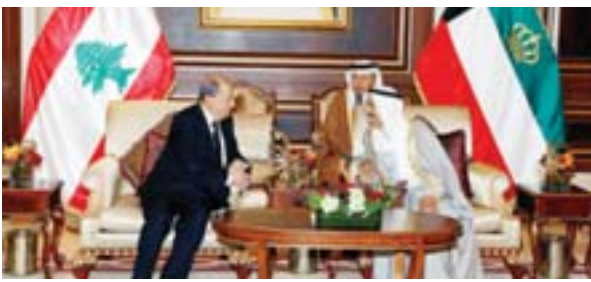




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Mol announces amnesty for residency violators

Illegals can leave Kuwait without paying fines, won't be blacklisted

By Nawara Fattahwa

KUWAIT: The interior ministry issued a decree yesterday granting a general amnesty to expatriates living in Kuwait without valid visas. The amnesty runs between Jan 29 and Feb 22, 2018 and is expected to benefit nearly 130,000 expatriates in violation of residency laws. The amnesty decree (no. 64/2018) gives illegal residents two options - they can either leave the country during the abovementioned period through any port without getting permission from any authority and without paying any penalties; or they can legalize their status and continue residing in Kuwait after paying all fines and obtaining a valid visa without being referred to the investigation department.

Residency violators who are banned from travelling or have a court case should visit the residency affairs department to discuss the possibility of getting a valid visa during the amnesty period. Those who leave the country during this amnesty period are

allowed to enter Kuwait again if they meet the regular conditions of entry and if they were not banned for another reason.

This decree does not apply to expats who will lose their legal residency status after the amnesty period. If an illegal resident is caught during the amnesty period, they will be deported immediately. Residency violators who don't leave the country during the amnesty period will face legal penalties, won't be given a valid visa, will be deported, and won't be allowed to enter Kuwait again.

Head of the interior ministry's media security department Lt Col Nasser Buslaib stressed on the importance of this decree. "This is a great opportunity for illegal residents to resolve their legal status, especially since those who want to leave don't have to pay fines. Also, they will have the chance to come back in the future, rather than being blacklisted if caught and deported," he told Kuwait Times.

Those who want to legalize their status and stay in the country will pay a penalty of

KD 2 for each day up to total of KD 600, even if they were in violation for a longer period. The last time an "amnesty" was granted was in January 2016, but it was partial, as violators who wanted to leave the country still had to pay fines. The last full amnesty (leaving without paying fines) was granted in 2011.

The amnesty comes as a relief for thousands of Indian workers forced to illegally extend their stay in Kuwait due to non-payment of salaries. "This comes as a great relief for the Indian workers," said social worker Shaheen Sayyed, who had taken up their cause, according to a report in the Times of India. The paper said many of the workers, mostly from the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, went to the Indian Embassy yesterday and submitted their details so that they could return home. The amnesty also comes after India's Union Minister of State for External Affairs VK Singh's recent visit to Kuwait. Singh had taken up the issue of the workers who had not been paid.



KUWAIT: Police officers check ID cards of people detained during a recent crackdown on residency violators. (Photo used for illustrative purposes)

News in brief

UAE military told not to escalate crisis

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates' military have been told not to do anything to worsen a seven-month diplomatic crisis with Qatar, a senior military officer said yesterday, a move which may reduce tensions over mutual accusations about military overflights. "We got orders not to escalate and to commit to regional safety and security", air force Brigadier General Helal Saeed Al-Qubaisi told reporters at a news conference in Abu Dhabi. UAE military aircraft would also fly alternative routes over Saudi Arabia to avoid the possibility of interception by Qatari warplanes, Qubaisi added.

Shuaa eyes more shares in Amwal

KUWAIT: Dubai-based Shuaa Capital is in talks to acquire Amwal International Investment Company after buying a minority stake in the Kuwaiti investment bank last year. Shuaa said it was negotiating a "potential acquisition of Amwal" in a statement posted yesterday on the Dubai stock exchange. In a Boursa Kuwait filing on Monday, Amwal said Shuaa intended to take its shareholding in the bank to 75-100 percent, sending its shares soaring. Shuaa acquired an 11 percent stake in Amwal in July. Shuaa had looked to invest in fellow Kuwaiti bank Global Investment House and Bahrain's GFH, but both attempts were abandoned last year.

Sisi challenger calls off campaign

CAIRO: The last challenger seen as a potential threat to the re-election of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi was detained yesterday, and halted his campaign after the army accused him of breaking the law by running for office without permission. Former military chief of staff Lieutenant General Sami Anan, who had announced his candidacy last week, was taken to the Military Prosecutor's office in Cairo, according to his son and one of his lawyers. Anan's spokesman denied he had broken any laws. Nevertheless, the campaign announced Anan was halting his bid.

Qatar backs Turkey military action

DOHA: Qatar has thrown its weight behind Turkey's military offensive against Kurdish militia in Syria, coming to the defense of the "national security" of one of its closest allies. "The state of Qatar reaffirmed its support for the efforts of the republic of Turkey to maintain its national security in the wake of the breaches and terrorist attacks carried out inside Turkish territories," foreign ministry spokeswoman Lolwa Al-Khater said. Turkey has a military base in Qatar and both countries have been unstinting in their opposition to Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad.

Zain Saudi Arabia reports first ever full-year net profit

RIYADH: Zain Saudi Arabia has reported its first ever full-year net profit, amounting to SAR 12 million for the period ending Dec 31, 2017. This is a milestone achievement for the company since the commencement of commercial operations in Aug 2008. The success is attributable to Zain KSA's focus on the growth of data services, leveraging the operator's advanced 4.5G LTE network, ongoing focus on higher value customer acquisitions, prudent cost optimization and operational efficiencies, network investment in advanced technologies and the effect of the 15-year license extension.

Total revenues of SAR 7.3 billion were achieved despite a significant decline in international revenues amounting to SAR 693 million in 2017 primarily due to the impact of VOIP and lower number of prepaid customers. The decline was partially mitigated by growth in revenues derived from mobile broadband, post-paid voice and data packages and, growth in enterprise business.

Gross profits grew by 11.6 percent over the previous year to reach SAR 4.913 million in 2017. Gross profit margin at 67 percent also improved compared to 64 percent in the previous year. A much-improved operational profit of SAR 903 million was recorded for 2017, compared to an operational loss of SAR 54 mil-

lion in 2016. For the 12 months in 2017, Zain Saudi Arabia recorded net profit of SAR 12 million, up substantially from a loss of SAR 979 million for the same period in 2016.

Commenting on the impressive full year results, Zain Group Vice-Chairman and CEO and Vice-Chairman of Zain Saudi Arabia Bader Al-Kharafi said: "The strong performance in all key financial indicators and notably the net profit that reflected a SAR 1 billion turnaround is attributed to the disciplined execution of our strategy to increase monetization of data and digital services and ongoing focus on the improvement of the company's operations and prudent efficiencies and optimization of its cost structure. Investment in 4.5G advanced mobile network technology and increased customer centricity and care equally contributed to best-ever performance."

"Zain Saudi for the first time since its launch delivered positive financial results based on healthy revenue growth, better margins and improved quality of service. It is an impressive outcome in the context of a very competitive market with fewer overall subscribers in 2017 and general decline in industry revenues," commented Kharafi.

"We also remain deeply committed to customers living in every part of the kingdom and to expanding high speed mobile internet to regional and remote communities in a partnership with Ministry of Communication an Information Technology (MCIT) as part of its Universal Service Fund (USF) program we commenced in 2017," continued Kharafi.

"The board is very proud of Zain's performance in



Zain Group Vice-Chairman and CEO and Vice-Chairman of Zain Saudi Arabia Bader Al-Kharafi

2017, which has also made a solid contribution to the local economy. We continue to contribute substantially to the National Transformation Program 2020, and are working with relevant authorities to implement initiatives that will contribute to achieving the objectives of Vision 2030," said Kharafi.

Peter Kaliaropoulos, Chief Executive Officer of Zain Saudi Arabia commented: "Whilst enduring significant competitive and structural challenges in the Saudi telecommunications sector, the team delivered remarkable results in 2017 in all facets of the business

Continued on Page 11

MPs file motion of no-confidence against Sabeeh

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Ten lawmakers yesterday filed a no-confidence motion against Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh following a marathon grilling in which MPs accused her of a raft of administrative and financial violations. The lawmakers who signed the motion are Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, Mohammad Hayef, Saleh Ashour, Adel Al-Damkhi, Abdulkarim Al-Kandari, Nayef Al-Merdas, Abdullah Fahhad and the three MPs who grilled the minister.

Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said voting on the motion will take place in a special session next Wednesday (Jan 31). The motion needs 25 votes to pass and if this happens, the minister will be automatically dismissed.

MPs Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei, Khaled Al-Otaibi and Mubarak Al-Hajraf charged that the minister has failed to implement policies to reduce the numbers of expatriates and accused the minister of adopting wrong decisions that sharply increased the number of expatriates in the country, which resulted in a massive demographic imbalance.

Subaei charged that the cause of the demographic problem in Kuwait is because the minister has been granting permits to small and "paper" companies to



KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh and MP Khaled Al-Otaibi are seen during the grilling debate of the minister yesterday. — KUNA



recruit large numbers of expatriates, and cited several examples of small companies being granted hundreds of work permits and then selling them at a high price to expatriates, which resulted in boosting visa trading.

Other MPs accused the minister of plotting to privatize cooperative societies by deliberately dissolving the boards of directors of several societies. The lawmakers charged that the minister did not apply the law properly over people with special needs and narrowed the base of needy people who are provided social assistance. They also cited examples where the minister appointed expatriates at handsome salaries, while many Kuwaitis remain without jobs. The MPs alleged that the ministry issued 133,000 work permits in the first seven

months of last year, while there are over 129,000 expatriates in violation of the residence law.

Sabeeh however categorically denied the allegations and claimed that she worked exactly the opposite, adding that she has been targeted by MPs because she applies the law. She said that 96 percent of employees at the ministry of social affairs and labor are Kuwaitis, denying that she favored appointing expats.

The minister also said that public assistance rose from KD 74 million a year to KD 265 million, and denied allegations that she planned to privatize cooperative societies, saying this is banned under the law. Sabeeh also insisted that she won many cases against visa traders and she will continue to fight them.

Local

Iraqi Prime Minister hails ties with Kuwait, works to boost them

Abadi calls on Kuwaiti companies to invest in Iraq



Members of the Kuwaiti media delegation meet Iraqi Oil Minister Jabbar Al-Luaibi in Baghdad yesterday.

BAGHDAD: Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Al-Abadi described on Tuesday bilateral relations with Kuwait as 'fundamental', calling for further boosting such relations in the economic and social fields. "The Kuwaiti-Iraqi bilateral relations witnessed a radical change, moving from the hostility phase following Saddam Hussain's invasion to the country, to the brotherhood phase." Abadi made his remarks during a reception of Kuwaiti media delegation, which is currently visiting Iraq.

Abadi expressed his thanks to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for hosting the upcoming Iraq reconstruction conference due to be held in Kuwait in February 12. This Kuwaiti stance towards Iraq assured its people that it will always stand beside them, he affirmed.

He called on the Kuwaiti investment companies to invest in Iraq, saying that his country took all the needed procedures to facilitate their mission in Iraq. The Iraqi premier welcomed the suggestions offered by the Kuwaiti delegation of offering investment licenses to companies taking part in the upcoming conference. The so-called Islamic State (IS) was only a result from the regional disputes, which formed a rich environment for attracting youth, he added. Iraq has succeeded military wise in eliminating IS, while a number of sleeper cells are still haunted by the security forces. Iraq is not wishing that any other country would be struck by terrorism including Egypt and Syria.

Meanwhile, Abadi said that he is not against the freedom of expression, but the social media nowadays are left with no boundaries or regulations, calling for a united Arab position to manage and control such technology.

The Kuwaiti delegation includes Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan, Deputy Director General for Editorial Affairs and Editor-in-Chief of Kuwait News

Agency (KUNA) Saad Al-Ali, Secretary of Kuwait Journalists Association Adnan Al-Rashid and senior officials in the Ministry of Information and Kuwaiti newspapers.

The international donor conference to rebuild Iraq will be held from 12th to 14th of February, chaired by the European Union (EU), Iraq, and Kuwait, the UN and the World Bank, with the participation of donors' countries as well as regional and international organizations.

Great gesture

In the meantime, Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari said yesterday that Iraq's reconstruction conference, which will be hosted by Kuwait in mid-February, is "a great gesture" expressing his sincere appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Jaafari made his remarks during a meeting with the Kuwaiti media delegation visiting the capital Baghdad, adding that the conference will be a global humanitarian event. "Although Kuwait is geographically small, its influence on the international stage is quite prominent", he said. He said that the victory over the so-called Islamic State (IS) is a lesson for what can be achieved when the nations unite.

He expressed hope that the Kuwaiti media will play a key role for the success of the conference. He stressed the need to strengthen the relationship between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti people, voicing hope that the State of Kuwait would continue its efforts to support Iraq.

He confirmed that the Iraqi government will offer big investment opportunities at the conference, stressing that the security situation is stable in Iraq and the government is doing its best to provide a stable environment for economic growth.

Big leap forward

Meanwhile, Iraqi Oil Minister Jabbar Al-



Members of the Kuwaiti media delegation meet with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari in Baghdad yesterday.

Luaibi assured that Kuwait International Conference of Iraq Reconstruction which will be held in Kuwait on February 12th, will be a big leap forward and a chance for Iraq to open up to countries and big companies for investment.

On the sidelines of a meeting that Luoibi held with the Kuwaiti delegation visiting Baghdad, he said the conference is important in bringing investments and capitals in all sectors for the reconstruction of the country. Iraq is about to build huge projects and needs a suitable infrastructure for these enormous projects, he added, expressing the hope that the conference will be successful because of being held in Kuwait.

The Minister clarified that cooperating with big and qualified reconstructing companies is needed for this process. "As you all know, Iraq has strong relations with Kuwait in the oil sector. Negotiations are now underway for new invitation plans in the field of natural gas with Kuwait," he noted. — KUNA



Kuwait Times Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan meets with Iraqi Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari in Baghdad yesterday.



BAGHDAD: Members of the Kuwaiti media delegation meet with Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar Al-Abadi in Baghdad yesterday. — KUNA photos



Members of the Kuwaiti media delegation pose for a group picture with Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers of Iraq Mahdl Al-Alaq in Baghdad yesterday.

Local

Amir, Lebanese President hold bilateral talks in Kuwait

Sheikh Sabah receives US Ambassador



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Lebanese President Michel Aoun. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes the Lebanese President Michel Aoun upon his arrival to Kuwait. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the Ambassador of United States to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, along with senior Kuwaiti officials, held talks yesterday with the visiting Lebanese President Michel Aoun and a delegation accompanying him. His Highness the Amir led the discussions on the Kuwaiti side, while Aoun headed the Lebanese delegation.

Speaking to the press after the encounter, Minister of State for Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah said that the talks centered on bilateral ties and issues of mutual concern. He pointed out that a sense of

amity pervaded the discussions between both sides, which reflects the camaraderie both nations share. Later yesterday, His Highness the Amir held a luncheon banquet at Bayan Palace in honor of Aoun and his delegation. The Lebanese President was received upon his arrival at the airport by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chairman of the National Guard Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-

Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah and several other senior state officials.

The accompanying mission of honor is led by Advisor at the Amiri Diwan Mohammad Abdullah Abu Alhasan. The Lebanese president's accompanying delegation comprises Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Jebran Bassil, Minister of Communications Jamal Al-Jarrah, Minister of State for Human Rights Ayman Choucair, Minister of State for Administrative Development Affairs Inayat Ezzdin and several other senior officials.

Separately, His Highness the Amir received the Ambassador of United States to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman, as well as His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Ahmad Al-Sabah. In other news, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of condolences to UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayid Al-Nahayan, expressing his sorrow over the martyrdom of one UAE soldier during the 'Restoration of Hope' operation in Yemen. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister sent similar cables to UAE over the incident. — KUNA

Deputy Foreign Minister meets Saudi, Iranian ambassadors

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with Saudi Arabia Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulaziz bin Ibrahim Al-Fayiz and discussion focused on bilateral relations and the latest developments in the region. Later, Jarallah also met with Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Redha

Enayati and talks between the two high-lighted bilateral relations, the latest developments in the region, including the latest on the apprehended Kuwaiti citizen Faleh Al-Azmi in Iran. The meeting was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Assistant Director Ambassador Ayhem Al-Omar. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Saudi Arabia Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulaziz bin Ibrahim Al-Fayiz. — KUNA



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Iranian Ambassador to Kuwait Redha Enayati.

Defense Minister meets Iraqi, US military officials

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with top Iraqi and US military officers, focusing on issues of mutual concern. The Kuwaiti defense minister's discussions with the Chief of Staff of the Iraqi military General Othman Al-Ghanimi and the Commander of the US Central Command General Joseph Votel, included a number of

important issues, read a statement by the Kuwaiti defense ministry. Senior Kuwaiti military officers attended the meeting.

In other news, Chief of the General Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khuder met yesterday with UK military advisor for Middle East General John Lorimer. They discussed key issues of mutual interest, primarily military aspects, the Ministry of Defense said in a press release.

The Kuwaiti army chief hoped that the newly appointed UK official would work to promote and bolster bilateral military cooperation between both friendly countries, it added. The meeting was attended by several Kuwaiti army officers and UK officials. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with the Chief of Staff of the Iraqi military General Othman Al-Ghanimi and the Commander of the US Central Command General Joseph Votel. — KUNA

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Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Sunset captured from Jaber Al-Ahmad City south of Kuwait. — KUNA

Ooredoo employees donate blood

An annual initiative reflecting the company's corporate social responsibility

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait has organized an internal blood donation campaign for its employees in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank (CBB); an initiative that reiterates its commitment towards the Kuwaiti society.

In collaboration with the CBB, Ooredoo Kuwait has arranged for the blood donation to be setup at its main headquarters in Kuwait City, with positive participation from its employees, to donate their blood to those who are in need of it and fulfill their commitment towards the society. Dhahia Juice Company contributed on that day by providing all the employees who were done donating a wide variety of their freshly bottled juice.

Mijbil Alayoub, Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "There is no better feeling than contributing to changing other people's lives, we believe that blood equals life to many of those who are in real need of it, therefore, in collaboration with the Central Blood Bank, Ooredoo Kuwait has organized this campaign where its employees contributed to save many lives."

Ooredoo Kuwait and its employees strongly believe in giving back to the community and making a real difference in the lives of people who need it the most. Kuwait and its people remain an integral part of the company's corporate social responsibility strategy.



Mijbil Alayoub



Ooredoo Kuwait's CEO and General Manager Mohammad bin Abdullah Al Thani donates his blood.



Ooredoo employees sign up to donate their blood.



Ooredoo employees donate their blood.



Dundee University, Dasman Institute celebrate delivering diabetes education in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Diabetes is a significant problem in Kuwait where it has been estimated that up to one in four of the adult population suffers from the disease. Since 2011 the University of Dundee, a world leader in clinical diabetes care and diabetes research, in partnership with the Dasman Diabetes Institute (which was established by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences; KFAS), with its mission to prevent, control and mitigate the impact of diabetes in Kuwait have created and delivered a Postgraduate Master's program in Diabetes Care, Education and Management. This program is available to a wide range of Kuwait based healthcare professionals who study part time while in work.

Through face-to-face and innovative blended, interactive teaching, the program enables healthcare professionals to provide more effective care for their patients. They gain specialized knowledge of diabetes



along with educational and management training that supports them in effective communication with colleagues and patients.

Throughout their studies, students undertake multiple work-based development projects as assignments with the aim of immediately improving and developing diabetes healthcare provision and reflective practice throughout healthcare providers in Kuwait. So far,

over 450 students have enrolled on the program and collectively they have achieved over 2,000 work-based projects, directly impacting diabetes care in Kuwait.

The fifth graduation ceremony that was held recently marks the successful achievements of 40 new graduates who join a group of 180 total graduates across Kuwait. The program still aims to deliver transformational change within the Kuwaiti healthcare system, with a

specific focus on diabetes. Students continue to encourage change through their workplace based projects, publishing dissertation outcomes through journals.

For all students, the graduation at the Dasman Diabetes Institute is the pinnacle of three years of hard work and dedication and the recent celebration brings together dignitaries from across Kuwait and Scotland to celebrate their considerable achievements.

Man killed, another injured in Fahaheel Expressway crash

Absconders busted in fake recruitment office

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: A motorist was killed and another person was injured in an accident reported yesterday at Fahaaheel Expressway. A sports car carrying the victims lost balance, crashed into a road sign and split in half from impact, according to eyewitnesses. Firefighters and paramedics headed to the scene yesterday evening in response to an emergency call reporting an accident at the highway near Al-Shaab. The driver, a 23-year-old Kuwaiti, was pronounced dead on the scene while his companion was rushed to the hospital. An investigation was opened to determine the circumstances behind the accident.

Fake office

Residency affairs detectives busted a fake recruitment office that used absconding domestic helpers to provide nursing services, the Interior Ministry's relations and security information department said yesterday. Information was received about a Bangladeshi man who hired absconders as nurses and provided them with uniforms. He also signed contracts worth KD 600 per month with citizens, using official papers and stamps from the company he worked for. A driver was arrested with one of the fake nurses, and both confessed to be absconding. The Bangladeshi man was later arrested with the contracts and receipts. Meanwhile, residency affairs detectives arrested several Asian and African nationals for running a bogus domestic help office and engaging in prostitution. They were referred to concerned authorities.

Home robbery

A security source said two homes in Ali



Sabah Al-Salem (Um Al-Haiman) were broken into and gas cylinders, food supplies and electronic devices were stolen.

Neighbors' row

An Egyptian man asked his neighbor to turn down the sound of music, but the man attacked him verbally. The citizen was in his house late at night playing music, so his Egyptian neighbor told him to lower the volume because his children were not able to sleep. But the citizen did not oblige and became angry.

Fugitive caught

Hawally police arrested a female citizen wanted on 18 financial cases amounting to KD 65,000 and sentenced to one year in



jail. The arrest was made in Salmiya as she attempted to escape. Meanwhile, Shuwaikh police sent a Syrian woman wanted for swindling to Adan detectives. The woman raised policemen's suspicions in Shuwaikh, so she was stopped and found wanted by Adan police.

Fake cops detained

Two men, Syrian and Lebanese, were arrested for impersonating detectives and robbing a man of his motorcycle, claiming it was in violation of the law. The two had drugs, a knife and an interior ministry flasher. Police saw the two trying to load the bike onto their pickup truck, who then escaped on foot, leaving the vehicle behind. Police were able to arrest them.

Kharafi Company wins auction of Al-Watan assets

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Mohammad Abdelmohsen Al-Kharafi Company won an auction held yesterday to take over all Al-Watan Journalism, Press and Publication Company's assets. Al-Kharafi Company got precautionary custody of the assets in 2012 that became implementable after the cassation court's ruling for payment of a debt of KD 19,699,526.

excluding interest.

Bidaa roundabout

Director General of the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transportation Ahmad Al-Hussan said most work on the bridge being built above Bidaa roundabout is complete. He said the bridge connecting Blajat and Taawon Streets will open in March, while the bridge in the opposite direction will open in April.

Transactions blocked

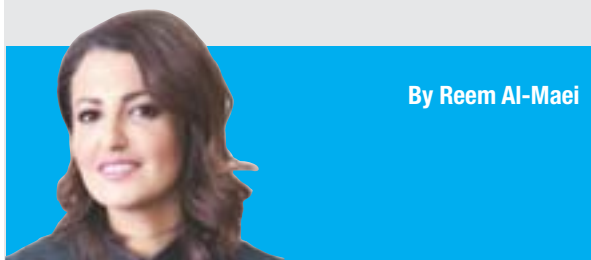
Plans are in place to block transactions of violators of construction rules at several government entities, informed sources said. They said this will be done in coordination with Kuwait Municipality and the interior, justice and social affairs ministries, and no transaction will be processed until the violations are removed. Sources said as violations were repeated

and extra floors were built, a committee was formed to monitor construction violations and reached this conclusion.

Female team members

The roaming collectors' team at the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) has collected Kd 6.2 million since it began working in 2013, Team Leader Khalifa Al-Doub said yesterday. He said the first batch of female team members will join the team within two weeks in order to use women's gatherings, exhibitions and diwanis to collect ministry dues. He said the idea of the roaming collector began to serve those with special needs and the elderly in 2013, then it was expanded to include all citizens who can benefit from them. He said the team has 18 persons who work round the clock, and whenever they receive a call from any citizen, an employee is sent to them.

Expats' valued services



I woke up in the morning to the loudest alarm our house has ever known - the Indian domestic helper who has the mission of waking me up with military precision in the morning. I then went to a cafe owned by a Kuwaiti youth before reporting to work to correct my mood - like other Kuwaitis who support Kuwaiti businesses regardless of the price and quality. A Filipino made the coffee for me at the Kuwaiti cafe. I then went to process a transaction, and found the female employees busy eating falafel, so I resorted to a Bangladeshi worker, who finished it quickly for me, even if I had to pay a dinar.

I later felt sick, so a Filipina nurse received me and checked my blood pressure and temperature. When the doctor asked me to remain for an hour at my workplace so he can follow the drop in my temperature before I leave, my Kuwaiti colleague avoided me out of fear of infection, but an Egyptian employee invited me for breakfast in his office, saying: "There is one God and one life."

My car broke down, so a Syrian mechanic repaired it for me. I went to the airport with an unconfirmed ticket, where every Kuwaiti employee sent me to another, and they all said what the others said, and it was an Indian employee who helped me out and ended three hours of my suffering in three minutes by getting the approval of a Kuwaiti official, which has become more difficult than meeting the master of the White House. I wrote this column full of spelling mistakes, and it was proofread by a Lebanese. I then waited for my mail, which was delivered by a Yemeni office boy.

All of the above are unlimited examples of good services that expats have presented and present every day to us, and we do not feel them like we feel their presence. We hold them responsible for global warming, budget deficits and administrative corruption, and we ignore that behind every great Kuwaiti is an expat. Since education, arts and letters were established during the renaissance era all the way to the regression era, the expat is a partner the Kuwaiti does not surpass except in bragging, which if the people and jinn gather, will not be able to make something like it, and because of it there is no progress.

Personally, I and other weak people on earth, with the help of Allah, depend on expats, without whom we would waste our country and no one would guide us to the right path. It would be wasted by the deliberate and predetermined actions of some of our compatriots who brag strongly and demand the deportation of expats so that we get lost and they get to control us. For those who demand that we get rid of expat workers in Kuwait, I ask: "Can they do without expats' help in their homes?"

—Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai

National Guard carries out 'Peninsula Lion 2' drill

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Guard (KNG) carried out the 'Peninsula Lion 2' exercise under the patronage of Undersecretary Hashem Al-Rifae, and

in the presence of General Commander of Portugal's National Republican Guard Lieutenant General Matthew Manuel Costa da Silva. The drill was held at Sheikh Salam Al-Ali Military Camp in cooperation with Kuwait Army's military police and Amiri guard.

Rifae lauded the performance of all participants, and conveyed greetings of KNG Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, and Deputy Chief Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The exercise is considered one of the largest to be carried out by KNG units, Rifae added.



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Pence visits Western Wall amid protests

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Millions gather to ‘purify souls’ in Hindu bathing ritual



HASSA, Turkey: A Syrian opposition fighter takes a selfie as fighters walk through Syria in front of Turkish troops near the Syrian border at Hassa, Hatay province. Turkey yesterday shelled Kurdish militia targets in Syria and claimed progress in a cross-border offensive that has stoked concern among its allies and neighbors. — AFP

Turkey, militia battle; US sounds alarm

Turkey detains 91, including politicians, journalists

HASSA: The Turkish army yesterday engaged in intense clashes with Kurdish militia inside Syria as the United States voiced alarm Ankara's operation could endanger attempts to bring peace to the conflict-torn country. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed at the funeral of the first Turkish soldier to be killed in the cross-border campaign that Ankara would emerge victorious from the campaign. Turkey on Saturday launched operation "Olive Branch" aimed at rooting out the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) militia, which Ankara sees as a terror group, from its Afrin enclave in northern Syria.

The campaign has caused ripples of concern among Turkey's NATO allies, especially the United States which is still working closely with the YPG to defeat Islamic State (IS) jihadists in Syria and fears the offensive will be a distraction. In his strongest comments yet on the offensive, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis called for Turkey to show "restraint". He warned the offensive "disrupts what was a relatively stable area in Syria and distracts from the international effort to defeat" IS, on a visit to Indonesia.

No fixed timetable

Turkish artillery yesterday pounded targets of the YPG inside Syria, the state-run Anadolu news agency said. Meanwhile, Turkish drones were also carrying out attacks, state television said. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor said "fierce clashes" were continuing especially north and south-

west of Afrin. As well as the artillery and air strikes, Turkish ground troops and Ankara-backed Syrian rebels have punched over the border several kilometers into Syrian territory, taking several villages, according to state media.

After intense exchanges, Turkey's forces took control of the hill of Barsaya, a key strategic point in the Afrin region. The Observatory said 25 Ankara-backed rebels and 26 Kurdish fighters had been killed in the fighting so far. It has also said 24 civilians have been killed on the Syrian side but this is vehemently rejected by Turkey which says it is only targeting militants. A Turkish soldier was killed Monday on the third day of the offensive, the first Turkish military fatality of the operation. Sergeant Musa Ozalkan, 30, was laid to rest yesterday with full honors in a ceremony attended by the Turkish leadership including Erdogan.

Diplomatic sensitivities

The offensive against the YPG is also fraught with diplomatic sensitivities with Western capitals particu-

larly concerned that it will take the focus away from eliminating IS. France and the European Union have made similar comments to those made by Mattis. But Ankara has expressed impatience with such sentiments, arguing that the YPG is the Syrian offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which has waged a bloody three-decade insurgency against the Turkish state. The foreign ministry of Qatar-Turkey's closest Gulf ally-gave its unequivocal backing to the operation.

Turkey also launched air strikes in northern Iraq on Kurdish militants planning an attack, the army said on yesterday. Such raids have been frequent since a cease-fire with the PKK collapsed in 2015. The UN Security Council discussed Turkey's intensifying offensive and the worsening humanitarian crisis in Syria on Monday but did not condemn or demand an end to the Turkish operation.

'Terror propaganda'

Critical is the opinion of Russia, which has a military presence in the area and a cordial relationship with the YPG but is also working with Turkey to bring an end to

the seven-year Syrian civil war. Erdogan said Monday that the offensive had been agreed with Russia but this has not been confirmed by Moscow. However many analysts argue that Turkey would never have gone ahead with the offensive without the Kremlin's blessing. Turkey's previous incursion into Syria was the Euphrates Shield campaign in August 2016-March 2017, targeting both the YPG and IS in an area east of Afrin. The Turkish security forces have meanwhile imposed a clampdown against anyone suspected of disseminating "terror propaganda" against the operation on social media. Forty-two people were detained Tuesday, adding to 25 already taken in Monday.

Turkey detains 91

Meanwhile, Turkey arrested dozens of people overnight for "spreading terrorist propaganda" about its Syrian incursion, state media said yesterday, raising to nearly 100 the number of such detainees, including politicians, journalists and activists. The latest police raids focused on the western province of Izmir, but people have been detained across Turkey over their social media posts since Operation Olive Branch began in Syria's Afrin region at the weekend, state-run Anadolu agency said. The incursion targets the US-backed Syrian Kurdish YPG, viewed by Ankara as a terrorist group and an extension of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has fought an insurgency in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast since 1984. — Agencies



Detainees accused of spreading terror propaganda on net

Southwest Iran suffocates under dust cloud

TEHRAN: Iran's Khuzestan province was suffocating for the fifth straight day yesterday under a cloud of dust that has hit seven times the maximum recommended limit, Iranian media reported. Images published by the semi-official news agency ISNA showed visibility reduced to just a few meters (yards), with the sun hidden behind a blanket of dense orange pollution and just a few brave pedestrians wearing masks. The province in southwest Iran has suffered for years under mounting air pollution as chronic drought has combined with over-use of water supplies to dry up the region.

Between Friday and Monday, 1,300 people were hospitalized for respiratory problems in the provincial capital of Ahvaz and the other key cities of Abadan, Khorramshahr and Shadegan, said official news agency IRNA.

Atmospheric pollution hit a peak on Monday afternoon in Abadan, leading to the closure of many schools and government offices, IRNA said. President Hassan Rouhani sent a team of experts, including environment department chief Isa Kalantari and Agriculture Minister Mahmoud Hojati, to oversee the government response over the weekend.

In a post on his departmental website, Kalantari said decades of excessive water consumption and poor policy were to blame for the increasing problems. "We have used our water resources without looking to the future and without applying any expertise on water resources," he wrote. "Given that the current situation is the result of the fact that our country is semi-arid and semi-desert, we must prepare ourselves to adapt to a life with less water." The environmental disaster is compounded by dust storms drifting in from neighbouring Iraq and Saudi Arabia, which have also increased over the past two decades. In a bid to limit the impact, Iranian authorities say they are planting thousands of hectares (acres) of plants and trees to act as a natural barrier and replenish the soil. — AFP

Swollen Seine halts trains as France braces for floods

PARIS: France braced for floods yesterday as the Rhine threatened to overflow and the rapidly rising Seine forced Paris authorities to halt trains on a busy commuter line. Heavy rains have lashed France for days, leaving 30 departments across the country on flood alert. Some towns and villages in the east are already inundated, leaving homes and shops filled with muddy water. The Seine, running through the centre of the French capital, had already burst its banks in some places Monday, growing into a powerful muddy torrent that has submerged riverside parks and footpaths.

It was set to reach 6.10 meters Friday-a peak last reached in 2016 when floods sent riverside museums scrambling to move artworks from their basements, which was the highest level since 1982. The height of the Seine is measured not from the riverbed but from a point located at the Austerlitz bridge-but 6.10 meters is five or six times the normal level of one to two meters. National train operator SNCF said the central part of the capital's busy suburban RER Line C, which runs under the river, would be closed "in



ERSTEIN: Photo shows a polder being filled due to the rise in the water level of the Rhine river. — AFP

order to guarantee the safety of the passengers and facilities".

Seven stations-including several that serve tourist attractions such as Notre Dame cathedral and the Musee d'Orsay-will be shut until at least Friday. Carmaker PSA meanwhile had to halt work at its factory in eastern Sochaux, which builds Citroen, Peugeot and Opus models, as one of its nearby subcontractors was hit by flooding.

Ski resort shut down

In Strasbourg, regional authorities announced they were opening an emergency

containment zone to stop the Rhine overflowing after days of snow and heavy downpours. The 600-hectare polder at Erstein near the German border was evacuated Monday and can take in up to 7.8 million cubic metres of water diverted from the massive river, authorities said. Further along the border, the medieval Swiss town of St Ursanne has been transformed into a lake, images on RTS television showed, while several mountain train lines have been halted. A mudslide caused a Swiss regional train in Solothurn to derail late Monday, although there were no injuries. — AFP

International

Looted cash, gold helps Islamic State recruit in the Philippines

Militants offering joining fee, salaries to new recruits

MARAWI CITY: Islamist insurgents looted cash, gold and jewelry worth tens of millions of dollars when they occupied a southern Philippines town last year, treasure one of their leaders has used to recruit around 250 fighters for fresh attacks. The military said Humam Abdul Najib escaped from Marawi City, which the militants had hoped to establish as a stronghold for Islamic State in Southeast Asia, before it was recaptured by the military in October after five months of ferocious battles and aerial bombardment. Since then, Najib, also known as Abu Dar, has used the booty looted from bank vaults, shops and homes in Marawi to win over boys and young men in the impoverished southern province of Lanao del Sur, military officers in the area said. Hardened mercenaries are also joining, lured by the promise of money.

As a result, Islamic State followers remain a potent threat in Southeast Asia even though hundreds of militants were killed in the battle for Marawi, the officers said. "Definitely they haven't abandoned their intent to create a caliphate in Southeast Asia," Colonel Romeo Brawner, the deputy commander of Joint Task Force Marawi said. "That's the overall objective, but in the meantime while they are still trying to recover and build up again - fighters and weapons - our estimate is they are going to launch terrorist attacks."

On Saturday, militants wounded eight soldiers in two attacks in Lanao del Sur, Brawner said, the first such violence since the recapture of Marawi. In the early days of the occupation of Marawi last May, as black-clad fighters burned churches, released prisoners and cut the power supply, other militants targeted banks and the homes of wealthy citizens, commandeering hostages to help with the plunder. "It was in the first week. They divided us into three groups with seven people each," said J.R. Montesa, a Christian construction worker who was captured by the militants.

Using explosives, the militants blew open the vaults of the city's three main banks, Landbank, the Philippine

National Bank and the Al Amanah Islamic Bank, Montesa told Reuters in a town near Marawi. They trucked away the booty, easily slipping out of Marawi because a security cordon was not fully in place. They also raided jewelry stores, pawnshops and businesses. Landbank and Al Amanah did not respond to requests for comment. Philippine National said recovering losses because of the Marawi fighting was a concern, but did not give details.

The Islamic celebration of Ramadan was looming at the time the militants struck and banks, businesses and homes had more money than usual, said Marawi City police chief Ebra Moxsir. The Maranaos, the ethnic group that dominates the area around Marawi, are mostly Muslims. "There was a lot of money inside the battle area," he told Reuters. "Maranaos keep millions of pesos in safety vaults in their homes. Gold, also. It is a tradition of the Maranao to give gifts of money (during Ramadan)." Montesa said vans they loaded with the spoils of the raids were "overflowing",

with money, gold and other valuables stuffed into every crevice of the vehicles. "They were saying it was a gift from Allah. They would say 'Allahu Akbar' (God is greatest) while we were stealing."

Marawi banks, businesses and homes looted

Dangerous regrouping

The military and police have also been accused by rights groups and by Marawi residents of looting during the conflict. Brawner said a small number of soldiers had been disciplined for looting but the practice was not widespread. However, the centre of Marawi - home to its major banks, main market and grandest residences - was under the control of militants for months. Brawner said authorities were unclear exactly how much was taken by the militants.

"It's hard for us to say. We have heard about 2 billion pesos (\$39.4 million) but that's just an estimate." "In the first days, when we were not able to establish that security cordon around the main battle area, that was the time



JAKARTA: This handout picture released by the Indonesian Foreign Ministry shows two Indonesian men, identified as La Utu bin Raali (left) and La Hadi bi La Adi (right), who were released by Islamic militants after more than a year in captivity in the southern Philippines, posing with their wives and with Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi (Center) upon their return home, in Jakarta. —AFP

when they were able to slip out with their war booty." The government also said the regrouping of militants in Mindanao, the southern region of the Philippines that has been marred by Islamic and Communist uprisings for decades, was dangerous.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said: "There is always the danger of these groups regaining strength enough to mount another Marawi-like operation." Najib is believed to have fled Marawi early in the battle. There are conflicting reports about whether he had a dispute with other leaders or left as part of a pre-conceived plan. He attempted to return in August with 50-100 more fighters to reinforce the militants, who by then were losing ground,

but he was prevented by an improved security cordon, said Brawner.

"According to reports, they were able to recruit another 100 to 150. So the estimate is 250 all in all, and this includes children," Brawner said. "They are trying to recruit orphans, relatives of the fighters who died and sympathizers." Parents of children are offered as much as 70,000 pesos (\$1,380) plus a monthly salary of as much as 30,000 pesos (\$590) to hand over their sons to the group, according to security sources and community leaders briefed on the recruitment. The average family income in the Philippines is 22,000 pesos per month, according to a 2015 government survey. —Reuters

Syrian chemical weapons attacks

BEIRUT: Since the start of the conflict in Syria in 2011, the belligerents-in particular the regime of President Bashar Al-Assad-have been accused on numerous occasions of using chemical weapons. Here is a summary.

Damascus threatens

The Syrian government acknowledges in July 2012 for the first time that it has chemical weapons and threatens to use them in the event of military operations by Western countries, but not against its own population. The following month, US President Barack Obama says the use or even movement of such weapons would be a "red line" for his administration.

Sarin attack

In August 2013 hundreds of people are killed in Damascus in chemical weapons strikes after Syrian troops launch an offensive in the area. The opposition blames the regime, which denies involvement. In late August a US intelligence report says with "high confidence" that Syria's government carried out the attacks. It says 1,429 people were killed, including 426 children. A UN report says later there is clear evidence sarin gas was used. The following month the United States and regime-backer Russia reach a deal to eliminate Syria's chemical weapons by 2014, averting punitive US strikes.

Chlorine, mustard gas

In September 2014 the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) says chlorine was used as a weapon "systematically and repeatedly" on villages in the central province of Hama and north-western Idlib province. A joint UN-OPCW commission finds in 2016 that helicopters from regime-controlled air bases dropped chlorine barrel bombs on villages in Idlib in 2014 and 2015. The commission accuses the jihadist Islamic State group of using mustard gas in August 2015 in the rebel stronghold of Marea in northern Aleppo. In October the commission says that the Syrian army carried out a chlorine attack in Idlib province in March 2015.

New sarin attack

Warplanes strike the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhun in Idlib in April 2017 with a chemical agent. More than 80 were killed, according to the UN and Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor.

The OPCW later says sarin gas was used but does not assign blame. UN war crimes investigators say later they have evidence that Syrian government forces were responsible, allegations rejected by Moscow. In November 2017 Western governments say a presumed chemical attack which just preceded that in Khan Sheikhun "bears the hallmarks of the Syrian regime".

Russian veto

In November 2017 Russia twice casts its veto at the UN Security Council to block the extension of the UN-led investigation to determine who is behind chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

Damascus accused again

On January 22, 2018 the Observatory says at least 21 people, including children, suffered breathing difficulties in a suspected Syrian regime chemical attack in a besieged rebel enclave near Damascus. A similar attack had targeted the outskirts of the same city, Douma, in the opposition-held Eastern Ghouta region on January 13, according to the monitor, which says seven people suffered breathing problems.—AFP

Pence visits Western Wall as Palestinians fume amid protests

JERUSALEM: US Vice President Mike Pence visited Jerusalem's Western Wall yesterday while Palestinians held a general strike after denouncing his fervently pro-Israel speech the previous day as "messianic". The devout Christian's speech to the Israeli parliament on Monday laden with biblical references was praised by Israelis as perhaps the best they could ever hope for from a US administration, but Palestinians saw it as confirming some of their worst fears.

Pence proudly reaffirmed US President Donald Trump's December 6 declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and pledged to move the embassy to the disputed city by the end of 2019. The vice president said "the friendship between our peoples has never been deeper. And I am here to convey a simple message from the heart of the American people: America stands with Israel."

Yesterday, as he wrapped up his trip, Pence, who was boycotted by the Palestinians, visited one of the holiest sites in Judaism, the Western Wall. The site lies in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, the sector the Palestinians want as the capital of their future state, and many Israelis are likely to

interpret it as Pence further backing their claim over the entire city. "Very inspiring," Pence said after the visit during which he was not accompanied by Israeli government officials. Pence followed in the footsteps of Trump, who became the first sitting US president to visit the Western Wall in May.

In December, a US senior administration official said "we cannot envision any situation under which the Western Wall would not part of Israel." "But as the president said, the specific boundaries of sovereignty of Israel are going to be part of the final status agreement." Pence also toured Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial accompanied by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday and met President Reuven Rivlin. He said the White House believes the Jerusalem declaration "will set the table for the opportunity to move forward in meaningful negotiations to achieve a lasting peace and end the decades-long conflict".

'Gift to extremists'

The Palestinians face a dilemma over how to deal with what they see as a blatantly biased US administration as they seek to salvage hope of a two-state solution. A top Palestinian official called Pence's parliament speech "messianic" and a "gift to extremists", reiterating the view that the Trump White House is incapable of being an even-handed mediator in peace talks. Pence has issued no criticism of Israel's half-century occupation of the West Bank during his visit. Around a dozen Arab Israeli lawmakers were expelled from the chamber as Pence began his speech after they shouted in protest. Yesterday, a general strike was observed in the Palestinian



JERUSALEM: US Vice President Mike Pence visits Jerusalem's Western Wall yesterday. —AFP

territories, but there were expressions of resignation among some.

"It's useless, the strike. Nothing will happen," Adel Humran, a Palestinian against the strike, said in the West Bank town of Ramallah. "Only the shops will be closed. The people won't benefit from it at all." A spokesman for Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, however, said the strike was a "message of rejection of the visit and the American position". "Jerusalem is a red line we cannot compromise on," said Nabil Abu Rudeina. A few hundred Palestinians also protested near an Israeli checkpoint in the West Bank, throwing stones at soldiers who occasionally fired back with tear gas,

sound grenades and rubber bullets. The Palestinian leadership has sought to look elsewhere for backing, and Abbas met European Union foreign ministers in Brussels on Monday. The 82-year-old urged them to recognize a Palestinian state, but such a move was not forthcoming from the bloc as a whole. Abbas said he was committed to negotiations, but he has sought an internationally-led process. Netanyahu, bolstered by the unstinting support of the Trump administration, says there is no substitute for US leadership. He has warmly welcomed Pence, calling him a "dear friend" and lauding Trump's Jerusalem declaration.—AFP

Belgian 'deacon of death' admits killings up to 20

BRUSSELS: A Belgian former nurse and Roman Catholic deacon confessed on the first day of his trial to killing up to 20 people in what he said was a bid to end their "suffering", local reports said yesterday. The admission by Ivo Poppe, 61, who has been dubbed the "Deacon of Death" by Belgian media, is the first time he has publicly given an estimate of the number of his victims. "Between 10 and 20 - 20 maximum. That's approximate but it's around that number." Poppe told the court in the scenic northern town of Bruges under initial questioning by the judge on Monday, according to transcripts in Belgian newspapers. "I wanted to end their suffering, these people weren't really living any more."

The married father-of-three expressed regret for the way he carried out the killings, saying: "If it was now, I would call a palliative care team." Poppe either gave his victims the tranquilizer valium or injected air into their veins to cause a fatal embolism. Most of the victims were elderly people suffering from physical or psychological ailments at a clinic in Menin, a town near the French border. He worked there in the 1980s and 1990s but continued to act as a pastoral visitor until 2011 after he was ordained as a deacon. During an initial investigation he told police his victims also included his own mother, his step-father and two uncles.

He was first arrested in 2014 after authorities were told that he had confided in his psychiatrist that he had "eutha-



BRUGES: A Roman Catholic deacon and former nurse, Ivo Poppe, is pictured during the jury constitution before the Assize Court of West Flanders province, in Brugge. —AFP

nized dozens of people". The bearded, bespectacled Poppe, who appeared in court wearing a chunky cardigan and open-necked shirt, explained the context of his comments to the psychiatrist, whom he consulted on the advice of his wife. "I wanted someone to help me with my nightmares. I really needed therapy. That's why I talked about dozens of cases, it was deliberately exaggerated," Poppe told the court.

The trial is scheduled to last two weeks. Poppe faces life in jail if convicted. Belgium legalized euthanasia for adults in 2002 — after the period when most of Poppe's alleged killings took place-although it has to be carried out under strictly controlled conditions. In 2014 it extended the right to children so long as they are conscious and capable of making rational decisions.—AFP

Kabul hotel guests describe lax security before deadly attack

KABUL: Visitors to an upmarket Kabul hotel attacked by Taliban gunmen have described glaring security gaps immediately before assailants went on a bloody rampage targeting guests, in a city constantly under threat. Bags were not checked, scanners did not work, and body searches were nonexistent, according to witnesses, as the private company providing security to the state-owned Intercontinental Hotel comes under the spotlight after the 12-hour attack overnight Sunday killed at least 22 people, the majority foreigners.

Authorities are still investigating how the six militants were able to slip past Kabul Balkh Safety & Security (KBSS) guards and launch the assault with guns and grenades. A witness and a security source told AFP that at least two of the gunmen were armed and inside the hotel before the attack began. An AFP reporter and driver visited the landmark 1960s building on a hilltop overlooking the Afghan capital on Saturday, hours before the assault. They described cursory security checks by KBSS in accounts confirmed by other recent visitors to the hotel.

"We were told the scanning machines were not working today," telecom executive Aziz Tayeb, who hid behind a pillar during the assault, said. "I also didn't see any armed guard in the scan room just before you enter the building or inside," he said, adding his bags were not searched. "In the past two weeks, I went to the hotel with my family twice. —AFP

International

Greenland, Faroe Islands are ‘tricky models’ for Catalonia

Puigdemont in Copenhagen to muster international support

COPENHAGEN: Sacked Catalan president Carles Puigdemont, in Copenhagen to muster international support for an independent Catalonia, has cited Denmark’s autonomous territories Greenland and the Faroe Islands as models for a peaceful bid for independence. But the model may be difficult to export, experts say. “It’s not easy I know but you’re proof that it’s possible,” Puigdemont said Monday during a seminar on the Catalan crisis at the University of Copenhagen.

Yesterday, Puigdemont met with Danish MPs at the invitation of Magni Arge, a representative of the Faroese separatist party Tjodveld (Republicans). No representatives from the parties that make up Denmark’s centre-right government will be present. Arge, who served as an observer for the banned Catalan independence referendum in October that saw a brutal police crackdown, said the purpose of the meeting was to take stock of relations between regional capital Barcelona and the central government in Madrid. And for Puigdemont, the aim was to learn more about the road to independence being pursued by Denmark’s former colonies. The Scandinavian country—a small parliamentary monarchy that has built its prosperity on reform, dialogue and consensus rather than social uprisings has since the 1950s gradually granted its former possessions increasing sovereignty. Negotiations have occasionally been thorny, such as those on control of natural resources, but for the most part disputes are resolved through compromise. “It’s not a criminal act in Denmark to be in favour of the independence of the Faroe Islands,” Arge said.



Catalonia seeks the road to independence

Puigdemont to draw any parallels at all. The largest island on the planet, snow-covered and plagued by financial and social woes, has little in common with tourist magnet, wealthy Catalonia. Its 55,000 inhabitants are for the most part indigenous Inuits. In 2009, the Danish parliament adopted a law granting Greenland self-rule, though Copenhagen retains control of foreign affairs and defense. For the Faroese people—most of whom are fishermen and sheep farmers—their status as islanders, coupled with Copenhagen’s rather distant interest in the archipelago,

means their independence drive is not much of a concern for most Danes.

The Faroe Islands, which receive sizeable government subsidies, will hold a referendum in April on a new constitution which would give the archipelago the right to self-determination. “Full independence for these two parts of the kingdom is broadly seen as legitimate, should those parts

of the kingdom so desire,” says Henrik Larsen, a social sciences professor at the University of Copenhagen. That said, “the political elite would not like to see this.” The Danish government has made several concessions to avoid any unilateral declarations of independence like the one made in Catalonia on October 27, said Marku Suksi, a professor of international law at the University of Turku in Finland.

Spain has appeared less flexible or willing to make concessions on the question of independence. “Denmark has shown once again that it understands democracy,” Puigdemont said on Monday. But in Catalonia, the reality is far more complex. The region, one of Spain’s wealthiest, has its own language and culture. But of its 7.5 million inhabitants, more than half come from elsewhere or were born to parents from other parts of Spain. And as far as



COPENHAGEN: Catalonia’s sacked president Carles Puigdemont (left) is welcomed by Danish MP and representative of the Faroese separatist party Tjodveld (Republicans), Magni Arge before a meeting on the Catalan crisis yesterday. — AFP

independence goes, views among the Catalans are evenly split. Polls suggest, however, that more than 70 percent of Catalans want the issue decided by a legal referendum.

Spain and Denmark are polar opposites when it comes to their recent histories. Spain emerged from four decades

of dictatorship in 1977. In 2011, a violent four-decade drive for Basque independence that claimed more than 800 lives came to an end. Denmark has meanwhile flourished in peacetime to become one of the most prosperous and egalitarian countries in the world.—AFP

News in brief

Activists fight booze buy

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka rights activists yesterday asked the island’s top court to reject a presidential order that restored a decades-old ban on women buying or selling alcohol, calling the move discriminatory. The historic ban was overturned by Sri Lanka’s finance minister earlier this month but was reinstated just days later by President Maithripala Sirisena after protests from conservative Buddhists. The law, dating back to 1979, bans women not just from buying alcohol but working in bars or factories where liquor is manufactured or sold. Women’s activist Bhavani Fonseka appealed the ban in the Supreme Court, saying it violated women’s rights to equal treatment, which are guaranteed under the Sri Lankan constitution. “We are arguing on the basis of a right to make a choice and equal opportunity of employment,” Fonseka said.

5 missing in Oklahoma

CHICAGO: Five Oklahoma drilling rig workers were missing Monday after an explosion caused a serious fire that burned for hours, according to authorities in the central US state. The rig, near the small city of Quinton in eastern Oklahoma, exploded at approximately 8:45 am, officials said. Emergency crews found 17 workers who escaped the flames, but five others remained missing in the evening. “We have searched the surrounding area and have not found anybody at this time,” emergency manager Kevin Enloe of Pittsburg County, where the accident took place, said at a late afternoon news conference. One worker was airlifted to a hospital having suffered burns, he added. Emergency responders were unable to get within 100 feet of the fire, and secondary explosions forced them to set up a wide perimeter. They did not attempt to put out the fire directly to avoid spreading hazardous materials, Enloe said. Officials did not know whether the new well was drilling natural gas or oil.

Hotel, nightclub evacuated

LONDON: Almost 1,500 people were evacuated from a hotel and nightclub in central London overnight and two train stations were closed following a gas leak, authorities said yesterday. The area was cordoned off throughout the morning and staff in some nearby offices who arrived for work were later evacuated, an AFP photographer said. “A ruptured gas main was discovered using detection equipment and high levels of natural gas were detected in the atmosphere,” a London Fire Brigade spokesman said. “As a precaution, approximately 1,450 people have been evacuated. They are from a hotel and a nightclub,” Charing Cross and Waterloo East train stations, which bring commuters into the capital, were also closed, while Underground trains were not stopping at Charing Cross. Most of those evacuated had been in the 1,000-capacity Heaven nightclub when the alarm was raised about 2am (0200 GMT).

Herder-farmer violence

KANO: Six people were killed last weekend when cattle herders battled farmers in northeast Nigeria, a state government official said yesterday, in violence that has piled pressure on the government. The clashes happened on Sunday in the Numan district of Adamawa state, where militia from the ethnic Bachama farming community killed at least 30 Fulani herders last November. “Six people were killed and many others were injured in attacks on two villages, Kikan and Lauru,” Adamawa state information commissioner Ahmad Sajo said. “A group of Fulani attacked Kikan, which is a Bachama village, killing three people, injuring many and carting away cattle.” He added: “Bachama youths in the area mobilized and launched a reprisal attack on nearby Lauru village.” But the attack may have targeted the wrong community, as Lauru is home to Hausa-speaking Muslims who are not Fulani people. “They are largely vegetable growers,” said Sajo.

Day of destiny looms for Brazil former leader

BRASILIA: A Brazilian appeals court will rule today whether to overturn a corruption conviction against ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, effectively deciding if he can run in this year’s election. Lula was sentenced in July to 9.5 years behind bars after being convicted of corruption in Brazil’s huge “Car Wash” graft scandal. All eyes are now turning to the court in Porto Alegre which said it will rule on his appeal on January 24.

That could decide whether Lula—hugely popular during his two-term presidency from 2001-2010 — can take part in the October 2018 presidential elections, in which he is currently the frontrunner. The Workers’ Party (PT) he founded has organized hundreds of buses to transport supporters to Porto Alegre and has also scheduled events in Sao Paulo, where the 72-year-old will await the verdict. Right-wing groups will hold demonstrations against Lula, whose appeal is only one of nine legal cases against him, the majority for corruption.

With tension around the case rising, and the stakes so high, Porto Alegre’s mayor has called on the army to provide extra security in the city, alarmed at the recent rhetoric of PT chairman Gleisi Hoffmann. “To stop Lula they’re going to have to stop a lot of people, but, more than that, they’re going to have to kill people,” Hoffmann, a senator, warned in an interview last week. Magistrates’ groups have also expressed concern at threats proliferating on social media against the three judges of Federal Regional Court No. 4, who are tasked with delivering the verdict.

Darling of the left

Lula was Brazil’s first democratically elected leftist president and is credited with helping lift 30 million Brazilians out of poverty. He was hugely popular during his 2003-2010 two-term presidency, but his reputation was damaged by steep economic decline under his hand-picked successor Dilma Rousseff—who was impeached in



BRASILIA: People wait in Brasilia at a bus stop covered in posters in support of Brazilian former President Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva calling for people to ‘Occupy Porto Alegre on January 24.’ — AFP

2016 for breaking budget rules. Rousseff told AFP in an interview last week that any government that emerged from the 2018 elections “will not be able to govern the country” if Lula is banned from contesting the vote.

A court convicted Lula in connection with Brazil’s “Car Wash” graft probe, after what began as a money laundering investigation led investigators to a web of corruption involving much of the country’s political and economic elite. The former union leader says he is the victim of political persecution. “The notion of a coup d’etat has become more sophisticated, tanks and soldiers are no longer needed, it’s enough to tell lies that the media reproduces as truth, lies that have anesthetized the population,” Lula told a meeting of supporters last week in Rio de Janeiro.

Slim chance of success

The chances of Lula emerging unscathed in Wednesday’s ruling are slim, however. Among the hundreds of appeals so far, the vast majority were increased or confirmed and only a score watered down—sometimes by only a few months—or cancelled. The court “will probably uphold the conviction,” said Eurasia analyst Silvio Cascione in a note. But even a unanimous ruling by the three judges “would not close the door on new appeals,” he added.

“Uncertainty will run high over the next months, probably until the early stages of the electoral campaign in August. Even if there is a unanimous 3-0 conviction against him, Lula will retain some options to keep his presidential dream alive.” —AFP

Mixed village in Cyprus buffer zone looks to offer hope

PYLA: Two village leaders, a mosque, Orthodox churches and the UN: welcome to Pyla, one of the few places on the divided island of Cyprus where Greek and Turkish Cypriots live side by side. Nestled in the UN-patrolled buffer zone that slices between the internationally-recognized Republic of Cyprus and a breakaway Turkish Cypriot statelet in the north, locals in Pyla are constantly reminded of the 44-year division of their homeland.

But as Cyprus gears up for a presidential vote on Sunday that could determine if it makes another push to reunify, residents of Pyla say they want their peaceful cohabitation to serve as an example. “Pyla is the only place in the buffer zone where the two communities live together,” Greek Cypriot mayor Simos Mytides said. “This itself is something to feel proud of.” When Turkey’s invasion of Cyprus split the island in 1974, some 200,000 people were forced from their homes as the population separated along ethnic lines. But along the frontline, Pyla remained an exception as the original villagers stayed put.

‘Like in a cocoon’

The village of around 1,800 inhabitants close to the island’s southeast coast is legally administered by the Republic of Cyprus but policed by UN peacekeepers. Signs in the streets are written in Greek and Turkish and the two languages can be heard. Each year, the Greek Cypriot mayor and his Turkish Cypriot counterpart organize festivals to bring their two communities together. “We live here like in a cocoon,” said Turkish Cypriot resident Mehmet Pasha, 50, the village sports club owner who has set up an intercommunal rugby team. “What happens outside in terms of politics doesn’t really affect us on a political level.” Last year, peace talks to reunify the island came closer than ever to reaching an elusive solution but collapsed in acrimony short of the finishing line. “The failure of the peace talks has not had a negative impact on us,” said Turkish Cypriot student Baris Alibeyoglu.

“We continue to have warm relations between neighbors, to exchange traditional dishes during religious holidays.” In a rare exception, the roughly 600 Turkish Cypriot residents of the village also have the right to vote in the Greek Cypriot presidential election on January 28. President Nicos Anastasiades is tipped to win a second term with a pledge to restart negotiations. In a sign of Pyla’s symbolic value, a pro-settlement left-wing candidate, Stavros Malas, visited the village on his campaign trail. “I talked to him. I was happy that a Greek Cypriot candidate came here to introduce



NICOSIA: Protesters shout slogans during a demonstration against the Turkish Cypriot weekly newspaper ‘Afrika Gazetesi’ in the northern part of Nicosia in the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) only recognized by Turkey. — AFP

himself,” said Alibeyoglu. “Since then I have been trying to follow the campaign as much as possible and intend to vote.”

‘No need for UN’

On the village square, elderly men play backgammon and cards in the Greek Cypriot community’s cafe, which sits adjacent to a Turkish Cypriot coffeeshop. Outside, the white trucks of the UN security patrol drive

through the streets. “Why do they have to guarantee anything? We do not need them to be at peace,” said Tassos Sotiriou, 76, pointing to light blue banner flying over a UN observation post. “I feel like a prisoner in the very place where I was born.” The retired painter and decorator, with a thin white moustache and bright eyes, accuses international powers Britain and the United States of perpetuating the division. —AFP

International

Dozens of rape victim support centers to open across India

Indian states sign up to ‘Justice For Her’ initiative

NEW DELHI: Dozens of support centers for women victims of sexual violence are to open across India under a scheme announced yesterday, as pressure grows on police over their handling of rape cases. Police in four states have signed up to the “Justice For Her” initiative, with Sheffield Hallam University in Britain. Fifty-one centers, which aim to improve access to justice for victims, will be opened in Madhya Pradesh state which has the country’s worst record for rape cases. The New Delhi region and the northern states of Haryana and Punjab have also signed up.

Lawyer Helena Kennedy, a member of Britain’s House of Lords upper chamber, said the initiative could be a “watershed moment” in India. “The first step towards tackling this issue is giving sanctuary for those who have been victims of these terrible crimes, whilst also providing the relevant authorities with the skills and power to address the problem with confidence,” Kennedy said when launching the project in New Delhi.

India has been in the global spotlight since the 2012 gang rape and murder of a woman on a New Delhi bus sparked angry protests. The number of reported rape cases has grown since then. The government has promised to speed up trials and set up hotlines but rights groups say authorities are still not doing enough. The apathetic response of police after the rape of a 19-year-old student by four men outside a Madhya Pradesh railway station in November sparked a new outcry. Police initially accused the woman of inventing the story and mocked her. Four officers have since been sacked.

Madhya Pradesh has the worst record for sexual assaults among India’s 29 states, with nearly 5,250 cases

reported in 2016 out of the 39,000 nationally. The support centers will provide medical attention, police liaison, legal advice and counseling. A training program will aim to make police more sensitive in handling sexual assault and improving access to justice. Many victims have complained of being coerced by police, who either urged them not to file cases or refused to register complaints. For many victims, justice remains distant as trials drag on for months and often years. Some accused have bought freedom by bribing officials or threatening victims.

Police extort transgender

Police in India routinely extort female transgender sex workers, which pressures them to earn more by engaging in unsafe sex that increases the risk of disease, researchers say. Gender minorities need more protection and police need sensitivity training, said a report by the Chennai-based Centre for Sexuality and Health Research and Policy (C-SHaRP) and the Mumbai-based Humsafar Trust. “We found that transgender women have poor earnings and they have to share that too with the police and ruffians who exploit them,” said Venkatesan Chakrapani, a doctor who chairs C-SHaRP and has researched the transgender community for years. “Because of this extortion, they try to earn more and do not insist their customers use condoms,” he said yesterday.

The study, published in late 2017, was based on interviews with 300 transgender women working in the sex industry in major Indian cities. The results showed that they face a high risk of abuse and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. The HIV prevalence among India’s transgender community is estimated at 7.5 percent, much higher than the country’s average of 0.3 percent, government data shows. Transgender women fear police action under a British colonial-era law that prohibits “carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal”,



NEW DELHI: Indian activists shout slogans during a protest in New Delhi against the gang-rape of two schoolgirls in the neighboring state Haryana. Amid growing pressure on Indian police over the handling of rape cases, dozens of new support centers for women victims of sexual violence are to be opened across the country under a scheme announced yesterday. —AFP

which is widely interpreted to refer to homosexual sex. “Biologically, most transgender women are born as males, so it is not clear whether they could be penalized for having sex with a man,” Chakrapani said. India’s 2011 census recorded half a million transgender people, but campaigners estimate the number at about 2 million. —Agencies

Millions gather to ‘purify souls’ in bathing ritual

ALLAHABAD: Millions of Hindu devotees are gathering in northern India for the Magh Mela—one of the world’s biggest religious festivals involving ritual bathing in the holy waters of the Ganges river. An estimated 10 million Hindus descend on the city of Allahabad every January for the festival staged at the sacred meeting point of the Ganges, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati rivers.

The 45-day Mela is currently underway, with pilgrims camping across Allahabad and joining the colorful throngs for dips in the venerated waters. Among them is Shiv Yogi Moni Swami, a holy man smeared in sandalwood paste, carrying a trident and clad in nothing more than beads and a leopard-print wrap around his waist. Swami demonstrates his devotion not by walking to the confluence of the rivers known as the Sangam but by rolling the roughly one-kilometre distance from his tent to the waters.

It is not an easy task, with his body collecting dust and grime before he arrives at the confluence where he submerges himself fully. The act “purifies the soul and washes away all sins”, he told AFP, after scattering rose petals to the rising sun and performing his ablutions. “As we bathe on this holy day in the Ganges we are praying not only for peace of our soul but for the welfare of the whole world,” Swami added. Fellow pilgrims, impressed by his piety and fortitude, bow to touch his feet and take blessings. Some even lie prostrate before him as he passes in a sign of reverence. Many Indians believe that holy men like Swami possess mystical powers and are capable of curing all manner of illnesses.

For the duration of the Mela, Swami says he eats just one simple meal of fruit a day, apparently enough to sustain him through a busy schedule of chanting prayers and



ALLAHABAD: Holy man Shiv Yogi Moni Swami cheers - surrounded by devotees after rolling towards the Sangam, the confluence of the rivers Ganges, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati, for a holy dip during the annual Magh Mela festival in Allahabad. — AFP

performing yagna, a centuries-old Hindu fire ritual. “I believe that if you all bow before the Ganges you will be blessed with eternal peace and happiness,” he said, explaining his devotion to the holiest river in Hinduism. “She (Ganges) is just like a mother.

Just like a mother is kind to all, be it a Christian,

Buddhist, Muslim or a Jain, the Ganges is all encompassing.” The annual ritual has been held in Allahabad for centuries and is a smaller version of the Kumbh Mela, a gigantic event attended by tens of millions that UNESCO describes as the largest peaceful gathering of pilgrims on earth.—AFP

As US goes quiet on naval patrols, China speaks out

HONG KONG: While the Pentagon plays down patrols close to Chinese-controlled reefs and islands in the South China Sea, Beijing is sounding the alarm about them, seeking to justify what experts say will be an even greater presence in the disputed region. Chinese officials publicized the latest US “freedom of navigation patrol”, protesting the deployment last week of the destroyer USS Hopper to within 12 nautical miles of Scarborough Shoal, an atoll west of the Philippines which Beijing disputes with Manila.

It was the second time in recent months that confirmation of a patrol came from Beijing, not Washington, which had previously announced or leaked details. Bonnie Glaser, a security expert at Washington’s Center for Strategic and International Studies, said while the administration of US President Donald Trump had a policy of keeping the patrols regular but low key, China was willing to publicly exploit them to further their military ends.

“It is difficult to conclude otherwise,” she said. “Even as it pushes ahead with these (patrols), I don’t think the Trump administration has really come to terms with what it will tolerate from China in the South China Sea, and what it simply won’t accept, and Beijing seems to grasp this.” In official statements, Chinese foreign ministry official Lu Kang said China would take

“necessary measures to firmly safeguard its sovereignty” in the resource-rich sea.

Some regional diplomats and security analysts believe that will involve increased Chinese deployments and the quicker militarization of China’s expanded facilities across the Spratlys archipelago. While US officials did not target China in their comments, couching freedom-of-navigation patrols as a “routine” assertions of international law, Beijing was quick to cast Washington as the provocateur. The Communist Party’s official People’s Daily newspaper on Monday accused the US of upsetting recent peace and co-operation and “wantonly provoking trouble”, saying China had must now strengthen its presence in the strategic waterway.

Construction, militarization

In recent years, China has built up several reefs and islets into large-scale airstrips and bases as it seeks to assert and enforce its claims to much of the sea, through which some \$3 trillion in trade passes annually. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei, as well as Taiwan, hold rival claims. Chinese coastguard and People’s Liberation Army navy ships patrol vast swathes of the South China Sea, routinely shadowing US and other international naval deployments, regional naval officers say.

Zhang Baohui, a mainland security analyst at Hong Kong’s Lingnan University, told Reuters he believed Beijing was rattled by Trump’s sharpening Asia strategy and they might be tempted to react in the South China Sea, even after months of relative calm. “We can perhaps expect the Chinese to push ahead with militarization as retaliation,” he said. A new US national defense strategy unveiled last week



IN THE AIR: Photo shows an F15SG air-superiority fighter flying over the South China Sea, northeast of Singapore. — AFP

stressed the need to counter the rising authoritarian powers of China and Russia, outlining a need to better support allies and newer partners against coercion.

While most analysts and regional envoys believe China remains keen to avoid an actual conflict with the significantly more powerful US navy in the South China Sea, it is working to close the gap. China has added bunkers, hangars and advanced radars on its new runways in the Spratlys, although it has not fully equipped them with the advanced surface-to-air and anti-ship missiles they use to protect the Paracels grouping further north. Similarly, Beijing has yet to land jet fighters in the

Spratlys - test flights some experts are expecting this year.

The latest patrol was at least the fifth such patrol under the Trump administration and the first to Scarborough - one of the more contentious features in the region. Scarborough, once a US bombing range, was blockaded by the Chinese in 2012, prompting the Philippines to launch its successful legal case in the Hague against China’s excessive territorial claims. China allowed Filipino fishermen back to Scarborough’s rich waters last year, but it remains a potential flashpoint as both sides claim sovereignty and China maintains a steady presence of ships nearby.—Reuters

News in brief

Suicide pacts in S Korea

SEOUL: South Korea is to make organizing a suicide pact a criminal offence, officials said yesterday, as the government seeks to reduce one of the world’s highest rates of self-killing. The suicide rate in Asia’s fourth-largest economy has increased sharply since 2000 to 25.6 a year per 100,000 people, twice the average for Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries. Prominent suicides regularly make headlines—K-pop singer Kim Jong-Hyun killed himself last month—but most victims are elderly in a country where social safety nets are weak. The criminalization of suicide pacts was among a series of measures approved by the cabinet Tuesday. TV dramas and web cartoons glorifying suicides will also be discouraged, and suicide prevention education will be required for all soldiers. Seoul aims to lower the suicide rate to 17 per 100,000 by 2022. The government said more than 90 percent of those who killed themselves sent warning signals in advance and suicides could largely be prevented through people paying attention.

Avalanche engulfs skiers

TOKYO: One man was killed and at least 11 people injured, some critically, when rocks from an erupting volcano rained down on skiers at a mountain resort in central Japan yesterday and an avalanche soon after the eruption engulfed about a dozen skiers. Seven of those struck by rocks were members of Japan’s Ground Self Defense Force (SDF) engaged in winter training maneuvers, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement. All were rescued, with one dying later, it added. Japanese media said at least 12 people were injured, many apparently hit by volcanic rocks. Two were critically injured and three seriously, national broadcaster NHK said. One person was trapped in the avalanche for some time before being dug out by rescuers, who included SDF members. Kusatsu-Shirane, a 2,160-metre (7,090 ft) volcano, erupted yesterday morning, the Japanese Meteorological Agency (JMA) said.

Quake shakes Jakarta

JAKARTA: Office workers fled high-rise buildings in the Indonesian capital yesterday after a strong earthquake shook the city, causing some injuries and damage to at least 130 buildings elsewhere on the densely populated island of Java. The relatively shallow quake of magnitude 6 struck off Java, the US Geological Survey said, and authorities ruled out the risk of a tsunami. Many people ran along the streets of downtown Jakarta, pointing at the buildings above them, witnesses said. Metro TV showed patients being evacuated from a hospital. The quake struck about 104 km west of the city of Sukabumi, at a depth of 44 km. Jakarta is about 100 km away. “In Cianjur, six students were seriously injured and two students suffered light injuries when the (school) roof collapsed,” Sutopo Purwo Nugroho, a spokesman for Indonesia’s disaster agency, said in a statement, referring to a district of West Java province.

Indonesia gay sex video

JAKARTA: Two Indonesian men have been arrested for allegedly uploading a video of themselves having sex to social media, police said yesterday, amid a crackdown on the LGBT community in the world’s biggest Muslim-majority nation. Police in Depok, a city in West Java province, arrested the men Saturday after a member of the public reported the “gay porn” video to authorities, police said. “They have been arrested and detained,” Depok police spokesman Putu Kholis Aryana said. “We will apply the law on pornography and the electronic information and transactions (ITE) law.” Homosexuality and gay sex are legal everywhere in Indonesia except in conservative Aceh province, which is ruled by Islamic law. But police have often used the country’s tough anti-pornography legislation to criminalize members of the LGBT community. The electronic information law is also frequently used by public officials to bring criminal charges against people accused of making internet-based insults and defamation.

Analysis

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‘Free’ Gambia faces resurgence in FGM and child marriage

Wearing a long black veil with her newly circumcised daughter on her lap, Aminata Njie vehemently gives her justification for having the two-year-old cut. “Female circumcision is our religion and tradition,” says the tall, frail mother of five from her one-bedroom home. “If Gambia is a democracy now, why should anyone stop us from practicing our religion and tradition?”

One year after Gambia's iron-fisted leader Yahya Jammeh flew into exile, residents of the tiny West African nation are enjoying newfound freedoms under President Adama Barrow, who ousted Jammeh with a shock election win. But to the dismay of human rights activists, some are also returning to harmful practices that the former president - in a rare display of progressive values - had banned during his 22 years of autocratic rule.

Three weeks ago, Njie, whose named has been changed to protect her from prosecution, travelled across the river to her husband's village to have her youngest daughter circumcised. Female circumcision, or female genital mutilation (FGM), involves the partial or total removal of the female genitalia and can cause fatal health problems, health experts say. Jammeh instated steep fines and jail sentences for those taking part in the ancient ritual, which many Gambians believe is a requirement of Islam, in 2015.

“Before the ban, all my three daughters were circumcised. By the time I had this one, the ban was in force and no one was doing it here,” said Njie, who lives down a dirt road in the working-class outskirts of the capital Banjul. “Now that (Jammeh) left we are free to do it because Barrow does not ban it and he is going to remove the law,” she said.

In fact, the law against FGM is still in effect and there are no plans to remove it, information minister Demba Jawo told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone. “We are convinced that FGM has serious health implications for women and girls. If anything, this government would be even more rigorous in enforcing the ban,” Jawo said. But many people have been misinformed, rights groups say. “If you go into communities they tell you that the law went with the former president,” said Lisa Camara of the Gambian rights group Safe Hands for Girls. The same is true of Jammeh's 2016 law against child marriage. “It's taken us back to square one,” she said.

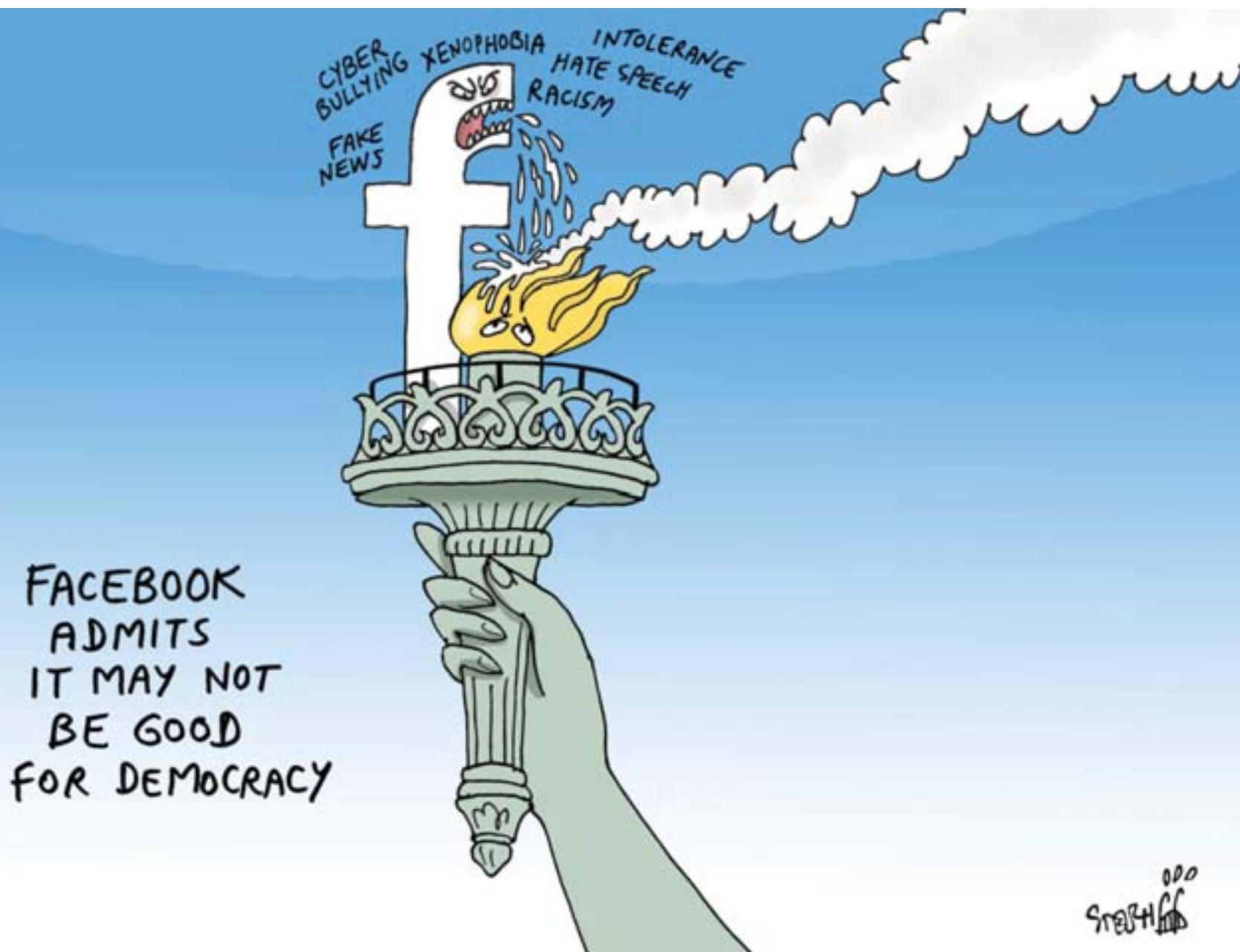
Culture of Fear

No data has been collected on FGM or child marriage since they were outlawed, the UN children's agency UNICEF said, so there is no evidence to prove the laws were respected under Jammeh or that they are now being widely broken. Before the bans, about 75 percent of girls in Gambia were cut and 30 percent married before the age of 18, UNICEF says. Laws against traditional practices often go unheeded in African countries where local chiefs and religious leaders can wield more influence than the central government, experts say.

But Jammeh, who had a reputation for imprisoning and torturing perceived opponents, was so widely feared that people tended to obey him, several Gambians said. “Most people at first thought it was a joke,” 20-year-old medical student Haddy Bittaye said of the FGM ban. They soon realized it was serious when a grandmother was arrested for allegedly cutting a young girl who died, said Bittaye, a youth activist.

The penalty for engaging in FGM is set as 50,000 Gambian dalasi (\$1,050) or 3 years in prison or both, according to the government, but there have been no prosecutions to date. “The law has done a lot,” said Bittaye. “Nowadays (FGM) is not that common because people are aware, and because of the fines attached to the law.” Yet other campaigners said the law has merely driven the practice underground. It is performed earlier now - on babies as young as one week old - to avoid detection, said Isatou Jeng, of local rights group Girls' Agenda.

“People said the law was forced on them,” said Jeng, an FGM survivor herself who travelled around the country last year on an awareness-raising campaign. In villages, people said Barrow had promised them he would repeal the law, she said, likely a misconception that came from the president's pledges to reform Jammeh-era legislation. The new government needs to do more to make its position clear, said Jeng. President Barrow has not spoken publicly against FGM or child marriage, but the vice president and other members of his administration have condemned them, said Neneh Touray, a representative in the ministry of women's affairs. “It takes time to put things in order. I know with time (Barrow) will make his pronouncement,” Touray said. Others said the government may be intentionally leaving room for ambiguity, since the laws are so unpopular. “Politically, I think they're trying to be very careful not to lose votes,” said Camara of Safe Hands for Girls. — Reuters



As Singapore ages, low tax model creaks

Change Afoot

One of the reasons the tax issue has come to the fore in Singapore is because efforts to boost productivity have been slow to bear fruit. With restrictions on foreign labor, Singapore has championed investment in automation and artificial intelligence to help gear its economy towards higher-value-added industries with strong productivity growth. But this transition takes time. Labor productivity growth was flat around 1-1.5 percent in the years 2013 through 2016, having been at nearly 10 percent in 2010.

Meanwhile Singapore's tax revenue, as a percentage of economic output, is below the average of other high income countries, World Bank data shows. As a result,



Analysts expect first GST tax rise in a decade

the government is projecting a primary budget deficit of S\$5.62 billion (\$4.3 billion) in 2017. If realized, that would be the largest since at least 2001 when changes to the classification of some items were brought in. Singapore's projected and realized primary budget balance has often varied and in 2016 the deficit was about half of what was projected.

Tax changes are already happening. An increase in the top rate of income tax from 20 to 22 percent was

announced in the 2015 budget and has already kicked in. Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat told an IPS forum on Monday that without increased revenue from the country's reserves in recent years, some taxes could have doubled. Changes to the goods and services tax (GST) - which in FY2016/17 accounted for nearly a quarter of total tax revenues - would further firm up government finances. Economists are expecting a rise to 8 or 9 percent from 7 percent, to be announced at the budget - the first hike in a decade. And there could be more rises in GST in the years to come.

A fictional account of a budget in 2065, penned by current central bank governor Ravi Menon in 2015, saw the GST rate raised to 14 percent. Menon said his article did not reflect the views or projections of the Monetary Authority of Singapore. The finance ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment on expectations for a rise in taxes. While tax hikes tend to be unpopular with voters, Singapore's government has until Jan 2021 to hold its next general election.

Sian Fenner, senior Asia economist at Oxford Economics, said over the next five to seven years there could also be more changes to income taxes, while others have pointed to the possibility of wealth taxes, estate duties, property gains tax or even something more novel such as a sugar tax. Singapore's three main taxes - corporate, income and GST - are relatively low by international standards, but it has stiff taxes on alcohol, tobacco and motor vehicles. One tax unlikely to rise is corporate tax, experts say. At 17 percent, Singapore's headline corporate tax rate is already slightly above that of its closest rival Hong Kong. “Singapore will be trying to make sure that whilst it is able to meet its own requirements in terms of fiscal revenue, it is also not killing what has made Singapore such a special place,” said Richard Mackender, a tax partner at Deloitte. — Reuters

Former sex slave in Argentina fights for justice

Enslaved and trapped in a brothel for six years in the southern Argentine port city of Ushuaia, Alika Kinan was beaten and forced to have sex with up to 30 clients a night. But when police raided the ‘Sheik’ street brothel in the center of the resort city in a rescue operation in 2012, Kinan's immediate reaction was one of denial and dismay. She didn't recognize herself as a victim. Instead she tried to defend her pimps and her work. “It was a short-lived Stockholm syndrome,” Kinan, now 41, said. “I never thought I was a victim of human trafficking. I thought I was working,” she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

It was only after her rescue when speaking to state prosecutors about her ordeal did Kinan realize she had fallen prey to a sex trafficking ring. “At first, I denied seeing myself as a victim. I denied any help. But when I heard myself speaking out loud I realized it wasn't okay,” Kinan said. “To recognize one is a victim is to recognize pain, to recognize the abuse suffered during childhood. No one wants to admit one is a victim.” More than five years on, Kinan has turned anger and denial into a quest for justice. She became the first trafficking victim in Argentina to take her pimps and authorities to court, filing a simultaneous civil and criminal lawsuit against them.

Entrapment

When she was a teenager, Kinan said her mother abandoned her leaving her to take sole care of her younger sister. Desperate and hungry, Kinan said a friend knew of a woman who was offering a waitress job in a bar and who would pay for her flight to get there, about 3,200 km away from her hometown in Cordoba province. “Like thousands of women in Argentina, I was pushed into this because of hunger. You don't have a choice when you don't have any options,” Kinan said.

But when Kinan arrived aged 19 to the ‘Sheik’ brothel, disguised as a dance club surrounded by barbed wire, Kinan was told she had ran up a debt and her documents were taken away. “The brothel owners wanted 25 women there at all times. Thousands were trafficked there over the years, including under-age girls,” Kinan said.

Justice?

The most common form of human trafficking in Argentina is women and girls forced into the sex trade, according to the government's anti-trafficking agency, PROTEX. This includes vulnerable migrant women from the poorer neighboring countries of Paraguay and Bolivia and the Dominican Republic, lured by traffickers with false promises of work and then trapped into sex slavery. Few victims get justice.

About 11,000 victims have been rescued by authorities since Argentina's 2008 anti-trafficking law was enacted, but only 220 convictions for human trafficking were handed down between 2009 to 2014, according to latest PROTEX figures. — Reuters

NAFTA's end could hit US poultry hard

Workers at the Sanderson Farms plant in Palestine, Texas, are cutting up chickens for export to Mexico, a market that has become a pillar of the town's economy and a key focus of the US poultry sector. The facility's roughly 1,000 employees process a quarter of a million chickens a day, with parts zipping along racks to a packing area where legs and thighs are prepared for delivery to the United States' southern neighbor.

But the Mexican market may find its way to the chopping block if talks to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement collapse and President Donald Trump makes good on a threat to pull out of the 1994 deal with Canada and Mexico. The stakes are high for the US poultry sector, which exports products worth more than \$1 billion a year to Mexico.

Mexico could slap a 75 percent tariff on US chicken and turkey under its commitments to World Trade Organization rules, compared to the 20 percent tax on imports the Latin American nation could apply to other major US exports like pork. “It would effectively prohibit us from selling product to Mexico,” Sanderson Farms Chief Financial Officer Mike Cockrell

said. He added that the loss of the market would be comparable to the impact of Russia's 2002 ban on US chicken imports.

The bulk price of chicken leg quarters in 10 US states including Texas sank to 18 cents a pound in March 2002, down from 26 cents a pound before the Russian ban, according to data from the US Department of Agriculture. Mexico accounted for about 4.5 percent of Sanderson Farm's gross sales in the 12 months through October. Mexican officials have made clear they don't want consumers to face the price hikes that would be triggered by tariffs, although they have also said global trade rules would allow import taxes in the absence of NAFTA.

“There is nothing standing in the way,” said Raul Urteaga, the top trade official in Mexico's agriculture ministry and one of the people involved in the NAFTA negotiations of the 1990s. “What I can't say is what the tariff would be.” Mexican, Canadian and US officials will meet in Montreal on Tuesday for talks to modernize the 24-year agreement, with negotiators aiming to reach a deal before Mexico's presidential campaign kicks into gear ahead of a July election.

Even a 25 percent tariff would make it hard to sell in Mexico, leading to a glut of chicken legs in the US market, Cockrell said. “Nobody really goes to the Olive Garden to buy a leg quarter,” Cockrell said, referring to US consumers' general preference for white chicken meat rather than the dark meat found on leg quarters. — Reuters



A picture taken yesterday shows a view of closed shops in an alley in the city of Nablus in the occupied West Bank, as people went on strike protesting against the visit of US Vice President to Israel and Jerusalem. — AFP

Zain Saudi Arabia reports first ever...

Continued from Page 1

including the first ever net profit since the launch of the company in 2008." He added: "The ongoing transformation of Zain Saudi was underpinned by strong revenue growth from data services, dedicated customer care efforts, significantly improved network coverage, faster download speeds and, operational efficiencies."

The quality and competitiveness of Zain's network was enhanced with a SAR 1.1 billion investment in capital expenditure in 2017 in addition to the acquisition of 1800MHz spectrum. The full deployment of recently acquired spectrum holdings in 2018 will have a significant positive impact on supporting Zain's ever-increasing data needs of consumer and business customers and raising the quality of its services.

In 2017, Zain Saudi was recognized as the "Best (IoT) Application/Service Provider" at the 5G MENA Conference and the "Best Telecommunications Deployment Company of the Year in the Middle East" by CPI Media Group. In addition, Zain Saudi was awarded the prestigious GTB Innovation Award for Predictive CEM Analytics and the Customer Relations Award at the CARE

Awards from Responsetek. Such awards endorse the company's brand and quality of service.

"Financial and operational improvements are aligned with our goal to keep improving customer experience. Zain is pleased that our key customer measure, our Net Promoter Score, improved to equal best-in-industry levels at the end of 2017. As our customers continue to be demanding of better care and service, ongoing improvement in customer experience is a key priority," said Kaliaropoulos.

Kharafi concluded: "Our success is reliant upon the strong leadership from Zain's board of directors and executives, the hard work and dedication of our employees and our very productive partnership with Zain Group. The commitment and continued efforts of all parties to deliver better customer experiences and implement our corporate strategy, allows us to remain cautiously confident of continued improvement of all aspects of our operations in 2018. Leveraging on the Group's aspirations to transform itself into a digital lifestyle provider, 2018 will witness a new era for Zain Saudi Arabia with the introduction of new digital services in line with the kingdom's future vision."

World powers step up pressure on Syria, Russia over attacks

PARIS: Two dozen countries agreed yesterday to push for sanctions against perpetrators of chemical attacks in Syria, with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson saying Russia "ultimately bears responsibility" for such strikes. Twenty-four nations approved a new "partnership against impunity" for the use of chemical weapons, just a day after reports they were used in an attack that sickened 21 people in rebel-held Eastern Ghouta, which Tillerson said was suspected to involve chlorine.

"Whoever conducted the attacks, Russia ultimately bears responsibility for the victims in East Ghouta and countless other Syrians targeted with chemical weapons since Russia became involved in Syria," Tillerson said after the international meeting in Paris, and ahead of further talks with ministers from several countries on ending the conflict.

"There is simply no denying that Russia, by shielding its Syrian ally, has breached its com-

mitments to the US as a framework guarantor" overseeing the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles, as agreed in Sept 2013, he added. Despite its pledge to destroy such weapons, the Syrian regime has been repeatedly accused of staging chemical attacks, with the United Nations among those blaming it for an April 2017 sarin gas attack on the opposition-held village of Khan Sheikhun which left scores dead. There have been at least 130 separate chemical weapons attacks in Syria since 2012, according to French estimates, with the Islamic State group also accused of using mustard gas in Syria and Iraq.

Russia twice used its UN veto in November to block an extension of an international expert inquiry into chemical attacks in Syria, to the consternation of Western powers. Moscow, backed by Iran and Turkey, has organized talks in the Russian city of Sochi next week aimed at finding a resolution to the brutal and multifaceted civil war. Those efforts are running parallel to talks overseen by the UN, with the latest round due in Vienna on Thursday and Friday.

The talks have so far failed to make progress in ending a war that has left more than 340,000 people dead. Tillerson said that "Russia's failure to resolve the chemical weapons issue in Syria calls into question its relevance to the resolution of the overall crisis". "At a bare minimum, Russia must stop vetoing,

or at the very least abstain, from future Security Council votes on this issue," he said.

At yesterday's meeting, 24 out of 29 countries attending committed to sharing information and compiling a list of individuals implicated in the use of chemical weapons in Syria and beyond. These could then be hit with sanctions such as asset freezes and entry bans as well as criminal proceedings at the national level. Ahead of the meeting France announced asset freezes against 25 Syrian companies and executives, as well as French, Lebanese and Chinese businesses accused of aiding regime use of chemical weapons.

"The criminals who take the responsibility for using and developing these barbaric weapons must know that they will not go unpunished," said French foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, who chaired Tuesday's meeting. "The current situation cannot continue."

Tillerson, Le Drian and several other ministers including Britain's Boris Johnson were meeting for further talks laying the groundwork for a new contact group on Syria that French President Emmanuel Macron has been urging for months. Macron wants the new group to bring together the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - Britain, China, France, Russia and the US - along with regional countries to find a solution. — AFP

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Sports

Cousins carries Pelicans with historic triple-double victory

Rockets’ juggernaut continues to roll over top teams

NEW ORLEANS: DeMarcus Cousins had a triple-double and the New Orleans Pelicans fought back from an 18-point fourth-quarter deficit to defeat the Chicago Bulls, 132-128, in double overtime Monday night at the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans. Cousins had 44 points, 24 rebounds and 10 rebounds to become the first player since Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in 1972 to have at least 40 points, 20 rebounds and 10 assists in the same game. Anthony Davis scored 34 points before fouling out midway through the first overtime, as New Orleans improved to four games over .500 for the first time in three years after winning for the fifth time in six games. E-Twaun Moore scored 15 points, Jrue Holiday added 12 and Darius Miller came off the bench to score 10. Jerian Grant led the Bulls with 22 points and 13 assists. Robin Lopez also had 22 points, Zach LaVine scored 19, Justin Holiday had 15, Lauri Markkanen finished with 14 points and 17 rebounds and Nikola Mirotic scored 14 off the bench.



Blake had 32 pts, a season-best 12 assists

TIMBERWOLVES 126, CLIPPERS 118
Andrew Wiggins scored a season-high 40 points and Jeff Teague contributed a season-best 30 points as Minnesota notched a high-octane victory over Los Angeles at the Staples Center. Wiggins was 16-of-28 from the field while picking up the scoring slack for a team missing guards Jimmy Butler (knee) and Jamal Crawford (toe). Nemanja Bjelica matched his season high of 18 points, Taj Gibson scored 14 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 11 points and 17 rebounds for his 41st double-double of the campaign as Minnesota won for the seventh time in the past nine games. Blake Griffin had 32 points, a season-best 12 assists and matched a season high with 12 rebounds to record his second triple-double of the season for Los Angeles, which lost its second straight following a six-game winning streak. Montrezl Harrell scored 23 points, Lou Williams had 20 and Milos Teodosic added 15.

BUCKS 109, SUNS 105
Khris Middleton scored 35 points and Malcolm Brogdon added a career-high 32 as Milwaukee overcame the absence of Giannis Antetokounmpo for a second straight game and the firing of head coach Jason Kidd earlier in the day to beat Phoenix at the Bradley Center. With Antetokounmpo out, interim coach Joe Prunty moved Brogdon and Sterling Brown into Milwaukee's starting line-up, giving the Bucks a three-guard set that wreaked havoc on Phoenix defensively, forcing 21 turnovers and holding Devin Booker to 14 points on 2-of-14 shooting after he'd scored 73 points in his last two games. T.J. Warren led the Suns with 23 points and Greg Monroe, shipped to Phoenix from Milwaukee earlier this season in the Eric Bledsoe trade, finished with 19 and grabbed seven rebounds.

HORNETS 112, KINGS 107
Kemba Walker had 26 points and nine assists to lead

host Charlotte past Sacramento. Dwight Howard, Nicolas Batum and Marvin Williams had 14 points apiece for the Hornets, who have won three of their past four games. Howard also finished with a game-high 16 rebounds. Skal Labissiere had 23 points off the bench for the Kings, who have lost eight consecutive games. De'Aaron Fox scored 16 points and Willie Cauley-Stein added 11 for Sacramento.

HAWKS 104, JAZZ 90
Dennis Schroder scored 20 points and Taurean Prince added 17 points as host Atlanta pulled away from Utah in the second half. Atlanta came out hot from beyond arc against the Jazz. Eight different Hawks hit 3-pointers, including three from Kent Bazemore. Atlanta hit 12 threes as a team, but was unable to distance itself from Utah until late in the third quarter. The Hawks poured it on in the fourth quarter. Bazemore drained two 3-pointers from the same corner, and the Hawks scored the first 13 points of the period to pull away from the Jazz.

ROCKETS 99, HEAT 90
James Harden and Chris Paul controlled the action late, and Houston turned stifling defense down the stretch into a win over visiting Miami. Harden drilled a 3-pointer with just over three minutes remaining to snap an 88-88 tie and added a step-back baseline jumper less than a minute later to help Houston reclaim its three-point lead. With 38.8 seconds remaining, Paul nailed a midrange jumper over Josh Richardson to seal the win, with Houston erasing a 14-point deficit to sweep its three-game homestand. Harden finished with 28 points and five assists while Paul scored half of his 16 points in the fourth quarter. Paul added six rebounds and six assists plus three steals to carry Houston home.

GRIZZLIES 105, 76ERS 101
Marc Gasol scored 19 points, Tyreke Evans added 18 and Memphis overcame a 15-point deficit to defeat Philadelphia at FedEx Forum. Mario Chalmers contributed 17 points while Jarrell Martin and Myke Henry had 12 each for the Grizzlies. Dario Saric had 22 points and 10 rebounds, Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot added 20 points and Robert Covington had 18 for the Sixers. Joel Embiid also had 15 points and 14 rebounds for his 20th double-double of the season.

MAVERICKS 98, WIZARDS 75
Harrison Barnes finished with a double-double of 20 points and 10 rebounds, as host Dallas stopped a three-game losing streak with a victory over Washington. The win completed a sweep of the two-game season series versus the Wizards. The Mavericks now have won 17 of the last 19 games against Washington and swept the season series in seven of the last eight years. Barnes hurt the Wizards in both games this year. He scored 31 points in the first contest, a 113-99 Dallas victory in Washington.



NEW ORLEANS: Anthony Davis #23 of the New Orleans Pelicans goes to the basket against the Chicago Bulls on Monday at the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans, Louisiana. — AFP

NBA results/standings									
LA Clippers 118, Minnesota 126; Dallas 98, Washington 75; Atlanta 104, Utah 90; Denver 104, Portland 101; Houston 99, Miami 90; Memphis 105, Philadelphia 101; Milwaukee 109, Phoenix 105; New Orleans 132, Chicago 128 (OT); Charlotte 112, Sacramento 107.									
Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Boston	34	13	72.3	-	Golden State	37	10	78.7	-
Toronto	31	14	68.9	2	Houston	33	12	73.3	3
Cleveland	27	18	60.0	6	Minnesota	31	18	63.3	7
Miami	27	20	57.4	7	San Antonio	30	18	62.5	7.5
Washington	26	21	55.3	8	Oklahoma City	26	20	56.5	10.5
Indiana	25	22	53.2	9	New Orleans	25	21	54.3	11.5
Milwaukee	24	22	52.2	9.5	Portland	25	22	53.2	12
Philadelphia	22	21	51.2	10	Denver	24	23	51.1	13
Detroit	22	23	48.9	11	LA Clippers	23	23	50.0	13.5
New York	21	26	44.7	13	Utah	19	28	40.4	18
Charlotte	19	26	42.2	14	Memphis	17	29	37.0	19.5
Brooklyn	18	29	38.3	16	LA Lakers	17	29	37.0	19.5
Chicago	18	29	38.3	16	Phoenix	17	30	36.2	20
Atlanta	14	32	30.4	19.5	Dallas	16	31	34.0	21
Orlando	14	32	30.4	19.5	Sacramento	13	33	28.3	23.5

NUGGETS 104, TRAIL BLAZERS 101
Jamal Murray went for a career-high 38 points to lift Denver Nuggets to victory against Portland at Pepsi Center. Will Barton made four straight free throws in the

final 7.9 seconds for Denver (24-23), which had lost two in a row and six of its last eight outings. Damian Lillard collected 25 points and eight assists and Jusuf Nurkic contributed 19 points and 12 rebounds for Portland (25-22), which saw the end of a three-game win streak.— Reuters

Bubka wary of changes that may put athletes at risk

MUMBAI: Pole vault must evolve if it is to remain relevant as individual sports look for new ways to attract fans but any changes introduced should not be at the expense of athlete safety, former great Sergey Bubka has told Reuters. Athletics has been hit hard over the past few years due to corruption and doping scandals and International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) President Seb Coe has said the sport's governing body was prepared to embrace radical changes to appeal to the next generation.

The 54-year-old Bubka, who won pole vault gold at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and is a member of the executive board of the International Olympic Committee, said change is essential for track and field events to remain attractive. "It's very important today to be progressive," said Bubka, who is also a senior vice president of the IAAF. "But it's most important that the crowd love it and enjoy it. "Competition between different sports is so big, for that we look for some changes, some innovations, for some improvements and some new ideas in our sport."

Bubka, who was in the city as the ambassador for the Tata Mumbai Marathon, said strong competition was vital for drawing crowds to the stadiums.

The IAAF approved technical changes last year including a reduction in the amount of time given to each athlete for an attempt from 60 seconds to 30 in a bid to make the sport more television friendly.

The changes have not gone down well with some athletes, with London Olympic gold medalist Renaud Lavillenie, who broke Bubka's long-standing world record, a strong critic.

"I am actually fighting against them, because it is one of the worst ideas I have ever seen," Lavillenie said last year. "The thing is, just one minute is actually just enough... it's just not safe. Pole vault is a dangerous event." Bubka agreed with the need to proceed with caution. "I think we should be careful with this," said the Ukrainian, who won six consecutive world athletics titles and four world indoor titles and set a total of 35 world records.

"This is where we put athletes in danger, put athletes in trouble. Thirty seconds for preparation, specially for outdoor competitions when there can be wind, there can rain, there can be cold, ... this will create some difficulties for the athletes. "I can understand that officials are trying to reduce the length of competition but we can try to find other solutions. Referees and judges can be possibly quicker. For the athletes we have to ensure to give them excellent conditions."

Athletics has been left to ponder an uncertain future following the retirement of sprint king Usain Bolt of Jamaica last year but Bubka said the sport had always faced the same problem over the years.—Reuters



Top USA Gymnastics board members bow to resignation demands

WASHINGTON: Three USA Gymnastics board members resigned on Monday, bowing to demands for a shake-up at the sport's governing body after revelations that the long-time national team doctor sexually abused dozens of female athletes, some as young as 10 years old. The resignations came during the fifth day of stinging testimony by some of the sport's biggest stars at an extended pre-sentencing hearing for the doctor, Larry Nassar, who pleaded guilty in November to 10 counts of molesting female gymnasts. Many of the dozens of athletes and former athletes who testified said they felt angry at and betrayed by USA Gymnastics for ignoring their complaints. The young women accused the governing body of seeking to suppress their accounts in bid to avoid bad publicity about the national program.

After the announcement of the resignations, John Manly, a lawyer who represents 2012 Olympic gold medalist McKayla Maroney and some of Nassar's other victims, said the change at the top was not sweeping enough and called on the federation to change its position that it had no duty to warn athletes about Nassar.

"Until that happens, this move is simply a public relations ploy to save a sinking ship," he said in a statement. The board announced the resignations of chairman Paul Parilla, vice chairman Jay Binder and treasurer Bitsy Kelley, who comprise the gymnastics governing body's executive leadership team. No replacements were named.

"We believe this step will allow us to more effectively

move forward in implementing change within our organization," USA Gymnastics Chief Executive Katy Perry said in a statement. Last March, USA Gymnastics Chief Executive Steve Penny resigned his post. A federation spokeswoman said the departing board members did not have any comment. But Manly said the resignations did not go far enough and called on the remaining 18 board members to step down, saying they were also aware of the federation's mishandling of the Nassar allegations.

He called on Congress to investigate the federation, the U.S. Olympic Committee (USOC) and Michigan State University, where Nassar, 54, worked for years as a physician in a sports clinic. The USOC's chief executive, Scott Blackmun said his organization has pressed USA Gymnastics to change its culture and leadership. "New board leadership is necessary because the current leaders have been focused on establishing that they did nothing wrong," Blackmun said on Twitter. "USA Gymnastics needs to focus on supporting the brave survivors."

STAR TESTIMONY

During Nassar's hearing in Ingham County Circuit Court in Lansing, Michigan, Olympic gold medalist Aly Raisman last week called for an independent investigation into US Gymnastics and Olympic officials, who she said had the power to stop Nassar.

"It's clear now that if we leave it up to these organizations, history is likely to repeat itself," Raisman, 23, said. Raisman was one of about 160 victims who are expected to make statements before the hearing wraps up later this week. Prosecutors have asked for a sentence of 40 to 125 years for Nassar, who is already serving a 60-year sentence in federal prison on child pornography convictions. Rick Burton, sports management professor at Syracuse University, said the leadership changes were crucial for USA Gymnastics to retain its sponsorships, which provide about a third of its funding. "You can't have elite athletes make those kinds of statements and not do anything," he said in a telephone interview. — Reuters

Seoul envoys visit N Korea ahead of Olympics

SEOUL: A South Korean delegation crossed into the North yesterday to inspect venues for joint Olympic-linked events, even as Pyongyang demanded Seoul apologise for "despicable" protestors who burned Kim Jong-Un's image, as controversy mounts over the rapprochement. The two Koreas agreed earlier this month that the North's athletes would attend February's Pyeongchang Winter Games in the South, and that they would form a joint women's ice hockey team and march together at the opening ceremony. The two nations also agreed Southern skiers would train with their counterparts from the North at its Masikryong ski resort, and for a joint cultural event at the scenic Mt Kumgang north of the border. There have since been a flurry of preparatory missions, and the Seoul officials—the first to visit the North in nearly two years—are expected to spend three days in the country. Seoul and the Games organisers have sought to promote Pyeongchang as a "Peace Olympics" to open a door for dialogue with the nuclear-armed North, which has traded threats with the US over the past year. But President Moon Jae-In's peace efforts have met a backlash at home, with many accusing him of using athletes for political purposes and making too many concessions to his hostile neighbour.

A group of right-wing activists went as far as setting leader Kim Jong-Un's image on fire at a rally in Seoul on Monday, along with the North's national flag, prompting a denunciation by Pyongyang.

They were "human rejects devoid of appearance as human beings", the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Country handling inter-Korea affairs said. "They are a despicable group of gangsters in human form," it said in a statement carried by the state-run KCNA news agency, accusing them of committing "a never-to-be-condoned hideous crime". Seoul, it said, had to "apologise before the nation" for the provocation, and take prompt measures to prevent a recurrence. In response to the protests and controversy, South Korea's presidential office on Tuesday called on the public to welcome all countries participating in the Games. "The people have to all work together," presidential spokesman Park Soo-Hyun told reporters. "Let us welcome the guests as dignified hosts." The Southern delegation's visit began a day after a group of Pyongyang officials ended a rare trip to the South to prepare for planned concerts by the North's artistic troupes during the Games—also a part of the inter-Korea deal. —AFP

Shakib inspires Bangladesh to crushing win over Zimbabwe

Final Tri-nation league game tomorrow

SCOREBOARD

DHAKA: Scoreboard of the fifth match of tri-nation one-day international tournament between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka on yesterday:	
Bangladesh	
Tamim Iqbal st Taylor b Cremer	76
Anamul Haque lbw b Jarvis	1
Shakib Al Hasan st Taylor b Raza	51
Mushfiquir Rahim c Muzarabani b Cremer	18
Mahmudullah lbw b Cremer	2
Sabbir Rahman c Ervine b Jarvis	6
Nasir Hossain c Taylor b Jarvis	2
Mashrafe Mortaza c Taylor b Cremer	0
Sunzamul Islam c Muzarabani b Chatara	19
Mustafizur Rahman not out	18
Rubel Hossain not out	8
Extras (lb2, w12, nb1)	15
Total (nine wickets: 50 overs)	216
Fall of wickets: 1-6 (Anamul), 2-112 (Shakib), 3-147 (Mushfiquir), 4-156 (Mahmudullah), 5-163 (Tamim), 6-167 (Sabbir), 7-168 (Nasir), 8-170 (Mashrafe), 9-196 (Sunzamul)	
Bowling: Jarvis 9-0-42-3, Chatara 7-0-33-1 (nb1, w5), Muzarabani 7-0-36-0 (w2), Raza 10-1-39-1 (w5), Cremer 10-0-32-4, Waller 7-0-32-0.	
Zimbabwe (target 217)	
H. Masakadza c Sabbir b Mortaza	5
S. Mire b Shakib	7
C. Ervine c Sabbir b Mortaza	11
B. Taylor lbw b Shakib	0
S. Raza b Mustafizur	39
P. Moor lbw b Sunzamul	14
M. Waller lbw b Sunzamul	0
G. Cremer lbw b Rubel	23
K. Jarvis c Mahmudullah b Mustafizur	10
T. Chatara c Sabbir b Shakib	8
B. Muzarabani not out	0
Extras (w8)	8
Total (all out, 36.3 overs)	125
Fall of wickets: 1-14 (Masakadza), 2-20 (Mire), 3-20 (Taylor) 4-34 (Ervine), 5-68 (Moor), 6-68 (Waller), 7-95 (Cremer), 8-107 (Raza), 9-118 (Chatara), 10-125 (Jarvis)	
Bowling: Shakib 9-2-34-3 (w5), Mortaza 6-0-29-2 (w2), Sunzamul 10-0-28-2 (w1), Mustafizur 6.3-3-16-2, Rubel 5-1-18-1.	
Result: Bangladesh won by 91 runs	
Man of the match: Tamim Iqbal	

DHAKA: Star allrounder Shakib Al Hasan smashed a half-century and claimed three wickets as Bangladesh thrashed Zimbabwe by 91 runs in a tri-nation one-day international tournament in Dhaka yesterday. Chasing 217 for victory, Zimbabwe were bundled out for 125 off 36.3 overs after Shakib took 3-34 with his left-arm spin for the hosts. Shakib and opener Tamim Iqbal, who top-scored with 76, set up the win as they shared 106 runs for the second wicket after Bangladesh elected to bat first.

Zimbabwe skipper Graeme Cremer claimed four wickets to restrict Bangladesh to a modest 216-9

“We let ourselves down big time”

despite a strong start provided by Tamim. The left-handed Tamim registered his third half-century in as many matches, becoming the first Bangladeshi to amass 6,000 ODI runs in the process. He was also named man of the match.

Bangladesh collapsed from 147-2 to 170-8 with paceman Kyle Jarvis grabbing three wickets for 42 runs. “It was a difficult wicket to bat on. Seamers were also getting support from the wicket. We thought that scoring above 200 would give us chance to win the match,” said Tamim.

“Today number 9, 10 and 11 batsmen provided nearly 50 runs for us and that made the difference,” he added. Number-10 batsman Mustafizur Rahman struck an unbeaten 18 to take Bangladesh past the 200-run mark and complete their full quota of 50 overs. Zimbabwe’s Jarvis credited the batting effort of Shakib and Tamim. “The way Tamim and Shakib batted, (by) hitting the ball along the ground, (they) gave themselves a chance,” said Jarvis.

“They got some runs. That’s what we needed; we needed two or three batters to get in and give them-



DHAKA: Bangladesh cricketer Rubel Hossain plays a shot during the fifth one day international (ODI) match in the Tri-Nations Series between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe at the Sher-e-Bangla national cricket stadium in Dhaka yesterday. — AFP

selves a chance. We let ourselves down big time, we should never have been bowled out for 125.”

Zimbabwe were dealt early blows as Shakib and Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Mortaza tore through the opposition top order. They were unable to overcome the damage despite middle-order batsman Sikandar Raza’s gritty 39 off 59 balls-the highest of the innings.

Mustafizur (2-16) ended the resistance of Raza, who dragged a short-pitched delivery onto his stumps.

Mortaza and left-arm spinner Sunzamul Islam also took two wickets each. Zimbabwe still has a chance to join Bangladesh in the final on January 27 provided the hosts beat Sri Lanka by a good margin in the final league game tomorrow. — AFP

Root to miss T20 tri-series, Stokes delays return

SYDNEY: Joe Root yesterday pulled out of England’s Twenty20 tri-series against Australia and New Zealand, as Ben Stokes confirmed his return to international cricket would be delayed by a court appearance.

Test captain Root, who has played in all five Ashes matches and the first three ODIs against Australia this month, will return to England before playing in the one-day international series against New Zealand in late February. Root said he did not like missing games but made a decision to “have a little break”. His replacement has not yet been named. “I came into this tour wanting to play everything. I love playing for England and I don’t like missing games of cricket,” the 27-year-old Yorkshire batsman said in a statement.

“I had a long chat with (coach) Trevor Bayliss about things and there’s obviously a big summer ahead and a lot of cricket still to be played. “It’s going to be really important to make sure that I’m available for all of that.” Stokes is due in court to face charges of affray on February 13, the same day England play New Zealand in the T20 series. The 26-year-old missed England’s Ashes series defeat in Australia after he was suspended from international duty by the England and Wales Cricket Board following his involvement in an incident outside a nightclub in September. He was last week included in the squad to play the triangular T20 tournament.

“As has been confirmed in the media a first hearing date at court has been set for 13th February,” Stokes tweeted Tuesday. “In the circumstances, I have decided that it would not be right to join my teammates until after attending court on the 13th.” The news came ahead of this year’s Indian Premier League auction set for January 27-28 in Bangalore, with both Root and Stokes lining up as among the top-ranking players the eight teams can bid for. Australian captain Steve Smith has been rested for the T20 games ahead of the crucial Test tour to South Africa, with David Warner stepping up to lead the team.

The T20 tri-series takes place in Australia and New Zealand from February 3-21. England’s five-match ODI series against New Zealand runs from February 25 to March 10. — AFP

Kohli challenges individuals in Indian team

JOHANNESBURG: Captain Virat Kohli revealed yesterday there has been some hard talking in the India camp ahead of the third and final Test against South Africa, starting at the Wanderers Stadium today.

He said his call after defeat in the second Test at Centurion to “be hard on ourselves” had been followed through. “Everyone has been spoken to individually as to what went wrong, what happened and why it happened,” Kohli said.

“The guys have taken it well. Any time that you step on to the field, it is an opportunity to correct your mistakes and that is how you progress at the international level.” He said batting coach Sanjay Bangar had worked with all the batsmen with a view to salvaging something from a series in which India are facing the possibility of a 3-0 defeat.

“I am sure everyone is looking forward to rectifying those mistakes and, if they are in the same positions (again), to consolidate those positions,” said Kohli. The Indian captain added: “We have looked at the positives from the first two games as well. It is not many times on overseas tours that we have taken 40 wickets in two Tests. “If the bowlers can continue doing their job, whichever team bats better can win the Test match. It’s a chance for everyone to step up and turn things around.” Both captains said there was a possibility they could go into the match with all-seam attacks on a green, well-grassed pitch.

‘AMAZING STAT’

Remarkably, at a Wanderers ground which usually favours fast bowlers, South Africa have yet to beat India in four Test matches. South African captain Faf du Plessis admitted that was “an amazing stat”. He acknowledged



JOHANNESBURG: Dinesh Karthik (C) dives for the ball during a training session on the eve of the first day of the third Test against South Africa yesterday in Johannesburg. — AFP

that teams get a boost from playing where they or their predecessors have enjoyed success.

“You get some grounds where you get a bit of confidence with the way that you play and you run with it,” he said. “I can think of a place like Perth in Australia, where we have never lost, and we get to the ground and we feel, ‘we are confident here, we can perform here’.”

But he said the South Africans were determined to complete a 3-0 series sweep. “What you can do is keep them under pressure. They are obviously under pressure now, being 2-0 down in the series.

“A good start with the bat or with the ball is when you can put a team down. If you can be really solid, you would think their fighting spirit will slowly go away.” Du Plessis said a key factor, as in the first two Tests, would be batting

partnerships.

“I think the difference between us and India is that more batters have contributed to partnerships than them. For me, it’s making sure we keep the pressure on their batsmen. “It’s been a pretty quiet series for most of them. If we keep doing that we will change that (Wanderers) stat.” Du Plessis admitted that the Indian Premier League auction this weekend could be a distraction. “The IPL plays a big part in all of our lives. For the management and myself it’s important to keep the focus and the energy driving towards the Test match.

“At the end of the day’s play, if you want to talk about the auction for a bit, you can do it. But the next day when it’s Test match time again we must be switched on and focused.” —AFP

Pope performs miracle, rejects comparisons to spin great Warne

ELLINGTON: Lloyd Pope produced something of a cricketing miracle yesterday when the leg-spinner took tournament record figures of eight wickets for 35 to bowl Australia into the semi-finals of the under-19 cricket World Cup in New Zealand.

The 18-year-old’s haul was even more impressive considering the fact that his side had been dismissed for 127 in the 34th over of their quarter-final against England, who were cruising to victory at 47 without loss after seven overs.

Pope, however, was then thrown the ball by captain Jason Sangha and he proceeded to run amok, taking two wickets in his first over off successive balls.

“Sangh (Sangha) put me on pretty early,” Pope told reporters after England were bowled out for 96,

despite opener Tom Banton scoring 58. “I like putting myself in pressure scenarios, I feel like I bowl better under pressure. “Sangh throwing me the ball gives me a bit of confidence that my captain is trying to advance the game and for me to land the ball in there straight away and take wickets, I love those scenarios in the game.” Pope said despite the fact his side had set such a paltry target at the Queenstown Events Centre, no-one believed they would lose the game, even after Banton had given England a blistering start.

“Everybody had some real fight left in them and we were constantly talking about winning the game,” Pope said. “We didn’t think we were ever falling behind. We all felt that we were in it and could win. “We always had the belief even when they 47 for none.”

Pope followed his double-strike by removing Will Jacks for one and then had Banton and Finlay Trenouth both caught by Sangha at slip to leave England reeling on 79-5 at the scheduled lunch break and staring defeat in the face. He finished off the tail after the break and the comparisons to leg-spinning great Shane Warne were immediately being made. The Australian is widely considered to have changed the art of leg-spin as he tortured batsmen worldwide with his control and variations before retiring with 708 test wickets but Pope said he did not feel anything like him.— Reuters



Up-and-coming South Australia leg spinner Lloyd Pope seen in action during the Under-19 National Championships.

Costa keeps champions Juventus in hot pursuit of leaders Napoli

Juventus deny Balotelli move

TURIN: Brazilian Douglas Costa scored the only goal as champions Juventus kept in hot pursuit of leaders Napoli with a 1-0 against Genoa on Monday. Napoli stayed top after the first game following the winter break when Dries Mertens ended a long goal drought in a 1-0 victory at Atalanta on Sunday.

Maurizio Sarri's side have 54 points after 21 games to stay one point ahead of Juventus. Poland's Wojciech Szczesny continued in place of the injured Gianluigi Buffon in goal for the Turin giants, with Costa starting ahead of Federico Bernardeschi up front. Miralem Pjanic missed an early chance from a free-kick awarded after six minutes when Gonzalo Higuain was fouled on the edge of the box, but Mattia Perin cleared.

But Costa broke through after 16 minutes in the Allianz Stadium and exchanged passes with Mario Mandzukic before slotting the ball past Perin. Although Genoa had struggled for possession before the break the champions were less threatening in the second half against a side that are 15th in the league.

"I think it's a very important goal," said Costa. "It was a difficult second half but it was important that the team did not concede a goal and brought the game home. "We must think only of ourselves and move forward without looking at others," he said.

Lazio moved third, 11 points behind Napoli, thanks to a thumping 5-1 win over Chievo in Rome on Sunday, equal on points but ahead of Inter Milan on goal difference. Luciano Spalletti's Inter fell further behind after a

scrappy 1-1 home draw with Champions League-chasing Roma, who are three points behind in fifth.

Inter are winless in six games in the league and no longer look like title contenders, while Roma, who stay fifth on 40 points, have fallen even further behind after picking up just ten points from a possible 24 since beating Lazio in mid-November.

Meanwhile, Juventus general manager Giuseppe Marotta has dismissed reports that the Serie A champions are interested in signing Italian striker Mario Balotelli as "a hoax". There were reports that a five-year deal was in the offing for the former Manchester City striker, who has hit top form for Nice this season with 17 goals.

"Beyond our affection, esteem and liking for this boy it's a fantasy football story," Marotta told Mediaset Premium on Monday. "His is a profile we don't need." Balotelli won six trophies with Inter Milan including the Champions League before moving to Manchester City in 2010, followed by two spells at AC Milan either side of an unsuccessful stint at Liverpool.

The 27-year-old left Liverpool on a free transfer in August 2016 to join Nice, who are sixth in the French league this season. Marotta confirmed the reigning six-time league champions' interest in Liverpool's German international Emre Can, whose contract expires in June.

"We know his contract is expiring but he could renew or have other opportunities," said Marotta. "We'll try to bring him to us, I think a big club has to have the ambition to achieve difficult objectives." —AFP



TURIN: Juventus' forward Gonzalo Higuain from Argentina (R) fights for the ball with Genoa's defender Armando Izzo (C) during the Italian Serie A football match Juventus Vs Genoa on Monday, at the Allianz Stadium in Turin. — AFP

‘Superstar’ Sanchez the right fit for Man Utd: Giggs

LONDON: Ryan Giggs says Alexis Sanchez is a ready-made "superstar" who can give Manchester United a lift as they bid to chase down Premier League rivals Manchester City. Sanchez on Monday sealed a move to United from Arsenal in a swap deal with Henrikh Mkhitaryan, saying he was "thrilled to be joining the biggest club in the world".

The 29-year-old Chile striker, who came close to joining Manchester City last summer, has signed what is believed to be a four-and-a-half-year contract that will make him the highest-paid player in the Premier League. It has been widely reported that Sanchez will earn a pre-tax salary of £500,000 (\$697,000, 569,000 euros) a week at Old Trafford. "Manchester United signing Alexis Sanchez is similar to Robin van Persie in the sense that they're getting a ready-made superstar and you're seeing the contribution already with Anthony Martial upping his performances," new Wales manager Giggs said on skysports.com.

"That can happen when top players come in, those around them lift their levels, and there will be some difficult selection decisions for Jose Mourinho. "However, Sanchez can also play on the right, as he did at Barcelona, so if Martial is flying then he may have to play in a different position, but those sort of decisions are positive for a manager to have to make."

United boss Mourinho said Sanchez would "complete our very young and talented group of attacking players" alongside the likes of Romelu Lukaku, Marcus Rashford, in-form Jesse Lingard and Martial, who has scored three goals in his past three Premier League games. Giggs, United's most-decorated player, said it was an extra bonus that the former Arsenal man would be able to play in the Champions League.



LONDON: File photo taken on May 7, 2017 shows Arsenal's Chilean striker Alexis Sanchez watching the ball during the English Premier League football match. — AFP

United play Sevilla in the first leg of their last-16 tie on February 21.

"To have somebody like that, who won't be fazed by playing in the big games, makes the squad look really strong," he wrote. United, who have not won the Premier League title since 2013, are second in the table but trail Manchester City by 12 points—a gap that looks impossible to breach even with four months of the season to run. Sanchez took a parting shot in an Instagram post at ex-Arsenal players who have criticised his attitude. "There are people (former club players) who have spoken with no knowledge of what happens inside the club and cause damage," Sanchez wrote.



SWANSEA: Swansea City's Polish goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski (R) catches the ball under pressure from Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah during the English Premier League football match between Swansea City and Liverpool in Swansea. —AFP

wide before the break and Van Dijk flashed a header just wide of the post. Liverpool kept pressing in the second half, but either found their strikers lacking or else discovered Lukasz Fabianski in inspired form in the Swansea goal.

He first denied Salah when he tipped over the Egyptian's free kick with an acrobatic save on the hour mark. Then, Fabianski dived low to deny Liverpool substitute Danny Ings late on. The goal came was a throw-back to the type of problems Liverpool have suffered under Klopp.

Liverpool dealt with one corner, but conceded a

second and from that kick the Swans took their unlikely lead through Mawson, leaving Klopp looking aghast. It was not just Klopp who was rattled as Liverpool pair Andrew Robertson and Joel Matip were shown yellow cards in quick succession. Robertson was booked for hacking at Ayew as he lay over the ball after a foul and then Matip went for scything down Lucas. Salah then put the ball on a plate for Mane with the last move of the half, but the striker volleyed wide from a tight angle.

Liverpool continued to surge forward after the break, but Swansea showed their new-found discipline under Carvalhal. — AFP

World Cup boost for VAR after ‘positive’ tests

PARIS: Video assistant referees (VAR) could be used at the World Cup in Russia later this year after the committee responsible for the laws of football pronounced itself "encouraged" by tests.

Since March 2016, VAR has been tested in more than 20 competitions and in more than 800 matches, unleashing mixed reactions and a heated debate.

On Monday, the International Football Association Board (IFAB), the rule-making arm of world governing body FIFA, heard a statistical presentation on the results and pronounced them "positive and encouraging". The board said on its website that "the experiment has been thorough".

IFAB said it would vote on a proposal to ensure international consistency in the use of VAR at its general meeting in Zurich on March 3. That could pave the way to using the technology in Russia.

"The philosophy we laid out from the start is being respected. We wanted the minimum of interference in the game and the maximum of benefit," said an IFAB spokesperson in a telephone interview.

In eight percent of matches video had a "decisive impact on the result" and in one in four a "positive impact", according to the report. The report countered criticism that VAR breaks the rhythm and fluidity of the game, insisting that "lost time" caused by reviews represents, on average, one percent of playing time, a lot less than free-kicks, throw-ins or goal-kicks.

Errors are also relatively rare. VAR missed a "clear and manifest" refereeing error in only five percent of the test games, a number that IFAB deemed "very encouraging given the short time frame of testing and inevitable human errors".

VAR has been tested in international competitions such as the Confederations Cup, as well as European leagues like the German Bundesliga and Italy's Serie A, and cup competitions in England and France. But not everyone is convinced by its success.—AFP

Battling Swansea shock Liverpool

SWANSEA: Liverpool's progress towards securing a Champions League spot was halted by the Premier League's bottom club and a single goal by Alfie Mawson on Monday as Liverpool's defensive frailties returned. Jurgen Klopp's side, with £75 million centre-back Virgil van Dijk making his away debut, were seeking to extend their unbeaten run to 19 matches and draw level on points with third-placed Chelsea.

But fresh from dramatically ending Manchester City's unbeaten run, the Reds ran into a determined Swansea side desperate to close the gap on the strugglers above them. Despite laying siege to the Swansea goal, Klopp's side were unable to find the net and Roberto Firmino struck the post with a header in the dying seconds. The defeat snapped Liverpool's unbeaten 14-match run in the Premier League dating back to October and old, familiar defensive failings were laid bare despite Van Dijk's arrival.

Swansea took the lead against the run of play just before half-time when Mawson swept the ball in from a corner after Van Dijk failed to head clear. The ball struck Swansea captain Federico Fernandez and Mawson swivelled to shoot past Liverpool keeper Loris Karius. It was exactly the kind of soft goal that Liverpool manager Klopp thought he had found the solution to with the purchase of the towering Dutchman. In contrast to their clinical performance against City at Anfield, Liverpool were wasteful and guilty of missing a number of first-half chances. Sadio Mane and leading goalscorer Mo Salah both volleyed

13 Cousins carries Pelicans with historic triple-double victory



14 Pope performs miracle, rejects comparisons to spin great Warne



15 Costa keeps champions Juventus in hot pursuit of leaders Napoli



MELBOURNE: Spain's Rafael Nadal hits a return against Croatia's Marin Cilic during their men's singles quarter-finals match on day nine of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

Nadal retires on day of upsets

Wozniacki stutters into Aussie Open semi-finals

MELBOURNE: Rafael Nadal's drive towards a 17th Grand Slam title came to a shuddering injury-induced halt yesterday on a day of Australian Open upsets that saw unseeded Kyle Edmund and Elise Mertens make the semi-finals. The world number one retired against Marin Cilic after a muscle in his upper right leg began troubling him in the fourth set on Rod Laver Arena, with the Spaniard wincing in pain and limping as he struggled to continue. His 3-6, 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 2-0 exit set up a last-four clash for the former US Open champion against Britain's Edmund, who stunned third seed Grigor Dimitrov 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Mertens, who is yet to drop a set, was equally convincing in blasting past world number four Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-0 to become the first Belgian to make the semis since Kim Clijsters in 2012. She will play second-seeded Dane Caroline Wozniacki, who battled past veteran Spaniard Carla Suarez Navarro in three sets, for a place in Saturday's final.

Little separated Nadal and big-hitting Cilic until the injury struck, as they traded ferocious groundstrokes in an intense battle. But the Spaniard, who was beaten in

last year's final by Roger Federer, called the physio at 1-4 in the fourth set and again at the changeover when two sets apiece and the writing was on the wall.

"Tough moments," said the top seed, adding that it was too soon to say how bad the injury might be. "I am a positive person, but today is an opportunity lost to be in the semi-finals of a Grand Slam and fight for an important title for me." Croat Cilic, the sixth seed, said it was "sad" to win in such a way but added that "I played great tennis, very high level". "So I am extremely pleased with the performance," Nadal's retirement follows the departure on Monday of Novak Djokovic, with the Serb's immediate playing future uncertain after an elbow injury flared. He

also appeared to have a hip problem.

There were no such troubles for Edmund against Dimitrov, as he became only the fourth British man to reach the Australian Open semi-finals in the post-1968 Open Era. "It's an amazing feeling. I'm very happy," said the overwhelmed 23-year-old, ranked 49. "It was my first match on Rod Laver Arena and it's very special."

TOO PHYSICAL

He is the only British man in the draw after Andy Murray's injury withdrawal before the tournament, raising the prospect that it will be him, rather than the Scot, who breaks through to win in Australia. Murray has been a five-time finalist, but lost them all.

World number 37 Mertens is on a hot streak of form, unbeaten in 10 matches after winning in Hobart this month. She was too physical for Svitolina as she stormed into the semis, incredibly on her Australian Open debut.

"It's amazing. I mean, it was not expected, especially today. Really tough match," said the Belgian. "But I was in the zone today. If you believe in yourself, then anything can happen. But of course semis is 'Wow'."

Svitolina blamed a hip injury for her shock ousting as she again failed to get to the last-four of a Grand Slam on her 22nd attempt. She needed a run to the final to have a chance of displacing Simona Halep at the top of the rankings. Romania's Halep plays her quarter-final against sixth seed Karolina Pliskova today.

Wozniacki made the semis for the first time since 2011, overcoming familiar foe Suarez Navarro 6-0, 6-7 (3/7), 6-2 as she inched closer to a first-ever Grand Slam title after a decade of trying. "I'm proud I managed to stay cool and finish it off in the third set," she said. "I had a little bit more energy than she did." — AFP



World number 37 Mertens is on a hot streak of form

Russia confirms star track speed skater An banned

MOSCOW: Short track speed skating star Victor An has been excluded from the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics in the aftermath of a state-sponsored doping scandal, angry Russian officials confirmed yesterday. Six-time Olympic gold medalist An—who was born in South Korea but took Russian citizenship before the 2014 Sochi Games—was "absent from the list of potential participants", vice president of the Russian Olympic Committee Stanislav Pozdnyakov said in a statement, confirming media reports from Monday.

Olympic champion biathlete Anton Shipulin

and world champion skier Sergei Ustyugov were also absent from the list of athletes invited by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the statement said. The absent sportsmen have "never been implicated in any type of doping affair and the numerous tests they have passed in their careers show that they are clean athletes", Pozdnyakov said.

"Today we will send the International Olympic Committee a request for the specific reasons why the captains of Russian teams in various sports have not been included in the list of potential participants."

The ROC said it did not see this as a final decision, but An's lawyer told media on Monday there would not be time to appeal before the Games. In a separate statement, the Russian figure skating federation said skaters Ksenia Stolbova and Ivan Bukin had been banned from the games, in a decision the body slammed as "groundless and absurd".

Stolbova along with her partner Fedor Klimov took silver in the European

Championships in Moscow last week and the pair were also second at the Sochi Winter Games in 2014. Bukin won bronze with his partner Alexandra Stepanova at the latest European Championships.

President of the Russian Skating Union Alexei Kravtsov said he was "outraged by the unjust decision" to bar top athletes. "By acting like this, the IOC can be compared to a despot and a tyrant, trampling on laws and deciding people's fate simply according to its whims," he said in a statement. "It is clear that we do not really have time to do anything before the Olympics, but we intend to continue the fight to clear the names of our athletes," he added.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said he had seen the "sad" media reports that An, Ustyugov and Shipulin had been banned. "We deeply regret this, if such a decision is indeed taken," he told journalists. The IOC banned Russia from the 2018 Olympics after a report on a vast, Moscow-backed doping scheme in previous Games. —AFP



SOCHI: File photo taken on February 23, 2014 shows Russia's gold medalist Victor An posing during the Men's Short Track 500 m Medal Ceremony at the Sochi medals plaza. An has been banned from the Pyeongchang Winter Games, the Russian Olympic Committee confirmed yesterday. — AFP

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Middle East debut**20** World stocks hit another record
high after US funding deal**21** Third generation Cayenne
continues its success story

DAVOS: Guests gather prior to the Crystal Award ceremony ahead of the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2018 annual meeting on Monday. — AFP photos

Globalization is losing its luster: Modi

Snow-bound Davos warms to business-friendly climate

DAVOS: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi acknowledged yesterday that globalization is “losing its luster,” but warned that new trade walls are not the answer, opening a week of Davos meetings that will climax with a speech by the loudly protectionist US President Donald Trump.

After spectacular snowfall that stranded some high-flying delegates on their way to the Swiss ski resort, the World Economic Forum started in earnest basking in robust global growth but facing warnings that the world's have-nots are missing out more than ever. Modi told the forum that India should serve as an example as it opens up to foreign investment, in a speech that delved into Indian scripture and had strong echoes of an anti-protectionist clarion call issued in Davos a year ago by Chinese President Xi Jinping as Trump prepared to take office.

“It feels like the opposite of globalization is happening. The negative impact of this kind of mindset and the wrong priorities cannot be considered less dangerous than climate change or terrorism,” Modi said, staging the first appearance at Davos by an Indian prime minister since 1997.

“In fact everyone is talking about an

interconnected world but we will have to accept the fact that globalization is slowly losing its luster,” he said. “The solution to this worrisome situation is not isolationism. Its solution is understanding and accepting change and formulating agile and flexible policies for these changing times.”



WEF meetings bask in glory of robust global growth

Trump came to office on a populist platform that demonized the globalist Davos elite. While some delegates are relieved that full-blown trade wars with the likes of China have yet to erupt, the president served a fresh reminder that his rhetoric has teeth.

Trump on Monday approved steep tariffs on imports of solar panels and washing machines to protect US producers, trigger-

ing an outcry in China and South Korea.

Let the winds blow

However in Davos, Modi channelled the founding father of independent India, Mohandas Gandhi, who he said had argued that “I don’t want the walls and windows of my house to be closed from all directions. “I want that the winds of cultures of all countries enter my house with aplomb and go out also. However I will not accept my feet to be uprooted by these winds.”

That was redolent of Xi last year, who wowed the Davos crowd by warning that pursuing protectionism “is like locking oneself in a dark room”. “Wind and rain may be kept outside, but so is light and air.”

Modi, touting India’s growing appeal to foreign investors and his Hindu-nationalist government’s campaign to promote technology, said the country took Gandhi’s thinking on board entirely. “With complete self-confidence and fearlessness, India is welcoming this wave from all over the world,” he said.

Despite its impressive growth under the Modi government, India displays some of



DAVOS: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivers a speech on the opening day of the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2018 annual meeting yesterday.

the world’s worst extremes of the rich-poor divide, an issue exercising the 70-odd leaders and thousands of delegates engaging in the week of debate high in the Swiss Alps.

Undermining rosy data on the world

economy are warnings that elite fora such as Davos must start finding solutions for everyone else down the income ladder as the “one percent” amass untold riches a decade since a major financial crisis erupted. — AFP

US votes to end shutdown, Trump claims win

WASHINGTON: Congress put the US government back in business Monday by voting to end a three-day shutdown, as President Donald Trump claimed victory in his standoff with Democrats in Washington.

The House voted 266 to 150 to extend federal funding, hours after Senate Democrats dropped their opposition to the plan after winning Republican assurances of a vote on

immigration in the coming weeks. Trump signed the measure into law Monday night, and government operations essentially returned to normal yesterday.

“I know there’s great relief that this episode is coming to an end,” House Speaker Paul Ryan told colleagues. “But this is not a moment to pat ourselves on the back. Not even close.”

The stalemate consumed Washington for the better part of a week, as lawmakers and the White House feuded over immigration policy and the nation’s two main political parties exchanged bitter barbs before finally reaching a deal. “I am pleased Democrats in Congress have come to their senses,” Trump said in a defiant statement, as lawmakers moved to get hundreds of thousands of federal government employees back to work. — AFP

Russia may back Aramco IPO, enhance OPEC ties

DAVOS: Russian pension funds are considering investing in Saudi Arabian state oil major Aramco when it lists its stock in a move to strengthen the partnership between the world’s two top oil producers, Russia’s top state investment officer said. The head of Russia’s Direct Investment Fund, Kirill Dmitriev, told Reuters yesterday that Moscow and Riyadh should be coordinating oil policies for many more years.

“We see great interest in the Aramco IPO from Russian pension funds as well as from our Chinese partners,” said Dmitriev, who two years ago was the first Russian official to suggest the possibility of a joint oil output deal with OPEC. He said he could not disclose the names of the funds or the amount they were prepared to invest. Sources told Reuters

last year Chinese state oil companies were willing to become cornerstone investors in the Aramco IPO which could become the world’s biggest, valuing the firm at up to \$2 trillion and raising more than \$100 billion.

“Russia already has significant positions in the oil business so it is hard to expect us taking a very significant stake during the IPO,” Dmitriev said on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

He added that the deal would help strengthen growing cooperation with Riyadh. Non-OPEC Russia and OPEC led by Saudi Arabia agreed to cut oil output by 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) or around 2 percent of global production throughout 2017 and 2018, in a move that has helped oil prices to double from their 2016 lows to around \$70 a barrel. “Extending such cooperation for many more years would be very useful for the market. It has proven its efficiency, when we were targeting balancing supply and demand rather than targeting a particular oil price,” said Dmitriev.

OPEC has said it wanted global oil stocks

to return to a five-year average and the group’s officials have said that target could be reached by the middle or end of 2018.

But even when the target is reached, OPEC has insisted it would exit from cuts gradually in order not to shock the market. “Future mechanisms of cooperation and concrete tools could differ,” said Dmitriev. He said oil producers had generated an extra \$600 billion in revenues thanks to oil cuts and higher prices over the past year, which allowed them to resume investments and guarantee no supply shortages in the future.

For Russia and Saudi Arabia the deal has also paved the way for dialogue on many other fronts despite the two countries effectively fighting a proxy war in Syria. “The deal has created elements of trust in investments and in political cooperation. It did help political dialogue. It showed Russia and Saudi Arabia can work together,” Dmitriev said. “Without the deal, a visit of the Saudi king to Russia wouldn’t have been possible and wouldn’t have been that successful,” said Dmitriev, referring to King Salman’s visit in October. — Reuters

Business

INFINITI QX80 makes Mideast debut

New QX80 exemplifies INFINITI’s presence in luxury SUV segment



DUBAI: Following the World Premiere at the 2017 Dubai International Motor Show, the INFINITI QX80 has arrived to the Middle East region. Further advancing INFINITI's market-leading presence in the full-size luxury SUV segment, the QX80 takes INFINITI's 'Powerful Elegance' design language in a bold new direction, creating a powerful, contemporary and commanding aesthetic.

The new model has been created to meet the needs of today's luxury car buyers, and introduces

a more modern interpretation of upscale luxury to the full-size SUV segment. It will appeal to a buyer that wants for nothing: affluent, high-achieving entrepreneurs and business leaders, often with families, who demand space and utility, hand-crafted quality and modern design, and effortless on-road performance. Markus Leithe, Managing Director, INFINITI Middle East said: "The new INFINITI QX80 has been designed and engineered to allow customers to travel everywhere in luxury. The world

premiere of this vehicle in the UAE, underlines the strategic importance of our flagship SUV for our region. With a host of enhancements, we are confident that the new QX80 will continue to be a cornerstone for our success in the region."

The QX80 has a refined and spacious cabin that features high-quality materials, a hand-crafted finish and advanced drive-assist technologies. With a taut yet comfort-oriented suspension, and ample performance from its 5.6-liter V8 engine, the

new QX80 gives drivers an assured feeling of control and confidence at the wheel.

The QX80's rear entertainment system has also been upgraded. Higher-resolution screens provide the interface for connectivity and entertainment devices. The system also now supports 31 languages, up from three in the outgoing QX80.

The QX80 is newly-available with a range of technologies to inform the driver of their surroundings, help them avoid potential hazards and ease

the monotony of driving in certain conditions. These technologies include: Lane Departure Warning and Prevention, Intelligent Cruise Control, Distance Control Assist, Predictive Forward Collision Warning, Forward Emergency Braking, Blind Spot Warning and Intervention and Backup Collision Intervention.

The new QX80 is available across the Middle East with an MSRP that starts at AED 307,500 with the top grade at AED 334,550.

Philippine economy grows 6.7% in 2017

MANILA: The Philippine economy grew 6.7 percent in 2017, remaining one of Asia's best performers despite a weaker business process outsourcing industry, the government announced yesterday.

Government spending ensured the country remained one of Asia's fastest-growing major economies, behind only China and Vietnam, Economic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia told reporters. However he said last year's growth was slower than the 6.9 percent gross domestic product (GDP) rise in 2016, when consumer spending was boosted during elections that propelled President Rodrigo Duterte to power.

But the 2017 figure was "a good performance", Pernia said, with China having reported 6.9 percent 2017 GDP growth last week and Vietnam achieving a 10-year-high expansion of 6.81 percent over the same period. Philippine economic growth in the three months to December 2017 was at an annualized 6.6 percent clip, slower than the previous quarter's 7.0 percent pace.

The business processing outsourcing industry, worth \$23 billion and employing 1.15 million people, was a "major contributing factor to this decline", Pernia said.

The sector, which has become a major pillar of the Philippine economy, includes call centers and offices that carry out such functions for overseas companies as accounting, medical and legal transcription, software design, animation and even architecture.

Industry officials said investment fell 31.3 percent year-on-year in the three months to last June, with threats by US President Donald Trump to bring back jobs outsourced abroad cited as a key factor. There was also concern in the Philippines that automation and artificial intelligence could eventually steal call-center jobs. The Philippines' fourth quarter growth was marginally lower than market expectations, said Sanjay Mathur, chief Southeast Asia and India economist for ANZ Research, adding the trade balance in the last two months of 2017 also deteriorated.

"The prospects for growth in the Philippines remain solid," Mathur said, citing the passage last month of Duterte's tax reform program designed to raise funds for infrastructure spending.

State spending should reinforce already strong domestic demand, Mathur added. Pernia said the government remained confident it would hit its growth target range of 7-8 percent this year, powered by Duterte's vow to raise spending on transport, energy, and water supply infrastructure. — AFP

Markets buoyant as US shutdown crisis blows over

KUWAIT: US stock markets ended Monday's session in record territory after Senate Democrats and Republicans reached a settlement to revive the US government. The S&P rose 0.8 percent for the day at 2,832.98, steered by a more than 2 percent increase in telecommunication and energy sectors. The jump in equity markets was derived after the Senate voted 81-18 to end debate and move to a vote on the funding bill helping end a three-day impasse on immigration policy that has kept federal workers at home.

The greenback was trading slight weaker yesterday, however the depreciation is limited. The single currency has been gaining momentum thanks to German politics and an optimistic Bundesbank. The EUR/USD is currently trading at 1.2260, while the euro is on the back foot versus the Sterling pound. The EUR/GBP pair is hovering around the 0.8765.

In Japan, the BoJ maintained its monetary settings yesterday and painted a more upbeat picture on price growth than the previous quarter, indicating that the Bank's perception on inflation will gradually push towards the 2 percent target around the fiscal year ending in March 2020. The BoJ stated that the economy is projected to expand moderately and it will maintain its extremely loose monetary policy as long as needed to hit its inflation target. Looking at the economic data, the economy grew for seven continuous quarters, the longest uninterrupted stretch of growth since 1994 and stock prices are at their highest in 26 years.

As for core inflation, prices rose for the 11th straight month in November and the percentage of households

Asia fears US tariffs on washing machines, solar panels just the start

SEOUL/BEIJING: South Korea and China protested yesterday against US President Donald Trump slapping steep import tariffs on washing machines and solar panels in a move that stirred fears in Asia of more protectionist measures coming out of Washington.

For all his rhetoric to win votes, Trump's actions on trade during his first year had been less alarming than

Chart Points and Other Technical Input

CCY	2nd Support	1st Support	Spot	1st Resistance	2nd Resistance
EUR	1.2160	1.2210	1.2259	1.2320	1.2370
GBP	1.3880	1.3930	1.3984	1.4030	1.4080
JPY	109.85	110.30	110.78	111.35	111.85
CHF	0.9525	0.9570	0.9618	0.9670	0.9720

Local & Global Rates

CCY	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
KWD	1.38	1.69	1.88	2.13	2.38
USD	1.47	1.56	1.74	1.93	2.23
EUR	-0.42	-0.40	-0.38	-0.34	-0.26
GBP	0.48	0.50	0.52	0.58	0.78
CHF	-0.81	-0.80	-0.74	-0.64	-0.53

expecting inflation to accelerate hit a nearly two-year high in January. Overall, the perception that inflation in Japan will remain low have decreased significantly and if rates are rising in the US and Japan's economy is doing well, there will be some upward pressure on rates.

The EUR/USD pair moved up to the 1.2274 level during Monday's trading session and currently trading at 1.2259.

many outside the country had feared - until now. "It shows that the US administration, after taking its time, it's now indeed starting to roll out measures restricting trade with the idea of living up to the promises made during the electoral campaign," said Louis Kuijs, head of Asia economics at global consultancy Oxford Economics, in Hong Kong. "This could very well be just one step of many," said Kuijs, predicting steel and aluminium imports could be on Washington's target list.

The United States' stance has put a cloud over global trade at a time when its revival has fueled hopes for a stronger world economy. But, at least, economists believe the United States will avoid taking measures that could impact US companies global supply chains, particularly for cars and electronics. The tariffs on washing machines, meantime, have dealt a heavy blow to South Korea's Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics.

Together they ship between 2.5 million to 3 million

washing machines annually to the United States, with sales of around \$1 billion, and they hold a quarter of a US market that has been dominated by Whirlpool and General Electric Co. South Korea's trade minister Kim Hyun-chong said the new US tariffs violated World Trade Organization rules. "The United States has opted for measures that put political considerations ahead of international standards," Kim told a meeting of industry officials. "The government will actively respond to the spread of protectionist measures to defend national interests."

China, the world's biggest solar panel producer branded the move an "overreaction" that would harm the global trade environment for affected products.

"The US's decision ... is an abuse of trade remedy measures, and China expresses strong dissatisfaction regarding this," Wang Hejun, the head of the commerce ministry's Trade Remedy and Investigation Bureau, said in a statement on its microblog. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.721
Indian Rupees	4.734
Pakistani Rupees	2.727
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.957
Nepali Rupees	2.956
Singapore Dollar	229.200
Hongkong Dollar	38.552
Bangladesh Taka	3.619
Philippine Peso	5.946
Thai Baht	9.487
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.427
Qatari Riyal	82.836
Omani Riyal	783.264
Bahraini Dinar	800.850
UAE Dirham	82.137
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.700
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.990
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.210
Tunisian Dinar	124.700
Jordanian Dinar	425.110
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.009
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	33.121
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	301.400

Euro	371.320
Sterling Pound	420.750
Canadian dollar	243.260
Turkish lira	80.160
Swiss Franc	316.360
Australian Dollar	24.413
US Dollar Buying	300.200
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 Franc	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	0.415184	0.422884
Czech Korune	0.006503	0.015803
Danish Krone	0.045492	0.050492
Euro	0.363444	0.370944
Georgian Lari	0.118327	0.118327
Hungarian 0.001100	0.001290	0.001290
Norwegian Krone	0.034233	0.039433
Romanian Leu	0.062086	0.078936
Russian ruble	0.005316	0.005316
Slovakia	0.008963	0.018953
Swedish Krona	0.033445	0.038446
Swiss Franc	0.306422	0.317422
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.232109	0.244109
New Zealand Dollar	0.214183	0.223683
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.236260	0.245260
US Dollars	0.297150	0.301570
US Dollars Mint	0.297650	0.301570

Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003272	0.003856
Chinese Yuan	0.045534	0.049034
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036443	0.039193
Indian Rupee	0.004273	0.004914
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002633	0.002813
Korean Won	0.000271	0.000286
Malaysian Ringgit	0.072671	0.078671
Nepalese Rupee	0.003006	0.003178
Pakistani Rupee	0.002550	0.002840
Philippine Peso	0.005916	0.006216
Singapore Dollar	0.222992	0.232992
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001726	0.002306
Taiwan	0.010191	0.010371
Thai Baht	0.009105	0.009655
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.792503	0.801003
Egyptian Pound	0.014341	0.020059
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000098	0.000258
Jordanian Dinar	0.420278	0.429278
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000149	0.000249
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021960	0.045960
Omani Riyal	0.776149	0.781829
Qatar Riyal	0.078456	0.083396
Saudi Riyal	0.079247	0.080547
Syrian Pound	0.001276	0.001496
Tunisian Dinar	0.119969	0.127969
Turkish Lira	0.074507	0.084807
UAE Dirhams	0.080594	0.082294
Yemeni Riyal	0.000979	0.001059

Lincoln Alghanim Reveals the All-New Navigator at the 2018 Kuwait Motor Show

The new showroom will be inaugurated in February to introduce the full Presidential line

In its new home, Lincoln Alghanim, the American luxury car brand Lincoln revealed the power and distinct presence of its most-anticipated 2018 Navigator model in a remarkable setting at the annual Kuwait Motor Show. The reveal was attended by H.E. Deputy Minister of Al-Diwan Al-Amiri Affairs, Sheikh Mohamed Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, and the Ambassador of the United States of America, H.E. Lawrence R. Silverman.

Participating in its first car show in Kuwait since its soft opening in September 2017, Lincoln Alghanim showcased its flagship models the Lincoln Continental, MKZ, MKX, and MKC, demonstrating their luxurious designs, comfortable spaciousness, sharp performance and technologically-advanced engineering.

Speaking on the successful reveal of its flagship models, General Manager of Lincoln Alghanim, Nasr Al Jairoudi, said, "We are proud to bring the rich heritage of luxury, craftsmanship and reliability that have become household qualifications of Lincoln cars around the world to Kuwait. Kuwaiti car enthusiasts are among the most informed and experienced customers, and we are delighted to introduce Lincoln's 2018 lineup in Kuwait and reveal one of its most coveted cars, the powerful Navigator. We look forward to continue servicing customers with standards exceeding their expectations with the official opening of our showroom in February to introduce of the full Presidential line of cars."

With an experienced team of professionals to guide people to the car that suits their lifestyle, Lincoln Alghanim presents exclusive services for Lincoln owners including attractive trade-in offers, competitive financing and insurance packages, test drives that include car delivery, car pick-up and drop-off services and courtesy vehicle services.

From the Lincoln Continental, known as the car of presidents, to the elegant MKZ, comfortable MKX and the MKC car for all, Lincoln Alghanim enables customers to take advantage of free test drives by appointment on all available models.

About the Lincoln lineup:

First produced in 1997, the Lincoln Navigator is celebrating its 20th anniversary. This yacht on wheels is the first non-limousine model to seat more than six people. There is no doubt that the Navigator brings ease and command with a twin-turbocharged 3.5-liter engine and a 10-speed transmission. The engine, capable of producing 450-horsepower, gives drivers and passengers a smooth and controlled ride.

Known as the car of presidents, the Lincoln Continental comes with a twin-turbocharging 3.0-liter V6 engine, providing up to 400 horsepower for an elevated experience that every driver wishes to experience. The Lincoln's flagship, defined with heritage and pride, is a celebrity's luxury brand of choice, a highly styled, mass-produced luxury vehicle known as a personal luxury car. With a twin-turbocharged 3.0-liter V6 engine with 400hp, the MKZ was designed with an exceptional level of grace and elegance, providing an exhilarating sedan experience. A number of features including an adaptive suspension and Dynamic Torque Vectoring help to harness and control power, creating an even more thrilling driving experience.

Distinguished by its design, the MKX makes unexpected moments less unexpected with a 360-degree camera for a complete view of the surroundings. This spacious crossover comes with technological features that include the Lincoln Way app to stay connected with the car at all times.

The MKC is a crossover that comes in style and with the perfect frame of mind, enabling owners to venture out with the hands-free lift gate and a panoramic Vista Roof, and 285hp generated by the



twin-scroll turbocharged 2.3-liter engine. The MKC delivers power through three brilliant technologies: turbocharging, direct injection and twin independent variable camshaft timing.

Lincoln customers can visit the Lincoln showroom and service center located in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, opposite the Classical Car Museum. Working hours are from 9 AM to 9 PM, Saturday to Thursday. Customers can also contact the showroom at 1888080.

About Lincoln: Lincoln is the luxury automotive brand of Ford Motor Company, committed to creating compelling vehicles with an exceptional ownership experience to match. For more information about Lincoln, please visit [media.lincoln.com](http://www.lincoln.com), [HYPERLINK <http://www.lincoln.com>](http://www.lincoln.com) www.lincoln.com, or [HYPERLINK <http://www.lincolnluxury.me>](http://www.lincolnluxury.me) www.lincolnluxury.me www.lincolnluxury.me for the Middle East. Follow us on [facebook.com/LincolnMiddleEast](https://www.facebook.com/LincolnMiddleEast) and on Twitter @LincolnME.

About Alghanim Industries: Alghanim Industries is one of the largest, privately-owned companies in the MENA region. Founded at the turn of the century in Kuwait, the company today employs more than 15,000 people in 30 businesses across 40 countries in the Middle East, North Africa, Eastern Europe and Asia. Alghanim Industries is a market leader in almost every major sector of its operations, which include: engineering, retail, automotive sales and service, insulation and pre-engineered steel building structures, logistics and warehousing, fast moving consumer goods, food & beverage, oil & gas, office automation, advertising, insurance, consumer credit and travel. The company is actively growing its brand portfolio, with a focus on top-tier global partners, among them: Avis, British Airways, British Petroleum, Cathay Pacific, Daewoo, Honda, Saint-Gobain and Toshiba. Additionally, Alghanim Industries has created a number of successful regional businesses, including X-cite (consumer electronics), and Safat Home (lifestyle and home furniture).



Business

Third generation Cayenne continues its success story

Porsche Centre Kuwait welcomes new Cayenne models



KUWAIT: The latest generation of Porsche's successful SUV model line is now available in Kuwait. Arrival of the brand's flagship SUV was celebrated at a special event held by Porsche Centre Kuwait, Behbehani Motors Company at Crowne Plaza Hotel, where the Cayenne and Cayenne S, were showcased to attending guests.

A completely new development brings the Cayenne closer to its racetrack roots and offers greater versatility and more performance than ever before. Powerful turbocharged engines, enhanced chassis systems, a range of off-road modes and a sharper design underpin the model's credentials as a true sports car in its segment. Additional enhancements to the latest generation also include intelligent assistance systems and more connectivity features aimed at offering improved driver and passenger comfort.

Peter Green, Group General Manager of Behbehani Motors Company, said: "Since its initial launch, the Cayenne has been one of the most popular models in Kuwait, and I have no doubt that the third generation, which offers even more sports car performance and practicality, will continue this success story. For me, the new Cayenne's versatility is truly unique. It is at home on any road, but it is equally ready to explore new terrain. It enjoys a short sprint as much as a long road trip, and the commute to work as much as a lap on the track. It is capable of producing a superb drive experience virtually anywhere, and that is really what sets the Cayenne apart from any other SUV. We're very excited to be welcoming it to Kuwait today."

Design evolution

A bold new design stays true to the unmistakable identity of the Cayenne but delivers a more streamlined, athletic impression to complement an increased length and lower height. The pronounced bonnet, redesigned headlight contour and trademark large air intakes underline the Cayenne's improved driving dynamics from the front. Narrower side windows, a redesigned rear wing, wide rear end with integrated light strip and wider alloy wheels further enhance and emphasize its sports car genes.

The new Cayenne offers a spacious cabin, with several comfort and convenience features throughout. The luggage compartment has been increased by 100 liters, meanwhile the Porsche Advanced Cockpit concept brings the vehicle and the occupants closer through increased connectivity and intuitive controls. The center console with Direct Touch Control and a new 12.3-inch touch display for the Porsche Communication Management act as the driver's interface to all vehicle functions. PCM can be configured for up to six individual profiles to store a large number of interior settings, as well as specifications for lights, driving programs and assistance systems.

New driving modes

A true all-rounder, five pre-programmed drive and chassis modes can be activated in

contributes to an overall weight saving of up to 65 kilograms despite an extended range of standard equipment.

With the exception of the active PASM damper system, all chassis systems are new, including the adaptive three-chamber air suspension and electric roll stabilization. The 4D Chassis Control connects all the systems to add to the enhanced driving dynamics of the range. The Porsche Surface Coated Brakes, which come as standard in the Turbo, make a global debut and offer improved responsiveness as well as an up to 30% longer service life.

For the first time, the Cayenne is available with rear-axle steering as an option, and a mixed tyre configuration. The tyres are also larger than before, ranging from 19 to 21 inches. Both developments are derived from the 911 to improve agility, stability and safety, whilst rear-axle steering also reduces the turning circle by 0.6 meters for even greater practicality.

Performance driven engines

The third generation model range combines powerful and efficient engines with a new, responsive eight-speed Tiptronic S gearbox which enhances capabilities thanks to shorter response times and sportier ratios in the lower gears.

The six-cylinder turbo engine of the Cayenne delivers 450 Nm of torque and 340 hp, a 40 hp increase on its predecessor. It reaches 100 km/h in 6.2 seconds, or just 5.9 seconds with the optional Sport Chrono Package, and has a top speed of 245 km/h. The Cayenne S is powered by a 2.9-litre, biturbo-charged V6 engine with 440 hp (an increase of 20 hp) and 550 Nm of torque. It reaches 100 km/h in 5.2 seconds (4.9 seconds with the optional Sport Chrono Package) and boasts a top speed of 265 km/h. With its 550 hp biturbo eight-cylinder engine, the Cayenne Turbo is the top model in the new generation and exceeds the engine of its predecessor by 30 hp, while the maximum torque of 770 Nm represents an increase of 20 Nm. It accelerates from zero to 100 km/h in 4.1 seconds (or 3.9 seconds with the Sport Chrono Package), and achieves a top speed of 286 km/h.

Cayenne Turbo: top of the range

The Cayenne Turbo sets itself apart as the



Special event celebrates arrival of flagship SUV

accordance to the terrain via the PCM. As well as the default Onroad program, drivers can choose between Mud, Gravel, Sand and Rocks settings to adapt to the relevant conditions. Depending on the selection made, the control unit optimally conditions the engine and chassis systems including the new Tiptronic S, the Porsche Traction Management (PTM) all-wheel system and the PSM stabilization program. The air suspension, PASM damper system, PDCC rolling-motion compensation and the rear axle steering are also activated if the options are fitted.

More dynamic performance and improved agility

The new lightweight chassis of the Cayenne has been completely redesigned from scratch to deliver the optimum balance between sporty performance and comfort, and



leader of the new generation. It is the first SUV to have an adaptive roof spoiler as part of its active aerodynamics. Similar to the 911 Turbo, the spoiler adapts the aerodynamics and downforce to suit the driving conditions. Visually, the Turbo is easily identifiable by its distinctive twin tailpipes, enlarged air intakes, double-row front-light modules and 21-inch Turbo wheels in dark titanium emblazoned with the colored Porsche crest.

The rear apron, exterior mirrors and door side trims are finished in the vehicle color.

Adaptive sports seats with 18-way adjustment, unique stitching and raised side bolsters come as standard in the top-of-the-range model. The Turbo comes equipped with a BOSE Surround Sound System to deliver true clarity of sound to all five seats for even more drive enjoyment.

The new Porsche Cayenne, Cayenne S and Cayenne Turbo are now available at Porsche Centre Kuwait. Basic retail prices are as follows: Cayenne — KD 24,600, Cayenne S - KD 30,000, Cayenne Turbo-KD 45,750.

Boursa Kuwait hosts students from College of Business Studies



KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait continues to hold its series of tours for Kuwait's university students, where it recently hosted students from the College of Business Studies.

The tours are held in an effort to raise awareness among the students, of the Boursa Kuwait journey, as the first privatized entity in Kuwait and its main objective, which focuses primarily on continuously developing an efficient, transparent and accessible exchange, in accordance with best practices and international standards.

The students visited the trading hall; as the

main function area of the exchange, where the actual trading of shares take place. Students were also presented with a thorough brief of the various departments within Boursa Kuwait, the responsibilities of each and the role each plays in assuring a productive and efficient operation.

Boursa Kuwait is keen to adopt initiatives that contribute to raising awareness of the exchange and its operations; as a key investment driver and a significant contributor to the Kuwait economy, among young students, who are the leaders of Kuwait's bright future.

84 teams qualify to finals of MIT EF Arab startup competition

BEIRUT: The MIT Enterprise Forum (MIT EF) of the Pan Arab Region is proud to announce the results of semi-finalists of the 11th edition of its competition. The MITEF Arab startup competition, in partnership with Community Jameel, will be held in Oman on April 19. Community Jameel, a social enterprise organization that operates a wide range of initiatives to promote a positive society and economic sustainability, has been a founding partner for 10 consecutive years and Zain Group as the competition's digital partner for the last 4 years.

As local support and engagement in Oman is always very important, strategic partners this year include Riyada, the competition's governmental backbone, and Omantel, the country's leading telecom entity and key contributor and supporter.

This year's edition, that was open for applications between September 3 and December 5, 2017, witnessed an impressive participation, with more than 5,300 applications including Saudi Arabia, which runs a parallel competition. The submitted projects came from a variety of sectors, such as internet services, software, education, healthcare and creative industries.

The semi-finalists hailed from 14 Arab countries, as follows: Lebanon (20), Egypt (14), the United Arab Emirates (10), Saudi Arabia (9), Jordan (7), Palestine (6), Morocco (4), Tunisia (6), Bahrain (2), Sudan (2), Kuwait (1), Qatar (1), Algeria (1), Oman (1).

As in previous years, the competition includes three tracks - the Ideas track, the Startup track, and the Social Entrepreneurship track, with respectively 26, 34 and 24 semi-finalist projects in each one of them. Each project includes a team of at least three people bringing the number of Arab entrepreneurs coming to Oman in April to over 200.

All 84 teams will participate in pre-boot camps in February and March in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. Nine winning teams from the MIT EF Saudi Competition will be announced in March, and will be part of the list of the Pan Arab semifinals. For a complete list of semi-finalists and more information, visit: www.mitarabcompetition.com

This year's edition is yet another annual competition that celebrates Arab innovators, who see it as a platform to showcase, test and develop their creative ideas and skills. Cash prizes exceeding USD 160,000 will be distributed among the nine lucky winners, three per track. Beyond the cash prizes, all 84 semi-finalists will benefit from advanced training sessions, personal mentorship and guidance, as well as media visibility, and excellent networking opportunities.

Hala Fadel, Chair of the board of MIT EF Pan Arab, commented on this year's edition by saying: "Every year, our confidence and belief in the importance of this competition grows in its role in supporting and nurturing the culture of entrepreneurship. Developing the ideas and projects of the Arab youth and empowering them to transform these pioneering ideas into success stories couldn't make us prouder."

Fady Jameel, President of Community Jameel International, commented on the semi-finals saying: "We are happy to give the opportunity for innovation and creativity across the Arab world. We see new promising business models each year, all coming from diverse backgrounds. This reinforces the fact that the Arab world is full of talent and cre-



ativity. Community Jameel has offered full support to this successful Arab event for 11 consecutive years now, and remains true to its commitment to see it through. As it has been the case in previous years, our strong belief in this competition continues, as we strive to encourage an environment where new ideas flourish and projects are implemented not only in the Arab region but internationally. The generation of young Arabs deserves our full support to realize their hopes and bring their aspirations to life."

Scott Gegenheimer, Zain Group CEO-Operations commented, "Over the years we have reinforced our belief in the youth of our region, and displayed our passion for offering them the opportunities to attain their goals. This competition has become an established platform to foster innovation and youth development, and we are proud to again confirm our support of this renowned event. We look forward to tracking the progress being made by the participants at the various stages of the competition, building towards the selection of the final shortlist and winners. Supporting such events perfectly aligns to Zain's aspirations in becoming a digital lifestyle operator."

The MIT Arab Startup Competition will culminate in a two-day event on April 18 and 19, 2018 in Oman, with the announcement of this year's winners, set to take place during the final award ceremony.

Technology

Netflix crosses \$100 billion market capitalization as subscribers surge

Building its customer base in 190 countries

LOS ANGELES: Netflix Inc snagged 2 million more subscribers than Wall Street expected in the final three months of 2017, tripling profits at the online video service that is burning money on new programming to dominate internet television around the world. The results drove Netflix to a market capitalization of more than \$100 billion for the first time. Shares jumped 9 percent to over \$248 in after-hours trading on Monday after rallying throughout the month and rising 53 percent last year.

The company has signed up more than half of all US broadband households and is building its customer base in 190 countries by spending billions on programming. Netflix picked up 6.36 million subscribers in international markets from October through December, when it released new seasons of critically acclaimed shows “Stranger Things” and “The Crown” as well as Will Smith action movie “Bright.” That topped Wall Street expectations of 5.1 million, according to FactSet. Along with 1.98 million customer additions in the United States, the company ended the year with 117.58 million streaming subscribers around the globe, despite a price hike in October.

“Netflix is pouring more and more money into making content, and it is directly translating into more subscribers,” BTIG analyst Richard Greenfield said. “They see a huge opportunity and they are moving as fast as they can to attack it.” The company also said it took a \$39 million non-cash charge for “unreleased content we’ve decided not to move forward with.” A source familiar with the matter said the charge was related to content starring Kevin Spacey, with whom

Netflix cut ties after he was accused of sexual misconduct.

Netflix temporarily halted production of “House of Cards” to write out Spacey’s character and decided not to release the film “Gore,” which starred Spacey as Gore Vidal. Spacey has apologized to one of his accusers, and according to his representatives is seeking unspecified treatment. Reuters was unable to independently confirm the accusations. The charge is one of the first signs of costs faced by companies in the wake of a widespread campaign against sexual harassment.

“More money into making content”

Fighting for its audience

Netflix turned a DVD-by-mail business into an online competitor of movie channel HBO. As it grew it began licensing its own original shows to ensure a stream of new offerings if studio suppliers ended deals. In fact, Walt Disney Co is making a major push into online streaming and will pull its first-run shows and movies from Netflix in 2019 as Hollywood fights for audiences. Netflix plans to spend up to \$8 billion this year on TV shows and movies to fend off Disney, Amazon.com Inc, studios-owned Hulu and local competitors that are jumping into online

video, and it is turning more and more to high-budget projects, such as the roughly \$90 million “Bright.” In 2017, Netflix recorded its first full-year profit in international markets. The company has said it is aiming for steady improvements in profitability overseas this year. “We believe our big investments in content are paying off,” Netflix said in a quarterly letter to shareholders.

Netflix is raising its marketing budget faster than revenue is growing and will spend about \$2 billion this year. The company expects negative cash flow in 2018 of \$3 billion to \$4 billion, up from \$2 billion in 2017. Last October, Netflix raised prices for two of its three main subscription plans to help fund the substantial content investment. The earnings report showed customers took it in stride. “Consumers are tolerant as long as something’s improving,” Netflix CEO Reed Hastings, on a post-earnings webcast, said of the price increase.

For the December quarter, Netflix reported diluted earnings-per-share of 41 cents, even with the expectations of analysts polled by Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S. Revenue for the three months totaled \$3.286 billion, in line with forecasts. Looking ahead, Netflix forecast streaming customer additions of 6.35 million for the first quarter, above analysts’ expectation of 5.01 million, according to FactSet. Investors appear confident in Netflix’s ability to grow.

Netflix recently traded at 91 times expected earnings for the next 12 months, versus Amazon at 152 times earnings and Disney at 17 times earnings, according to Thomson Reuters data. Netflix also said Monday that Rodolphe Belmer, CEO of global satellite company Eutelsat, had joined the company’s board. —Reuters



LOS GATOS: This file photo taken on April 13, 2011, shows the Netflix headquarters. — AFP

China online quiz craze lures prize seekers, tech giants

BEIJING/SHANGHAI: It seems like a game everyone wins: some of China’s biggest tech companies, looking to hook in new consumers, are using cash prizes to draw millions of contenders to mobile-based online quiz shows. Up to 6 million people at a time log into the free, live games on their smartphones to answer a series of rapid-fire questions in an elimination battle, with those remaining sharing the prize money.

Over the weekend, search engine giant Baidu Inc and video game maker NetEase Inc launched their own online shows, joining news feed platform Toutiao, Alibaba Group Holding Ltd-owned UCWeb and Wang Sicong, the scion of Chinese billionaire Wang Jianlin. But how they will cash in on the games and stay on the right side of government censors might prove to be a tricky question.

The trivia games have drawn some controversy, heightened by a broader crackdown on online content during the last year under President Xi Jinping, from livestreams and blogs to a campaign against internet addiction. This month, one quiz show, “Millions Winner,” backed by internet security company Qihoo 360, apologised after it was chastised by a regulator for listing Taiwan and Hong Kong, over which China claims sovereignty, as independent countries in a question. How firms will monetise the craze is also not yet clear, though some companies, such as online retailer JD.com Inc, have already jumped on the trend, sponsoring shows to help raise their profiles. Many of the games show ads to players during the shows.

‘It’s really fun’

“If you ask me why I do this, to be honest, I don’t really know if I can make money,” Zhou Hongyi, chairman of Qihoo, said at an event where he presented a contestant with a 1 million yuan (\$156,115.84) prize cheque two weeks ago. “But from a user’s perspective, I think this is really fun.” The quiz mania underlines the fierce appetite of China’s consumers for internet entertainment, a trend helping drive billions of dollars of investment into digital news portals, online gaming, internet advertising and television content. “I heard about this game from a friend who won 1,700 yuan in one day. I immediately decided to join up myself,” Wang Ting, a 26-year-old graduate student in Qingdao, told Reuters. She now spends three hours each day on her phone playing the games.

Questions, read by a live host, might include: “From which country were pineapples imported to China in the 16th century?” “In which dynasty was the lamb hot pot invented?” or “How many fingers does Mickey Mouse have?” Contestants get 10 seconds – a time frame designed cut out cheating – to select the correct answer from a choice of three. Winnings can be up to 3 million yuan per game, but are often split between many winners.

Toutiao parent Bytedance said that “millions of our users” had taken part in its live quiz “Million Dollar Hero” since the show launched at the start of January. It also has a tougher “Hero Game” with harder questions and bigger prizes. “We’ve been running for just two weeks, so it’s still in the very early stages, but it’s encouraging to see how the game has taken off across the country, and with all age groups,” the company said in a statement to Reuters.

Toutiao, a highly popular news feed app, was valued at around \$20 billion in a fund-raising last year, sources close to the company told Reuters. Raymond Wang, managing partner at Beijing law firm Anli Partners, said the shows were a “relatively low-cost way to get to users,” but cautioned there were political and technical risks. —Reuters

Intel asks customers to halt patching for chip bug, citing flaw

NEW YORK: Intel Corp said on Monday that patches it released to address two high-profile security vulnerabilities in its chips are faulty, advising customers, computer makers and cloud providers to stop installing them. Intel Executive Vice President Navin Shenoy disclosed the problem in a statement on the chipmaker’s website, saying that patches released after months of development caused computers to reboot more often than normal and other “unpredictable” behavior.

“I apologize for any disruption this change in guidance may cause,” Shenoy said. “I assure you we are working around the clock to ensure we are addressing these issues.” The issue of the faulty patches is separate from complaints by customers for weeks that the patches slow computer performance. Intel has said a typical home and business PC user should not see significant slowdowns. Intel’s failure to provide a usable patch could cause businesses to postpone purchasing new computers, said IDC analyst Mario Morales.

Intel is “still trying to get a handle on what’s really happening. They haven’t resolved the matter,” he said. Intel asked technology providers to start testing a new version of the patches, which it began distributing on Saturday. The warning came nearly three weeks after Intel confirmed on Jan. 3 that its chips were impacted by vulnerabilities known as Spectre and Meltdown, which make data on affected computers vulnerable to espionage.

Meltdown was specific to chips from Intel, as well as one from SoftBank Group Corp’s ARM Holdings. Spectre



LAS VEGAS: This file photo taken on January 8, 2018 shows Intel CEO Brian Krzanich speaking during a keynote address at the Monte Carlo Park Theater during CES 2018. —AFP

affected nearly every modern computing device, including ones with chips from Intel, ARM and Advanced Micro Devices Inc. Problems with the patches have been growing since Intel on Jan. 11 said they were causing higher

reboot rates in its older chips and then last week that the problem was affecting newer processors. The Wall Street Journal first reported Intel asking customers to halt using the patches. —Reuters

Google announces new AI research centre in Paris

PARIS: Google on Monday announced it will open a research centre in Paris devoted to artificial intelligence, following a meeting between the tech giant’s boss and French President Emmanuel Macron. “The different achievements in this country, including in science, art and the academic field make it an ideal place for the creation of a centre of theoretical research in artificial intelligence,” Google chief executive Sundar Pichai said in a statement.

The announcement came as Macron welcomed 140 multinational business lead-

ers to Versailles in Paris on Monday night, ahead of the opening of the World Economic Forum in Davos yesterday. Google said it will extend it’s headquarters in the capital to accommodate the centre—the third to open worldwide, after California and Switzerland. The number of staff in Paris is set to increase from 700 to 1,000. Facebook earlier announced its intention to double the number of researchers at its own AI centre, opened in Paris in 2015, from 30 to 60.

The social media giant will also invest 10 million euros by 2022 to “accelerate artificial intelligence” in France. The announcements “signal the competitiveness of France” in the growing sector, the Elysee Palace said in a statement. Both companies intend to open programs in France to help train tens of thousands of people in digital skills. —AFP



DAVOS: A man guards the entrance of the Google Cloud booth of the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2018 annual meeting. —AFP

Microsoft may lose out if sales curbed in Russia

MOSCOW: Microsoft could lose billions of dollars if it chooses to curb its sales in Russia due to US sanctions, communications minister Nikolai Nikoiforov was quoted by Russian news agencies as saying yesterday. Reuters reported on Monday that two of Microsoft’s official distributors in Russia imposed curbs on sales of Microsoft software to more than 200 Russian companies following new U.S. sanctions, which came into force on Nov. 28.

The US sharpened its economic restrictions in relation to Russia in November, adding yet another layer to the sanctions regime first imposed by several Western nations on Russia for its role in the Ukraine conflict. The new restrictions cut the duration of loans that can be offered to Russian financial firms subject to sanctions to 14 days from 30 days and to 60 days from 90 days for Russian energy companies on a US list.

Previously, the restrictions had mainly affected Western banks lending to Russian firms; but with such short financing periods, swathes of companies supplying goods and services to Russian clients fear they could fall foul of the rules too. It is routine in Russia for suppliers to wait weeks or even months to get paid after submitting invoices for goods and services. Some Western firms have been advised by lawyers that the US Treasury Department could, in theory, take the view this consti-

tuted financing in violation of the sanctions, according to several people involved in the discussions.

Two Microsoft distributors, Merlion and RRC, set out new guidelines for sales in directives referring to restrictions resulting from the new US sanctions policy. “Microsoft will lose a market worth several billion dollars, from the point of view of its corporate and government clients in our country,” Nikoiforov is cited by the TASS news agency as saying at the annual economic summit in Davos, Switzerland.

Russia is able to get by without Microsoft and can replace the software completely, Nikoiforov said. “This may require further work and investments, but... it’s the US economy that is hit hardest by these politically-motivated sanctions,” Nikoiforov said, according to TASS. Neither Merlion nor RRC responded to Reuters questions. Microsoft said in a statement to Reuters: “Microsoft has a strong commitment to complying with legal requirements and has robust processes around the world to help ensure that our partners are in compliance as well.”

Microsoft new openings in France

In other news, Microsoft is to open four data storage centers in France to meet strong customer demand for cloud computing, the head of the software giant’s French operations told AFP yesterday. “There’s strong demand from our clients. A lot of them prefer to have (cloud computing) infrastructures and their data in their home territory,” Carlo Purassanta said. He did not reveal the size of the planned investment, but said that three of the centers would be located in the Paris region and the fourth in Marseille. —AFP

Health

Japan's latest overtime example: Xiang Xiang to work extra hours

Catering to thousands of fans of cuddly celebrity

TOKYO: By popular demand, Tokyo's new panda cub Xiang Xiang is working extra hours from yesterday, the latest example of overtime in a country famous for its hard-working "salarymen." Ueno zoo's first baby panda since 1988 will be on display for an extra two hours every day until the end of January and working a full seven-hour day from February to cater to the thousands of fans of the cuddly celebrity.

Munching on bamboo shoots and nuzzling her mother, the bright-eyed seven-month-old has been the object of major media attention, with visitors clad in panda paraphernalia flocking to see her since her first public appearance in December. More than a quarter of a million fans entered a lottery to get a first glimpse but zoo officials initially limited visitors to 400 per day during a three-hour window. Until the end of January however, panda fans can get a first-come, first-served ticket to see Xiang Xiang, who will be on display for five hours a day.

Seven hour shift

And from February, the hours are expected to be extended again-to a seven-hour shift-as the zoo seeks to accom-

modate up to 9,500 fans of the curious cub. Some visitors at the zoo yesterday were not sure whether the baby panda was ready for grown-up working hours. Asami Sato, a 45-year-old mother visiting with daughter Yuriya, questioned whether the cub was ready for so much exposure. "It must feel unnatural," she said, "but as long as she is happy and not stressed, I guess it's OK."

Grown-up working hours

Xiang Xiang has attracted. "Pandas are not much of a novelty to me back home. I think it's interesting to see people queue for so long though. The extended hours will probably help the crowd to be honest," she said. To avoid congestion, each visitor gets two minutes to observe the cub-along with her 12-year-old mother Shin Shin. There are no limits for viewing Xiang Xiang's father Ri Ri in the neighbouring enclosure. — AFP

Dennis Pook, 36, an assistant manager, said the extended hours were "too much, too fast." "I think the increase is very sudden. If they had extended the hours more slowly and let the panda adapt, it would probably be a lot better," he said. For Chinese student Chen Gingya, 20, the most surprising part of the issue was the massive attention



TOKYO: This file photo taken on December 18, 2017 shows schoolchildren looking at an enclosure holding female giant panda cub Xiang Xiang (R) and her mother Shin Shin (L) at Ueno Zoo. — AFP

CDC director urges flu vaccinations as deaths mount

CHICAGO: Of the 30 US children who have died from the flu so far this season, some 85 percent had not been vaccinated, said Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald, who urged

Americans to get flu shots amid one of the most severe flu seasons in years. "My message is, if you haven't gotten a vaccine, please get a vaccine. Also, please get your children vaccinated," said Fitzgerald, who is urging citizens "to take every advantage that you can to protect yourself."

The dominant strain during this flu season is an especially nasty type called influenza A (H3N2) that in seasons past has been linked with severe disease and death, especially in the elderly and young.

This year's seasonal flu epidemic is especially severe. In its latest report, the CDC said the virus is present in every state, with 32 states reporting severe flu activity.

Although the vaccine is only estimated to be about 30 percent effective against the H3N2 strain, it has been shown in studies to reduce severity and duration if people do become infected, said Dr Dan Jernigan, director of the influenza division at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Fitzgerald conceded in a telephone interview that reports that the flu vaccine in Australia was only 10 percent effective may have caused people to think the vaccine would not be worth the trouble.

Fitzgerald said the agency's flu division has been on the job during the three-day federal government shutdown. Senators on Monday reached a deal to keep the govern-

ment funded through Feb 8. Studies have shown that even a vaccine that has lower overall effectiveness can decrease the number of days spent in hospital, duration of the flu and the degree of symptoms. "That helps support the point of getting a vaccine," Jernigan said.

Fitzgerald said the flu vaccine and antiviral drugs used to fight the flu are widely available across the country, noting that people can go to the CDC website and enter their zip code to find the nearest flu clinics with vaccines. Fitzgerald also recommended that people frequently wash their hands or use hand sanitizer, avoid those who are sick or coughing and carry disinfectant wipes.

The CDC does not have numbers for adult deaths from the flu because adult flu is not a reportable disease in all US states. But she said North Carolina, which collects such data, has reported 42 adult flu deaths so far this season. Official estimates from the CDC are expected at the end of the current season, based on a calculation from hospitals and states reporting data to the agency.

In the 2014/2015 flu season, in which the H3N2 strain was also the leading strain, there were an estimated 35.6 million cases, 710,000 hospitalizations and 56,000 deaths. At this point, it is not clear whether the current flu season will surpass those estimates, Jernigan said. — Reuters

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What's On

Sheraton Kuwait awarded the 1st Rank at Horeca Kuwait 2018



The Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotel Culinary Team dominated this year's Salon Culinare competition, clearly showcasing the hotel's leading position during the HORECA exhibition which is Kuwait's largest cooking competition program. The contest among Kuwait's leading Hotels and Restaurant Chef's lasted for 3 days which included a variety of activities such as live cooking competitions that ranged from appetizers, desserts, hot and cold beverage and display categories. The competition was held under the supervision of world class Chefs and an

international panel of culinary experts. All the attending judges unanimously agreed that the Culinary Team's performance was excellent and presented their winning creation with luxury touches not to forget the top quality materials used by the team to prepare their dishes. Sheraton Kuwait has been awarded a trophy for winning the overall battle with 7 Gold, 6 silver, 10 Bronze and numerous merit and appreciation certificates was handed over by the organizers to the participating Chefs including 4 Hygiene Awards from Boecker.

Fahed Abushaar - General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait & Mounir Amer- General Manager of Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait and all the Department Heads commended the Culinary Team that participated in the HORECA Exhibition and praised their efforts for the exceptional performance and outstanding skills. Abushaar recognized the efforts of Chef Frank Noack - Cluster Director of Culinary for his successful team management and guidance which have strengthened the presence of Sheraton Kuwait and maintained the high level of quality service for over 50 years of continuous success.

Safir Hotel & Residences win nine medals, 11 certificates in HORECA

Safir Hotel & Residences Kuwait - Fintas participated in HORECA Kuwait for the fourth consecutive year. The annual exhibition has become a hallmark across the hospitality, catering and food industry in Kuwait and the region. Safir Hotel & Residences Kuwait - Fintas culinary & housekeeping team was recognized as a winner in 14 categories, bagging 2Silver, 7Bronze medals and 11 Merit Certificates. The winners of the competition walked away with several prizes and accolades. Chef Abdul Hameed Abdul Kadher won a Silver Medal in the "Kuwaiti Traditional Dish" category, in addition to 2 Bronze Medals in the "Asian Cuisine" & in the "Fresh Pasta" categories. Pubudu Samarasooriyage won a Bronze Medal in the "Wedding Cake" category, Shreeni Paramban won 2 Bronze Medals in the "Theme Celebration Cake" category& "Fruit Vegetable Carving" category, and Rafa Bou Hamdan won a Bronze Medal in the "Best Burger" Category. The hotel's participants from the culinary team also won nine merit cer-

tificates; Pubudu Samarasooriyage won the "Bread Creations", Manjula won in both the "Best ...clair" and "Three Plated Dessert", Negmeldin Ahmed won in both the "Hot & Cold Mezzeh" & "Best Burger" categories, Abdul Hameed Abdul Kadher won the "Mystery Basket", Bishnu won the "Kuwaiti Traditional Dish", each of Abdulaziz, Mani and Shinoj are won the "Cold Sandwich-Making Competition" category. HORECA Kuwait 2018 has also introduced the "Bed Making Competition" which included our Housekeeping Team for the first time who won 1 Silver Medal by Ratul Mondal, 1 Bronze Medal by Marcus Freddy Fernandes and 1 Merit Certificate by Shakhi Ullah Shami. The event, which was held from the 15th - 17th January 2018, included a culinary art show, cooking competition and Bed Making Competition. More than 15 different and innovative categories were listed for the competitors to participate and compete in. Throughout the exhibition, more than 300 chefs participated in the competition that was judged by a distinguished panel of 13 international judges. In an invitation initiated by Saif Eddin Mohammed - General Manager, the culinary & housekeeping team along with the family of SafirHotel & Residences Kuwait - Fintas headed by the Executive Sous Chef - Wissam Kasdallah & Assistant Executive Housekeeper- Satish Konduru, celebrated their achievements with appreciation certificates and valuable prizes during a luncheon get-together.



Movenpick Hotel & Resort Al Bida'a host social media bloggers on special evening



Movenpick Hotel & Resort Al Bida'a hosted a group of community women, social media bloggers, and local media representatives on a very special evening held at the hotel to enhance communication with customers and media professionals. The hotel team was present to welcome all attendees. The special evening included many surprises that the hotel specially prepared for the attendees, the guests enjoyed the famous chocolate hour in the lobby, where the taste of the Swiss chocolate prepared by the hands of the hotel's international Chefs. The guest were accompanied by the hotel staff on a tour that included all the facilities, ballroom and meeting rooms, in addition to rooms, spa, Kids' club and many other services. The attendees had the opportunity to enjoy the taste of both Arabic and International cuisine in a luxurious buffet. The buffet included a variety of delicious dishes, as well as seafood, pasta and grills, presented with refreshments, fresh juices and an assorted delicious desserts. The evening was filled with live oriental music atmosphere with oud tones.



69th Republic Day of India

The 69th Republic Day of India will be celebrated at the Indian Embassy's premises on

Friday, 26th January with the hoisting of the Indian Tri-color at 9AM by the Ambassador. This will be followed by the reading of the President's message to the Nation, patriotic songs by school children and an open house reception. All Indian nationals and friends of India in Kuwait are most cordially invited to attend the function.

TIES announcement

You are cordially invited to another session of our series about some prophets and messengers of Allah (SWT) this Thursday, January 25th at 7:00 pm. We will explore why Allah (SWT) described Ibrahim (AS) as one who never failed to fulfill his obligations,

examine some of those obligations, learn about Ibrahim's physical traits and impeccable hygiene and list some religious customs and practices he pioneered. We will also discuss some of the virtues that qualified him to the lofty position of the second-best prophet and messenger after Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), and prove how Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) held him in high regard, emulating him in some aspects of life. Finally, we will examine why Ibrahim (AS) is known as the patriarch of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

TV



01:25 Knight And Day
03:25 The Viral Factor
05:30 Iron Man 2
07:40 Being Evel
09:25 Knight And Day
11:25 Resident Evil: Vendetta
13:10 Iron Man 2
15:20 Point Break
17:20 The Core
19:40 Iron Man 3
21:55 In Time
23:55 Revenge Of The Green Dragons



00:50 Lone Star Law
01:45 Treehouse Masters
02:40 Bad Dog
03:35 Swamp Brothers
04:00 Swamp Brothers
04:25 North Woods Law
05:05 My Fat Pet
06:02 Wildest Middle East
06:49 Lone Star Law
07:36 Night
08:00 Night
08:25 Swamp Brothers
09:15 Treehouse Masters
10:10 Bad Dog
11:05 Wildest Middle East
12:00 Swamp Brothers
12:55 North Woods Law
13:50 My Fat Pet
14:45 Bad Dog
15:40 Wildest Middle East
16:35 Lone Star Law
17:30 Treehouse Masters
18:25 Tanked
19:20 Treehouse Masters: Boxtralls
Special
20:15 Bad Dog
21:10 Snake Sheila
22:05 Tanked
23:00 Treehouse Masters: Boxtralls
Special
23:55 Mutant Planet



00:50 Unforgotten
01:45 Unforgotten
02:40 Class
03:30 Class
04:15 New Tricks
05:05 Hollyb City
06:00 Hollyb City
06:55 The Musketeers
07:55 Stella
08:45 Hollyb City
09:40 Hollyb City
10:40 New Tricks
11:35 The Musketeers
12:35 Stella
13:25 Hollyb City
15:15 New Tricks
16:10 The Musketeers
17:05 Stella
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:00 New Tricks
20:00 Stella
20:55 Top Of The Lake
22:00 New Tricks
23:00 Doctors
23:30 Eastenders



00:00 The Menendez Murders: Erik Tells All
01:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
02:00 It Takes A Killer
02:30 It Takes A Killer
03:00 The First 48
04:00 The Menendez Murders: Erik Tells All
05:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
06:00 It Takes A Killer
06:30 It Takes A Killer
07:00 Homicide Hunter
08:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
09:00 It Takes A Killer
10:00 The Murder Of Laci Peterson
11:00 Cold Case Files
12:00 The Eleven
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 Eleven
20:00 The Murder Of Laci Peterson
21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
22:00 Cold Case Files
23:00 Psychic Kids: Children Of The Paranormal



00:05 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salvage
00:35 The Half Hour
01:20 Broad City
01:45 Tosh.0
02:10 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
02:35 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:25 Tosh.0
03:50 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
04:15 Kroll Show
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Important Things With Demetri Martin
05:30 Impractical Jokers
05:55 Disaster Date
06:20 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:50 Hungry Investors
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
13:30 Important Things With Demetri Martin
13:55 Friends
14:15 Workaholics
15:10 Key And Peele
15:35 Kroll Show
16:00 Friendszone
16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Ridiculousness Arabia
18:35 Lip Sync Battle UK
19:00 Lip Sync Battle UK
19:25 Impractical Jokers
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends
20:35 Friends

21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 The Opposition With Jordan Klepper
22:00 Lip Sync Battle UK
22:25 Tosh.0
22:48 Tosh.0
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah



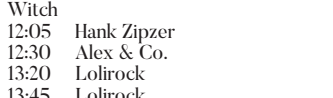
00:30 Kids Do The Craziest Things
00:55 Kids Do The Craziest Things
01:20 Now That's Funny
02:10 Now That's Funny
03:00 How The Earth Works
03:50 Ultimate Survival
04:40 Tanked
05:30 How It's Made
05:55 How It's Made
06:20 Kids Do The Craziest Things
07:00 Ultimate Survival
07:50 How It's Made
08:15 How It's Made
08:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
09:30 Tanked
10:20 How The Earth Works
11:10 Mythbusters
12:00 The Big Brain Theory
12:50 How It's Made
13:15 How It's Made
13:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
14:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
14:30 Tanked
15:20 Ultimate Survival
16:10 How The Earth Works
17:00 Mythbusters
17:50 The Big Brain Theory
18:40 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:05 Kids Do The Craziest Things
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Tanked
21:10 Mythbusters
22:00 The Big Brain Theory
22:50 How The Earth Works
23:40 Ultimate Survival



00:50 Village Of The Damned
01:45 I Speak For The Dead
02:40 Shallow Grave: People Magazine Investigates
03:35 Evil Online
04:30 Village Of The Damned
05:25 California Investigator
05:50 California Investigator
06:20 I Almost Got Away With It
07:10 Nightmare Next Door
08:00 California Investigator
08:25 On The Case With Paula Zahn
09:15 California Investigator
09:40 California Investigator
10:10 Nightmare Next Door
11:05 Disappeared
12:00 American Monster
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 The Perfect Murder
17:30 On The Case With Paula Zahn
18:25 California Investigator
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
20:15 Nightmare Next Door
21:10 Disappeared
22:05 Married With Secrets
23:00 Drew Peterson: The Wife Killer Cop?
23:55 Drew Peterson: The Wife Killer Cop?



00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:20 Hank Zipzer
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Jessie
07:25 Tangled: The Series
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
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 Tangled: Queen For A Day
11:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
12:05 Hank Zipzer
12:30 Alex & Co.
13:20 Lolirock
13:45 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 Bizaardvark
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 Disney Mickey Mouse
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 Bizaardvark
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 PJ Masks
01:00 PJ Masks
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopydoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster



00:15 PJ Masks
00:30 PJ Masks
01:00 PJ Masks
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopydoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster

02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopydoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopydoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopydoo
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
11:50 The Lion Guard
12:45 Sofia The First
13:10 Sofia The First
13:35 PJ Masks
14:00 PJ Masks
14:30 Doc McStuffins
14:55 P-King Duckling
15:20 Vampirina
15:45 Sofia The First
16:10 Puppy Dog Pals
16:35 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
17:05 Sofia The First: The Floating Palace
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
20:10 The Lion Guard
20:35 P-King Duckling
21:00 Vampirina
21:30 PJ Masks
22:00 PJ Masks
22:25 Sofia The First
22:50 P-King Duckling
23:20 Puppy Dog Pals
23:45 Mickey And The Roadster Racers



00:15 Yukon Men
01:05 Diesel Brothers
01:50 Supertrucks
02:35 Fast N' Loud
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
06:45 How Do They Do It?
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Alaska: The Last Frontier
08:20 Auction Kings
09:10 Deadliest Catch
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17:05 Fast N' Loud
17:50 Alaska: The Last Frontier
18:40 Deadliest Catch
19:25 Yukon Men
20:15 Street Outlaws
21:00 Dangerman
21:50 Railroad Australia
22:40 Abandoned Engineering
23:30 Alaska: The Last Frontier



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 Adventures
10:45 Star Wars: The Freemaker Adventures
11:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
11:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
12:00 Kid vs. Kat
12:25 Two More Eggs
12:30 Kid vs. Kat
12:55 Kirby Buckets
13:20 Kirby Buckets
13:45 Supa Strikas
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Supa Strikas
14:40 Right Now Kapow
15:05 Right Now Kapow
15:30 Milo Murphy's Law
16:00 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
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
20:20 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
20:45 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
21:10 Kid vs. Kat
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:10 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



00:10 WAGs Atlanta
01:00 WAGs Atlanta
01:50 E! News
02:50 WAGs
03:40 WAGs
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Second Wives Club
06:55 E! News
07:10 Second Wives Club
08:10 E! News: Daily Pop
09:10 Live From The Red Carpet
11:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
12:00 E! News
12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
13:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians

14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:00 E! News
15:15 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 WAGs LA
17:10 WAGs Atlanta
18:05 WAGs Atlanta
19:00 E! News
20:00 My Fabulous Me
20:30 My Fabulous Me
21:00 My Fabulous Me
21:30 Celebrity Style Story
22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 E! News
23:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Man Fire Food
01:30 Man Fire Food
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
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 Chopped
21:00 Iron Chef Gauntlet
22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
23:00 Chopped



00:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Cash Trapped
03:25 Vera
05:15 Don't Tell The Bride
06:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
07:05 Cash Trapped
08:00 Vera
09:35 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
10:00 Don't Tell The Bride
10:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
11:50 Cash Trapped
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
15:10 Cash Trapped
16:00 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
17:00 Tutankhamun
17:50 Don't Tell The Bride
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Cash Trapped
21:00 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
22:00 Tutankhamun
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Ancient Impossible
01:00 Ancient Top 10
02:00 The Colour Of War
03:00 In Search Of Aliens
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 How 2 Win
05:30 Ancient Impossible
06:20 Ancient Top 10
07:10 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
08:00 The Colour Of War
09:00 In Search Of Aliens
10:00 Ancient Aliens
11:00 How 2 Win
12:00 Ancient Impossible
13:00 Ancient Top 10
14:00 The Colour Of War
15:00 In Search Of Aliens
16:00 Ancient Aliens
17:00 How 2 Win
18:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
19:00 Ancient Top 10
20:00 The Colour Of War
21:00 In Search Of Aliens
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Modern Marvels



00:20 Swamp People
01:10 Swamp People
02:00 American Restoration
02:50 Ice Road Truckers
03:40 Road Hawks
04:30 Swamp People
05:15 Swamp People
06:00 Mountain Men
06:50 Forged In Fire
07:40 American Restoration
08:30 Ice Road Truckers
09:20 American Pickers
10:10 X Men
11:00 Forged In Fire
11:50 American Restoration
12:40 Ice Road Truckers
13:30 Swamp People
14:20 Swamp People
15:10 Mountain Men
16:00 Forged In Fire
16:50 American Restoration
17:40 Ice Road Truckers
18:30 Mountain Men
19:20 Forged In Fire
20:10 American Restoration
21:00 Counting Cars
21:25 Counting Cars
21:50 Billion Dollar Wreck
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 Mountain Men



00:15 Places We Go
00:45 Cruise Ship Diaries
01:10 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
01:40 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
02:35 Sara's Australia Unveiled
03:00 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
03:30 Testing The Menu With Nic Watt
03:55 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
04:25 Straight To The Source: Korean Food
04:50 A Taste Of South Africa
05:20 A Taste Of South Africa
05:45 John Torode's Asia
06:15 Miguel's Feasts
06:40 Eat Street
07:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
08:05 Sara's Australia Unveiled
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01:00 Wicked Tuna: North vs South
02:00 Air Crash Investigation
03:00 Seconds From Disaster
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05:00 Disappeared: The Search For Cody Dial
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07:00 Dog Whisperer
08:00 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
08:30 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
09:00 Filthy Riches
10:00 Route Awakening
10:30 Route Awakening
11:00 Explorer XL
12:00 Drain Alcatraz
13:00 Breakthrough
14:00 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
14:30 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
15:00 The 2000s: The Decade We Saw It All
17:00 Explorer XL
18:00 Drain The Sunken Pirate City
19:00 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
20:00 Breakthrough
20:50 Explorer XL
21:40 Drain The Sunken Pirate City
22:30 The Story Of Us With Morgan Freeman
23:20 The Big Picture With Kal Penn
23:45 The Big Picture With Kal Penn



00:20 Feast Of The Grizzly
01:10 Monster Fish
02:00 Croc Labyrinth
02:50 Monster Fish
03:45 Search For King Cobra
04:40 Wild 24
05:35 Croc Labyrinth
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 Search For King Cobra
08:20 Wild 24
09:15 Blood Rivals: Hippo V. Lion
10:10 Man V. Monster
11:05 Ultimate Animal Countdown
12:00 Fish Tank Kings
12:55 Game Of Lions
13:50 Monster Fish
14:45 World's Deadliest Snakes
15:40 Lion Kingdom
16:35 Kings Of The Kill
17:30 Man V. Monster
18:25 Lion Kingdom
19:20 World's Deadliest Snakes
20:10 Lion Kingdom
21:00 Kings Of The Kill
21:50 Man V. Monster
22:40 Lion Kingdom
23:30 Fish Tank Kings

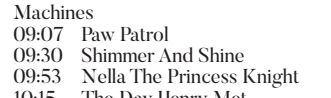


00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbids Invasion
01:00 Rabbids Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:24 Rabbids Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
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 Ratchad Academy
11:00 Winx Club
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
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbids Invasion
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
00:38 Shimmer And Shine
01:01 Max & Ruby
01:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:34 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:45 The Day Henry Met
01:50 The Day Henry Met
01:55 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:18 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:40 Zack & Quack
02:52 Kid-E-Cats
02:57 Kid-E-Cats
03:03 Shimmer And Shine
03:25 Nella The Princess Knight
03:36 Paw Patrol
03:59 Little Charmers
04:11 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
04:23 Dora The Explorer
04:46 Max & Ruby
05:08 The Day Henry Met
05:14 Nella The Princess Knight
05:36 Shimmer And Shine
05:59 Wallykazam!
06:22 Zack & Quack
06:33 The Day Henry Met
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:00 Rusty Rivets
07:13 Paw Patrol
07:37 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight
08:10 Kid-E-Cats
08:15 Kid-E-Cats
08:21 Bubble Guppies
08:44 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:07 Paw Patrol
09:30 Shimmer And Shine
09:53 Nella The Princess Knight
10:15 The Day Henry Met
10:22 Paw Patrol
10:45 Rusty Rivets
11:05 Wallykazam!
11:28 Bubble Guppies
11:52 Team Umizoomi
12:15 Shimmer And Shine
12:39 Shimmer And Shine
13:01 Max & Ruby
13:25 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:36 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:47 The Day Henry Met
13:52 The Day Henry Met
13:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:41 Zack & Quack
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14:58 Kid-E-Cats
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23:45 The Big Picture With Kal Penn



00:50 Storm Rider
02:35 The Kids From 62-F
04:30 We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story
05:50 Pirates Code: The Adventures Of Mickey Matson
07:25 Storm Rider
09:10 Pet Pals In Wonderland
10:35 We're Back! A Dinosaur's Story
11:55 Get Santa
13:40 Ratchet And Clank
15:15 Step Dogs
16:45 Molly Moon And The Incredible Book Of Hypnotism
18:25 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
20:10 Get Santa
21:55 Ratchet And Clank
23:30 Molly Moon And The Incredible Book Of Hypnotism



00:30 How To Make Love Like An Englishman
02:15 The To Do List
04:05 Growing Up And Other Lies
05:45 Sneakers
08:00 A Midsummer's Hawaiian Dream
09:35 The Discoverers
11:25 Life Or Something Like It
13:15 Big Momma's House 2
15:05 Tyler Perry's Boo: A Madea Halloween
17:00 A Stand Up Guy
18:30 Big Mommas: Like Father, Like Son
20:30 The Guilt Trip
22:15 Neighbors 2: Sorority Rising
23:55 Kill Your Friends



01:15 Forsaken
02:55 Not Without My Daughter
05:00 My Sister

07:00 Healing
09:10 Das Tagebuch Der Anne Frank
11:25 Not Without My Daughter
13:30 Healing
15:40 Coming Through The Rye
17:25 Meru
19:05 The Quiet Hour
20:45 Never Let Me Go
22:40 Barry Lyndon

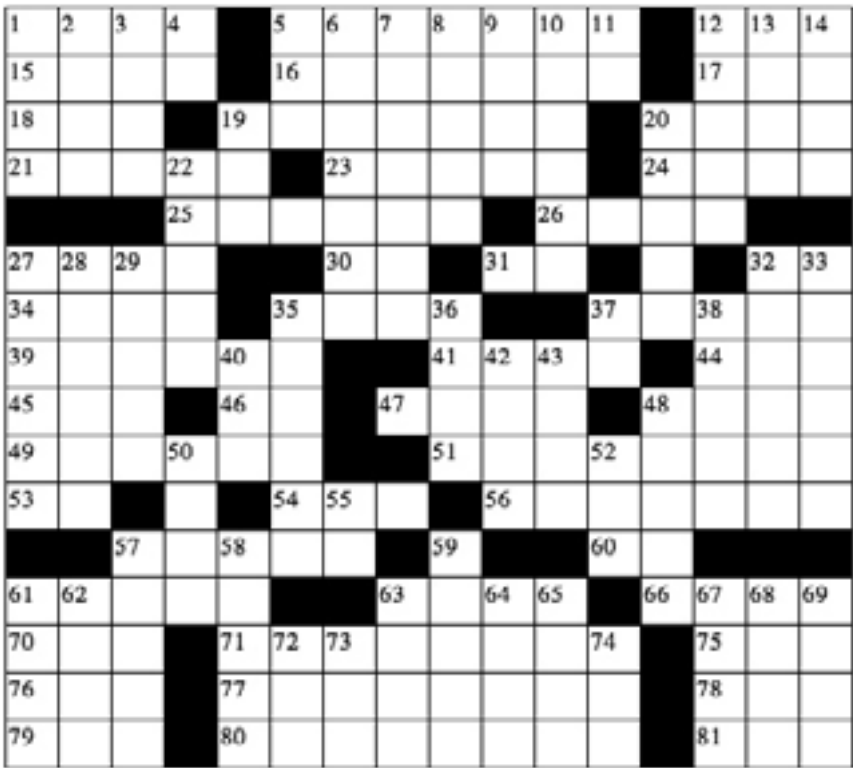


01:20 Rainbow Valley Heroes
03:00 Ploddy Police Car
04:25 Elias And The Royal Yacht
05:50 Dinofroz - An Island In The Sky
07:15 Simba The King Lion
09:25 Papeluchito & The Martian
10:50 Dinofroz The Origin
12:25 Rh+ The Vampire Of Seville
13:55 Theo: The Intergalactic Hunter
15:20 Ploddy Police Car
16:45 Elias And The Royal Yacht
18:10 An American Tail: Fievel Goes West
19:40 Rh+ The Vampire Of Seville
21:10 Micropolis
22:40 An American Tail: Fievel Goes West



00:10 Pushing Tin
02:15 Taxi
03:55 Fast & Furious 7
06:15 Before We Go
07:55 Everest
10:00 Max
11:55 Fast & Furious 7
14:15 We Bought A Zoo
16:20 The Portrait Of A

CROSSWORD 1817



ACROSS

- 1. An infection of the sebaceous gland of the eyelid.
- 5. Being or situated at an end.
- 12. The sign language used in the United States.
- 15. A composition written in metrical feet forming rhythmical lines.
- 16. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade names Acular and Toradol) that is administered only intramuscularly.
- 17. A state of southwestern India.
- 18. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- 21. Shrubby tree widely distributed along tropical shores.
- 23. Sudden mass fear and anxiety over anticipated events.
- 24. Any of the forms of Chinese spoken in Fukien province.
- 25. (trade mark) A soft form of cereal for infants.
- 26. Designer drug designed to have the effects of amphetamines (it floods the brain with serotonin) but to avoid the drug laws.
- 27. A unit of area (4840 square yards) used in English-speaking countries.
- 30. Being nine more than forty.
- 31. A colorless explosive liquid that is volatile and poisonous and foul-smelling.
- 34. Someone who leaves.
- 39. Live in or as if in a tent.
- 41. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- 44. Failing to speak or communicate etc when expected to.
- 45. A federal agency that supervises carriers that transport goods and people between states.
- 46. A light strong brittle gray toxic bivalent metallic element.
- 47. Wearing or provided with clothing.
- 49. An ancient musical horn made from the horn of a ram.
- 51. A genus of Carangidae.
- 53. Informal terms for a mother.
- 54. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
- 56. A structure that has a roof and walls and stands more or less permanently in one place.
- 60. A heavy brittle diamagnetic trivalent metallic element (resembles arsenic and antimony chemically).
- 61. Obvious and dull.
- 66. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- 70. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
- 71. Coelenterate genus of order Madreporaria, including staghorn corals.
- 75. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- 76. A flexible container with a single opening.
- 77. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- 78. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- 79. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- 80. Genus of showy plants of western North America having palmate leaves and variously colored racemose flowers.
- 81. A young woman making her debut into society.

DOWN

- 1. (trademark) A tinned luncheon meat

- made largely from pork.
- 2. A one-piece cloak worn by men in ancient Rome.
- 3. Not only so, but.
- 4. The square of a body of any size of type.
- 5. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- 6. Designed to reduce or prevent slipping.
- 7. Comprises tropical American species usually placed in genus Masdevallia.
- 8. A woman of refinement.
- 9. Any property detected by the olfactory system.
- 10. Dignified and somber in manner or character and committed to keeping promises.
- 11. A soft gray malleable metallic element that resembles tin but discolors on exposure to air.
- 12. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- 13. A district in southwestern Manhattan noted for its shops and restaurants and galleries and artist's lofts.
- 14. A polite name for any woman.
- 19. Seed of a pea plant.
- 20. Widely known and esteemed.
- 22. A drama set to music.
- 28. (anatomy) A structure that resembles a shell in shape.
- 29. Reconnaissance (by shortening).
- 32. Of or relating to an inability to urinate.
- 33. A loose shirt or tunic.
- 35. South American cavy.
- 36. A rapid series of short loud sounds (as might be heard with a stethoscope in some types of respiratory disorders).
- 37. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- 38. Italian violin maker in Cremona.
- 40. A master's degree in business.
- 42. Exhibiting or restored to vigorous good health.
- 43. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- 48. A crime syndicate in the United States.
- 50. A tax on employees and employers that is used to fund the Social Security system.
- 52. A castrated tomat.
- 55. Before noon.
- 57. Lake in northwestern Russia near the border with Finland.
- 58. People having the same social or economic status.
- 59. Lap at the front of a coat.
- 62. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- 63. (Greek mythology) Daughter of Zeus and Demeter.
- 64. Meat from a domestic hog or pig.
- 65. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
- 67. Set down according to a plan.
- 68. (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and reared by hand.
- 69. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- 72. An index of the cost of all goods and services to a typical consumer.
- 73. A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
- 74. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you will be the one looked to for common sense and steady pace for a group endeavor. Work, achievement and ambition are highlighted in you chart as a new year unfolds. Keep yourself open to the lighter moments in life, stop to breathe and smile. You focus on the entire concept; not the details just now, those will come later. Concentrate on sharpening your foresight, what is ahead will require cool, deliberate planning and execution. Apply past lessons to the present for a good view; You may be able to understand the problems of others better than your own. Work on this! Experimenting with new mystic and spiritual ideas may hold your interest for some time. Your world will become more stable as you continue your journey, aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, it might be best to keep your thoughts to yourself today; other people are thinking they know best. You could feel stunted or not able to come across the way you would like; your normally boisterous nature will struggle with this. Group settings are not for you as they all appear to be a tangled mess. You may just want to get out and about and walk or exercise. You should be clearing away old debts, resentments and paperwork at this time. You will find that someone is very grateful to you for a deed done long ago. You will be able to take care of a private matter. A nice person will offer you a shoulder to lean on this evening. Let yourself smile. Laugh and make it a point to get others to laugh, taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you could be confronted about a very touchy subject by someone who is critical of you in general; a heated quarrel could result. This could throw you into a disturbing tailspin. You could have an opportunity to gain valuable insight into those you work with. You will be perceived as stylish and poised by a group you attend later today. You will discover an elusive answer to a tricky problem you have been trying to solve for sometime. Spiritual exploration will be rewarding during this cycle. You are surround by well wishes and encouragement regarding a new, innovative project. An old friend may stop by unexpectedly; a nice dinner with excellent conversation will characterize the evening as you reminisce and laugh, gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, you would love an amorous encounter; this is a strong energy surrounding you. You may have dramatic ambitions to cure what ails the globe or you could be longing for a true love that is a true match. Perhaps you have thought of someone off and on for years and this drives your heart's desire; you may not even care where it comes from, you just want to be adored. A break from repetition and monotony will bring a chance to gain understanding. Someone will help you with something you no longer want to tend to. This cycle brings results from a project you poured yourself in to a while back. You will enjoy acquiring beautiful new things. You may feel a bit hyper; put your feet up tonight and let your mind wander to comforting things, Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, you have a deep need to call the shots, even if they are not yours to call. It looks as though your newest most important new interest could be learning more about investing in the stock market or real estate. Your acute sense of planning and making things happen could be applied to a group interest. You will be drawn into studying the purpose for humanity, the reason we come to the earth. A certain person will help you find some of the elusive answers you seek; if not you could be in a phase that supports acceptance and belief that you will find those answers at the right time. You may be called on to make choices for someone who can't. You will feel loved and understood throughout much of this month; this will give you the confidence you need, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, your personal relationships will enjoy the positive energy of the cycle you just entered. Send your thanks heavenward as this new year holds many changes that will signal the foundation for a harmonious tone for a long time. One of your strengths is empathy you know what people are thinking and needing and it will be strongly felt this afternoon. A certain group could approach you for your suggestions and insight into a new project; beware. Remember that just because someone asks for your opinion doesn't mean they truly want it. Stay where you are domestically for now until you are sure of the changes you think you want to make. Relax with someone you have kept your guard up with, you could be pleasantly surprised, Virgo.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Livewire Puzzles

Find these words. They are some of the puzzles made by Livewire Puzzles since 1979. The remaining letters spell a Dutch Proverb.

ESQUARING OFF TONKORTSAA
VNHTSABNNNDHMFWDKINTUPS
AUUWUORRAIEAODENTLOTFIA
WTMTRPMAILARVOQFERTLIR
KHOGEEANEDDCVHEIUIDECCB
COTNETEDTEGSRRAPANAIEA
OUHIDIALLLHGOEELHTLGEID
HSBKEUEPCNICTEHPEDIOHDC
SEASPCILILRNPHATLAAZTCA
STLLIRWLGAALGRELANRREA
ORLETISACNATTFEGDEITRR
TOSINCBKSYANSZTICAPWHWB
GUWGETEEUMETTYUSWPHEOA
RBEHCRDRRRROENFRIMOROP
ALRTEOBUIRRUOFERCEYAD I
NECOGHUEVPHSSEPANABCEN
DCSFDSGNOISIVELBUODKNE
PLKHEZEZEPAORTSETTHGILFOT
RERAWUTOUCHWOODRSHELP
IFONGNIRDNALLABOAFBRE
XACDCHINESERINGSIPNSNE

ABRACADABRA	EQUALIZER	PENTANGLE	THE RACK
ARROW	EUREKA	PINETREE	TOUCH WOOD
ASTROKNOT	FLARECRACKER	PRETZEL LOGIC	TRAPEZE
BALL AND RING	FLIGHT TEST	SHOCKWAVE	TRIPLE CROWN
BEDBUG	GRAND PRX	SHORT CIRCUIT	TRIPLE PLAY
BRIDGE THE GAP	HANDOUTPS	SILENT PARTNER	TRIPWIRE
CENTRIFUGE	HAVE A HEART	SLEIGHT OF HAND	TROUBLE CLEF
CHINESE RINGS	KING TUT	SLINGSHOT	VIRUS
CORSCREW	MELEDA	SOMETHING FISHY	WEATHERVAN
CRYSTAL CLEAR	MOTHBALLS	SPUTNIK	WEDGE
DEAD END	MOUSETRAP	SQUARING OFF	WOODEN OPEN
DOUBLE VISION	NUT HOUSE		

Daily SuDoku

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

Libra (September 23-October 22)



Libra, your spirits are high and your smile genuine. Around you is an energy of accomplishment and completion; this could pertain to work or personal relationships and projects. You will enjoy being recharges by the positive vibes of coworkers or friends. You have a high respect and sentiments for the military or police departments when you work on something to help a fallen one. You could discover a new recipe that is not only tasty but healthy! You will contribute greatly to a large account or endeavor where there are children or animals involved. It would be best not to push yourself too hard at this time. You have risen to the challenges of the day with great success, now pay attention to what you need and fulfill them tonight, selfless libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, you may have gotten up on the wrong side of the bed this morning when you feel dread for being around people today; you could think about ways to avoid work as you sip on your morning beverage. A surprising person will challenge your thinking on a sensitive situation; remember, there's often more to a situation than we can see. Best not to place that large, and very important, order today; check your chart again tomorrow regarding this when you might find the unique supplies you seek. Someone new could invite you to a dinner meeting. With your help, work will be productive once again. Later you may want to set aside some time to see why a certain person never showed up. Positive changes for you much sooner than you think, Scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, a long lost friend may contact you via social media; the energies are strongly indicated for this type of activity and you could hear from more than one! Neighborhood gatherings create a close knit community, perhaps there are safety concerns. An important aspect of this cycle is that you want your feelings known and will not back down or keep your thoughts to yourself on certain matters. The gift of gab may help you with an over-cautious customer or friend when they truly need to listen. A need for sound, common sense advice will send a friend to you in an upset state; you could have trouble giving good advice. You are appreciated and admired for your thoughtful ways; you never meet a stranger you don't like, jovial Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, you are focused on how things work and who is calling the shots. Intuition and other spiritual gifts are working overtime; figure out how to deal with this special cycle you have entered and you will be rewarded. You want to know more about the forbidden, that which is off the beaten path. You seem to have found yourself among the new ideas and theories you seek to study. You may feel compelled to focus on your savings and investments. There will be new information regarding a certain person you have been thinking of. Try to keep your feet planted firmly on the ground later today. Someone may question your motives. Go for a brisk walk or bike ride this evening with someone who is like-minded, Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Aquarius, you may feel like just keeping to yourself except for the welcome presence of a sweetheart or those who get you. Your emotions may feel stunted. If you feel restless and stressed out, think about how short-lived these feelings were last time; you'll get past this. Your surroundings are not a comfortable fit; you will discover changes that will take time but are worth waiting for. You could decide to change some plans immediately; someone will completely agree. Obstacles will be present, but so will the ways around them and in a very surprising place. Late in the evening you will read something that affects the way you think; spiritual, religious and mystic questions speak to you now, Aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, try to remember how impulsive decision making has turned out before; do you really need to make a large purchase now you could feel as though you are going up against everyone when you state certain opinions. You feel confidence in doing something a new way and may find that someone challenges your thinking. Don't be afraid to stand your ground, especially if this concerns you and not them. You may find yourself dealing with a person who is a control freak. The energy today is one of keeping to yourself and tending to your own business. Try not to let your feelings get hurt when someone inadvertently overlooks you. You love to help people and will want to jump in on a new volunteer project when you hear of it this evening, Pisces.

Yesterday's Solution

Les Misérables

ARGOT
AZELMA
BARRICADES
BISHOP MYRIEL
BREAD
CONVENT
CONVICT
COSETTE
DOLL
ENDJINAS
EPONINE

FABRIQUE
FANTINE
FRANCE
FRANÇOIS
FRENCH
GAVROCHE
GORBEAU HOUSE
INSPECTOR JAVERT
JEAN VALJEAN
JUNE REBELLION

MARIUS
MAYOR
MERCY
MONTFERMEIL
NOVEL
PARIS
PATRON-MINETTE
PRISON
RECONCILIATION
REDEMPTION

REVOLUTION
RUE PLUMET
SEWERS
SOLDIERS
STUDENTS
SUICIDE
THE SEINE
THE HARBOR
VICTOR HUGO
WEDDING

The hidden message is:
LES MISÉRABLES IS ONE OF THE LONGEST NOVELS EVER WRITTEN

Yesterday's Solution

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

Classifieds

Wednesday, January 24, 2018



Now you can browse

www.kuwaittimes.net

e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



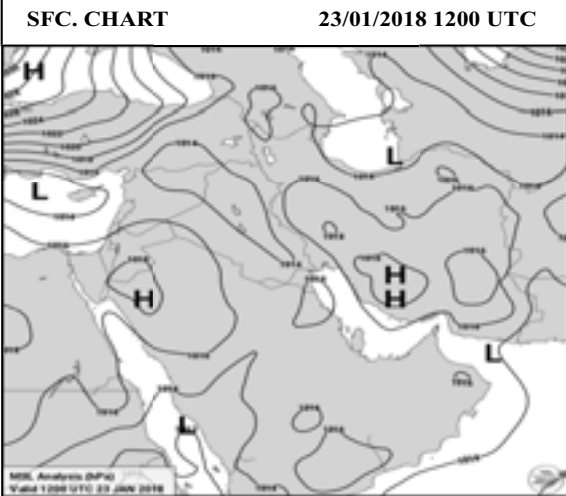
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate south easterly wind changing to north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 35 km/h with a chance for haze and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY DAY: Warm with light to moderate north westerly wind to variable wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h .

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. REC.	MIN. EXP.	<div>SFC. CHART23/01/2018 1200 UTC</div>	
KUWAIT CITY	21 °C	14 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20 °C	09 °C		
ABDALY	21 °C	09 °C		
BUBYAN	00 °C	00 °C		
JAHRA	23 °C	10 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	19 °C	13 °C		
SALMIYAH	18 °C	15 °C		
AHMADI	18 °C	12 °C		
NUWAISIB	21 °C	07 °C		
WAFRA	23 °C	08 °C		
SALMY	23 °C	11 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	01/24	Warm	23 °C	09 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h
Thursday	01/25	Partly cloudy to cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	23 °C	10 °C	VRB-SE	10 - 38 km/h
Friday	01/26	Cloudy to partly cloudy	26 °C	11 °C	SE-NW	10 - 35 km/h
Saturday	01/27	Fair causing rising dust	21 °C	09 °C	NW	20 - 45 km/h

TOMORROW PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:19
Sunrise	06:41
Zuhr	12:00
Asr	14:59
Sunset	17:19
Isha	18:38

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	19 °C
MIN. Temp.	04 °C
MAX. RH	79 %
MIN. RH	28 %
MAX. Wind	S 21 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

REQUIRED

For a Restaurants Company

5 Hot Western Cuisine Cooks & Chef

3 Cold Lebanese Cuisine Cooks

2 Pizza and Pastry Bakers

12 Waiters and Waitresses Asian

Nationality

Transferable article 18 visa required

Tel: 55664812 / 99791672

Call from 12:00 pm till 6:00 pm only

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Obanapu Usharani, holder of Indian Passport No. J2199214 issued at Hyderabad, India on 04/11/2010 w/o Obulapu Sankar Reddy shall henceforth be known as Obulapu Usharani w/o Sankar Reddy Obulapu, for the purpose of correction of wrong entries mentioned in my passport. 23-1-2018

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988



Flight Schedule

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

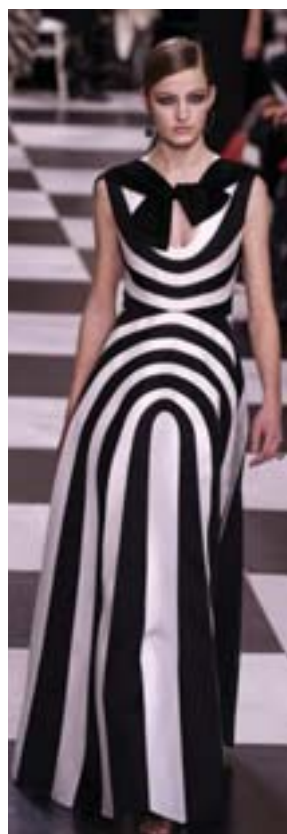
DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 24/1/2018					Departure Flights on Wednesday 24/1/2018				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	MSR	575	Sarm el-Sheikh	14:15		
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KAC	692	Jeddah	14:15		
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	FDB	059	Muscat	14:15		
KAC	102	London	00:50	QTR	1078	Doha	14:20		
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	672	Dubai	14:20		
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	286	Dhaka	14:25		
MSR	618	Alexandria	01:35	KAC	412	Bangkok	14:35		
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	364	Colombo	14:40		
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40		
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	304	Mumbai	14:50		
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55		
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	KNE	683	Madinah	15:05		
ABY	129	Sharjah	02:20	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10		
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15		
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	562	Amman	15:30		
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	JZR	787	Riyadh	15:30		
OMA	2643	Muscat	02:30	KAC	502	Beirut	15:30		
WAN	548	KTM	02:40	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35		
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45		
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	QTR	1072	Doha	15:55		
RJA	644	Amman	03:05	JZR	535	Cairo	16:00		
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00		
FEG	931	Alexandria	03:15	ABY	127	Sharjah	16:00		
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	SVA	504	Madinah	16:00		
OMA	2641	Muscat	03:30	KAC	118	New York	16:00		
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	WAN	436	Al Najaf	16:10		
KAC	796	Madinah	03:50	JZR	779	Jeddah	16:25		
QTR	1090	Doha	04:05	JZR	357	Mashhad	16:25		
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	FDB	051	Dubai	16:40		
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	KAC	522	Al Najaf	16:45		
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	RJA	640	Amman	16:55		
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	KAC	542	Cairo	17:05		
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	WAN	954	Baku	17:15		
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15		
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30		
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:40		
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00		
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	FDB	063	Dubai	18:10		
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	JZR	177	Dubai	18:15		
KAC	358	Kochi	05:40	MSR	620	Cairo	18:30		
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	JZR	483	Istanbul	18:45		
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	QTR	1080	Doha	18:50		
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	744	Dammam	19:10		
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:20		
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25		
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30		
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:30		
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45		
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50		
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:55		
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KNE	381	Taif	20:00		
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	104	London	20:00		
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	KAC	166	Rome	20:10		
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	620	Doha	20:15		
IRC	6552	ABD	09:50	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20		
WAN	342	Sohag	10:15	KAC	512	Mashhad	20:40		
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	QTR	1088	Doha	20:45		
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:45		
IRA	665	Shiraz	10:40	ALK	229	Colombo	21:20		
JZR	125	Bahrain	10:55	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20		
WAN	114	Bahrain	11:00	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20		
SYR	341	Latakia	11:00	KAC	786	Jeddah	21:25		
AXB	890	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:30		
IRM	1188	Mashhad	11:15	UAE	859	Dubai	21:35		
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45		
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:50		
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	WAN	116	Bahrain	21:50		
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	564	Amman	22:00		
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05		
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15		
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:15	AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25		
KAC	798	Taif	12:45	SVA	514	Riyadh	22:30		
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	JZR	241	Amman	22:40		
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	SVA	502	Jeddah	22:45		
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	JZR	185	Dubai	22:45		
KIS	6032	Mashhad	13:00	JAI	579	Mumbai	23:10		
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:20	PIA	239	Sialkot	23:15		
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:40	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45		
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	MSC	411	Asyut	23:55		



DIOR gets surreal as stars
talk Time's Up at PARIS COUTURE

Dior designer Maria Grazia Chiuri projected a ludic mood at the Rodin Museum as top actresses weighed in on the Time's Up movement against sexual harassment at the start of Paris couture week. Here are highlights from Monday's spring-summer 2018 collections:



Magic and illusion at Dior

Chiuri channeled surrealism for her predominantly black-and-white Dior show that brimmed with optical illusion and surprise. Chess board squares led around a mirrored runway adorned with hanging plaster sculptures: an ear, a torso, a nose, a hand and a cage. A series of A-line "domino" coats and gloves whimsically attached to an ankle set the tone for playful styles that were inspired by touchstones from the early 20th century artistic movement.

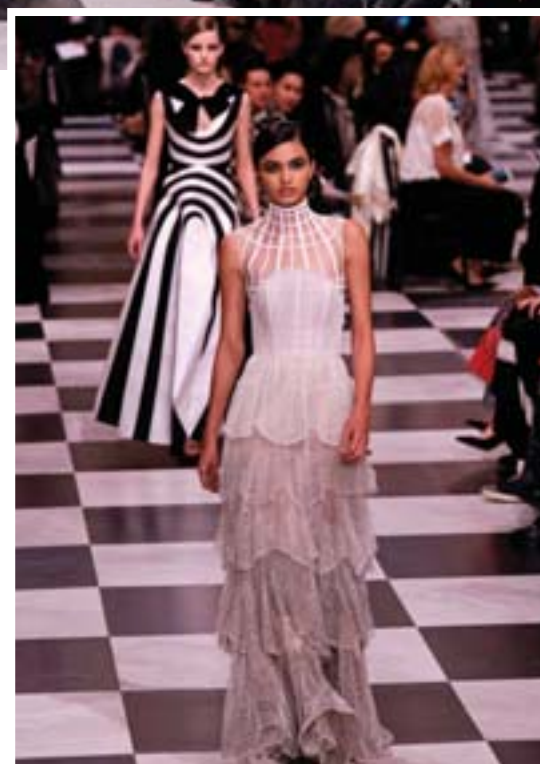
Gowns with visible caging - a surrealist leitmotif - played on transparencies. Eyes - a frequent reference for Salvador Dali - were emphasized by masks and exaggerated makeup. And the movement's frequent depiction of plumes was captured in the most beautiful gown in the collection: a bustier dress made of huge white feathers. They billowed out dramatically in an hourglass silhouette from a cinched waist fastening. A "hypnotic" striped bustier dress with a dropped waist called "Vertigo" was handled less subtly. Alongside several of the gowns in dots and stripes, it suffered due to its black-and-white shapes that gave an unintended harsh edge to the otherwise feminine display.

Schiaparelli Channels 1930's

Singers Kylie Minogue and Pixie Lott and actress Melissa George lined up at Schiaparelli's morning show, which aptly kicked off couture week offering a view across the majestic Place Vendôme. The age-old maison evoked the romantic nostalgia of the late Elsa Schiaparelli's 1930s heyday, while cinched waists and ribboned espadrilles added touches of the 1950s style. Designer Bertrand Guyon was mainly on form this season - using rolling, layered pleats to evoke the 30s in a rose gold hand-painted silk chiffon gown. Its shoulders were lobbed off in a stylish contemporary touch.



A midnight blue dress evoked a slinky quality, produced by the weight of embroidered crystals on soft chiffon fabric. Elsewhere, fun post-war details were referenced as coarse raffia fringing jazzing up a multicolored banana tree fiber gown, and the house's signature surrealist insect motifs infested a 1950s white faux-leather jacket. Sometimes, designs were a tad heavy-handed. But the piece de resistance, a black gown with a dramatic full skirt, fluttered by literally and figuratively with all-encompassing silver gilt butterflies.





Models present creations for Christian Dior during the 2018 spring/summer Haute Couture collection in Paris. — AFP photos



Guests pose during the Dior Ball in the grounds of the Rodin Museum in Paris, following the Christian Dior 2018 spring/summer Haute Couture collection fashion show earlier in the day on January 22, 2018.

Van Herpen's abstractions
Iris Van Herpen deftly captured the beauty and fragility of nature in a sublime couture display. The decor of baroque-like swirls of fabric led the eye to the collection of 21 vibrant gowns that riffed on the organic. While she abandoned none of the abstract musing that has won her critical acclaim, the Dutch conceptual designer evolved this season's styles in a more wearable direction. Abstract foliage in aqua green, held together from a nude bodice, looked remarkably like it had grown from, or was fused with, the model's body. A cascading silver gown that played on watery transparencies resembled a jelly fish with its myriad stripes and dots. The silhouette sometimes borrowed from the long sleeves or caped silhouette of the Middle Ages in a collection that stood out in the crowded couture calendar.

Proenza Schouler Channels 70s vibe
The New York-based ready-to-wear label Proenza Schouler delivered its sophomore display for Paris Couture Week and it was all about 1970s American craft. Center-partings, velvet, flared sleeves, tassels, turtle-necks, fringing and patchwork styles merged together - and always with subtlety - as they appeared to a funky, retro-sounding soundtrack. The ethnic styles preferred by hippies of the era were referenced in giant statement necklaces, huge earrings and the clasps and beading on the flame red, black and brown looks. Indeed, it was fastidious detailing - what the house called "a sense of handcraft" - that defined the spirit of the perfectly executed designs. It was an accomplished, architectural collection for designers Jack McCollough and Lazaro Hernandez.

Chanel goes girly with pretty-in-pink walk in the park
Chanel designer Karl Lagerfeld dived into the brand's archives for his pretty-in-pink haute couture Paris show yesterday, giving its founder Coco Chanel's classics an intensely girly twist. Chanel liberated women from their Edwardian corsets a century ago and recut men's tweeds and trousers to make the modern women's wardrobe. Lagerfeld, 84, sporting a wispy white beard which is likely to make as many headlines as his clothes, took her

classic silhouettes and turned the femininity dial up to sugar plum fairy. Lagerfeld's beard is the designer's first radical change of image in nearly two decades since he lost 41 kilos (90 pounds) in order to squeeze into Hedi Slimane's skinny black jeans. Much to the horror of many style watchers, the "Kaiser" wore it rather unkempt, with Harper's Bazaar saying it made him look "surprisingly (intentionally, we're sure) scruffy". But social media were quicker to judgement. "Karl Lagerfeld growing out his beard. He looks like goth Santa Claus," one person commented on Twitter. There was nothing shabby about his uber-girly collection, however, which pushed pretty till it squeaked. Yet amid all the frills and feathers, the bride-the figure that traditionally closes Paris haute couture shows-wore trousers. Lagerfeld put Dutch model Luna Bijl in a white tuxedo with a long white feathered trailing cape. The designer's nine-year-old godson, Hudson Kroenig, scattered rose petals at her feet. While rivals Dior make much of their feminist credentials these days under Maria Grazia Chiuri, Lagerfeld may have felt the need to signal that Chanel women are no pushovers either.



Models present creations by Iris Van Herpen.



Models present creations for Proenza Schouler during the 2018 spring/summer Haute Couture collection.

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Teenage American stars

As well as closing the show, rising star Bijl, 19, also led out the run of pink and green beaded tweed suits that opened it. They were matched with similarly beaded mid-calf boots with transparent wedge heels, with some models wearing edged leather gloves in a very Lagerfeld finishing touch. If the set of a French formal garden complete with fountain was decidedly less overwhelming than Lagerfeld's usual Grand Palais spectaculars, the flower theme was clear enough. As well as Sevillian black mesh flower fascinators, bouquets of tiny embroidered flowers lit up a large part of the collection that glistened with crystals and acres of fine embroidery. One bubble-gum pink flower-fringed bustier dress with matching pink crystal-encrusted boots skirted Barbiedom, but the veteran designer just about got away with it.

And there was a very early 1920s feel about a run of black and silver lace and organza dresses where Lagerfeld played up their slit pockets. Others, including a couple of coats, were hooped and cut just below the knee like sawn-off fish tails. While the front row was less starry than of late-British-Kosovanpop star Rita Ora rubbed shoulders with Russian actress and "Valerian" star Sasha Luss-Lagerfeld's models included two of the catwalk's new American teenager stars.



Kaia Gerber, 16, daughter of 1990s supermodel Cindy Crawford, who is working on a capsule collection of West Coast-inspired designs with the designer, walked with Cara Taylor, who is still only 15. Lagerfeld defended his choice of so young a model when Taylor first walked for him in Chanel's ready-to-wear collection in March, telling AFP, "That is ridiculous. Kate Moss and Naomi (Campbell) all started at 12, 13, 14."

Taylor, a 1.8-metre (5-foot-11) volleyball player from Huntsville, Alabama, has been modelling since last summer, when an agent spotted her in an Instagram photo. The haute couture shows-which are unique to the French capital-are the creme de la creme of fashion with sometimes thousands of hours going into the handmade dresses that can be afforded only by the richest women on the planet. — AP/AFP



Models present creations for Chanel during the 2018 spring/summer Haute Couture collection.

Models present creations for Schiaparelli during the 2018 spring/summer Haute Couture collection.

OSCAR NOMINEES IN MAIN CATEGORIES



This combination of pictures shows directors nominated for the 90th Academy Awards, The Oscars, (From left) Christopher Nolan, Jordan Peele, Greta Gerwig, Paul Thomas Anderson and Guillermo del Toro. — AFP photos



This combination of pictures shows actors nominated for the 90th Academy Awards, The Oscars, in a leading role (From left) Timothee Chalamet, Denzel Washington, Gary Oldman, Daniel Kaluuya and Daniel Day-Lewis.

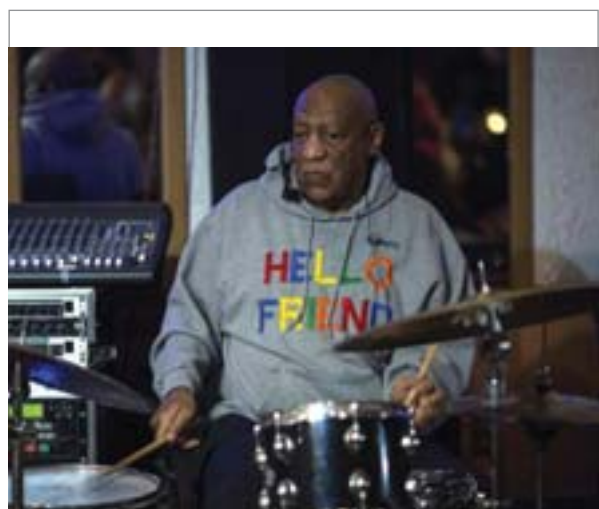
Here are the nominees in key categories for the 90th Academy Awards, to be handed out on March 4 in Hollywood. "The Shape of Water" leads the nominations with 13, followed by "Dunkirk" with eight:

- Best picture:**
"Call Me By Your Name"
"Darkest Hour"
"Dunkirk"
"Get Out"
"Lady Bird"
"Phantom Thread"
"The Post"
"The Shape of Water"
"Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"
- Best director:**
Christopher Nolan, "Dunkirk"
Jordan Peele, "Get Out"
Greta Gerwig, "Lady Bird"
Paul Thomas Anderson, "Phantom Thread"
Guillermo del Toro, "The Shape of Water"
- Best actor**
Timothee Chalamet, "Call Me by Your Name"
Daniel Day-Lewis, "Phantom Thread"
Daniel Kaluuya, "Get Out"
Gary Oldman, "Darkest Hour"
Denzel Washington, "Roman J. Israel, Esq."
- Best actress**
Sally Hawkins, "The Shape of Water"
Frances McDormand, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"
Margot Robbie, "I, Tonya"



This combination of pictures shows actresses nominated for the 90th Academy Awards, The Oscars, in a leading role (From left) Margot Robbie, Sally Hawkins, Meryl Streep, Frances McDormand and Saoirse Ronan.

- Saoirse Ronan, "Lady Bird"
Meryl Streep, "The Post"
- Best supporting actor**
Willem Dafoe, "The Florida Project"
Woody Harrelson, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"
Richard Jenkins, "The Shape of Water"
Christopher Plummer, "All the Money in the World"
Sam Rockwell, "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"
- Best supporting actress**
Mary J. Blige, "Mudbound"
Allison Janney, "I, Tonya"
Lesley Manville, "Phantom Thread"
Laurie Metcalf, "Lady Bird"
Octavia Spencer, "The Shape of Water"
- Best foreign language film**
"A Fantastic Woman" (Chile)
"The Insult" (Lebanon)
- Best animated feature**
"The Boss Baby"
"The Breadwinner"
"Coco"
"Ferdinand"
"Loving Vincent"
- Best documentary feature**
"Abacus: Small Enough to Jail"
"Faces Places"
"Icarus"
"Last Men in Aleppo"
"Strong Island"
- Best original screenplay**
"The Big Sick" - Emily V. Gordon and Kumail Nanjiani
"Get Out" - Jordan Peele
"Lady Bird" - Greta Gerwig
- Best adapted screenplay**
"Call Me By Your Name" - James Ivory
"The Disaster Artist" - Scott Neustadter and Michael H. Weber
"Logan" - Scott Frank, James Mangold and Michael Green
"Molly's Game" - Aaron Sorkin
"Mudbound" - Virgil Williams and Dee Rees
- Best original score**
"Dunkirk" - Hans Zimmer
"Phantom Thread" - Jonny Greenwood
"The Shape of Water" - Alexandre Desplat
"Star Wars: The Last Jedi" - John Williams
"Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" - Carter Burwell
- Best original song**
"Mighty River" from "Mudbound"
"Mystery of Love" from "Call Me By Your Name"
"Remember Me" from "Coco"
"Stand Up for Something" from "Marshall"
"This Is Me" from "The Greatest Showman"
Number of nominations for films with four or more nods:
"The Shape of Water" - 13
"Dunkirk" - 8
"Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" - 7
"Darkest Hour" - 6
"Phantom Thread" - 6
"Lady Bird" - 5
"Blade Runner 2049" - 5
"Call Me By Your Name" - 4
"Get Out" - 4
"Mudbound" - 4
"Star Wars: The Last Jedi" - 4—AFP



Comedian Bill Cosby plays drums during an appearance at the Germantown neighborhood jazz club, La Rose in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. — AFP

Cosby performs for first time since assault charge

Disgraced American entertainer Bill Cosby returned to the stage Monday for the first time in nearly three years, telling jokes just months before his scheduled retrial for alleged sexual assault. The 80-year-old pioneering African American actor and comedian spent around an hour performing at the LaRose Jazz Club in Philadelphia at an event honoring drummer and jazz great, Tony Williams. He sat on a wooden chair, in front of the jazz quartet, dressed casually in dark pants and grey hoodie inscribed with the words "Hello Friend" spelled out in multicolored capital letters.

There was no heckling and the audience was generally supportive, clapping and at times laughing, but the fewer than 50 people, filling only half a small venue underscored how far he has fallen from grace. For a few minutes, he sat behind the drum kit and played some drums, before delivering a very short stand-up routine, joking about getting old and going blind, interacting with an older couple in the audience.

Announcing the event only shortly before it was due to begin, his spokesman said the intention was to "honor his fans with a historic performance" at what was a public event with tickets sold on the door. It was the first time Cosby performed in public since May 2015, when CNN reported that he was interrupted twice in Atlanta after a string of women had already come forward to accuse him of sexual assault. He was indicted in December 2015 and went on trial in June 2017, accused of drugging and molesting a former university basketball official at his Philadelphia home in 2004.—AFP

S African jazz legend Hugh Masekela dies, aged 78

South African jazz legend Hugh Masekela died yesterday aged 78, his family announced, triggering an outpouring of tributes to his music, his long career and his anti-apartheid activism.

"After a protracted and courageous battle with prostate cancer, he passed peacefully in Johannesburg," Masekela's family said in a statement. It hailed his "activist contribution" to music, which it said "was contained in the minds and memory of millions." President Jacob Zuma praised Masekela as a "jazz artist, legendary trumpeter, cultural activist and liberation struggle veteran." "He kept the torch of freedom alive globally fighting apartheid through his music and mobilizing international support," Zuma said.

"It is an immeasurable loss to the music industry and to the country at large," South African singer Johnny Clegg described Masekela as "an outstanding musical pioneer and a robust debater, always holding to his South African roots." Masekela fled white-ruled South Africa in 1960, and did not return until after the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990. Among his greatest hits were the beloved anthem "Bring Him Back Home", demanding Mandela's freedom from jail, and "Grazing in the Grass". Keeping up his international touring schedule into his 70s with energetic shows, his concerts at home often became mass sing-alongs. A teenaged Masekela was handed his first trumpet-and later a Louis Armstrong hand-me-down-through anti-apartheid activist priest Father Trevor Huddleston. "I took to it like a fish to water. I was a natural," he recalled.

'Music captured my soul'
He spent his early years in a conservative small town east of Johannesburg, surrounded by coal mines that relied on cheap black labor. "It was in those days in Witbank that music first captured my soul, forced me to



This file photo taken on January 8, 2015 shows South African trumpeter, composer, and singer Hugh Masekela entertaining guests during the CAF African Footballer of the Year Award in Lagos. — AFP

recognize its power," he wrote in his candid autobiography "Still Grazing". Growing up under the worst of apartheid's racial laws that classified blacks as second-class citizens, Masekela was desperate to leave the country that he described as cursed.

"When the airplane finally took off, it was as though a very heavy weight had been taken off me-as if I had been painfully constipated for 21 years," he said of his flight to London. Despite his long exile, the aching pain of a country ripped apart by skin color never left his music. Masekela moved on to New York to study at the Manhattan School of Music and fell into a fast-paced life alongside fellow South African legend Miriam Makeba and giants of music like Dizzy Gillespie and Harry Belafonte.

Masekela and Makeba were briefly married in the 1960s, and later continued to collaborate. His first No. 1 was the 1968 breezy single "Grazing in the Grass" which topped the US charts while he was living in Los Angeles and hanging out with stars like Jimi Hendrix and Marvin Gaye.

Personal struggles
He later returned Africa, where he played with icons like Nigeria's Fela Kuti, and in 1974 helped organize a three-day festival ahead of the "Rumble in the Jungle" boxing clash in Zaire (the Democratic Republic of Congo) between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman. In the 1980s, he built a mobile recording studio in Botswana where he lived for several years, toured with Paul Simon of "Graceland" fame and helped with the score for the hit musical "Sarafina!" A charismatic horn blower and vocalist, Masekela's songs ranged from the haunting "Stimela" about trains taking black workers to South Africa's mines, to the cheeky energy of "Thanayi" about a large woman's struggle with food.

But his life was also filled with excess-women, alcohol and drugs-with which he struggled from his youth. "I was drunk on money-when I could find it-drugs, which were never hard to find, love, lust and music, and in no hurry to sober up," he wrote. Affectionately known as "Bra Hugh"-South African slang for "brother" or "mate"-Masekela finally returned home after the release of Mandela, who telephoned him while he was in New York. Arts Minister Nathi Mthethwa said yesterday that "the nation has lost a one-of-a-kind musician." "He uplifted the soul of our nation through his timeless music."— AFP



This file photo shows singer Neil Diamond performing during the annual Clive Davis pre-Grammy gala at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. — AFP

Neil Diamond reveals Parkinson's, ends touring

Neil Diamond, one of the best-selling singers of all time, announced Monday he was immediately retiring from touring after being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Following his doctor's advice, the Brooklyn native who turns 77 today scrapped Australia and New Zealand stops scheduled for March as part of a global tour to celebrate his 50th anniversary as a recording artist. However, Diamond said in a statement that he plans to "remain active in writing, recording and other projects for a long time to come."

"It is with great reluctance and disappointment that I announce my retirement from concert touring. I have been so honored to bring my shows to the public for the past 50 years," the singer said, apologizing to his fans who had been anticipating the upcoming shows. In a nod to his signature song "Sweet Caroline," Diamond thanked his loyal fans, saying: "This ride has been 'so good, so

good, so good' thanks to you." Diamond, who dropped out of New York University to start a career writing songs for stars such as The Monkees, found fame on his own by the late 1960s after emerging from the folk scene.

As tastes shifted to louder and more provocative rock, Diamond won a fan base by going into softer fare that harked back to classic pop. The old-style crooner packed concerts with hits including "Sweet Caroline," "Girl, You'll Be a Woman Soon" and "Cracklin' Rosie." An inductee into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Diamond will be honored again on Sunday with a lifetime achievement award at the Grammys. Diamond recently appeared to be healthy, albeit frigid, as he appeared in a stocking cap on New Year's Eve in New York's Times Square to lead the packed crowd in a singalong of "Sweet Caroline."— AFP

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2018



Iranian sky diver Bahareh Sassani jumps in Zibakenar. — AFP photos

Iranian woman skydiver looks to break down stereotypes



Iranian sky diver Bahareh Sassani prepares to a jump in Zibadasht.

For Iranian parachuting enthusiast Bahareh Sassani, skydiving is “a way to prove that women are just as capable as men”—a small step from a big height for women’s equality in her country. The 35-year-old accountant has been skydiving less than two years but already has more than 220 jumps under her belt. “I encourage all women to try this experience. It gives you the feeling you can do whatever you want. Women should not be excluded from anything,” she said. Sassani—one of just a handful of female skydivers in her deeply conservative homeland—refuses to describe herself as a “feminist”. But her motto is firmly “there is no difference between men and women and a woman can do anything she wants and succeed”.

That still runs against the grain of Iranian society, where women have had a lower legal status than men since the Islamic revolution of 1979 even if they have battled to stay equal in daily life. Her favorite pastime is still very much the preserve of men in Iran—made more complicated by the fact there is no parachuting club so she must do it with the army. “When they organize jumps, the army invites everyone, including civilians,” she explained.

Liberating

There were a handful of women parachutists in pre-revolutionary Iran: archived images published recently by the ISNA news agency showed the first four female army skydivers from 1965. But today, women are not permitted to join the army. The police has an elite unit that does



Iranian sky diver Bahareh Sassani jumps in Zibakenar.

“There is no difference between men and women, a woman can do anything she wants and succeed”

some parachuting practice, but Sassani says she knows only five other qualified women from the civilian population. Unlike her friends who chose to buy a car, clothes or jewelry with their first pay cheques or savings, Sassani said she opted instead to invest in parachuting, despite the adventurous sport being a male bastion in Iran. At the

start, her motivation for taking up skydiving was to combat a fear of heights, she said. But now she loves the sense of liberation from every day cares that it gives her, she added.

Male reactions can be rather extreme though, she says. “Men often avoid women like me, thinking we aren’t made for marriage because we are uncontrollable,” she said, bursting into laughter. “But a small number do show an interest in what I’m doing.” It can also generate interest abroad, said Sassani, who has jumped in Russia, Kenya, Thailand and the UAE. “Even abroad, when I sky-dive, people are surprised. They think there are a lot of restrictions in Iran, but I explain to them that there are women doing motocross, flying planes and, yes, parachuting,” she said. A recent photo did the rounds in the Iranian media, showing Sassani jumping with an Iranian flag. “I meet lots of cultures and beliefs abroad, but I’m a patriot and I love doing jumps in Iran more than anything,” she adds. — AFP



Iranian sky diver Bahareh Sassani prepares for a jump at the Hemat flight site in Tehran.



Iranian sky diver Bahareh Sassani prepares to a jump in Zibadasht.