20 internationals.

"Given the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service) decision to charge him and two others with affray, confirmation of his intention to contest the charge and the potential length of time to trial, the board agreed that it would not be fair, reasonable or proportionate for Ben Stokes to remain unavailable for a further indeterminate period," the ECB said. Former England captain Nasser Hussain sympathised with the ECB, telling Sky Sports: "It was an incredibly difficult decision to make for the ECB and I don't envy them—they were damned if they do (select Stokes) and damned if they didn't."

"They have a person who at the moment has not been found guilty of anything in court of law and as he said in his statement he is going to contest the charge which means it is going to go on longer. — AFP



Ben Stokes

Sports

VAR system helps Leicester advance to FA Cup fourth round

Leicester makes history as English football's first beneficiaries

LONDON: Leicester made history as English football's first beneficiaries of the Video Assistant Referee system after the replay technology was used to award their second goal in a 2-0 FA Cup win over Fleetwood on Tuesday.

When Leicester striker Kelechi Iheanacho ran onto a Riyad Mahrez pass to slot home in the 77th minute of the third round replay, his strike was initially ruled out for offside.

But after a short delay while the attack was being analysed by the VAR assistant Mike Jones, the decision was changed—replays showed Nigeria's Iheanacho was just onside—and referee Jon Moss awarded a goal.

The VAR system was first used in England earlier this month for Brighton's FA Cup third round tie against Crystal Palace and the League Cup semi-final first leg between Chelsea and Arsenal. However, this was the first time it had actually been needed to reverse a decision.

"I didn't know if I was onside or offside but I agree totally now that I was onside," Iheanacho said.

"I was concentrating on the goal, I didn't think if I was onside or offside but Riyad told me that I was onside. "We just waited to see what the decision was."

Former Manchester City youngster Iheanacho had

already put Leicester ahead in the 43rd minute at the King Power Stadium, running onto Islam Slimani's pass and firing home. Leicester's reward for a comfortable win against their third tier opponents is a trip to Peterborough, also of League One, in the fourth round.

VAR, which has already been used in other competitions around the world, can be called on to rule over goals, straight red cards, penalty decisions and cases of mistaken identity.

Elsewhere, Cardiff set up a fourth round clash with Premier League leaders Manchester City as the Championship side won 4-1 in their replay at fourth tier Mansfield.

With City boss Pep Guardiola watching from the Field Mill stands, Bruno Manga put Cardiff ahead in the 34th minute. Danny Rose equalised for Mansfield 60 seconds later.

But Neil Warnock's side dominated in the second half and Junior Hoillet put them ahead in the 66th minute.

Anthony Pilkington made it three after 71 minutes and Hoillet's second in the 89th minute ensured City will visit south Wales on January 28. Championship sides Reading, 3-0 winners against Stevenage, and Sheffield, who beat Carlisle 2-0, will meet in the fourth round. — AFP



LEICESTER: Leicester City's Nigerian striker Kelechi Iheanacho celebrates scoring the team's first goal during the English FA Cup third round replay football match between Leicester City and Fleetwood Town at King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England. — AFP

“ I didn't know if I was onside or offside ”

Ambitious Walcott joins Everton from Arsenal

LONDON: Everton have signed Theo Walcott from Premier League rivals Arsenal on a 3-1/2 year deal with the forward saying he wants to take the Merseyside club to the next level. The 28-year-old, who joined Arsenal in 2006, scored 108 goals in 397 appearances but has struggled to hold down a first-team place this season under manager Arsene Wenger.

Neither club disclosed the transfer fee but British media said Everton paid about 20 million pounds (\$27.59 million) for the England international, who completed a medical yesterday. "I'm very ambitious and I've come here because I want the club to push to the next level," Walcott told Everton's website. (www.evertonfc.com). "And with the players that have come in, I feel like the next level can be reached."

Everton have won the league title nine times but not since 1987 and their last major trophy was their fifth FA Cup in 1995. "The club has won trophies but I want them to win trophies now," added Walcott. "The manager (Sam Allardyce) is very hungry... I've had a couple of chats with him and straightaway I felt that hunger and that desire that he wanted from me. I need that and I wanted that."

Walcott, who was a hot property when he joined Arsenal from Southampton in 2006 aged just 16, has made only six substitute appearances in the league this season and has featured in a total of 16 games across all competitions.



Theo Walcott

"It felt like it was time for me to move on (from Arsenal). It was sad but it's exciting at the same time and I want to reignite my career and push Everton to win things as they have done before," he added.

"I want to be part of something and I feel like this place will offer me that." The winger will be keen to re-establish himself as a starter and earn an England call-

up for this year's World Cup in Russia. He has made 47 appearances for his country, scoring eight goals.

Everton manager Sam Allardyce was keen to bolster his attacking lineup and the arrival of Walcott, along with Turkish striker Cenk Tosun who signed for the club earlier this month, will boost their frontline in the second half of the season. — Reuters

Falcao rescues Monaco after Balotelli double

PARIS: Radamel Falcao scored an injury-time equaliser to snatch Monaco a 2-2 draw with a Mario Balotelli-inspired Nice on Tuesday, but Marseille leaptfrogged the Ligue 1 champions into second place by beating Strasbourg.

Monaco took a first-half lead at the Stade Louis II through Adama Diakhaby, but Balotelli turned in an equaliser less than two minutes into the second period. The enigmatic Italian completed his double in the 68th minute, but Falcao stabbed in on his return from injury in the second minute of added time. "That's Falcao. He's a forward who takes chances, like Balotelli. That's what great strikers do," said Monaco coach Leonardo Jardim. The point extended Nice's unbeaten run to seven league games, while Monaco will still slip out of the three Champions League places if Lyon win at Guingamp today.

Marseille's third straight victory leaves them second, nine points adrift of runaway leaders Paris Saint-Germain and one point clear of Monaco, while Nice stay sixth. The away team were the better side early on without creating any clear-cut chances, with Balotelli curling a long-range free-kick wide and Pierre-Lees Melou firing straight at Danijel Subasic from the edge of the box.

But Monaco forged ahead against the run of play in the 33rd minute as Diakhaby took advantage of a stroke of luck to net his second goal in three games. A hopeful ball forward ricocheted off Monaco winger Thomas Lemar and fell perfectly for Diakhaby to send the ball into the roof of the net, with Nice appeals for handball against Lemar waved away by the referee.

Nice continued to play the better football after the restart, though, and Balotelli, who also scored twice in a 4-0 thrashing in September's reverse fixture, stretched to divert a low Allan Saint-Maximin cross in at the near post. The former Manchester City and Inter Milan striker went agonisingly close to completing a turnaround, but couldn't get enough contact onto another dangerous Saint-Maximin cross into the area. The game continued to open up and Lemar, linked with a January move to either Liverpool or Arsenal, was denied by a brave block from Nice midfielder Jean-Michael Seri. Balotelli did put Lucien Favre's visitors ahead midway through the second half, as he powered forward before seeing a deflected effort loop over goalkeeper Subasic and into the net.

It was Balotelli's 18th goal of the season, despite having missed much of the campaign through injury and suspension. "It's his first match since December. He was a bit behind following the short winter break," said Nice coach Lucien Favre. — AFP

Flanagan sentenced for assault

LONDON: Liverpool defender John Flanagan was sentenced to rehabilitation and 40 hours of unpaid work yesterday, having pleaded guilty to attacking his girlfriend. The 25-year-old full-back admitted an offence of common assault by beating at a hearing on January 2.

Liverpool Crown Court heard that he kicked his partner Rachael Wall in a central street in the northwest English city in the early hours of December 22. District judge Wendy Lloyd sentenced Flanagan to a 12-month community order, which includes 15 rehabilitation activity days, 40 hours of unpaid work, £85 court costs (\$117, 96 euros) and an £85 victim surcharge.

"You are, of course, a young man of previous good character and therefore it's undoubtedly sad that you have brought yourself here by your behaviour," she said. "It was a matter of this lady going to the floor twice and you used your foot on her on one occasion."

The court saw security camera footage which showed Flanagan hitting his girlfriend before pushing her against a wall twice and then kicking her. His lawyer Lionel Grieg told the court: "He deeply regrets his behaviour and there is genuine remorse. "They are back together and working very hard at the relationship." Liverpool-born Flanagan has made more than 50 first-team appearances for the Reds since making his debut aged 18. He has captained Liverpool and made an appearance for England as a substitute in 2014. Flanagan spent last season on loan at Burnley after 20 months out due to knee surgery. He has featured only once for Liverpool this season. — AFP

Ronaldinho retires from football

SAO PAULO: Brazilian World Cup winner Ronaldinho has formally confirmed his retirement from football, more than two years since his last appearance as a professional, reports in Brazil said Tuesday.

The 37-year-old former Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona star, a key member of the Brazil side which won the World Cup in 2002, last played in 2015 during a brief stint with Fluminense. However his brother and agent Roberto Assis said he would not play again and would now concentrate on tribute events.

"He stopped, we're going to do something really big, nice, after the World Cup in Russia, probably in August, we'll do several events in Brazil, Europe and Asia, and of course, we're watching a game with the Brazilian team," Assis said.

Ronaldinho's career began with Gremio in Porto Alegre, his hometown, before he emerged as a star with French giants PSG. He then spent five years with Barcelona between 2003 and 2008, helping the Catalans win the Champions League in 2006, after being awarded the Ballon D'Or in 2005.

He spent three more seasons in Europe with AC Milan between 2008 and 2011 before returning to Brazil, where he played with Flamengo and Atletico Mineiro. A season in Mexico with Queretaro was followed by his return to Brazil and Fluminense, for whom he played seven times before cutting short his contract.

For Brazil, Ronaldinho made 97 appearances, scoring 33 goals, including two in the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea. — AFP



Ronaldinho

Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

SPAIN COPA DEL REY

Leganes v Real Madrid	23:30
beIN SPORTS HD 3	

SPANISH LEAGUE

Osasuna v Gimmastic de Tarragona	21:00
beIN SPORTS	

12 Kuwait's Hamad Al-Namshan, Eman Al-Shamma and Abdallah Al-Rasheedi bag three gold



14 Stokes available for England despite charge



15 Liverpool's Flanagan sentenced for assault



PANMUNJOM: This handout photo provided by South Korean Unification Ministry yesterday shows South Korean delegation members (R) shaking hands with North Korean delegation members as they exchange joint statements during their working-level talks at the South side of the border truce village of Panmunjom in the Demilitarized zone dividing the two Koreas. The two Koreas agreed yesterday to march together under a single flag at the Winter Olympics opening ceremony and field a united women's ice hockey team for the Games. — AFP

Koreas to march together in Olympics

North and South to form unified ice hockey team

SEOUL: The two Koreas will field a combined women's ice hockey team and march together under one flag at next month's Winter Olympics in the South, Seoul said yesterday, after a new round of talks amid a thaw in cross-border ties.

North and South Korea have been talking since last week - for the first time in more than two years - about the Olympics, offering a respite from a months-long standoff over Pyongyang's pursuit of nuclear and missile programmes, although Japan urged caution over the North's "charm offensive".

The two Koreas will compete as a unified team in the Olympics for the first time, though they have joined forces at other international sports events before. North Korea will send a delegation of more than 400, including 230 cheerleaders, 140 artists and 30 Taekwondo players for a demonstration, a joint press statement released by Seoul's unification ministry said, adding the precise number of athletes will be hammered out after discussions with the IOC.

Prior to the Games, the sides will carry out joint training for skiers at the North's Masik Pass resort and a cultural event at the Mount Kumgang resort, for which Seoul officials plan to visit the sites next week.

The delegation is expected to begin arriving in South

Korea on Jan 25, the statement said. The North will separately send a 150-strong delegation to the Paralympics. Twenty nations meeting in the Canadian city of Vancouver agreed on Tuesday to consider tougher sanctions to press North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson warned the North it could trigger a military response if it did not choose dialogue.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono said the world should not be naive about North Korea's "charm offensive" over the Olympics. "It is not the time to ease pressure, or to reward North Korea," Kono said. "The fact that North Korea is engaging in dialogue could be interpreted as proof that the sanctions are working."

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has refused to give up development of nuclear missiles capable of hitting the United States in spite of increasingly severe U.N. sanc-

tions, raising fears of a new war on the Korean peninsula. The North has fired test-fired missiles over Japan.

In state media this week, the North warned the South of spoiling inter-Korean ties by insisting it gives up its nuclear weapons.

"We will work actively to improve North-South Korean relations but will not stand still to actions that are against unification," the North's Rodong Sinmun newspaper said. The South's Unification Ministry said the two sides exchanged opinions on several issues, including the size of the North Korean athletics team and joint cultural events.

Seoul has proposed a joint ice hockey team, which triggered an angry response from athletes in the South suddenly being told they may have to play alongside total strangers. "I don't know if it will happen, but a joint team will be a good opportunity for ice hockey to shed its sorrow as a less-preferred sport as many Koreans will take

interest," South Korean President Moon Jae-in told players during a visit to a training centre. The number of petitions to the presidential Blue House's website opposing a unified team climbed to more than 100 this week, with the most popular petition gaining more than 11,000 votes. "This isn't the same as gluing a broken plate together," said one of the signers. Paik Hak-soon, the director of the Centre for North Korean studies at Sejong Institute in South Korea, said North Korea was using the cheering squad to draw attention to its apparent cooperative spirit.

"Seeing good results in competitions thanks to the cheering squad would enable the North Koreans to say they contributed to a successful Olympics and the South Korean government would likely agree," said Paik. "In the end, they are using this old tactic to get to Washington through Seoul." On Tuesday, officials from North and South agreed a 140-person North Korean orchestra would perform in South Korea during the Games. Pyongyang is also planning to send a large delegation in addition to the athletes and orchestra.

Reclusive North Korea and the rich, democratic South are technically still at war because their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. The North regularly threatens to destroy the South, Japan and their major ally, the United States.—Reuters



Joint ski training, cultural event to be held in North

Nadal dominant as big guns pull off great escapes

MELBOURNE: Rafael Nadal swept into the Australian Open third round to keep his Grand Slam title hunt on track yesterday, as Caroline Wozniacki and Grigor Dimitrov pulled off great escapes to stay in contention. The world number one Spaniard's march towards a 17th Grand Slam crown was never threatened by Argentina's Leonardo Mayer, who took him to a third set tiebreak before being swatted aside 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) on Rod Laver Arena. "Playing this court is always a big motivation for me," said Nadal, who lost last year's final to Roger Federer.

"He was a dangerous opponent and I'm happy to be in the third round. "For my team and my family, this is our favourite tournament of the year, so I hope to stay around a bit longer," he added. Nadal, showing no signs of the troublesome knee

that bothered him late last season and interrupted his Melbourne lead-up, next plays Bosnian 28th seed Damir Dzumhur. Surprisingly, he was not the prime time men's night match on centre court, with that honour going to third seed Dimitrov, who survived a huge scare from unheralded qualifier Mackenzie McDonald.

The Bulgarian needed to call on all his experience to down the 186th-ranked American 4-6, 6-2, 6-4, 0-6, 8-6. "I'm very happy with the win, not because the way I played, but because the way I fought," said Dimitrov. "It all came down to a few points here and there." In contrast to Nadal's easy progress, world number two Wozniacki also struggled against little-known Croat Jana Fett. The Dane saved two match points and rallied from 5-1 down in an epic third set to keep her dream of a first Grand Slam title alive.

She looked out for the count, and was struggling afterwards to work out how she survived 3-6, 6-2, 7-5 against a player ranked 119. "That was crazy, I don't know how I got back in the match," said Wozniacki, adding that "experience was crucial". Fourth seed Elina Svitolina also came from a set down to overcome spirited Czech Katerina Siniakova 4-6, 6-2, 6-1.

The Ukrainian is now on a seven-match win

streak and after picking up five WTA Tour titles last year, more than any other woman, is a serious Grand Slam contender.

Her next task is tackling 15-year-old sensation Marta Kostyuk, who became the youngest woman to reach the third round since Martina Hingis got to the quarter-finals in 1996. Also Ukrainian, she beat local wildcard Olivia Rogowska 6-3, 7-5. Her win streak at Melbourne Park is now 11 straight matches after claiming the Australian Open girls' title in 2017 and coming through qualifying this year.

"I heard a lot of times that I'm talented, and I know that," said the confident teen. "But I know that only talent will not help me to play good. So I'm working pretty hard." Svitolina said she knew little about the youngster, and was preparing for a no-holds barred fight.

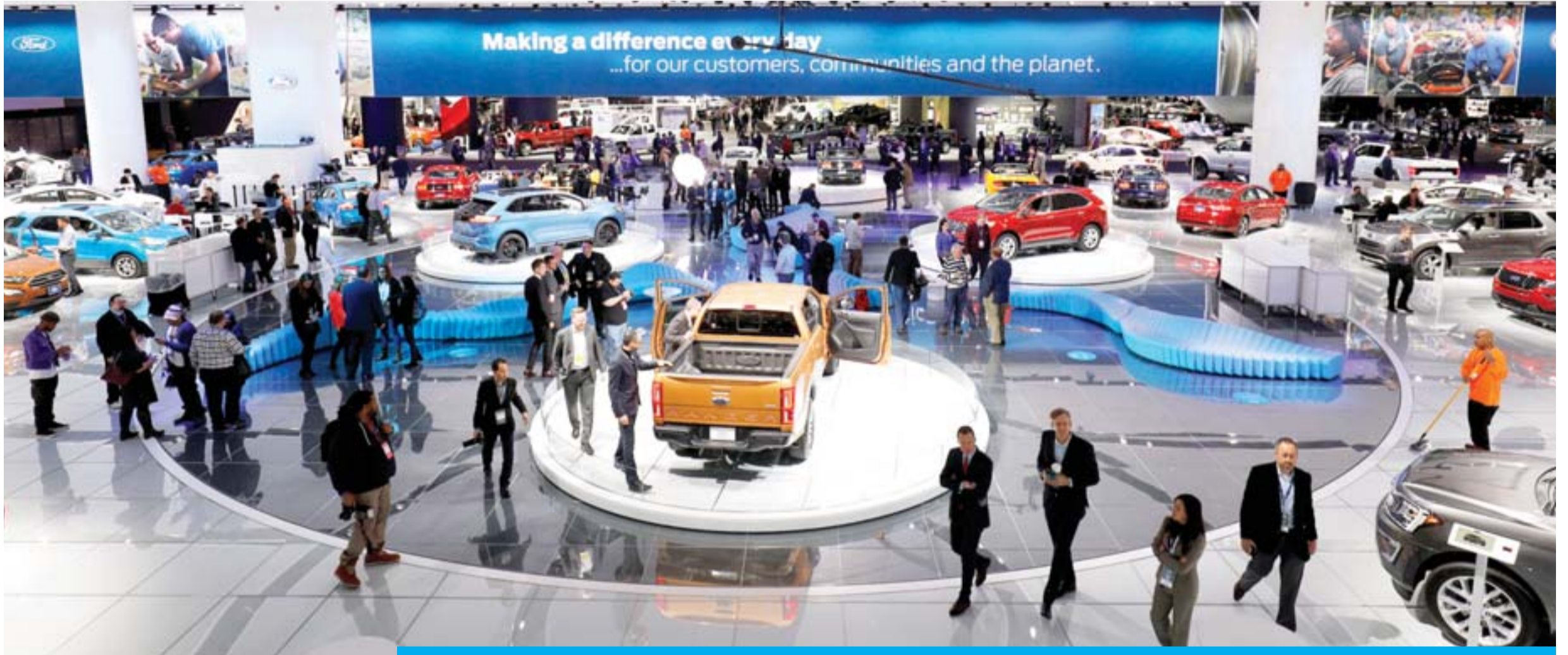
"She has nothing to lose, so that's why I know she goes just for everything. You know, a little bit like a headless chicken," she said. French Open champion and seventh seed Jelena Ostapenko also progressed, but she too needed three sets to get past China's Duan Yingying. On a hot Melbourne day, Croatia's sixth seed Marin Cilic advanced, with last year's Wimbledon finalist easily beating Joao Sousa.—AFP



MELBOURNE: Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki hits a return against Croatia's Jana Fett during their women's singles second round match on day three of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

Business

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2018

18 Saudi government unveils largest ever budget for 2018**19** KFH: 200 CSR initiatives in 2017**21** Chevrolet launches Tahoe RST during Kuwait Motor Show Auto Moto 2018

DETROIT: The Ford exhibit is shown at the 2018 North American International Auto Show on Tuesday. — AFP

At auto show, future high tech is present

What's in a name? Chinese automaker nixes 'Trumpchi'

DETROIT: For the technology phobic, the Einride T-Pod autonomous cargo truck could be the stuff of nightmares. It is an imposing sight, lacking a traditional driver's cab, and looks like it might have been dreamed up by a sci-fi filmmaker.

The electric truck was one of many high-tech innovations on display at the Detroit auto show, where the top industry players in North America showed off their latest models and considered the future of automobiles and transportation. A spokesman for Swedish company Einride told AFP on Tuesday it will test the T-Pod on its native country's roads later this year.

The promise of an autonomous future is a dominant theme for industry insiders, and many tech companies participating in the auto show focused on how to improve self-driving vehicles.

Nearby, steering systems manufacturer Nexteer boasted that it can make a steering wheel that does not need to be physically attached to the actual wheels of a car in order to turn them.

That lack of a direct connection allows the steering wheel to be a lot more maneuverable. "We can have a stowable column, so the steering wheel actually stows

into the dash," Dave Sabol, an engineer with Nexteer, told AFP. This will be key for autonomous driving, he said, because future cars can hide the steering wheel when the driver is not in charge.

An Ohio firm offered access to data from its expansive road testing facility at a barely-populated outpost 40 miles out of Columbus. Chief scientist Christoph Mertz told AFP he can create a database of regularly updated road conditions, so that robot cars of the future can use the information to quickly adapt to their environment.

"At the moment we are in the place where (data) is growing exponentially," Mertz said. Meanwhile, Sheikh Shuvo is offering to "clean" data that already exists to teach self-driving vehicles perform better and learn how to drive more like humans. "That refining process

is labeling the data, showing the car what a pedestrian looks like, what a pedestrian does, so that it can better predict different behaviors," Shuvo told AFP.

Despite all of the promise, though, many tech attendees said robots and artificial intelligence are not replacing humans any time soon.

Even that autonomous cargo truck has its limitations. The T-Pod carries about half as much as a typical human-driven truck and is best for distances no farther than 300 miles, the company said.

the US market to avoid the wrong connotation or misunderstanding," a GAC spokesman told AFP on Tuesday at the Detroit auto show.

The Trumpchi models have been available in China for years, and the word actually means "legend" in Chinese, the spokesman said. US media has previously reported that company executives had been deliberating over a name change. GAC, which sells 500,000 cars in its native country and 13 others in Asia and the Middle East, has long announced plans to be the first Chinese auto maker to enter the US market by the end of 2019. The company also plans to expand into Europe after trying to woo American consumers.

The cultural dissonance with its chosen brand name is something with which another auto maker can relate. Tata Motors' "zippy car" abbreviation Zica was an unfortunate choice in 2016 for its new hatchback sedan, considering it debuted as the World Health Organization declared the Zika virus a global health emergency.

The Indian company renamed it Tiago after making marketing lemonade out of a public relations lemon by holding an online renaming contest. —AFP



Clean data for self-driving vehicles

'Trumpchi'

Chinese auto maker GAC is changing the name of models it plans to introduce in the US market next year, because "Trumpchi" sounds too much like its linked to President Donald Trump. "The name will change for

Saudi announces \$2bn bailout for Yemen government

Salman bin Abdulaziz has issued a directive to transfer a \$2 billion deposit to the central bank of Yemen," the Saudi interior ministry said.

The riyal currently trades at 500 to the dollar, down from around 215 before the war, a serious depreciation for a country that relies heavily on imports of basic foodstuffs.

In 2016, the Yemeni government moved the central bank to second city Aden from the capital where the rebels operate their own rival central bank. More than one million civil servants lost their jobs in the bank transfer, and both the Sanaa and Aden central banks have struggled to pay salaries.

Saudi Arabia, which itself faces a hefty budget deficit, has led a military coalition in support of the government since March 2015. But as the intervention nears its fourth year, the government's authority is still largely confined to the south. The conflict has left more than three-quarters of Yemenis in need of humanitarian aid and some 8.4 million at risk of famine, the UN humanitarian affairs office said on Tuesday. —AFP

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia announced yesterday it would transfer \$2 billion to Yemen's central bank, following desperate calls for a financial rescue from the beleaguered government it has supported militarily for nearly three years.

The bailout aims to curb the fall in value of the Yemeni riyal, which has plummeted as the war between the Saudi-backed government and Houthi rebels who control the capital Sanaa and much of the north has dragged on.

"To address the deteriorating economic situation faced by the Yemeni people as a result of the actions of the Iranian-backed Houthi militias, King

Goldman Sachs reports 4Q loss on big charge for US tax reform

NEW YORK: Goldman Sachs reported a rare quarterly loss yesterday due to a one-time charge associated with US tax reform. Performance across operating division was mixed.

The US investment banking giant reported a fourth-quarter loss of \$2.1 billion, compared with a profit of \$2.2 billion in the year-ago period. The loss, Goldman's first in a quarter since 2011, was driven by \$4.4 billion in one-time charges, mostly due to US tax reform provisions on the repatriation of foreign earnings. The bank warned of the hit in December. The charge also weighed on annual earnings, which fell 48 percent to \$3.7 billion. Numerous large companies have made similar announcements of one-time negative effects from US tax reform in recent weeks. Most, including Goldman Sachs, are bullish on the long-term effects of the US tax cuts, arguing they will lead to



NEW YORK: This picture taken on June 22, 2010 shows the headquarters of investment banking and securities firm Goldman Sachs in lower Manhattan, in New York. — AFP

faster economic growth.

In terms of bank operations, Goldman scored impressive gains in revenues from both debt and equity underwriting. Financial advisory revenues also increased.

On the downside, Goldman's performance in its trading division, which has struggled in recent quarters amid low volatility, turned in another weak performance. Revenues in this division slumped 34 percent from the year-ago period, weighed down especially by a 50 percent plunge from the closely-watched fixed income, commodities and currency

trades. "Last year, we delivered higher revenue and stronger pre-tax margins despite a challenging environment for our market-making businesses," said Goldman Sachs chief executive Lloyd Blankfein.

"With the global economy poised to accelerate, new US tax legislation providing tailwinds and a leading franchise across our businesses, we are well positioned to serve our clients and make significant progress on the growth plan we outlined in September."

Shares of Goldman Sachs fell 0.6 percent in pre-market trading to \$256.75. —AFP

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

Saudi government unveils largest ever budget for 2018

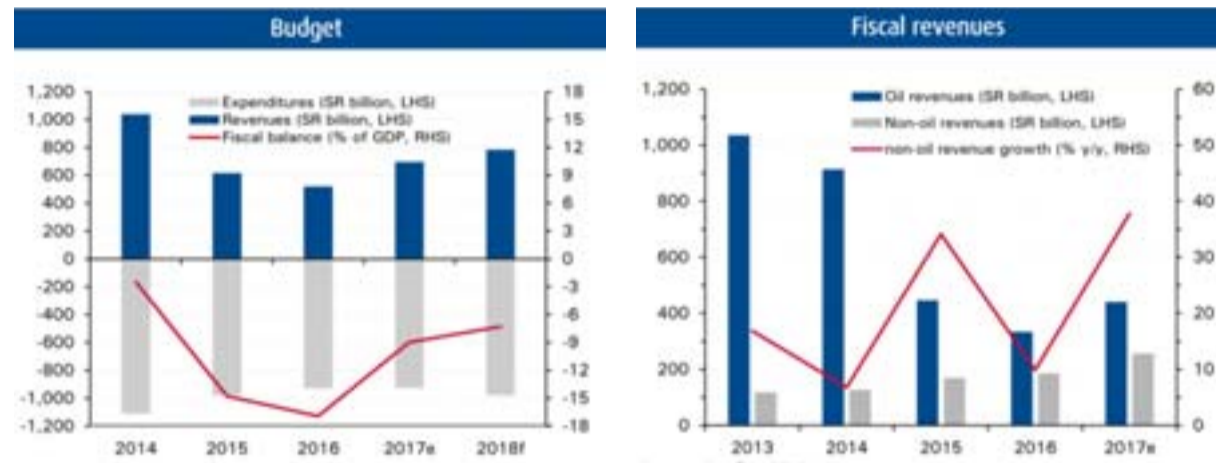
Non-oil growth reached a better-than-expected 1.5% last year

KUWAIT: The Saudi authorities have unveiled for 2018 their second consecutive expansionary budget, with spending set to rise by 5.6 percent next year to SR 978 billion (\$260 billion) and revenues projected to increase by 12.5 percent to SR 783 billion (\$208 billion).

Based on these projections, the government is budgeting for a fourth consecutive fiscal deficit in 2018, albeit a narrowing one, at 7.3 percent of GDP (SR 195 billion). This is a slight improvement on 2017's deficit of 8.9 percent of GDP, which is close to our own projection of 7.3 percent of GDP.

Moreover, the expansionary budget will also be supplemented by an additional SR133 billion (\$35 billion) from the Public Investment Fund (PIF) and the National Development Fund (NDF). Revenue projections appear to be based on an oil price of \$59/bbl (Brent), with minimal scope for crude production gains given Saudi Arabia's commitment to an extension of the OPEC production cut agreement to end-2018. As a statement of intent, the 2018 budget is a powerful one. Not only is this the largest ever budget - more than a trillion Saudi riyals if the PIF/NDF outlays are included - but it is also one designed to send a strong signal to economic actors both inside and outside the kingdom that the government is serious about supporting the economy, especially the non-oil sector, and pursuing its Vision 2030 strategic objectives.

The authorities have recognized that they must slow down the pace of austerity so as not to imperil the economic recovery. With SR 655 billion (\$175 billion) in government deposits



at SAMA and \$493 billion in foreign reserve assets (SAMA) as of October 2017 as well as a burgeoning domestic and international bond and sukuk program, the kingdom has the space to adopt an expansionary fiscal stance and slow down the pace of austerity. This is in effect what the IMF has prescribed in its consultations with the authorities.

The 2018 budget will mitigate some of the impact on discretionary spending that the introduction of VAT and the removal of subsidies is having. At the same time, the authori-

ties aim to ramp up capital spending and stimulate the private sector (through 16 initiatives directed at the real estate, manufacturing and export sectors, worth SR 72 billion, or \$19.2 billion in 2018). Boosting employment in the private sector is a key medium-term target.

Expenditures and revenues

Actual spending in 2017 came in 4 percent above budget and 12 percent higher than in 2016 at SR 926 billion (\$246 bil-

lion); capital spending declined by 2 percent y/y to its lowest level as a share of total expenditures (19 percent) since 2006, after the government rationalized infrastructure projects and improved efficiency. Actual revenues in 2017 came in marginally higher than budgeted and 34 percent higher than in 2016 at SR 696 billion (\$185 billion); non-oil revenues rose by a sizable 38 percent y/y to SR 256 billion (\$68 billion) as a result of increases in investment income and taxes and duties, such as the excise and expatriate dependents' tax. (Chart 2.) Oil revenues were up 32 percent in 2017 following a rise of 27 percent in the oil export price.

Non-oil sector rebounds

Real growth in 2017 is estimated at -0.5 percent y/y (vs. NBK's forecast of -1.3 percent y/y), with oil GDP declining by 3.1 percent y/y (vs. NBK's -3.7 percent y/y) and non-oil GDP growing by 1.5 percent y/y (vs. NBK's 0.5 percent y/y). (Chart 3.) In 2018, the authorities expect the economy to expand by 2.7 percent, driven by the non-oil sector, which is projected to grow by 3.7 percent.

2017 marked by deflation in consumer prices

Inflation is expected at -0.1 percent in 2017 (vs. NBK's forecast of -0.2 percent) and 5.7 percent in 2018 (vs. NBK's 2.9 percent), following the imposition of VAT at 5 percent and a further round of energy price hikes, which was recently announced.

EU Ombudsman urges ECB's Draghi to leave G30 club

FRANKFURT: European Central Bank President Mario Draghi should give up his membership of the opaque Group of 30 consultative body because it risks hurting public confidence in the ECB's independence, the European Ombudsman said yesterday.

The G30 is an international panel of senior figures from the finance industry, academia and current and former policymakers, which holds meetings on global financial issues behind closed doors.

At present its members include Draghi, Bank of England Governor Mark Carney and People's Bank of China Governor Zhou Xiaochuan, but also former policymakers who have now joined the private sector and directors from two banks supervised by the ECB. "The ECB president's membership of the G30 could give rise to a public perception that the independence of the ECB could be compromised," Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly said. "For the ECB to allow this perception to arise over several years constitutes maladministration on its part."

O'Reilly, whose recommendations are not binding, criticized what she described as the "secrecy" surrounding the G30, including how members are chosen and what is discussed at the meetings. She said the ECB should tighten its rules regarding public engagements.

The activist group Corporate Europe Observatory, which filed the complaint to the Ombudsman, a European Union body, welcomed the decision as "timely and very positive". An ECB spokesman said the central bank had taken note of the Ombudsman's recommendations and would respond in due course. The criticism comes as the ECB is already under fire over other issues related to trans-

parency and the appearance of being too close to industry, including its massive purchases of company debt, its handling of failing banks and the hiring of Draghi's top aide.

The G30 includes directors from banks regulated by the ECB, including Germany's Bayerische Landesbank, US giant JPMorgan, whose Luxembourg subsidiary is ECB-supervised, and until recently Spain's Santander. The chairman of UBS, Axel Weber, and the chief executive of Credit Suisse, Tidjane Thiam - two large Swiss banks with several subsidiaries in the euro zone - are also members.

They sit alongside former officials such as ex-Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke, now an adviser to hedge fund Citadel. O'Reilly said she had found no evidence that G30 meetings had influenced the ECB's work as the supervisor of the euro zone's largest banks.

The ECB previously said it benefits from the exchanges of views at the G30. O'Reilly said the ECB could send representatives to G30 events open to external guests, only if it published agendas and non-confidential summaries, which it has declined to do so far.

She also asked that the ECB amended its rules to spell out that the six members of its Executive Board must be accompanied by staff to all meetings, and introduce equivalent rules for bank supervisors. Corporate Europe Observatory has been criticising the ECB for being too close to the financial sector it is meant to supervise, including by letting financiers take most seats on its advisory groups. In a concession to critics, the ECB has announced plans to hold regular meetings with entrepreneurs outside finance. — Reuters

Utilities, mining boost US industrial production

WASHINGTON: US industrial production increased more than expected in December as unseasonably cold weather toward the end of the month boosted demand for heating, but manufacturing output slowed further.

The Federal Reserve said yesterday industrial output surged 0.9 percent last month also buoyed by robust gains in mining production after a downwardly revised 0.1 percent decline in November. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast industrial production advancing

0.4 percent last month after a previously reported 0.2 percent increase in November. Industrial production rose at an annual rate of 8.2 percent in the fourth quarter, the biggest gain since the second quarter of 2010.

For all of 2017, industrial output rose 1.8 percent, the first and largest increase since 2014. The industrial sector is being supported by a strengthening global economy and a weakening dollar, which is helping to make US exports more competitive relative to those of the nation's main trading partners. A survey early this month showed an acceleration in factory activity in December, with a measure of new orders recording its best reading since January 2004.

Mining production increased 1.6 percent amid a rebound in oil and gas well drilling. Utilities production accelerated 5.6 percent last month after declining 3.1 percent in November. Bitter cold gripped a large part of the country at the end of December. The

surge in utilities demand bodes well for consumer spending in the fourth quarter. But manufacturing output gained only 0.1 percent in December, putting a wrinkle on the report, after rising 0.3 percent in the prior month. Manufacturing production jumped 1.5 percent in October.

Manufacturing output was last month held back by a 1.5 percent drop in the production of primary metals. Motor vehicle and parts production increased 2.0 percent. Manufacturing production rose at a 7.0 percent rate in the fourth quarter.

With output accelerating last month, capacity utilization a measure of how fully industries are deploying their resources increased to 77.9 percent from 77.2 percent in November. Officials at the Fed tend to look at capacity use as a signal of how much "slack" remains in the economy and how much room there is for growth to accelerate before it becomes inflationary. — Reuters

No more bonuses for Carillion bosses after UK collapse

LONDON: There will be no more bonus payments or severance payments to company directors of Carillion, a British government agency said yesterday as it tries to deal with the fallout of the firm's collapse. Payments were stopped after the construction-to-catering firm went bust on Monday, the government's Insolvency Service said.

"Any bonus payment to directors, beyond the liquidation date, have been stopped and this includes the severance payments which were being paid to some senior executives who left the company," a spokesman for the agency said. The announcement followed a heated exchange in parliament over Carillion's collapse, as Prime Minister Theresa May sought to defend the government's decision to sign major deals with the company after it



LONDON: A picture shows the branding of British construction company Carillion on the hoarding at the closed access gate to the collapsed company's construction site at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital in Liverpool, northwest England. — AFP

issued the first of several profit warnings last July. "We're making sure in this case that public services continue to be provided, that workers in those public services are supported and taxpayers are protected," May told lawmakers.

Carillion has public sector and private partnership contracts worth £1.7 billion (\$2.35

billion, 1.9 billion euros), including cleaning and catering at public hospitals, various construction works and maintaining 50,000 army base homes for the Ministry of Defense. The government has said the company's 19,500 staff in public sector jobs will continue to be paid, at a potential cost to the taxpayer of hundreds of millions of pounds. — AP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.721
Indian Rupees	4.724
Pakistani Rupees	2.726
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.962
Nepali Rupees	2.968
Singapore Dollar	228.560
Hongkong Dollar	38.520
Bangladesh Taka	3.615
Philippine Peso	5.986
Thai Baht	9.471
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.414
Qatari Riyal	82.823
Omani Riyal	783.134
Bahraini Dinar	800.720
UAE Dirham	82.123
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.700
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.018
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.210
Tunisian Dinar	125.300
Jordanian Dinar	425.040
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.009
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	33.188
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	301.350

Euro	370.060
Sterling Pound	416.620
Canadian dollar	243.020
Turkish lira	798.300
Swiss Franc	314.560
Australian Dollar	241.080
US Dollar Buying	300.150
GOLD	
20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570
Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.100
Canadian Dollar	242.530
Sterling Pound	409.633
Euro	362.965
Swiss Frank	297.145
Bahrain Dinar	803.394
UAE Dirhams	82.651
Qatari Riyals	83.886
Saudi Riyals	81.454
Jordanian Dinar	427.373
Egyptian Pound	17.118
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.966
Indian Rupees	4.743
Pakistani Rupees	2.735
Bangladesh Taka	3.664
Philippines Peso	5.998
Cyprus pound	17.976

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.409145	0.416645
Czech Korune	0.006480	0.015780
Danish Krone	0.045440	0.050440
Euro	0.363206	0.370706
Georgian Lari	0.117212	0.117212
Hungarian 0.001102	0.001292	0.001292
Norwegian Krone	0.034135	0.039335
Romanian Leu	0.062189	0.079019
Russian ruble	0.005320	0.005320
Slovakia	0.008955	0.018958
Swedish Krona	0.033376	0.038376
Swiss Franc	0.306315	0.317315
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.231167	0.243167
New Zealand Dollar	0.211716	0.221216
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.236525	0.245525
US Dollars	0.297250	0.301670
US Dollars Mnt	0.297750	0.301670

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003273 0.003857
Chinese Yuan	0.045367 0.048867
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036428 0.039178
Indian Rupee	0.004429 0.004900
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018 0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002632 0.002812
Korean Won	0.000272 0.000287
Malaysian Ringgit	0.072307 0.078307
Nepalese Rupee	0.003007 0.003177
Pakistan Rupee	0.002551 0.002841
Philippine Peso	0.005948 0.006248
Singapore Dollar	0.222154 0.232154
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001727 0.002307
Taiwan	0.010062 0.010242
Thai Baht	0.009086 0.009636
Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.792705 0.801205
Egyptian Pound	0.014347 0.020065
Iranian Riyal	0.000083 0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000198 0.000258
Jordanian Dinar	0.420420 0.429420
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000 1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000149 0.000249
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021972 0.045972
Omani Riyal	0.776409 0.782089
Qatar Riyal	0.078483 0.083423
Saudi Riyal	0.079273 0.080573
Syrian Pound	0.001277 0.001497
Tunisian Dinar	0.120532 0.128532
Turkish Lira	0.074267 0.084567
UAE Dirhams	0.080621 0.082321
Yemeni Riyal	0.000979 0.001059

Business

KFH: 200 CSR Initiatives in 2017

Bank keen to implement inclusiveness in strategy of social responsibility



Distributing Iftar meals in Ramadan



Sponsoring Belgrade Championship

KUWAIT: Executive Manager Group Public Relations and Media at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Yusef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh said that KFH has offered nearly 200 initiatives and contributions in the corporate social responsibility in the year 2017, indicating the bank is keen to implement inclusiveness and diversity in the strategy of social responsibility. This encompassed the fields of health, education, sport, youth, people with special needs, and people with outstanding achievements in inventions, science, cultures and other fields.

Al-Ruwaieh added in a press release, that KFH has signed strategic partnerships with many institutions to support several activities in the health and medical field for its significant role in the life of individuals and society. KFH pays great attention to this vital field as it represents a main pillar for comprehensive development. KFH participated in the cancer and diabetes awareness

campaigns and organized many events to raise the awareness among society individuals. Moreover, the bank sponsored scientific and medical forums and conferences to raise the awareness of some widespread diseases. KFH has been honored and recognized by several official bodies such as the Ministry of Health, Dasman Diabetes Institute in addition to several hospitals and medical institutions in recognition of its key role in participating in the events that are meant to raise the health awareness in the society.

Al-Ruwaieh continued: "KFH prioritized the youth and is the leading supporter for them at all levels. KFH sponsored the students and youth specialized clubs at the University of Kuwait and other private universities. The bank sponsored the graduation projects for the students of Engineering and Petroleum College. It organized many lectures and seminars for university stu-

dents, not to mention hosted international lecturers to participate in job fairs and different students' activities. This affirms the bank's endeavors to support the youth and appreciate students and the educational process.

He stressed the importance of environment noting that KFH pays great attention towards keeping the environment clean and healthy in collaboration with concerned official authorities and bodies. KFH uniquely sponsored a pioneering environmental project Umnia for Plastic bottles recycling. This small project has now become a factory for recycling. It participated in many other environmental activities and events such as cleaning the beaches, planting of greenery and holding events for school students to encourage planting and greening.

KFH Ramadan Campaign witnessed great success and received huge recognition. The bank launched around 70 initiatives of which were feeding fasting people, serving worshippers during Qiyam prayer in the Grand Mosque.

KFH also continued its strategic partnership with the Youth Empowerment Symposium dedicated for empower-

ing the youth and granting them the opportunity to benefit from global leaders' expertise and success stories.

KFH issued its annual Corporate Social Responsibility report CSR Report. This report generally highlights the bank's initiatives and accomplishments.

He indicated that KFH inked a significant strategic agreement with a group of national champions who join KFH program under the theme "KFH initiators". This agreement embodies the bank's keenness to recognize those who contribute in raising the Kuwaiti flag high in the international forums and championships, while confirming its instrumental role in the corporate social responsibility.

KFH's efforts in supporting and honoring the distinguished people reflects its commitment in the corporate social responsibility, indicating KFH inked two agreements with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs; one for partnership and collaboration, and the other for supporting and sponsoring the activities of the Kuwait Capital of Arab Youth event. KFH contributions in the social responsibility show the bright image of the bank's 40 years of giving.



Significant role in empowering, supporting youth



Sponsoring Youth Tamkeen Conference



Sponsoring students graduation ceremony



The Gergai'an Ceremony



Signing the largest strategic partnership agreement to support the youth with a group of entrepreneurs



Visiting the geriatric care house



The Baitak Kids Club activity



Supporting the Finance Club activities

Business

European stocks dip, bitcoin crashes

LONDON: Europe's major stock markets mostly churned lower yesterday as investors took their cue from downbeat sentiment in Asia, while Wall Street resumed its upward trend.

Virtual currency bitcoin meanwhile dived, falling below \$10,000 for the first time in six weeks in what one analyst called a "cryptocalypse" that saw several digital units take a hammering.

London stocks "opened on the back foot following downward trends in the US and Asia, signalling a shift in global sentiment as traders opt to lock in profits following the latest rally," noted Russ Mould, investment director at online stockbroker AJ Bell. Adding to the gloom, disappointing earnings eclipsed takeover activity in the British capital.

Publisher and conference organizer Informa revealed it was in talks to buy rival UBM to create a giant worth more than £9.0 billion (\$12.4 billion, 10.1 billion euros). The deal is aimed at accelerating growth and slashing costs, the companies said in a statement.

But investors were unconvinced, sending Informa shares tumbling more than nine percent.

The FTSE 100 was also punished as poor results from luxury fashion giant Burberry and publisher Pearson sent the two companies' share prices diving by seven and five percent respectively.

'Cryptocalypse' for bitcoin

Bitcoin fell below \$10,000 for the first time since early December, as the leading cryptocurrency extended Tuesday's 15-percent slump. The fierce selling also spread to other alternative digital units, with ethereum, ripple and litecoin all losing about a quarter of their value Tuesday.

Bitcoin is down from record highs approaching \$20,000 in the week before Christmas, having rocketed 25-fold over the year before being hit by concerns about a bubble and worries about crackdowns on trading it. "It's been a Cryptocalypse overnight with BTC (bitcoin) and other virtual currencies coming under

heavy selling pressure," said Greg McKenna, chief market strategist at AxiTrader.

But Shane Chanel, equities and derivatives adviser at ASR Wealth Advisers, sounded a slightly positive note, saying: "Not all hope is lost. The cryptocurrency market is privy to these wild swings and seasoned veterans in this space have seen this happen many times previously."

"Not saying that it couldn't be different this time but every major correction has been followed up by a rally more powerful than the last."

David Cheetham, chief market analyst at XTB also warned against burying bitcoin prematurely. "There have been numerous occasions when a sell-off in Bitcoin has prompted non-believers to rush in with declarations of the speculative bubble bursting, and each time they have been wrong," he said.

But "crypto bulls" were still "in very real danger of getting badly burned with a substantial further decline ahead entirely feasible", he added.

Hong Kong stocks soar

In Asia, Hong Kong stocks hit an all-time high to break a record that had been in place for more than 10 years. However, most other regional markets fell into the red with energy firms rocked by lower oil prices. Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index spent most of the day in negative territory after ending at a record high close on Tuesday. But late buying saw shares stage a recovery to finish up 0.3 percent at 31,983.41 — overtaking its previous high seen on October 30, 2007. However, most other markets in the region tracked Tuesday's losses on Wall Street, where investors returned from a long holiday weekend to political horse-trading as Washington lawmakers struggle to avert a crippling government shutdown. But yesterday the Dow was headed upwards again, pushing against the 26,000 level. "US stocks are trading higher in early action, recovering from yesterday's sharp downside reversal, with earnings results from Dow member Goldman Sachs and Bank of America fostering a mixed reaction," the Charles Schwab brokerage said in a note to clients. —AFP

National Bank of Kuwait		البنك الوطني						
Financial Markets		NBK						
Daily Report								
At 02:00 PM Previous Day								
Global Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Dow Jones	25,803.19	25,792.86	-10.33	▼	-0.04	4.34		
NASDAQ	7,261.06	7,223.69	-37.37	▼	-0.51	4.64		
S&P 500	2,786.24	2,776.42	-9.82	▼	-0.35	3.85		
Financial Times	7,755.93	7,735.03	-20.90	▼	-0.27	0.61		
DAX	13,246.33	13,226.77	-19.56	▼	-0.15	2.39		
CAC 40	5,513.82	5,504.29	-9.53	▼	-0.17	3.61		
Swiss	9,484.05	9,444.30	-39.75	▼	-0.21	0.67		
Nikkei 225	22,951.81	22,868.34	-83.47	▼	-0.35	4.85		
Toptix	1,894.25	1,890.82	-3.43	▼	-0.18	4.03		
Hang Seng	31,904.75	31,983.41	78.66	▲	0.25	6.90		
Straits Times	3,550.21	3,541.91	-8.30	▼	-0.23	4.08		
MENA Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Kuwait	6,624.53	6,603.30	-21.23	▼	-0.32	3.27		
Saudi Arabia	7,531.56	7,530.42	-1.14	▼	-0.02	4.22		
Dubai	3,525.59	3,537.95	12.36	▲	0.35	4.61		
Abu Dhabi	4,615.41	4,622.47	7.06	▲	0.15	4.93		
Bahrain	1,321.40	1,331.73	10.32	▲	0.78	-0.77		
Qatar	9,178.18	9,137.38	-40.80	▼	-0.44	7.68		
Oman	5,039.86	5,031.73	-8.13	▼	-0.16	-1.17		
Lebanon	1,170.16	1,171.31	1.15	▲	0.10	1.88		
Jordan	2,142.60	2,147.87	5.27	▲	0.25	0.74		
Egypt	15,989.37	15,155.71	-833.66	▼	-5.22	0.47		
Morocco	12,939.66	12,932.39	-7.27	▼	-0.06	4.39		
Tunisia	6,280.82	6,325.80	44.98	▲	0.72	-0.02		
Global Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwaiti Dinar		12.3638	3.3107	2.7027	2.3994	3.1866	366.66	4.1493
Saudi Riyal	0.08088		0.2678	0.2187	0.1941	0.2577	29.66	0.3356
US Dollar	0.30205	3.7345		0.8167	0.7247	0.9625	110.75	1.2533
Euro	0.36986	4.5729	1.2245		0.8877	1.1788	135.61	1.5347
Sterling Pound	0.41677	5.1529	1.3798	1.1265		1.3283	152.82	1.7298
Swiss Franc	0.31382	3.8800	1.0390	0.8483	0.7528		115.07	1.3021
Japanese Yen	0.00273	0.0337	0.0090	0.0074	0.0065	0.0087		0.0113
Australian Dollar	0.24101	2.9798	0.7979	0.6516	0.5781	0.7680	88.37	
MENA Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30205	3.7345	0.3742	3.6275	0.3831	3.6570	17.6500
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.3107		12.3638	1.2387	12.0096	1.2684	12.1073	58.4340
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08088		0.1002	0.9713	0.1026	0.9792	4.7262
Bahraini Dinar	2.6727	0.80727	9.9810		9.6951	1.0240	9.7739	47.1723
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08327	1.0295	0.1031		0.1056	1.0081	4.8656
Omani Riyal	2.6101	0.78837	9.7473	0.9766	9.4681		9.5451	46.0679
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08260	1.0212	0.1023	0.9919	0.1048		4.8264
Egyptian Pound	0.0567	0.01711	0.2116	0.0212	0.2055	0.0217	0.2072	
Global Interest Rates								
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year			
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.38	1.69	1.88	2.13	2.38			
US Dollar	1.46	1.55	1.73	1.90	2.19			
Euro	-0.42	-0.40	-0.38	-0.33	-0.25			
Sterling Pound	0.48	0.49	0.52	0.57	0.77			
Swiss Franc	-0.79	-0.79	-0.73	-0.64	-0.52			
Australian Dollar	1.60	1.70	1.69	1.72	1.81			
Japanese Yen	-0.04	-0.04	-0.03	0.02	0.11			
Global Bond Yields								
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year				
United States	2.03	2.37	2.55	2.83				
Europe	-0.59	-0.14	0.55	1.27				
United Kingdom	0.56	0.82	1.29	1.80				
Commodities								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Kuwait Oil	66.27	65.87	-0.40	▼	-0.60	4.23		
Brent	69.66	69.15	-0.51	▼	-0.73	3.70		
West Texas	63.87	63.77	-0.10	▼	-0.16	5.34		
Gold	1338.54	1335.96	-2.58	▼	-0.19	2.69		
Silver	17.19	17.17	-0.02	▼	-0.13	1.42		

Wall Street on Cloud Nine since Trump's election

NEW YORK: The bronze sculpture of a bull that stands near the New York Stock Exchange serves as a symbol of Wall Street's power perhaps this year more than ever.

Since President Donald Trump took office a year ago, the principal US stock indexes have gained by leaps and bounds, hitting a record string of records. "I have not seen such enthusiasm on Wall Street since Ronald Reagan," said Peter Cardillo of First Standard Financial, who has seen nine US presidents come and go since 1971, when he started working at the heart of global finance.

In 2017, the S&P 500 soared 19.4 percent while the blue-chip Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 25 percent and the tech-heavy Nasdaq added 28.3 percent—the strongest performances since 2013.

Only two other presidents, the Democrats Barack Obama and Franklin Roosevelt, saw higher gains in the broad-based S&P 500 during their first years in office. Analysts say euphoria over the tax overhaul that slashed corporate rates, which Trump signed last month, fed Wall Street's buying frenzy, along with rising prosperity and job creation after a decade of slow economic recovery.

"We got a very generous tax cut and of course it favors corporate America and so basically that means that we're going to see capital investments rise at a hefty pace, and that could create more jobs," Cardillo said. After the tax package was enacted in December, some companies wasted no time in announcing pay raises and rosy earnings—including automaker Fiat Chrysler, commercial banking giant Wells Fargo and global retailer Walmart.

But many companies have said the windfall will go to increased payments to shareholders and share buybacks rather than more investments and job creation.

In addition to the Christmas present of tax

Bank of America profits drop due to US tax reform hit

NEW YORK: Bank of America reported better-than-expected fourth-quarter earnings yesterday on solid loan growth and a lift from higher interest rates, despite a hefty one-time hit associated with US tax reform.

Earnings at the US banking giant tumbled 50.2 percent to \$2.1 billion. The bank booked \$2.9 billion in one-time costs associated with deferred taxes due to tax reform after previously signaling the hit.

Revenues rose 2.2 percent to \$20.4 billion. Higher interest rates boosted results, enabling the bank to make more money on the loans it grants to banks and customers. On the downside, some of the bank's trading divisions suffered revenue declines due to low volatility. Consumer banking loans and credit/debit card spending rose during the period, which overlapped the holiday shopping season.

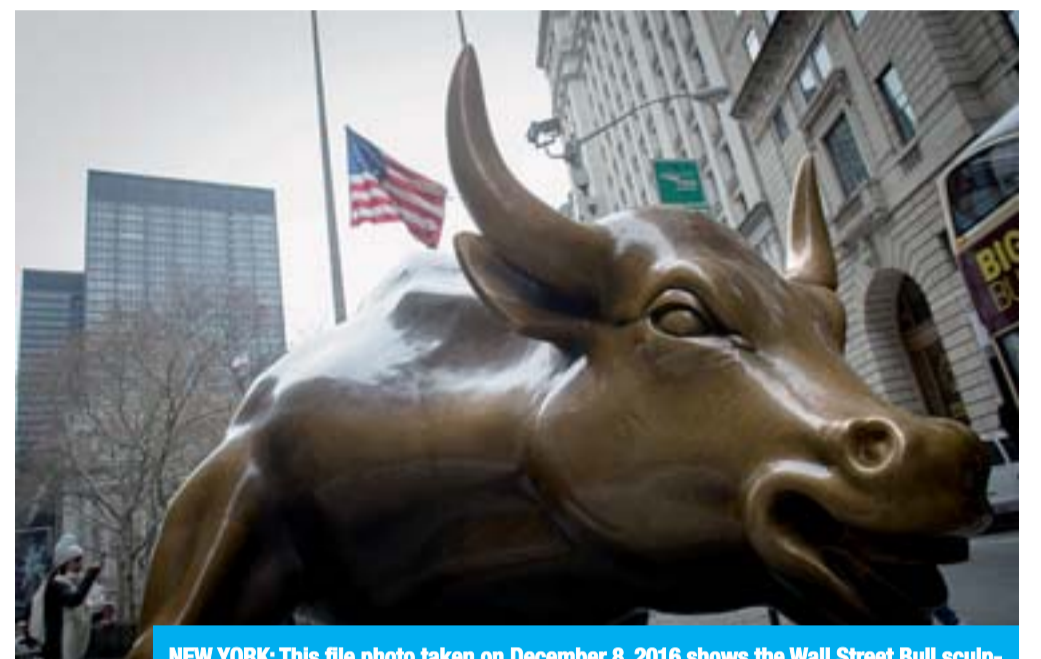
The bank has cut its retail branch footprint compared with a year ago, with more consumers now banking online. The overall headcount is also down from last year. "Client

French brace for 'massive' imports of South American beef

SAINTE-CECILE, France: Cedric Mandin, who raises some 800 Charolais cows with his brother in France's Vendee region, is the fourth generation of his family to own their farm, and he fears he will be the last. The source of his worry is a huge trade deal being negotiated by the European Union and the four Mercosur members Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay—an accord whose signature seems closer than ever.

If the treaty goes through, "we would be in an impossible situation, untenable", said Mandin, 44, who inherited his 270-hectare farm 20 years ago.

"Today we're paid between 3.60 and 3.70 euros per kilogram of meat, but our production costs are 4.50 euros a kilo," he said while chain-smoking cigars. "We already have a deficit and face a difficult situation on our farms. If on top of that we add these massive imports of South American beef in Europe, we're liable to see prices collapse."



NEW YORK: This file photo taken on December 8, 2016 shows the Wall Street Bull sculpture is seen in the Financial District in New York. —AFP

cuts, Trump's pro-business attitude has comforted investors.

'Not related to Trump'

"Around him, the people in charge of the American economy come directly from Wall Street and Goldman Sachs," said Gregori Volokhine, president of Meeschaert Financial Services. That includes senior White House economic advisor Gary Cohn and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, among others.

"It's a team of insiders. Donald Trump lets things happen and what happens is market friendly." Those welcome signals from the White House come against the backdrop of steady economic expansion, with US GDP growing every year since 2010, fuelling the good mood on Wall Street. Trump and his team are seen as having given the economy a "boost," Cardillo said, noting that "the US economy and job creation were already robust before him." But the healthy US outlook is also part of a bigger, global picture. The International Monetary Fund estimates the world economy will grow by 3.7 percent this year after expanding by 3.6 percent in

2017, further increasing demand for US exports.

And as Volokhine noted, "last year, the most successful financial markets in the world were Argentina, Nigeria and Turkey." "It was obviously not related to Donald Trump." Underlining the impact of global conditions on the US economy, he noted that the 55 percent of American companies on the S&P 500 that are export-dependent have become even more competitive due to the weakening of the US dollar, which fell nearly 10 percent last year.

Meanwhile, individual investors who are cautiously dipping their toes back into American stock markets after suffering so heavily in the financial meltdown of 2008, seem largely unconcerned by the president's penchant for controversy.

"Everything he does is not perfect but Donald Trump does what he promised," said Steven Kinney, a New Jersey resident who has been investing on Wall Street for four years, and says he more than quadrupled his investments last year thanks to skyrocketing tech stocks. —AFP



WASHINGTON DC: This file photo taken on February 3, 2017 shows a woman using an ATM at a Bank of America branch in Washington, DC. —AFP

activity was strong across all of our businesses in 2017," said chief financial officer Paul Donofrio.

"Once again, we delivered positive operating leverage by carefully managing expenses

even as we continued to invest in new capabilities and technology that make it easier for our customers to do business with us."

Shares rose 0.2 percent to \$31.30 in pre-market trading. —AFP

France's cattle industry, the largest in Europe, has been facing a deep crisis of rising costs and lower prices—against a backdrop of falling meat consumption. Many ranchers are barely able to make a profit, while debt levels have been rising.

'We've tried everything'

"We've been in a crisis for four years, four years that we've been trying to streamline everything, clamp down everywhere, cut our costs to the limit," said Mandin, shrugging his shoulders.

"There comes a point where you can't cut any more—in terms of competitiveness we've tried everything." If the EU and the South American countries reach the agreement, at least 70,000 tons of Mercosur beef could enter Europe each year, free of custom charges. European negotiators consider this an enormous amount, while the South American side says it falls well short of what is necessary. The new imports would represent just one percent of Europe's total beef production, and 4.5 percent of France's output.

But ranchers say the current market structure could not absorb the increase, which would come on top of the 65,000 tons the EU has agreed to allow in from Canada as part of a trade deal.

That assessment is shared by Philippe Chotteau, chief economist at the French Livestock Institute, who said the lower-priced beef will "aggravate the crisis". —AFP

Business

Chevrolet launches Tahoe RST during Kuwait Motor Show Auto Moto 2018

Chevrolet Tahoe RST fulfils needs of regional customers

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Motor Show Auto Moto 2018, yesterday witnessed the Middle East launch of the eagerly-anticipated Tahoe RST. Following the overwhelming response at its regional premiere during the 2017 Dubai International Motor Show, the street-performance Rally Sport Truck edition of the Chevrolet Tahoe has been confirmed for the Middle East market.

Packing the potent 6.2-litre V-8 that also powers the iconic Corvette Stingray, the Tahoe RST boasts 420 hp channeled to all four wheels via General Motors' all-new Hydra-Matic 10L80 10-speed automatic transmission. To ensure exceptional handling without sacrificing ride quality or comfort, the Tahoe RST comes equipped with Magnetic Ride Control suspension. Cosmetically, the RST is differentiated from the standard Tahoe with its aftermarket cues, which give it a decidedly more aggressive appearance.

The exterior chrome elements are almost entirely eliminated for a street-performance look and replaced by gloss-black appointments. Exclusive to the RST are body-color grille surround, headlamp eyebrow and door handles; gloss-black grille, mirror caps, roof rails, running board accent, window trim and RST badging and illuminated black Chevrolet bowties. Finally, to ensure an imposing stance to complement the design enhancements, the Tahoe sits on exclusive 22-inch wheels.

Other standard features to differentiate the Tahoe RST include a Borla performance exhaust system, which not only gives it a more sonorous aural characteristic, it also liberates extra horsepower, thanks to 28 percent improvement in exhaust flow. To reign in the power, the Tahoe RST gets sizable front Brembo six-piston, fixed aluminum calipers finished in red, with brake pads clamping on bigger 410 x 32mm (16.1 inch x 1.3 inch) Duralife(tm) rotors. The new braking system increases the brake pad area and the rotor area by a substantial 84 percent and 42 percent respectively to boost system thermal capacity. The new Duralife rotors feature a hardened surface to reduce corrosion and provide quieter braking with less vibration.

Ahmed Soudodi, Head of Brand at Chevrolet Middle East, said: "The Tahoe is one of the most loved large SUVs in the Middle East and the outstanding response the RST edition received at its regional unveiling during this year's Dubai International Motor Show cemented this fact. The Tahoe RST was undeniably one of the star attractions on our stand - a clear indication of how much our customers want this vehicle. And now their wishes are being fulfilled as the most powerful Tahoe is officially launched at the 2018 Kuwait motor show."

He added: "With its street-performance look

and increased power, the RST is the most performance oriented Tahoe yet. Its exceptional styling is backed by equally impressive performance, all the while retaining the presence, and capability that make the Tahoe a firm favorite in the large SUV segment."

Also available for the Tahoe RST is General Motors' Magnetic Ride Control suspension system, which has been calibrated to make the best out of the street performance on offer.

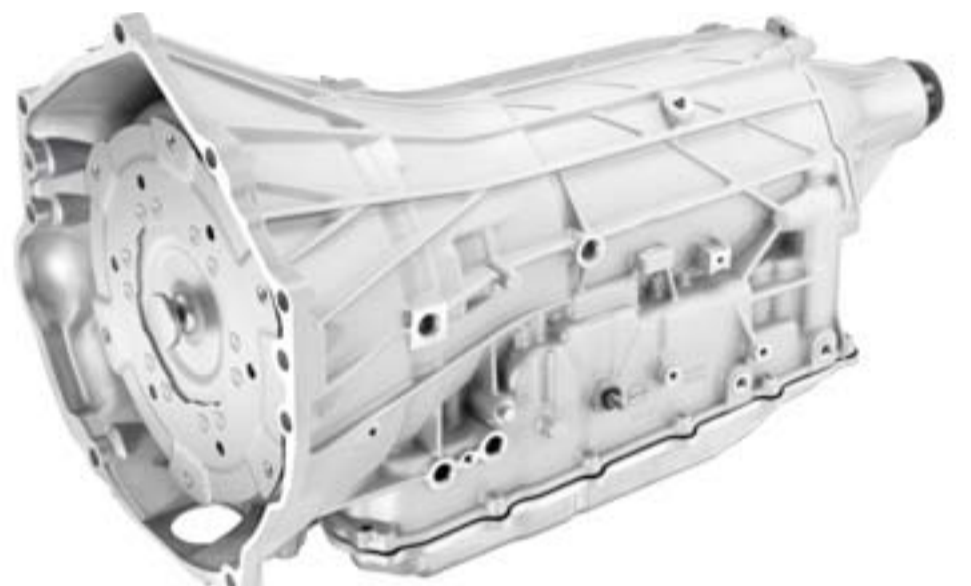
Plucked straight from Chevrolet's sports cars, Magnetic Ride Control is an active suspension system that constantly scans the road surface every millisecond and triggers damping changes electronically in as little as 5 milliseconds to give the Tahoe RST's driver confident handling with minimal body roll and enhanced ride quality.

The 6.2L V-8, which is being offered in the Tahoe for the first time, develops an estimated 420 horsepower and 460 lb-ft of torque. Not only is the engine suitably powerful, it also features state-of-the-art technologies such as



direct injection, Active Fuel Management, including cylinder deactivation and continuously variable valve timing. This allows for the optimal use of the engine's power, torque and efficiency across a variety of operating conditions.

Also exclusive to the Tahoe RST is the all-new 10-speed automatic transmission, which has been fine tuned to deliver great performance, seamless shifts, and better fuel economy. Smaller steps between the gear ratios allows the gearbox to maximize engine power under acceleration, giving the SUV a brisk 0-60 mph (0-



96kph) time of under 6 seconds.

To enhance fuel economy the transmission features a wide 7.39 overall gear ratio spread and lower numerical top gear ratio - this

improves efficiency by reducing engine revolutions at highway speeds. The first Tahoe RSTs will arrive to Chevrolet showrooms across the Middle East region this month.

Renault Al-Babtain displays Dokker Van at biggest B2B hospitality exhibition in Kuwait



KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized dealer of Renault vehicles in the State of Kuwait, showcased the Renault Dokker Van's exquisite features at the 7th edition of HORECA Kuwait Trade Show 2018, which took place between 15-17 January 2018 at the Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref, Hall 8.

The HORECA Exhibition showcased the latest equipment and technology for the hospitality sector and Renault Al-Babtain was thrilled to display its Renault Dokker Van, especially designed for this particular sector. Aimed towards small business owners and tradespeople, the Renault Dokker Van is a modern and efficient transport solution with an innate sense of practicality and versatility, that is both environment and budget-friendly. Its body design & generous interior space match the different

needs of owners. The Renault Dokker exudes aptly the finesse of Renault's automotive expertise, proving it to be the partner in business and success.

Renault Dokker starting price is KD 3,350 and comes with a 5-year warranty or 200,000 Kms and free registration with 3rd party insurance.

The HORECA Kuwait Exhibition 2018 was held under the patronage of the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, and the exhibition attracted great participation from leading hospitality and catering companies as well as VIP guests and members of the diplomatic corps.

Al-Babtain's participation in this event stems from its belief in supporting developing projects and businesses as well as engaging and partnering with national companies and projects.

Al-Babtain Group continues to impart knowledge in partnership with Injaz Kuwait

KUWAIT: For the second consecutive year in a row, Al-Babtain Group in collaboration with INJAZ Kuwait recently welcomed eager new Kuwaiti students to the 2018 Internship Program. Providing an avenue for career possibilities, the dynamic four week course was specially designed to familiarize the students with the different departments, subsidiaries and their individual responsibilities while also inspiring best practice work methods through motivational talks.

Ensuring exposure to real life challenges and learning curves, the course explored theoretical and practical hands-on approach through visits to the respective divisions and interactive sessions with the different division heads. With rising demand for high caliber employees in the workplace, the training aims to advance local skills and empower the new generation of Kuwaiti youth with the tools to excel.

The program that will continue until 1st February 2018 integrated the students into areas of the group's Sales, Finance, Service, Customer management, Marketing and Human Resources for a wider and intricate understanding of internal operations.

In addition, the program will further include six individual development modules that have been dedicated to equip the driven to face changing environments, ranging with motivational sessions about employment in the private sector, future success challenges, and how to steer ones career in the right direction. Core skills required to compete in a thriving business environment such as

Marketing Operations, Brand Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Accounting and Financial Operations, Service and Parts Operations, were also part of the month long training.

The final phase will see all of the participants receive a certificate of completion and an evaluation of each intern's performance. Towards the end of the course, the interns will also be able to determine their future employment opportunities in the concerned operations.

Abdulmohsen Al-Babtain, Chief Human Resources Officer - Al-Babtain Group said: "In line with our mission to uphold the society's needs and boost national progress, we are proud to contribute to lasting change starting with the new wave of young and determined youth."

It gives us pleasure in arming each individual with new skills and international standards. In addition to our eagerness to process and apply the international best practices in our business with the help of INJAZ Kuwait. Offering a jumpstart on the road to a successful career, at Al-Babtain, we envision an entity of passion, integrity and commitment, values that we follow and would like to see reflected in the potential candidates that have the ambition to join our family."



Technology

As technology ascends, has CES made Detroit Auto Show an afterthought?

Dominated by revamps of tried-and-true models

DETROIT: This year's Detroit Auto Show has unfolded with the slick precision of a corporate infomercial, filled with sparkly new offerings, but little of the crackle of something truly innovative. There were no launches of major new electric vehicles and no significant news on autonomous cars that hadn't come out a week earlier at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

Instead, the annual Motor City gathering was dominated by revamps of tried-and-true models, especially pickups and SUVs that have been the foundation of US car sales in recent years. Like many other industries, automakers know now to show up at CES for the buzziest discussions about technology that affects their sectors. Critics question the relevance of the Detroit show as CES grabs more attention.

"At Detroit, you see the cars of yesterday. At Las Vegas, you get a glimpse of the cars of tomorrow," said Ferdinand Dudenhofer of the Center for Automotive Research at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Germany. Dudenhofer said all conventional car shows have lost some of their luster in recent years, but Detroit is even more diminished than Frankfurt or Tokyo, in part because so many of the vehicles presented are massive gas guzzlers that have no overseas market.

Max Muncey, a spokesman for the Detroit Auto Show, brushed aside talk that CES has rendered Detroit a has-been, running through a litany of best-selling US vehicles that were first introduced in Detroit. "There's a lot of wasted air that's happening down there about technology and products that are never going to see the light of day," Muncey said of CES, adding that there are actually "synergies" between the two events. "I think discussions there are about five, 10, 15 years out from making the road," he said. Technologies discussed in Detroit are "going to be on vehicles within the next 12 months."



Automakers know now to show up at CES

NAIAS. But longtime observers say the show has lost some zest, partly because there are few genuine surprises among vehicle launches.

Bigger priorities

Adding to that is the diminished importance of the US car market as other emerging countries have taken to the roads. The US share of global auto sales was 20 percent in 2017, down from 35 percent in 2000, according to figures cited by Dudenhofer. CES only became a big priority for auto execs in the last couple of years as electric cars and autonomous technology became bigger priorities. Part of the problem for Detroit is CES' proximity on the calendar, which can make the car show seem like an afterthought.

At CES this year, Ford announced a series of projects, such

Storied history

The show, officially called the North American International Auto Show, was originally devised in the 1980s to boost the US auto industry amid the rise of Japanese and German imports. The event in those years featured such iconic figures as Lee Iacocca, a legendary executive at both Ford and Chrysler, and Roger Smith of General Motors.

In 1989, both Toyota and Nissan chose Detroit to officially launch their luxury lines, Lexus and Infiniti. The show has also seen plenty of head-spinning stunts, such as in 2008, when Dodge unleashed a parade of longhorn cattle and cowboys through downtown Detroit to launch a new Dodge Ram truck.

The 2017 show at the Cobo Center in downtown Detroit drew more than 5,000 media members from 61 countries and more than 800,000 visitors from the general public. Between the show itself and side events at hotels and restaurants, it generated \$450 million in economic impact for Detroit, according to data from



DETROIT: New models debut at North American International Auto Show. The 2019 Ram Rebel is introduced during the press preview at the 2018 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS). —AFP

as a "transportation mobility cloud" that links communication from a city's public transit systems, and Mercedes-Benz' Smart Vision EQ, a self-driving smart car prototype. Execs from Toyota, GM and other car companies also made headlines.

But Detroit defenders say the show remains essential because it offers access to an unmatched array of industry executives, suppliers and academics. Not all the biggest

names present publicly, but many stop through for one-on-one meetings at the Cobo Center, said Muncey. "At the end of the day, we have something special here in Detroit and nobody can take that away from us," Muncey said, noting the city's network of big auto suppliers, manufacturers and researchers. "We bring in the global CEOs that are really unparalleled at both a tech side and an industry side." —AFP

YouTube toughens rules on video advertisements

SAN FRANCISCO: YouTube on Tuesday announced ramped-up rules regarding when it will run ads with videos as it scrambled to quell concerns by brands about being paired with troublesome content. "There's no denying 2017 was a difficult year, with several issues affecting our community and our advertising partners," YouTube vice president of display, video and analytics Paul Muret said in a blog post. "The challenges we faced in 2017 have helped us make tough but necessary changes in 2018."

Channels at YouTube will need to have at least 1,000 subscribers and 4,000 hours of watch time within the past year to be eligible for ads, according to Muret. Previously, channels could be eligible for ads as part of a YouTube Partner Program by racking up 10,000 views or more. "We want to take channel size, audience engagement, and creator behavior into consideration to determine eligibility for ads," Muret said.

YouTube will closely watch for spam, abuse flags and other signals to make sure channels are remaining within the Google-owned video-sharing platform's policies regarding content, according to the post. Muret said that manual reviews of video will be added to a Google Preferred system that brands use to place ads with popular YouTube content to better vet videos.

YouTube is also providing advertisers simpler controls regarding where ads appear and transparency including safety checks by outside parties, according to Muret. The changes were expected to affect "a significant number" of YouTube channels eligible to run ads. YouTube late last year pulled 150,000 videos of children after lewd comments about them were posted by viewers and went public with a vow to greatly increase the ranks of workers focused on rooting out content violating its policies.

The moves came as YouTube strived to assure companies their ads would not appear with offensive or inappropriate videos. "We are passionate about protecting our users, advertisers and creators and making sure YouTube is not a place that can be co-opted by bad actors," Muret said. "While we took several steps last year to protect advertisers from inappropriate content, we know we need to do more to ensure that their ads run alongside content that reflects their values." —AFP

Top five game changers for 2018

I am fortunate in my role to have the opportunity of speaking with some of the best Chief Information, Technology, Security and Digital Officers in our region - many of whom are trailblazers leading the charge to redefine their businesses and industries during a time of unprecedented change.

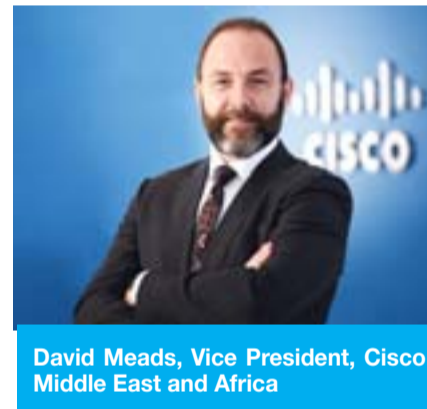
Many of the conversations I have revolve around how they can use technology to do amazing things that we could barely imagine only a few years ago. As the new year kicks off, I am particularly excited to see how quickly things will start to come together as 2018 is already shaping up to be a year in which technology will have a bigger impact than ever before.

For 30 years connectivity has been at the heart of everything we do at Cisco - connecting people and devices securely, reliably, and with the highest levels of performance. But today, being connected is a given and has become the new normal. In 2018, we're taking this to the next level by helping businesses and organizations get even more value out of all this connectivity. So, they can connect even more deeply with their data, their network, their customers and prospects, and with smart assistants and using any cloud of their choice - private or public. As we look towards a new year with all of the opportunities its presents, here are the top five technology trends that digital leaders should invest in for 2018:

1. Put your data to work

Organizations are now collecting more data in a matter of days than a human brain could possibly process in a lifetime (or even several). We're using artificial intelligence and machine learning to gather and analyze data from everywhere - with the goal of helping us make smarter decisions.

We already see this trend in action. Hospitals can track if doctors and nurses wash their hands at the right times. Banks can find and fix issues with their mobile



David Meads, Vice President, Cisco Middle East and Africa

apps before users have to call in. Museums can see which attractions people visit most frequently. The list goes on. In 2018, we expect to see many more examples of human imagination pushing the boundaries of what's possible.

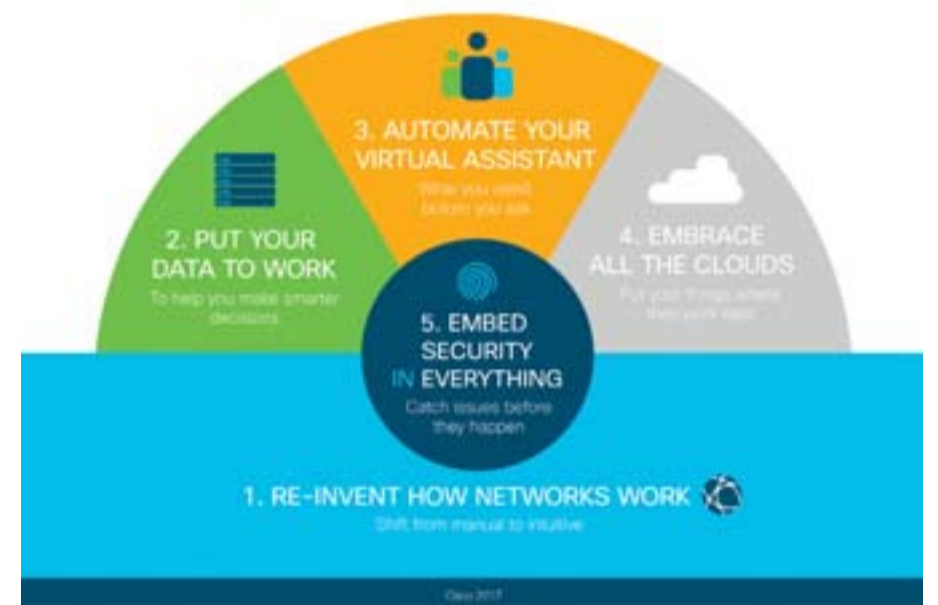
2. Re-invent how networks work

For 30 years, networks have worked pretty much the same way, requiring an IT army to manage network settings manually. But this is the year it all changes. We're moving away from manual, and we're shifting to intent. Think of the network as a car. Until now, someone had to drive. But an intent-based network is a self-driving car. You tell it where to go, and it gets there by itself. Let's say you tell your network to "Set up a new building site." The network will automatically set up the machines and connect them in the right way. And it will do this securely in milliseconds, rather than the hours it takes to do it manually.

3. Automate your virtual assistant

In the present-day world, we need to prompt virtual assistants to provide us with the information we seek. The underlying requirement being we have to ask for the information. But it doesn't have to work this way. In 2018, virtual assistants will be smart enough to figure out what we need before we tell them. Picture this: You walk into a smart meeting room big enough for six people. The room can tell from your phone that you have arrived. Behind the scenes, the video conference tool talks to your calendar, sees you have a meeting in two minutes, and starts the call on time. The room also notices that you are the only one here, so it raises the temperature by a few degrees to keep you comfortable.

Top 5 game changers for 2018



This is the power of automated assistants - when all of your tools are able to talk together in the background to make the right things happen at the right time. It may sound somewhat sci-fi, but this is already a reality. And it will be even more widespread in 2018.

4. Embrace all the clouds

It's no longer about a journey to the cloud, singular. It's about putting your data and applications where they work best, and moving them around at will - all whilst keeping everything secure. 2018 will be the year you get to store data wherever you would like, and without compromise. Adopt a private cloud in your data center. Pick public clouds from Microsoft, Amazon, and Google. Or use all of the above. The more the merrier. Because your data will be secured, managed, and orchestrated effectively-whether you're using one cloud or one hundred.

5. Embed security in everything

In 2018, we will be able to embed security in everything we do. We will be able to

watch how people or things behave, learn their patterns, and get alerts if something changes. Imagine an employee named Pam. Every day, Pam checks her email, uses video conferencing, and goes to certain websites. But then one day, Pam tries to upload files to a server she hasn't used in two years. That's odd. It could mean that Pam plans to leave the company. And it looks like she wants to take some of the data with her. With security embedded in everything, our systems would notice this change in behavior right away. And they could automatically block Pam-and issue an alert. This helps identify security issues before they happen. Or at least respond to breaches more quickly.

A parting thought

Remember, these trends are connected. The companies who thrive in the digital era are the ones who master all five. So, don't think of them as separate trends. They are a digital platform and a foundation for everything you do. Have a transformative 2018! - Provided by David Meads, Vice President - Middle East & Africa, Cisco



TOKYO: This photo taken on January 15, 2018 shows Space Invaders GigaMax video game being displayed on the windows of the Roppongi Hills observatory, Tokyo City View during a Play Space Invaders exhibition. —AFP

'Alien attack' in Tokyo as Space Invaders turns 40

TOKYO: Block graphic aliens dropped down the window panes of a Tokyo skyscraper before being blasted into oblivion by enthusiastic gamers celebrating 40 years of the arcade sensation "Space Invaders". Four decades after the game took the world by storm, a high-tech exhibition is allowing enthusiasts to save the world from extra-terrestrial invasion in a variety of novel ways. Part of the installation sees the game projected inside the windows of a skyscraper's 52nd floor, against the glittering backdrop of Tokyo's night skyline.

Elsewhere at the "Play! Space Invaders!" exhibit, gamers interact more closely with their alien opponents thanks to motion-sensor technology that allows them to stamp or hit the invaders as they approach on the floors or walls. And for those

with a touch of nostalgia, the exhibit also features the traditional game machines that first tempted players in arcades and pizza parlours decades ago.

Father of two, Keiji Ishihara, 50, remembers the frenzy that surrounded the game's original release when he was 10. "It was a big shock, a fever swept Tokyo, but boys like me didn't have much money to play at the time," he said, smiling as his son blasted away an alien. "It's beyond sci-fi that we can now access Space Invaders like this!" When the game was released in 1978, Japan's tech sector was still in its infancy, creator Tomohiro Nishikado said.

"At the time, computers were not that well known in Japan so I learned everything by myself." "I came up with the characters and the concept. I did everything on my own. Looking back, it is quite impressive... I would say that I am surprised that I managed to achieve this." Takayuki Taketa, 46, first played the game in a bowling alley and was involved in the development of its revival as an art director.

"It's fantastic to see the game being played again," he said, as electronic beeps and bleeps around him indicated the progress being made in the war against the aliens. "It makes me so happy to watch people's reactions and see them enjoy it after working on the project." —AFP

Health

Thames paddle-boarders try to turn the tide on plastic

Products would take hundreds of years to downgrade

LONDON: Floating on the murky waters of the River Thames in London, activist paddle-boarders are trying to rid the waterway of a plague of plastic waste and draw attention to the problem. As the sun rises on the Thames behind historic Kew Bridge in the west of the British capital, quacking ducks and gliding swans conjured a serene landscape. But on closer inspection all manner of plastic objects have washed up ashore, including plastic bags hanging from trees.

It is this kind of regularly sullied scene that inspired several members of paddle-board association Active360 to launch cleaning sessions of the river and canals that run through London. The founders—Paul Hyman, Louise Nolan and James Roorda—took to the water this week to inspect an island for detritus. Within half an hour, they had discovered enough discarded waste to fill a large bucket. The haul includes plastic bottles, ropes, sheeting, cups “and the most unpleasant plastic bags: dog poop bags which seem to get everywhere now,” Nolan said. Many of these products would take hundreds of years to downgrade.



LONDON: Louise Nolan (L) and James Roorda balance on their paddle-boards as they collect discarded plastic and rubbish from the banks of the River Thames, near Kew Bridge. —AFP

'1,000 Royal Albert Halls'

Nolan noted their haul was relatively modest and depending on the tides it can be three or four times larger. For her, this small gesture for the environment is “really gratifying”, but Hyman, the founder of the association, struggles with its limitations. “Cleaning it up, the danger is that we’re just hiding the problem,” he said. “It’s upstream measures that need to happen. There’s no point just cleaning up after people, you need to stop it happening in the first place.”

The association tries to raise awareness about its efforts on social networks and at a festival held in spring. Their latest battle: attempting to convince coffee shops in the capital to abandon disposable cups, many of which fall into the river. Their anti-plastics campaign is slowly starting to gather momentum, aided in part by the government of Prime Minister Theresa May, who last week announced a plan to fight “one of the great environmental scourges of our time.” “In the UK alone, the amount of single-use plastic wasted every year would fill 1,000 Royal Albert Halls,” she said, referring to the famous London concert hall with more than 5,000 seats.

'Change in the air'

May’s environmental action plan includes extending a small charge for plastic carrier bags—currently enforced at supermarkets—to all retailers in England, as well as urging them to introduce plastic-free aisles. The government will also call for evidence on changes to the tax system or charges on single-use plastic items, such as take-away containers. However environmental advocates have criticized the proposals as too modest, in particular the pledge to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste only by the end of 2042.

The European Union wants to phase out single-use plastics, aiming to make all packaging reusable or recyclable by 2030. Corporations also appear to be responding to the growing climate of concern around plastics. On Tuesday, budget supermarket chain Iceland, which special-

izes in frozen food, announced it would remove all plastic packaging from its own branded product lines within five years. Coffee and convenience goods chains like Starbucks, Pret a Manger and Costa Coffee also increasingly compete in “green” proposals, offering discounts to customers who bring their own mugs and charging more for their disposable cups.

“This year there is definitely a change in the air,” said Hyman, though he remains unconvinced by May’s plans. “What the government announced last week was interesting but it wasn’t very tangible,” he said. As he plays his part in the evolving anti-plastics revolution, Hyman urged others “to think about their own lives and the plastic they use, and to think about what they don’t really need to use. “Just carrying a reusable coffee cup around with you is a really good example.” —AFP

Endangered Sumatran elephant gives birth in Indonesia

JAKARTA: A critically endangered Sumatran elephant has given birth to a new calf in Indonesia, the country’s conservation agency said yesterday. Sumatran elephants are a protected species, but rampant deforestation for plantations has reduced their natural habitat and brought them into conflict with humans. The newborn was found with its 40-year old mother Seruni, who was being closely monitored by the agency in anticipation of the birth inside a conservation forest in Riau on the island of Sumatra.

Officials expressed jubilation at the arrival of the baby who is believed to be a week old. Its gender has not yet been determined. “The birth of the elephant is a conservation gift,” the agency said in a statement. “The calf is constantly being guarded by its mother and two other adult elephants.” Dozens of elephants were found dead in Sumatra last year, including an adult without tusks in Aceh, along with its abandoned 11-month-old calf. Most were killed by humans, according to conservationists. Last month, a pregnant elephant was found dead in a palm oil plantation in Sumatra, in what authorities suspected was a deliberate poisoning. There are believed to be around 2,000 Sumatran elephants left in the wild. —AFP

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What's On

Al Kout lifestyle and entertainment destination nears its completion



Tamdeen Group, Kuwait's leading property developer, announced that development of Al Kout Project, the largest waterfront retail and entertainment destination in the country, has entered its final stages. The company also asserted its commitment to finishing the project according to the highest international standards. Occupying a plot of 300,000 square meters, Al Kout Project offers six diverse experiences reflecting the unique architectural heritage of Kuwait. The most modern of these experiences is Al Kout Mall, which is expected to open for visitors during the first quarter of 2018.

Al Kout Mall will increase the overall leasing area of KWD 123 million Al Kout Project to 100,000 square meters. Al Kout Project comprises 360 stores and a 12-screen cinema, which is equipped with the latest IMAX and 4DX systems and will be managed by Kuwait National Cinema Company (Cinescape). Dining features prominently at Al Kout Mall, with an array of local and international restaurants and cafes, including 11 Kuwaiti trademarks which affirms Tamdeen Group's constant support for ambitious initiatives from Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.

Al Kout Mall is also home to Infinity Sea family entertainment center, the largest indoor entertainment center in Kuwait. The center is themed around marine life and is an ideal edutainment for visitors of all ages eager to learn more about the marine environment. In addition, Al Kout Mall will house the first ever Q8 Karting, the biggest indoor track of its kind in the Middle East, offering an exhilarating experience that simulates pro racing. The Q8 Karting track is designed to suit all types of races, and age groups.

Al Kout Project has a seafront stretching 1.6 kilometers in Fahaheel area, with captivating views of the Arabian Gulf, particularly at Al Kout Marina, which can accommodate more than 150 boats. Meanwhile, Al Kout NAG'AT, a favorite pier for fishermen, is one of the rare spots that has preserved its heritage, with traditional sailboats, fishing methods, and commercial activities.

Al Kout Souq is another highlight of the project that reflects the area's heritage. It features a traditional-style marketplace where traders sell fruits, vegetables, fish and meat. The design of the Souq area reflects the simplicity of shopping in old Kuwait. The project does not only offer variety in entertainment and shopping, but it also offers convenience for tourists to find that the five star Al-Kout Rotana Hotel is connected to the rest of the project's facilities. Strategically placed, the hotel is 25 minutes' drive from Kuwait International Airport and a 45-minute drive from the Saudi borders.

The project promotes easy accessibility, with Al Kout Mall connected via a footbridge to Al Kout Souq, offering stunning views of fountains, and the marina. The mall also incorporates a multi-story car park and external parking, with 3,600 parking slots. Muath B Al Roumi, GM - Tamdeen Group Marketing, said: "The first quarter of 2018 will witness the birth of an exceptional tourism and retail destination in Kuwait. With many exciting tourist attractions for all, Tamdeen Group is proud of Al Kout Project, and Al Kout Mall in particular, as a multiuse destination that goes beyond mainstream concepts of shopping centers. This will be one of the leading urban landmarks in Kuwait offering an enthralling mix of modernity and Kuwaiti heritage."

Landmark to launch 'Art Olympiad'

As part of its commitment to the community, Landmark Group Kuwait is all set to host, for the tenth year in a row, the Art Olympiad 2018. The event will take place on February 01 from 8.00am - 1.00pm at Centrepoint, The Avenues Mall. Children aged 14 years and below are eligible to enter the competition. This initiative is considered as part of Landmark Group's ongoing corporate social responsibility where young artists have an opportunity to showcase their talents.

As always, Landmark Group is keen on maintaining an excellent rapport and creating awareness about relevant issues among the youth with constant activities and events, while setting a platform for around 170 students from over 17 schools of repute across Kuwait. Children will be provided with a craft pack that includes a drawing sheet and a variety of art materials such as paints, pencils and crayons.

Saibal Basu, Chief Operating Officer of Landmark Group, Kuwait said, "It will be a decade for us this year to host The Art Olympiad. We hope to continue to raise the spirits of the students and encourage them to express their views strongly and in an innovative manner. We take pride in the growing popularity of this initiative and the great anticipation we see from participating schools and students"

"Year after year we receive positive and enthusiastic feedback from schools and students as well as the growing number of participants are a clear indication of the successful

engagement the Landmark Group has with the community. We are committed to the Kuwaiti society and are extremely pleased to receive such positive responses. We are certain that this year's version of Art Olympiad will mark another success and become an incentive for potential talents to surface their creativity".

Participating schools this year include: The English School Salmiya, Fahaheel Al Watanieh Indian Private School, Indian Educational School, Indian Learners Own Academy, Ajal Bilingual School, Canadian Bilingual School, Indian English Academy School, Indian Central School, Al-Nibras International Bilingual School, The English School Fahaheel, Kuwait English School, Salmiya Indian Model School, Carmel School, British School of Kuwait, Dasman Bilingual School, Kuwait National English School, International British School etc.

Art Olympiad objective is to bring fun and entertainment to young artists by encouraging their creativity and reward them for their participation in the art competition. It provides a grooming platform for these students by helping them improvise their flair and encourage their innovative ability through art. Students will be judged based on creativity, workmanship and overall impression. Judging will be held in two age categories: 1) 9-11 years, 2) 12-14 years.

First, second and third place prizes will be awarded for each category, in addition to two awards for creativity and colorfulness in which a total of eight winners will be selected at the end of the competition. Each winner will be awarded with exciting grand prizes and many other valuable gifts. They will also receive certificates and trophies in recognition of their participation, and their schools will be given a plaque of appreciation.

EQUATE honors employees' children for their excellent achievements at school



EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, has always made an effort to strengthen engagement with its employees' and their families. The Company recently held a ceremony to honor 200 of its employees' pride and joy - their children - who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievements at their respective schools, an event that highlights the Company's work force as accomplished employees who also contribute to developing future generations.

While congratulating the students, EQUATE's President & CEO Dr Ramesh Ramachandran said, "EQUATE places high importance on education as a key pillar to achieving sustainability. The younger generations are the ones who will take on the reigns of what we build today. Therefore, it is essential for us to encourage them to seek knowledge and arm them with the capabilities that will enable them to lead, innovate and sustain our world tomorrow." Ramachandran added,



"We also extend gratitude to our employees for providing a better future for the younger generations and making a difference in our society in their own way. We look forward to seeing their children excel in their future professions and we hope to inspire them year after year to continue in their endeavors to success."

Since 2012, EQUATE continues honoring

the achievements of its employees' children starting from grades 1 through 12 each year, which is in appreciation of their commitment to excel and succeed in their academic studies. The EQUATE Group* is a global producer of petrochemicals and the world's second largest producer of Ethylene Glycol (EG). The Group has industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe that annually produce over 5 million tons of Ethylene, EG, Polyethylene (PE) and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET).

The products are marketed throughout Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The EQUATE Group's shareholders include Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan Petrochemical Company (BPC) and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC). The Group is a leading enterprise that pursues sustainability wherever it operates through partnerships in fields that include the environment, economy and society.

IMA to host two days of intensive Seerah Camp

Under the patronage of Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Masjid Al-Kabir, Indian Muslim

Association (IMA) is organizing an in-depth 2 days Seerah Workshop on 9th and 10th of February 2018 at Rajdhani Palace Bouquet Hall, Khaitan. Renowned Islamic scholar and Motivational speaker Mr. Ameenul Hasan will conduct this workshop and Well known speaker and trainer Fahad Sarwani from Bahrain will also take part as guest speaker. Seerah retreat is a unique course for the entire family to benefit. It takes you back to the golden ERA of Islamic history. The two day camp will have series of lectures and interactive sessions on the life of last prophet of Islam.

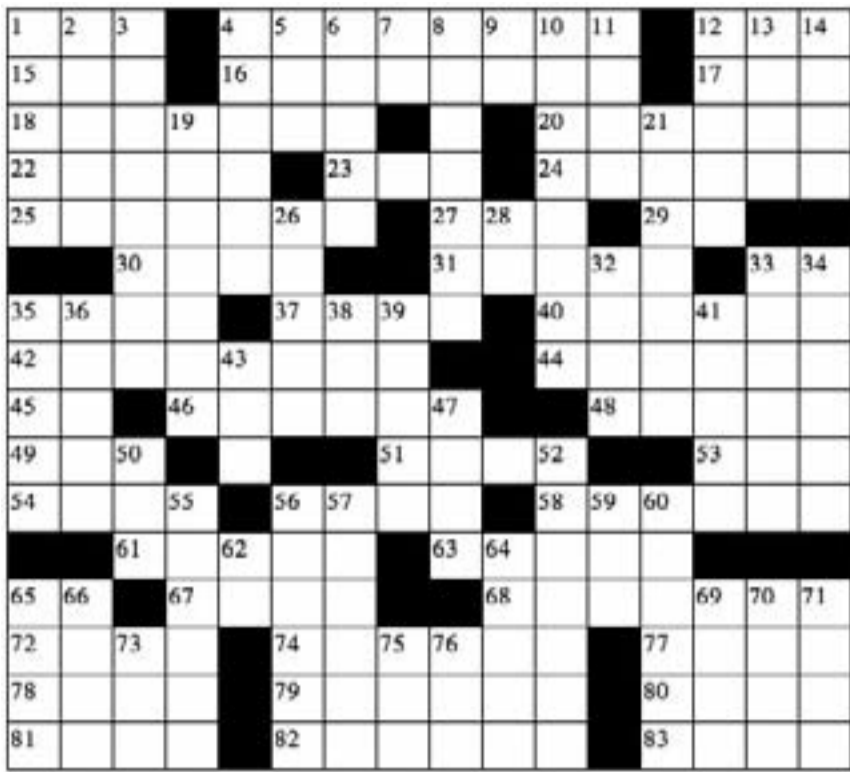
TIES talks

Join a monthly public speaking club to develop your communication skills and share information related to life in Kuwait. Get public speaking tips, hear and evaluate a 15-minute speech, and pluck your courage for a two-minute, impromptu speech. The topic for January's session is titled 'Food in Kuwait'. The talk will take place on Wednesday, January 24th at 7pm.



Stars

CROSSWORD 1812



ACROSS

1. An acute inflammatory disease occurring in the intestines of premature infants.
4. A place where taxis park while awaiting customers.
12. Chiefly perennial grasses of cool temperate regions.
15. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
16. Large arboreal boa of tropical South America.
17. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
18. Patterned with veins or streaks or color resembling marble.
20. Port city in western Saudi Arabia on the Red Sea.
22. Take control of.
23. (British) Informal term for information.
24. Type genus of the Alaudidae.
25. Merchandise issued for sale or public showing (especially a record or film).
27. A human limb.
29. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
30. (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
31. Port city in northwestern Belgium and industrial center.
35. An accidental hole that allows something (fluid or light etc.) to enter or escape.
37. A domed or vaulted recess or projection on a building especially the east end of a church.
40. Necessary for relief or supply.
42. (Judaism) An eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem.
44. Evergreen Indian shrub with vivid yellow flowers whose bark is used in tanning.
45. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
46. Type genus of the family Pholadidae.
48. Squash bugs.
49. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on the sea or ships.
51. Urged social reform in 19th century England.
53. Ratio of the adjacent side to the hypotenuse.
54. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
58. Women's stockings made from a sheer material (nylon or rayon or silk).
61. (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
63. Jordan's port.
65. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
67. In bed.
68. An amine containing the double bond linkage -C=C-N-.
72. (informal) Exceptionally good.
74. Melon having yellowish rind and whitish flesh.
77. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
78. An island in Indonesia east of Java.
79. Away from the mouth or oral region.
80. A standard or model or pattern regarded as typical.
81. A collection of things (goods or works of art etc.) for public display.
82. West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
83. Of the color of black ink.

DOWN

1. A city in south central Belgium situated on a promontory between the Meuse River and the Sambre River.
2. Remove from memory or existence.
3. Of a deep somewhat purplish blue color or similar to that of a clear October sky.
4. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
5. Used of a single unit or thing.
6. An emblem (a small piece of plastic or cloth or metal) that signifies your status (rank or membership or affiliation etc.).
7. A white trivalent metallic element.
8. A tax imposed on ships that enter the US.
9. An associate degree in nursing.
10. The capital and largest city of Chad.
11. The lower house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
12. A city in Veneto.
13. Toward the mouth or oral region.
14. A Loloish language.
19. The termination of a relationship.
21. Of or relating to Dante Alighieri or his writings.
26. Tall hat.
28. A blood group antigen possessed by Rh-positive people.
32. A river in northwestern Russia flowing generally west into the Gulf of Finland.
33. A rational motive for a belief or action.
34. The segment of the public that is easily influenced by mass media (chiefly British).
36. An upright tripod for displaying something (usually an artist's canvas).
38. A close friend who accompanies his buddies in their activities.
39. Cloak consisting of an oblong piece of cloth used to cover the head and shoulders.
41. Athenian lawmaker whose code of laws prescribed death for almost every offense (circa 7th century BC).
43. One thousand periods per second.
47. Any branch of Shinto other than Kokka.
50. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
52. A city in southeastern Spain.
55. (of tempo) Leisurely n.
56. A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
57. A member of an agricultural people in southeastern India.
59. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
60. Saudi Arabian minister of petroleum who was a central figure in the creation of OPEC (born in 1930).
62. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
66. Type genus of the Cracidae.
69. Extremely robust.
70. (British) An informer or spy working for the police.
71. An annual award for outstanding achievements in television.
73. Any high mountain.
75. A colloid that has a continuous liquid phase in which a solid is suspended in a liquid.
76. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, unique designs and ideas are most attractive to you now as you cast away the old, outmoded things in your life. You will have the urge to separate yourself from mean, trivial people who enjoy creating drama out of nothing. You long to be with more like-minded people who like to discuss solutions rather than people; a new smile will brighten your day. Getting out and about will create opportunities for less than traditional romance and new friends with avant-garde attitudes. This is a positive window of times for looking ahead regarding your work conditions: be proactive and you will be rewarded. Where finances are concerned you are on a clear path to success. You will figure out what is going on with someone you see often, aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, a disagreement will cause distance between you and a formerly close friend. This could be a result of difference in thinking regarding impracticality. The cycle you have come into will push you away from all that doesn't support and advance projects and life in general. You are interested in only solid evidence and factual truths; the rest could just go to heck in a hand basket as far as you're concerned. Ideas involving cutting edge, futuristic thinking appeal to you now; you will apply these to an important project. Your intellectual abilities are performing at the highest level. Enjoy a walk or a good visit with a friend this afternoon. Opportunities abound now for introducing new habits and routines in your work and home life, taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you are entering a cycle that indicates the possibility ungrounded and estranged from intimate relationships. You seek viable, workable strategies; those you do not work in this way will not fit into your plans. Cutting-edge, progressive methods and attitudes are priorities now according to the stars. Nostalgia and legacy are foremost in your heart and mind. You may be compelled to search your ancestral lineage; you long to build your own family upon a solid foundation. You will do whatever it takes to avoid small-minded people with trifling attitudes. Your sense of humor will create positive feelings. You may make new friends in an unusual way during this cycle. Enjoy this evening with someone who is your intellectual match, gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, some days are just meant for daydreaming; allow yourself to think not just outside the box, but as though there is no box! The stars are aligned for ethereal energy and manifestation of hopes. Be wise with your use of power. There could be some push back from a critical person that does not think or operate like you. Your sense of coming to the aid of friends and family is strengthened and shared with someone you care for. You will run from the boring or mundane in search of anything exciting and innovative. You are likely to make new acquaintances and find new outlets for your interests during this cycle; there could be someone more than willing to tag along with you as you uncover new people, places and things, cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, you will appear confident and powerful today as you address superiors in a meeting. You will veer away from conventional, tried and true methods and introduce innovative new strategies. You could make known that you will not tolerate trivial interference. You may feel disconnected from certain people regarding views on spiritual or political issues. You want concrete evidence and facts, not sentiments or guesses. You feel as though someone is standing on your last nerve as they try to convince you that you are wrong. Take a full view of your life and every facet affecting your daily routine; are you getting where you want to go tonight you will have no doubt that you are loved and respected when you dine with special friends, leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, you will find that you are bored with life in general today. It will seem as though you live on a different planet as you examine your thoughts and feelings. You may feel compelled to think about an old love affair that could still be under your skin; there's never been another like it. You may venture out into new social circles that might bring disappointment. Someone may voice opposition with the way you are doing things; you might just tell them where to go! There is nothing like laughter to bring about a peaceful ending to any trying day. Humorous television or a movie could work wonders if you share them with the right person. Think about the start of the new year and what opportunities for professional and personal growth come with it, virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, the new cycle you have enters brings with it opportunities to make new and interesting connections socially and perhaps romantically. You feel that trivial thinking and gossip are beneath you and no wanted in your comfort zone. You may explore a cool retro venue with clothes from another time luring you; could this be past lives vibes or just a love of history? Not to get swept up in being right; instead take a moment to think about the truth. When you present your views, someone will dispute your opinion in a very rude manner that's when you can shine, letting your diplomatic nature take over. New people, new ideas, that's what you long for and will pull to you if given half a chance. Let yourself unwind for the evening, libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, you may find yourself estranged from someone and feeling disconnected to the world. You have no time for dealing with things, people or places that you consider trivial. You tend to enjoy every minute you can even with the large responsibilities of work and home. Good news today regarding finances and investments you made earlier in life that you had put on the back burner. You may make many new connections at a convention or large meeting of some kind. You could find yourself showing someone around town that is from either a foreign country or a very different area of your country. You are able to help this person feel more at home. Indulge your love of the abstract, experimental methods with a visit to a museum of modern art, scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, you may sever a long-standing relationship that has outgrown its place of trust in your life. Healthcare secrets and concerns could come to light regarding someone you love. Your support is sought for political or religious reasons; you should think this one over carefully. You tire of trivial gossip and activities; big minds equal big ideas, small minds equal small talk. You long to rise above the ordinary when planning your future. You may seem to be in search of like-minded individuals that can entertain deep thoughts and solutions. This is a full day with a most positive ending. Smile with a friend later. Do something lighthearted you get you through hump day doldrums at work! Maybe skating or another vigorous activity tonight, sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, no one will win an argument with you today. Your words will hit their target every time without fail. Your thoughts and feelings about life are an open book today and you won't mind sharing. There is a warning regarding a problem that seems insurmountable; your quick wits and clear head will prevail, but beware! It won't be easy and you could find yourself being shunned as a result. You have entered another cycle of change that finds you throwing tradition to the wind and pursuing eccentric goals. The old way of life no longer appeals to you. You would like to stay away from people if possible to stay focused on what is important to you now. Unusual romantic and social interaction is probable at this time, capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Aquarius, your patience wears thin with those who have many opinions but no answers. You seek cutting edge, newly or undiscovered information. Look for words of praise from your superiors. There is a connection to those around you as well as those you meet. Generally, you will feel as though small talk and gossip are beneath you. You will be drawn more and more to the positive; handle this tastefully. An amorous opportunity will present itself in a most unusual way. New friendships seem to form now and some of them will be long lasting. Someone admires your accomplishments and ideas. You'll need to refresh and unwind tonight with a concert or movie, perhaps with a group of friends, aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, the heavens create an energy that focuses on your appearance as well as your health. If weight gain has plagued you remember that what you put in your mouth stays with you awhile. There is an opportunity to commit to a new diet or lifestyle if you are truly serious. The new phase you have entered highlights gaining respect and love for yourself; let right energy flow through you! You can gain new insight to someone's motives that will show you that you were incorrect. You will make strong efforts to please those you interact with; remember that sometimes people pleasers can not be trusted to give an honest opinion. Let your heart be light and your smile glow this evening as you prepare a delicious dinner using your own recipe, pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Human Skeleton & Organs

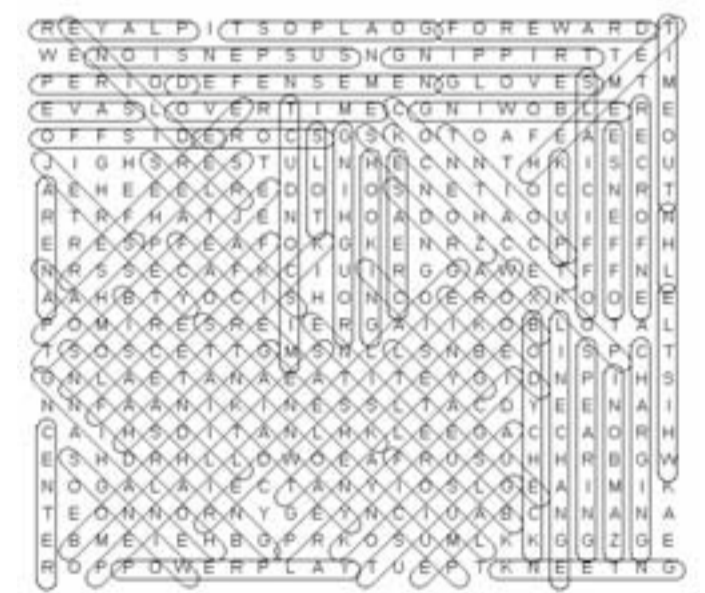
Find and circle all of the skeletal parts and body organs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

Note: TARSALS and METATARSALS are hidden separately and do not overlap. The same goes for CARPALS and METACARPALS, and BLADDER and GALLBLADDER.



- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|------------|-------------|-----------|---------------|----------|------------|-----------|--------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| Skeleton: | - CARPALS | - CLAVICLE | - COCCYX | - CRANIUM | - FEMUR | - FIBULA | - HUMERUS | - INNOMINATE | - MANDIBLE | - METACARPALS | - METATARSALS |
| | - PATELLA | - PHALANGES | - RADIUS | - RIBS | - SACRUM | - SCAPULA | - STERNUM | - TARSALS | - TIBIA | - ULNA | - VERTEBRAE |
| Organs: | - APPENDIX | - BLADDER | - BRAIN | - GALLBLADDER | - SKIN | - GENITALS | - HEART | - INTESTINES | - KIDNEYS | - LIVER | - LUNGS |
| | - PANCREAS | - SKIN | - STOMACH | - VOICE BOX | | | | | | | |

Hockey



- | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|----------|------------|------------|------------|----------|----------|
| ARENA | ASSIST | BLUE LINE | BOARDING | BOARDS | BODY CHECK | BREAKAWAY | CENTER | CHARGING | CONTACT | CREASE | DEFENSEMEN | DEKE | ERUPTION |
| ELBOWING | ENFORCER | FACE MASK | FACE-OFF | FORWARD | FOUL | GAME | GLOVES | GOALPOST | GOALTENDER | HAT TRICK | HELMET | HOLDING | HOOKEY |
| ICE RINK | ICING | JERSEY | KNEEING | LEAGUE | LINE CHANGE | LINSMAN | MISCONDUCT | NHL | OFFENSE | OFFICIALS | OFFSIDE | OVERTIME | PASS |
| PENALTIES | PERIOD | PERIOD | PLAYER | POINT | POKE CHECK | POWER PLAY | PUCK | RED LINE | REFEREE | ROUQUING | SAVE | SCORE | SKATES |
| SLASHOT | SLASHING | SLOT | SPEAKING | STANLEY CUP | SUSPENSION | TIME-OUT | TRIPPING | WHISTLE | WINGS | WREST SHOT | ZAMBONI | ZONES | |

Hidden sentence: I WENT TO A FIGHT THE OTHER NIGHT, AND A HOCKEY GAME BROKE OUT

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Classifieds

Thursday, January 18, 2018

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

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



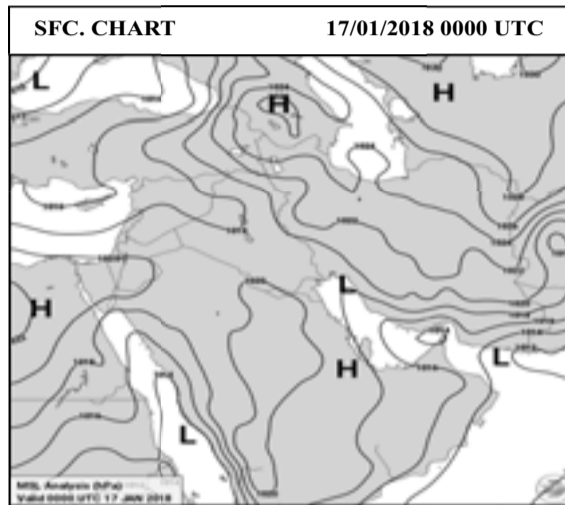
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy with light to moderate north westerly wind to variable wind, with speed of 08 - 26 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate north easterly wind to variable wind, with speed of 08 - 24 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings
-----------------	---------------------

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	20 °C	11 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20 °C	04 °C
ABDALY	19 °C	07 °C
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C
JAHRA	21 °C	08 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	20 °C	09 °C
SALMIYAH	18 °C	13 °C
AHMADI	19 °C	13 °C
NUWAISIB	20 °C	07 °C
WAFRA	20 °C	05 °C
SALMY	19 °C	05 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Thursday	01/18	Fair	21 °C	06 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Friday	01/19	Warm and rising dust and some high clouds will appear later on	27 °C	09 °C	SE-NW	30 - 60 km/h
Saturday	01/20	A significant decrease in temperature and in temperature	18 °C	05 °C	NW	15 - 45 km/h
Sunday	01/21	Cool	18 °C	05 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:20
Sunrise	06:43
Zuhr	11:58
Asr	14:54
Sunset	17:13
Isha	18:34

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	21 °C
MIN. Temp.	07 °C
MAX. RH	64 %
MIN. RH	27 %
MAX. Wind	NW 43 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

ACCOMMODATION
 One single partition room for rent KD 60 only, Indian bachelor in Hawally Tunis Street opposite McDonald's New Canary Restaurant. Please Contact: 97470947 after 3 pm. (C 5375) 18-1-2018

EMERGENCY

 Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1899988**

Airline

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

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 18/1/2018				Departure Flights on Thursday 18/1/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
KAC	102	London	00:50	PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	JZR	502	Luxor	01:30
WAN	416	Beirut	01:05	KAC	142	Doha	01:45
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
ETH	620	AddisAbaba	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KAC	351	Kochi	03:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	ETH	621	AddisAbaba	03:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
ETD	305	AbuDhabi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	ETD	306	AbuDhabi	04:05
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	544	Cairo	04:25	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:05
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	DHX	172	Bahrain	06:50
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	JZR	902	Beirut	07:50
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	KAC	501	Baku	08:00
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	KAC	413	Bangkok	08:10
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:30	KAC	791	Madinah	08:35
WAN	342	Sohag	06:35	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	BAW	156	London	08:55
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	WAN	133	Doha	09:00
QTR	8511	Doha	07:35	KAC	117	NewYork	09:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	QTR	8512	Doha	09:05
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
WAN	332	Alexandria	08:00	KAC	741	Dammam	09:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	101	London	09:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
ETD	301	AbuDhabi	09:05	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	IRA	668	Mashhad	10:00
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
FDK	803	Damascus	10:00	ETD	302	AbuDhabi	10:10
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:40
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	RSB	7867	Jeddah	11:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
NIA	161	Cairo	11:35	FDK	804	Damascus	11:00
WAN	134	Doha	11:45	IRA	672	Ahwaz	11:10
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	JZR	786	Riyadh	12:00
FEQ	933	Sohag	12:40	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
JZ	R561	Sohag	12:45	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
FD	B075	Dubai	12:45	MSC	404	Asyut	12:15
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	VIZ	202	IAQ	12:30
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	QTR	1075	Doha	12:30
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	NIA	362	Alexandria	12:35
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15				
KAC	792	Madinah	13:20				

British designer Jones quits Louis Vuitton



This file photo shows British designer Kim Jones acknowledging the public at the end of the Louis Vuitton men's Fashion Week Fall/Winter 2016/2017 collection in Paris. — AFP

British designer Kim Jones is to quit Louis Vuitton after he shows his final men's collection for the label on Thursday, the brand said yesterday. His departure from one of the plum jobs in men's fashion is likely to set off a fresh round of musical chairs, with speculation mounting that he may be on his way to Versace. The 38-year-old has led the luxury French brand since 2011 after he was poached from British heritage house Dunhill, which he dusted down and gave a new lease of life. Vuitton said that Jones "has been the driving force behind some of the house's most successful projects and collaborations", with eye-catching hook-ups with hip New York streetwear brand Supreme and the iconoclastic British artists Jake and Dinos Chapman.

Jones brought his passion for wildlife and for exotic travel to his ultra-luxurious collections

for Vuitton, mixing a lingering nostalgia for British colonial chic with a streetwise edge. Vuitton's chairman Michael Burke praised Jones' ability to "set trends" and for making the label "the leading brand in luxury menswear today." "All of us who have been fortunate to work with Kim wish him continued success in his next venture," he added in a statement.

Move to Versace?

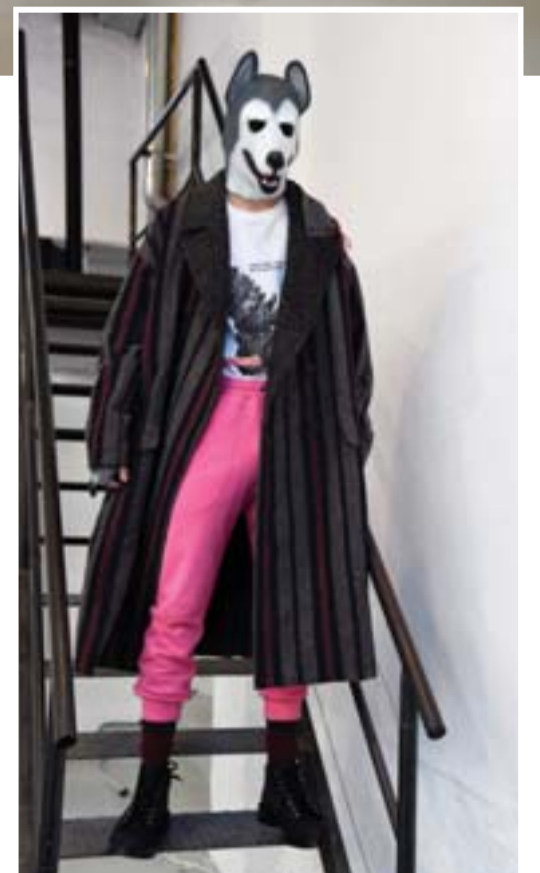
Women's Wear Daily, the fashion industry bible, had reported that the designer was in talks with Versace in September, but the Italian brand would not comment on the rumors. WWD praised the Briton in September as one of the "small clutch of marquee designers who can straddle the luxury and streetwear worlds, which is why Versace might have come knocking." Jones could also be a contender for the

British brand Burberry which has been looking for a creative director to replace Christopher Bailey, who is leaving in March.

The creator, who had a globetrotting childhood that took in Africa and the Amazon, said in November that he planned to retire in five years, or at least by the time he was 45. "I would like to do something else. Life doesn't have to be one thing," he told GQ magazine. "I would like to do conservation." Jones who was talent-spotted by designer John Galliano while he was still a student in London. Indeed Galliano, then at Dior, bought his graduate collection from the prestigious Central Saint Martins fashion school. He later became a close friend of Alexander McQueen, who killed himself in 2010, who he regarded "as an older brother". — AFP



Models present creations by Julien David for the Fall/Winter 2018/2019 collection as part of the men's Fashion Week in Paris yesterday. — AFP photos



Lebanon reverses ban on Spielberg film

Lebanon's interior ministry will allow the release of Steven Spielberg's latest film, "The Post", overturning a ban by the General Security authority, a senior official said Wednesday. The security body had on Monday announced it was banning the Hollywood thriller to comply with an Arab League boycott targeting supporters of Israel. In a rare move, the interior ministry chose not

to sign off on the decision by General Security, which in addition to controlling Lebanon's borders, is responsible for censoring films, plays, and books. "Interior Minister Nohad Mashnouk is going to allow the film to be shown," a senior ministry official told AFP.

The company distributing the film in Lebanon confirmed that the film, starring Meryl Streep and

Tom Hanks would be released in cinemas in Beirut and elsewhere today. The acclaimed production tells the behind-the-scenes story of the 1971 publication by The Washington Post of the Pentagon Papers, which exposed the lies behind US involvement in the Vietnam War. Lebanon is divided on the boycott-driven bans, with some welcoming them as a bulwark against the "cultural normalization" of

Israel's occupation. Banned films can often be found in bootleg movie shops across the country for as little as one dollar, and even blacklisted books can sometimes be found in regular bookstores. — AFP

File photo shows director Steven Spielberg attends the 5th Annual Ambassadors for Humanity Dinner. — AFP



Lifestyle | Features



A green mamba snake skin wrist watch by Swiss manufacturer Christophe Claret is shown.



An automate representing a bird singing on the top of a tortoise is displayed at the stand of Swiss watch brand MB&F, on the opening day of the 28th International Fine Watchmaking Exhibition SIHH. — AFP photos



A watch by Swiss manufacturer Richard Mille is displayed.



A giant watch is seen at the booth of German watchmaker A Lange & Soehne.



A wrist watch manufactured in Switzerland by La Montre Hermes, a subsidiary of the Hermes French luxury brand.



People visit the stand of Swiss luxury watch manufacturer International Watch Co.



Watches by Swiss manufacturer Ulysse Nardin.



A watch by Cartier is displayed.



A watch by Swiss luxury watches and jewellery manufacturer Roger Dubuis.

Watchmakers hope to make Chinese market tick

“It remains a market on which we have a lot of hope”

Watchmakers at the industry's major fair in Geneva this week said they are bringing themselves up to speed in the digital age following China's economic recovery. Through online stores, social networks, and brand new boutiques in China's central cities, manufacturers at the international luxury watchmakers show SIHH are hoping to reach up-and-coming affluent shoppers now that financial signals are positive again in Asia. "China was the good surprise of the past year with a sharp increase in our exports," Swiss Watch Industry Federation President Jean-Daniel Pasche told AFP, adding the market still presents a "strong potential for growth".

While statistics for the whole of 2017 are yet to be published, Swiss watch exports to China have returned to double-digit growth, rising by 19.6 percent between January and the end of November. Watch sales grew spectacularly with the expansion of the Chinese economy until Beijing banned extravagant gifts in an anti-corruption drive at the end of 2013. "There was a big dip," said Pablo Mauron, a partner at Shanghai-based digital com-

munications company DLG. "But the signals are once again very positive." "For a long time, the Chinese loved to buy their watches in Europe, in the shops on the Rue du Rhone in Geneva or in Paris. They liked to come back from their travels with an experience to tell," he added. But watch enthusiasts are now more inclined to buy directly in China—both because of a reduction in taxes on foreign purchases and a greater hesitation to travel following the wave of attacks in Europe.

Online shopping

Among the developments, Chinese consumers are now much quicker to make purchases online, notably through China's main social network WeChat. "Many brands have positioned themselves on this platform to reach a new clientele," said Mauron, citing German manufacturer Montblanc, which led a social media campaign to launch its interactive watch in China. Swiss brand H. Moser plans to unveil at the Geneva fair a partnership with JD.com, the Chinese online trading giant.

"A small factory like ours doesn't necessarily have the

means to launch a big advertising campaign throughout China," its chief Edward Meylan told AFP, emphasizing the effectiveness of online trade to gain a foothold in the market. The brand, however, also plans to open its first high-street store in China because it believes buyers still want to see expensive products in the flesh before buying. French company Hermes also plans to open an online store in China later this year, said one of its directors Guillaume de Seynes in an interview at SIHH.

He said Hermes will also open two new shops in the center of the country where a wealthy class is emerging, to strengthen its network beyond China's megacities. The Paris-based brand intends to set up in Changsha, in Hunan province, where Mao was born, and in Xi'an, a province of Shaanxi, known for its terracotta army. "It remains a market on which we have a lot of hope," said Guillaume de Seynes. — AFP

S AFRICA AIMS TO PATCH-UP THREADBARE CLOTHING INDUSTRY

South Africa is fighting to revive its frayed clothing industry, once a crucial provider of jobs in a country suffering from high unemployment, as a flood of cheap imports forces local factories to shutter and lay off workers. Once the economic lifeblood of many small regional towns, the abundance of cheaper products from China has led to the loss of nearly two-thirds of the sector's jobs over the past two decades. "After being employed for 22 years we were informed that the factory would close down in eight weeks," said Vinla Padayachee, 46, who lost her job three years ago.

The clothing factory in Verulam, north of the port city of Durban, shut down after years of battling low demand for its products. "A person of my age is not likely to get another job again, and so are my colleagues," she said. The former seamstress is one of thousands of clothing sector workers who have been made redundant, in a country where official unemployment is nearly 30 percent. The

dire situation forced the government to intervene while business has called for a radical policy overhaul to stem the crisis. Inside a bustling factory in Maitland near Cape Town, workers bowed in front of rows of whirring sewing machines, stitching at a brisk pace to fulfill daily orders from a local chain store. It is one of the producers benefiting from government grants and loans designed to help companies recapitalize their operations.

'Amazing potential'

"We've had a very rocky ride, and we have lost ground to the rest of the world," said Christopher Kinross, who runs a clothing company that bears his name and employs 253 people. "The industry is stagnant at the moment." Kinross, who has been in the industry for more than 50 years, said the government's scheme had brought "some stability". But he stresses that more had to be done to promote competition and create jobs.

"There is no doubt that there is a will to help the industry... but the problems go beyond the influx of imports," said Kinross. One of the main challenges facing the industry is a tax on importing raw materials essential for manufacturers. "We pay 22 percent duty on imported fabrics... if they remove that duty, our businesses could grow in a spectacular fashion," he said.

"The industry has an amazing potential to create jobs but that is not happening." Years of talks to remove the duty have been unsuccessful and there are no quotas on clothing imports. South Africa's textiles and clothing sector contributes 3.3 percent to the nation's overall economic output—and is heavily reliant on domestic consumption. Foreign investment in apparel has repeatedly bypassed South Africa and instead gone to Lesotho, Swaziland and Madagascar, among other African nations. "We pay wage levels that are relatively high for clothing manufacturing countries," said Kinross. As much as 45 percent of sector income is spent on labor costs, he added. Only textile businesses that agree to pay a minimum wage set by the government qualify for official assistance. The support for the industry has been running for six years, supporting 505 beneficiaries and distributing 5.3 billion rand (\$390 million).

'Devastation' in local industry

"Whatever is needed to be done to protect the industry, it must be done," said Rob Davies, the trade minister. "But it should be in the interest of industry development and to improve the local supplier base." The arrival of giant international "fast fashion" brands such as H&M and Zara opened another front in the battle being fought by South African clothing manufacturers. Fast fashion retailers, which largely source their products from outside South Africa, have aggressively expanded in the country in recent years—denting sales of locally made garments.

In November, the Southern African Clothing & Textile Workers Union staged protests outside malls across the



Workers at Kinross Clothing manufacturers in Maitland, sew men's trousers.



Workers at Kinross Clothing manufacturers in Maitland, sew men's trousers in Cape Town. — AFP photos



Partially completed men's trousers lie piled up at Kinross Clothing manufacturers in Maitland.

country to pressure retailers to buy locally. "These foreign retailers cause fewer orders in South African factories which contributes to local (redundancies) and factory closures," the union said. Despite the challenges facing the sector, but the green shoots of recovery are starting to be seen. "In almost 15 years we have probably lost somewhere between around 160,000 and 170,000 jobs, but from around 2011 (job losses) began to taper off—and within the last 18 months we have seen it pick up," said Simon Appel, an industry researcher. "A decline in retail sales is causing a devastation in the local industry," he said, adding that boosting exports would be vital to turning around the situation. "Our industry is struggling to break back into the export market." — AFP



Syrians eat falafel at the King's Restaurant, the oldest and most famous falafel restaurant in the northern Syrian city of Raqa, on January 9, 2018 after a huge military operation led on the ground by Kurdish fighters and in the air by US warplanes defeated jihadists from the Islamic State group but also left the city completely disfigured. — AFP photos

At beloved falafel shop, Syrians get taste of pre-war Raqa

Raqa is still mostly a sinister ghost town of gutted buildings and rubble-strewn streets but there is one place teeming with activity in the Syrian city: Ammar Qassab's falafel shop. "We reopened almost two weeks ago," the 33-year-old said, as one of his employees spooned balls of yellow chickpea mixture from a battered, bullet-pierced vat and dipped them in searing oil. "King Falafel is famous here," Qassab said, smiling as customers crowded his tiny shop in central Raqa. Only a few months ago, the northern Syrian city was still the inner sanctum of the Islamic State group's now defunct "caliphate".

A huge military operation, led on the ground by Kurdish fighters and in the air by US warplanes, defeated the jihadists but also left the city completely disfigured. Once home to around 300,000 people, Raqa's neighborhoods were empty when it was declared retaken in mid-October. Three months on, despite the lack of infrastructure and the lingering threat of unexploded mines and bombs, a trickle of residents—a few hundred families—are attempting to return. "I cannot say how happy it makes me to see people return to the city and come here again," said Qassab. He sells around 1,200 falafel sandwiches a day, a number he explained was the result of recent returnees not having working kitchens to prepare their own food. King Falafel, across from the famed Harun Al-Rashid park, was itself a food landmark in Raqa for more than four decades. It stayed open even after jihadists took over the city in 2014 but had to close a year ago as fighting to oust IS got closer.



Syrians eat falafel outside the King's Restaurant, the oldest and most famous falafel restaurant in the northern Syrian city of Raqa.

'Rubble two meters high'

For Qassab and other Raqa natives, the reopening of the falafel shop signals a return to familiar things. The owner and his helpers are back to dropping balls of mashed chickpeas into a deep fryer, then pressing the crispy puck-shaped falafel into flatbread with pickles and tahini. And like they once did years ago, customers pull up plastic chairs to the storefront to dig into their savory sandwiches. "I was 10 when I came here for the first time," said Issa Ahmed Hassan, a white-haired man in his

fifties. "My family and I used to come for the park to watch the people walk by," he said. Hassan left Raqa two years ago with the rest of the city's Kurdish minority, and King Falafel was one of his first stops when he returned to his hometown.

"A lot of people didn't come back because of this crisis. God willing, the situation will get better and Raqa will be even more beautiful than before," he said. Across the city, life is attempting to take hold in neighborhoods that were restricted military areas just weeks ago. Returnees seek out the few shops that have reopened to find basic goods, but many struggle to contain their anger at what they see is the slow pace of reconstruction. "I came back to find my house a wreck, with rubble two meters high," said Abdel Sattar Al-Abid, a 39-year-old who returned to rebuild his home in the devastated Old City. Dozens of security forces and civilians have been killed and wounded since October by the explosion of booby-traps and roadside bombs left behind by IS. Abid was critical of the local authorities, saying not enough was being done to bring back water and clean up the streets. "I risked my life and started cleaning up without even checking for mines. We just started because we want to live here," he said.

'Look at our houses'

Across the city, residents have similar complaints. With infrastructure still ravaged, they are relying on neighborhood electricity generators and water that has been trucked in. Iman Al-Faraj, 40, returned to Raqa



Syrians eat falafel outside the King's Restaurant, the oldest and most famous falafel restaurant in the northern Syrian city of Raqa.



Syrians buy falafel at the King's Restaurant, the oldest and most famous falafel restaurant in the northern Syrian city of Raqa.



A Syrian man prepares falafel at the King's Restaurant, the oldest and most famous falafel restaurant in the northern Syrian city of Raqa.

almost three weeks ago to find nothing standing from her beloved home except a single room. "Look at our houses. They're all destroyed. Who has the money to rebuild?" the mother-of-eight cried out. "From an entire house, I've got nothing except one room. I fixed it and put in a door, and now that's where we live."

"We pay 1,000 Syrian pounds (about \$2) for a single ampere of electricity. We can't live in darkness," said Faraj. Near the Old City's ancient Rafiqah wall, Mohammad Omar has lined up rows of gas canisters and plastic jugs of diesel. "If you have money, you buy diesel. If you don't have money, you burn wood. If you don't have wood, you burn sponge mattresses or furniture," said Omar, 25. And just a few meters away, Ismail Omar gazed at his ravaged home. "We're the biggest losers in this war. We've got nothing left but destruction, mines, hunger, and poverty," the 45-year-old said. "What's gone isn't coming back!" — AFP



The upper deck of "Galeb".

Tito's legendary, rusting yacht set for overhaul

Once a stage for geopolitical dealmaking and host to the 20th century's most glamorous stars, the now-dilapidated yacht of late Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito is set for a new chapter as a museum. "Galeb" (Seagull in Croatian) was in its heyday an icon of Yugoslavia, carrying the charismatic communist president on business around the globe and counting Elizabeth Taylor, Sophia Loren and dozens of heads of state among

global profile of Yugoslavia, opponents slam his communist rule and personality cult.

Croatian conservatives—increasingly hardline in recent years—are keen to downplay the legacy of Tito, which they link to Belgrade's domination of the former Yugoslav federation that Croatia battled to leave in the 1990s. "The idea of the ship is not to glorify Tito non-critically," said Obersnel, of the centre-left Social Democrats. The aim is rather "to talk about the history around Yugoslavia and Croatia" and tell the tale of the boat's "very turbulent" past, the mayor said.

Banana boat turned warship

Built in 1938 in Genoa, Italy, to transport bananas from Africa, Galeb—then called "Ramb III"—was deployed in World War II by the Italians and torpedoed by the British in 1941. Repaired but later seized by German forces and turned into a minelayer, the ship was sunk by Allied bombing while in Rijeka in 1944. The 117-metre (384-foot) boat was raised from the sea and became Tito's official yacht after the war.

The Ship of Peace, as it was also known, first drew global attention in 1953 when it sailed Tito up the Thames in London to meet Winston Churchill, marking the first visit of a communist head of state to Britain. Galeb also played an important role in the Non-Aligned Movement, founded by Tito and the leaders of India, Indonesia, Ghana and Egypt in reaction to US and Soviet dominance during the Cold War. "It was indeed on this ship that the most important talks regarding that political movement were held," said Kristina Pavec, curator at Rijeka's City Museum, which is overseeing the project.

Communist chic

Looking today at Galeb's rusting hulk, it is hard to imagine an era in which presidents, royalty and Hollywood stars trod its decks. Dusty mid-century modern chairs lie scattered around the main salon, a bucket catches dripping water in one of the narrow corridors and some ceilings look close to crumbling.

Among the better preserved parts of the ship are the cabins of Tito and his wife Jovanka. "All the furniture is original and we will try to keep it in its original state in order to present their life on the ship as genuinely as pos-

sible," said Pavec. The city plans to spend 40 million kunas (5.4 million euros, \$6.4 million) of EU funds on refurbishing Galeb as a floating museum, with some quarters offered in concession for a hotel or restaurant.

Rijeka reboot

Like the ship in its docks, Croatia's third-largest city has seen better days. Once a thriving industrial port, Rijeka's economy is now struggling—a consequence of the 1990s war of independence and badly-managed privatization, sparking the collapse of major companies. The city is now banking on cultural attractions and tourism to boost its coffers, aiming to complete what the mayor calls its "post-industrial transition" by 2020. It bought the boat at auction after it had been seized by a Rijeka court over the non-payment of debts by a previous owner, and had been declared part of Croatia's cultural heritage.

Rijeka has its own eventful story to tell, having been run by various different states over the 20th century—from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, to two decades of Italian rule and subsequent Nazi occupation, the former Yugoslav federation under a post-WWII peace treaty and finally the Republic of Croatia.

Support

Tito ruled the former Yugoslav federation from the end of WWII until he died. He made Yugoslavia one of the most prosperous communist countries, but political dissidents were jailed under his regime and opponents denounce his lavish lifestyle. But on the anniversary of his death, thousands of his supporters still gather every year at his birthplace in northern Croatia. The renovation of his yacht appears to meet largely with approval among the 130,000 or so residents of "Red Rijeka", as it is known for being traditionally

on the left of the country's politics. "Thanks to Tito, Rijeka was finally Croatian," said Biljana Perincic, 43, a local jewelry designer. "But the younger generation, I don't know if they know enough about Tito to make a proper judgment." — AFP



'Galeb', the yacht of late Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito, at the port of Rijeka. — AFP photos



The main cabin of "Galeb", the yacht of late Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito, at the port of Rijeka.

its guests. After Tito's death in 1980, his yacht declined in tandem with his rudderless country: Galeb was left to rot as the federation collapsed in a series of bloody wars.

Now Croatia's northern port city of Rijeka, which bought the boat nearly a decade ago, plans to transform Galeb into the star feature of its stint as European Capital of Culture in 2020. "A ship with such a history can be an extraordinary attraction," Rijeka's mayor Vojko Obersnel told AFP. The mayor has come under fire for the project in Croatia, where Tito is much more controversial than in other ex-Yugoslav republics. In September, the capital Zagreb—under pressure from nationalists—stripped the late leader's name from a prominent square. While admirers praise Tito's role in defeating the Nazis and raising the



“ There hasn't ever been an accident, and no burns ”

SPANISH VILLAGE 'PURIFIES' HORSES WITH FIRE IN AGE-OLD RITUAL

Thick smoke fills the cobble streets of San Bartolome de Pinares as the clip-clop of galloping hooves edges ever closer to a bonfire crackling nearby. Suddenly a horse and its rider burst through the flames as the mysterious age-old festival of Las Luminarias kicks off in this village nestled deep in snow-capped

mountains near Madrid. Some 130 horses follow suit, ridden by young and old alike, with couples, parents and children taking part in the annual ritual village historians say is unique in Spain. The event may have originated as a pagan ritual practiced by the Celts who lived in this area of Castilla y Leon more than 1,000 BC, says Salvador Saez, a 64-year-old retired teacher from the village who has researched the festival. Fire—the great purifier—was thought to protect animals from diseases and give their riders fertility. The ritual could have been “Christianized” later by the Catholic Church, he adds. But that is mere conjecture. There are no written records and villagers have simply faithfully replicated the same annual routine for centuries. “We’ve all asked the question of where it originates from, to our parents, our grandparents, and the response has always been ‘since forever,’” says Saez. “No one has been able to give a concrete response.”

Revival

So every year on the evening of January 16, the 600-strong village fills with smoke as residents light bonfires at regular intervals, warming cold onlookers but also forcing them to cover their mouths and noses. Riders from the village and neighboring areas assemble at 9 pm (2000 GMT) and set off on a procession around the streets led by two walking locals playing the drums and dulzaina, a Spanish oboe-like instrument, clearing the fires one by one and downing local wine or soft drinks in the process. The final stretch on the main Road of the Virgin sees the more fool-hardy careering up, their horses leaping over the flames or passing next to them, narrowly missing—and at times hitting—people in the crowds pressed together to watch.

After the ceremony, residents cook meat on the blazes before partying the night away. The next day, the bonfires are lit again to smoke up the streets in honor of Saint Anthony, protector of animals. After almost disappearing in the 1960s as people left the village for the lure of

cities, Las Luminarias was regenerated by a group of youths keen to preserve the ritual. The difference now is that the horses used to jump the fire are no longer farming the fields, but are prized possessions of keen riders.

Animal rights concerns

Before nightfall, Diego Martin prepares his horse Dandy, a handsome brown Selle Francais who has never before participated in the ritual. As he braids his mane and covers his tail with a cloth to protect them from the flames, Martin says he isn't worried. “If he wants to go through, he will. But if he doesn't like it and he gets scared, he won't,” says the 38-year-old, whose parents are from the village but who grew up in Madrid. Activists have denounced an event they believe scares the horses. In 2016, the PACMA animal rights party published footage showing several riders hitting their horses and one of the animals falling over.

On Tuesday evening, a few riders were seen with sticks but a large majority went without, many throwing their hands up in the air while they jumped to show they were not hitting their animals. One horse fell down near a bonfire, and promptly got up again. Residents in San Bartolome de Pinares insist no horse is forced to go through the fire and add the animals belong to people who love and tend to the them all year, and would not put them in any danger. “There hasn't ever been an accident, and no burns,” says Jose Luis Escapuz, 57, one of the organizers of this year's event. — AFP



Horsemen jump over a bonfire in the village of San Bartolome de Pinares in the province of Avila in central Spain, during the opening of the traditional religious festival “Luminarias” in honor of San Antonio Abad (Saint Anthony), patron saint of animals. — AFP photos

In the auto world, women still battle to crack old boys' club

The auto industry is famously male dominated, forcing women in the field to fight sexism, discrimination and unequal pay—though woman car experts say having Mary Barra at the helm of General Motors is a “very significant” development. In the midst of the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct, industry experts Maryann Keller, Michelle Krebs and Rebecca Lindland say they have never faced harassment comparable to that described by the accusers of, for example, film producer Harvey Weinstein. But speaking to AFP on the sidelines of the Detroit Auto Show, one thing was clear: as women, they felt unwelcome in the “old boys' club” of the automobile world.

All working as industry analysts—with expertise in a world which seems incomprehensible to many—Keller, Krebs and Lindland are regularly consulted on the battle between US and Japanese manufacturers, the ambitions of Tesla or the arm-wrestling of BMW and Mercedes Benz. But the 62-year-old Krebs, of AutoTrader.com,

recalls that when she started, “There was some skepticism that I wouldn't be sticking around.” “I don't know if I was taken seriously initially,” echoes the 74-year-old Keller, who was a financial analyst on male-heavy Wall Street before she became an automobile expert, eventually opening her own consultancy. She remembers “silly events” and “inappropriate remarks” from salesmen, but declined to go into further detail.

Golf, fishing and car racing

Krebs and Lindland, meanwhile, explained some of the discrimination they faced. “I had to make sure that I knew everything because they doubted that a woman would know everything,” said Lindland, who is in her 40s. “There were a lot of male bondings that I was excluded from,” added Krebs, referencing the golf, fishing and car racing outings enjoyed by her colleagues. “In the very early days... when you go on car drives you usually partner up,” she said. “Nobody would ride with me.” A former journalist, Krebs began her auto career in 1980 at a local newspaper in Michigan.

She worked her way up to become the first woman to review cars for The New York Times in the 1990s—but found herself on the receiving end of insults from misogynistic readers. “I got a letter from someone in Texas that said, ‘Women have no business writing about cars—they belong in the kitchen making cookies and making mine chocolate chips.’ I never forgot,” she said. And for Lindland, who has been passionate about cars since the age of nine, auto shows are often frustrating.

“The assumption is that I'm part of the support staff,” she said. As for pay, Lindland added she had “no doubt” that is another area where women lose out. “Myself and other female colleagues are paid less... that's probably for me the most frustrating and upsetting bit,” she said.

Meanwhile, troubling allegations have surfaced about mistreatment of women workers at two Ford Motor Company factories in Chicago. Last month, Ford's CEO apologized to employees at the plants after a scathing expose detailed decades of sexual harassment and abuse. In recent years, auto groups have made efforts to hire more women—but the majority of employees are still men.

'Petrol in your blood'

“It seems to me that there are safe places where you can have women... you can be an economist, you can be in HR,” said Keller. In fact, Barra, CEO of General Motors since 2014, is the only female at the head of a large automobile group—an appointment Keller described as “very, very significant.” However, she said questions were raised

about Barra's credentials—despite the fact she had spent her entire career in the auto field. Meanwhile, she added, Ford's newly appointed, less experienced CEO, Jim Hackett, faced no scrutiny. “I think it was... because she is a woman,” said Keller, who compares perceptions of women working in the industry to manufacturers' view of female consumers.

“Starting in the 90s, probably if I went to a dealership to buy a car, they would say bring your husband,” she said. Indeed, it took years for the three women to earn their colleagues' respect a moment Lindland will not forget. “I still remember when they said, you know, we now know that you have petrol in your blood,” she said. — AFP



Auto trader Executive Analyst Michelle Krebs speaks with her male counterparts and reporters during the Cox Automotive Detroit Industry Insights Breakfast in Detroit, Michigan. — AFP



File photo shows General Motors CEO Mary Barra shakes hands at the official debut of the new 2019 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 at the 2018 North American International Auto Show January 13, 2018 in Detroit, Michigan.

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2018



Saudi falcon Hawk Mk 65 aircrafts perform during the Kuwait aviation show in Kuwait City yesterday. — AFP

Traditional Asian Textiles Exhibition

Story and photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi

Indian textile art historian, crafts expert and artisan Jasleen Dhamija showcased her private collection of over 60 years at Sadu House as part of the 24th Qurain Cultural Festival. This event took place under the

patronage of Mohammad Al-Jabri, Minister of Information and the Chairman of NCCAL, in cooperation with the World Craft Council-Asia Pacific Region. Sheikha Altaf Salem Al-Ali Al Sabah, Honorary President of Sadu House, and Assistant Secretary General of NCCAL Mohammad Al-Asousi were in attendance, in addition to a number of public figures from Kuwait, Europe and Asia.

Sheikha Altaf explained that cultural exchange in the field of art and textile is the core of Sadu House. "I'm happy that Jasleen Dhamija is here with us to share her thoughts, experience and knowledge of textile heritage from around the world. I have known her for over 30 years, and I invite you all to take advantage of her expertise to learn more about the textile industry," she added.

Dhamija has written many books on textiles, and is among the first to explore the handloom and handicraft industry. "Years ago, Sheikha Altaf Al-Sabah introduced me to the rich heritage of the bedouins. The word 'sadu', which means threads woven by bedouin women, caught my curiosity and gave me a different perspective towards textiles," she said.



Private collection of textile showcased during the event.



Sheikha Altaf Salem Al-Ali Al Sabah, Honorary President of Sadu House.



Indian textile art historian and crafts expert, artisan Prof Jasleen Dhamija.

