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Iraqi official hails Kuwait's hosting of donor conference

Hakim praises Amir's efforts during meeting with media delegation

BAGHDAD: Leader of the National Wisdom Movement Ammar Al-Hakim said the international donor conference to rebuild Iraq to be hosted by Kuwait in February adds to Kuwait's brilliant image and will further bolster bilateral ties between Kuwait and Iraq. He said during a meeting with a Kuwaiti media delegation visiting the capital Baghdad late Saturday that HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has always been supporting Iraq to overcome various crises. He also mentioned Kuwait's role in liberating his country from Saddam Hussein's regime by opening its land and airspace to allow the movement of armed forces.

SEE PAGE 2

On the other hand, Hakim said that the upcoming Iraqi parliamentary elections will create stability and boost democracy in the country. This year's elections are similar to those of 2005, when Iraq moved from dictatorship to democracy, he said during the meeting with the Kuwaiti media delegation.

Iraq has witnessed many prominent achievements recently, including defeating the so-called Islamic State (IS) that occupied 40 percent of Iraqi land, overcoming religious extremism which was destroying stability and security and reaching a level of political unity, Hakim noted. He added that the government aims to build a country able to provide citizens with complete services as well as job opportunities and residence, while developing its infrastructure and fighting corruption.



BAGHDAD: Leader of the National Wisdom Movement Ammar Al-Hakim poses with the Kuwaiti media delegation late Saturday. Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan is seen fourth from right. — KUNA

Iraq is currently producing up to five million barrels per day, while the country will benefit from the production of natural gas by 100 percent end of 2018. Meanwhile, he noted that the wisdom party pays attention to fully represent women and youth, especially college graduates as these two categories form the majority of Iraqi society.

Responding to a question on the possibility of

postponing the elections set for May 12, Hakim said he doesn't believe there is any reason to delay the process. On Thursday, the Iraqi parliament failed to vote on the set date for the elections due to the absence of some MPs. The parliament will hold another vote today to approve the date of May's elections.

The Kuwaiti delegation includes Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Saad Al-Ali,

Secretary General of Kuwait Journalists Association Adnan Al-Rashed, Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait Times Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan and senior officials from the information ministry and Kuwaiti newspapers. The international donor conference to rebuild Iraq will be held from Feb 12 to 14, chaired by the European Union, Iraq, Kuwait, the UN and the World Bank. — KUNA

Feeling Filipino

In my view

By Nejouad Al-Yagout

local@kuwaittimes.net

Yesterday, I was told by a fellow Kuwaiti that the president of the Philippines has issued a ban on Filipino workers traveling to Kuwait. I sensed a tone of surprise (and an underlying tone of dismay) by the one conveying the news to me, but I was very happy. My first thought was: Finally! This is not an unpatriotic sentiment. Nor should it be considered a patriotic one, for that matter. This is a humanitarian issue and should be viewed objectively. Our loyalty in such cases should be towards humanity. It has absolutely no connection to borders. And a degree of authenticity and responsibility is required when it comes to the development of one's nation.

We all know that if Kuwaitis were treated badly by others abroad, our government would take care of us too. We need to take off our perception glasses and start wearing those of others. This has nothing to do with the Philippines breaking ties with Kuwait. This is a protective ban and does not apply to all Filipino workers, but mainly domestic helpers due to incidents of abuse that resulted in deaths. As mentioned in yesterday's article in Kuwait Times by Ben Garcia, Ambassador of the Philippines to Kuwait Renato Villa had already sent a letter to the interior ministry, but didn't receive a response. We cannot afford to ignore such appeals made to us by our guests.

It seems that our first reaction is one of surprise or denial. If one person states that there is a problem with the treatment of domestic helpers, it could be a lie. If two people state an issue, there is still room for debate. But three or more people? Yes, Houston, we have a problem. And this problem needs to be addressed, sooner rather than later. If it will take cons to change hearts and minds, it will take no time at all to begin an investigation.

Nobody is insulting us. In fact, I am amazed at how long it took for this ban to be in place. Our Filipino brothers and sisters have been extremely patient in implementing this ban. Decades of patience on their part is highly commendable. And, still, according to the embassy here, the order is not yet official. The time is upon us to place our egos aside and address the obvious elephant in the room. Why are we closing our eyes? Everywhere I go, I hear new incidents about domestic helpers from various nations seeking help.

Continued on Page 11

Kuwait summons Filipino envoy; private hiring of MoH nurses banned

By B Izzak and Agencies

KUWAIT: The issue of maids and expatriate labor dominated developments yesterday as the foreign ministry summoned the Philippines ambassador over a ban on Filipino workers, while the foreign minister said discussions are ongoing with several countries to recruit maids. The health minister also stopped private companies from

recruiting nurses from abroad to work for the ministry, giving the job to a ministerial committee. Meanwhile, lawmakers yesterday said they will demand forming a committee to investigate why the maid crisis continues despite setting up a special company for the recruitment of domestic helpers.

The foreign ministry summoned yesterday Ambassador of Philippines to

Turkish tanks roll into Syria to fight militia

HASSA, Turkey: Turkish troops and tanks entered Syria yesterday to push an offensive against Kurdish militia as France warned over the risks of the operation and rockets hit border towns in apparent retaliation. Turkey on Saturday launched operation "Olive Branch" seeking to oust from the Afrin region of northern Syria the Peoples' Protection Units (YPG) which Ankara considers a terror group. But the campaign risks further increasing tensions with Turkey's NATO ally the

United States - which has supported the YPG in the fight against Islamic State (IS) militants - and also needs at least the tacit support of Russia to succeed.

In its first reaction to the offensive, the US State Department urged Turkey "to exercise restraint and ensure that its military operations remain limited in scope and duration and scrupulous to avoid civilian casualties". "We call on all parties to remain focused on the central goal of defeating" IS, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said in a statement.

US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said yesterday during a flight to Asia that Turkey advised the US ahead of its air strikes in Syria, and Washington is in contact with Ankara about the way forward.

Continued on Page 11



AMMAN: US Vice President Mike Pence (left) meets Jordan's King Abdullah II yesterday. — AFP

Kuwait Renato Pedro Villa, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Sulaiman Al-Jarallah announced. The Filipino envoy met at the ministry with the assistant foreign minister for consular affairs, who notified the ambassador about Kuwait's regret and bewilderment towards his president's decision to suspend the dispatch of workers to Kuwait. Such a stance contradicts the nature of the distinctive ties between the two countries and does not serve their common interests.

Jarallah added that the Kuwaiti side noted to the ambassador that freedoms and rights enjoyed by the expatriate communities in the country have contributed to raising the number of Filipino workers

Continued on Page 11

Our apologies

Kuwait Times would like to officially apologize for the photo that appeared alongside the article published yesterday regarding Manila's ban on Filipino workers coming to Kuwait. The photo was chosen by an editor, not reporter Ben Garcia who is currently on leave and did not see the front page before it was published. It was a poor choice and we deeply regret any offense caused. Kuwait Times is a longtime supporter of Filipinos and Filipino issues in Kuwait and would never wish to offend this valuable and hardworking community here.



HASSA, Turkey: Turkish army tanks and soldiers gather close to the Syrian border yesterday in Hatay province. — AFP

Jordan king tells Pence of concern over Jerusalem

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah II yesterday voiced concern over Washington's controversial recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, as US Vice President Mike Pence visited Amman during an uncomfortable Middle East tour. Arab outrage over President Donald Trump's decision to move the American embassy in Israel to Jerusalem had prompted the cancellation of several planned meetings ahead of Pence's trip, originally scheduled for December.

Abdullah, a key US ally, said he had "continuously voiced over the past year... my concerns regarding the US decision on Jerusalem that does not come as a result of a comprehensive settlement to the Palestinian Israeli conflict". "Jerusalem is key to Muslims and Christians as it is to Jews," he added. "It is key to peace in the region. And key to enabling Muslims to effectively fight some of the root causes of radicalization."

Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967 and later annexed east Jerusalem in a move never recognized by the international community. The US move to recognize the city as Israel's capital broke with decades of international consensus that the city's status should be settled

Continued on Page 11

Local

Iraqi journalists' dean praises Amir's reconstruction support

Kuwaiti media delegation interviews officials to know the needs of Iraq



BAGHDAD: Dean of Iraqi journalists Muwayyed Al-Lami speaks during a meeting with a delegation from Kuwaiti official and private media outlets. —KUNA



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan (left) meets with Leader of the National Wisdom Movement Ammar Al-Hakim.



Dean of Iraqi journalists Muwayyed Al-Lami meets with members of the visiting Kuwaiti media delegation.

BAGHDAD: Dean of Iraqi journalists Muwayyed Al-Lami praised His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's support for reconstruction of Iraq. "The humanity of His Highness the Amir is taking care of Iraq and its people, just like he does to his people and country," Lami said during a meeting with a visiting delegation from Kuwait official and private media Saturday night. He said the delegation's visit is an evidence of Kuwait's political, economic and security support of Iraq for more than 15 years.

Kuwait wants to continue this backing by hosting a conference to rebuild Iraq on February 12-14, said Lami. He said the delegation would meet senior state officials and conduct interviews to know the real needs of Iraq. The Kuwaiti delegation would be meeting government officials and political parties' leaders to discuss the reconstruction conference.

Faisal Al-Mutlaqqem, Kuwait Information Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for External Media, called for further development of relations at all levels with Iraq, Kuwait, he added, is keen on boosting relations with the Arab media institutions, including the ones in Iraq. He said Kuwait is interested in a stable Iraq.

The Kuwaiti delegation also includes Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, KUNA's Deputy Director General and Chief Editor Saad Al-Ali, Secretary General of Kuwait Journalists Association Adnan Al-Rashed, Chief Editor of Al-Nahar newspaper Emad Bu Khamseen, Hassan Al-Sayegh from the Diwan of His Highness the Prime Minister, and journalists from Al-Jarida, Al-Qabas, Al-Shahed and Al-Rai newspapers, as well as KUNA. —KUNA



Faisal Al-Mutlaqqem, Kuwait's Information Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for External Media, speaks during the meeting.

Foreign Minister, US envoy discuss IS, Iraq reconstruction

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday Brett McGurk US Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat the so-called Islamic State (IS). They discussed, during the meeting, current preparations for upcoming ministerial meeting of the Global Coalition against the so-called Islamic State (IS), due in Kuwait on February 13. They also examined the remarkable progress in encountering the IS, as well as boosting international efforts to dry up its funding resources. McGurk praised the distinguished Kuwait's efforts and contributions to the coalition in combating the terrorist organization, the IS, also known as "Daesh." The meeting was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Sulaiman Al-Jarallah, beside other officials.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf held talks with McGurk, along with accompanying officers, as part of Kuwait's preparations for the planned international conference for reconstructing Iraq. The Ministry of Finance said in a statement that the two sides discussed means of combating terrorism funding, as a prelude to the convention, due to be hosted by Kuwait on February 12-14, under His Highness the Amir's patronization. The meeting was attended by the director of operations at Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development Marwan Al-Ghanem, the head of financial inspection unit Talal Al-



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Brett McGurk US Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat the so-called Islamic State (IS). —KUNA



Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf meets with French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy.

Sayeh and the US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman.

Hajraf also held talks yesterday with French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy, during which France affirmed it will take part in the Iraq reconstruction conference. The meeting also focused on boosting cooperation between the State of Kuwait and France. The Ministry of Finance said in a statement that the discussions, involving the head of the economic mission at the French embassy Philippe Ghali, dealt with issues of common concern. The two sides lauded the distinguished bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, noting necessity of activating cooperation between Kuwait and Paris in various spheres. —KUNA



Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf meets with Brett McGurk US Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat the so-called Islamic State (IS).

Amir receives visiting Qatari defense minister



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Qatari Defense Minister Dr Khaled bin Mohammad Al-Atiyah. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, and Chief of the National Security Agency Lieutenant General Essam Al-Naham.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his Qatari counterpart Dr Khaled bin Mohammad Al-Atiyah. Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad also presented the Qatari minister to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Dr Atiyah arrived to Kuwait yesterday accompanied by his delegation in an official visit. Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad and a number of senior Defense Ministry officials greeted the guest upon his arrival, the Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations in the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir also received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, who presented to His Highness the Chief of the National Security Agency Lieutenant General Essam Al-Naham, who was recently promoted. Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah later presented

Naham to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister as well.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince, Highness the Prime Minister, as well as National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. Meanwhile, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Ghanem, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Premier and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Khaled Al-Saleh.

In the meantime, His Highness the Prime Minister received Chairman of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Ali Mohammad Al-Ghanem, accompanied by president of the Arab-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry Peter Ramsauer at Seif Palace. The meeting was attended by chairperson of the Diwan of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Elmam Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Qatari Deputy Premier and State Minister for Defense Affairs Dr Khaled bin Mohammad Al-Atiyah.

Deputy Foreign Minister receives new diplomats



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Paraguay. — KUNA



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Portugal.



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Denmark.



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the newly appointed Ambassador of Sweden.

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah received yesterday credentials of newly appointed Ambassadors of Paraguay, Portugal, Denmark and Sweden. Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Ambassador Dhari Ajran Al-Ajran and Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Minister Affairs Bureau, Ayham Al-Omar, attended the ceremony. — KUNA

Kuwait Times

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Local

Farwaniya Governor announces national celebrations' plans

Flag-raising ceremony on Jan 29 launches state-wide celebrations

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

KUWAIT: The national holidays have a great position in the hearts of Kuwaitis. The decorations that adorn the country at this time of the year, the raising of flags on houses and competition between the government and private institutions in decorating buildings is a renewal of the covenant of allegiance and belonging to this country.

Kuwait Times met Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Malik Al-Sabah to discuss the program prepared by Farwaniya governorate this year. After a flag-raising ceremony at Bayan Palace by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the political leadership on January 29, the six provinces will begin celebrations of the 57th National Day of Kuwait and the 27th anniversary of the liberation.

"In Farwaniya governorate, there will be a festive program on January 29 which includes a show by honor guards, flag-raising, national poetry, folk dance (ardha) and a presentation by some school students. Another event will take place on Feb 8 at The Avenues, which will include participation by Kuwaiti singers and folkloric dancers, as well as a ceremony in the Grand Ballroom of the Crowne Plaza Hotel on Feb 14. In addition, there will be a celebration at Kuwait International

Airport for travelers and guests. We all express, both in Farwaniya governorate in particular and Kuwait in general our love for our homeland and sincerely interpret it," Sheikh Faisal said.

Stories of patriotism

Sheikh Faisal has been really attentive and keen about the national celebrations even before he became the governor of Farwaniya. "I worked in 2001 for the 10th anniversary celebrations of Liberation Day. At that time, our enemy was at the pinnacle. But we delivered through the national ceremonies our message transparently and affectionately to the world, and it was met with applause, empathy and respect. Kuwaitis are distinguished in their love for their nation and leadership. They have penned through history some of the greatest stories of patriotism," Sheikh Faisal said. "You can see parents doing their best and giving what they can when they are celebrating the wedding ceremonies of their children. Let alone the ceremony of Kuwait. I cannot imagine there is anything more important than that," he concluded.

Farwaniya governorate has a number of populated residential, industrial and commercial areas, including the zoo, Kuwait International Airport, The Avenues and Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium. Sheikh Faisal is the sixth governor of Farwaniya governorate.

“We all express our love for our homeland”



KUWAIT: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Malik Al-Sabah speaks to Kuwait Times. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

Kuwait Airways denies operating new routes

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways Saturday denied media reports that it was launching new routes. The national carrier posted a message on its Twitter account saying that it only posts reports about any new routes through its official media accounts. It urged social media users to be careful about reporting unconfirmed reports. Meanwhile, Kuwait Airways said in a statement it has 39 routes in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America. It said it planned to operate new routes to Vienna, Austria, and Munich, Germany, in coming summer. Kuwait Airways was established in 1953 and became fully owned by the government in 1962. —KUNA



Architecture in Kuwait, from mud houses to modernism

KUWAIT: Kuwait witnessed a radical urban renaissance, following the discovery of oil, as the simple mud houses turned into huge villas built of cement, following the latest modern designs. Kuwaiti historian and author of 'Glances Of Kuwait's Modern History' book Fahad Al-Abduljaleel said that earliest description of the Kuwaiti architecture dates back to 1709, by traveler Haj Muradha Bin Olwan.

Olwan visited Kuwait as he was coming for 'Hijaz' - western coast of Saudi Arabia - describing it as a simple town, with primitive buildings similar to those in Al-Ahsaa -eastern coast of Saudi Arabia- but simpler. The architecture commenced in Kuwait back in the 17th century in the central city called 'Baheeta' overlooking the Arabian Gulf, and close from Al-Seif Palace and the old Kuwait's Port, he added.

The rich families then built their houses from the sea rocks, while the poor families built mud houses, that would unfortunately easily collapse during seasons of heavy rains as it happened in the year of 'Rajbeya' in 1872, and years of 'Haddamah' in 1934, and 1954, he said.

The sea rock houses had the advantage of cooling the hot air during the summer, and that they would stand still against the heavy rains, he affirmed. Among the most famous builders' families were namely Al-Bannai, Al-



Rubah, Al-Bahoo and Al-Farhan, Al-Abduljaleel said.

The radical quantum leap in the Kuwait architecture took place during the reign of late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, as people during late 1950s and early 1960s moved to new residential areas that were named

according to alphabetical order. The modern buildings then depended on engineers, architectures, designers and specialists coming from various countries like Lebanon, Egypt Jordan, UK, Poland, Czech, besides other nations. — KUNA

NBK Al-Shabab cardholders enjoy 50% discount on KNCC tickets

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) makes the most of each customer's banking experience by offering special discounts and rewards tailored to suit their lifestyles. Now Al-Shabab prepaid card holders can get more fun out of their weekends with a massive 50 percent discount on movie tickets at (Cinescape) cinemas.

"NBK customers enjoy sharing their weekends with family and friends," explained Dalal Yousef Al-Mulla, Marketing Planning and Execution Manager at the Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. "We are delighted to collaborate with the Kuwait National Cinema Company (KNCC) the leading company in the Cinema industry to provide this valuable offer for NBK Al-Shabab Prepaid Cardholders."

Each account holder can purchase one (Standard 2D/ 3D) ticket per day at the discounted price every Friday and Saturday. Kuwaiti college or university students ages 17 to 23 may apply for an Al-Shabab prepaid card online. The recharge-as-you-go feature, available online or through the NBK smart phone App, helps students budget their monthly allowance, making it easy for them to transfer money as needed for expenditure while tracking all spending.

NBK Al-Shabab Prepaid Card holders enjoy valuable, exclusive benefits including access to Kuwait's single largest loyalty reward program, NBK Rewards, with more than 700 partner outlets. Shabab Prepaid Card holders also receive exclusive discounts, including pop up offers, contract and annual deals like 20 percent off yearly membership to Platinum Health Club.

NBK Al-Shabab prepaid cardholders also enjoy exclusive access to many innovative products and services like online Secure Shopping and Tap and Pay wearables. NBK is the only bank in Kuwait which offers the Tap and Pay service on stickers and wristbands which simplify and ease payments while taking contactless payments even further. To pay for any transactions up to KD 10, Shabab prepaid cardholders simply tap their card, sticker or wristband on the POS machine. Any transaction above KD 10 will require a PIN to be entered on the POS terminal.

The innovative service highlights NBK's drive to introduce best-in-class banking products and services and cutting-edge technology to provide the ultimate banking experience without compromising on security. NBK's Tap and Pay service adheres to the highest international security standards, further supporting NBK's position as one of the 50 safest banks in the world.



Dalal Al-Mulla

Wajar: Main tool used in the past to ignite fire



KUWAIT: There is almost no house, tent, or farm in old Kuwait without a hosting corner called 'Wajar' using charcoal and firewood for heating and preparation of Arabic tea and coffee. Shapes and types of Wajar differs; they can be made out of gypsum or marble and decorated with tea and coffee making supplies from different tea and coffee pots. —KUNA

Local

Interior seeks MPs' cooperation to address overcrowded jails

Exchange agreements allow expat prisoners to serve sentences in their countries

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dousary said that the plan to reduce the number of prisoners at the Central Jail will begin as soon as the committee formed to study the issue completes its work and sets the rules and conditions in cooperation with the general prosecution and justice ministry. "We will seek a change in some sentences and release some inmates after making sure they meet the conditions and laws due to overcrowding in prisons, and we have appealed to MPs to help us by setting legislations allowing us to release some cases," he said. Dousary added that many expatriate inmates will also be released as per agreements of prisoner exchange, so they can serve their sentences in their countries instead of Kuwait.



Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dousary

seriousness by the investor to operate the hospital. The ministry is waiting for the health ministry's answer to take legal action. The ministry said seven hospitals whose allocations were cancelled due to not signing contracts during the designated period include Al-Hayat Medical, Al-Kharafi Medical Services, Arabiya Medical Services, Khalid Al-Dabous, Boubyan Medical and Mowasat Hospital. The allocated area for each hospital was between 5,000 to 6,000 sq m. The finance ministry said there are no contracts with foreign companies, adding contracts must be reviewed by the Cabinet, State Audit Bureau and the Fatwa and Legislation Department.

Governance rules

The parliamentary financial and economic affairs committee held a meeting yesterday in the presence of a government team and discussed governance rules in state departments. Committee rapporteur MP Saleh Ashour said the government asked for a two-week period to prepare a study on discussing the governance issue more deeply before taking a decision. Separately, the education, culture and guidance committee approved several proposals regarding the development of the educational process and help executive bodies learn about the opinions and wishes of MPs. Committee Chairman MP Awwad Al-Ruwaei said an invitation will be sent to the education minister to attend its next meeting to discuss the issue of supervisory jobs, as the committee had received many complaints that confirms the ministry's ignorance of this issue.

Private hospitals

The finance ministry disclosed information about build-operate-transfer (BOT) contracts it has signed with the private sector to operate private hospitals in Kuwait, as official data revealed the current contracts with the private health sector are 10 in total. The data revealed that current contracts are signed with Salam Hospital, whose contract expires on Feb 1, 2026; the health assurance hospital in Jahra which expires on Aug 13, 2040; the health assurance hospital in Ahmadi which expires in Aug 13, 2040; Sidra Hospital which expires on May 1, 2025; Seif Hospital which expires on Jan 19, 2025; Kuwait International Hospital which expires on June 11, 2028, Dar Al-Shifa Hospital which expires on May 15, 2024, Enaya Hospital which expires on May 20, 2024, Kuwait Clinic which expires on June 12, 2024 and Dar Al-Shifa Hospital which expires on May 17, 2024.

The finance ministry said only one contract was violated and wrote to the health ministry on the lack of

Jaber Hospital's estimated operational cost KD 10 billion



The Jaber Hospital.

KUWAIT: The cabinet is expected to make a decision soon on the mechanism to operate and manage the Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital, as a governmental team has estimated its operation costs at KD 10 billion for 50 years.

A team that included members from Kuwait Investment Authority, economic development committee of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, and Fatwa and Legislation Department has recently completed its report to estimate the total cost to operate the hospital. According to sources familiar with the report, the total cost to operate the hospital is \$10 billion in 50 years which is the projected life span of the project, without calculation of inflation percentages. These estimations for operational costs do not mean that the government intends to charge Kuwaiti patients for treatment, the sources added. The sources said cash salaries item is estimated at nearly KD 121.3 million,

and will rise to KD 130.4 million by adding the government share in insurance and material advantages.

The report compares between the operational costs of the Amiri and Jaber hospitals. It states that the projected cash salaries for Jaber Hospital is KD 121.3 million, compared to KD 40.5 million for the Amiri Hospital. Material advantages for the Jaber Hospital are projected at KD 2.4 million, compared to KD 811,266 for Amiri Hospital. According to the report, medical supplies for the Jaber Hospital are projected at KD 49.5 million, compared to KD 16.5 million for Jaber Hospital. Patients' food costs are projected at KD 1.64 million for Jaber Hospital, compared to KD 547,624 for the Amiri Hospital, while clothes and patients' covers are projected at KD 111,918 for Jaber Hospital (KD 37,306 for Amiri Hospital). The Jaber Hospital is expected to open sometime this year, though an official opening date is yet to be announced. — Al-Anbaa

Security chief, French Ambassador discuss cooperation



KUWAIT: The National Security Bureau's Chairman Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah meets with French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy. — KUNA

KUWAIT: The National Security Bureau's Chairman Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah met yesterday with French Ambassador to Kuwait Marie Masdupuy who was accompanied by the military attache of the French Embassy Patrick Piquer. According to a statement by Kuwait's National Security Bureau, the two sides discussed cooperation, latest issues in the region and a host of topics.

Separately, Deputy Chief of the Kuwaiti National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with the General Commander of Portugal's National Republican Guard Lieutenant General Matthew Manuel Costa da Silva. The discussions between Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad and the visiting Portuguese military official centered on strategies to establish closer bilateral ties, Kuwait's



Deputy Chief of the Kuwaiti National Guard Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the General Commander of Portugal's National Republican Guard Lieutenant General Matthew Manuel Costa da Silva.

National Guard said in a statement. Kuwait's National Guard is eager to reach out to its allies, the statement cited Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad as

saying. Meanwhile, a number of Kuwaiti and Portuguese military officials were present during the encounter. — KUNA

Driver hurt in botched armed robbery

KUWAIT: A taxi driver paid a heavy price for resisting three robbers in Salwa at dawn Saturday. When the trio failed to rob the victim, they stabbed him in the abdomen and escaped, leaving him bleeding. A call was received about the victim, so police and paramedics went to the area and rushed him to Mubarak Hospital in critical condition. He

spent three hours in the operation theater. Detectives are working on the case.

Campers fight

A fight broke out between six persons from neighboring camps, resulting in five injuries. One of them was run over with the driver escaping, but he gave himself up an hour later. The fight broke out in Subbiya when a person protested after a car passed next to his camp. It belonged to a person from a neighboring camp, so he asked him why he passed near his camp. The matter escalated to a fight that injured five people, while one was run over. Jahra policemen responded to a call and went with paramedics to the scene, and the injured were taken to hospital.

Investigations are ongoing.

Officer assaulted

A police officer accused a man and his three sons of storming into his house and beating them due to what he described as previous disputes. The officer lodged a complaint at Saad Al-Abdullah police station. The four were charged with trespassing and assault, and were ordered arrested.

Gamblers arrested

Four Asian persons were arrested while gambling red-handed in the open. They were taken to Salhiya police station. Police found KD 884 on them. The three Indians and a Pakistani confessed to the charges. — *Translated from the Arabic press*

Kuwait renovates Palestinians' homes

GAZA: A Palestinian charity yesterday launched an endeavor to refurbish some 380 Palestinian homes financed by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, at a cost of \$4 million. The project is geared towards impoverished Palestinian domiciles across the Gaza strip, the chairman of the Al-Rahma Charity Association Imad Kaheel said in a ceremony with Palestinian Minister of Public Works and Housing Dr Mufeed Al-Hassanieh in attendance. He pointed out

that the project was a genuine effort to assist the Palestinian people, many of whom are mired in sheer penury as a result of a rigid Israeli blockade of the Gaza strip.

Kaheel revealed that a comprehensive survey of Gaza was carried out to determine the beneficiaries of the humanitarian program, thanking Kuwait for its unyielding support for the Palestinian people. Meanwhile, the Palestinian minister lamented the plight of around 4,200 Palestinian families who live well below the poverty line, saying that "their misery is likely to intensify." He urged Arab and Islamic nations to ratchet up aid for these hapless families in order to improve their living conditions, expressing his gratitude to the Kuwaiti people as well. — KUNA

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25,000 murdered in Mexico in 2017

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KABUL: Afghan security personnel leave the Intercontinental Hotel after an attack in Kabul yesterday. —AFP

18 dead in 12-hour Taliban siege

Gunmen attack Intercontinental Hotel in Afghan capital

KABUL: At least 18 people including 14 foreigners were killed in a bloody Taliban-claimed assault on a luxury hotel in Kabul, an interior ministry spokesman said yesterday, hours after the overnight attack ended. "Fourteen foreigners were killed and four Afghans," interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish told Afghanistan's Tolo News, without specifying the nationalities involved. Ukrainian officials have already said at least one Ukrainian is among the dead.

Gunmen stormed a luxury hotel in Kabul, sparking a 12-hour battle that left terrified guests scrambling to escape and parts of the building ablaze. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack on the six-storey Intercontinental Hotel on a hilltop overlooking the Afghan capital. People trapped at the top of the building tied bedsheets together and climbed over balconies to escape the overnight assault.

One lost his grip and fell in dramatic television footage by Afghanistan's Tolo News station, which also showed black smoke and flames billowing from the top of the hotel. Special forces were lowered by helicopters during the night onto the roof of the landmark 1960s building, with Afghan security forces killing four attackers in the hours-long assault, the interior ministry said. "Afghans and one foreigner have been killed," interior ministry deputy spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said yesterday, adding around 150 people were rescued including

more than 40 foreigners.

"The body of the foreigner, a woman, was recovered from the sixth floor as the last attacker was being killed," he added. An official with Afghanistan's spy agency put the number of wounded at eight, while the interior ministry said 18. Officials said four gunmen burst into the hotel, which is not part of the global InterContinental chain, on Saturday night, opening fire on guests and staff and taking dozens of people hostage. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the latest assault in the war-torn capital via an email from spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid. The interior ministry had earlier blamed the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani network.

It followed security warnings in recent days to avoid hotels and other locations frequented by foreigners. Kabul has become one of the deadliest places in Afghanistan for civilians, with the Taliban and the Islamic State group both stepping up attacks. It was not clear how many people had been inside the hotel. During the siege, a guest hiding in a room said he could hear gunfire inside the building, where dozens of people attending an information technology conference on Sunday were staying.

"I don't know if the attackers are inside the hotel but I can hear gunfire from somewhere near the first floor," the man, who did not want to be named, told AFP by telephone. "We are hiding in our rooms. I beg the security

forces to rescue us as soon as possible before they reach and kill us." His phone has been switched off since then.

'Fleeing like crazy'

Afghan Telecom regional director Aziz Tayeb, who was attending the IT conference, said he saw the attackers enter the hotel. "Everything became chaotic in a moment. I hid behind a pillar and I saw people who were enjoying themselves a second ago screaming and fleeing like crazy, and some of them falling down, hit by bullets," Tayeb told AFP. Local resident Abdul Sattar said he had spoken by phone to friends who are hotel staff and had been trapped inside.

"Suddenly (militants) attacked the dinner gathering... (then) they broke into the rooms, took some people hostage and they opened fire on some of them," he said. Rahimi said the attackers were armed with light weapons and rocket-propelled grenades when they stormed the hotel, a popular venue for weddings, conferences and political gatherings. Security in Kabul has been ramped up since May 31 when a massive truck bomb killed some 150 people and wounded around 400 - mostly civilians.

Devastating attacks

But the resurgent Taliban and Islamic State are both scaling up their assaults on the city, with multiple dev-

astating attacks in recent weeks. The attack on the Intercontinental was just one of several bloody assaults Sunday. In a village in the northern province of Balkh, Taliban militants went from house to house in the middle of the night, pulling police from their homes and shooting them dead.

At least 18 officers were killed, deputy police chief Abdul Raziq Qaderi said. In Herat in the west at least eight civilians were killed when a car hit a Taliban-planted roadside mine, officials there said. The last major attack on a high-end hotel in Kabul was in March 2014 when four teenage gunmen raided the Serena, killing nine people including AFP journalist Sardar Ahmad. The overnight siege is not the first time the Intercontinental has been targeted: in 2011 a suicide attack claimed by the Taliban killed 21 people there, including 10 civilians.

Even before the attack was over Sunday, authorities were questioning how the attackers got past the hotel's security, which was taken over by a private company three weeks ago, said Najib Danish, another interior ministry spokesman. "We will investigate it," he said. A hotel employee told AFP that as he fled the staff living quarters in a building next to the hotel he saw the new security guards running for their lives. "They didn't do anything, they didn't attack. They had no experience," the man said on condition of anonymity. —Agencies

100 in Indonesia's Papua feared dead from malnutrition

JAKARTA: A measles outbreak is feared to have killed about 100 malnourished people in Indonesia's Papua, an official said yesterday, highlighting a health crisis in the country's easternmost province. A total of 69 toddlers have died in the remote Asmat region, said Papua military spokesman Muhammad Aidi, while reports on the ground suggest 27 people have died in an equally remote and mountainous district named Oksibil. "We have received reports from villagers that the outbreak is also happening in Oksibil district and our staff have confirmed that, but we still need to check how many people have died," Aidi said. "Measles is not dangerous, it's a mild disease. But because those children are malnourished, they can't cope in that condition."

The government and military have sent medical teams and are supplying villagers with medicine, vaccines, medical equipment and nutritious food in Asmat. But the difficult terrain means the team will not arrive in Oksibil until today at the earliest, Aidi added. Both areas suffer from a severe shortage of doctors and health facilities as well as poor infrastructure and communications networks, delaying news of the outbreak. About 129,000 people live in Asmat, a swampy region criss-crossed by rivers that can only be accessed by a flight from Papua's capital Jayapura followed by a helicopter and boat ride.

The district of Oksibil has a population of 4,000. To reach some of the villages, people must walk for about a day. "We have sent aid, now we are making sure that it is actually distributed to those remote villages and not just stocked in a warehouse," said social affairs minister Idrus Marham. Jakarta proclaimed western Papua to be part of Indonesia after a self-determination referendum in 1969 which some regarded it as a sham. When President Joko Widodo took office in 2014 he vowed to speed up the development in infrastructure in Papua to speed up economic growth. —AFP

Mumbai metro will beat traffic, but at what cost?

MUMBAI: A new underground metro is expected to ease the burden on Mumbai's notoriously congested roads and railways, but not everybody in India's sprawling financial capital is happy about the multi-billion-dollar project. Announced in 2014 with much fanfare, the Metro 3 line has been hailed by backers as essential to help solve the city's traffic woes and finally provide a link to its airports.

But campaigners are angry at the felling of thousands of trees, and say it could desecrate temples and lead to the destruction of an urban forest tribal groups call home. The scheme has faced considerable opposition in court, delaying completion and highlighting the complexities of undertaking major infrastructure work in the world's largest democracy where people have the right of redress. "This is one of India's biggest projects. It has faced immense difficulties and challenges of different types," says Ashwini Bhide, managing director of the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation.

The 231-billion-rupee (\$3.6 billion) line will link Mumbai's popular tourist destination of Colaba in the historic south to SEEPZ, a special economic zone situated 33.5 kilometers (21 miles) north. It will boast 27 stops servicing the coastal city's busiest business districts, including Bandra Kurla Complex and Lower Parel, where 23 people died during a stampede at a railway station last year. The line is scheduled to be finished by December 2021. "Congestion on the road will be substantially reduced because of this corridor," Bhide told AFP, estimating that 650,000 vehicle trips could disappear from the roads daily.

'Mumbai is upgrading'

Metro 3 also aims to ease the load on Mumbai's creaking railway lines where an average of more than nine people lose their lives every day, often falling off overcrowded carriages.



MUMBAI: A 'dabbawala', or deliveryman, cycles past a metro railway working site in Mumbai. The new underground metro is expected to ease the burden on Mumbai's notoriously congested roads and railways, but not everybody in India's sprawling financial capital is happy about the multi-billion-dollar project. - AFP

Seven million people use Mumbai's railway daily. Bhide says the new metro will carry 1.7 million passengers per day, freeing up space on overground trains. "The quality of commute, ease of travelling and speed of travelling will increase," she says. Mumbai effectively shuts down when trains cannot run, as is often the case when tracks flood during the four-month summer monsoon. The underground will ensure the city keeps running, advocates say. Work began in October 2016 and large areas of the city have been dug up to bore tunnels, which will be up to 22 metres (72 feet) deep.

Barriers shielding construction work boast the tagline "Mumbai is upgrading" but while most people support the project, several groups are angry. Thousands of Parsis signed a petition calling for the route to be changed so trains do not pass under fire temples where Zoroastrians worship, claiming it would pollute the "holy fire" and force nature to exact its revenge. Environmentalists unsuccessfully went to court to

stop the destruction of thousands of trees, and also object to plans for a depot and station on a 33-hectare (82-acre) site in Aarey Colony, a biodiversity hotspot. The area borders Sanjay Gandhi National Park, home to leopards, birds and other animals.

'We don't want change'

"It's a beautiful forest in the heart of Mumbai, an oxygen cylinder for the city that needs to be protected," Stalin Dayanand, director of the environmental non-profit organization Vanashakti said. "Once the shed and station come up, it opens the door for real estate developers to construct properties there," he added. Some 7,000 indigenous Indians—the Warlis—also live across Aarey, which at more than 1,200 hectares is a green oasis in the teeming city. The animists worship wildlife and are famous for their simple paintings depicting nature. —AFP

International

Israel won't prosecute embassy guard over Jordan shootings

Guard killed 2 Jordanians in self-defense, Israel claims

JERUSALEM: Israel will not prosecute a guard from its embassy in Amman who killed two Jordanians in July, as had long been demanded by the kingdom, two Israeli sources said yesterday. Instead, the Foreign Ministry and Shin Bet security agency will review protocols surrounding the actions taken by the guard, and his conduct, "and share the results with the Jordanians", a diplomatic source said. The killings led to a rift between the countries, which both said last week had been mended.

Jordan said Israel had apologized for the embassy deaths, would compensate the victims' next of kin and "implement and follow up legal measures" in the case. Jordanian officials were not immediately available to comment on the diplomatic source's account. Israel's Foreign Ministry spokesman declined comment. Amman had previously demanded a homicide trial for the guard, whose repatriation under diplomatic immunity and hero's welcome by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu angered Jordanians.

Israel said in the aftermath of the incident that the guard had acted in self-defense, shooting a workman who stabbed and wounded him lightly, and that the second Jordanian was killed by stray fire. Asked yesterday whether criminal prosecution of the guard was possible, a second Israeli official told Reuters on condition of anonymity: "No way." The guard's prospects of remaining in the Israeli secret service may be in doubt, however, after a Jordanian newspaper published his name and photo-

graph. Other fine-print elements of the reconciliation deal were designed to limit legal culpability for Israel, the diplomatic source said.

Israel would not pay damages to the next of kin directly, but instead provide a \$5 million lump sum for the Jordanian government to disburse as compensation, that source said. The money is also meant to cover the needs of the family of a Jordanian shot dead by an Israeli border guard in 2014. Two sources close to the families confirmed the payout sum. The Israeli diplomatic source said the Netanyahu government had not apologized for the shooting of the alleged assailant but rather "voiced regret".

On Thursday, a Jordanian government spokesman said Israel had sent a memorandum stating its "deep regrets and apologies". Yet Israel distinguishes between the two expressions of contrition, seeing in the latter a potential admission of guilt. A deal reconciling Israel and Turkey over the killing of 10 pro-Palestinian Turks who tried to breach the Gaza blockade in 2010 included Israel voicing regret and paying \$20 million into a Turkish fund that compensated the bereaved and injured. In return, Ankara agreed not to seek the criminal prosecution of Israeli marines who raided the activists' ship.

Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994. Three years later, during Netanyahu's first term as prime minister, relations were strained when Israeli secret agents were caught spraying poison into the ear of Palestinian Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal on an Amman street. The assassi-



JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opens the weekly cabinet meeting at his Jerusalem office yesterday. —AFP

nation team was repatriated in return for an antidote for Meshaal and the release of Hamas's spiritual leader, Ahmed Yassin, from an Israeli jail. On Saturday night in a Twitter

posting, Netanyahu expressed appreciation for behind-the-scenes efforts by US envoys Jared Kushner and Jason Greenblatt to help end the crisis with Jordan.—Agencies



Killings spark a rift between Israel, Jordan

Trump inauguration anniversary marred by shutdown, protests

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's first anniversary as US president was marred by chaos Saturday as lawmakers traded bitter recriminations over a government shutdown while mass demonstrations erupted in cities across the country. The famed Statue of Liberty was among the federal sites that were shuttered on Saturday. But the real impact of the shutdown won't be fully felt until Monday morning, when hundreds of thousands of public sector workers are set to stay home without pay.

Top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell on Saturday night tried to head off that possibility, setting a key vote for a funding measure for 1:00 am today. "I assure you we will have the vote at 1:00 am today, unless there is a desire to have it sooner," he said in a statement. Highlighting the deep political polarization, crowds estimated to number in the hundreds of thousands took to the streets of major US cities to march against the president and his policies.

"This is the One Year Anniversary of my Presidency and the Democrats wanted to give me a nice present," Trump, who is in Washington instead of celebrating at his Mar-a-Lago resort as originally planned, wrote on Twitter in reference to the shutdown. "Democrats are far more concerned with Illegal Immigrants than they are with our great Military or Safety at our dangerous Southern Border," he tweeted, later accusing the opposition party of "holding our Military hostage." The impact of the shutdown would be felt acutely if it lasts into the coming work week. Essential federal services and military activity are continuing, but even active duty troops will not be paid until a deal is reached to reopen the US government.

'Holding pattern'

There have been four government shutdowns since 1990. In the last one in 2013, more than 800,000 government workers were put on temporary leave. "We're just in a holding pattern. We just have to wait and see. It's scary," Noelle Joll, a 50-year-old furloughed US government



LOS ANGELES: Protesters (part of a 500,000 strong crowd) gather during the Women's Rally on the one-year anniversary of the first Women's March, when millions marched around the world to protest US President Donald Trump's inauguration. —AFP

employee, told AFP in Washington. Joll was also affected by the 2013 shutdown, but "this one feels a lot more ominous," she said. A deal had appeared likely on Friday afternoon, when Trump—who has touted himself as a master negotiator—seemed to be close to an agreement with Democratic Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer on a measure to prevent the expulsion of undocumented migrants who arrived in the United States as children.

But no such compromise was in the language that reached Congress for a stop-gap motion to keep the government open for four more weeks while a final arrangement is discussed. And Republicans failed to win enough Democratic support to bring it to a vote. Congress reconvened for a rare Saturday session, where leaders of both sides were meant to hammer out their differences to prevent

the shutdown from stretching into Monday. Instead, they traded accusations of responsibility for the shutdown. Schumer said trying to negotiate with Trump "was like negotiating with Jell-O." "It's impossible to negotiate with a constantly moving target," he said. "President Trump is so mercurial it's been impossible to get him to agree to anything."

Meanwhile, McConnell said Schumer "took the extraordinary step" of preventing the legislation from passing and thus "plunging the country into this totally avoidable mess." "We're dysfunctional right now," said Democratic Senator Joe Manchin, who voted in favor of the funding measure on Friday night. "If we can't open the government back up and work through our differences, it would be a travesty." "Tomorrow this should come to an end. The true, unacceptable silliness that we go through must stop."—AFP

US Christian tourists see deep meaning in US' Jerusalem move

JERUSALEM: Near the olive grove where Christians believe Jesus (PBUH) agonized before his crucifixion, an American visitor spoke of a decision by US President Donald Trump some believe also holds spiritual importance. Phillip Dunn, the 37-year-old pastor of an evangelical Christian church in the US state of South Carolina, said he saw Trump's declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital last month as part of biblical prophecy. "Certainly this holds a lot of significance for people in that way. We believe Christ is going to return," Dunn, part of a group of around 50 American Southern Baptists visiting Jerusalem holy sites over the weekend, said before climbing back aboard a tour bus.

Trump's controversial declaration on December 6 will be back in the spotlight over the coming days with Vice President Mike Pence arriving Sunday night for talks with Israeli officials in Jerusalem. Dunn and his fellow believers are key backers of Trump's move in the United States and part of the Christian evangelical community there that has become an important pillar of support for his Republican party. Pence, who stood behind Trump as he made his

Jerusalem announcement, is himself an evangelical Christian.

Dunn and others on the Jerusalem tour, planned before Trump's announcement, said they were pleased with his declaration because they consider it important to support Israel and affirm its claim that the entire city is its capital. But there were also otherworldly considerations among the group. Some evangelicals believe, based on interpretations of scripture, that firmly establishing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and establishing a new temple there could help lead to the second coming of Jesus. Dunn and others on the trip said interpretations of Jerusalem's place in biblical prophecy vary too widely to provide a simple answer such as that one.

'A lot of mystery'

Brett Burleson, a pastor at a church in Alabama, said "there's a lot of mystery to that, so I don't claim to know how it's all going to play out". "We do recognize that this is a place where we believe the Lord Jesus himself will return and bring a peaceful end to human history," the 47-year-old said. Jerusalem's status is perhaps the most sensitive issue in the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel occupied and later annexed its eastern sector in the Six-Day War of 1967 in a move never recognized by the international community. It sees the entire city as its capital, while the Palestinians view east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state. Trump's declaration deeply angered the Palestinians, with president Mahmud Abbas cancelling plans to meet Pence dur-



JERUSALEM: A man rides a scooter past a bus bearing a poster in support of US President ahead of the visit of the US vice president to Israel yesterday. US Vice President Mike Pence is on a Middle East tour overshadowed by anger in the Arab world over Washington's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. —AFP

ing his visit, which had been set for late December before being postponed.

The declaration was partly the result of a long political debate in the United States, with a law passed calling for the embassy to be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in 1995. It however allowed presidents to sign a waiver every six months to prevent the embassy move for national security reasons. Trump again signed the waiver when declaring Jerusalem Israel's capital last month, but stressed he intended to move

the embassy. He also said Jerusalem's final borders and status would have to be negotiated, but Palestinians were unconvinced.

David Parsons, vice president of the International Christian Embassy based in Jerusalem, said he helped draft an earlier version of the embassy legislation while working for a pro-Israel lobbying firm in the United States. "We have a large, broad movement worldwide that supports Israel on various motivations," Parsons said of the primarily evangelical Christian embassy.—AFP

News in brief

Army helicopter crashes

CALIFORNIA: A US Army Apache attack helicopter crashed early Saturday morning in California, killing two soldiers, a spokesman for the Army said. An investigation is ongoing into the crash of the AH-64 Apache helicopter on the sprawling National Training Center at Fort Irwin in southern California, Lieutenant Colonel Jason Brown, US Army spokesman, said in a statement emailed to Reuters. Another Army spokesman said that the pilot and the copilot were killed, but did not give their names, saying their families had yet to be notified. The crew of soldiers and the aircraft were based in Fort Carson in Colorado and were on a training rotation at the base in the Mojave Desert, said Brandy Gill, a spokeswoman for the Army at Fort Carson. The crash occurred about 1 am local time, Gill said. The AH-64 Apache is made by Boeing in Arizona. Boeing signed a \$3.4 billion, five-year deal to make AH-64 Apache helicopters for the US Army and an unnamed foreign customer, the company said in a statement last March.

German to be hanged

BAGHDAD: An Iraqi court said yesterday it had condemned to death by hanging a German woman of Moroccan origin after finding her guilty of belonging to the Islamic State jihadist group. She was sentenced for providing "logistical support and helping the terrorist group to carry out crimes," said court spokesman Abdel Settar Bayraqdar. "The accused admitted during interrogations that she left Germany for Syria then Iraq to join IS with her two daughters, who married members of the terrorist organization," he said. In September 2017, the same court sentenced to death by hanging a Russian man who was captured in Iraq's second city Mosul and found guilty of fighting for IS. Iraqi forces expelled the jihadists from Mosul in July 2017, ending three years of IS rule in the city. The same month, a German teenage girl suspected of joining IS was arrested in Mosul, according to Germany's justice department.

Mogadishu mayor fired

MOGADISHU: Somalia's president fired the mayor of the capital Mogadishu yesterday, in an apparent bid to defuse moves towards greater autonomy for the city. President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed named current information minister Abdirahman Omar Osman to the post of Mogadishu mayor and governor of the Banadir administration, the region that includes the city, according to a statement from his office. Osman replaces Thabit Abdi Mohamed who has served just nine months in office. Immediately after the mayor's firing, government security forces were deployed across Mogadishu to forestall any potential protest against the move. Earlier, Mohamed's supporters in the city council had nominated him to head an autonomous Banadir administration, hoping to secure for the city and surrounding area equal status to Somalia's six regional states, which have their own presidents and enjoy a greater degree of autonomy. The central government is opposed to any such efforts.

Honduras roads blocked

TEGUCIGALPA: Activists blocked roads and clashed with police in Honduras on Saturday as part of nationwide protests against the contested re-election of President Juan Orlando Hernandez. Dozens of people have been killed and hundreds jailed since Hernandez was declared the winner of the November 26 run-off election after a three week stretch of often-interrupted ballot counting that stoked tensions and sparked accusations of fraud in the Central American country. The left-wing Alliance in Opposition against the Dictatorship is heading a protest campaign insisting that the election was stolen from its candidate, former TV anchor Salvador Nasrallah. The opposition called for a "national strike" on Saturday to block the country's main roads ahead of the start of the president's new term in office on January 27. The government deployed police and soldiers to confront protesters.

International

Dark clouds loom over Kosovo 10 years after its independence

Conflicts claim 13,000 lives, mostly ethnic Albanians

PRISTINA: The assassination of a prominent Serb politician has cast another dark cloud above Kosovo as it prepares to mark the 10th anniversary of its independence. Unilaterally declared on February 17, 2008, the independence of Serbia's breakaway province is recognized by more than 110 countries. But Belgrade and many of the 120,000 members of Kosovo's Serb minority, refuse to do so almost 20 years after the 1990s war. The conflict pitting Serbian security forces against Kosovo Albanian guerrillas claimed 13,000 lives, mostly ethnic Albanians.

The January 16 murder of moderate Serb politician Oliver Ivanovic has sparked fresh tensions in the volatile region. The 64-year-old was shot dead from a car in northern Mitrovica, a Serb-populated part of the ethnically divided flashpoint town. He was the only top Kosovo Serb politician to have publicly denounced Belgrade's policies in Kosovo, earning him the label "traitor" from detractors. The murder, whose perpetrators have not yet been identified, has "the potential to destabilize Kosovo", political analyst Ramush Tahiri told AFP.

It already prompted the suspension of EU-mediated talks between Serb and Kosovo negotiators, which had been due to resume on the day Ivanovic was killed. The indefinite halt of discussions "is bad for our country," commented Zeri, one of Kosovo's leading daily newspapers. Begun in 2011 under EU auspices, the process of normalizing ties has been at a standstill for months. A number of key issues remain yet to be solved including the status of "Serb-majority municipalities".

'Rogue state' warning

Tensions already rose in December after lawmakers in Kosovo (population 1.8 million) made a failed bid to scrap

a new special court trying ethnic Albanian ex-guerrillas suspected of committing war crimes during the 1998-1999 conflict. The EU-backed tribunal, based in The Hague, is poised to begin issuing indictments. But senior war veterans of the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) have demanded that MPs abolish the law on what they say is a "biased" court. President Hashim Thaci, the former head of the KLA's political wing, is rumored to be among those prosecuted for the alleged kidnapping and disappearance of around 500 civilians, mostly ethnic Serbs.

Ivanovic death sparks fresh tensions

A brother of Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj is also thought to be under investigation. Calling the court into question would be "a terrible example of self interest prevailing over the common good and Kosovo's interest as a state," the US ambassador to Kosovo Greg Delawie said, warning that the move would have "harsh consequences". It would turn Kosovo into a "rogue state" joining the ranks of North Korea or Iran, according to security expert Lulzim Peci. For some Kosovars, the situation has already taken a turn for the worse. "It is too late to change something," said Zenel Kastrati, 57, a shopkeeper in Pristina, who is against a "confrontation with the United States and other western friends".

Catastrophic economy

Having reunited after years of bitter infighting, the former KLA chiefs barely retained power in legislative elections in June. But their majority is thin and observers say the fall of Haradinaj's government could soon become a reality as in the parliament it depends on the support of 10 Serb MPs who oppose abolishing the war crimes court. Meanwhile, the nationalist leftwing opposition Vetevendosje (Self-determination) — the strongest party



LAPLJE SELO, Kosovo: Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić arrives at a meeting with Kosovo Serbs in the village of Laplje, near the town of Gracanica, during his visit to Kosovo. Vučić urged Kosovo Serbs to remain calm after the murder of a prominent political leader that sparked fears of renewed tensions in the fragile region.—AFP

in the country-faces its own power struggles. The party is divided between supporters of its founder and leader Albin Kurti and those who oppose his re-election as party leader at regular vote due in the coming weeks.

Kosovo's dismal economic situation has also blunted the enthusiasm of post-independence. Nearly one Kosovar out of three is unemployed, with the jobless rate currently at 52 percent among 15-24 year old, according to Kosovo's Agency of Statistics. Although

the average salary officially is 363 euro (\$450), a third of the population lives below the poverty line, according to the United Nations.

While there is no official data, it is estimated that tens of thousands of people emigrate each year towards the western countries. For Kosovars the priority is visa liberalization for the European Union's passport-free Schengen zone. One more reason to not upset the West.—AFP

German SPD leader implores party to back coalition talks

BONN: Social Democrat leader Martin Schulz made an impassioned appeal to his party yesterday to give the go-ahead for formal coalition talks with Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives, a move that would bring Germany a step closer to a stable government. Schulz is facing a backlash from the Social Democrats' (SPD) left and youth wings, which argue the party should reinvent itself in opposition after scoring its worst election result in September since Germany became a federal republic in 1949.

Speaking in Bonn, where late SPD chancellors Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt earned reputations as international statesmen while ruling former West Germany, Schulz implored delegates to allow the SPD to serve as Merkel's junior coalition partner again — a sign of how far the party's fortunes have fallen. "The SPD must and will be visible, audible and recognizable!" Schulz, sounding hoarse after a week of lobbying delegates, said to loud applause at the packed World Conference Center in the former capital city.

"We ask for your consent to start coalition negotiations." Around 600 delegates met at the special party congress in Bonn to debate and vote on whether their leaders should push ahead with formal coalition talks on renewing an alliance with Merkel's conservatives that took office in 2013. The two blocs, which both bled support to the far right in the Sept. 24 election, struck a preliminary deal earlier this month after exploratory talks, but critics, including the party's youth wing leader Kevin Kühnert, say the blueprint does not bear enough of the SPD's hallmarks.

Blueprint

A copy of the motion on which delegates will vote, seen by Reuters, included language on SPD leaders reaching "concrete, effective improvements" to the blueprint but did not make a final vote on the coalition deal conditional on achieving these. The envisaged improvements would see concessions on labor, health and migration policies, the motion showed. "We will fight for further improvements in the coalition negotiations if we can continue the talks," Schulz said.

If a coalition deal is reached, all SPD members still get to vote on the agreement — another hurdle to achieving a new government in Europe's economic powerhouse, which is humming despite the political uncertainty. Yesterday's vote will be watched abroad as Germany has Europe's largest economy and Merkel has long played a leading role in the continent's economic and security affairs. "Without the SPD, there will be no bold impulses for the future of Europe," said Schulz, 62, a former president of the European Parliament. "It is up to us." Arriving for yesterday's congress, SPD parliamentary leader Andrea Nahles told Reuters she was "cautiously optimistic".

A negative vote by the SPD would prolong Germany's political deadlock — already four months old — just as its European partners are looking to Berlin for leadership on European Union reform in light of Britain's decision to leave the bloc. Possible scenarios in case of an SPD rejection would include a new election or a minority government for what would be the first time in Germany's post-war era. "This is about the question: coalition negotiations or new elections!" Schulz said in a 57-minute speech. "I do not believe new elections are the right way for us." Merkel has said she would prefer a new election to leading a minority government. Leading conservatives have rejected SPD demands for more concessions. Business associations have urged SPD delegates to back coalition talks.—Reuters

Troubled history of modern Cyprus

NICOSIA: Cyprus holds a presidential election on January 28 that could determine if the divided eastern Mediterranean island relaunches a push to reunify. Here are the key dates in the island's history since it gained independence from Britain in 1960:

Independence and unrest

On August 16, 1960 Cyprus becomes independent from Britain after a guerrilla campaign waged by fighters aiming to unite the island with Greece. A new constitution sought to keep a balance between the island's main communities, with the president from the Greek Cypriot majority and a Turkish Cypriot vice president. Britain, Greece and Turkey pledge in a treaty to guarantee the independence of Cyprus through the right of military intervention. In December 1963, intercommunal violence erupts between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in unrest known as "Bloody Christmas". British troops begin overseeing a ceasefire along a "Green Line" dividing the communities in Nicosia but violence spreads to other areas. In March 1964, a UN peacekeeping force for Cyprus (UNFICYP) is established in a bid to staunch further unrest.

Coup, Invasion, Division

On July 15, 1974, members of the National Guard overthrow president Archbishop Makarios in a coup sponsored by a military junta in Athens which wants to merge the island with Greece. Five days later, Turkey, citing the independence treaty, invades the north with the declared aim of protecting the Turkish Cypriot minority. The Athens regime falls and the coup in Nicosia collapses, leading to the return of Makarios. The United Nations demands the restoration of Cypriot sovereignty and withdrawal of foreign troops but peace talks in Geneva collapse. The Turkish army in mid-August advances to control 37 percent of the island. Hundreds of thousands of Greek Cypriots in the north and Turkish Cypriots in the south flee to opposite sides. After a ceasefire is announced, the UN establishes a buffer zone separating the two sides that runs across the island to this day.

Breakaway state in north

On February 13, 1975, Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş proclaims a separate federal state and becomes its president. In January 1977, Makarios and Denktaş agree on the principle of a federal "bicomunal, bizonal" non-aligned state. Makarios dies of a heart attack in August 1977 and further efforts to hammer out the new state founder. On November 15, 1983, Turkish Cypriot leaders announce the creation of The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in a proclamation rejected as illegal by the United Nations. Only Turkey recognizes it as a country.

Talks end in collapse

On September 3, 2008, then Greek Cypriot leader Demetris Christofias and his Turkish Cypriot counterpart Mehmet Ali Talat launch intensive talks under UN auspices after four years of deadlock. In 2012, stalled negotiations are suspended by the Turkish Cypriots, in reaction to Cyprus taking over the rotating EU presidency. New negotiations fail in 2014, then restart in May 2015. In June 2017, a peace conference opens

Over 25,000 murdered in Mexico in 2017

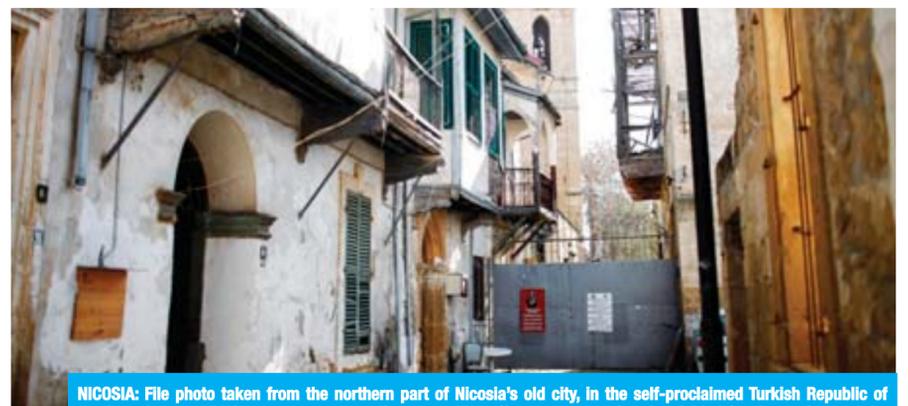
MEXICO CITY: Mexico saw a total of 25,339 murders last year, official data has shown, after 2017 was already established as a record-breaking year based on killings carried out until November. The interior ministry on Saturday said 2,219

people were murdered in December 2017. Authorities began collecting data in 1997, and the previous record high of 22,409 occurred in 2011. The homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants meanwhile climbed to 20.51, against 16.80 in 2016, when 20,545 were murdered. Mexico is convulsing from a wave of violence linked to drug trafficking that has left almost 200,000 dead since December 2006, when former president Felipe Calderon's government launched a controversial military anti-drug operation that, according to its critics, has only led to more murders and attacks.

The figures do not detail how many of the murders are linked to organized crime but experts say it is probably a large majority since the bulk were recorded in states where drug cartels are deeply entrenched, such as southern Guerrero and eastern Veracruz. Within the last year, even states that were previously relatively peaceful, such as Baja California Sur, northwestern Colima and central Guanajuato, were shaken by violence.

Analysts believe this may be linked to a surge in the number of autonomous cells following the capture of the heads of major drug cartels. Criminal gangs have

also diversified, trafficking in stolen gasoline, engaging in extortion, kidnapping for ransom or people trafficking. In a bid to address the issue, Mexico's congress last week approved a controversial internal security law that would formalize the military's role in domestic security. The move drew criticism from rights groups concerned about the militarization of the country — while UN rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al-Husseini said earlier this month it "risks weakening incentives for the civilian authorities to fully assume their law enforcement roles." —AFP



NICOSIA: File photo taken from the northern part of Nicosia's old city, in the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), shows a gate leading to the UN buffer zone separating the divided Cypriot capital and the Holy Cross Catholic Church in the background.—AFP

in the Swiss resort of Crans-Montana, the culmination of two years of negotiations between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders. On July 7, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres announces that despite his repeated interventions, the marathon talks have collapsed.

Things to know

Cyprus is gearing up for presidential elections on January 28 that could determine whether the divided Mediterranean island resumes a push for reunification. Here are five things to know about the popular holiday destination that has been split for almost 44 years:

Aphrodite and empires

Nestled in the eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus is the mythical birthplace of the Greek goddess of love Aphrodite, who legend has it rose out of the foam near the ancient town of Paphos. The island's strategic location at the crossroads between east and west has made it a target for a succession of empires from the Assyrians and early Greek settlers to the British. It was given by Roman general Mark Anthony to his Egyptian lover Cleopatra and used by England's King Richard the Lionheart as a staging post during the Crusades before he sold it to the Knights Templar. For 300 years, it was part of the Ottoman Empire before the British took control in 1871. After an insurgency by fighters seeking union with Greece, the British eventually granted Cyprus independence in 1960.

Divided island

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkish troops invaded and occupied the northern third of the island in response to a coup sponsored by the military junta then ruling Greece. Ankara's intervention followed a decade of intercommunal tension and violence between the Greek majority and the Turkish minority and the deployment of UN peacekeepers. The division saw some 200,000 people forced from their homes. Almost 44 years later, Cyprus remains cut in two and a barrier of barbed wire and military posts makes the capital Nicosia the world's last divided city. In the south is the internationally recognized Greek-majority Republic of Cyprus that became an EU member in 2004. In the north is the breakaway

Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus recognized only by Ankara. In July 2017, talks came closer than ever to reuniting the island but collapsed before the finishing line, over issues that included the future of tens of thousands of Turkish troops in the north.

British bases

Cyprus is home to the two British Sovereign Base Areas of Akrotiri and Dhekelia that house key military and air force installations. The areas were established under the treaties that saw Britain grant Cyprus independence, as London sought to maintain a strategic foothold in the region. The bases have served as intelligence-gathering hubs and a launch pad for British air operations as part of a US-led coalition fighting the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq.

Holiday destination

With its year-round sunshine, sandy beaches and crystal-clear waters, Cyprus has long been a tourist destination. Before the island's division, the international jet set graced the beaches of Famagusta. Sophia Loren owned a house there, and it was a favorite of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. The city's Varosha district is now an abandoned and fenced-off ghost town. But the rest of the island is enjoying a tourist boom. In 2017, with traditional rivals Egypt, Turkey and Tunisia facing instability, Cyprus smashed records as an estimated 3.5 million tourists flocked to the island. Britain makes up the biggest market, followed by Russia, Israel and Germany.

Economic crisis

The flow of tourists has helped Cyprus recover from a 2013 financial crisis when it was forced to take a stringent 10-billion-euro bailout package to save its crumbling economy and insolvent banks. The government imposed harsh austerity measures including a haircut on deposits of over 100,000 euros (\$120,000) in its biggest bank. In the wake of the crisis, Cyprus says it has cleaned up its banking system and tightened controls over a sector that was long seen as a haven for cash from Eastern Europe. Cyprus has stepped up a passports-for-investment scheme, and the government is also looking to cash in on offshore oil and gas deposits.—Agencies

International

China accuses US of violating 'South China Sea sovereignty'

Philippines staying out of US-China 'intramural'

SHANGHAI: A US Navy destroyer this week sailed near the Scarborough Shoal, a disputed lagoon claimed by China in the South China Sea. US officials said on Saturday, and Beijing vowed to take "necessary measures" to protect what it said was its sovereignty. China's foreign ministry said USS Hopper missile destroyer came within 12 nautical miles off Huangyan island, better known as the Scarborough Shoal and subject to a rival claim by the Philippines, a historic ally of the United States.

It was the latest US naval operation challenging extensive Chinese claims in the South China Sea and came even as US President Donald Trump's administration seeks Chinese cooperation in dealing with North Korea's missile and nuclear programs. Two US officials confirmed that the USS Hopper had sailed within 12 nautical miles of Scarborough Shoal, a rocky outcrop and prime fishing spot due to its bountiful catches and calm waters. With a permanent presence of large coastguard vessels, China blockaded the Scarborough Shoal for more than four years but ended that in October 2016 at the request of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, who said Filipino fishermen were suffering.

The US officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the patrol was in line with international law and was an "innocent passage," in which a warship effectively recognizes a territorial sea by crossing it quickly, without stopping. Twelve nautical miles is an internationally recognized territorial limit. Though located within the Philippines' 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone,

an international tribunal in 2016 ruled that the Scarborough Shoal is a traditional fishing ground that no one country has sole rights to exploit.

The US military says it carries out "freedom of navigation" operations throughout the world, including in areas claimed by allies, and that they are separate from political considerations. The Pentagon did not directly comment on the latest patrol but said such operations are routine. "All operations are conducted in accordance with international law and demonstrate that the United States will fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows," Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Logan said.

The US military put countering China and Russia at the center of a new national defense strategy unveiled on Friday. China criticized the strategy, saying Beijing sought "global partnership, not global dominance." Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang said the USS Hopper violated China's sovereignty and security interests and threatened

the safety of Chinese vessels and personnel. Lu said the Chinese navy ordered the vessel to withdraw after determining its identity. The United States has criticized China for constructing islands and military installations in the South China Sea, saying they could be used to restrict free movement in a critical global trade route.

Lu said China "firmly opposes" efforts to use freedom of navigation as an excuse to hurt its sovereignty and urged the United States to "correct its mistakes." China's defense ministry said the repeated dispatch of US warships to the region was "undermining regional peace and



IN THE AIR: This photo taken through the port window of a Republic of Singapore Airforce (RSAF) KC-135R Stratotanker shows an F15SG air-superiority fighter, flanked by two F16Cs, flying over the South China Sea.— AFP

stability" and hurting bilateral relations. The Philippines has sparred with China for decades over what it says is aggressive conduct at the Scarborough Shoal. But in Duterte, China has found an unlikely new ally who prefers to avoid confrontation. "We do not wish to be part of a US-China intramural. The United States can take care of its own interest," Duterte's spokesman, Harry Roque, said yesterday.

He said the Manila's claim over the Scarborough Shoal "is recognized under our constitutional law and interna-

tional law". Greg Poling, a South China Sea expert at Washington's Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank, said the Pentagon appeared determined to keep up regular freedom of navigation patrols in the sea, with one every six weeks or so, in spite of Chinese objections.

"The last made public was in October, but we should expect that there was at least one other in the interim," he said. "The only time word is getting out these days is if Beijing makes an issue of it."—Reuters



Passage in line with international law, Pentagon says

More than 50,000 Greeks protest over Macedonia name row

THESSALONIKI: More than 50,000 protesters massed in the streets of northern Greece's biggest city Thessaloniki yesterday, police said, in a long-running row between Athens and Skopje over the use of the name Macedonia. Athens argues that the name Macedonia suggests that Skopje has territorial claims to the northern Greek region of the same name, of which Thessaloniki is the capital. The region was the centre of Alexander the Great's ancient kingdom, a source of Greek pride.

Hardline clerics, far-right leaders and Greek diaspora groups had called for yesterday's rallies, with the turnout exceeding media estimates of 30,000. Gathered around the statue of Alexander the Great in Thessaloniki were members of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party and local clergy. Representatives from the main opposition party, New Democracy, were also present despite a tacit order from its liberal-minded leader Kyriakos Mitsotakis to boycott the protests.

Cretans in traditional costumes who travelled from the southern island with their horses, as well as people from northern Greece wearing costumes from the Macedonian wars era a century ago, crowded at the White Tower on the Thessaloniki waterfront from early in the morning. Greece and Macedonia returned to the United Nations last week hoping to reach a compromise that could end the 27-year dispute over the former Yugoslav republic's name.

'Not negotiable'

Greece's objections to the use of the name Macedonia since the Balkan country's independence in 1991 have hampered the tiny nation's bid to join the European Union and NATO. "We demand that the term Macedonia isn't included in the name which they will agree on. This is not negotiable," said Leonardou, a 59-year-old writer from Thessaloniki, warning that if the Greek government does otherwise "there will be an answer from the Greek people".

The UN negotiator Matthew Nimetz—a 24-year veteran on the issue—said last week that he was "very hopeful" that a solution was within reach. Despite the nationalist fervor that is also being fed by Golden Dawn, Greeks appear to be less militant on the issue than in the past. In 1992, more than one million people — 10 percent of the population—joined a rally



THESSALONIKI: People holding flags of Greece take part in a demonstration to protest against the use of the name Macedonia following the developments on the issue with the neighbor country yesterday. — AFP

in Thessaloniki to proclaim that "Macedonia is Greek".

According to a survey conducted for Greek radio station 24/7 by the Alco polling group, 63 percent of respondents said they thought it was in Greece's best interests to seek a mutually acceptable solution at the UN talks. And the Greek Orthodox Church, which is traditionally opposed to the use of the term Macedonia from Skopje and led the 1992 rally, appears to have distanced itself from yesterday's events. Its leader Archbishop Ieronymos on Thursday reportedly told Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras that "national unity is needed... (not) protests and shouts".

'National stupidity'

Tsipras, who is expected to meet with his Macedonian

counterpart Zoran Zaev in Davos next week, said in an interview published yesterday: "If there is an opportunity for a solution, it would be a national stupidity not to make good use of it." However, he told Ethnos newspaper that he could understand "the concerns and sensitivities" of the Greeks of the north. Macedonia is known as the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) at the United Nations, although the Security Council acknowledged this was a provisional name when it agreed to membership. If a deal is reached at the UN talks, it will be put before Greek parliament for approval, with the government expecting the compromise name to be approved despite opposition within some parties. According to Macedonian media, Nimetz has proposed five alternatives all containing the name.—AFP

'Pray for me': Kabul hotel guest's plea during bloody siege

KABUL: As gunmen went on a night-time rampage through Kabul's Intercontinental Hotel on Saturday, Aziz Tayeb posted a desperate plea on Facebook: "Pray for me. I may die." The telecom executive hid behind a pillar as four heavily-armed attackers stormed the luxury hotel and began spraying terrified guests and staff with bullets. At least six people were killed, including a foreigner, and eight wounded in the 12-hour ordeal as the attackers engaged in a fierce gunfight with Afghan security forces.

"I saw people who were enjoying themselves a second ago screaming and fleeing like crazy, and some of them falling down, hit by bullets," Tayeb said yesterday, hours after his traumatic experience ended. One colleague, who had been stuck on the fifth floor of the six-storey building throughout the attack, told Tayeb that some areas of the hotel resembled a butcher's shop with blood everywhere.

The attackers were eventually killed. Tayeb, a regional director for Afghan Telecom in the western city of Herat, was staying at the hilltop hotel—not part of the

global InterContinental chain—with dozens of industry colleagues from around the country ahead of an annual conference due to begin yesterday. The gunmen shot at people who had been enjoying dinner in one of the hotel restaurants before breaking into guest rooms and taking dozens of hostages including foreigners, witnesses said. Tayeb and a few friends managed to escape to the hotel's outdoor pool area where they hid, listening to the horrifying attack meters away. "I could repeatedly hear blasts one after another, hand grenades, they used many grenades," he said, his voice heavy with exhaustion.

"We contacted security officials who arrived an hour later and as we were being escorted out I saw five or six bodies outside the hotel. "The second, third and fifth floors were on fire—the fifth floor was engulfed in flames." Once he was a safe distance from the hotel, Tayeb called his colleagues still trapped inside the burning building. "Some were crying that they would die of smoke inhalation," he said. Dramatic television footage from Afghanistan's Tolo News showed people trapped on balconies at the top of the building climbing down bed-sheets to escape, with at least one losing his grip and falling.

Security staff fled

A witness told AFP that the hotel's security team fled "without a fight", leaving guests to their fate. "They didn't attack.



KABUL: Afghan journalists take cover behind an ambulance near the Intercontinental Hotel during a fight between gunmen and Afghan security forces yesterday. — AFP

They didn't do anything to them. They had no experience," said the 24-year-old man, a hotel employee who spoke to AFP on condition of anonymity. He ran from the hotel with some of them, he said. "I was asking them, where should I go?" An interior ministry spokesman has confirmed to

AFP that the hotel's security had been taken over by a private company just three weeks earlier. No hotel official was immediately able to comment. As he waited for news of his colleagues, Tayeb updated his Facebook status to thank his friends for their prayers.—AFP

News in brief

Delhi lawmakers sacked

NEW DELHI: India's President yesterday sacked 20 lawmakers from the state assembly in New Delhi after they were revealed to be holding jobs in government despite laws forbidding the practice. The purge reduces by nearly a third the number of state assembly seats held by Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which still maintains a majority. It attacked the sackings as "unconstitutional". The Election Commission had recommended on Friday that the legislators be disqualified for drawing salaries for government jobs outside their elected duties. Politicians are barred in most states from accepting paid work in public office while earning a living as sitting members. Those appointed as ministers are exempt from the rules. The practice of "holding offices of profit" has been legalized in some Indian states but not in the capital Delhi. President Ram Nath Kovind—who was nominated last year by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party for the post—upheld the commission's recommendation and dismissed the lawmakers.

Police drop gun, flee

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan police who were charged by elephants as they staked out a cannabis farm dropped an automatic rifle as they ran for their lives, sparking a hunt Sunday for the missing weapon. Policemen who had been camping out near the plantation in a bid to catch crooks turned tail and scurried after the huge creatures started hurtling after them. "The constables dropped their weapons and fled to save their lives when the elephants charged," a statement said. Officers were now looking for the T56 automatic assault rifle in the bush at Lunugamvehera, 225 kilometers south of the capital Colombo. Sri Lanka has strict laws protecting elephants, which are considered sacred. However, about 200 jumbos are killed annually by farmers who say wild elephants stray onto their land and destroy their crops. About 50 people are killed in wild elephant attacks annually.

Hotel fire kills four

PRAGUE: A fourth person has died from injuries sustained in a fire on Saturday at a hotel in central Prague, a hospital spokesman said. The fire broke out on Saturday evening at the Eurostars David Hotel, situated on a narrow street a block away from the Vltava River. Two people died on Saturday and were identified by police yesterday as a German man born in 1996, and a South Korean woman born in 1997. The hospital spokesman said two more people who died yesterday were women. Police said they had yet to identify the women. Four other people injured in the fire remained in hospital, police said. Their conditions were unclear. Investigations into the cause of the fire were continuing, police said.

Congo blocks Internet

KINSHASA: Authorities in the Democratic Republic of Congo blocked the internet in Kinshasa and set up roadblocks throughout the city ahead of planned protests yesterday demanding that President Joseph Kabila leave power. Catholic church leaders have called for a mass peaceful demonstration against Kabila's 17-year rule, three weeks after a similar protest on New Year's Eve that ended in deadly violence. The authorities have banned all demonstrations, and at around midnight (2300 GMT Saturday), the internet, email and social media messaging networks were cut in the capital, AFP correspondents said. Security forces have installed roadblocks on major routes into Kinshasa, while armed officers are conducting ID checks. The church has also called for rallies in several other cities including Lubumbashi and Goma, but the government has banned all demonstrations since September 2016, when anti-Kabila protests turned violent. The head of the Muslim community in DR Congo has backed the church, urging the authorities to allow the march to take place despite no official permission being granted.

Analysis

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The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
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Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24835619
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

If Trump kills Iran nuclear deal, global security will suffer

After months of threatening to undo the Iran nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Donald Trump once again opted to extend the deal by waiving economic sanctions on Iran. This was the "last chance," he declared in a Jan. 12 statement, "to either fix the deal's disastrous flaws, or the United States will withdraw."

The US president provided four conditions for a "supplemental agreement" to the JCPOA and called on Congress to ordain them into law. These include: Iran allowing "immediate" inspections of "all sites requested by international inspectors," Iran never coming "close to possessing a nuclear weapon," that there be "no expiration date" for these provisions, and finally, that the legislation explicitly state that Iran's "long-range missile and nuclear weapons programs are inseparable."

In the event that Congress or American allies in Europe fail to support the so-called supplemental agreement, Trump proclaimed, he would unilaterally "terminate" the JCPOA. This is a shocking attitude towards the European Union member countries, among others.

The reality is that the JCPOA's text stipulates the highest standards on nuclear transparency and inspections ever negotiated and provides verifiable assurances that Iran's nuclear program cannot be diverted towards developing nuclear weapons. These measures already meet the first two of Trump's conditions and surpass anything agreed to by a member of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT).

Furthermore, while the JCPOA's major restrictions are temporary, with expiration dates ranging from eight to 25 years, after the deal expires, Iran returns to monitoring under the International Atomic Energy Agency's "Additional Protocol" safeguards. As noted by more than 90 nuclear scientists in an October 2017 letter supporting the JCPOA, these represent the "strongest set of generally applicable safeguards implemented by the IAEA."

Trump's conditions seemingly seek to make permanent the JCPOA's major restrictions on Iran's nuclear program and connect the Iranian nuclear program to its missile program, despite the opposition of other world powers to any renegotiation of the deal and the conditions representing an egregious violation of the NPT. Indeed, Iran has a sovereign right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes under the treaty, which states that there should be no discrimination in the right of signatories to benefit from peaceful nuclear technologies and in no way limits states' abilities to develop conventional weapons.

Sovereign Right

Iran also has a sovereign right to possess missiles to defend itself. There are no international treaties banning conventional missiles. "President Trump has no right to dictate limits or restrictions over and beyond those just described," said Peter Jenkins, a former UK ambassador to the IAEA. If Trump follows through with his ultimatum and chooses to leave the JCPOA, his decision will have long-term consequences not only for the United States but also for global attempts to control nuclear proliferation.

First, in the domestic arena, all vital political organs from Congress to Trump's own national security agencies, including the National Security Council, Pentagon, State Department, and Department of Energy, oppose unilateral American withdrawal because they believe the agreement prevents Iran from developing nuclear weapons and that withdrawal will isolate the United States internationally.

Second, scuttling the JCPOA will increase global mistrust of the United States and remove any incentive for North Korea to negotiate a deal to curtail its own nuclear program. Washington could also find it harder to win support for any military campaign it may launch against Pyongyang if US allies hold it responsible for re-igniting the Iranian nuclear crisis.

Third, the JCPOA was endorsed by the UN Security Council - which includes the United States - and its other members continue to support the deal. Based on the UN charter, it is the obligation of all members to enact Security Council resolutions. Outright US violation of UNSC Resolution 2231 will damage the credibility of other Security Council resolutions and be seen by other member states as hurting its consensus-driven model.

Fourth, the IAEA has on numerous occasions confirmed Iran's adherence to the deal and has emphasized that US withdrawal will foment a crisis in the agency's ability to carry out its inspection duties. The JCPOA represents a major achievement for the IAEA because it is the most comprehensive non-proliferation agreement in history. It is a new standard for resolving nuclear crises and its tenets may even have prevented countries such as North Korea from developing nuclear weapons in the first place.

Fifth, the majority of Washington's allies, including the EU, Japan, Australia, Canada, and South Korea, strongly oppose the United States abandoning the JCPOA. This represents a significant break in America's alliance system and, going forward, could affect future collaboration on issues such as Russia's annexation of Crimea. These factors are presumably the reason Trump has again waived sanctions on Iran. But they will still exist in mid-May - the next deadline for Trump's sanctions decision - and for every 120 days after that. —Reuters



What to do when liberals are censors?

Citizens in authoritarian states know what they can read or publish, see or hear. In places such as China, Russia, Iran, Turkey and Egypt, semi-free private discussion and small-circulation publishing is permitted. But the dissident talk can't become opposition action. That is cut off, either at the root or when it appears on the streets.

In a revealing interview, the Chinese artist Qiu Zhijie, a dissident in his youth and now a professor at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, told the sinologist Ian Johnson that "this (Chinese) government... is not a traditional dictatorship. It's a new type. It's now much more complicated." Young people who want to explore forbidden zones can, said Qiu, use secured VPNs - virtual private networks - which allow users to bypass government filters by disguising their physical location. So China allows limited discussion of sensitive subjects such as the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre - accounts of which are still controlled by China's ruling Communist Party.

The authorities allow these conversations because they know they can't afford to alienate smart young people, but also make clear where the boundaries are. Beyond these, in the forbidden zone, lies anything from a reprimand to long jail time and possibly torture. "Governments pursuing such goals," The Economist observed, "have many options. They can press blasphemy laws into service... they can twist the media to their will... or they can simply ban speech they dislike."

But what if there is virtually no forbidden zone? What happens in liberal democracies, where the explicit default position of governments and the law is freedom to speak, publish and protest? What happens is that censorship slips from government to civil society, to groups and institutions and individuals who see some form of speech or publication as intolerable, and seek to ban it, or remove it. These are the flash floods of outrage which in turn provoke demands that the authorities rein in the would-be censors. This means doing the opposite of that which authoritarian states do. It means to remove censorship, not exert it.

This has given rise to what is being called in the UK the "no-platform" movement - attempts to ban from university campuses speakers whom one or other group considers harmful to an audience. In July last year, the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, whose "The God Delusion" is an extended critique of all religions, was "no platformed" from the Berkeley, California radio station KPFA because, according to the station, his com-

ments and writings about Islam had "offended and hurt" many people. Ironically, the station, founded in 1949 as a listener-sponsored broadcaster, advertises itself on its website as dedicated to freedoms of speech.

"Offense" and "hurt" are the central concepts employed in this battle. They are often employed by those who see themselves as liberal, and even by universities, which insist on their intellectual freedom. Last December a group of historians wrote an open letter condemning an attempt by Nigel Biggar, a theology professor at Oxford, from organizing a conference looking at the benefits of colonialism.



'Offense' and 'hurt' are central concepts employed in this battle

Objections

The objectors argued that such a project "should have no place in academic scholarship". The writer and former London deputy mayor for education, Munira Mirza, disagreed, writing of the scholars' objections that "it is a peculiarity of our times that many academics want to shut down debate... it might have been an authoritarian state trying to clamp down on uncomfortable opinion".

Freedom of speech in universities in the United States remains a matter to be fought out between students and their universities. In the more statist UK, a government-appointed Office for Students will now protect freedom for students, announced last month by Jo Johnson, the higher education minister, who argued that "young people should have the resilience and confidence to challenge controversial opinions and take part

in open, frank and rigorous discussions".

Johnson mentioned both the feminist writer Germaine Greer and the gay rights campaigner Peter Tatchell - both of whom had been objects of attempted censorship for being "transphobic," and who have more often been on the left of mainstream thought, more often in conflict with the state than protected by it.

"Hurt" can't automatically be privileged over all else. Louis-Ferdinand Celine was, by general agreement, one of the great French prose writers of the early 20th century. He was also a vicious anti-Semite. His novels remain in circulation: but essays, grossly abusive to Jews, have been unpublished. The famed Gallimard publishing house was set to publish them - but earlier this month bowed to pressure from Jewish organizations and several intellectuals because, in the latter's opinion, it "risked sanctifying incitement to murder." Yet a great deal - including violence in films and on TV, can incite to murder. As one should be able to read Hitler's Mein Kampf - it's published in France - so one should be able to read Celine.

But where do you stand on hate speech? In Germany, the constitution bans censorship, while laws ban speech deemed to incite hatred. Finding the balance between these potentially contradictory approaches has increased claims of hate speech, and fed the propaganda of the far-right Alternative für Deutschland, the anti-immigrant party that became the country's third-largest political party after making unexpected gains in last year's federal election.

In the United States, should statues of slavery-protecting Southern generals and politicians, and the flying of the Confederate flag, be tolerated? The demonstration last August in Charlottesville, Virginia, by far-rightists and neo-Nazi protesters the proposed removal of a statue of the Confederate general Robert E Lee caused the death of a young woman counter-protester, and President Donald Trump's endorsement of some of the demonstrators as "very fine people".

The white-supremacist marches sparked demands for removals of Confederate monuments everywhere - many of which have been successful. These memorials were largely erected in the Jim Crow period - a denial to Southern blacks of their citizens' rights lasting until the 1960s. There's an argument that the monuments should stay on grounds of free speech. But there's a better one that tributes, especially the Confederate flag, give succor to racism. —Reuters

Sirleaf: Africa's first elected female leader

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who shared the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize as a champion of women's rights, is stepping down after making history as Africa's first elected female president in Liberia. Taking the reins of a nation that had just emerged from a civil war leaving an estimated 250,000 dead, Sirleaf will be remembered for maintaining peace and attracting massive donor funding as she rebuilt her country from scratch over 12 years in power.

"We were a nation exhausted from three decades of conflict. We were starting from zero, with the complete destruction of our national infrastructure, a collapsed economy, and a state incapable of providing services to its people," she recalled of her 2006 inauguration in a final speech to the nation on Wednesday. She will on Monday hand power to former international footballer George Weah, representing the West African country's first democratic transfer of power since 1944, and will leave behind a mixed record of peace and freedom of speech cherished by the population, but stubbornly low living standards.

Sirleaf, 79, presided over the 2014-16 Ebola crisis during which more than 4,000 Liberians died, and struggled to counter the effects of plunging commodity prices in a nation highly dependent on exports of iron ore and rubber. She also weathered regional crises in West Africa, most notably as a mediator during The Gambia's 2016-17 political crisis, when President Yahya Jammeh stubbornly refused to stand down after losing an election. Sirleaf noted in her final address that Liberia "reflects the changing face of the continent,

where rule of law, human rights, good governance, and accountability are demanded by its citizens. This is Africa's future, and Liberia is one of its enviable democracies."

Massive expectations

Sirleaf made use of her international cachet as a Harvard-trained economist, former finance minister and an executive at the World Bank to get a massive chunk of Liberia's debt written off in 2007. Sirleaf also attracted investments in the mining, agriculture and forestry sectors and offshore oil exploration. Her high profile abroad as a symbol of post-war reconstruction has not saved her from messy politics at home, where she has faced criticism over the absence of prosecutions for war criminals, and allegations of nepotism surrounding the employment of her sons.

"When Ellen came to power, the expectation of the Liberian people was high, so high that she could not meet up with such expectation," said political science professor Emmanuel Nimeh. "That does not mean that she did not try, she did try but could just not do it all." Half

of the roads around Monrovia have been rebuilt and the capital now has running water. Electricity, once non-existent here, is available in some parts of the city but the supply is still haphazard.

Yet unemployment is still high and extreme poverty pervasive. Most Liberian children do not finish school. She herself told

journalists last week there were "more things we wanted to do", adding that her agenda was "more expansive than what we've achieved".

Backing Charles Taylor

Turning around Africa's oldest independent state - first founded for freed US slaves - where institutions had become rotten to the core, was never going to be easy. Attitudes cooled to Sirleaf at home when a 2009 Truth and Reconciliation Commission named her on a list of people who should not hold public office for 30 years for backing warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor. Sirleaf admitted to initially backing Taylor's insurgency against Samuel Doe's government in 1989 which led to the country's first civil war, but became a fierce opponent as the true extent of his war crimes became apparent. She calmly deflected the myriad criticisms against her, returning time and again to the need to reconcile and move forward.

'Born to rule'

Re-elected in 2011, Sirleaf oversaw a country that slipped into recession under the impact of an Ebola outbreak, virtually shutting down businesses, and the collapse in commodity prices. "The last five years of Ellen's regime were marked by a flood of people coming from the diaspora to get jobs while locally qualified people" were overlooked, Nimeh told AFP. Born Ellen Euphemia Johnson on Oct 29, 1938, in the capital Monrovia, she wrote in her memoirs that an old man predicted days after her birth that she would grow up to rule. The sprightly grandmother, who is equally at ease in flowing robes and headdresses while charming financial institutions, and in a comfortable pair of jeans and a cap on the streets of Liberia, married at age 17, but later divorced after the relationship turned abusive. She has four sons and 11 grandchildren. —AFP



News

Jordan king tells Pence of concern...

Continued from Page 1

as part of a two-state peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians. Israel claims all of Jerusalem as its united capital, while the Palestinians see the eastern sector as the capital of their future state. Israelis and Palestinians alike interpreted Trump's move as Washington taking Israel's side in the dispute over the city.

After the meeting, Pence flew to a military facility near the Syrian border to meet US troops. He headed to Israel later yesterday for a two-day visit, during which he can expect a warm welcome from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin. Pence - a devout Christian - will visit the Western Wall, one of the holiest Jewish sites in Jerusalem's Old City, and pay his respects at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial. He will also deliver a speech to Israel's parliament today. A coalition of Arab parties said Saturday it would boycott the address, calling Pence "dangerous and messianic".

The US vice president arrived in Jordan on Saturday evening from Egypt, where he met President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, a key Trump ally. The leaders of both

Egypt and Jordan, the only Arab states that have peace treaties with Israel, would be key players if US mediators ever manage to revive a stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace process, as Trump says he wants.

Speaking in Amman yesterday, Pence called Trump's Jerusalem move a "historic decision" but said the United States respected Jordan's role as custodian of the city's holy sites. "The United States of America remains committed, if the parties agree, to a two-state solution. We are committed to restarting the peace process, and Jordan does now and has always played a central role in facilitating peace in the region," Pence said. Abdullah said he was "encouraged" by Trump's stated commitment to finding a solution to the decades-long conflict, which he called a "potential major source of instability". "We hope that the US will reach out and find the right way to move forward in these challenging circumstances," he said.

Sisi had urged the US president before his Jerusalem declaration "not to complicate the situation in the region by taking measures that jeopardize the chances of peace in the Middle East". The international community considers east Jerusalem illegally occupied by Israel and all embassies are currently in commercial capital Tel Aviv. Pence's trip has also been overshadowed by the White House's decision to freeze tens of millions of dollars in aid to the United Nations agency for Palestinians, as well as by a federal government shutdown looming over Washington. — AFP



A competitor warms up on Lake Annecy prior to competing in the 5th edition of the GlaGla Race, a race of some 300 paddlers competing on icy waters off Talloires, in the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region of southeastern France yesterday. — AFP

Turkish tanks roll into Syria...

Continued from Page 1

"Turkey was candid," Mattis said, without disclosing the US reaction to Turkey's notification. "They warned us before they launched the aircraft they were going to do it, in consultation with us. And we are working now on the way ahead. We'll work this out."

France's defense minister said the offensive risked harming the campaign to crush IS, as Paris called for an urgent UN Security Council meeting to discuss the fighting. Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said troops crossed into YPG-controlled region in Syria at 0805 GMT, the Dogan news agency reported. Thirty-two Turkish planes destroyed a total of 45 targets including ammunition dumps and refugees used by the YPG on the second day of the operation, the Turkish army said.

Turkish troops were advancing alongside forces from the Ankara-backed rebel Free Syrian Army (FSA) and were already five kilometers inside Syria, state media said. An AFP photographer saw Turkish tanks lined up at the border waiting to cross into Syrian territory. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said in televised comments several villages had already been taken in the advance. But a YPG spokesman claimed Turkish forces seeking to enter Afrin had been "blocked" and that it had hit two Turkish tanks.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said a total of 18 civilians had been killed so far in the two-day operation. Ankara denied any civilian casualties, with Cavusoglu accusing the YPG of sending out "nonsense propaganda and baseless lies".

In his first comments on the offensive since it began, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed hope the "operation will be finished in a very short time" and vowed "we will not take a step back". Following calls from some Turkish pro-Kurdish politicians for people to take to the streets, he warned that anyone protesting in Turkey against the operation would pay "a heavy price". Police stopped demonstrations against the campaign

taking place in the mainly Kurdish southeastern city of Diyarbakir and in Istanbul, making arrests, AFP correspondents said.

In a sign of the risks to Turkey, six rockets fired from Syria hit the Turkish border town of Reyhanli yesterday, killing one Syrian refugee and wounding 32 people, its mayor said. Earlier, several rockets hit the Turkish border town of Kilis without causing fatalities. The operation is Turkey's second major incursion into Syria during the seven-year civil war after the August 2016-March 2017 Euphrates Shield campaign in an area to the east of Afrin, against both the YPG and IS.

Turkey accuses the YPG of being the Syrian offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which has waged a rebellion in Turkey for more than three decades and is regarded as a terror group by Ankara and the EU and US. Afrin is an enclave of YPG control, cut off from the longer strip of northern Syria that the group controls to the east, extending to the Iraqi border which has a US military presence. Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdag ruled out the risk of a clash with American forces, saying they were not present in the Afrin region. Yildirim was quoted as saying that the Turkish forces

aimed to create a security zone some 30 km deep inside Syria. Turkey risks entering a diplomatic minefield with its action in Syria and the foreign ministry said it had informed Damascus through its Istanbul consulate. But the Syrian regime, which is at odds with Turkey, strongly denied this and President Bashar Al-Assad slammed the offensive as "support for terrorism". There was no immediate comment from the United States on the offensive but ahead of its launch a senior State Department official had raised concerns it risked harming regional security.

French Defense Minister Florence Parly said the fighting "must stop" as it could deter YPG fighters helping the international coalition against IS. Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said France was calling the UN Security Council meeting as it was deeply worried by the "brutal degradation of the situation" in flashpoints like Afrin. Crucial is the attitude of Russia, which has a military presence in the area and is also working with Turkey on a drive to end the civil war. The Russian foreign ministry voiced concern and urged Turkey to show restraint, while the defense ministry said its troops were withdrawing from the Afrin area to ensure their security and prevent any "provocation". — Agencies

Feeling Filipino...

Continued from Page 1

This is not just an issue in Kuwait, obviously, but since the ban is focusing on our country, we need to hold each other's hands as we navigate unknown terrain. We need to look at each other and remind ourselves of our potential: to resurrect what is known as Arab hospitality. When someone comes into our home, they must feel welcome, whether they are our relative or the cook that works in our house. Our jobs have nothing to do with status. Most of us work to make money. Only a lucky few in the world get to do what they love and be paid for it.

Our Filipino brothers and sisters are souls who have left behind poverty to send a monthly cheque to their families. What will it take to remind us of this fact? They are not here willingly. And to leave their homes and be subjected to mental or physical abuse is heartbreaking. Especially for the women workers - who are more vulnerable, because their bodies may be violated in extreme cases.

This is not an article about treating helpers better. Nor is it an article to preach the rewards we will reap if we treat others well. Those who abuse their workers and those who make sure they treat them well can - in many cases - be two sides of the same coin: A misguided notion that we are superior. If we are treating domestic helpers with extra kindness because we feel sorry for them, or for an eternal reward or even because we want them to feel they are the "same" as us, then we feel they are beneath us.

There is no need for us to make anyone else feel better because of a perceived status. Human beings can sense when someone is being nice to them out of pity. If we are

kind, let it be because we choose to be kind to everyone. And let us remember, that if our situation changes one day, then we may be domestic helpers too - just as we may become CEOs or entrepreneurs one day. There is no prestige or shame in our jobs. It is just a matter of circumstance. Additionally, this notion that we can control those who work for us or give them rights still puts us one level above them.

Sure, there is a system of hierarchy wherever we go. We humans seem to have excelled at that. But aren't we tired of it? People are dying at the hands of our abusers. This is not a joke. And the last thing we should feel is anger that we are being exposed. This is a blessing in disguise. This is a chance for us to open our hearts: a chance for us to realize that our jobs do not define us, but can be an opportunity for us to transcend our differences. This is a chance for us to remember that all human beings deserve freedom and respect.

It is not only about domestic abuse, but even the lifestyles we impose on those who share our roofs. Our helpers are not allowed to use their phones, and are given "permission" to go out once a week. This notion of a day off once a week or twice a month is cruel. How would we feel if we were imprisoned at our workplace and given a day off merely once a week? Heck, we can't wait to leave work after eight hours! But that is a whole different topic!

For now, we are not sure if and when this ban will go into effect, but I hope it is a wakeup call for us to look at how we are all contributing to this and to realize that this has nothing to do with Kuwait. It is a global issue. But since the spotlight is on our country, let us welcome this opportunity to discuss this plight with our Filipino brothers and sisters and find ways to resolve this. Let us feel Filipino for a change, and maybe then we can transform ourselves.

Kuwait summons Filipino envoy...

Continued from Page 1

to 276,000. The status of the workers in Kuwait cannot be assessed according to individual cases that are common in other nations. Moreover, the Kuwaiti side expressed readiness to host Filipino diplomats to discuss the conditions of the community and follow up on Filipinos' problems.

Jarallah added that the envoy was asked to seek to lift the ban. Villa praised the cooperation of the ministry of foreign affairs and pledged to recommend to his government to end the ban soon. Jarallah also noted that the Kuwaiti Ambassador to the Philippines Musaed Al-Thuwaikh will meet today with the Filipino foreign minister and other officials as part of Kuwait's efforts in this respect.

MP Khalil Abul said the lawmakers will demand during tomorrow's session the formation of a committee from various ministries and departments to investigate the maid recruitment problem in the country. He said the motion will demand that the planned committee study the issue and submit a full report to the National Assembly's health committee. The Assembly will then study the report and take a decision.

A company for the recruitment of maids was established two years ago to try to recruit domestic helpers from abroad at reasonable prices, after costs skyrocketed at a large number of private recruitment offices.

Abul blamed the government for contributing to the problem by not trying to provide alternative countries for the recruitment of maids, and called for quick and decisive measures.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah said yesterday no country has yet agreed or rejected to deal with the private Al-Durra Company for the recruitment of maids. He said the company is negotiating with some countries and is currently in talks with Indian authorities to win their approval for the recruitment of domestic helpers. The Kuwaiti mission in Laos is also discussing with the authorities there over the same reason. The minister said Kuwaiti missions in maid-exporting countries have completed a study about the cost of recruitment. He did not reveal its contents.

Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah yesterday set new guidelines for recruiting nursing staff from abroad to work for the ministry and stopped private companies from recruiting them. The decision comes following reports of wide-ranging corruption that forced expat nurses to pay thousands of dinars to get jobs at the health ministry. The decision however allowed private companies to recruit manpower for nursing services.

In another development, MP's Jamaan Al-Harbash and Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, currently in jail, demanded yesterday to be allowed to attend the planned grilling of Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh, expected to be debated tomorrow. The two lawmakers have been in jail for the past two months after the appeals court sentenced them among 67 opposition activists for storming the Assembly in 2011. The two lawmakers said in a letter that they want to be present in the grilling session so they can express their right to support or oppose the quiz.

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Sports

Swiss skier Lara Gut blows away speed queen Vonn in windy Cortina

World Cup leader Shiffrin was third in the downhill

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO: Swiss skier Lara Gut blew away speed queen Lindsey Vonn to snatch her first win in a year in the women's World Cup Super-G at Cortina d'Ampezzo yesterday. Gut stormed to victory in 1min 14.78sec to beat Italian Johanna Schnarf by 0.14sec and Austrian Nicole Schmidhofer by 0.27sec to collect her 24th career victory and 12th in Super-G.

US star Lindsey Vonn could only manage sixth fastest 24 hours after her downhill victory on the Olympia delle Tofane piste, saying she had "never had such a strong gust of wind in a race ever in my life". The 26-year-old Gut-sidelined for eight months after a devastating knee injury in St Moritz in February 2017 — defied the difficult conditions in a race shortened because of strong gusts and overnight snow in the Italian Dolomites. "It's good to be back winning," said Gut after her first World Cup win since the downhill in Cortina a year ago, to boost her confidence ahead of the Winter Olympics starting on February 9.

"Some girls had wind from the back others from the front, it was a challenge," admitted the Sochi Olympics bronze medalist. "(Olympic champion) Benjamin Raich once told me that during the year you will have balance between good luck and bad luck. "Today was my day."

'SHIFFRIN, GOGGIA MISS OUT'

The windy conditions forced organisers to definitely interrupt the race after 42 skiers had competed. Austria's Nadine Fest suffered a bad fall, with the 19-year-old transported to

hospital suffering suspected knee injuries after crashing into the netting. Vonn, 33, was clearly unhappy after her run as she missed out on a chance for her 80th World Cup success, a day after becoming the oldest woman to win the women's downhill.

"Also tough race considering most of the athletes are still qualifying for the Olympics and wind is dictating results," Vonn said on Twitter. "Oh well, can't change it. I'll save the good luck for February I guess," added the American who has won the Super G in Cortina six times, most recently in 2016. "Still, it's an outside sport and all we can do is our best. Can't change it unfortunately."

Overall World Cup leader Mikaela Shiffrin was third Friday in the downhill but the American was one of the many who did not finish yesterday. "It just didn't happen," said Shiffrin. "A lot has to do with time, I don't have a lot of time training for Super G."

"I'm going to put this behind me and get focussed on the giant slalom," added Shiffrin of next Tuesday's race in nearby Kronplatz. Italy's Federica Brignone, chasing a second straight Super-G win after Bad Kleinkirchheim, Austria a week ago, pulled out ahead of the race with a high fever.

Compatriot Sofia Goggia, winner of the downhill on Friday, flew off the track as she tried to rectify a bad start, a day after she fell on the second downhill. But for fellow Italian Schnarf it was a return to the podium eight years after her first. "It means a lot," said the 33-year-old. "My second podium after nearly ten years. It's near where I live, my family, my husband are here, so it's just amazing." — AFP



CORTINA D'AMPEZZO: USA's Lindsey Vonn competes in the FIS Alpine World Cup Women's Super G yesterday in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italian Alps. — AFP

“Some girls had wind from the back, it was a challenge”

Cuddly and cute, but will Japan's Olympic mascots be cash cows?

TOKYO: They're wide-eyed, brightly coloured, and completely adorable. But can Japan's Olympic mascots bring in the cash, in a country where cuddly icons promote everything from regional tourism to local prisons?

Japan unveiled three sets of prospective mascots for the 2020 games last year. The winning duo will be announced in February, graduating into a landscape packed with cute and quirky characters. Known locally as "yuru-kyara" or "laid-back characters", mascots can be major money spinners. The pot-bellied, red-cheeked bear known as Kumamon—created in 2010 to promote Japan's southern Kumamoto region—raked in \$8.8 million last year for local businesses selling branded products. Mascots capitalise on a local love of all things adorable, including characters that have gained international fame like the perky-eared yellow Pokemon, and the demure Hello Kitty with her signature hair bow.

"Japan has a tradition of creating personalised characters out of nature—mountains, rivers, animals and plants," said Sadashige Aoki, professor of advertisement theory at Hosei University. "It has a tradition of animism, a belief that every natural thing has a soul." Now the hope is that the Tokyo Olympics mascots can serve as both ambassadors for Japan's expanding tourism industry, and a way to recoup some of the billions spent on staging the Games. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime chance for Japan to promote its tradition, culture and how its society looks," said Aoki. "The question is how to make them globally popular, like Mickey Mouse."

LICENSING LIMITATIONS

In the past, Olympic mascots have been anything but a sure bet in terms of revenue. Brazil netted \$300 million in profits from licensing intellectual property from the 2016 Games, according to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Merchandise featuring Rio's feline mascot Vinicius was the top-selling item. But Wenlock and Mandeville, the widely mocked mascots of the 2012 London Games, proved



TOKYO: File photo taken on December 7, 2017 shows a shortlist of three pairs of official Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games mascots being unveiled at Kakezuka elementary school in Tokyo. They're wide-eyed, brightly coloured, and completely adorable. But can Japan's Olympic mascots bring in the cash, in a country where cuddly icons promote everything from regional tourism to local prisons? — AFP

far from Olympic gold. The one-eyed characters were dubbed "bizarre" and "creepy" by some, reportedly sending shares in their manufacturer down by more than a third. Without the cute factor, mascots are unlikely to have much success, said Munehiko Harada, professor of sports business at Waseda University. "It's important that mascots are popular among children," he told AFP. But even if the mascots have mass appeal, they may not be long-term money-makers for Japan because of licensing issues. "Olympic mascots in the past have been forgotten after the Games were over," said Harada. "But there is a chance they remain alive and remembered as a legacy of the Tokyo Olympics, depending on how they operate the business." Tokyo 2020 owns the intellectual property rights to the mascots for now, but will have to transfer them to the IOC and the International Paralympics Committee after the Games.

THEY'RE COOL

"If I were head of the Tokyo 2020 organising committee, I would demand the IOC loosen its control over rights," Harada said. Without those rights, there will be no

way to capitalise on the mascots after the Games, including developing back stories that drive ongoing interest.

There has been no indication so far that Japan intends to request rights to the mascots, with a spokeswoman for Tokyo 2020 confirming that it expects to relinquish them after the Games. But the organisers say they are still expecting a substantial windfall from the mascots and other merchandise and licensing opportunities. "Of the total revenues, \$130 million is forecasted to accrue from licensing" of mascots and other Olympic emblems, a Tokyo 2020 official told AFP. "While we have the target number, we aim to increase it." The money is desperately needed, with officials drawing flak for the massive cost of the Games. Japan has already slashed the Tokyo 2020 budget by \$1.4 billion, but is under pressure to further reduce the \$12.6-billion bill.

The country's children will decide which pair of characters will represent the Olympics. They are voting in schools across the country, with the results to be announced on February 28. At one school in northern Tokyo, delegates proudly dropped the names of the winners of each class's vote into a ballot box. — AFP

N Korea delegates arrive for pre-Olympics inspection

SEOUL: North Korean delegates arrived in South Korea yesterday to prepare for cultural performances during next month's Winter Olympics, in the first visit by Pyongyang officials to the South for four years. Television footage showed seven officials led by Hyon Song-Wol, the leader of the North's popular Moranbong girl band, crossing the heavily-fortified border by bus before arriving at Seoul train station about an hour later.

The stony-faced officials, surrounded by hundreds of Seoul police officers, then boarded a train to the eastern city of Gangneung, where one of two planned concerts is due to be held. Hyon, a star singer and also the leader of the 140-member Samjiyon Orchestra chosen to visit the South, left the station in Gangneung without talking to throngs of journalists.

After months of high tensions over the North's missile and nuclear tests, the neighbours agreed this month that North Korean athletes, cheerleaders, artistic troupes and other delegates would attend the Games beginning in the South's ski resort of Pyeongchang on February 9.

The International Olympic Committee on Saturday endorsed the deal, saying the North would send 22 athletes in sports ranging from figure skating to short-track speed skating. "It marks the opening of the door towards peaceful coexistence and peaceful cooperation forged through sports," Seoul's sports minister Do Jong-Hwan, who attended Saturday's meeting, told reporters on returning to Seoul.

The two nations also agreed to march together at the opening ceremony under a unification flag—a pale blue silhouette of the Korean peninsula—and to form a joint women's ice hockey team.

The South's government, facing mounting public criticism of the sporting rapprochement, defended it Sunday as "an investment for a peaceful future". The orchestra led by Hyon will give two concerts—one in the capital Seoul and another in Gangneung—during the Olympics. Seoul will also send skiers to the North's Masikryong ski resort for joint training with North Korean counterparts, and hold a joint cultural event in the scenic Mount Kungang area north of the border.

The delegation led by Hyon will inspect venues in Gangneung yesterday and those in the capital Seoul on Monday before returning to the North the same day. Another team will visit the South this week to check logistics for North Korean athletes, while Seoul will send its own officials to the North's ski resort to inspect the venue.

'PEACE OLYMPICS'

Seoul's government and the organisers hope that the Games, which they have promoted as the "Peace Olympics", can ease tensions that soared to new heights in recent months. The North last year staged its most powerful nuclear test and test-fired long-range missiles believed capable of reaching the US mainland. Its ruler Kim Jong-Un also traded colourful personal insults and threats of war with US President Donald Trump, sparking fears of another conflict on the peninsula once devastated by the 1950-53 Korean War. The South's President Moon Jae-In has tried to use the Winter Games as an opportunity to defuse tension, even asking the US to postpone an scheduled joint military exercise during the event—a request Washington accepted. — AFP

Russian skaters, source of light in dark times

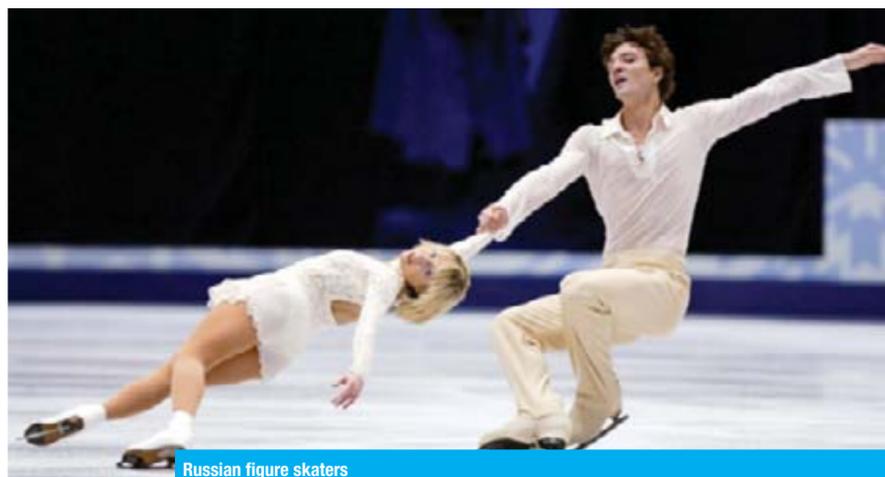
MOSCOW: Moscow is emerging from the darkest December on record but teen sensation Alina Zagitova and a cluster of other Russian skaters provided some welcome rays of sunshine at this week's European Championships.

With Russian sport under its own dark cloud as it serves an Olympic ban for state-sponsored doping, new European champion Zagitova represents a critical source of light for the nation at next month's Games.

As do deposed queen Evgenia Medvedeva, who will fancy her chances of gaining revenge in Pyeongchang, and Evgenia Tarasova and Vladimir Morozov, who defended their pairs title. The home team can look back on a hugely productive four days at Moscow's Megasport Palace, with Russia bagging nine of the 12 medals on offer.

The two golds that got away were hardly a surprise: Spain's Javier Fernandez proving he is still king of men and French duo Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron waltzing to their fourth ice dance title with a new world record. Zagitova is the latest star skater to come off the remarkable Russian ice skating production line. As the clock in Moscow edged towards 2230 on Saturday night, a time when most girls of 15 were being packed off to bed, Zagitova was standing proud as punched at the top of the podium, gold medal around her neck, eyes glistening as the Russian national anthem was played in her honour.

An astonishing new chapter in her sensational first



Russian figure skaters

senior season. And this could be just a stepping stone to even greater glory with Zagitova now favourite with Medvedeva for the Olympic title in Pyeongchang next month. "At the Olympics we will be competing under the white flag, but we are still 'Athletes from Russia'. In our souls, we know," said Zagitova, displaying a striking level of maturity beyond her years. Although deprived of her third title by her training partner, Medvedeva nonetheless had the satisfaction of making a fight of it on this, her comeback after breaking her right foot.

"My main victory is that I am standing here (after the injury). For all athletes, but for me too, their performances improve from competition to competition. The bigger the break in competing, the worse it is," said the 18-year-old Muscovite. The crown slipped from her grasp after she fell less than six points shy of matching Zagitova's personal best points tally of 238.24 after the girl in red's flawless free skate routine. Italian veteran Carolina Kostner, resplendent in a dazzling dayglo green costume, took bronze. — AFP

Sports

Buttler serves up series success for England against Australia

England take unbeatable 3-0 lead in five-match ODI series

SCOREBOARD

SYDNEY: Scoreboard at the end of the third one-day international between Australia and England in Sydney yesterday:

England	
J. Roy c Finch b Cummins	19
J. Bairstow b Zampa	39
A. Hales c Zampa b Stoinis	1
J. Root b Hazlewood	27
E. Morgan c Paine b Hazlewood	41
J. Buttler not out	100
M. Ali b Marsh	6
C. Woakes not out	53
Extras (lb2, w13, nbl)	16
Total (for six wickets, 50 overs)	302
Fall of wickets: 1-38 (Roy), 2-45 (Hales), 3-90 (Bairstow), 4-107 (Root), 5-172 (Morgan), 6-189 (Ali)	
Bowling: Starc 10-0-63-0 (3w), Hazlewood 10-0-58-2, Cummins 10-1-67-1 (6w, 1nb), Stoinis 8-0-43-1 (1w), Zampa 9-0-55-1, Marsh 3-0-14-1 (2w)	

Australia	
A. Finch lbw Rashid	62
D. Warner c Hales b Woakes	8
C. White c Buttler b Wood	17
S. Smith c Buttler b Wood	45
M. Marsh c Hales b Rashid	55
M. Stoinis c sub (Billings) b Woakes	56
T. Paine not out	31
P. Cummins not out	1
Extras (lb5, b4, w2)	11
Total (for six wickets, 50 overs)	286
Fall of wickets: 1-24 (Warner), 2-44 (White), 3-113 (Finch), 4-181 (Smith), 5-210 (Marsh), 6-284 (Stoinis)	
Bowling: Wood 10-1-46-2 (2w), Woakes 10-0-57-2, Plunkett 12-0-6-0, Ali 10-0-57-0, Root 8-4-0-60-0, Rashid 10-0-51-2	

England won by 16 runs, take series 3-0

SYDNEY: A scintillating century from Jos Buttler brought England a 16-run win and a one-day international series victory against Australia in Sydney yesterday. The hosts, set 303 to win by England after winning the toss and choosing to bowl, were always struggling in their chase and eventually managed only 286 for six.

The result gave England an unbeatable 3-0 lead in the five-match ODI series, a remarkable turnaround after Australia had trounced them 4-0 in the Ashes Tests. England ODI captain Eoin Morgan said Buttler had engineered of the best wins he'd been part of.

"Jos was probably the difference between the sides,"

“I thought the way we bowled was good”

he said. "On a two-paced wicket he paced it to perfection, played the anchor until about five or six overs out. "This is one of the best wins from this group."

Australia's hopes largely rested with Steve Smith (45) and Mitchell Marsh (55), but both were dismissed at a crucial stage of the chase, with Smith falling to a contentious low-down catch by Buttler off the bowling of Mark Wood (2-46).

Marcus Stoinis made a late attempt to lift Australia with a punishing 56, but England managed to hold on despite losing pacemen Liam Plunkett to a leg injury early in the Australian innings. Australian captain Smith said the game was lost in the last few overs of the England innings.

"I thought the way we bowled in the first 45 overs was good, but Jos played exceptionally well, Woakesy too, but we bowled poorly at the end, can't do that to a guy like Jos," he said. "We were chasing probably 30 too many... batted well but not enough to get over the line." Buttler, 27, was the only batsman from either team really to get to grips with a slightly slow pitch. His late



SYDNEY: Australia's batsman Marcus Stoinis (R) hits a six as England's wicketkeeper Jos Buttler (L) looks on, during the third one-day international (ODI) cricket match between England and Australia in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

surge enabled England to reach a total which had seemed out of their reach until the final few overs. Several English batsmen failed to capitalise on promising starts, but Buttler notched his fifth one-day international century from the last ball of the innings as England helped themselves to 38 off the final two overs.

Buttler himself took 28 runs from the last 11 balls he faced. He faced 83 balls, hitting six fours and four sixes, in a dazzling innings that gathered momentum in the last 10 overs. Just as England appeared to be struggling against a full-strength Australian attack, Buttler found a willing ally in Chris Woakes late in the innings, the seamer making 53 from 36 balls in a match-winning partnership of 113 in 11.5 overs.

Australia recalled pacemen Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood for the match, the first time in the one-day

series that the trio of Cummins, Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc, who spearheaded the Ashes win, had been reunited.

The tactic appeared to be working until Buttler and Woakes came together and turned the match on its head. The English were aided by sloppy Australian fielding, with four missed catches and two botched run-out attempts.

The easiest of the catches to go to grass was a howler by Cameron White, who failed to get a hand to a skied chance from Moeen Ali when he was on one. Marsh was the unlucky bowler, but had his revenge a few minutes later when he bowled Ali for six, continuing the all-rounder's wretched tour. Smith dropped Morgan (41) on 18 off spinner Adam Zampa, while Starc got his fingers to a tough caught-and-bowled chance. — AFP

Thunder embarrass Cavs, Rockets topple Warriors

LOS ANGELES: Paul George scored 36 points, Carmelo Anthony added a season-high 29 points with 10 rebounds, and Russell Westbrook recorded a season-best 20 assists as the Oklahoma City Thunder throttled the Cleveland Cavaliers 148-124 on Saturday at Quicken Loans Arena.

The Thunder led wire-to-wire in extending their winning streak to four games. Paul teamed with Steven Adams (25 points, 10 rebounds) to score the first 20 points for Oklahoma City, and when Westbrook added two free throws at the 6:45 mark of the first quarter, the Thunder led 22-12.

Isaiah Thomas tallied 24 points for the Cavaliers, who've lost nine of 12 games. LeBron James finished with 18 points, leaving him seven shy of becoming the seventh player in league history with 30,000 career points. James added seven assists and finished minus-33 over 38 minutes.

Cleveland was a defensive sieve from the opening tip, allowing Adams easy access to the rim on deep post-ups and offensive rebounds while also surrendering open perimeter looks to George. The Thunder posted a season-high 43 points in the first quarter, shooting 63 percent (17-for-27), including 5-of-9 on 3s, as George and Adams combined for 23 points on 9-of-11 shooting.

ROCKETS 116, WARRIORS 108

Chris Paul paired 33 points with 11 rebounds and James Harden delivered a key 3-pointer down the stretch as Houston snapped Golden State's 14-game road winning streak with a 116-108 victory at Toyota Center. Harden finished with 22 points plus eight assists, and he drilled a 3 over Stephen Curry with 70 seconds remaining to push the lead to six points and fend off the Warriors once and for all. Golden State had erased a 17-point deficit and led by as many as four points earlier in the fourth quarter before Paul, P.J. Tucker (12 points), and Harden responded with late treys. Clint Capela added 18 points and Luc Mbah a Moute 14 for Houston, which claimed the season series over the Warriors. Kevin Durant paced Golden State with 26 points and seven rebounds while Draymond Green added 21 points, seven boards and six assists. Curry and his back-court partner Klay Thompson combined to shoot 9 for 31 and totaled 27 points.

HEAT 106, HORNETS 105

Kelly Olynyk made the second of a two-shot free-throw opportunity with 0.2 sec-

onds remaining as Miami put together a strong final two minutes to overcome Charlotte at the Spectrum Center in Charlotte, NC. The Heat trailed 101-91 with less than four minutes to play. It was 105-100 before James Johnson's dunk with 34 seconds to go. Just seconds later, Josh Richardson's steal led to Johnson's tying 3-pointer. Kemba Walker missed twice for the Hornets, and then Dwight Howard was charged with fouling Olynyk, who missed the first attempt before sinking the winner.

JAZZ 125, CLIPPERS 113

Donovan Mitchell scored 23 points and Joe Ingles matched a pair of career highs, scoring 21 points while making five 3-pointers, to lead Utah to a victory over Los Angeles in Utah. Six different players scored in double figures to help Utah win for just the sixth time in its last 22 games. The Jazz led from wire-to-wire. Lou Williams scored 31 points, collected 10 steals and dished out seven assists. Blake Griffin chipped in 25 points and eight rebounds while Wesley Johnson added 17 points and eight boards off the bench.

PELICANS 111, GRIZZLIES 104

DeMarcus Cousins and Anthony Davis played their first game since being named starters in the NBA All-Star Game, but teammate Jrue Holiday commanded equal billing as New Orleans beat Memphis in the Smoothie King Center. Holiday scored a team-high 27 points as the Pelicans got their first victory over the Grizzlies after two losses earlier in the season. Cousins had 24 points and 10 rebounds and Davis had 21 points and 12 rebounds. Darius Miller came off the bench to score 12.

TIMBERWOLVES 115, RAPTORS 109

Andrew Wiggins and Karl Anthony-Towns hit clutch 3-pointers down the stretch as Minnesota withstood a 40-point night by point guard Kyle Lowry and beat Toronto at the Target Center in Minneapolis. Wiggins, who scored a season-high 29 points, gave Minnesota the lead at 107-106 by knocking down a 3-pointer from the left wing with 2:05 remaining. A Towns 3-pointer shortly after made it 110-106 and gave the Timberwolves all the room they needed. Lowry recorded his most productive night of the season and posted his fourth career game with 40 points. He made 14 of 25 shots and hit six 3-pointers.

TRAIL BLAZERS 117, MAVERICKS 108

Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum combined for 57 points to lead Portland past Dallas at Moda Center. Lillard scored 31 points and doled out nine assists and McCollum added 26 points as the Trail Blazers (25-21) won their third straight game and sixth in a row at home. Wesley Matthews led Dallas (15-31) with 23 points while Dirk Nowitzki and Dennis Smith Jr. each chipped in 21.—Reuters

Perera halts Sri Lanka slide after win over Zimbabwe

DHAKA: Thisara Perera started with bat and ball as Sri Lanka ended their recent dismal run by beating Zimbabwe by five wickets in the tri-nation one-day international tournament in Dhaka yesterday. Perera claimed four wickets to lead an inspired Sri Lankan bowling attack that limited Zimbabwe to 198 all out before his unbeaten 39 helped the islanders to chase down their target in 44.5 overs. Sri Lanka were in trouble at 145-5 before skipper Dinesh Chandimal (38 not out) and Perera put on an unbeaten 57-run stand for the sixth wicket. Perera, who bats left-handed, sealed the win with a six to keep Sri Lanka's tournament hopes alive after they lost against Zimbabwe and hosts Bangladesh.

Zimbabwe paceman Blessing Muzarabani claimed three wickets to rattle the Sri Lankan top-order after opener Kusal Perera's dominating 49. But the day belonged to Thisara Perera, who soon took the attack to the opposition with his 26-ball knock that was laced with a four and 3 sixes. Chandimal, leading the side in place of injured Angelo Mathews, played the

International stars join OMEGA at the Olympia Bob Run in St Moritz

ST. MORITZ: OMEGA is a company of the Swatch Group, the largest manufacturer and distributor of watches and jewellery in the world. OMEGA is the Official Timekeeper of the Olympic Games and is currently preparing for its role at the Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang this February. As part of the build-up, the brand gave their specially invited guests a chance to experience the thrill of bobsleigh, as they were driven in a taxi bob from the top to the bottom of the 1,722 metre track.

The stars included: Cody Simpson (US singer); Pixie Lott (British singer); Oliver Cheshire (British model); Baptiste Lecaplain (French actor); Manon Azem (French actress); Alessandro Borghi (Italian actor); Kostja Ullmann (German actor); Miyavi Ishihara (Japanese guitarist and actor) and his wife, Melody Ishihara (Japanese singer) and Christa Rigozzi (Swiss Presenter - TV Entertainment).

Not only is the Olympia Bob Run in St. Moritz the oldest in the world, but it is also the only one that is naturally refrigerated. It has hosted bobsleigh events at the Olympic Games in 1928 and 1948 and, most recently, it was used for the FIBT World Cup races in January this year - an event that OMEGA officially timed.

SCOREBOARD

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

Zimbabwe		Sri Lanka (target 199)	
H. Masakadza c Tharanga b T. Perera	20	K. Perera c Sub b Muzarabani	49
S. Mire c Dickwella b T. Perera	21	U. Tharanga b Chatara	17
C. Ervine c Tharanga b T. Perera	2	K. Mendis b Muzarabani	36
B. Taylor c Tharanga b T. Perera	58	N. Dickwella c Sub b Muzarabani	7
S. Raza c Mendis b Sandakan	9	D. Chandimal not out	38
M. Waller c Dickwella b Sandakan	24	A. Gunaratne c sub b Jarvis	9
P. Moor run out (Mendis/Dickwella)	0	T. Perera not out	39
G. Cremer b Pradeep	34	Extras (lb3, w3, nbl)	7
K. Jarvis b Pradeep	5	Total (5 wickets: 44.5 overs)	202
T. Chatara not out	2	Fall of wickets: 1-33 (Tharanga), 2-103 (K. Perera), 3-110 (Mendis), 4-117 (Dickwella), 5-145 (Gunaratne)	
B. Muzarabani b Pradeep	0	Did not bat: A. Dananjaya, S. Lakmal, L. Sandakan, N. Pradeep	
M. Muzarabani b Pradeep	2	Bowling: Jarvis 9-0-34-1 (w2), Chatara 9.5-1-40-1 (w1), Muzarabani 10-0-52-3 (nbl), Raza 7-0-44-0, Cremer 9-0-29-0.	
Extras (lb8, w15)	23	Result: Sri Lanka won by five wickets	
Total (all out: 44 overs)	198	Man of the match: T. Perera	
Fall of wickets: 1-44 (Masakadza), 2-49 (Ervine), 3-56 (Mire), 4-73 (Raza), 5-139 (Waller), 6-140 (Moor), 7-171 (Taylor), 8-191 (Jarvis), 9-198 (Cremer), 10-198 (Muzarabani)			
Bowling: Lakmal 7-0-23-0, Pradeep 8-2-28-3 (w6), T. Perera 8-0-33-4 (w2), Dananjaya 10-0-45-0 (w2), Sandakan 10-0-57-2 (w5), Gunaratne 1-0-4-0.			

sheet anchor's role to perfection during his 71-ball stay. Earlier Perera ran through the Zimbabwe top-order, grabbing the most vital wicket of Brendan Taylor, who top-scored with 58 before his side were bowled out in 44 overs.

The 28-year-old Perera, who bowls medium-pace, was ably supported by fellow paceman Nuwan Pradeep (3-28). Left-arm wrist spinner Lakshan Sandakan took two wickets

before Pradeep wiped off the Zimbabwe tail including the prized wicket of skipper Graeme Cremer for 34. The win kept Sri Lanka in the hunt for a spot in the final as they still have a game in hand against Bangladesh. Zimbabwe, who beat Sri Lanka by 12 runs in their first match of the tournament, also can qualify for the final if they can beat the hosts in their next match on Tuesday. — AFP



Sports

Lewandowski, Mueller star as Bayern go 16 points clear

Mueller has now scored 100 Bundesliga goals in his career

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski and Thomas Mueller both netted twice as Bayern Munich went 16 points clear in the Bundesliga yesterday with a 4-2 victory over Werder Bremen. Mueller and Lewandowski each claimed goal-scoring milestones in a polished second-half display by Bayern's forward pair.

Mueller has now scored 100 Bundesliga goals in his career while Lewandowski has hit 94 German top-flight goals, making him the highest scoring foreigner in the club's history. "It's always nice to score, I didn't plan on doing it today, but I knew I was close," said Mueller, who warned there is more to come from Bayern. "We aren't yet playing like we want to." Bremen took a shock first-half lead when midfielder Jerome Gondorf scored his first goal for the club. However, Bayern went into the break level after Mueller equalised before Lewandowski struck with the first of his two second-half headers. Bayern defender Niklas Suele turned the ball into his own net to make it 2-2 with 15 minutes left, but Lewandowski restored the lead shortly afterwards. He scored with a towering header to claim his 17th league goal in 18 games this season and leave him as the league's top-scorer, four clear of Borussia Dortmund's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang.

Mueller converted a superb chip over the Bremen defence by James Rodriguez to add gloss to the final scoreline. Bayern have won 17 of 18 games since head

coach Jupp Heynckes returned in October.

The hosts were troubled when Bremen took a deserved lead on 25 minutes to stun the Munich crowd in freezing temperatures. Werder's Germany striker Max Kruse slid a pass through the defence and midfielder Gondorf slotted through the legs of Bayern goalkeeper Sven Ulreich. The ball rolled into the net, despite the efforts of Bayern right-back Joshua Kimmich to clear off the line. Bremen grew in confidence, but the hosts drew level with a superb equaliser by Mueller just before the break.

Jerome Boateng's pinpoint long pass found Mueller's chest and the Germany star slammed the ball home to make it 1-1 four minutes before the break. Bremen's brave display meant Bayern only took the lead for the first time with an hour gone. Rodriguez, who has recaptured the form which saw him finish top-scorer

Bayern defender Niklas Suele turn ball into his own net



at the 2014 World Cup, fired in a cross which Lewandowski headed home. Suele was left red-faced when the ball clipped his shoulder and rolled past Ulreich on 74 minutes. However, Lewandowski put Bayern back ahead by leaping to smash home Mueller's cross in the 77th minute as Bremen goalkeeper Jiri Pavlenka fumbled the header. Lewandowski has now scored 23 goals in 27 games in all competitions this season.

The win leaves Bayern clear of the densely-packed pursuers, with only one point separating second-placed Bayer Leverkusen and Eintracht Frankfurt in seventh. — AFP



MUNICH: Bremen's German midfielder Philipp Bargfrede (R) and Bayern Munich's Polish striker Robert Lewandowski (R) fall down during the German first division Bundesliga football match Bayern Munich vs Werder Bremen in Munich, southern Germany. —AFP

Bloodied Ronaldo scores twice in Real Madrid rout

MADRID: Cristiano Ronaldo scored twice but had to leave the pitch with his face covered in blood as Real Madrid eased their domestic crisis by hammering Liga strugglers Deportivo La Coruna 7-1 at home yesterday to reclaim fourth place in the standings.

Real had lost two of their last three league games and got off on the wrong foot against relegation-threatened Deportivo when former Atletico Madrid forward Adrian Lopez put the visiting side ahead against the run of play in the 23rd minute.

The stumbling La Liga champions responded in emphatic fashion, however, and went on to record their biggest win of the season in all competitions with two goals apiece from Gareth Bale and Nacho Fernandez as well as Ronaldo and a long-range strike from Luka Modric.

Ronaldo was unable to continue playing after he was left with a bloodied face by the boot of Deportivo defender Fabian Schar as he struck his second goal, which took him level with Bale as Real's top scorer in the league with six strikes. Real climbed back above Villarreal into fourth place on 35 points but are still far behind runaway leaders Barcelona, who top the standings with 51 points and can move 11 clear of nearest challengers Atletico Madrid if they beat Real Betis later yesterday. — Reuters



MADRID: Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (down) lies on the field after sustaining an injury during the Spanish league football match between Real Madrid CF and RC Deportivo de la Coruna at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. —AFP

Struggling Hamburg sack their coach Gisdol

BERLIN: After a fourth straight Bundesliga defeat, Hamburg reluctantly fired their head coach Markus Gisdol yesterday with the club second from bottom of the league. "Parting ways with a coach prematurely is never something we would wish to do but we feel a fresh start might help us to stay up, which is our aim," said Gisdol, who was informed of his dismissal at a 0900 meeting (0800 GMT) yesterday. According to German daily Bild, former Hamburg midfielder Bernd Hollerbach, 48, who played for the club from 1996-2004, is set to take charge. "The decision to change (coaches) was unanimous, but it was not easy for us, there was no alternative. The new coach should solve the uncertainty in the team," added Bruchhagen, without confirming who will take over. Gisdol lasted less than 15 months in charge, but Hamburg has been a revolving door in the last decade with no head coach managing to stay for two years.

Experienced coaches such as Bert van Marwijk, Mirko Slomka, Bruno Labbadia, in two different spells, and Armin Veh all had brief stints in charge. The last to enjoy any success was Thomas Doll, head coach from October 2003 until February 2007. He steered Hamburg to the group phase of the Champions League in 2006/07 - their last appearance in European football's top competition. It's a far cry from the club's glory days in the 1980s when Hamburg won the Bundesliga crown twice, were runners up three times, and lifted the European Cup in 1982-83. — AFP

Spanish La Liga table							
MADRID: Spanish La Liga table after yesterday's early matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):							
Barcelona	19	16	3	0	52	9	51
Atletico Madrid	20	12	7	1	29	9	43
Valencia	20	12	4	4	41	21	40
Real Madrid	19	10	5	4	39	18	35
Villarreal	20	10	4	6	28	22	34
Sevilla	20	10	2	8	26	28	32
Getafe	20	7	6	7	25	20	27
Girona	20	7	6	7	29	29	27
Real Betis	19	8	3	8	33	36	27
Eibar	19	8	3	8	24	31	27
Athletic Bilbao	20	6	8	6	23	22	26
Celta Vigo	19	7	4	8	33	27	25
Leganes	19	7	4	8	17	19	25
Espanyol	20	6	6	8	16	25	24
Real Sociedad	19	6	5	8	33	34	23
Alaves	20	6	1	13	16	29	19
Levante	20	3	9	8	16	28	18
Deportivo La Coruna	10	4	4	12	22	44	16
Las Palmas	20	4	2	14	16	47	14
Malaga	19	3	2	14	13	33	11

Napoli edge Atalanta to extend Serie A lead

MILAN: Dries Mertens ended a long goal drought to give Napoli a 1-0 victory at Atalanta yesterday that stretched their advantage in Serie A to four points. Napoli's win in the first league game after the winter break extended their lead over second-placed Juventus ahead of the champions' clash with Genoa today.

Belgian international Mertens' 65th-minute strike ended a league dry spell that had dated back to October 29, getting behind the defence and flashing a shot past Atalanta goalkeeper Etrit Berisha.

Lazio moved third with a thumping 5-1 win over Chievo in Rome that saw rising star Sergej Milinkovic-Savic bag a fine brace either side of half-time to put Lazio two up, after Chievo's Manuel Pucciarelli had equalised Luis Alberto's 23rd-minute long-range opener for the hosts. Milinkovic-Savic's substitute Nani laid on Bastos to fire home a deflected fourth with seven minutes left, before the former Manchester United winger added a fifth three minutes later with fine hit from the edge of the area. Simone Inzaghi's exciting side are Serie A's top scorers with 53 goals following the win and are a point ahead of Inter Milan, who host fifth-placed Roma later. Sampdoria are three points ahead of Atalanta in sixth after Fabio Quagliarella fired an excellent hat-trick to

down Fiorentina 3-1 in Genoa. The 34-year-old Italian is having something of an Indian summer and scored in the 30th, 60th and 68th minutes to continue Sampdoria's fine home record that has seen them make 24 of their 33 points at the Stadio Luigi Ferraris. Bottom club Benevento's mini-revival came to a crashing halt with a 3-0 beating at Bologna, who won thanks to goals from Mattia Destro, Sebastien De Maio and Blerim Dzemaili.

SARRI TURNAROUND

Napoli lost six points to Atalanta last season and this narrow victory represents a complete turn-around for Maurizio Sarri's Napoli, who also won 3-1 in the reverse fixture earlier in the season. Seventh-placed Atalanta are one of Italy's surprise packages and responded to Merten's opener with a brief bout of pressure that created one dangerous moment, with Napoli keeper Pepe Reina leaping to palm away a ferocious long-range drive from Bryan Cristante.

There was controversy in added time when Jorginho set up Marek Hamsik who slid the ball inside the far post, only for referee Daniele Orsato to change his decision to give the goal after spotting the tightest of offsides on video review.

Elsewhere, Simone Berardi saved a point for Sassuolo with a 1-1 draw at home to Torino after Obi had given the away side a 26th-minute lead, and Udinese played out another 1-1 draw with SPAL, who drop back into the relegation zone despite Sergio Floccari saving a point after Samir's 11th-minute opener. — AFP



Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
Swansea City v Liverpool	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
SPANISH LEAGUE	
Eibar v Malaga	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
Juventus v Genoa	22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 4	

13 Cuddly and cute, but will Japan's Olympic mascots be cash cows?



14 Buttler serves up series success for England against Australia



15 Bloodied Ronaldo scores twice in Real Madrid rout



MELBOURNE: Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov celebrates beating Australia's Nick Kyrgios in their men's singles fourth round match on day seven of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

Rafa survives test, Dimitrov ousts Kyrgios

Wozniacki takes another step towards maiden Grand Slam title

MELBOURNE: Rafael Nadal battled through a huge test to make his 10th Australian Open quarter-final yesterday as Grigor Dimitrov ousted Nick Kyrgios to join him and Caroline Wozniacki kicked into top gear.

On an overcast and muggy day at Melbourne Park, the Spanish world number one was up against his most dangerous opponent yet in pocket-rocket Diego Schwartzman, one of the smallest men on tour.

The Argentine 24th seed endeared with his astonishingly powerful groundstrokes before Nadal prevailed 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3, 6-3 in almost four hours on Rod Laver Arena. It kept alive his push for a 17th Grand Slam title and also ensured he will remain number one when the new rankings come out after the tournament.

"It was a great battle," said Nadal, who is chasing his second Melbourne title after beating Roger Federer in the 2009 final. "Of course, I feel little bit tired, but I was able to keep fighting until the end." He will play sixth seed Marin Cilic for a place in the semi-finals after the Croat beat Spanish 10th seed Pablo Correna Busta 6-7 (2/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/0), 7-6 (7/3). The win was Cilic's 100th at a Grand Slam.

"I have played great tennis from the first round against tough opponents and now I am really looking to the next match, it will be definitely be a big challenge," he said of the Nadal clash.

Ordinarily Nadal, as the top seed, would have top billing on Rod Laver in the evening, but not with local star Kyrgios in action.

The maturing Australian 22-year-old pushed world number three Dimitrov close in a hugely entertaining four setter before succumbing 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/4), 4-6, 7-6 (7/4). "Playing Nick is always tricky," said the Bulgarian, as he targets bettering the semi-finals he made last year.

"It was one of those matches you had to take any opportunity that you got." His reward is a showdown with Briton Kyle Edmund, who reached his first Grand

Slam quarter-final with a 6-7 (4/7), 7-5, 6-2, 6-3 win over Italy's Andreas Seppi.

PLAY AGGRESSIVE

World number two Wozniacki turned on the style in her match to take another step towards a maiden Grand Slam title. The assured Wozniacki, a semi-finalist in 2011 who has never quite lived up to the hype in the majors, annihilated 19th-seeded Magdalena Rybarikova 6-3, 6-0 in her most impressive performance to date.

"She really mixes up the pace, I just tried to calm down, get my returns in and wait for the opportunities to attack," she said after crushing the Slovak, who made the semi-finals at Wimbledon last year.

"I think you can tell my confidence is pretty good at

the moment." Her easy passage sets up a last-eight clash with gritty Spaniard Suarez Navarro, who battled back from a set and 4-1 down to shatter the hopes of 32nd seed Anett Kontaviet.

The Estonian had been bubbling with confidence after despatching French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko in the third round, but nerves got the better of her. The Spaniard, who has made the quarter-finals in Melbourne twice before, most recently in 2016, credited her fightback with a conscious decision to be more aggressive. "My team all the time they say (to) me, play aggressive, play aggressive. That's I think what I did," said Suarez Navarro, one of the few who still uses a one-handed backhand. Looking ahead to Wozniacki, she added: "I know how she plays. I know how tough she is. It will be a really interesting match."

The 37th-ranked Elise Mertens also made the last eight, becoming the first Belgian since Kim Clijsters in 2012 to get so far in Australia. She posted a straight-sets win over Croat Petra Martic and will now play fourth seed Elina Svitolina who swept past Czech qualifier Denisa Allertova in two easy sets. — AFP

“ I am really looking to the next match ”

Qatar Emir discusses youth, sports with Minister Al-Roudhan

DOHA: Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani discussed yesterday with Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan relations between the two countries in youth and sports fields. During his meeting with Sheikh Tamim, Al-Roudhan conveyed greetings from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, along with his best wishes of good health and happiness to the Qatari Emir, who asked Al-Roudhan to relay his salutes to His Highness the Amir.

Moreover, Kuwaiti officials accompanying Minister Al-Roudhan expressed sincere gratitude and appreciation to Sheikh Tamim for support extended by Qatar to Kuwait in the field of sports, which contributed to lifting FIFA's suspension against Kuwait Football Association, last month.

The Kuwaiti delegation included Director General of the Public Authority for Sports Dr Humoud Fulaiteh, Deputy Director General for Construction and Maintenance at the Public Authority for Sports Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Al-Sabah, President of the Kuwaiti Football Association Sheikh Ahmad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah and Deputy President of Kuwait Football Association Sheikh Fawaz Mishal Al-Sabah, in addition to a number of senior officials and sports figures.

Al-Roudhan held talks with Qatari Minister of Culture and Sports Salah Al-Ali on issues of joint interest. In a statement to KUNA as he emerged from the meeting, Minister Al-Roudhan said his talks with Minister Al-Ali dealt with means of boosting cooperation between the two countries as they prepared for upcoming sports events. The Kuwaiti-Qatari talks touched on cooperation for organizing training courses, holding diverse activities, promoting the sector in the two countries in a manner that would solidify the bilateral relations.

Minister Al-Roudhan added that he discussed with the Qatari official plans to activate youth role, guiding them for constructive investment in time and encouraging the talented in sports and youth sectors. — KUNA



DOHA: Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani during his meeting with Kuwait's Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khaled Al-Roudhan. — KUNA

Business

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MUSCAT: (From left to right) Omani Energy Minister Mohammed bin Hamad Al-Rumhi, OPEC Secretary General, Mohammed Barkindo and Saudi Energy Minister Khaled Al-Faleh attend the 7th Meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee in Muscat yesterday. — AFP

Extend OPEC-non-OPEC cooperation: Saudis

Agreement helped shore up crude prices: Al-Faleh

MUSCAT: Top oil exporter Saudi Arabia called yesterday for extending cooperation between OPEC and non-OPEC producers beyond 2018, after a deal to cut output succeeded in shoring up prices.

The call, the first explicit invitation by Riyadh for long-term cooperation between oil producers, came with oil prices topping \$70 a barrel thanks to the deal, after they dove below \$30 a barrel in early 2016.

"We should not limit our efforts to 2018. We need to be talking about a longer framework for our cooperation," Saudi Energy Minister Khaled Al-Faleh told reporters before a meeting between ministers of OPEC and non-OPEC countries in the Omani capital Muscat.

The meeting will be discussing levels of compliance to the cuts. Oil producers from inside and outside the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries signed a landmark agreement in November 2016 to cut output by 1.8 million barrels per day to fight oversupply and lift sagging prices. That deal was initially for six months, but the 14-member cartel and 10 independent producers have since extended it until the end of this year. Officials from the participating countries have been talking about whether they should quit the agreement altogether or just have another extension depending on the market situation.

But the Saudi minister said the agreement should be extended for an unspecified duration. "I am talking about extending the framework that we started-which is the declaration of cooperation-beyond 2018," Faleh told reporters.

'We must not relax'

Faleh however said the new framework for cooperation might differ from the current agreement and its production quotas. "It does not necessarily mean sticking barrel by barrel" to the same agreement.

It would mean "assuring stakeholders, investors, consumers and the global community that (the agreement) is here to stay." It would send the message that "we are going to work together not only with the 24 countries, but inviting more and more participants," he said.

Faleh said oil producers had not yet achieved their target of reducing world



MUSCAT: Kuwait Energy Minister and Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Petroleum, Bakheet Al-Rashidi (right), attends the 7th Meeting of the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee in Muscat yesterday. — AFP

stocks to normal levels and striking a balance between supply and demand.

He called for efforts to continue to bring inventories to "normal levels." "That objective has not been achieved. We are not close to achieving it," said Faleh, adding that a rebalance is unlikely in the first half of 2018. Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said oil producers should not ease off on their

stocks by more than half," Novak said.

'Consultations'

Novak said he was pleased with the outcome of the historical agreement with OPEC and other producers, but appeared less committed to the idea of establishing a permanent framework. "As for efforts to coordinate joint actions on the oil market, the last year showed that this is a successful experiment," he told reporters, according to Russia's RIA Novosti news agency.

"I think that if necessary it can be used in the future too." But "mutual action between OPEC and non-OPEC countries" could also continue after the end of the agreement in the form of "consultations", the Russian minister said. Omani Oil Minister Mohamed Al-Rumhi said different arrangements could be discussed. "By the end of this year, the stock level will be very small and it will be time to discuss different arrangements or agreements," he said. Meeting attendees were told global crude inventories stood at about 120 million barrels above its historical average, down by more than half since the start of last year.

Gulf states as well as many oil-producing nations have posted huge budget shortfalls since oil prices plummeted in mid-2014. OPEC said on Thursday the global oil market is moving closer to reaching a healthy balance between supply and demand. — AFP

“Market moving to achieve a healthy balance”

efforts despite the rebound.

"Despite the fact that progress is obvious, we must not relax. We are determined to carry through the rebalancing," Novak, whose country is the world's top crude producer, told reporters.

Novak held separate talks with Faleh on the sidelines of the Muscat meeting. The Russian minister praised the outcome of the cuts deal. "The market got on the way towards balancing and we jointly managed to reduce the surplus in

Zain recognized as 'Best Telecom Company in Kuwait'



Waleed Al-Khashti receives the award.

KUWAIT: Leading regional business magazine International Finance awarded Zain the 'Best Telecom Company in Kuwait' at the prestigious Achievement Awards, held in Dubai. The International Finance Awards recognize and reward outstanding success and innovation across various industry sectors in the country.

Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain Kuwait's Corporate Communications and Relations Director, received the award on behalf of Zain. The company was singled out for this year's honor given its relentless pursuit of excellence and innovation with the aim of achieving superior digital lifestyle transformation.

Zain expressed its pride and appreciation for this recognition, as well as in the interest International Finance Magazine shows in the achievements of Kuwaiti organizations on particular. The 2017 awards honored leading companies and institutions that have delivered success, innovation and excellence, as well as those that have made a vital contribution to the vibrancy of business within Kuwait and the region.

Zain is deeply invested in the fabric of the Kuwaiti society, and its corporate sustainability and social responsibility activities speak for themselves in this regard. Keen to encourage and uplift the youth, Zain has a series of

initiatives and programs aimed at engaging with youth in Kuwait, and allowing them to develop their talent and find expression to their ideas.

As one of the most recognizable brands in Kuwait, Zain was recently ranked the second most powerful home-grown brand in the Middle East by London-based valuation and strategy consultancy Brand Finance. The company was also awarded the 'Best Mobile Operator' and 'Best Internet Service Provider' in Kuwait from Service Hero for the fifth time.

Zain also received 6 prizes as part of Kuwait's Public Relations and Customer Service annual Prize during 2017 last April. The prizes included: "Excellence in Customer Service", "Excellence in Social Awareness", "Excellence in Corporate Communications and Relations", "Excellence in Website Services", and "Excellence in Call Center".

The recognition Zain received from International Finance Magazine further strengthens the company's role as a leading private sector company, and reinforces Zain's commitment in maintaining the values of its brand. The company is motivated to continue its pledge in providing exclusive services to meet the needs of its customers as well as to facilitate their personal, professional, and business needs.

Business

INJAZ Kuwait signs MoU with Safya Int'l Import and Export Company

Agreement for adopting projects through Boeing's 'Start-Up program'



Ibrahim Al-Rshoud from Agrivage with mentor Shaker Al-Eisa - GM of Safya International



INJAZ Team with Shaker and Agrivage team



Laila Al-Mutairi, INJAZ Kuwait CEO with Bader AlQadhi from Agrivage

KUWAIT: INJAZ Kuwait has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Safya International Import and Export Company on January 17 at Safya's headquarters.

Laila Al-Mutairi, CEO of INJAZ-Kuwait, and Shaker Al-Eissa - General Manager of Safya International, have signed the agreement on behalf of both parties, with an objective of supporting and guiding founders of 'Agrivage' company, which won the "Best Company of the Year" award at INJAZ's regional competition, through 'Start-Up program', one of the most interactive programs provided by INJAZ Kuwait and sponsored by Boeing, a leading manufacturer of commercial

jetliners, defense, space and security systems.

Through this agreement, INJAZ Kuwait will be able to implement one of its most interactive programs, which aims at developing a comprehensive approach for transferring the student's ideas and projects into real businesses that are able to compete with others in the local market and contribute to Kuwait's economy. With more than 10 years of experience in the recycling industry, Shaker Al-Eisa will be sharing his knowledge and providing the necessary counsel and guidance to founders of 'Agrivage', a company that aims at recycling food waste and converting it into usable rich soil. Commenting on signing the MOU, Laila Al-

Mutairi, INJAZ Kuwait CEO said: "Pleased with the cooperation with Safya International Import and Export Company, this agreement came to support one of INJAZ's goals, which is to help developing the knowledge of youth of Kuwait and to raise awareness of the entrepreneurship concept as well as the private business culture, through INJAZ's most interactive programs 'Start-Up program', which was created with a main objective of adopting and supporting potential projects and turning them into real companies, through providing the necessary funding and the needed guidance during the program period."

"We are extremely proud of the exceptional

performance and the results delivered by "Agrivage" team in particular and youth of Kuwait in general, they have been working hard to establish their own future businesses. At INJAZ, our responsibility has always been and will always remain to develop youth of Kuwait by providing innovative educational programs to become entrepreneurs. I would like to give a special thanks to Safya International for their cooperation and to all our sponsors and partners for their ongoing support and contribution to the success of INJAZ's programs, to inspire and educate the generations to come."

INJAZ's Start-Up program was designed for

university students who are creative and got innovative ideas to implement. The program, which runs over the period of 6 months, aims to incubate students' ideas and projects and turn them into real companies, through providing support by leaders of the various industries, who share their practice with students, provide them with the needed funding to establish a business model, prepare financial and marketing plans, commercially register the company and direct them to get financial supply for the project.

INJAZ Kuwait will continue to equip and support youth, to ensure a more prosperous future for generations to come.

Bank of Canada raises interest rate to 1.25%

KUWAIT: The Bank of Canada raised its benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points to 1.25 percent, pointing to sustained growth in the G7 economy and inflation that is closer to the country's target.

The central bank explained in a statement that while the Canadian economy was going strong, with jobs on the rise and inflation in check, "uncertainty about the future of NAFTA is weighing increasingly on the outlook." Canada, the United States and Mexico are in talks to possibly revamp the North American Free Trade Agreement, which US President Donald Trump has threatened to leave. The next round is to take place in a week in Montreal. Given that the United States absorbs about three-quarters of Canada's exports, the bank said it had factored "additional negative judgment on business investment and trade" into its projections.

For 2018, the central bank put Canada's GDP growth at 2.2 percent, slowing to 1.6 percent in 2019 — a slower pace than the estimated 3.0 percent growth expected for 2017. In the coming months, according to the BoC, "consumption and residential investment are expected to contribute less to growth, given higher interest rates and new mortgage guidelines."

The central bank said while higher interest rates would be justified "over time, some continued monetary policy accommodation will likely be needed to keep the economy operating close to potential and inflation on target" close to two percent.

Benoit Durocher, a senior economist at Desjardins Securities, said the bank had left the door open to "new rate hikes... in the coming quarters to tighten monetary conditions." CIBC economist Avery Shenfeld said the statement shows "the need to be cautious in how fast they hike ahead." The Bank of Canada said "core measures of inflation have edged up, consistent with diminishing slack in the economy," adding that in the coming months, inflation could fluctuate on the back of changing gasoline and power prices.

But it should remain near the target two percent. On the jobs market, the central bank said job creation and hours worked were showing "promising signs." At the end of 2017, Canada's unemployment rate fell to 5.7 percent, its lowest level in more than 40 years. The bank's next rate decision is expected on March 7. — AFP

NAFTA future iffy going into new round of negotiations

MONTREAL: Negotiators from Canada, Mexico and the United States tomorrow will kick off the sixth round of talks aimed at revamping the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in Montreal. The six days of talks come amid high trade tensions between Ottawa and Washington and as US President Donald Trump insists Mexico will pay for the construction of a controversial wall along the US's southern border.

Trump continues to blow hot and cold on the continental trade pact that he has threatened to repeal, and recently said in a Twitter message that "NAFTA is a bad joke." Outraged by huge anti-dumping and countervailing duties imposed on Canadian aircraft manufacturer Bombardier as well as its primary softwood lumber and newsprint exporters, Ottawa recently filed a complaint with the World Trade Organization alleging widespread trade violations by its neighbor.

The government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is aiming for a repeat of past adjudications that went Canada's way to turn the tide against rising US protectionism. In line with his campaign commitment, Trump forced Canada and Mexico to the table to renegotiate the 1994 free trade pact, promising to bring back US

manufacturing jobs and update NAFTA for the digital age. Talks to modernize what Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland called "the largest free trade area in the world" were originally scheduled to wrap up by the end of 2017. But the parties have agreed to continue negotiating until March.

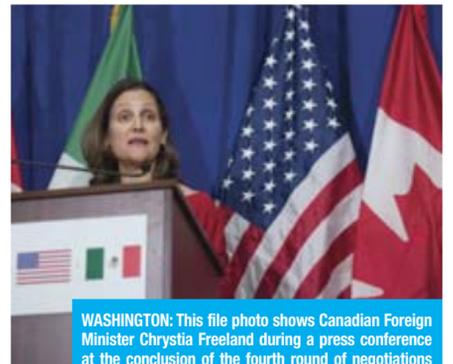
Despite significant progress on so-called "bread and butter" issues, Freeland said Canada is bracing for "the worst," including a possible US withdrawal from NAFTA that would effectively mean the end of the tripartite trade pact. While often railing against NAFTA, Trump has at times also seemed to soften his view, telling the Wall Street Journal he would be "a little bit flexible" on his threat to withdraw because of the upcoming Mexican presidential election on July 1.

Although he failed to mention the upcoming US midterm elections, these must also weigh on mind.

No 'dance partner'

In Montreal, trade envoys are due to tackle some 28 outstanding concerns, including thorny issues such as the proportion of US content in passenger vehicles and parts. "I think the concern that a lot of people have is that so little progress have been made and so little effort is being made by the Americans that you worry that they are... just positioning for Trump to be able to say 'We are out,'" former Conservative leader Rona Ambrose told broadcaster CTV.

"When you don't have a dance partner on the other side, it becomes really difficult," said Ambrose, who was appointed by Trudeau to Canada's NAFTA advisory



WASHINGTON: This file photo shows Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland during a press conference at the conclusion of the fourth round of negotiations for a new North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) at the General Services Administration headquarters in Washington, DC. — AFP

council. A former Conservative industry minister, James Moore, however, struck a more optimistic tone after current Tory leader Andrew Scheer and several MPs returned this week from lobbying Washington decision makers on NAFTA.

He sees possible trade-offs on access to government procurement and rules of origin for the auto sector, which Trump wants to restrict to better favor the United States. — AFP

Malabar Gold & Diamonds 209th showroom

MANNARKKAD, Kerala: Panakkad Sayed Hyderali Shihab Thangal inaugurated the 209th showroom of Malabar Gold and Diamonds at Mannarkkad, Kerala. Mannarkkad MLA N Shamsudheen, Malabar Group Chairman MP Ahamed, Malabar Gold and Diamonds India Operation MD Asher O, Group Executive Directors KP Veerankutty, AK Nishad, Abdul Majeed, Regional Head Abdul Jaleel R, other management officials also attended the function.



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	301.200
Canadian Dollar	242.640
Sterling Pound	417.825
Euro	368.910
Swiss Frank	29
Bahrain Dinar\$03.394	
UAE Dirhams	80.100
Qatari Riyals	82.410
Saudi Riyals	83.640
Jordanian Dinar	426.100
Egyptian Pound	17.067
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.958
Indian Rupees	4.723
Pakistani Rupees	2.727
Bangladesh Taka	3.653
Philippines Peso	5.935
Cyprus pound	17.925

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.412672	0.420172
Czech Korone	0.006562	0.015862
Danish Krone	0.045656	0.050656
Euro	0.363358	0.370858
Georgian Lari	0.134241	0.134241
Hungarian 0.00135	0.001325	
Norwegian Krone	0.034452	0.039652
Romanian Leu	0.064420	0.081270
Russian ruble	0.005322	0.005322
Slovakia	0.008960	0.018960
Swedish Krona	0.033605	0.038605
Swiss Franc	0.306903	0.317903
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.233011	0.245011
New Zealand Dollar	0.213511	0.223011
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.236139	0.245139
US Dollars	0.297300	0.301720
US Dollars Mint	0.297800	0.301720

Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003274	0.003858
Chinese Yuan	0.045558	0.049058
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036650	0.039400
Indian Rupee	0.004275	0.004916
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002642	0.002822
Korean Won	0.000272	0.000287
Malaysian Ringgit	0.072709	0.078709
Nepalese Rupee	0.003007	0.003177
Pakistan Rupee	0.002551	0.002841
Philippine Peso	0.005934	0.006234
Singapore Dollar	0.223357	0.233357
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001277	0.002307
Taiwan	0.010340	0.010521
Thai Baht	0.009102	0.009652
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.792901	0.801401
Egyptian Pound	0.014350	0.020068
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000198	0.000258
Jordanian Dinar	0.420491	0.429491
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000155	0.000255
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021977	0.045977
Omani Riyal	0.776539	0.782219
Qatar Riyal	0.078497	0.083437
Saudi Riyal	0.079287	0.080587
Syrian Pound	0.001277	0.001497
Tunisian Dinar	0.119513	0.127513
Turkish Lira	0.074387	0.084687
UAE Dirhams	0.080635	0.084687
Yemeni Riyal	0.000979	0.001069

Business

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

US dollar under pressure over government shutdown fears

Euro posts gains for the fifth week in a row

KUWAIT: The US dollar continued to be pressured last week as fears of a potential government shutdown mounted. President Donald Trump and Republican leaders in Congress were racing to meet a midnight Friday deadline to pass a short-term spending bill to keep the US government open and prevent agencies from shutting down. Without the injection of new money, federal agencies across the United States would be forced to close starting at midnight Friday the 19th, when existing funds expire. In the late-night session, Democrats and Republicans, locked in a bitter dispute over immigration and border security, failed to agree on a last-minute deal to fund its operations. As such, the US government technically ran out of money and shut down its operations putting hundreds of thousands of "non-essential" federal workers on temporary unpaid leave. Democratic and Republican leaders did however, agree to reopen negotiations on Saturday and said were committed to getting a quick agreement.

The US dollar had also been pressured by strengths in other major economies as investors were selling on the view that other central banks will join the Federal Reserve in tightening monetary policy. The Bank of Canada followed suit last week by hiking the benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points while the Bank of Japan trimmed its purchases of long dated Japanese government bonds last week. Although the BOJ is unlikely to exit from its current policy stance anytime soon, the 10 year Japanese bond yield increased 1.1 basis points since the cut. Finally in Europe, the recent release of the European Central Bank's minutes for their December meeting hinted that tighter monetary policy, which includes the possibility of higher interest rates as well as the winding down of asset purchases, could be on the horizon amid strong European economic growth. The prospect of a reduction in the interest rate differential between the Fed and other central banks has helped pressure the US dollar index to a two-year low.

The US dollar index fell to a new low at the start of the week where it remained subdued as fears of the US government shut down loomed. The index fell 2.09% from the previous week's high of 92.640 to close the week at 90.690.

The euro on the other hand, posted its fifth consecutive week of gains reaching a two year high of 1.2322. Investors are now focused on the European Central Bank's meeting February the 8th. The EUR/USD pair closed the week at 1.2220.

The British pound was also supported to new highs this week as the Brexit negotiations passed a new hurdle. Theresa May's cabinet has agreed to increase the UK's financial offer to the European Union for the Brexit divorce bill to in an attempt to break the deadlock in negotiations. Media reports suggest the figure is in the region of 40 billion pounds. The GBP/USD pair opened the week at 1.3728 and closed at 1.3856.

The Japanese yen opened the week 1.41 percent stronger against the US dollar after the Bank of Japan unexpectedly reduced its purchases of Japanese government bonds January the 9th. The move led to speculation that the central bank may be leaning towards tighter monetary policy. Investors will be cautiously waiting for the Bank's next meeting on January the 23rd. The USD/JPY pair closed the week at 110.76.

In the commodities sector, oil slipped off its three year high as analysts warned of a downward correction after prices have gained more than 13 percent over the past month. Healthy demand growth and OPEC's production cuts have helped fuel price gains during recent weeks. On the other hand, US shale is positioned to break an output level of 10 million barrels per day, a number last reached in 1970 during the US energy crisis. Brent crude was last \$68.71 while US West Texas Intermediate closed the week at \$63.33.

US industrial production

Industrial production in the United States increased at the fastest pace since May. Cold weather during the end of December managed to boost demand for heating, while manufacturing output stayed flat. Meanwhile, the Fed also reported that the capacity utilization rate increased to 77.9 percent, above market expectations. The rate is a leading indicator of consumer inflation - when producers are nearing full capacity they respond by raising prices, and the higher costs are usually passed on to the consumer.

New York Empire State manufacturing

Business activity continued to grow at a solid clip in New York State, according to firms responding to the January 2018 Empire State Manufacturing Survey. The headline general business conditions index, at 17.7, was little changed from last month's level. The new orders and shipments indices both showed ongoing growth, although at a slower pace than in December. Unfilled orders and delivery times increased slightly, and inventory levels were higher. Labor market conditions pointed to a modest increase in employment and steady workweeks. Both input prices and selling prices increased at a faster pace than last month. Firms remained very optimistic about future business conditions and capital spending plans were robust.

US housing & construction

Housing starts on new US homes eased from the fastest pace in 13 months while permits held steady to finish the strongest year for housing construction in a decade, government figures showed Thursday. Annual totals for permits, starts and completions were all the highest since 2007. The level of permits indicates construction should pick up in the coming months. A separate report on Wednesday showed homebuilders' confidence in January at the second-highest level since 2005. More construction would help ease an inventory crunch that the National Association of Realtors has flagged as an impediment to more sales. However at the same time, last month's tax-cut legislation that curbed deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes could weigh on housing in some states.

Bank of Canada

The Bank of Canada announced its decision to increase the benchmark interest rate from 1.00 percent to 1.25 percent. The decision comes after a run of strong economic data. Nevertheless, the central bank indicated it's in no rush to embark on an aggressive interest rate path as it cited future uncertainties including the fate of the North American Free Trade Agreement. "While the economic outlook is expected to warrant higher interest rates over time, some continued monetary policy accom-



modation will likely be needed to keep the economy operating close to potential and inflation on target."

Eurozone Inflation

Euro zone inflation eased in line with expectations in December, according to a revision released by Eurostat. The European Union's statistics office said the consumer price index rose at an annual rate of 1.4 percent in December, down from 1.5 percent in November. The rates were in line with expectations but below the ECB target inflation rate of 2 percent, supporting the central bank's approach to gradually increasing interest rates. Meanwhile inflation rose by 0.4 percent month-over-month in December, compared to a previous reading of 0.1 percent. Core inflation, which excludes energy and food prices and is closely watched by the ECB, rose by an annualized 0.9 percent.

UK inflation

Consumer prices in the UK eased slightly to 3.0 percent in December from 3.1 percent in November. The data comes in line with market expectations as well as the Bank of England's projections that inflation in the UK would peak in November and December before moving back towards the 2 percent target. Year-on-year the core

figure was at 2.5 percent. The downward effect came mainly from air fares, along with a fall in the prices of a range of recreational goods, particularly games and toys.

China GDP

China's economy grew faster than expected in the fourth quarter of 2017, as an export recovery helped the country post its first annual acceleration in growth in seven years, defying concerns that intensifying curbs on industry and credit would hurt expansion. Growth for the 2017 full year picked up to 6.9 percent year-on-year, the first annual acceleration for the economy since 2010 beating expectations. While economists believe fundamentals will remain intact in 2018, some downside risks remain. Risks include more forceful US trade restrictions on Chinese exports, higher borrowing costs, and an increase in environmental regulations that has hurt the industrial sector in many parts of the country. However, the data remains optimistic allowing policymakers some leeway to cut debt and pollution in older industries without stunting growth.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30055
The USD/KWD opened at 0.30055 yesterday morning.

Good and sustainable corporate earnings pushing markets higher

By Hayder Tawfik

Global economic macro pictures plus central bank's monetary policies are extremely positive for stocks but the main factor pushing stocks higher is good quality and sustainable corporate earnings. This is where equity investors should focus their attention and benefit from market rallies.

First signs for 4th quarter and 2017 earnings are quite encouraging. They are very constructive and very much bullish sign for further market rally. The S&P 500 now is trading on a Price Earnings Ratio of 18.5x for 2019. This ratio has been coming down over the past few years with the main markets achieving record highs.

The US financial markets are just started pricing in the \$1.5trillion corporate and individuals tax cuts plus the weakness of over 10 percent of the dollar against major currencies through 2017. Equity investor has a big support in the figure of the President Donald Trump. He is on course to deliver his economic agenda that is very friendly to the financial markets and supportive of US corporates. Equity investors who have for the past few years been bearish on the stock markets could miss out on further gains.

Most world stocks markets have been rising while their valuation been declining. Most of the stock market increases has been led by great earnings momentum. The word momentum literally what is driving the markets higher. This is extremely bullish for the global stock markets.

The economic fundamentals are continuously getting better but have been slower than expected. What has been a great surprise is that in such



slow economic environments, corporate earnings have been doing very well. This because the global economy is on the mend and has been doing reasonably well. Equity investors have taken notice and been pushing more fresh money into the stock markets.

Global stock markets rally since the lows they reached in 2007-2008 have been on the back of a wall of worry.

This is a classic example of bull market rally that splits investors into two camps. Those who have been negative and expecting a big correction and those who see through all the worries and position themselves to benefit for the good fundamentals and great corporate earnings.

This great stock market rally is no different from previous ones. Those who are still have doubt should remember that most markets have just surpassed the previous highs that reached back before the crash of 2007. Whereas corporate earnings have been hitting new highs.

How much of the good corporate earnings are discounted in the stock markets is something to be seen in the coming months. However, as I said earlier as long as corporates delivering increases in revenue and earnings, markets will grind upwards but may be on a slower space. Equity investors should focus on good quality earnings and find out what exactly driving these increases in corporate earnings. Earnings that are driven from pure operational activities are worth more than those that resulted from share buyback, cost cutting or acquisitions. I personally do not see much disrupting the rally that is driven by increase in corporate earnings. @Rasameel

VIVA available 'More' at 23 new co-ops in Kuwait

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced its availability at 23 new Cooperative Societies "Co-op" in different areas in Kuwait, with limited time special offers on iPhone X, smart devices, tablets and routers.

VIVA is thrilled to start 2018 with a convenient customer experience to match the dif-

Bonds to get by without a little help from central banks

PARIS: The rebound of global growth is sounding the death knell for easy money, so debt markets should see the backs of central banks in 2018, although a gradual withdrawal should help avoid a new tantrum sending interest rates spiking.

The colossal sums that central banks injected into the financial systems to ward off economic cataclysm went primarily into the debt markets, which will have the biggest adjustment to make as part of the so-called normalization of monetary policy by central banks.

As central banks slow down their purchases of debt and then reduce their holdings the interest rates that governments and companies pay to borrow money are expected to climb higher. While everyone expects borrowing costs to rise in 2018, the key question is whether it will happen smoothly or not.

Any disruptions in the credit markets can have a severe impact on the overall economy. In Europe, where the European Central Bank (ECB) is set to continue buying 30 billion euros of assets each month until September, ultralow or even negative on certain maturities, there is a not of optimism in the air. "We

ferent lifestyles of our esteemed customers through new retail expansion, facilitating reach and keep them posted regularly with the latest VIVA products and services with ease and convenience.

Commenting on this occasion, Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA said: "VIVA's strategy revolves around relevance and convenience to our customers. This specific achievement is part of our persistent focus on expansion to shorten time and distances and investing in the right areas to serve our vision and aspirations."

In addition to our branch services, VIVA's customer care line at 102 is ready round the clock and up to public holidays, to provide outstanding service to our valued customers through a team of specialities.

"I don't see a strong break with 2017" said Felix Orsini, who handles government debt issues for Societe Generale's commercial and investment bank. "There is a deep resilience of the market, and there is still plenty of appetite for risk and there is a large margin for manoeuvre before the level of dissuasive rates," he told AFP. HSBC's Frederic Gabizon shares that view. He foresees "a moderate increase in rates paid by companies and European states in 2018".

US rates in spotlight

Most bond market experts see the greatest risk as sharp readjustment of the market where interest rates spike higher, as happened in the 2013 "taper tantrum" when investors panicked in reaction to news that the US Federal Reserve would reduce, or taper, its purchase of bonds, thus sending rates of return surging higher. With the US Fed taking the lead in the normalization, cutting its holdings of bonds along with raising interest rates, investors and experts are looking at how borrowing costs evolve there.

There have been a few voices of caution, such as S&P Global Ratings and the International Monetary Fund's chief economist, Maurice Obstfeld.

"If you look around the world, there is a lot of debt," Obstfeld said recently. "If there were a sudden rise in US interest rates, that could put a lot of debtors under stress." But Rene Defosse, a London-based debt analyst at French investment bank Natixis, said "central banks aren't taking any risks, they are normalizing their policies on tiptoes and with inflation still extremely weak they don't



have any reason to rush." Eric Vanraes, head of fixed income investments at the Swiss-based Sturdza Banking Group said "it is difficult to imagine the Fed losing its bearings and making too quick an exit. It has learned its lesson."

Lessons learned

In the United States, the Fed did not include corporate bonds in its buying program, whereas the ECB did. But even if European firms will have "live with this exit, without the ECB, the balance between supply and demand is in their favor," said Orsini at Societe Generale.

Moreover, "since 2008, and that is one of the big lessons of the crisis, companies are preparing for periods" when debt markets are inaccessible and are managing their liquidity prudently, he said.

On the political level, the situation appears to be calmer in 2018 as only Italy has elections, whereas the previous two years had a heavy electoral calendar.

For debt market analysts, there is a good chance that 2018 will turn out to be a good year, much as 2017 was. "The ultralow interest rate environment allowed big groups to at once reinforce their financial structures in favorable conditions, but also finance very important" mergers and acquisitions in 2017, said Gabizon at HSBC.

For Sturdza's Vanraes, what is most likely to change in 2018 is volatility. "After years where the monetary programs drowned out volatility on all the markets, investors will have to get used again to erratic movements" both in amplitude and duration. — AFP

KAMCO report on oil market

Oil price reaches 3-year high on falling inventory, supply

Pressure on prices likely in 2018, primarily from US output

KUWAIT: Oil prices reached highest levels seen in 3 years, as Brent crude touched \$70/b at the start of 2018. Key drivers are supply issues in Libya, ongoing issues in Venezuela that has affected supply from OPEC members and declining inventory in the US, although US supply is expected to increase to an almost 5-decade high in 2018. American data have consistently reported huge drawdown of inventory in the US.

The most recent weekly inventory report from API showed an inventory draw of 5.121 million barrels following a more than double inventory draw of 11.19 million barrel during the previous week.

The consistent decline in inventories came on the back of a drop in US oil production due to the cold weather in the US that has affected some oil facilities. The weekly report published by the EIA also pointed to a huge draw of 6.9 million barrels, a ninth consecutive week of decline, further supporting oil prices. Commercial inventories in the US is now projected to be around 413 million barrels, the lowest level since February-15. However, the decline is expected to be only temporary and producers in the US would be encouraged to take advantage of the rise in oil prices. Moreover, according to projections mentioned in EIA's latest Short Term Energy Outlook (STEO), US crude production is set to reach 10.3 mb/d in 2018 and even higher to 11 mb/d by late 2019, rivaling Russia's production levels. However, prices were little affected by these projections as the oil market is currently undergoing a tightening of supplies.

Supply side factors that supported oil prices also included a decline in oil production

in Libya due to a pipeline disruption during the last week of December-17 that resulted in a decline in production from the country by almost 100 tb/d, although it was restored after almost a week. In addition, threats to oil supply from Nigeria have also affected prices recently. The protests in Iran was also one of the closely watched events during the last few weeks.

Demand side factors have also supported higher oil prices. The EIA report pointed to higher oil demand in 2018 by an additional 100 tb/d as compared to the previous prediction for 2018, while demand in 2019 is expected to be at 101.8 mb/d, an increase of 1.65 mb/d from 2018. Manufacturing activity around the world has gained pace supported by higher demand from developing markets and this has affected commodity prices in general. Unemployment rates in the US and Germany, two key industrialized nations, have dropped recently to record lows indicating higher industrial activity. In addition, the latest tax reforms in the US is expected to spur faster economic activity and corporate profitability, that augurs well for the already positive trend in vehicle sales. In Asia, Bloomberg data suggested a consistent rise in oil demand from China during 2017 with an increase of 5.4 percent during the year. Demand from India is also expected to rise in the near term with the country going into elections next year with a number of populist policies expected to be announced until elections.

Oil price growth

Oil market improved in 2017 as prices went up for the second consecutive year. However, the surge in price was much slower than in 2016.

Year-end oil prices during 2017 stood at \$64.5/barrel of OPEC crude which was up 21 percent as compared to 2016 year-end prices. Similarly, Brent spot prices stood at \$66.7/barrel during 2017 as compared to \$55/barrel in 2016, a surge of 21.4 percent. Average oil prices during the year, however, showed a different picture. OPEC crude average price during 2017 witnessed a positive gain after four consecutive years of decline. Crude averaged \$52.4/barrel in 2017 as compared to \$40.8/barrel in 2016, recording an increase of 28.6 percent. Average Brent spot prices were also high as compared to the previous year at \$54.2/barrel in 2017 as compared to \$43.6/barrel in 2016, recording an increase of 24.2 percent. In terms of OPEC oil production in 2017, despite the production cuts announced by the OPEC members, overall production rate by the group has seen minimal decline during the year. According to data from OPEC's secondary sources, average oil production during 2017 declined by 0.6 percent or 203 tb/d to 32,058 mb/d as compared to 32,261 mb/d in 2016. The decline came primarily on the back of production cuts undertaken by Saudi Arabia that slashed its production by an average 456 tb/d in 2017 and produced at the rate of 9.95 mb/d as compared to 10.41 mb/d in 2016. Venezuela recorded the second biggest decline of 227 tb/d in 2017 and produced at an average rate of 1.93 mb/d. Kuwait reported the third biggest decline of 145 tb/d in 2017 and produced at an average rate of 2.71 mb/d.

These aforementioned prominent declines were partially offset by higher production in Libya which increased its production by 427 tb/d to an average rate of 817 tb/d in 2017. Iran, which saw the biggest increase in production in 2016 at 679 tb/d, recorded the second highest increase in 2017 recorded at 296 tb/d and produced at an average rate of 3.81 mb/d. Nigeria also added production during 2017 and produced at 1.66 mb/d recording an increase of 107 tb/d during the year. On the non-OPEC side, US raised production by 5 percent to 9.3 mb/d during 2017 as compared to 8.9 mb/d during 2016. The US has seen one of the highest average production growth rates over the past five years, recorded at around 7.4 percent.

KAMCO Research believes 2018 would see increasing pressure on oil prices coming primarily from the US as it raises production backed by higher prices and initial signs of some incentives by the US government. Oil market will also be swayed by signs of how OPEC plans to end the ongoing pact and how gradually the production would be raised in 2019 and beyond, as these countries have continued to add capacity over the years. We see \$70/b as a strong resistance level for oil and see higher volatility on any sign of higher production in Libya and Nigeria as well as any indication of stability and improvement in Venezuela.

Oil prices

Crude prices continued to surge since the start of the year continuing the momentum seen at the end of 2017 on the back of tightening oil market conditions. Spot crude prices scaled new heights reaching a 3-year high level as OPEC's restraint in cutting production coincided with rising oil demand as well as a temporary slowdown in production in the US owing to weather conditions that shut down some production facilities and resulted in a decline in crude inventories. OPEC crude prices soared to \$67.78/barrel during January-18, the highest level since December-14, while Brent crude spot prices reached \$70.36/barrel. The decline in US oil production was also visible in the weekly rig count data released by Baker Hughes. After adding 10 rigs in the week ended 12-Jan-18, the highest since June-17, US oil rig count declined by 5 to reach 747 rigs during the week ended 19-Jan-18.

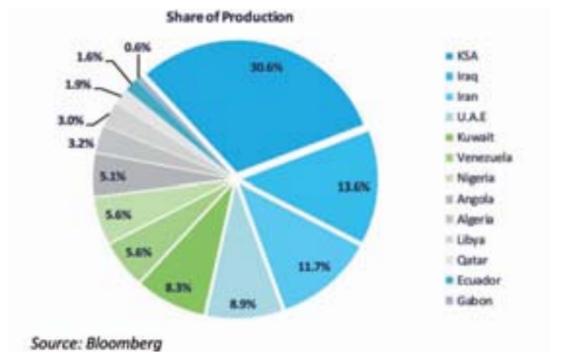
The surge in oil prices during the third week of January-18 was so remarkable that IEA updated its monthly report with revised view on the oil market given the higher prices. The agency now predicts a slowdown in oil demand in 2018 to a growth of 1.3 mb/d owing to the higher prices, changing pattern of oil use in China, weakness in OECD demand and the switch to natural gas in several non-OECD countries. On the supply side, IEA expects higher production in the US, Canada and Brazil will push non-OPEC supply by 1.7 mb/d in 2018 as compared to 0.7 mb/d growth in 2017.

Average crude prices continued to maintain a positive trend and were consistently up for the past six months. Average OPEC prices reached \$62.06/barrel, recording a month-on-month gain of 2.2 percent in December-17. Kuwait crude grade also posted a similar gain of 2.3 percent to reach an average price of \$60.93/barrel. Average Brent crude prices during December-17 reached the highest level in 37 months to \$64.4/barrel recording a month-on-month increase of 2.4 percent.

World oil demand

World oil demand growth estimates for 2017 was revised up by 43 tb/d to an average of 1.57 mb/d and total demand is expected to reach 96.99 mb/d during the year. The upgrade in demand outlook reflected better-than-expected demand data from OECD Europe and China.

The OECD Europe region continues to witness strong economic momentum that led to higher demand, particularly in Q3-17 by 100 tb/d, resulting from higher consumption in the transportation and industrial sectors. In terms of individual countries, higher demand was seen in Italy, Turkey, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Portugal during October-17. This growth comes despite warmer weather as compared to 2016 that is expected to affect oil demand during the last two months of the year, although the weather was still colder as compared to historical norms. The transportation sector witnessed strong vehicle sales in the region with November-17 data suggesting a year-on-year growth of 5.9 percent. Oil demand data from the US also indicated strong trends emanating espe-



cially from the transportation sector in addition to higher requirements for most crude categories. Preliminary weekly data for the last two months of the year indicated an overall positive trend, although gasoline demand remained flat, while the colder weather resulted in higher demand for diesel and residual fuel oil usage. A similar trend was also seen in Canada with the latest data for October-17 indicating growth in all product categories, with the only exception of LPG demand that declined as compared to the previous year.

In the non-OECD countries, oil demand data was upgraded by 30 tb/d for 2017 on the back of higher oil demand from China and India, while demand from Middle East was lowered by 10 tb/d. This decline in Middle East reflected downward revision of 30 tb/d for Q4-17 oil demand led by high level of fuel substitution in Saudi Arabia and Iraq, in addition to a general fall in demand due to higher prices. Oil

demand growth for 2018 was kept largely unchanged at 1.53mb/d to reach 98.51 mb/d. China and India are expected to be key drivers of oil demand growth in 2018 owing to higher economic growth rates that will lead to higher oil consumption, particularly in the transportation sector.

World oil supply

In terms of global oil supply, December-17 witnessed a big month-on-month jump of 0.4 mb/d and averaged at 97.49 mb/d primarily on the back of higher non-OPEC supply that grew by 0.34 mb/d during the month and averaged at 58.62 mb/d. The increase was primarily on the back of higher supply from Canada, Mexico, Norway, Brazil and Kazakhstan partially offset by a decline in production in the US and the UK. For the

full year 2017, non-OPEC supply growth estimates were lowered by 0.04 mb/d and is now expected to grow by 0.77 mb/d to average at 57.79 mb/d during the year. The downward revision primarily reflects lower oil supply from OECD (-28 tb/d) and Developing Countries (-35 tb/d), while the oil supply forecast for the FSU was revised up by 32 tb/d. In OECD Americas, supply growth estimates for US and Canada were revised upwards by 16 tb/d and 11 tb/d, while it was lowered in the case of Mexico. On the other hand, supply estimates for OECD Europe were lowered particularly for Norway and UK that affected the overall downward revision for OECD countries for 2017. In the non-OECD group, oil supply from China increased by 0.05 mb/d during November-17, although the average for the first eleven months of 2017 showed a decline of 0.14 mb/d compared to the same period in 2016.

Non-OPEC supply growth projection for 2018 was revised up by 0.16 mb/d to 1.15 mb/d and is expected to average at 58.94 mb/d. The revision primarily reflects higher-than-expected supply estimates from the US, Canada, Mexico and the UK partially offset by expected decline in supply from Norway and Argentina.

OPEC oil production & spare capacity

According to Bloomberg data, OPEC production remained flat month-on-month during December-17, although individual country production did see some minor changes. Among the prominent ones, the increase in production in Nigeria, Iraq, Angola and Algeria were offset by lower production in Venezuela, Libya, Iran and Saudi Arabia. This led to an increase in compliance to the ongoing production cut agreement pushing it to 129 percent in December-17. Production in Saudi Arabia continued to remain below the critical 10 mb/d mark at 9.95 mb/d, the lowest level of production since May-17. The production disruption in Libya during the last week of December-17 resulted in an output decline in the country while mounting problems in Venezuela has severely affected the country's ability to produce oil in line with historical levels. The latter continues to see production decline at an accelerated pace owing to the deepening economic and humanitarian crisis in the country. Meanwhile, Nigeria which is exempt from the ongoing pact, increased production by 40 tb/d during December-17 as the country continues to make several changes in its oil industry, including passing a historic legislation in the country. An additional 80-100 tb/d of oil is expected to be added to Nigeria's oil production by one of its oil producers, Shoreline Group, after the company signed a financing deal with Vitol Group and local lenders.

The dramatic run up in oil prices during the end of 2017 and the start of 2018 has also rattled OPEC and non-OPEC producers that are a part of the production cut pact. The earlier-than-expected rise in oil prices has the potential to push shale production even higher and completely blunt the aforementioned producer's effort to push oil prices higher by voluntarily curbing oil production to rebalance the market marred with chronic oversupply. There are already indications that if oil prices remain above \$70/b for long, it would force some of the bigger producers to raise the production and take advantage of the higher prices instead of just US shale producers enjoying the full advantage. Nevertheless, the energy ministers of UAE, Qatar and Iraq have, in separate interviews, assured that their plan is to stick to the pact and they continue to eye global inventories to come down to five year average before reviewing the accord.

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	26,017.81	26,071.72	53.91	▲	0.21	5.47		
NASDAQ	7,296.05	7,336.38	40.33	▲	0.55	4.05		
SPB 500	2,798.03	2,810.30	12.27	▲	0.44	5.08		
Financial Times	7,700.96	7,730.79	29.83	▲	0.39	0.56		
IAX	13,281.43	13,434.45	153.02	▲	1.15	4.00		
CAC 40	5,494.83	5,526.51	31.68	▲	0.58	4.03		
Swiss	9,452.35	9,509.77	57.42	▲	0.61	1.36		
Nikkei 225	22,763.37	23,808.06	44.69	▲	0.19	4.58		
Topix	1,876.86	1,889.74	12.88	▲	0.69	3.97		
Hang Seng	32,121.94	32,254.89	132.95	▲	0.41	7.81		
Straits Times	3,521.31	3,530.36	29.05	▲	0.82	4.33		
MENA Stock Indices								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Kuwait	6,639.38	6,620.40	-18.98	▼	-0.29	3.48		
Saudi Arabia	7,539.02	7,522.80	-16.22	▼	-0.22	4.33		
Dubai	3,531.05	3,512.33	-18.72	▼	-0.53	4.78		
Abu Dhabi	4,625.39	4,636.22	10.83	▲	0.23	5.16		
Bahrain	1,333.17	1,335.92	2.75	▲	0.21	0.11		
Qatar	9,200.10	9,145.44	-54.66	▼	-0.59	7.94		
Oman	5,024.06	4,978.60	-45.46	▼	-0.90	-1.48		
Lebanon	1,169.16	1,169.16	0.00	-	0.00	1.79		
Jordan	2,148.28	2,148.57	0.29	▲	0.01	1.01		
Egypt	15,411.00	15,404.32	-6.68	▼	-0.04	2.61		
Hong Kong	12,849.51	12,950.73	101.22	▲	0.79	4.54		
Tunisia	6,346.42	6,342.09	-4.33	▼	-0.07	1.35		
Global Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwaiti Dinar		12.3611	3.3102	2.7081	2.3879	3.1870	366.63	4.1403
Saudi Riyal	0.08090		0.2678	0.2191	0.1932	0.2578	29.66	0.3349
US Dollar	0.30210	3.7343		0.8181	0.7214	0.9628	110.76	1.2508
Euro	0.36926	4.5644	1.2223		0.8821	1.1770	135.46	1.5287
Sterling Pound	0.41877	5.1765	1.3862	1.1337		1.3352	153.59	1.7342
Swiss Franc	0.31377	3.8786	1.0286	0.8496	0.7490		115.00	1.2991
Japanese Yen	0.00273	0.0337	0.0090	0.0074	0.0065	0.0087		0.0113
Australian Dollar	0.24153	2.9856	0.7995	0.6542	0.5766	0.7698	88.55	
MENA Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30210	3.7343	0.3741	3.6275	0.3833	3.6572	17.6300
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.3102		12.3611	1.2382	12.0076	1.2686	12.1059	58.3582
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08090		0.1002	0.9714	0.5026	0.9794	4.7211
Bahraini Dinar	2.6734	0.80765	9.9834		9.6979	1.0246	9.7773	47.1327
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08328	1.0294	0.1031		0.1057	1.0082	4.8601
Omani Riyal	2.6093	0.78826	9.7438	0.9760	9.4651		9.5426	46.0013
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08260	1.0211	0.1023	0.9919	0.1048		4.8206
Egyptian Pound	0.0567	0.01714	0.2118	0.0212	0.2058	0.0217	0.2074	
Global Interest Rates								
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year			
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.00	1.19	1.44	1.63	1.94			
US Dollar	1.46	1.56	1.74	1.93	2.22			
Euro	-0.42	-0.40	-0.38	-0.33	-0.26			
Sterling Pound	0.48	0.49	0.52	0.58	0.78			
Swiss Franc	-0.80	-0.80	-0.74	-0.64	-0.52			
Australian Dollar	1.57	1.69	1.68	1.72	1.82			
Japanese Yen	-0.05	-0.04	-0.03	0.02	0.11			
Global Bond Yields								
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year				
United States	2.06	2.45	2.66	2.93				
Europe	-0.61	-0.16	0.57	1.32				
United Kingdom	0.56	0.85	1.34	1.84				
Commodities								
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %			
Kuwait Oil	65.79	65.80	0.01	▲	0.02	3.53		
Brent	68.73	68.71	-0.02	▼	-0.03	2.40		
West Texas	63.43	63.33	-0.10	▼	-0.16	4.68		
Gold	1331.41	1331.41	0.00	-	0.00	2.17		
Silver	17.00	17.00	0.00	-	0.00	0.30		

Source: National Bank of Kuwait

Business

KFH digitally transforms data storage and data protection with Dell EMC

KFH partners with ITS and Dell EMC to support rapid data growth

KUWAIT: Dell EMC, yesterday announced that Kuwait Finance House (KFH), a global pioneer in Islamic Banking, has selected Dell EMC's Data Protection Solution to create a highly scalable infrastructure to support rapid data growth.

The project was managed by International Turnkey Systems (ITS), the leading integrated information technology provider for Islamic financial solutions and a strategic Dell EMC partner in the region. KFH aims to leverage the unmatched flexibility, agile performance, enterprise-ready protection and recovery capabilities offered by this solution to achieve an increased level of data availability and facilitate a superior banking experience.

Serving customers across the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 480 branches, KFH is driven by massive volumes of data - retained on backup tapes. To keep pace with the demands of the digital age, KFH optimizes the user-generated data to offer diversified financial services and solutions. To meet this end, IT forms the backbone for KFH's data-driven operations, ensuring uninterrupted provision of services to its customers across the globe. With data expected to further grow at an exponential rate, resilient cloud-enabled protection storage with effective backup, archive and disaster recovery features is critical to power the ambitious vision fostered by the leading financial

institution. To balance the needs between capacity, capability and advanced protection, KFH selected Dell EMC solution to start its journey toward tapeless solutions by expanding the existing Dell EMC backup to disk solution. By deploying this solution at its major data centers, KFH aims to migrate its traditional data protection system and switch over to a tapeless backup

limiting human intervention in backup and recovery operations and save approximately \$1 million over a three year period in storage management.

Group Chief Information Officer at KFH, Srood Sherif said: "As a leader spearheading Islamic financial services worldwide, KFH has always been committed to providing its ever-expanding customer base with frontline products and services - which can be obstructed by a lack of real-time data access.

Data Protection solutions by Dell EMC helps ensure that our present storage infrastructure not only facilitates round-the-clock data availability but also extends a high level of data protection and recovery at the speed of our business. Hence, we are extremely glad to be working with Dell EMC to realize our vision of becoming the most sustainable and profitable Islamic bank in the world."

Fahad Al-Rashdan, Regional Director at International Turnkey Systems Group (ITS) said: "(ITS) has developed and refined its award-winning technology for Islamic bank and financial institutions for over 36 years. Our extensive industry experience helped us identify Dell EMC's Data Protection Suite as the solution that would deliver a superior banking experience for KFH. With this new implementation, KFH will further upgrade its banking system to unlock



Bank aims to save \$1m over a 3-year period

system, gradually reducing their exposure to the risk of data loss. This tapeless solution will provide simplicity, cost optimization and will address risks, compliance and data sovereignty concerns associated with any potential data loss due to tape-centric issues.

With the deployment completed, KFH intends to drive the efficiency of data recovery to the highest level, eliminate usage of tape backup by



Srood Sherif with Dell EMC officials

new enterprise capabilities and better serve its customer's needs."

Meanwhile, Habib Mahakian, Vice President, Gulf at Dell EMC said: "We are immensely pleased to be working with an innovation-led financial institution such as the Kuwait Financial House and supporting them with their objective

of creating a strong foundation for data growth. At Dell EMC, we aim to ensure that by leveraging our Data Protection Solutions, KFH is able to protect its critical data and optimize the protection and availability of its IT environment to deliver cutting-edge services and deliver the highest level of customer service."

Nissan Al-Babtain excels with 3 awards at Nissan Regional Skills Contests 2017



KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the sole authorized agent of Nissan in the State of Kuwait, once again demonstrated the superior caliber of its sales and aftersales staff at the Nissan Regional Skills Contests 2017 in Dubai by bagging three medals and a best performance award. The contests were held in the Dubai Autodrome on 11th & 12th December followed by a dazzling awarding ceremony on the 14th onboard the Lotus Yacht, Dubai Marina.

The annually held regional skills contests comprise four competitions for technicians, sales executives, parts executives and service advisors; the aim is motivating Nissan staff through the spirit of competition by displaying their skills among peers from the Middle East region and identifying key strengths and weaknesses to further improve individual training programs.

Mohamed Fathy won the gold medal as well as best performance (greeting and consulting cate-

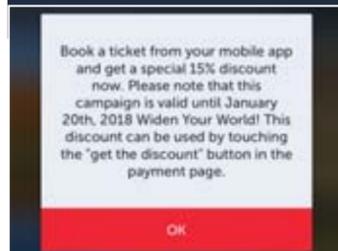
gory) in the Sales Executives contest while Sandeep Kumaran Leela and Shaik Mokhadder Moulana won bronze medals in the Service Advisor and Parts Executives contests respectively. The felicitation event was attended by Al-Babtain Group senior management and the winners were felicitated by Al-Babtain CEO Saleh Al-Babtain who said, "It brings us great pride to applaud our successful employees. We are on a constant road to an enhanced performance which requires the right talents as they help to meet the company's operational and strategic goals. We at Al-Babtain consider the customer's satisfaction as pivotal in these tough markets, and for that we will keep on investing in our employees to reach the highest level of success and make sure our services exceed expectations". As a token of appreciation, Saleh announced the management's decision to reward Fathy, Sandeep and Mokhadder for their outstanding achievement.

Turkish Airlines' mobile app offers discount flight tickets

KUWAIT: Turkish Airlines, the airline that flies to more countries than any other airline in the world, now offers 15 percent discount on its all domestic and international flights for passengers who download the latest version of the carrier's mobile app.

The new app offers a much better user experience when planning trips, purchasing tickets and using Miles. Buying tickets, making reservations and seeing saved flights now much faster than ever with this redesigned mobile app.

It has been also added a host of payment options to the application to enable the passengers to choose the one which suits them. By this way, they can easily purchase their tickets, or save their credit cards, or use their device's camera to scan their credit card details to be used at checkout. By remembering the users' selections and likes



from their previous flights, the application offers suggestions unique to them. Furthermore, using the app also offers a more comprehensive Miles & Smiles experience for the passengers as using Miles to buy award tickets, purchasing additional Miles, and transferring Miles to other members.

The passengers, who download the new app to discover the world with all advantages that Turkish Airlines has to offer, can benefit percent15 discount provided that purchasing their tickets between 18-20 January, 2018.

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

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

The lucky winners are:

1. Wali Abdulwahab Dolati Ghadhban
2. Ahmad Zaid Ammer Almutairi
3. Mohammad Abdullah Ali
4. Mohammad Hasan Yousef Theyab
5. Abdulmohsen Khaled Abdulmohsen Albahar

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to



the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

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

CBK announces winners of Al-Najma Account draw

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the daily draw on "Al-Najma Account" yesterday at bank's head office to select five winners to win a cash prize of KD 7,000 for each. The draw was held in the presence of Jassim Al-Otaibi, representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The following names were announced as winners of the prizes:

1. Salman Nazeeh Ezzaldeen
2. Ruqayah Jassim Al-Mashmoum
3. Moajab Saleh Al-Ajmi
4. Mohammad Abdullateef Al-Abdullah
5. Esraa Yousef Abdulrahman Jabr

Al-Najma Account allows its customers to win a daily prize of KD 7,000 which is the highest daily prize in Kuwait. In addition, the Account offers quarterly draws that provide customers with opportunity to get their dreams turned to reality by winning great prizes starting from KD 100,000 for the first quarter escalating thereafter by KD 50,000 for each quarter to reach KD 250,000 in the last quarter. Customers can enjoy



additional benefits including obtaining ATM card and a credit card against the customer's account along with enjoying all other banking services.

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

Lulu Group's Twenty14 Holdings acquires iconic Scottish landmark for \$120m

Twenty14 Holdings (T14H), the hospitality investment arm of Lulu Group International, has completed a \$120 million acquisition of the Waldorf Astoria Edinburgh - The Caledonian.

The Caledonian joins a portfolio of \$650m worth of luxury property across the UK, the Middle East and India that T14H has brought together since 2014. T14H intends to invest a further \$28m in enhancement and expansion of the property. T14H has a strategy of investing in profitable luxury sites while preserving their historical legacy. The Caledonian is a grand Edwardian railway hotel that has epitomised Scottish hospitality for more than 100 years. T14H intends to sensitively enhance the building

while retaining its rich heritage and distinctive architecture.

Commenting on the latest acquisition Adeb Ahamed, Managing Director, T14H said, "We are excited to add The Caledonian to the portfolio of Twenty14 Holdings. With more than 100 years of history, The Caledonian brings with it a rich heritage, character and unique opulence."

The Caledonian operates under the Hilton's flagship brand Waldorf Astoria. First opened in 1903 as part of the old Princes Street Railway Station The Caledonian currently has 241 rooms and offers awe-inspiring views of Edinburgh Castle. Local perceptions and historical legacies are central to T14H's acquisition strategy. "We are

honoured to be part of this Scottish landmark that has a great significance for locals and visitors alike. We look forward to adding to the experience The Caledonian already offers," added Adeb Ahamed.

Among improvements planned for the site, T14H intends to engage local craftsmen to enhance the hotel's historic Caledonian Suites. Luxury and style will be the keynote of these improvements. Bespoke furniture, eclectic artwork and en-suite bathrooms featuring marble and burnished chrome fittings will feature among a host of exclusive additions.

The Caledonian is also home to two exquisite restaurants operated by Michelin-starred brothers Chris and Jeff Galvin. These are the Pompadour by Galvin and Galvin Brasserie de Luxe. It also houses the only Guerlain spa in the UK, offering the glamour and prestige of its esteemed counterpart in Paris.



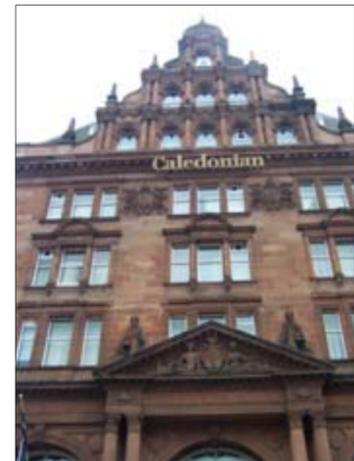
Adeb Ahamed

About Twenty14 Holdings

Working thoughtfully to bring historic buildings to life, Twenty14 Holdings is the hospitality arm of Abu Dhabi-based conglomerate Lulu Group International, founded in 2014 to capitalize on the growth in the global hospitality industry. The company currently has assets worth more than \$650m spread across the UK, Middle East and India.

The group has made a £110m agreement with property developer Galliard Homes to create a luxurious five-star hotel at 1-5 Great Scotland Yard, the former headquarters of London's Metropolitan Police.

The firm co-owns the landmark Sheraton Oman Hotel in Muscat, a 230 room five-star architectural marvel, which was gloriously reopened in 2016. The company also owns the Steigenberger Hotel Business Bay in Dubai and three properties in India.



Technology

AI and virtual reality make inroads in tourism sector

Sector is starting to embrace new technologies

MADRID: A hotel room automatically adjusting to the tastes of each guest, virtual reality headsets as brochures: the tourism sector is starting to embrace new technologies, hoping to benefit from lucrative personal data. In a prototype of the hotel of the future on display at Madrid's Fitur tourism fair, receptionists have disappeared and customers are checked-in via a mirror equipped with facial recognition.

Once the client is identified, the room adapts itself automatically to all demands made at reservation: temperature, lighting, Picasso or Van Gogh in the digital frames hanging on the walls. "Technology will allow us to know what the client needs before he even knows he wants it," says Alvaro Carrillo de Albornoz, head of Spain's Hotel Technology Institute, which promotes innovation in the sector.

Tracking guests

Some hotels already offer such experiences at a more basic level. But the room prototype put on show by French technology consultancy Altran, aimed at luxury hotels, has incorporated cutting-edge speech recognition technology, allowing for instance a guest to order a pizza in 40 languages. "Even the lock is intelligent-it opens and closes via the WhatsApp application on the client's phone," says Carlos Mendez, head of innovation at Altran.

The mattress is equipped with sensors and records the movements of those sleeping, which could prompt hotel staff to offer them a coffee when they wake up. Generally speaking, hotels are hoping to use artificial intelligence (AI) to get better knowledge of their clients via personal data provided on reservation or "beacon" technology used once the client is in the hotel or resort.



MADRID: A hostess uses virtual reality glasses at the Iberia stand during the International Tourism Fair (FITUR).

Restricted in some countries, the latter involves placing a beacon in the hotel that will detect customers' smartphones, meaning they will know how much time they spend in their rooms, for instance, or at what time they go to the pool.

AI algorithms

Fed with this data, AI algorithms will get to work, determining what the clients' habits are to lure them back again by offering a tailor-made experience, or sell them additional products. If the algorithm "knows that when you come to the hotel with your wife, you don't eat at the restaurant but order room service, it will propose a special room menu with a bottle of champagne,"

says Carrillo. "But if you come with your entire family, it will propose a reduction on kids' menus." For Rodrigo Martinez, head of consultancy Hotel Servicers, these technological tools could also help improve hotels' productivity. "All purchases can be made automatic," he says. "For instance, if a huge amount of Brits are coming, the system will know that it has to order more bacon."

Virtual reality

Manufacturers of virtual reality (VR) headsets are also jumping onto the bandwagon. At various Fitur stands, visitors are able to immerse themselves in the streets of Marrakech or amble along a portion of the Santiago de Compostela pilgrims' trail.



MADRID: A man uses virtual reality glasses at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics stand during the International Tourism Fair. — AFP photos

"We're in a completely pioneering phase," says Marcial Correal, head of the Spanish association for virtual travel agencies, who is promoting this tool to tourism professionals as the brochure of the future, without too much success so far.

"Professionals say 'how amazing' but they don't buy it. It's not in their marketing budget priorities." Headsets themselves are not too pricey, between 50 and 600 euros (\$60 and \$730), says Cesar Urbina of virtual reality agency Iralta. "Then there's content production, a little more than a normal video—from 2,000 euros up to 150,000 euros." Hotel chain Palladium, however, has decided to give it a go. Its salespeople no longer have paper brochures on them to

present their hotels to travel agents, they carry virtual reality headsets.

Using these, the agents can virtually visit rooms, pools or restaurants at every one of their hotels. Ivan Corzo, head of marketing for Europe at the group, says this gives travel agents a better idea of what the hotels are really like. They "tell us it helps them sell," he says. "It's much more difficult to cheat with VR headsets," adds Urbina. Morocco's tourism office is also using VR. "Tourism is linked to experiences, sensitivity," says Siham Feltouhi, head of e-marketing at the office. "Virtual reality can't replace the taste of local cuisine or the smell of the ocean. But it makes you want to explore more." — AFP

After two-year wait, Uganda gets its cancer machine

KAMPALA: Uganda's only radiotherapy machine was officially replaced Friday, nearly two years after the previous one broke down, giving hope to cancer patients who had been denied a crucial tool against the disease. The failure of the old machine in March 2016 caused a public outcry and was seen as symbolising the deterioration of Uganda's medical services.

Since 1995, Mulago Hospital in Kampala had become a hub for treating cancer patients across east Africa, many of them coming from countries lacking radiotherapy equipment. On Friday, Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda said the new \$815,000 (664,000-euro) Cobalt-60 machine, housed in a concrete bunker at the hospital, was part of a "vision of becoming the East African centre of excellence in the management of oncology." Yukiya Amano, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)



KAMPALA: A picture taken on January 19, 2018 shows a new Cobalt 60 Radiotherapy Machine being installed at Mulago hospital. — AFP

which helped install the new machine, said Friday's commissioning was a "major cause of celebration".

The agency and the Ugandan government each paid half of the cost of the machine. "In 28 countries in Africa there is no cancer machine. (Patients) cannot be diagnosed and

they cannot be treated," said Amano. Dr Jackson Orem, director of the Uganda Cancer Institute, told AFP that about 5,000 cases are referred to the institute each year. Many patients show up with cancer that is already at an advanced stage. The new machine is capable of treating up to 120 people a day. — AFP

High-tech toothpaste could fight malaria

LONDON: Research carried out in part by an artificially-intelligent (AI) 'robot scientist' has found that a common ingredient of toothpaste could be developed to fight drug-resistant strains of malaria. In a study in the journal Scientific Reports, scientists from Britain's Cambridge University who used the AI robot to conduct high-throughput screening said the ingredient, triclosan, showed the potential to interrupt malaria infections at two critical stages - in the liver and the blood.

Malaria kills around half a million people every year, the vast majority of them children in the poorest parts of Africa. The disease can be treated with a number of drugs, but resistance to these medicines is increasing, raising the risk that some strains may become untreatable in the future. Because of this, the search for new medicines was becoming increasingly urgent, said Steve Oliver of Cambridge University's biochemistry department, who co-led the work with Elizabeth Bilsland.

After being transferred into a new host via a mosquito bite, malaria parasites work their way into the liver, where they mature and reproduce. They then move into red blood



cells, multiply and spread around the body, causing fever and potentially life-threatening complications. Scientists have known for some time that triclosan can halt malaria parasites' growth at the blood stage of the infection by inhibiting the action of an enzyme known as enoyl reductase (ENR), which is involved in production of fatty acids.

In toothpaste, this helps prevent a build-up of plaque bacteria. In this latest work, however, Bilsland's team found that triclosan also inhibits an entirely different enzyme of the malaria parasite, called DHFR. DHFR is the target of the antimalarial pyrimethamine - a drug to which malaria parasites are increasingly developing resistance, particularly in Africa. The Cambridge team's work showed that triclosan was able to target and act on

this enzyme even in pyrimethamine-resistant parasites. "The discovery by our robot colleague that triclosan is effective against malaria targets offers hope that we may be able to use it to develop a new drug," said Elizabeth Bilsland, who co-led the work.

"We know it is a safe compound, and its ability to target two points in the malaria parasite's lifecycle means the parasite will find it difficult to evolve resistance." The AI robot scientist used in the study - nicknamed Eve - was designed to automate and speed up the drug discovery process. It does this by automatically developing and testing hypotheses to explain observations, running experiments using laboratory robotics, interpreting the results, altering the hypotheses, and then repeating the cycle. — Reuters

Second face transplant for Frenchman in world-first

PARIS: A man whose body rejected a face transplant he received seven years ago has been given a second donor face after living nearly two months without one, French medical agencies said Friday. It is the first time in transplant history that doctors have replaced one donor face with another, according to Olivier Bastien of France's biomedicine agency. More than 12 years since the first-ever face graft was done, in France, it remains a high-risk procedure.

A transplant can help recipients—often victims of accidents, violence, or rare genetic disorders—to resume basic tasks such as breathing, eating and speaking, and restores non-verbal communication through smiles and frowns. But it also means a life-long reliance on immunosuppressant

medicines, to stop the body rejecting the "foreign" organ. These drugs can leave a person vulnerable to infections and cancers. It is a rare procedure with fewer than 40 operations performed to date, and at least six patients have died.

The latest recipient, in his 40s, went under the knife at a Paris hospital on Monday, for a procedure that lasted nearly a full day, according to a joint press statement issued by the biomedicine agency and the AP-HP public hospital system. The man's original graft had been removed in an operation on November 30, and he was kept on life support in an induced coma until the follow-up procedure.

"This graft shows for the first time... that re-transplantation is possible in the case of chronic rejection" of a donor face, said the statement. It will be weeks before doctors can say whether the second graft has taken. The recipient of the world's first face transplant, Isabelle Dinoire, died of cancer in April 2016, 11 years after her groundbreaking operation. Doctors said her body had rejected the transplant, and she had lost partial use of her lips by the time she died. — AFP

Australia lifesaving drone makes first rescue

SYDNEY: A pair of Australian swimmers on Thursday became the first people to be rescued in the ocean by a drone when the aerial lifesaver dropped a safety device to distressed teens caught in rough seas. Australia is leading the use of the technology in surf lifesaving, with dozens of drones being trialled on beaches around the country. In what is believed to be a world-first drone surf rescue, two boys on Thursday got caught in three-metre (10-foot) swells while swimming off Lennox Head in New South Wales, near the border with Queensland.

Beachgoers onshore raised the alarm to the lifeguards who then alerted the drone pilot, and the aerial lifesaver was deployed in moments. "I was able to launch it, fly it to the location, and drop the pod all in about one to two minutes,"

lifeguard supervisor Jai Sheridan told the Gold Coast Bulletin. "On a normal day that would have taken our lifeguards a few minutes longer to reach the members of the public." Other than a little weary from their experience the pair were reportedly unharmed. Along with their ability to spot swimmers in trouble and deliver life saving devices faster than traditional lifesaving techniques, like launching surfboards or rubber dinghies, drones are being used in Australia to spot underwater predators like sharks and jellyfish.

Artificial intelligence is being developed using thousands of images captured by a drone camera to build an algorithm that can identify different ocean objects. The software can differentiate between sea creatures, like sharks which it can recognize with more than 90 percent accuracy, compared to about 16 percent with the naked eye. Some beaches in Australia have shark nets, but a government report last year called for their phasing out in favor of exploring a range of alternatives, including sonar technology and aerial patrols. The inquiry found that nets did not guarantee public safety any more than other deterrents but caused significant damage to marine life. — AFP

Health

Rocky start to Alzheimer's medical research in 2018

Support groups are putting on a brave face

PARIS: The year 2018, barely underway, has already dealt a series of disheartening blows to the quest for an Alzheimer's cure. Within the first three weeks, pharmaceutical giant Pfizer abandoned the costly and frustrating field of dementia drug development, and two promising treatments stumbled in patient trials. Alzheimer's support groups are putting on a brave face, but the collective disappointment is palpable as the global cost of caring for some 50 million dementia sufferers is set to reach \$1 trillion (819 billion euros) this year.

"It's very fair to say that progress is slow," David Reynolds, chief scientific officer at Alzheimer's Research UK, a charity, told AFP. "Companies have put a lot of time, effort and money in over the last 25 years, and there haven't been any new medicines launched in this area for 16 years now." Experts say it takes 12-15 years, on average, and more than \$2 billion to develop a single drug. According to the Alzforum website, which gathers data on candidate drugs, fewer than 300 have made it to Phase II drug efficiency trials so far.

Only five have ever been approved to treat symptoms such as memory loss associated with Alzheimer's, first identified more than 100 years ago. With a clinical trial failure rate of over 99 percent, there is still no licensed drug that slows the condition's progression, or cures it. Today, about 100 candidate dementia drugs are enrolled in trials, compared to over 1,000 for cancer, according to Reynolds. One reason is that "pharmaceutical companies ultimately are companies. They are beholden to their investors," he said. "A return on investment is really: How much time and money do you put into getting a new medicine versus how much money can you make once you've actually got it? In this area, success has been very difficult to come by."

Mysterious brain

The stakes are high. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), some 10 million people per year are diagnosed with dementia, with Alzheimer's disease accounting for about two-thirds of cases. By 2030, the number of sufferers is projected to reach 82 million globally, and by 2050 some 152 million. The medical, patient-care, and economic costs are enormous. A heavy burden falls on family members, the majority of care providers worldwide. Many have to give up their jobs.

Alzheimer's affects mainly older people—about one in four over-85s is a sufferer. And numbers have soared as lifespans have lengthened thanks to medical advances in

other fields. With cardiovascular disease and cancer the biggest killers in the 1960s and '70s, that is where most of the research money went. "In dementia, that investment wasn't there. So the amount of knowledge... about the disease is at a much, much earlier stage, and arguably the brain is a much more complicated organ" than the heart, said Reynolds. To this day, scientists don't know exactly what causes Alzheimer's, leaving drug developers stumped.

On January 6, Pfizer announced an end to its "discovery and early development efforts" for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's dementia drugs. Two days later, Danish company Lundbeck reported its idalopirdine compound did not "decrease cognitive loss" in patients, and on January 12, biotech firm Axovant announced the end of the road for its offering, intepirdine.

Slow, but not backwards

Experts say every failure of a drug reveals something new about Alzheimer's disease, which is thought to be associated with a buildup of protein "plaques", and "tangles" in the brain. One important recent realization was that an effective treatment may have to begin long before symptoms appear as protein build-up likely starts decades before disease sets in. This, in itself, presents a research challenge.

"How do you find these patients?" when they are in middle age and symptom-free, explained French neurology professor Bruno Dubois. "How long do you treat them?" Drugs in development today are targeting several tracks. Some use antibodies to mop up proteins in circulation, or enzymes to inhibit their production. Another experimental approach is vaccination: training the body to produce its own antibodies to attack disease-causing proteins. "We are not moving backwards," insisted Reynolds.

Yet, he was "by no means certain" that a goal set by the G8 in 2013 to develop a cure or treatment for dementia by 2025 can be met. "Even knowing the obstacles, we have never been as optimistic as we are today," added James Hendrix, a director at the US-based Alzheimer's Association, one of several non-profit research funders. "We will not slow down in our fight against this terrible disease," he vowed. "We are steadfastly committed to both advocating for further increased federal funding for Alzheimer's and dementia research, and increasing our own level of research funding to get us to where we ultimately need to be—a world without Alzheimer's disease." —AFP



Geraldine (R), 20 years old and who recently lost her cousin Rosette to cholera, stands in the door of her family's house waiting for the rain to stop on January 18, 2018 in Kinshasa. The World Health Organization (WHO) on January 15 said there was a high risk of a cholera epidemic after flooding in Kinshasa, the teeming and ramshackle capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo. —AFP

Craving carbs? Then blame your brain

TOKYO: Under pressure and gobbling pizza or chocolate? It may not be your fault, according to Japanese researchers who have isolated the neurons that drive a craving for carbs. The team at Japan's National Institute for Physiological Sciences found that activating neurons known to respond to social stress increased the appetite in mice for carbohydrates. Rodents with the neurons activated ate high-carbohydrate food at a rate of three times the mice under nor-

mal conditions. They also roughly halved their intake of high-fat food, the study found. The research is the first to demonstrate the way that the brain plays a role in the preference for carbohydrates or fats, said Yasuhiko Minokoshi, a scientist at the institute, who led the study. The teams said the study could help find a way to shift people away from gorging on sugary treats or unhealthy junk food.

Humans generally select what to eat based on taste, as well as the nutritional state of the body, but the exact mechanism involved in the selection has remained largely a mystery. "Many people who eat sweets too much when stressed tend to blame themselves for being unable to control their impulses," Minokoshi said. "But if they know it's because of the neurons", they might not be so hard on themselves, he said. —AFP

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What's On

The 24th Qurain Cultural Festival for 2018



By Abdellatif Sharaa

The National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) was founded in 1973 to become the most important source to further the cultural movement and project the artistic and civilized image of Kuwait. This includes working on enhancing the cultural infrastructure of the society through encouraging and supporting the intellectual and creative production in all fields including art, her-

itage, music, formative arts and theater. The council holds several exhibitions and training courses in addition to festivals and awards that motivate people to be creative and innovative in all fields. The NCCAL is also interested in children by organizing courses and other events for them.

The council recently organized an important event titled "The 24th Qurain Cultural Festival for 2018" which is being held from January 14 to the 20th. The festival was held for the first time from Nov 23- Dec

22 1994, at the wish of the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in order to enhance the cultural and arts movement in Kuwait. The festival encourages formative Kuwaiti artists of various generations to participate in the exhibition which sheds the light on the contemporary arts movement in Kuwait.

Artist Essra Hasan (aka Sara Hasan) participated with her golden collection which combined the heritage of Arab beauty from the past and Arabic calligraphy which became one of the symbols of modern

art. Essra Hasan is an artist of unique nature through what she presents in the form of merging elements, colors and feelings with her innovative vision, as apparent in her participation in the formative arts exhibition of Al-Qurain Cultural Festival with two art works one of the "rooster" and the other of the "sisters", which received good praise and encouragement from well-established Kuwaiti artists and art lovers. They all wished her further success in the field of arts.

ASSE launches GCC HSE Excellence award



American Society of Safety Engineers - Kuwait Chapter (ASSE) is pleased to launch of ASSE GCC HSE Excellence Award 2018. Fadhel Ali, Chairman, ASSE Kuwait chapter, Fares Al-Mansouri, Team Leader of KOC along with Advisory committee & Core Committee of ASSE Kuwait Chapter released the brochure for the award program on 15th January 2018 at KOC Tent, Ahmadi Township, State of Kuwait. More than 150 HSE leaders representing different Private Sector Companies of Kuwait and Other parts of GCC, participated in this launch program. The event witnessed 150 HSE professionals out of which 40 plus contracting companies of Kuwait and around 110 ASSE HSE professionals. American Society of Safety Engineers-Gulf Cooperation Council HSE Excellence Award introduced to recognize leadership, excellence and encourage exceptional performance in the field of Health, Safety and Environment in private sector companies in the Gulf Region.

The American Society of Safety Engineers-Kuwait chapter instituted the award, since 2007. The award scheme is devised to recognize and reward those GCC private sector organizations who have been successful over the course of the years in managing the Occupational Health, Safety and Environment risks of workplace, development and performance of its HSE Management System. The award is patronized by Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and endorsed by the international organizations like International Association Of Drilling Contractors (IADC), Supported by Board of Certified Professional (BCSP) and Institution of Occupational Safety and Health UK (IOSH).

The awards will be presented to the private sector organizations under five categories such as ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION, MANUFACTURING, OIL & GAS, FACILITY & MAINTENANCE and SECTOR (Specific Contract / Project Site). Based on the award criteria, Gold, Silver, Bronze and Merit awards are presented under



each Category.

During the brochure release event Chairman ASSE, Kuwait chapter, Fadhel Ali conveyed best wishes to the Chapter Executive Committee members and Award organizing committee members for the success of the program. Chief guest Fares Al-Mansouri stated that ASSE GCC HSE excellence award promotes HSE culture among the companies and commended the efforts of the ASSE Kuwait chapter for introducing such awards. He also emphasized the contractors to participate in the event.

During the Launch program, Sunil Sadanandan, Secretary of ASSE Kuwait Chapter, Welcomed the VIPs and the gathering. Muhammad Alamgir, President of ASSE Kuwait Chapter in his opening address stated that it will be a good opportunity for the private sector companies to show case their HSE performance and benchmark their position. The ASSE GCC HSE Excellence Award 2018 Director Amir Rasheed briefed the gathering on the award program and its benefits. During the program, the website for the GCC HSE excellence award2018 was launched by Fares Al-Mansouri in the presence of invited guests from the contracting companies, ASSE Executive Committee, ASSE Advisory members and the ASSE members.

TIES
announcement

You are cordially invited to our Tafseer class (Divine Wisdom from the Last Testament) today at 7:00 pm. In this class, we will focus on Surat Al-Mulk (The Dominion) from

verse 28 till the end of the Surah. We will explore why the polytheists of Makkah wished for the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and how he reacted to that. We will show signs that prove Allah's existence, and the reality of trusting in Him. We will also examine the best forms of charity and their practical and spiritual significance. Finally, we will learn about the 70,000 people who will enter Paradise without reckoning and why.

IEI - Kuwait
Chapter meets
new Indian
Ambassador
to Kuwait

The Institution of Engineers (India) Kuwait Chapter, Executive Committee members had fixed an appointment on 18th January 2018 with Indian Embassy to meet and greet HE K Jeeva Sagar, the new Indian Ambassador to the State of Kuwait. As a token of love and welcoming the new Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, a flower bouquet was presented by the Engr. Ajay Sharma, Chairman IEI - Kuwait chapter and introduced the committee members to His Excellency. Each engineer had introduced himself with short brief.

The Ambassador expressed that, engineers play a major role in building the nation and contribute much in developing the economy and he further said

that he himself being an Applied Physics graduate can appreciate the Engineering aspects well. Jeeva Sagar was very simple, down to earth, spoke in a very comfortable manner and enquired with sincere eagerness to know the situation in Kuwait, the contribution of the Indian Engineering companies in Kuwait and how the relationships can be built to increase contributions of Indian companies in Kuwait.

The Ambassador expressed his willingness to resolve the issues faced by the Indians and in particular the Engineers' membership of Kuwait Society of Engineers. He reaffirmed his commitment to take the issues to its logical conclusion and if required he will use his good offices to contact the Ministry officials in India to resolve the Engineers problems. These words were very encouraging and the Engineers felt a positive vibration in his words. Dr Abdul Rumane presented the fourth book authored by him on quality in construction, which was received by K Jeeva Sagar. After discussions on several topics the team took leave of his HE the Ambassador and with a confirmation to meet in the coming days to work on various subject matters for the benefit of the Indians and Indian Engineering companies.

S Ramadoss,
CEO of Global
Technology
honored with
Pravasi Bharathi

Reputed Indian businessman from Kuwait, S Ramadoss, was honored with the "Pravasi Bharathi (Kerala) "Karma Sreyas" Award 2018 at the 16th Pravasi Bharathiya Day Celebrations Kerala 2018 held at Thiruvananthapuram on 11th January, 2018. The colorful event was attended by the Honorable Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha PJ Kurien, Honourable Speaker of Kerala Legislative Assembly P. Sreeramakrishnan, Honourable Civil Supplies Minister of Karnataka UT Khader, several other Ministers, MPs, MLAs, social leaders and prominent NRIs from different parts of the world.

Pravasi Bharathiya Day celebrations in Kerala have been organized every year since 2003, coinciding with the "Pravasi Bharathiya Diwas" of the Government of India, under the auspices of Pravasi Bharathi News Bulletin, NRI Coordination Council and Regional Committee comprising social and political leaders. During these celebrations, prominent NRIs and eminent personalities from political, cultural, business, health and humanitarian sectors, who excel in their respective areas, are felicitated and honored with Pravasi Bharathi (Kerala) Awards. Ramadoss is the



CEO of Kuwait's fast-growing telecom and IT services company, the Global Technology Company WLL. The Award is a great honour not only for Ramadoss, a hardworking, ambitious and visionary businessman and a humble, kind and spiritual person, but also to the Indian community in Kuwait in general.

Born to an ex-serviceman, Subbiah, who had served with the Indian Army during the Second World War, Ramadoss lived in a small village named M Duraisampuram near Sivakasi in the state of Tamil Nadu. He used to walk three kilometers every day to attend school. Ramadoss graduated with Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from ANJA College at Sivakasi. Later he acquired Engineering Degree (AMIE) and MBA in Operations Management.

He joined the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Government of India in 1980 as a Junior Engineer. His work took him across India and he worked in multiple states during his tenure. He was deputed to Kuwait in 1991 as part of TCIL's team for rebuilding the telecom networks damaged during the First Persian Gulf War.

He moved to KNETCO as a Project Engineer and climbed the professional ladder swiftly. With his dedication and hard work, he rose to the position of General Manager of KNETCO in a short time. Ramadoss later moved to Oman in 2009 to establish Al Jassar Telecommunications as part of Al Jassar Group of Companies, and soon got promoted as the Group CEO. During his tenure in Oman, he was instrumental in setting up Duraline's factory in Sohar, a JV with Beasuk Engineering, South Korea for mechanical works in PDO, Oman, and many others.

He then moved back to Kuwait in 2010 and joined Global Technology Company WLL (GTC) as its Chief Executive Officer. Under his dynamic leadership, GTC grew rapidly to become one of the main contractors for ICT solutions in Kuwait for various Ministries, KOC, KNPC and major private players. His visionary and ambitious personality led him to spread GTC's business to other countries in the region, with branches in Qatar, Oman & Malaysia. In Kuwait, Ramadoss also manages two other companies, Nettelecom and Zena Technologies.



TV



01:10 The Haunting
03:10 Savage Dog
04:50 Compadres
06:35 War Of The Worlds
08:35 Sonmuss
10:00 Savage Dog
11:40 The Darkest Hour
13:15 War Of The Worlds
15:15 Project Almanac
17:05 Street
18:40 Iron Man
20:50 Heat
23:40 The Delta Force



00:50 Untamed & Uncut
01:45 Treeshouse Masters
02:40 Treeshouse Masters
03:35 Treeshouse Masters
04:25 Treeshouse Masters
05:15 Treeshouse Masters
06:02 Bad Dog
06:49 Bad Dog
07:36 Night
08:00 Night
08:25 Swamp Brothers
08:50 Swamp Brothers
09:15 Treeshouse Masters
10:10 Bad Dog
11:05 Wildest Middle East
12:00 Swamp Brothers
12:28 Swamp Brothers
12:55 Keeping Up With The Kruger
13:50 The Lion Queen
14:45 Bad Dog
15:40 Wildest Middle East
16:35 Lone Star Law
17:30 Treeshouse Masters
18:25 Sharkbite Beach
19:20 Alaska Monsters
20:15 Bad Dog
21:10 Swamp Brothers
21:38 Swamp Brothers
22:05 Sharkbite Beach
23:00 Alaska Monsters
23:55 Wildest Middle East



00:00 Call The Midwife
01:00 Gunpowder
02:00 Line Of Duty
03:00 New Tricks
04:00 Doctors
04:30 Eastenders
05:00 Call The Midwife
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Eastenders
07:00 The Musketeers
07:50 Call The Midwife
08:50 Agatha Raisin
09:40 Doctors
10:05 Eastenders
10:30 New Tricks
11:30 The Musketeers
12:25 Call The Midwife
13:25 Agatha Raisin
14:10 Doctors
14:40 Eastenders
15:10 New Tricks
16:00 The Musketeers
17:05 Casuality
18:00 Casuality
19:00 New Tricks
20:00 Call The Midwife
21:00 The Level
22:00 New Tricks
22:55 Casuality
23:55 The Level



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



00:05 Dara O'Briain - Talk Funny
01:00 Another Period
01:22 Another Period
01:45 Tosh.0
02:10 Chappelle's Show
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
03:25 Tosh.0
03:50 Chappelle's Show
04:15 Kroll Show
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Important Things With Demetri Martin
05:30 Impractical Jokers
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:50 Catch A Contractor
07:40 The Jim Gaffigan Show
08:05 Impractical Jokers
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Kroll Show
09:45 Key And Peele
10:10 Important Things With Demetri Martin
10:35 The Jim Gaffigan Show
11:00 Impractical Jokers
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Impractical Jokers
12:40 Friendszone
13:05 Friendszone
13:30 Important Things With Demetri Martin
13:55 Friends
14:20 Friends
14:45 Workaholics
15:10 Key And Peele
15:35 Kroll Show
16:00 Friendszone
16:30 Friendszone
16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 Punk'd (Bet)
19:00 Punk'd (Bet)
19:25 Impractical Jokers

19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends
20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
21:30 Detroiters
22:00 Martha And Snoop Potluck Dinner Party
22:25 Comedy Central Presents
22:50 Detroiters
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show - Global Edition



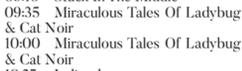
00:30 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
01:20 Ecolips
02:10 Ecolips
03:00 Ecolips
03:50 Kids Do The Craziest Things
04:15 Kids Do The Craziest Things
04:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
06:20 How It's Made
07:00 Ultimate Survival
07:50 How It's Made
08:15 How It's Made
08:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:30 Tanked
10:20 Ecolips
11:10 Finding Bigfoot
12:00 Somebody's Gotta Do It
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
14:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
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19:30 How It's Made
20:20 Tanked
21:10 Finding Bigfoot
22:00 Somebody's Gotta Do It
22:50 Ecolips
23:40 Ultimate Survival



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

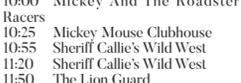


00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binnie And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:55 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binnie And The Ghost
03:30 Binnie And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:25 Binnie And The Ghost
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Tangled: Queen For A Day
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
07:55 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
08:20 Elena Of Avalor
08:45 Bunk'd
09:10 Stuck In The Middle
09:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
10:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
10:25 Lolirock
11:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
12:05 Hank Zipzer
12:30 Alex & Co.
13:20 Lolirock
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
15:00 The Zhuzhus
15:15 K.C. Undercover
15:40 Bunk'd
16:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
16:10 Elena Of Avalor
16:35 Bizarroville
17:00 Tangled: The Series
17:25 Descendants Wicked World
17:30 Stuck In The Middle
17:55 K.C. Undercover
18:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
18:45 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
19:10 Star Wars Forces Of Destiny
19:15 Bunk'd
19:40 Girl Meets World
20:05 Sports Swap
20:10 Liv And Maddie
20:35 Jessie
21:00 Tangled: The Series
21:25 K.C. Undercover
21:50 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
22:15 Bizarroville
22:40 Stuck In The Middle
23:05 Rolling With The Ronks
23:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
23:45 Lolirock



00:15 PJ Masks
00:30 Vampirina
01:00 Vampirina
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopdidoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopdidoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
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06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopdidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 PJ Masks
08:00 P-King Duckling
08:25 Jungle Junction
08:40 Special Agent Oso
09:00 Handy Manny
09:15 PJ Masks
09:30 Puppy Dog Pals
10:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
10:25 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
10:55 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
11:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
11:50 The Lion Guard
12:15 The Lion Guard
12:45 Sofia The First
13:10 Sofia The First
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 PJ Masks
14:30 Doc McStuffins
14:55 P-King Duckling
15:20 Vampirina
15:45 Sofia The First
16:10 Puppy Dog Pals
16:35 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
17:05 The Wizard Of Dizz
17:50 Minnie's Bow-Toons
18:00 Goldie & Bear
18:15 Goldie & Bear
18:30 Puppy Dog Pals
18:55 Sofia The First
19:25 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:55 Doc McStuffins
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20:35 P-King Duckling
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06:00 Art Attack
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06:45 Loopdidoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
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21:00 Vampirina
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22:00 PJ Masks
22:25 Sofia The First
22:50 P-King Duckling
23:20 Puppy Dog Pals



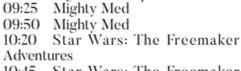
00:00 Iron Chef Gauntlet
01:00 Tia Mowry At Home
01:30 Tia Mowry At Home
02:00 The Big Eat - Middle East
02:30 The Big Eat - Middle East
03:00 Chopped
04:00 Iron Chef Gauntlet
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:25 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:50 Bake With Anna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



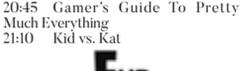
23:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
Discovery HD
00:15 Yukon Men
01:05 Danglerman
01:50 X-Ray Mega Airport
02:35 Abandoned Engineering
03:20 Street Outlaws
04:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
04:50 Deadliest Catch
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Auction Kings
06:23 Container Wars
06:45 How Do They Do It?
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Alaska: The Last Frontier
08:20 Auction Kings
08:45 Container Wars
09:10 Deadliest Catch
09:55 Danglerman
10:45 X-Ray Mega Airport
11:30 Abandoned Engineering
12:20 Auction Kings
12:43 Container Wars
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 How Do They Do It?
13:55 Deadliest Catch
14:40 Yukon Men
15:30 Danglerman
16:15 X-Ray Mega Airport
17:05 Abandoned Engineering
17:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
18:40 Deadliest Catch
19:25 Yukon Men
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Gold Rush



21:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
22:40 Rebel Gold
23:30 Alaska: The Last Frontier
Disney XD
06:00 Supa Strikas
06:25 Milo Murphy's Law
06:50 Right Now Kapow
07:15 Mech-X4
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Walk The Prank
08:10 Walk The Prank
08:35 Right Now Kapow
09:00 Right Now Kapow
09:25 Mighty Med
09:50 Mighty Med
10:20 Star Wars: The Freemaker
10:45 Star Wars: The Freemaker
11:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
11:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
12:00 Kid vs. Kat
12:25 Two More Eggs
12:30 Kid vs. Kat
12:55 Kirby Buckets
13:20 Kirby Buckets
13:45 Supa Strikas
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Supa Strikas
14:40 Right Now Kapow
15:05 Right Now Kapow
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law - Missing Milo
16:25 Lab Rats
16:50 Lab Rats
17:15 Mech-X4
17:40 Marvel's Spider-Man
18:05 Supa Strikas
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man
18:35 Walk The Prank
19:00 Gravity Falls
19:25 Milo Murphy's Law
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Mech-X4
20:20 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
20:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
21:10 Kid vs. Kat

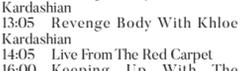


00:00 Cities Of The Underworld
01:00 How 2 Win
02:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
03:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
03:50 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
04:40 Ancient Top 10
05:30 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
06:20 Ancient Impossible
07:10 Cities Of The Underworld
08:00 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
09:00 Ancient Top 10
10:00 Modern Marvels
11:00 Ancient Discoveries
12:00 Ancient Top 10
13:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
14:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
15:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
16:00 Engineering Disasters
17:00 Modern Marvels
18:00 Cities Of The Underworld
19:00 Ancient Top 10
20:00 The Colour Of War
21:00 In Search Of Aliens
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 10 Things You Don't Know About...



00:20 Swamp People
01:10 Swamp People
02:00 American Restoration
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 Storage Wars
03:40 American Pickers
04:30 Swamp People
05:15 Swamp People
06:00 Mountain Men
06:50 Forged In Fire
07:40 American Restoration
08:30 The Warfighters
09:20 American Pickers
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Forged In Fire
11:50 American Restoration
12:30 The Warfighters
13:30 Swamp People
14:20 Swamp People

06:55 El News
07:25 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
08:20 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
09:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
10:10 El News
10:40 My Fabulous Me
11:10 My Fabulous Me
12:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
13:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
14:05 Live From The Red Carpet
16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:00 Live From The Red Carpet
19:00 Live From The Red Carpet
21:00 WAGs Atlanta
22:00 The Platinum Life
23:00 El News
23:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



00:15 A Taste Of South Africa
00:45 The Food Files
01:10 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
01:40 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
02:35 Fearless Chef
03:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
04:50 John Torode's Asia
05:20 My Restaurant In India
05:45 My Restaurant In India
06:15 A Taste Of South Africa
06:40 A Taste Of South Africa
07:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
08:05 Confucius Was A Foodie
09:00 Fearless Chef
09:55 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
10:20 John Torode's Asia
10:50 My Restaurant In India
11:15 My Restaurant In India
11:45 A Taste Of South Africa
12:10 A Taste Of South Africa
12:40 Places We Go
13:05 Places We Go
13:35 Restoration Man
14:30 Shimmer And Shine
15:25 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
15:50 John Torode's Asia
16:20 John Torode's Asia
16:45 My Restaurant In India
17:15 Places We Go
17:40 Places We Go
18:10 A Taste Of South Africa
18:35 A Taste Of South Africa
19:30 Places We Go
20:00 Restoration Man
21:00 Fearless Chef
22:00 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
22:25 John Torode's Asia
22:55 John Torode's Asia
23:20 My Restaurant In India
23:50 Places We Go



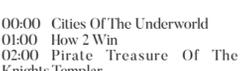
00:00 Iron Chef Gauntlet
01:00 Tia Mowry At Home
01:30 Tia Mowry At Home
02:00 The Big Eat - Middle East
02:30 The Big Eat - Middle East
03:00 Chopped
04:00 Iron Chef Gauntlet
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:25 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
06:50 Bake With Anna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



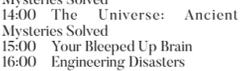
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01:00 Emmerdale
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Cash Trapped
03:25 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
04:25 Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
05:15 Surprise Surprise
06:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
07:05 Cash Trapped
08:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
08:30 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
09:00 Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans
10:00 Surprise Surprise
10:55 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
11:50 Cash Trapped
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
14:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
15:10 Cash Trapped
16:00 The Voice UK 2018
17:15 Royal Stories
17:50 Surprise Surprise
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
20:10 Cash Trapped
21:00 The Voice UK 2018
22:15 Royal Stories
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:20 Nordic Wild
01:10 Wild 24
02:00 Secrets Of The King Cobra
02:50 World's Deadliest
03:45 Ultimate Animal Countdown
04:40 The World's Most Wanted Leopard
05:35 Secrets Of The King Cobra
06:30 World's Deadliest
07:25 Ultimate Animal Countdown
08:20 The World's Most Wanted Leopard
09:15 World's Weirdest
10:10 The Monster Project
11:05 Animal ER
12:00 Shark Survivors: USA
12:55 Fatal Attraction
13:50 World's Deadliest
14:45 Animal Fight Club
15:40 Man Among Cheetahs
16:35 World's Weirdest
17:30 Safari Brothers
18:25 Man Among Cheetahs
19:20 Animal Fight Club
20:10 Man Among Cheetahs
21:00 World's Weirdest
21:50 Safari Brothers
22:40 Man Among Cheetahs
23:30 Shark Survivors: USA



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:24 Got Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig
09:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
09:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
09:48 Henry Danger
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
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13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Massive Monster Mayhem



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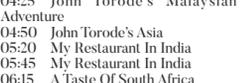


00:20 Swamp People
01:10 Swamp People
02:00 American Restoration
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 Storage Wars
03:40 American Pickers
04:30 Swamp People
05:15 Swamp People
06:00 Mountain Men
06:50 Forged In Fire
07:40 American Restoration
08:30 The Warfighters
09:20 American Pickers
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Forged In Fire
11:50 American Restoration
12:30 The Warfighters
13:30 Swamp People
14:20 Swamp People

15:10 Mountain Men
16:00 Forged In Fire
16:50 American Restoration
17:40 The Warfighters
18:30 Mountain Men
19:20 Forged In Fire
20:10 President Obama: In His Own Words
21:50 Barbarians Rising
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 Mountain Men



00:15 A Taste Of South Africa
00:45 The Food Files
01:10 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
01:40 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
02:35 Fearless Chef
03:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
04:50 John Torode's Asia
05:20 My Restaurant In India
05:45 My Restaurant In India
06:15 A Taste Of South Africa
06:40 A Taste Of South Africa
07:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
08:05 Confucius Was A Foodie
09:00 Fearless Chef
09:55 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
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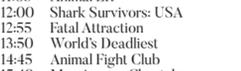
00:10 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
01:00 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
02:00 The 90s: The Decade That Connected Us
04:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
05:00 Don't Tell My Mother
06:00 Startalk
07:00 Ghost Town Gold
08:00 Bid & Destroy
08:30 Bid & Destroy
09:00 Don't Tell My Mother
10:00 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
11:00 Lawless Island Alaska
12:00 Nazi Megastructures
13:00 Sea Of Hope: America's Underwater Treasures
14:00 Bid & Destroy
14:30 Bid & Destroy
15:00 Ghost Town Gold
16:00 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
17:00 Lawless Island Alaska
18:00 Nazi Megastructures
19:00 Supercar Megabuild
20:00 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
20:50 Lawless Island Alaska
21:40 Nazi Megastructures
22:30 Supercar Megabuild
23:20 Bid & Destroy
23:45 Bid & Destroy



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23:30 Shark Survivors: USA

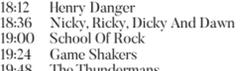


00:30 Lego DC Comics: Justice League Cosmic Clash
02:00 A Sunday Horse
03:50 The Sound Of Music Live!
06:10 Deck The Halls
07:45 A Sunday Horse
09:35 Capture The Flag
11:15 The Sound Of Music Live!
13:35 Chilly Christmas
15:05 The Angry Birds Movie
16:45 Monte Carlo
18:35 The Little Rascals
20:00 The Great Gilly Hopkins
21:40 Chilly Christmas
23:10 The Angry Birds Movie



00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
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02:36 Winx Club
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11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbids Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Massive Monster Mayhem

13:48 Hunter Street
14:12 I Am Frankie
14:36 The Thundermans
15:00 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky & Dawn
15:24 School Of Rock
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Massive Monster Mayhem
17:24 I Am Frankie
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky And Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 Ride
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



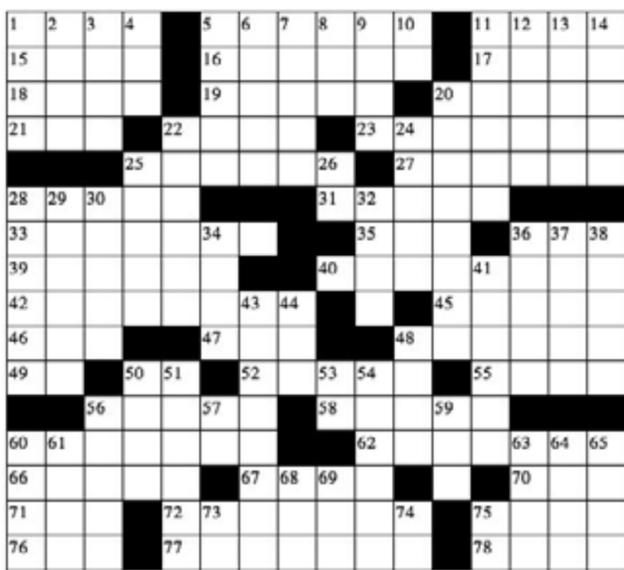
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22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:16 Shimmer And Shine
0

Stars

CROSSWORD 1815



ACROSS

1. A French abbot.
5. English natural scientist whose 'On the Origin of Species' formulated a theory of evolution by natural selection (1809-1882).
11. part of the peritoneum attached to the stomach and to the colon and covering the intestines.
15. A sudden short attack.
16. (Old Testament) The first of the major Hebrew prophets (8th century BC).
17. A river in central Italy rising in the Apennines and flowing through Florence and Pisa to the Ligurian Sea.
18. In bed.
19. An area in which something acts or operates or has power or control.
21. A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served over a counter.
23. (of non-living objects) The state of being free of pathogenic organisms.
27. A disease of cattle and sheep attributed to a dietary deficiency.
28. American Revolutionary patriot.
31. At or near or toward the stern of a ship or tail of an airplane.
33. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
35. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
39. A large Yoruba city in southwestern Nigeria.
40. Be unsuccessful.
42. Relating to or resembling a cone.
45. A step in walking or running.
46. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
47. The upper side of the thighs of a seated person.
49. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
52. (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
55. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
58. Having come or been brought to a conclusion.
60. Straggling shrub with narrow leaves and conspicuous red flowers in dense globular racemes.
62. The English physicist and chemist who discovered electromagnetic induction (1791-1867).
66. An edible seaweed with a mild flavor.
67. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
70. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
71. A long projecting or anterior elongation of an animal's head.
72. An exceptional interest in and admiration for yourself.
76. Any of several small ungulate mammals of Africa and Asia with rodent-like incisors and feet with hooflike toes.
77. A short aria.
78. (Scottish) A long dagger with a straight blade.

DOWN

1. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
2. A small cake leavened with yeast.
3. A coffin along with its stand.
4. A doctor's degree in education.
5. English theoretical physicist who

- applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
6. The fourth month of the Hindu calendar.
7. (the feminine of raja) A Hindu princess or the wife of a raja.
8. Hairpiece covering the head and made of human or synthetic hair.
9. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
10. A state in New England.
11. Floor covering consisting of a piece of thick heavy fabric (usually with nap or pile).
12. Come into existence.
13. Open the zipper of.
14. A fine-grained unstratified accumulation of clay and silt deposited by the wind.
20. A bet that you can pick the first and second finishers in the right order.
22. A unit of pressure equal to one newton per square meter.
24. A large number or amount.
25. Any organic compound containing the group -CONH2.
26. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
29. Remove the bones from (an animal).
30. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
32. The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
34. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
36. Of or relating to or involving an area.
37. An ancient city in northern Portugal.
38. Alcoholic drink from fermented cider ('cider' and 'cyder' are European (especially British) usage for the fermented beverage).
41. A large fleet.
43. A desert in southwestern Africa - largely Botswana.
44. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
48. An informal term for a father.
50. Adopted in order to deceive.
51. A chain of connected ideas or passages or objects so arranged that each member is closely related to the preceding and following members (especially a series of patristic comments elucidating Christian dogma).
53. A state in New England.
54. Invade in great numbers, as of pests.
56. Infestation of the pubic hair by crab lice.
57. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
59. A cgs unit of work or energy.
61. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
63. Surrealist Spanish painter (1904-1989).
64. Little known Kamarupan languages.
65. Noisy talk.
68. Water frozen in the solid state.
69. The shorter of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
73. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
74. Informal terms for a mother.
75. A bachelor's degree in religion.



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you may be tested on a most tender subject involving deeply personal attachments; harsh, hurtful words could be a product of this tension. Something from the past could come to light and change everyone's perspective. You could lean toward over-analyzing yourself and others in situations that are not important; be careful, this could create serious trouble between friends or family members. Your leadership abilities are requested on building a new system that will make things go faster and smoother. You will direct your efforts toward using methods that have worked before; someone may oppose you on this decision. The stars are aligned for the conception of new customs within your very close circle, aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, without even looking you will find chances to make money through investing. Prosperity lies in showing others the openings as well as including yourself in the actual investment. Learning more about taking care of yourself is imperative just now; a change of diet, exercise and perhaps even a new physician is highlighted now. During this new cycle, be progressive and take steps to rise to your career goals; you have waited long enough! You will find it effortless to create momentum regarding completion of a difficult project. There is a change you would like to make but your efforts will be blocked; patience will pay off. You will discover that someone has a need for your advice and support this evening, taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you might feel like playing hooky and enjoying friends today but duties will remain your priority. You could be left out of a fun outing because you choose to tend to business. You will constantly work to update and fine-tune your skills. The tendency to daydream is strong and you will struggle against it in order to get things accomplished that just won't wait. You may find that you are going against the grain, especially when people complain. Someone is watching you closely; they are looking for something to criticize you for. A short-lived complication may slow you down. Your individuality will shine; others would like to be in your shoes. A good conversation with those you love is possible. Home life is happy, gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, someone in your circle could appear to be hiding something from you; you may not care to spend even a moment getting to the bottom of it. You may get restless and want to create new connections and contacts on a social level; be careful you don't step on anyone's toes as you enter new environments. A critical natured person is watching and waiting for the right time to pounce; be prepared to stand your ground in the most zen way possible. You seem to be in a difficult position just now with something that seems petty and beneath you. Chin up, you know your own mind and intentions; that's all that counts now, not the opinions of others. Surround yourself tonight with those who love and encourage you and your journey, cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, this new cycle will clear the way for you to let your feelings be known. If you're single, you desperately want a meaningful relationship with someone you can trust and care for deeply. Married or attached leos may long for more affection or intimacy with their partners. Either way you can find ways to create what you want in an amorous situation by taking the first step to correct and fill the hole you're feeling. Take into account that social media is not the place to air your grievances. You could feel as though you are being pushed in a certain direction you don't want to go. Perhaps this is the time to think about what you want but actually do nothing. Smile as you have a few friends over for a themed dinner you all pitch in to make, leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, the energy of the heavens works to highlight your quirks and individual viewpoints. Someone will call and complement some positive results you got from using one of your experimental methods. You aren't finished with figuring out new approaches to old mundane circumstances. You wrote a note of sympathy to someone last year and you will hear from them today, perhaps there will be an invitation to lunch or dinner. You will push your endurance to trying levels, but you will complete a project on time; use better judgment next time when accepting this type of duty. You may receive the offer of a new job. As you grow and evolve never let go or forget where you came from and who helped you along the way, virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, you are all about your career and climbing the corporate ladder, so to speak. The new cycle you have entered brings opportunities for promotions or perhaps a pay raise. You will take advantage of a new aspect of your work to learn about taking your assignments to another level. You will sail through some sort of evaluation or review. On a personal level, you could be misled about a certain person you have shown interest in; find out more on your own and disregard gossip. You will have a one true friend that will stand by you faithfully throughout your life. You could feel drained at the end of the day and just want to go home and pull the covers over your head. Instead, leave yourself open to visitors who could bring food and drink and joy, libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, you are strengthened by your sense of loved ones, friends and community unity. Your comfort zone could be broadening and leading you to exciting new circles of friends and opportunities to learn. You will be able to convince people to give your new ideas a try. You are not ashamed of the things you want in life and you could make a point of letting people know. Pay attention to events that could mean more to you than you think at this time. You feel you are becoming more like the person you want to be; this will continue if you allow it. The universe sends energy of getting things done and run with it! You feel at the top of your game as far as feeling physically fit. You could receive a reward for your help with a fundraiser, scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, you may put your money where your mouth is when you do something you said you would. The window is open to come to swift, accurate conclusions with no second guessing. You could have to be harsh when making a point with someone who is difficult and willful; don't feel badly because sometimes people make you act this way. Your passion will be reflected in your words today. A problem will present itself you can't seem to figure out. You could feel stress relating to working out some type of scheduling situation that could impact other things; this could involve medical appointments or meetings. Stop a moment and let your mind and body relax to jump-start your mental capabilities and for your physical well-being, sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, this is not the time to try communicating with others. Thoughts seem frozen and out of reach when working with a group. You would prefer to do anything but work today, but responsibilities demand otherwise. You are close to finding a solution to a tricky situation no one seems able to correct. A new acquaintance will shine light on a friend you haven't heard about in quite some time. A sense of peace and well-being stays with you as you tackle problems on the home front help arrives later and a nice dinner is enjoyed later. You may want to make changes domestically but don't be in a rush just now; let some time pass before you make firm decisions. Pay no mind to those who say you work too much, capricorn, you know what you're doing.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Aquarius, you could experience dissatisfaction regarding your place in life just now. Something of a very private nature is troublesome and discouraging. There may be feelings of separation and loneliness you might overcome by reaching out to someone with the same interests or goals. Overcoming a particular difficulty will take some time but it will be worth the wait and worry. Decline making any decisions until you are on steadier ground; someone may push you to do something now but if you aren't sure, don't make a move. You may want to seek entertainment in places you shouldn't; something seemingly fun could turn into a nightmare that could be far reaching. Relax this evening and rethink some of your short or long-term plans, aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, you may come face to face with your insecurities and thinking; it could seem as though you are on the outside looking in. The realm of dreams and cosmic laws will continue to be a fascination you can't do without; let yourself relax when you research these subjects. Items you have looked for will become available to you perhaps via the internet. Watch your money; just because you have it doesn't mean you absolutely have to spend it. If you feel disgruntled with your home or belongings, remember this energy will be short lived. You may hold something against someone that you think let you down; release this and keep going. At home you may enjoy a late nap and early dinner with loved ones who could surprise you with a small gift, pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Las Vegas

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 24 letters spell something you might see in Las Vegas.

E	S	F	R	E	M	O	N	T	S	T	R	E	E	T	S	S	S	S	S
L	K	S	V	I	V	A	C	A	T	I	O	N	S	S	P	L	H	T	
P	N	N	T	S	N	A	I	C	I	G	A	M	R	R	O	E	O	E	
L	I	O	E	N	S	S	L	C	A	O	R	E	H	P	P	F			
A	R	I	U	P	Y	I	R	E	O	D	T	D	R	A	S	A	P	F	
S	D	T	R	I	E	U	A	N	G	A	I	E	A	T	W	H	I	U	
V	N	C	I	E	O	R	C	T	N	A	S	N	C	V	M	C	N	B	
E	I	A	S	T	N	E	F	O	N	T	I	A	I	N	E	G	G	S	
G	G	R	T	E	R	T	S	O	A	U	E	R	E	N	S	N	R	N	
A	H	T	S	T	I	R	E	U	R	T	O	O	R	O	G	I	D	A	
S	T	T	S	R	E	T	R	U	M	N	M	A	N	D	E	I			
S	L	A	Y	P	E	A	I	B	T	S	E	I	G	E	M	D	S	O	
T	I	P	M	N	G	I	R	I	A	S	R	V	N	E	E	E	E		
R	F	I	R	T	N	R	N	G	B	A	I	U	S	S	I	W	R	M	
I	E	S	O	T	U	N	I	C	E	O	N	D	H	R	T	O			
P	H	O	T	E	L	S	N	S	S	L	A	M	O	H	O	P	C		
T	S	N	O	I	T	N	E	V	N	O	C	E	O	E	O	G	W	S	
P	L	A	Y	S	S	L	A	C	I	S	U	M	C	R	N	F	I	S	
R	E	S	O	R	T	S	C	L	A	R	K	C	O	U	N	T	Y	L	

Attractions: BUFFETS, CASINOS, CELEBRITIES, CLARK COUNTY, COMEDIANS, CONCERTS, CONVENTIONS, DESERT, DINING, DRINKS
Entertainment: FOOD, FREMONT STREET, HOTELS, IMPERSONATORS, LAS VEGAS STRIP, LIGHTS, MAGICIANS, MARRIAGES, MUSICALS
Neon Signs: NEVADA, NIGHTLIFE, PERFORMERS, PLAYS, RESORTS, RESTAURANTS, SHOPPING, SHOPS, SHOWS
Singers: SINGERS, SOUVENIRS, SPRING MOUNTAINS, SUNNY, TOURISTS, TRIBUTE ACTS, VACATION, WARM, WEDDING CHAPELS

Yesterday's Solution

John Wayne Movies

B	A	B	A	C	E	Y	A	W	S	M	H	A	N	N	I	L	T	A	R
O	M	U	N	D	E	F	A	T	E	D	I	T	O	L	O	B	E	A	R
I	S	T	I	O	U	R	S	R	E	T	I	N	G	R	F	W	E	N	E
B	R	A	N	N	I	B	A	R	U	Z	I	T	R	A	G	E	K	E	R
G	O	R	E	U	N	A	R	U	O	T	R	A	L	L	A	E	C	T	O
C	E	R	E	R	R	I	T	L	L	E	R	O	R	D	M	S	A	P	A
M	R	W	H	O	P	P	L	L	E	R	O	R	D	O	T	T	H	A	N
C	H	I	P	P	L	L	E	R	O	R	D	O	T	T	H	A	N	A	N
D	E	L	H	A	V	E	N	E	G	A	L	E	G	A	S	I	A	A	N
E	I	A	R	S	O	N	E	G	A	L	E	G	A	S	I	A	A	N	
S	C	O	O	L	E	G	E	S	N	C	C	O	S						
R	E	T	O	R	O	G	I	D	A										
S	T	T	S	R	E	T	R	U	M	N	M	A	N	D	E	I			
S	L	A	Y	P	E	A	I	B	T	S	E	I	G	E	M	D	S	O	
T	I	P	M	N	G	I	R	I	A	S	R	V	N	E	E	E	E		
R	F	I	R	T	N	R	N	G	B	A	I	U	S	S	I	W	R	M	
I	E	S	O	T	U	N	I	C	E	O	N	D	H	R	T	O			
P	H	O	T	E	L	S	N	S	S	L	A	M	O	H	O	P	C		
T	S	N	O	I	T	N	E	V	N	O	C	E	O	E	O	G	W	S	
P	L	A	Y	S	S	L	A	C	I	S	U	M	C	R	N	F	I	S	
R	E	S	O	R	T	S	C	L	A	R	K	C	O	U	N	T	Y	L	

ALAMO, The ARIZONA, BABY FACE, BIG JAKE, BIG TRAIL, The BLOOD ALLEY, BLUE STEEL, BRANNIGAN, CHISUM, CIRCUS WORLD, COMANCHEROS, The CONFLICT, CONQUEROR, The
COWBOYS, The OKAYOTA, DAWN RIDER, The DECEIVER, The DESERT TRAIL, The EL SORADO, FLYING TIGERS, FORT APACHE, GREEN BERTS, The HATARI, HELL FIGHTERS, HONDO, IN HARMS WAY
JET PILOT, LONELY TRAIL, The MCINTOCK, NEW FRONTIER, NIGHT RIDERS, The PITTSBURGH, QUIET MAN, The RANGE FEUD, RED RIVER, RIO BRAVO, RIO GRANDE
RIO LOBO, SEA CHASE, The SEARCHERS, The SHOOTIST, The SPICELERS, The STAGECOACH, THE STAR Packer, The TRUE GRET, TYGON, UNDEFEATED, The WAR WAGON, The WESTWARD HO

The hidden message is: TOMORROW HOPES WE HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING FROM YESTERDAY

Daily SuDoku

		1		7		3	9	
9				2				
	2		4	3		5		
			8	2				
7		8				4		6
					4	6		
		5		1	4		7	
			5					4
	9	3		8		6		

Yesterday's Solution

9	3	4	8	2	6	1	5	7
2	7	5	9	4	1	3	6	8
1	6	8	5	3	7	9	4	2
3	4	6	2	1	9	7	8	5
7	9	2	6	5	8	4	3	1
8	5	1	3	7	4	6	2	9
6	1	7	4	8	5	2	9	3
4	8	3	1	9	2	5	7	6
5	2	9	7	6	3	8	1	4

Classifieds

Monday, January 22, 2018

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

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Cold and Hazy over some areas with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h .

BY DAY: Clouds will increase with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	SFC. CHART 21/01/2018 1200 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	18 °C	10 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	18 °C	06 °C		
ABDALY	18 °C	05 °C		
BUBYAN	00 °C	00 °C		
JAHRA	19 °C	07 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	18 °C	10 °C		
SALMIYAH	17 °C	11 °C		
AHMADI	17 °C	13 °C		
NUWAISSIB	18 °C	07 °C		
WAFRA	18 °C	06 °C		
SALMY	16 °C	04 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	01/22	Clouds will increase	20 °C	06 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 26 km/h
Tuesday	01/23	Partly cloudy causing rising dust with a chance for scattered light rain	22 °C	10 °C	SE	20 - 45 km/h
Wednesday	01/24	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	24 °C	12 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Thursday	01/25	Partly cloudy	23 °C	08 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 30 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:19
Sunrise	06:42
Zuhr	12:00
Asr	14:57
Sunset	17:17
Isha	18:37

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	19 °C
MIN. Temp.	10 °C
MAX. RH	49 %
MIN. RH	25 %
MAX. Wind	NW 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

New apartments in Salwa for rent
 2 bedroom 1 master room, maid room, saloon, 3 bathrooms
 AC central - 2 car parking
6 6 6 8 4 5 8

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

For Immediate Sale
 6 month old Kelvinator fridge, full automatic whirlpool washing machine, microwave oven, cup boards, fish aquarium 90cms x 60cms, oil heaters, new beds, dining tables, lots of dumbbells, discs, bench press bench, bars, etc and lots of items.
 Contact, Mr. Albert +965 98786488 - Place Hawally

Airline

American Airlines	22087425
Kuwait Airways	22087426
Jazeera Airways	171
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw) DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 22/1/2018															
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KAC	692	Muscat	14:15	JAI	574	Mumbai	23:15	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:01	KAC	618	Doha	14:15	MSC	405	Sohag	23:30	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:10
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	KAC	206	Islamabad	14:20	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45	QTR	1075	Doha	12:30
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	MSC	411	Asyut	23:55	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	QTR	1078	Doha	14:20	Departure Flights on Monday 22/1/2018							
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	KAC	672	Dubai	14:25	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	IAW	158B	Alexandria	13:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:35	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05	RBG	554	Dubai	13:00
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	352	Kochi	14:35	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	JZR	176	Dubai	13:40
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	412	Bangkok	14:35	FDB	072	Bahrain	00:35	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	PIA	206	Lahore	01:00	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	364	Colombo	14:40	MSC	502	Alexandria	01:00	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05	KAC	673	Dubai	15:05
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:50	BBC	044	Dhaka	01:30	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	14:55	JZR	502	Luxor	01:30	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	IAW	157C	Al Najaf	14:55	JZR	142	Doha	01:45	KAC	785	Jeddah	15:25
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:45
WAN	548	KTM	02:40	JZR	787	Riyadh	15:30	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00	KAC	283	Dhaka	15:50
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	502	Beirut	15:30	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	562	Amman	15:30	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30	IAW	158C	Al Najaf	15:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	QTR	1072	Doha	15:55	KAC	351	Kochi	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
QTR	1090	Doha	04:05	JZR	535	Cairo	16:00	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	ABY	127	Sharjah	16:00	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:40
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	KAC	118	New York	16:00	KKK	1269	Jeddah	03:55	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	JZR	779	Jeddah	16:25	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	SAW	706	Damascus	16:55
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	FDB	051	Dubai	16:40	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00	QTR	1073	Doha	17:15
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	RJA	640	Amman	16:55	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	KAC	542	Cairo	17:05	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	WAN	954	Baku	17:15	QTR	1091	Doha	05:05	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	KAC	205	Islamabad	05:20	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30	KAC	357	Kochi	17:45
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:40	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	THY	775	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	FDB	063	Dubai	18:10	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	177	Dubai	18:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	JZR	538	Cairo	18:15
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	QTR	1080	Cairo	18:30	QTR	1091	Doha	04:15	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	MSR	620	Doha	18:50	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50	JZR	184	Dubai	18:30
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	JZR	1080	Doha	18:50	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:40
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	744	Dammam	19:10	RJA	643	Amman	07:05	KAC	381	Delhi	18:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	07:15	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:20	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15	FDB	064	Dubai	19:10
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:20	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:30	KAC	167	Paris	07:35	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00	QTR	1081	Doha	20:00
IAW	157A	Al Najaf	08:00	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45	KAC	161	Geneva	08:20	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:55	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KNE	381	Taif	20:00	BAW	156	London	08:50	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	620	Doha	20:15	KAC	691	Muscat	08:50	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20	IAW	158A	Al Najaf	09:00	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	QTR	1088	Doha	20:45	KAC	117	New York	09:00	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:45	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
WAN	342	Sohag	1												



Models present creations by Dior during the men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2018/2019 collection in Paris. — AFP photos

DIOR TRAVELS BACK IN TIME FOR COUTURE-INFUSED MENSWEAR



Designer Kris Van Assche travelled back in a fashion time machine Saturday while Robert Pattinson explained the importance of clothes for acting roles as he attended Dior Homme's Paris menswear collection. Here are some highlights of the fourth day of fall-winter shows:

Dior's tattooed couture

It was an ambitious fusion of two periods for Dior Homme: A sartorial homage to the past that twinned what the house called the "reckless abandon" of youth with the couture of Monsieur Dior's New Look. Designer Van Assche used references to 1990s tattoo culture in prints and gothic silver jewelry alongside suit variations on the Bar Jacket from the famed 1947 collection that transformed Western fashion. The two-periods theme in the 49 suit-heavy looks was also evident in the age range of the models, who were either very young, or over 40.

The first styles, accessorized with silk neck scarves, featured some beautifully refined single- and double-breasted suits with narrow waists that curved out in a slight peplum-shape. Suits are the bread-and-butter of the house. "I thought it was a good moment for Dior to go back to its DNA, like really the sharply cut suit," the 41-year-old Van Assche told The Associated Press. A flash of bright red across a striped T-shirt, meanwhile, turned the dial to the '90s with the appearance of a spiked tattoo motif on the shirt undergarment. Continuing that vibe were the baggy jeans, woolly tank tops and sneakers, which were worn by models with messy hair. "It's looking back with a lot of love and sweet memories to when I myself was a teenager," Van Assche said. It was an intentionally split aesthetic - and featured some very strong individual pieces. Yet, the result was sometimes incongruous as a whole.

Pattinson says clothes help acting role

"Twilight" star Robert Pattinson demonstrated why he'd been chosen as a Dior brand ambassador by extolling the influence of fashion and clothing on the ability of an actor to engage in a role. "Shoes. I always find that when you play a character, if you find the right pair of shoes there's a trigger that happens inside you," said the 31-year-old who was dressed head to toe in Dior Homme. "Or to have your pants up here, you feel like an entirely different person." He added that "you can change your body language and your entire silhouette. It's all done through the clothing."



Front row at Dior

Model Bella Hadid joined Chanel designer Karl Lagerfeld, sporting a chic new beard, alongside "Pearl Harbor" actor Josh Harnett on the Dior Homme front row. A rare face on the Paris fashion scene, Harnett, 39, said he was invited by Dior since he was in town promoting his new movie "Oh Lucy!" It's a French-Japanese co-production that was screened in the International Critics' Week section of last year's Cannes Film Festival. "It's a comedy and lot of it is a road trip with me and two older Japanese ladies not speaking the same language and having parallel crises," he said. "I think it's really funny."



Models present creations for Thom Browne during the men's Fall/Winter 2018/2019 fashion show in Paris.



The 64 looks - in mainly green, black and gold - were a glimmering treasure trove of ideas.

Silver sparkle on a women's singlet looked like chainmail, seen again in a men's statement coat which screamed 1980. Tribal patterns - horizontal and vertical stripes, and a "V" shape running down the torso - gave the designs a wild edge. And 1980s peaked shoulders, slashed sections, black PVC pants and architectural, sculptured jackets gave the silhouette lots of sexy attitude. Subtle is simply not a word in Rousteing's vocabulary.

Sacai revamps the Poncho

One of Japan's most popular luxury brands, Sacai gave traditional Latin American styles an urban reworking for its Saturday morning show. With its signature use layering, thick embroidered sweaters sported voluminous fringing that evoked ponchos that originated in the Andes region. Their hue of intense pastel red gave the statement garments a contemporary lift.

Then styles from the gaucho horse riders that were popular in 19th-century Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay were included. Thigh-length soft leather riding boots were combined with highly embroidered patterns and fringing and myriad layers of material across the torso that created divergent lines in the silhouettes. It was fun, and fall-winter saw a more coherent side to the designs than has been seen in recent seasons. — AP



Walking in a Thom Browne wonderland

There was the real crunching sound of fake snow at Thom Browne's theatrical menswear display that wowed guests with its snowy white forest scene and tall silver birches lining the runway. Equally impressive were the winter styles in the clothes. With many designs channeling the sartorial vibe from which the New York City-based designer cut his cloth, Browne prepared his models to brave the harshest elements of the coldest months and in the process produced one of the best shows of the season. Gray-blue knit ted caps, oversize knit scarves, red snow gloves and robust black hiking boots with thick lacing accessorized wrapped-up looks. They included block-like fur trims on cuffs and hems in the coat-heavy 32-look collection with classic tailoring in knit fabric.

Textured wool and checks motifs - that merged a winter scarf with a suit-style pattern - adored long A-line coats amid some of the thickest outerwear to be seen this fall-winter. A touch of humor, in braided hair extensions with colored ribbons and sheeny ankle warmers that evoked a tied trash bag, was a crowd pleaser.

Balmain homme's eclectic sparkle

Eclectic was the word for Olivier Rousteing's high-energy show for Balmain Homme. Mixing menswear and the womenswear pre-collection designs, the 32-year-old designer referenced almost all of the thematic touchstones used in previous shows within the same collection.



Models present creations for Balmain, during men's Fall/Winter 2018/2019 fashion show in Paris.



Models present creations for Sacai, during the men's Fall/Winter 2018/2019 fashion show in Paris.

Lifestyle | Music & Movies

Jane Fonda: From 'vacuous' bombshell to leading activist

Oscar-winner, peacenik, fitness guru, fashion model, cancer patient, feminist and political activist—Jane Fonda has spent her life confounding labels and surprising people. Since she burst into the American consciousness in the 1960s, she has lived a life of controversy, tragedy, and self-discovery—all in the public eye. The 80-year-old actress bares her soul in “Jane Fonda in Five Acts,” a startlingly candid documentary that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival on Saturday.

“It’s about the importance of being brave and taking leaps of faith,” she said on the red carpet ahead of the screening in Utah’s Park City ski resort. “And it’s very hopeful because it shows how somebody that was kind of vacuous can become someone who has a more purposeful and meaningful life.” The film mixes talking-head commentary from friends and ex-husbands, archive clips and Fonda’s own first-person account of her life, culled from 21 hours of interviews.

Set to air later this year on HBO, the film’s first four acts bear the names of the key men in Fonda’s life, from her film star father Henry through her husbands: Roger Vadim, Tom Hayden and Ted Turner. It’s in the fifth act—“Jane”—that the real Fonda emerges, and we see the one-time ingenue as a fully-rounded public figure who has become one of America’s leading political activists. The actress arrived on the Sundance red carpet fresh from marching crowds as part of a nationwide Women’s March opposing President Donald Trump.

“I’m older and wiser, clearer and more focused. I’m



Activist and actress Jane Fonda speaks at Rally Park City to celebrate community victories, honoring the one-year anniversary of the Women’s March and Park City’s March on Main in Park City, Utah. — AFP

more able, I think, to know what has to be done at a certain time,” she told AFP, asked how her politics have changed over the years. “That’s why today at the march I spoke about the importance of going beyond protest to organizing on the ground.”

Democracy ‘being stolen’

Fonda talked about taking back American democracy which she said was “being stolen from us” as the planet

was “being destroyed.” The documentary explores the pain of her mother’s suicide, 30 years of bulimia and three marriages to high-profile, sometimes difficult men. “The hardest (part) is always to talk about the things that are more difficult in your life—painful, emotional, difficult,” she said. “But it’s not going to be a useful documentary that people can learn from unless I talk about the good as well as the bad.” Born in New York in 1937, Fonda rose to global prominence in the 1960s starring in films such as “Barefoot in the Park” opposite Sundance founder Robert Redford.

Her big breakthrough came in Sydney Pollack’s “They Shoot Horses, Don’t They?” and she won her first of two Academy Awards for Alan J. Pakula’s “Kluge.” She is still perhaps best known, however, for her earlier work in her first husband’s 1968 erotic sci-fi romp “Barbarella.” Fonda’s political awakening came on the streets of Paris—her home for a short while—where she saw mass protests against the government of President Charles de Gaulle in 1968.

The documentary looks at her role as a leading figure in the anti-Vietnam war movement, including her 1972 trip to Hanoi when she outraged Americans by being photographed sitting on an anti-aircraft gun. Beyond her peace campaigning, “Hanoi Jane” has long been a campaigner for women’s rights and recently stood up for native Americans protesting the controversial Dakota Access Pipeline.

Life lessons

She hailed female directors such as Greta Gerwig, Patty Jenkins, and Dee Rees, all of whom have made acclaimed movies over the last year, voicing hope that Hollywood was in a moment that would “amplify from here forward.” “Women see things differently, we experience things differently, and if you don’t hear our tales, our narrative, then you are missing half the narrative and men are losers as well as women,” she said. Sporting a bandaged face, she also opened up about her battle with skin cancer, days after revealing she’d had a growth removed from her lower lip.

“You live long enough or you’re a sun worshipper, you get cancer. So I’m dealing with it,” said the actress, who underwent a lumpectomy for breast cancer in 2010. Fonda, whose Netflix series “Grace and Frankie” is about to begin its fourth season, was accompanied on the red carpet by Troy Garity, her son with Hayden and one of the film’s interviewees. “She’s not insane but she moves through life at a furious pace and because of that has experienced a lot and learned a lot,” he told AFP. “And I think the film has good lessons that we can all live by.” Asked if watching the premiere was going to be a difficult experience, he added: “I think I’ll enjoy it more than ‘Barbarella.’”—AFP



Dua Lipa forced to push back US gigs after ‘scheduling’ nightmare

Dua Lipa has been forced to reschedule several US tour dates due to “scheduling conflicts”. The “IDGAF” hitmaker was due to perform concerts in Dallas, Houston, and Seattle in February, but has been forced to push the shows back to June and July after the mishap. However, she has reassured her 1.42 followers who purchased tickets that they will be able to attend the new dates, which will be announced soon, or get a full refund if they are unable to make it down. The brunette beauty is also going to be performing Orlando, Florida after previously having to cancel a radio performance. In a series of tweets she confirmed: “My loves, due to scheduling conflicts, I’ll be rescheduling my shows in Dallas, Houston, and Seattle.

All dates will be moved to June and July of this year, and tickets will be honored at the re-scheduled shows ... If you’re not able to attend the new dates, full refunds will be offered at point of purchase. Please stay tuned for further details on exact dates and venues. Sorry for any inconvenience and I’ll see you soon xx ... We are and they are in June and July. And Orlando will also be in the mix although that was a radio show that got cancelled and I was only gonna play 5 songs and was really ill that day but ill be back with a full set and m&sgs will transfer ofc if purchased with original date x (sic)

The ‘New Rules’ singer recently revealed it is her dream to bag a Grammy and play New York’s Madison Square Garden in the future. The 22-year-old pop star has already performed around the globe in support of her chart-topping self-titled LP, but has set her sights on world domination, as she admits she dreams of wowing arenas and winning a prize at the prestigious US awards ceremony. Speaking about her “high” ambitions”, she said: “I would love to win a Grammy. I would love to do a massive world arena tour one day, be able to see that my career has grown to that extent, to have the opportunity to go and perform at Madison Square Garden in New York. My ambitions are always high and after you’ve conquered one then you’re always hoping to go on to the next big thing.”

J Hus plans to break America and educate them on grime

J Hus wants to show US rappers “how it’s done”. The ‘Common Sense’ hitmaker is planning a trip stateside to try and break the country, and he has hinted he has some top secret collaborations in the works with some artists across the Atlantic. Asked if he’s going to show the American stars “a thing or two” about grime music, he laughed: “Yeah, definitely. We are definitely going to do a thing or two. I plan to this year.” And on whether he’s been approached for any collaborations over the pond yet, he teased: “We’ve got a couple of things. I don’t want to say yet, I won’t keep it a surprise.” Meanwhile, the ‘Did You See’ hitmaker revealed he is a massive fan of fast food chain KFC [Kentucky Fried Chicken] and has invited them to provide him with free treats when he’s on tour. He told BANG Showbiz: “I love a KFC tea.” Asked if he gets it free now, he



laughed: “Not yet, I still pay. So KFC shout at me, it’s cheap though.” The 21-year-old star - whose real name is Momodou Jallow - is up for British Album of the Year [‘Common Sense’], British Breakthrough and British Single of the Year for ‘Did You See’ at this year’s BRIT Awards - which takes place at London’s The O2 arena on February 21 - but doubts he’ll be victorious on the night, because he’s “not that big yet”. J Hus - who is up against Dua Lipa’s self-titled debut solo LP, Ed Sheeran ‘Divide’, Rag n’ Bone Man, ‘Humour’ and Stormzy’s ‘Gang Signs & Prayer’ - said previously: “I am the underdog, it’s my first time. I don’t think I am going to win, I am not that big yet.”



Hyon Song-Wol (center), leader of North Korea’s popular Moranbong band, arrives at the Gangneung Arts Center where one of the planned musical concerts is due to be held, in the eastern city of Gangneung yesterday. — AFP photos

South Korea in a swoon as megastar from the North visits

South Korea went into swoon mode yesterday—at the feet of a party apparatchik from the North. Hyon Song-Wol is, however, no dourly-dressed, suit-wearing bureaucrat from the nuclear-armed nation, but the leader of Pyongyang’s most popular girl band. Cameras followed her every move as the glamorous songstress swept through Seoul at the head of a North Korean delegation sent to inspect performance venues for the Pyeongchang Olympic Games. Wearing a fur muffler and exuding an air of confident calm, Hyon was unphased by the throng of cameras that followed her everywhere. Believed to be in her late 30s or early 40s, Hyon is as close to a megastar as North Korea probably has.

Her “Excellent Horse-like Lady”—a term describing a smart and energetic woman—with a big hit in the 2000s. She is also a politically powerful figure as an alternate member of North Korea’s ruling Workers’ Party’s central committee. Hyon was once rumored to be a former girlfriend of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un and became the subject of lurid and—as it turned out—incorrect 2013 reports in the South that she and a dozen other musicians had been executed for appearing in porn movies.

North Korea watchers dismiss speculation over her ties with Kim, saying in the deeply patriarchal North, romantic partners of leaders past and present are forced to keep a low profile. Hyon heads the 10-member Moranbong Band—the public face of North Korean soft power. The all-female outfit perform a mixture of Western-style pop and patriotic North Korean numbers, and are frequently seen

sporting miniskirts and shoulder-baring dresses. Their style—highly unusual in the conservative North—is seen as quaintly provincial in the South, with its slick, image-obsessed pop scene, and it has also earned them a cult following among North Korean watchers.

The band is not expected to make the trip south for the Games next month, but other musical groups—as well as hundreds of “cheerleaders” will be there. Hyon’s presence in the run-up to the international event—which until recently was marked by global tensions over North Korea’s missile and nuclear program—is seen by some as the latest attempt to capitalize on the appeal of its performers. South Korea’s voracious media followed her every move yesterday, with tiny details about her facial expressions and fashion style making headlines. Hyon’s attire—from her shoes to an expensive-looking fur—drew intense debate, with one fashion analyst likening her style to the US first lady.

“I think she was trying to emulate the style of Melania Trump... and trying to showcase the image of being rich by wearing the fur,” Heo Euna, head of Korea Image Strategy Institute, told Yonhap news agency. Pyongyang has often deployed young women to soften its international image, from hundreds of “cheerleaders” sent to previous sporting events in the South, to waitresses at the North’s network of overseas restaurants, who put on a nightly musical and dance show for clients. —AFP

Def Leppard: We weren’t going to be victims of music industry

Def Leppard waited to put their entire back catalogue on streaming services because they “weren’t going to be victims of the industry”. The ‘Pour Some Sugar On Me’ rockers, fronted by Joe Elliott, recently put their music on Spotify and Apple Music for the first time but admitted that part of the reason they waited was because they were holding out for a “fair deal”.

Joe told Rolling Stone magazine: “We needed the right deal for the band. We weren’t going to

be victims of the industry. We signed our deal with Mercury many, many decades ago when there was no digital part of the record deal. So when [our contract ended] in 2009, we were free to do whatever we wanted to do. We were so busy touring and not worrying about the back catalogue - because people were still buying CDs - that we weren’t sure about [embracing] streaming. “We came to the conclusion that it’s not going to do us any harm, but the deal had to be right. These things just don’t happen overnight.”

And he revealed that trying to place all of their music on the same service was another hold-up. Joe said: “We didn’t want certain albums on one service and others through another one. So negotiating everything with different places just takes time. It’s not like a make-or-break thing, whether we do it or not. So we didn’t and just went off on our own. “We were able to come to the decision that it was the right thing to do and have it all come out at once. So now you’ve got everything from the very first EP we did back in 1979 - which is what got us our record deal in the first place - all the way up to the last album that came out in 2015.”— Bang Showbiz



Justin Timberlake: ‘Vegas residency is just a retirement plan’

Justin Timberlake says a Las Vegas residency is a “retirement plan”. The 36-year-old singer - who is preparing for the release of his comeback album ‘Man of the Woods’ - insisted that he is not planning to follow in the footsteps of artists including his ex-girlfriend Britney Spears, Backstreet Boys, Jennifer Lopez or Celine Dion by signing up for a Vegas residency. During an interview with Zane Lowe on Beats 1 Radio, he said: “I mean I wouldn’t rule it out if it was something that was different. I definitely don’t, you know, it feels like.” When Lowe said: “...A retirement option?” Justin agreed.

He said: “You’re planning your retirement. You know what I mean? So for some reason that feels like scary to me.” Meanwhile, Justin has teamed up

with Timbaland for his new album and he revealed the idea behind the record came from years of conversation with super producer Pharrell Williams. Opening up about the LP’s Southern Americana sound, he explained: “There’s this sonic real estate that’s so available. [Pharrell] kept pushing me and pushing me to say, ‘No but you’re the guy who has to do it because you’re from there’. “You can put a positive thing out there about the South and we can do it with sound. He kept telling me, ‘I can hear it.’”— Bang Showbiz



Justin Timberlake

Lifestyle | Features

FASHION SUPERSTAR SLIMANE TO TAKE OVER AT CELINE

Hedi Slimane, the designer who pioneered the skinny look at Dior and Saint Laurent, is to take over at Celine, the brand's owners said yesterday. The 49-year-old French-born creator is one of fashion's biggest and most enigmatic names, and his future has been surrounded by speculation since he walked away from Saint Laurent last year. The luxury giant LVMH, which owns Celine, has given Slimane complete control of the brand's images and creative side in order to sign him up—a concession which put him alongside Chanel's Karl Lagerfeld as one of the most powerful designers in fashion.

He has also been given his head to create a menswear line at the label, which up until now only made clothes for women. Announcing the surprise appointment, Bernard Arnault, the owner of LVMH, said: "He is one of the most talented designers of our time. Hedi will oversee and develop all creativity for both women's and men's fashion, but also for leather goods,

accessories and fragrances," he added. "He will leverage his global vision and unique aesthetic virtuosity in further building an iconic French fashion house," he added. Lagerfeld, who famously shed 41 kilos (90 pounds) in order to squeeze into his Slimane's skinny jeans, was the first to cheer the news. "I am enchanted, what a great choice," he told Women's Wear Daily. "It will be great."

Renowned photographer

Like Lagerfeld, Slimane is a renowned photographer, and he has spent the last few years living in Los Angeles, where he had moved his studio at the end of his reign at Saint Laurent. The designer drew much of his inspiration from the LA rock, which he tirelessly documented with his photographs. AFP understands that he will that will continue to live in the city while he designs for Celine. "I am delighted to

join Bernard Arnault in this all-embracing and fascinating mission for Celine," Slimane said. "I greatly look forward to returning to the exciting world of fashion and the dynamism of the ateliers."

Slimane will be reunited with Sidney Toledano, one of fashion's most influential backroom figures, at Celine. The pair were a formidable team at Dior where Slimane was a huge trendsetter until his departure in 2012, designing for the late rock star David Bowie, with his skinny silhouette dominating men's style for nearly a decade. — AFP



This file photo shows French-born designer Hedi Slimane acknowledging the public at the end of the Saint Laurent Spring/Summer 2013 ready-to-wear collection show in Paris. — AFP



CEO and Cofounder of StockX Josh Lubner



Shoes are displayed at the offices of Stock X.



Michelle Winkfield authenticates a Gucci bag at Stock X.— AFP photos



A pair of Air Jordan 1 Retro shoes are seen before being packed to ship out of Stock X.



A pair of Air Jordan 1 Retro High shoes that have been authenticated are on display at the offices of Stock X.



A tag is placed on a pair of Nike Air Max Anniversary shoes at Stock X.

Motor City not just for cars: Detroit boasts world's 1st sneaker exchange

Detroit remains synonymous with cars, but "Motor City" is also home to a virtual marketplace for a much smaller consumer item: sneakers. Located on the 10th floor of an ultra-modern building in downtown Detroit and backed by investors that include the rapper Eminem and actor Mark Wahlberg, StockX is an exchange to buy and sell athletic shoes, including limited-editions or collector's items. As with other trading floors, prices on the world's first sneaker exchange fluctuate based on consumer perceptions, and can sell for hundreds or thousands of dollars.

Instead of poring over the utterances of central bankers, participants on StockX—which has expanded into handbags, watches and streetwear-monitor Instagram to see what Hermes bag Kim Kardashian is carrying or what is on Kanye West's feet. The market's main floor has a display of Air Jordans and shoes by Nike, Adidas and other brands in a variety of colors. All have been verified by the exchange for authenticity. A few feet away, a team of young women inspect handbags by Chanel, Louis Vuitton and Hermes.

"StockX is a stock market of things," said founder and chief executive Josh Lubner. "We just connect buyers and sellers but the method by how we connect buyers and sellers is exactly the same way that the world's stock markets connect buyers and sellers." Not unlike Nasdaq, the electronic exchange located at Times Square in Manhattan, StockX has a scrolling display that updates prices with each new transaction. On a recent wintry morning in early January, an order of the Air Jordan 10 Retro Drake OvoWhite went for \$400.

Eminem also has conducted business on the exchange, selling a re-release of the limited-edition Air Jordan 4 Encore. The offering was part of a fundraising drive for

Detroit communities that raised more than \$200,000. Although most participants are in the US, the virtual exchange, which opened two years ago, also has a solid clientele in China. StockX tracks different "sectorals," such as the "Jordan Index," the "Nike Index" or the "Adidas Index," which aggregate prices for various items. Just off the main room, a group of "analysts," glued to their screens, collect and number-crunch the latest transactions and manage the catalogue.

Recognizing knockoffs

Someone who wants to sell a pair of Air Jordans, for example, would need to open a StockX account, and then "literally all you have to do is click one button, 'sell' and just accept that highest offer," said Lubner, a former consultant for IBM. Once a bid is accepted, the seller must send the item to the exchange headquarters in Detroit or to the company's other authenticators in Phoenix, Arizona, who verify that the product is not a copy. "Every time I get a pair of shoes I smell them because that glue is so so particular," said sneaker authenticator Aaron Fields.

"You know like Jordans and Nikes and Adidas all have different smells and you just have to know them," he said. "Fake shoes smell a little bit different." The tell-tale signs of a knockoff vary by item. "This one has a lot of uneven stitching double stitching, wrong type of thread," said Michelle Winkfield, a handbag authenticator, examining a Louis Vuitton fake. "The hardware feels really cheap and the logo stamped on it is incorrect."

StockX penalizes sellers of fake goods, charging them 15 percent of the transaction price, and possibly banning them from the exchange. But fewer than two percent of the transactions have been canceled for this reason,

Lubner said. The exchange on trades in new sneakers, while watches and handbags must be in "excellent" condition. The exchange charges a 9.5 percent commission on each sneaker transaction, which comprised about three-quarters of revenues last year. It charges 11.9 percent for watches and 14.5 percent for handbags.

Started with just a workforce of five including the founder, the growing exchange now has 115 employees. The future may mean expansion into new items, like Star Wars paraphernalia, musical instruments, rare wine, collectible cars and artwork. There are no immediate plans to raise funds from additional investors, beyond the current group that includes Quicken Loans founder Dan Gilbert, who also owns the Cleveland Cavaliers basketball team. —AFP



The authenticating room for sneakers is viewed at Stock X.

Kourtney Kardashian to launch make-up line

Kourtney Kardashian is set to launch a make-up line. The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star's sisters Kim Kardashian West and Kylie Jenner already have their own cosmetics brands, but it looks like there may be some competition between the family members as the 38-year-old beauty is planning to drop her own range under the name 'Kourt' to rival her siblings. According to TMZ, the brunette babe - who has three children: Mason, eight, Penelope, five, and Reign, three, with her ex-partner Scott Disick - filed legal documents to own the business name 'Kourt' but, in order to keep things under wraps for the time being, she filed the application under her company '2Die4Kourt'.

And, although it's not known for sure whether Kourtney will bring out her own cosmetics range, she has been uploading more beauty-related content on her app, including her favorite natural products

and her every day make-up routine. But the reality TV star should have no trouble getting her brand off the ground as her younger half-sister Kylie, 20 - the daughter of Kris Jenner and Caitlyn Jenner - launched her KKW beauty range in 2015 and just two months ago reportedly earned \$420 million in retail sales in 18 months.

The range - called Kylie Cosmetics - keeps expanding year on year but is known for liquid lipsticks, lip liners, eye-shadow palettes, concealers and foundation. Kim, 37, on the other hand, launched her KKW beauty range in 2016 and just two months ago dropped a line of shimmering highlighters and lip glosses. Her perfume collection KKW Fragrance - called Crystal Gardenia, Crystal Gardenia Citrus and Crystal Gardenia Oud - sold out in just six days. — Bang Showbiz



Kourtney Kardashian

Alexander Wang leaves New York Fashion Week

Alexander Wang is set to break away from the conventional fashion week calendar. The 34-year-old designer has announced that after the Fall 2018 showcase this February, he will no longer be showing his designs at New York Fashion Week, in favor of holding presentations in June and December instead. The changes are expected to "better serve" the designer's customers, as the new dates align more closely with the pre-collection schedule. In a press release, Alexander Wang CEO Lisa Gersh said: "Our consumer will be better served through the new system. The innovative approach reframes product on the month that it ships, rather than the outdated labels of 'Resort' or 'Pre-Fall,' giving our customers more relevant and consistent merchandise throughout the year."

Alexander will make the changes this year, meaning that

whilst his designs will still be presented in February, he will not be showing off his Spring/Summer 2019 collection during September's fashion week. According to Vogue, the change in schedule has already been accepted by the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA), which is exploring the idea establishing a more concrete fashion show around both June and December, as well as keeping the existing February and September shows. CFDA President Steven Kolb told WWD.com: "I could see it happening this summer. I could see a collective of maybe five or so brands that have the right adjacency and might align to it ... Alex is one of many designers the CFDA has spoken to about the idea, and we support him in this business decision. There are others who are part of this idea." — Bang Showbiz



Alexander Wang

Lifestyle

MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2018



A child plays with giant ice cream statues during the 39th International trade Show of Artisan Gelato (ice cream), Pastry, Bakery and Coffe World (SIGEP) in Rimini, on January 20, 2018. — AFP

The juice startup putting Mali in a bottle

Scarlet hibiscus petals infuse their flavor in a giant pot of liquid, where green leaves picked from the west African kinkeliba shrub also swirl. With a pinch of ginger and some baobab fruit, the concoction is ready to be tasted. Aissata Diakite's juices are part of an all-natural health startup which the 28-year-old Malian launched in December, blending traditional flavours with an engineer's eye for detail. The idea of launching a range of entirely natural fruit juices using locally sourced products from the

meeting prospective buyers at the "Invest in Mali" forum. The business takes its name from the zaban-or saba senegalensis, a shrub-like tree native to the Sahel region which grows predominantly on riverbanks and in woodlands, whose fruit and leaves are highly prized.

Investing in her homeland

The forum was not for the fainthearted: Mali is struggling with a jihadist insurgency across large swathes of its rugged terrain-including Diakite's home region-which are currently being patrolled by several international military forces. "Coming to Mali today is an act of faith," admitted President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in a speech at the forum's opening. Nonetheless, investors pledged some 34 billion CFA francs (\$63 million, 52 million euros) to an array of businesses, from solar energy to cement and packaging.

"Producing what we consume, that's how we create jobs and wealth," Industrial Development Minister Mohamed Aly Ag Ibrahim said a week later at the formal launch of Zabbaan. And he hailed Diakite as "an inspirational young woman" who had "returned from abroad to invest in her country and succeeded in that challenge".

Echoes of an empire

There are 10 juices in the range, each bearing names like "the king", a punchy mango and baobab mix, "the duke"-zaban and baobab, or "the warrior" which blends hibiscus with mint and baobab, with names evoking the pomp of the Mali Empire, which ruled large sections of west Africa for 400 years. It was her grandmother who told her stories about Mali at the height of its power when it was a world-renowned center of learning, she told AFP.

Her recipes are based on leaves, flowers and fruits from the African savannah, "most of them growing wild" with fresh, local products one of the trademarks of the range. "We work with a network of farmers who supply us, who often work on lands passed down through the family," she



Aissata Diakite (left), agribusines engineer and founder of Zabbaan Holding tastes juice made in Mali and all-natural with her employees, in Bamako. — AFP photos

says. "And these products are also used in traditional African medicine." In order to break into new markets and start exporting overseas, the company is also in the process of obtaining organic certification.

Essence of Mali

Bamako's small but growing middle class is taking note. Zabbaan now produces around 1,000 bottles a day at its production facility in the capital which are mostly sold at supermarkets in Bamako for 500 CFA francs (\$0.90) a go. The juice, which is pasteurized, comes in brightly-coloured 300 ml (10 fluid ounce) bottles, which are made of recyclable plastic. But even this foothold in a nascent market was hard won. "It's not easy to grow a network of suppliers like that," Diakite said. "It took me about three years."

On the factory floor, where the latest batch is ready, the production team is in full swing. Before it can be bottled, the product-"the prince" in this case-must be tasted. And it's a job for the whole team. "Some people think that this one lacks ginger, so we are changing that and adding a bit more," says Lala Coulibaly, who is responsible for quality control and hygiene. With 65 employees on the payroll, Diakite has now set her sights on the export market, with the company due to start shipping juices to France in February. And she's also working on a new line of products: the extraction and export of pure essences that will also bear the label: "Made in Mali". — AFP



Aissata Diakite, agribusines engineer and founder of Zabbaan Holding poses next to her new juices made in Mali and all-natural, in Bamako.

African savannah came from her childhood in Mopti, a region in central Mali through which the Niger River flows. And it was there, while studying agribusines in France, that the project came to fruition.

"When I was a student, I used to come back to Mali on holiday and I would drive through rural agricultural areas to meet the farmers, to understand the seasons and how to manage the off-season," she explains animatedly. And last month, she launched her line of "Zabbaan" juices after



Bottles of Zabbaan juices made in Mali and all-natural, named "Le Prince", are displayed in Bamako.



An employee of Zabbaan Holding, fills a bottle of juice made in Mali and all-natural.