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56 people still in custody • All detainees have left the Ritz-Carlton

conspiracy theories

Exploiting kids



By Badrya Darwish

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Lately I've noticed on social media - especially Facebook and WhatsApp - that people are using children under eight to publicize special causes - be they political, commercial, social or fun. Even celebrities sometimes use children to publicize their activities or to entertain. I know in show business, we see children all the time. But what is taking place now, particularly on social media, is unregulated and unsavory.

Children are being used left, right and center, and families are very happy to see their kids become popular and get likes, without thinking about the harm they may be doing to their children. They don't understand that this child will grow up possibly psychologically impacted from the experience.

Imagine a child recorded talking about the horrors of the Syrian conflict. Yes, it's a reality that children are suffering and living in these harsh miseries, unfortunately. But to use him to get attention seems wrong to me. It's abusive to the child because you are in a way stealing the child's innocence. Maybe it's justified sometimes to attract attention to the suffering of children in war zones. But it's a very thin line.

In Hollywood, there are regulations that are meant to protect child actors. But nowadays on social media, what are the protections? I don't think there are any kinds of protections, and on the contrary, families are overexcited to see their kids getting a hundred likes or if their images or videos go viral. All they care about is the likes, not what the child likes. And children pick up on that. And this is the dangerous area.

I have a friend who objected to my ideas. She said she puts her kids on social media all the time, demanding what was upsetting me. I explained to her, on the contrary, that I loved to see her children on Facebook because they are not being used to entertain adults and talk about adult issues. They are either painting or knitting or doing things that kids do, and this will encourage other kids.

There's nothing wrong with children showing their skills and achievements online to a limited degree, like horseback riding, swimming, running, singing or whatever, because this can inspire others to do good things. I'm not objecting to these types of activities or other stuff like that. I'm only objecting to exploiting children to talk about things and to gain a notoriety that can be harmful. Children who gain this kind of attention may be attracted to other harmful things, and will not live their childhood.

So think twice before you publicize your kids.

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's attorney general said yesterday \$107 billion has been recovered so far in a major crackdown on high-level corruption and that 56 suspects were still being investigated. Sheikh Saud Al-Mojeb said he has completed inquiries into 381 high-profile corruption suspects and decided to keep 56 in custody and free the rest. Those released include individuals proven not guilty but also others who had agreed financial settlements with the government after admitting corruption charges, he said.

Total settlements with the suspects had topped 400 billion riyals (\$107 billion) in various forms of assets handed over that included property, securities and cash. In November, the authorities launched an unprecedented anti-graft swoop that netted hundreds of members of the extended royal family, top businessmen and officials. The anti-corruption drive was led by Mohammed bin Salman, the 32-year-old crown prince and author of the "Vision 2030" program of social and economic reforms in the ultraconservative nation.

Among those detained was one of the desert kingdom's most high-profile and wealthiest men, Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal. The man dubbed the Warren Buffett of Saudi Arabia was released on

Saturday after striking an undisclosed financial agreement with the authorities. He remains chairman of the Kingdom Holding Company in which he owns a 95-percent stake.

Some critics have labeled Prince Mohammed's campaign a shake-down and power grab, but authorities insist the purge targeted endemic corruption as the country prepares for a post-oil era. But Prince Mohammed also appears to have won widespread approval for the purge among ordinary Saudis, partly because the government has said it will use some of the money it seizes to fund social benefits. "What has happened is great, it will be counted as a win for the government. Whoever the person is, he is being held accountable, whether a royal or a citizen," said Abdullah Al-Otaibi, drinking at a Riyadh coffee shop yesterday.

"The total number of subpoenaed individuals reached 381, a significant number of whom were called to testify or provide evidence," the attorney general said yesterday in a statement released by the information ministry. Mojeb said he had decided to "keep in custody those individuals - 56 in total - where the attorney general has refused to settle with them due

Continued on Page 11

MP threatens to grill PM if charges hiked

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition lawmaker Riyadh Al-Adasani yesterday threatened to grill Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah if the government hikes public charges or reduces subsidies to increase costs on citizens. Adasani said that if the government resorts to such measures in order to boost non-oil revenues, he will grill the premier as he did last year over the same issue.

Minister of Finance Nayef Al-Hajraf said on Monday that the government may resort to hiking charges for

public services and reduce subsidies as a way of financing the budget deficit, projected to be KD 6.5 billion for the 2018/2019 fiscal year. The minister also said that government wages and subsidies to public services, power and fuel account for as much as 73 percent of spending, estimated at KD 20 billion for the next fiscal year starting April 1.

Hajraf said these measures may be necessary until the National Assembly approves the debt law to allow the government to borrow from domestic and international markets. The bill has been sent to the Assembly. Kuwaiti MPs have strongly opposed government plans to hike prices of fuel and power and impose value-added tax (VAT) and other measures to finance the budget deficit resulting from low oil prices. Adasani said he will review the financial statements and highlight faults in them at a press conference tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the Assembly holds a special session today to vote on a no-confidence motion filed by 10

MPs against Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh amid clear signs that the minister will defeat the motion. Fewer than 15 MPs have said they will support the motion, while to succeed, it requires the backing of 25 MPs. The motion was filed following a marathon grilling over alleged financial and administrative violations by the minister.

The three grillers - MPs Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei, Mubarak Al-Hajraf and Khaled Al-Otaibi - have claimed the minister failed to take appropriate measures to rebalance the demographic structure, which is massively tilted in favor of expatriates, who form around 70 percent of the state's 4.5 million populace. They also accused the minister of failing to check visa traders who recruit thousands of expatriate workers for money and leave them without work, thus increasing the number of expats. The minister categorically denied the charges and said she has taken several measures to check the growth of expatriates and has referred dozens of visa traders to court.

Qadsiya win Crown Prince Cup



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah hands the Crown Prince Cup to Qadsiya Club captain Saleh Al-Sheikh after Qadsiya beat Kuwait Club yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 16)

US praises ties with Qatar, calls for Gulf unity

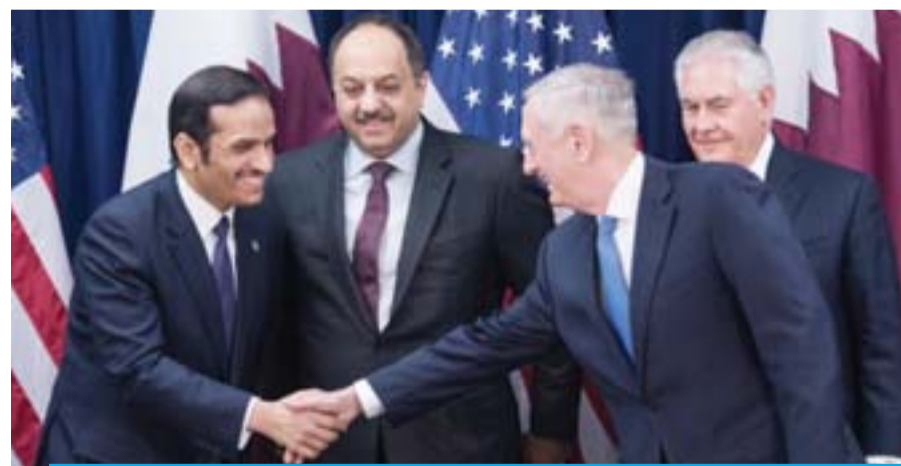
WASHINGTON: The United States praised Qatar for its improved counterterrorism cooperation yesterday and warned that its rift with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf neighbors has hurt the fight against extremism. Saudi Arabia and its allies launched a diplomatic boycott of Qatar and closed their frontiers last year, accusing the gas-rich emirate of cozying up to Iran and sponsoring Islamist groups.

US President Donald Trump, fresh from a successful trip to Riyadh, seemed at first to take the Saudi side in the dis-

pute and demanded that Qatar, which denies the charges, change its behavior. But US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis have been working to bring the dispute to an end and bind both Qatar and its opponents into a deeper mutual alliance.

Yesterday, these diplomatic efforts produced the first of what may become an annual US-Qatari Strategic Dialogue, hosted by Tillerson and Mattis for their counterparts from Qatar. In opening remarks, both sides stressed the importance of unity in the Gulf Cooperation Council. "As the Gulf dispute nears the eight-month mark the United States remains as concerned today as we were at its outset," Tillerson said, opening the meeting of senior US and Qatari officials. "This dispute has had direct negative

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WASHINGTON: US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis (second right) shakes hands with Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al-Thani as Qatari Defense Minister Khaled Al-Attiyah (second left) and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson look on prior to signing agreements at the State Department yesterday. — AFP

Yemen separatists seize government's de facto capital

ADEN: Separatists in war-ravaged Yemen have seized all but one district of the government's de facto capital Aden, also laying siege to the isolated presidential palace on the city's southern outskirts yesterday. Global charity Save the Children said it was suspending lifesaving work in Aden as its staff were forced to bunker down amid gun battles that the Red Cross says have killed at least 36 people in the past three days.

A number of ministers fled the port city by

boat on Monday night, docking in the district of Brega further west, a military source told AFP. A port official confirmed their arrival, saying they were transported to a base of the Saudi-led coalition which backs Yemen's government. But the ministers returned to Aden before dawn, after receiving guarantees from the coalition that the presidential palace would not be stormed, a government source said.

The source said Saudi Arabia and its coalition allies are now in talks with southern separatists and with Yemen's government, which Riyadh supports in the war against Iran-backed Houthi rebels. The separatists, who advocate for self-rule in southern Yemen, now control seven of Aden's eight districts. Forces loyal to the government of President Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi hold the large northern district of Dar Saad, while ministers

remain in the besieged presidential palace near the coast. Hadi's government has accused the separatists of attempting a coup in Aden, opening yet another front in the country's devastating conflict.

Save the Children yesterday said it was suspending critical humanitarian work in Aden out of fear for the safety of its staff. "Our staff are forced to shelter at home and in bunkers while gun battles rage outside," Yemen Country Director Tamer Kirolos said, saying children are "dying every day from preventable causes" like hunger, cholera and diphtheria. "Aden was a relative refuge amidst the fighting in Yemen, but now that too has been shattered," Kirolos said. "How many more innocent children must have their lives destroyed before the world takes notice?"

Continued on Page 11



ADEN: Smoke billows in the Yemeni government's de facto capital, as fighters from the separatist Southern Transitional Council move closer to taking full control of the city yesterday. — AFP

Local

Amir briefed about 'territorial communication pathway' project

Amir receives Wataniya Airways' president, board members



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah listens to a demonstration from Chairman of the Public Authority for Communications and Information Technology Salem Al-Uthaina about the 'territorial communication pathway' project. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a memento presented by the Wataniya Airways' chief and board of directors.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh and Chairman of the Public Authority for Communications and Information Technology Salem Al-Uthaina, who presented to His Highness detailed information on a planned communication project.

The project aims to shed light on Kuwait's role in the information technology transfer field in line with international standards. It will also turn Kuwait into a global destination for data transfer between the East and West. Moreover, the project will attract foreign investors and provide job opportunities for Kuwaitis.

IT powerhouse

The planned 'territorial communication pathway' project will put the country directly on the path towards becoming an IT powerhouse, Uthaina said, adding that the project would put Kuwait on par with other global technology hubs such as Frankfurt and London. Uthaina went on to say that factors including Kuwait's location and active diplomacy, as well as its ability to lure foreign investment, all but guarantee the success of the project.

He pointed out that countries with the most solid internet connections are usually the most economically developed, adding that Kuwait is in position to reap financial gains worth KD 102 million (\$337 million) through this monumental project. Uthaina revealed that the communication authority has contacted tech giants such as Google and Microsoft in a bid to have them contribute to the project. He stressed that the project will help transform Kuwait into a global IT hub, drawing the approval of His Highness the Amir, who hoped that the project would see the light of day soon.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Hamad Al-Tuwajri, accompanied by the President of Wataniya Airways Ali Al-Fowzan and board members of the airways. The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. The board members later met with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as well.

World Governments Summit

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir received a written letter from UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayid Al Nahayan, which was handed over by UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Rahma Hussain Al-Za'abi. The letter included an invitation for His Highness the Amir to attend the World Governments Summit, scheduled to be held in Dubai next month.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Separately, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness the Prime Minister and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Al-Jahra Governor Lieutenant General Fahad Al-Ameer and Mayors of Al-Jahra Governorate and Kuwait's Ambassador to Azerbaijan Saud Shamlan Al-Roumi. Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister received President of the Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents Saleh Al-Fadhala. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir receives a letter from UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayid Al Nahayan, handed over by UAE Ambassador to Kuwait Rahma Hussain Al-Za'abi.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with President of the Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents Saleh Al-Fadhala.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Wataniya Airways' delegation.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Al-Jahra Governor Lieutenant General Fahad Al-Ameer and Mayors of Al-Jahra Governorate.

Amir's envoy offers condolences to UAE

ABU DHABI: Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his accompanying delegation offered condolences to UAE Crown Prince and Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayid Al Nahayan, to Governor of Al-Ain Sheikh Tahnon bin Mohammad Al Nahayan, and to all of Al Nahayan family on the demise of Sheikha Hessa bint Mohammad Al Nahayan. His Highness Sheikh Nasser conveyed condolences on behalf of His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and the people of Kuwait to UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayid Al Nahayan. — KUNA



ABU DHABI: His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his delegation offered condolences on the demise of Sheikha Hessa bint Mohammad Al Nahayan. — KUNA

Minister meets UK Cyber Security Ambassador



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh meets with UK Cyber Security Ambassador Conrad Prince. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh held a meeting yesterday with UK Cyber Security Ambassador Conrad Prince and his accompanying delegation, focusing on the role of information security in protecting government and private institutions. The two sides also reviewed the attention that the countries of the world give to information security, noting that the Information Technology Authority pays much heed to this area as one of the

most important tasks assigned to it, the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs' office said in statement. The Minister's office added that Chairman of the Communication and Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA) in Kuwait Salem Al-Uthaina also attended the meeting. Saleh also praised the distinguished level of historical relations between the two countries and expressed his aspiration for more fruitful cooperation in all fields, the statement added. — KUNA

Local

Kuwaitis make up four percent of health ministry's nurses

KD 24.727 billion taken from future generations fund in 42 years

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Head of the studies and research office at the health ministry's nursing services department Dr Hanan Al-Naqaidan said Kuwaiti nurses in the ministry make up 4 percent, as their number is 900 out of 23,000 nurses of other nationalities. She hoped that the number will rise to 50 percent in five years, and this is a major challenge, she added. Meanwhile, Planning and Training Supervisor Dr Iman Al-Awadhi said the aim of holding workshops is to focus on certain aspects, most importantly having a national definition of the nursing profession and set the range of the nursing practice.



273 Kuwaiti technical staff join KPC

273 technical staff
The oil sector revealed that the number of accepted employees at Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its companies is 273 technical diploma holders. A source said that the employment ad for diploma holders was published in Dec 2017 for fresh Kuwaiti graduates.

Future generations fund
Official data released by the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) showed that the amount of funds taken from the future generations fund since it was established in 1976 until this month (42 years) reached KD 24.727 billion. The authority said there have been no withdrawals from the fund except for one time when KD 24 billion was withdrawn during the Iraqi invasion to ensure Kuwaitis' good living conditions, finance liberation operations in addition to rebuilding and meeting commitments towards the budget after oil wells were burned and state revenues came to a halt. KIA was able to recover the money and the last repayment from the general reserve to the future generations fund was made on March 24, 2008.

Business environment
Commerce and Industry Minister and State Minister for Youth Affairs Khalid Nasser Al-Roudhan said the Commerce Ministry is keen on making amendments to some items of old laws in order to apply the best legal practices that serve Kuwait's economy and requirements of improving the business

environment. He said he formed a legal committee from various authorities to present amendments to laws for discussion. He added that the next period at the National Assembly will see discussions over several laws, most notably the insurance law that the government sent to the Assembly, the commercial register law and a law that is in its final stages at the fatwa and legislation department, the law of information exchange, which is highly important, as well as amendments to some items of the national fund for small and medium sized projects. He said the amendments will help small and medium sized projects to be transferred from the financing fund to a fund that sponsors projects.

Medical storage
The Public Authority for Industry (PAI) asked Kuwait Municipality to allocate a site for medical storage near Kuwait International Airport. "Out of keenness to push the development process further and support state projects, and due to the need of public companies in the state for locations for medical storage activities near Kuwait airport, it presented the issue to the Municipal Council to allocate a site near Kuwait airport," PAI said. It hoped that the area in northwest location no. 11 in West Shuaiba be allocated for this purpose.

Novel banned
Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri said the ministry reviewed the contents of a controversial novel and decided to ban it in Kuwait because it contains words and suggestions that are contrary to Islamic teachings and public morals. Jabri, who was answering a parliamentary question, said the Arabic novel 'Subartu' was reviewed by a committee called the "assistance committee", and this committee approved it without referring it to the book review committee. The approval was then withdrawn and the novel was reviewed by the book committee, which banned it in Kuwait. Jabri said the issue was referred for investigations to find who passed it and did not present it to the book review committee, and found those responsible were the director of the government press and members of the assistance committee. All of them were disciplined with a deduction of two weeks' salaries.

Kuwaiti, Yemeni FMs mull over regional situation



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with his Yemeni counterpart Abdulmalik Al-Mekhlafi. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his visiting Yemeni counterpart Abdulmalik Al-Mekhlafi met yesterday and discussed the latest regional developments. They also addressed ongoing international efforts to find a political solution to the Yemeni problem and to ease out the humanitarian sufferings and woes of the Yemeni people.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled renewed Kuwait's firm position based on providing official and unofficial support to Yemen. He added that Kuwait, through its non-permanent UNSC membership in 2018-2019, would continue its efforts to help Yemen, to contribute to alleviating humanitarian woes, and to find a peaceful solution that could restore this Arab country's security and stability in line with the Gulf Initiative, its executive mechanism, National Dialogue and UNSC Resolution 2016.

Meanwhile, the Yemeni minister said his country pins much hope on Kuwait's role during its non-permanent UNSC membership. He voiced much appreci-

ation to Kuwait's contributions to Yemen, especially regarding the humanitarian situation, as well as its unwavering stance that calls for an end to bloodshed and violence in Yemen.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled then held a luncheon banquet in honor of the Yemeni guest and his accompanying delegation. The meeting and banquet were attended by several senior officials of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Separately, Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met with Saudi Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Consular Affairs Ambassador Tamim bin Majid Al-Dousari yesterday. The two sides discussed the outcome of the Kuwaiti-Saudi consular dialogue meeting, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement. Jarallah applauded the positive results of the meeting to support consular cooperation between the two countries. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Deputy Foreign Minister's office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar and Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs, Minister Plenipotentiary Sami Al-Hamad. — KUNA

15 inactive companies busted

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Residency detectives busted 15 closed and inactive companies that had 141 workers under their sponsorship, who are in violation of residency laws. This took place during a recent crackdown in Ahmedi governorate, and concerned authorities were contacted to take necessary legal action.

Oil production disrupted
Criminal detectives arrested two persons, Kuwaiti and Saudi, for committing a crime against the state, Al-Rai reported yesterday. The suspects disrupted oil production from a well after they stole electric cables and cut the fence at the site of an oil company. The two cut the cables connected to the wells to sell them in Amghara. Criminal detectives' investigations led them to the suspects. Both confessed to committing the crime, adding that they stole 27 cables and sold them to Iranians at the Amghara scarp yard. The losses are estimated at KD 46,000, apart from the losses resulting after production was stopped for three days.

Beggar caught
Policemen noticed a girl begging in Mubarakiya, so they arrested her and found she is 17 years old and on a visit visa. They also found KD 63 on her, besides other Gulf currencies. The girl was sent to criminal detectives to be deported, while the person who brought her to Kuwait will be questioned and may face charges.

Indian Embassy urges violators to avail of amnesty

KUWAIT: The Indian Embassy in Kuwait released the following statement on violation of residency rules, urging Indian nationals who are in violation to benefit from an amnesty announced recently by Kuwait's Interior Ministry.

As per the latest directives of Ministry of Interior, regarding travel of expatriates back to their countries without payment of penalty/fine for violation of 'Residency Rules', following guidelines may be noted by the Indian community in Kuwait.

1. All Indian expatriates without valid Residency/Visa (Residency not obtained at all /Residency not renewed timely /or has a valid Residency, but intend to return to India) must utilize this opportunity to leave Kuwait before 22nd February 2018.

2. Expatriates (under Visa Article Numbers 18 & 20) with absconding cases (registered by sponsor/company) can leave Kuwait during this period using valid Passport OR a travel document, i.e. Emergency Certificate (EC), to be issued by the Embassy.

3. Expatriates with "travel ban" (due to civil/criminal cases etc.) shall not be allowed to leave the country during this period. First, they have to obtain proper clearance from the concerned Authorities/Court/Ministry of Justice, Kuwait.

4. Those who are in possession of valid Passports (with air ticket) and not under travel ban can directly approach Airport Immigration Authorities for clearance and exit.

5. Those who do not have valid Passports, will have to:

- Obtain an EC from the Embassy.
- Along with EC, please approach Residency department (Passport) offices at various Governorates in Kuwait from where Residency/visa of individual was initially processed. EC will be verified and stamped at special counters (from 7 am to 2.30 pm) which will enable the individual to travel.

c. EC forms (free of cost) are available at the Embassy and individual has to pay a fee of Five KD (5 KD) only while submitting duly filled in EC applications. Individual has to personally collect EC from the Embassy on the due date of delivery.

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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Horses compete in a racetrack in Ahmadi recently. —KUNA photo

CONDOLENCES

The Chairman, Board Members,
Management and Staff of

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K.S.C.P.**

Wish to extend their
heartfelt condolences to

Mr. Ghulam Jillani Khawaja

Assistant Vice President - IT & Support Services Dept.

On the sad demise of

His Mother

*"May her soul rest in peace, and may the Almighty
grant solace and strength to the bereaved family
members during this time of grief.,*

ICF-Kuwait launched at 4th Coaching Conference

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The International Coach Federation - Kuwait chapter (ICF-Kuwait) was officially launched on Monday at the 4th Coaching Conference. Fifteen local and international professional coaches presented the lectures and workshops at this three-day event that was organized by Spatialco, Mashar and the ICF-Kuwait chapter.

Hilary Oliver PCC, ICF Global Chair 2017, gave a presentation on the ICF. "ICF was founded in 1995, and its first board was formed in 1996. It has over 60 chapters worldwide. We are pioneers in the development of global standards of professional coaching, core competencies, ethics and industry research," she noted during the presentation.

"Coaching is an integral part of a thriving society, and every member of ICF is a professional in coaching. The number of members has witnessed high growth over the past decade. Members grew from 5,000 to 35,000 from 2007 to 2017. Also, global awareness rose eight percentage points between 2014 and 2017," stressed Oliver.

Mona Al-Qattan, Marketing Director of ICF-Kuwait

chapter, said the main goal of founding the ICF-Kuwait chapter is spreading awareness about coaching and its benefits. "We aim to help certified coaches in networking to raise their level of credibility in the market by getting certified through the ICF. Many coaches claim they are certified, but their credentials show they are not really certified from an institute," she told Kuwait Times. A panel discussion followed the presentation and the members addressed their questions and shared their experiences.

The ICF is a global nonprofit organization that aims to set a professional standard for coaching and achieve a better understanding of the benefits of coaching for both individuals and within organizations. The Kuwait chapter will actively support the advancement of the coaching profession by providing education, networking, and business development opportunities for members and their supporting community. The chapter members are entrepreneurs with their own coaching business and corporate professionals using coaching as a performance and development tool in their jobs. ICF-Kuwait chapter serves to provide the experience encountered when coaching is chosen through personal development, career-enhancing, powerful programs and community involvement throughout.

ICF-Kuwait chapter creates opportunities for coaches to volunteer their coaching services in the community as well as educating the public about

benefits of coaching and partnering with ICF credentialed coaches. The chapter also maintains the ICF's standards of ethics and integrity. It will also support coaches in acquiring their first ICF credential and advancing to the next level and promotes professional coaching and professional coaches around the region. In addition, the chapter will build strategic alliances with regional business, government, nonprofit and other professional organizations.

Pioneers in coaching standards development



KUWAIT: Speakers attend a lecture hosted as part of the 4th Coaching Conference. —Photo by Joseph Shagra

Local

Zain participates in opening ceremony of 10th International Invention Fair Middle East

Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its participation in the opening ceremony of the 10th International Invention Fair Middle East as part of its strategic partnership. The event is held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and runs from 28-31 January 2018 in Arraya Ballroom at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel.

His Highness the Amir's representative, the Amiri Diwan Affairs Deputy Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and Chairman of Kuwait Science Club Talal Al-Kharafi visited Zain's booth, where the company showcased its latest offerings and promotions to visitors.

Zain's support of this major event since its inception is part of the company's corporate sustainability and social responsibility strategy, which aims at supporting the scientific arena and contribute to the further development of the scientific field in Kuwait and the region. The Invention Fair Middle East brings

together a large number of local, regional, and international inventors who jointly exchange knowledge and experiences.

The International Invention Fair is one of the most significant and largest specialized exhibitions of inventions in the Middle East, and is considered as the second largest exhibition of its kind in the world. The event is part of the International Exhibition of Geneva, and offers an opportunity for inventions from different cultures to be exhibited and the strengthening of relationships among inventors and investors.

Zain is keen on encouraging Kuwaiti and Arab talents, especially Kuwaiti inventors, in the fields of science and innovation side by side with international experts. Zain supports such areas as it believes it offers a valuable opportunity for young inventors to benefit from the expertise and knowledge of international inventors. The company will continue to foster young talents, believing that the current generation of youngsters holds the keys to the future development of Kuwait.



World's second largest exhibition of its kind



KUWAIT: Amiri Diwan Affairs Deputy Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and other officials visit Zain's booth at the exhibition.

KIB sponsors graduation projects at Engineering Design Exhibition



KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored several graduation projects developed by students from the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University. As part of its leading social responsibility program, the Bank provided its support to students who are taking part in the University's annual Engineering Design Exhibition.

KIB's sponsorship included the SpeakSim project which focuses on specific speech therapies and treatments and was developed by computer engineering students Abdullah Karata, Eyad Aldali, Alaa Eid, Abdullah Dawoud, and Mohammed Serafraz. Another graduation project focuses on determining reservoir fluid behavior in Kuwait oil reservoirs for material balance calculations and evaluation of reserves, based on testing and analysis. Additionally, the Bank sponsored the Alghazali Outfall project, which was spearheaded by civil engineering students Fatma Alkandari, Dalia Alhobeda, Reem Alrashed, Zainab Almoussawi, and Sara Hassan. The aim of the project is to study and analyze the contaminated water surrounding the Ghazali Bridge.

Speaking about this sponsorship, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najja said: "Supporting engineering students at Kuwait University and sponsoring their graduation projects every year comes in line with our encompassing program of initiatives specifically targeting the youth population. We believe that youth are the architects of this nation's bigger and brighter future."

KIB dedicates a large portion of its efforts towards supporting students' ideas and sponsoring their projects, as it believes they are an integral driving force of the nation's future. Accordingly, youth initiatives constitute a significant portion of the Bank's social responsibility program.

KRCS Chairman meets Philippine Senate President

KUALA LUMPUR: Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Hilal Al-Sayer met with President of the Senate of the Philippines Aquilino Pimentel to discuss boosting bilateral ties. In a statement yesterday, Sayer said that Pimentel hailed Kuwait's role in providing aid to Filipinos who were affected by natural disasters in the country. He added that they also spoke of KRCS' role in supporting the Philippines, mainly the building of 297 homes in Tacloban island. Sayer noted that the meeting discussed the agreement signed between KRCS and the Philippine Red Cross to aid those displaced in Mayon and Marawi cities with food, tents, ambulances, water and iftar (fast-breaking meals) for Ramadan. —KUNA

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Kenyan opposition leader sworn in as 'people's president'

US releases list of Russians eligible for sanctions



NEW DELHI: File photo shows an Indian social activist holding placards during a protest against a rape at Hauz Khas village in New Delhi. —AFP

8-month-old girl raped in New Delhi

21 million 'unwanted' girls in India

NEW DELHI: An eight-month-old Indian girl was yesterday recovering in hospital after she was raped at her home in Delhi, the latest such case in a country notorious for high levels of sexual violence. The girl's parents rushed her to hospital after discovering her bed covered in blood when they returned from work on Sunday. She later underwent a three-hour operation for her injuries. The Press Trust of India said the girl's 27-year-old cousin had been arrested and charged under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, meaning he could face a life sentence. "The worst has happened," tweeted Swati Maliwal, the head of the Delhi Commission for Women, after visiting the girl in hospital.

"An eight-month-old baby has been brutally raped in the Capital and is battling for her life in a hospital." A UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2014 said one in three rape victims in India was a minor and expressed alarm over the widespread sexual abuse of children. Nearly 11,000 cases of child rape were reported in India in 2015, according to the National Crime Records Bureau's latest figures. It said three children were raped every day in Delhi alone. The city, known as India's rape capital, hit global headlines in 2012 for the fatal gang-rape of a young female student.

'Unwanted' girls
Meanwhile, some 21 million girls in India are "unwanted" and receive fewer resources because their parents wanted a son, the government said, as analysts called for action to boost women's earnings. The government's annual economic survey, presented to parliament on Monday with a pink cover, included a chapter on women's issues for the first time - emblazoned #MeToo in recognition of the global campaign against sexual harassment. "India must confront the societal preference for a son, which appears inoculated to development," it said. While India is set to regain its position as the world's fastest growing major economy, development "has not proved to be an antidote" for its



Nearly 11,000 cases of child rape reported in India in 2015

skewed sex ratio, lack of women in the workplace and low contraceptive use, the survey said.

A sex ratio of 943 females per 1,000 males has led to the identification of some 63 million "missing" women, it said. While sex-selection abortions are widely prevalent despite a ban, the preference for sons also manifests in parents choosing to keep having children until they have sons, leading to an estimated 21 million "unwanted" girls, the survey noted. "Consigning these odious categories to history soon should be society's objective," it said. "A son 'meta' preference ... may be detrimental to female children because it may lead to fewer resources devoted to them."

Many parents prefer sons because they can inherit

property while families have to pay dowries when their daughters marry. Only 24 percent of women in India were employed in 2015-16 and almost 47 percent do not use any contraception, it said. Analysts welcomed the government's acknowledgement of the challenges to gender justice, but said it must do more to ensure equal rights for women. "There is no recognition of the failure of economic policy with respect to women's rights and women's work - including unpaid labor," said Jayati Ghosh, a professor of economics at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi.

"They are also not doing enough to stop violence against women, which is seriously limiting women's labor participation," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Nearly two-thirds of Indian women with college degrees are without jobs, and female labor force participation is among the lowest in the world, according to World Bank data. Ensuring property rights for women, and ending gender stereotyping in Indian popular culture can also help, said women's rights activist Kamla Bhasin. "It is not just the government; we need to tackle the entrenched patriarchy at every level. Otherwise, the message is: women are not equal to men." —Agencies

Female flight crews ordered to wear hijab

BANDA ACEH: An Indonesian province said yesterday it is ordering Muslim female flight attendants landing in the region to don a hijab upon arrival-or face punishment by religious police. Muslim women in Aceh, on the island of Sumatra, are required to wear the Islamic headscarf under religious law, while non-Muslim females can opt to wear modest clothing instead.

But some Muslim flight attendants who do not regularly wear the hijab were skipping the local practice during short layovers, forcing Aceh to issue the new regulations, said Mawardi Ali, head of Aceh Besar district which includes provincial capital Banda Aceh. "I hope the airlines respect the uniqueness of Aceh where Sharia (Islamic law) is implemented," he told AFP, adding that he would aim to meet with some half dozen affected airlines this week. "We are disseminating this regulation to the airlines through the end of this week. Later, we'll talk about punishment if we find there have been violations," Ali added.

"If a (Muslim) crew member fails to comply, we will reprimand her. If she does it repeatedly, I will order Sharia police to nab her." He did not say what sort of punishment would apply to those who refused to comply, though hijab violations usually result in a stern reprimand. Ali said any sanction would not include public flogging-a common punishment in Aceh for a host of crimes including selling alcohol and having gay sex. It was unclear how many flight attendants could be affected.

Many women in Indonesia, the world's biggest Muslim-majority nation, do not wear the hair-covering scarf and Islamic law only applies in Aceh-the region won special autonomy in 2001 as part of a deal to end a long-running separatist insurgency. Concern has been growing among rights activists about rising religious conservatism in Aceh, where police at the weekend forcibly cut the hair of a group of transgender women and made them wear male clothing to make them more "manly". Indonesia's national carrier Garuda and its low-cost arm Citilink service Banda Aceh, which hosts the province's main airport.

Garuda said it would comply with the new regulations and may add a special uniform worn by its female staff on Middle-East bound flights-which includes the hijab-to Aceh flights. "Garuda respects the local culture in Aceh," said company spokesman Ikhsan Rosan. Citilink spokesman Benny Butarbutar, meanwhile, said the carrier has already been using an Islamic-compliant uniform for its attendants servicing Banda Aceh since 2015. Other airlines affected include Indonesian budget carrier Lion Air and its full-service subsidiary Batik Air, which operate regular flights between Aceh and other parts of the Southeast Asian archipelago. AirAsia and Firefly, both Malaysia-based, are the main foreign carriers that operate flights to Banda Aceh. —AFP

US lifts ban on refugees from 11 countries

WASHINGTON: The United States announced Monday it was lifting its ban on refugees from 11 "high-risk" countries, but said those seeking to enter the US would come under much tougher scrutiny than in the past. Applicants from 11 countries, unnamed but understood to include 10 Muslim-majority nations plus North Korea, will face tougher "risk-based" assessments to be accepted.

"It's critically important that we know who is entering the United States," said Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen. "These additional security measures will make it harder for bad actors to exploit our refugee program, and they will ensure we take a more risk-based approach to protecting the homeland." The 11 countries, hit with a ban in October in the Trump administration's revised refugee policy, have not been identified officially. But refugee groups say they comprise Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, North Korea, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

Not a 'Muslim ban'

Speaking anonymously, a senior administration official told journalists that the policy of enhanced security assessments for the 11 countries was not designed to target Muslims. "Our admissions have nothing to do with religion," the official said, adding that there is "nothing especially novel" about tougher screening for countries deemed to have a higher level of risk. Donald Trump has pursued a much tougher stance on immigrants and refugees from all countries since becoming president one year ago.

His predecessor Barack Obama set refugee admission in fiscal 2017, which began on October 2016, at 110,000. When Trump took office a year ago, he slashed that to 53,000, a



WASHINGTON: A view of the US Capitol a day before the State of the Union address by US President Donald Trump on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. —AFP

number that was cut again to a maximum of 45,000 in fiscal 2018. But refugee arrivals this year could come in significantly lower than that, due to the backlog from the 120-day halt and a slowdown in processing because of generally tougher applicant reviews. DHS would not explain what the tougher vetting measures for the 11 countries would include.

But all applicants are being asked to supply more detailed histories and evidence of their past activities, and many are having to allow access to personal electronics and social media accounts. The move comes as Trump presses for a sharp turn in overall US immigration policy that critics say will result in a 50 percent cut in arrivals each year and bias admissions away from African, Asian and Muslim countries. Last week, Trump proposed to end the 27-year-old "green card lottery" program that aims to diver-

sify the source of immigrants, leading to an upturn in those from Middle Eastern and African countries.

He also proposed to tightly limit the family members who can join immigrants to only spouses and younger children. Until now, such "chain migration" could extend to immigrants' parents, grandparents, siblings and extended family. The White House said the policy was necessary to protect national security from terror and crime threats. In return, Trump proposed a plan that offers 1.8 million young unauthorized immigrants known as "Dreamers" a path to citizenship over 10-12 years. Democrats and Republicans are starting negotiations on those proposals, along with Trump's request for a \$25 billion "trust fund" to build a wall on the southern US border to deter illegal border-crossers from Mexico. —AFP

International

Russia's showpiece Syrian congress opens despite last-minute setbacks

Rocky start as delegates refuse to leave airport

SOCHI: Russia's showpiece congress aimed at bringing Syria's seven-year war to an end opened yesterday despite boycotts by the main opposition group and Kurds, as well as rebels pulling out at the last minute. Regime-backer Moscow has invited 1,600 delegates to the meeting in the Black Sea resort of Sochi as part of a broader push to consolidate its influence in the Middle East and start hammering out a political solution to the conflict. An opening speech by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, delayed by two hours because of ongoing negotiations, was interrupted both by cries of "Long live Russia!" and angry heckling from Syrian delegates.

Reading out a letter from President Vladimir Putin, Lavrov called for the UN to play a leading role in any political settlement, following fears among Western powers that Russia is seeking to undermine separate UN-backed talks with a view to carving out a deal that strengthens its ally President Bashar al-Assad. The main aim of the talks is to establish a committee to create a post-war constitution for Syria with United Nations backing, according to a draft statement seen by AFP. Representatives of rebel groups flew into Sochi from Turkey late Monday but refused to leave the airport after seeing the symbol of the congress featured only the Syrian regime flag, a source said.

The source told AFP that Russian hosts had promised to change the symbol, which was displayed on posters in the airport as well as billboards on the road towards Sochi, and in the congress hall itself. Lavrov and Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu spoke twice yesterday morning in a bid to resolve the issue. Artyom Kozhin of the Russian foreign ministry said.

But after almost 12 hours of negotiations some 80 rebels, politicians and activists refused to participate in the congress and prepared to return to Turkey, said rebel Ahmad al-Saoud.

Boycotts

Moscow said Syrian society would be fully represented at the meeting—the first of its kind held in Russia—but almost all confirmed are from either Assad's ruling Baath Party, allied movements or the regime's "tolerated opposition". The Syrian Negotiation Commission (SNC), the country's main opposition group, said following two days of UN-led talks in Vienna last week it would not attend the Sochi congress.

The SNC accused Assad and his Russian backers of continuing to rely on military might and showing no willingness to enter into honest negotiations. Authorities from Syria's Kurdish autonomous region said at the weekend they would also boycott the event because of the ongoing Turkish offensive on the Kurdish enclave of Afrin, Turkey, which supports

Some delegation upset over Syrian state flags



Syrian rebels vying for Assad's ousting, is co-sponsoring the congress along with regime-backer Iran. Members of the opposition and some Kurds would attend in an individual capacity, the Kremlin's special envoy on the Syria peace process Alexander Lavrentyev said earlier.

Russian bombing campaign

The UN's Syria peace negotiator Staffan de Mistura was at the event despite last-minute questions over whether he would attend. The US State Department on Monday said it



SOCHI, Russia: A man holds up a Syrian flag as attendees wait for the start of a plenary session at the Congress of Syrian National Dialogue in Sochi yesterday. —AFP

would not send observers to the Sochi conference, saying "our collective focus must remain on the UN-led political process". But Mohannad Dleikan, a representative of the Syrian opposition's so-called Moscow Group, which is

attending Sochi but has been accused by the mainstream opposition of toeing a more conciliatory line on Assad's future, said the aims of the talks were the same as those of the UN. —AFP

Turkey orders detention of top doctors

ANKARA: A Turkish prosecutor ordered the detention of 11 senior members of the Turkish Medical Association (TMB) yesterday, including its chairman, after the body criticized Turkey's military operation in northern Syria. The prosecutor said police in Ankara had started legal proceedings on Tuesday morning and search-and-detention operations were carried out in several provinces. Media reports said nine of the medics had been detained. Turkish authorities have cracked down on any expression of dissent over the air and ground offensive against the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia in Syria's Afrin region. More than 300 people have been detained for social media posts criticizing the campaign since it began 10 days ago.

The association's lawyer Ziyne Ozcelik said that the doctors faced accusations of "propaganda in support of a terrorist organization, and provoking the public".

Ozcelik said it was the first time in the association's history that all its executive members had been ordered detained. The association had denounced the cross-border operation into Syria's Afrin last week, saying: "No to war, peace immediately". That prompted President Tayyip Erdogan to accuse the union of treason. "Believe me, they are not intellectuals at all, they are a gang of slaves. They are the servants of imperialism," he told AK Party members in the northern province of Amasya on Sunday.

"This 'No to war' cry by this mob ... is nothing other than the outburst of the betrayal in their souls ... This is real filth, this is the honourless stance that should be said 'no' to," he said. Turkey's Health Minister Ahmet Demircan was quoted by Hurriyet newspaper as saying the union had no right to make such a statement and added that the health ministry had filed a lawsuit to have the union's administration removed. "It (TMB) has made a big mistake. The necessary actions will be taken in accordance with the law," Demircan was quoted as saying. The crackdown on top medics drew swift criticism from an international medical organization and rights group Amnesty International, who called for protection for the members and an immediate end to the legal proceedings. —Reuters

Syria's Kurds: From the margins to a de facto autonomy

BEIRUT: Syria's Kurds, whose Afrin enclave in the north of the country has been bombarded for the past week by Turkey, spent years carefully building a system of self-rule amid the chaos of war. They have largely stayed neutral in the conflict raging in Syria since 2011 and successfully turned decades of marginalization into partnerships with world powers.

Decades of discrimination

Concentrated in the north, Kurds make up around 15 percent of Syria's population. Most are Sunni Muslims, though there are some non-Muslim minorities and many Kurds consider themselves secular. After a controversial census in 1962, they were stripped of their Syrian nationality and have since suffered marginalization and oppression by the ruling Baath party.

Neutrality, then autonomy

When Syria's conflict erupted in 2011, the

Kurdish population generally sought to adopt a position of neutrality. President Bashar Al-Assad made conciliatory gestures towards the Kurds from the earliest days of the conflict, granting citizenship to 300,000 people after half a century of waiting. In 2012, government forces withdrew from Kurdish-majority areas in the north and the east, paving the way for Kurds to consolidate control on the ground. They have since established self-rule in many of these zones and have sought to prevent rebels and regime forces from entering them.

'Federal region'

In 2013, the Democratic Union Party (PYD) - the political branch of the powerful People's Protection Units (YPG) - announced the establishment of a semi-autonomous region. And in 2016, Kurdish authorities announced the creation of a "federal region" made up of those semi-autonomous regions. It would include three cantons: Afrin in Aleppo province, Jazira (Hasakeh province) and Euphrates (which includes parts of Aleppo and Raqqa provinces). The initiative looked like de facto autonomy, provoking hostility from Syria's mainstream opposition forces and neighboring Turkey. At the end of 2016, the Kurds gave themselves a "social contract" - a Constitution for the "federal region". And in 2017, inhabitants of the regions voted in "communal" elections to elect town councilors.

Anti-jihadists

Kurdish fighters have proved to be the most effective anti-IS force in Syria and Washington's best ally in the fight against the group. At the start of 2015, Kurdish forces supported by US-led coalition strikes ousted IS from Kobane on the Turkish border after more than four months of fighting. In 2016, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance of Kurdish fighters and Arabs, captured the city of Manbij from IS. And in 2017, they overran IS' de facto Syrian capital, Raqqa.

Turkish ire

At the start of 2018, the coalition announced it was working to create a 30,000-strong border security force in northern Syria, around half of whom would be retrained SDF fighters. The alliance would be made up of Kurdish and Arab fighters. But Ankara accuses the YPG of being the Syrian offshoot of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has waged a three-decade rebellion in Turkey's southeast. On January 20, Turkey launched an air and ground operation against the YPG-held enclave of Afrin in northern Syria. The local authority has called on the Syrian regime to intervene to prevent Turkish warplanes from entering the country's airspace and to protect Afrin. —AFP



ANKARA: Turkish police clash with protesters following the arrest of members of a medical association that spoke out against Turkey's military offensive into an enclave in northwest Syria yesterday. —AFP

US, Mexico explore placing armed air marshals on flights

MEXICO CITY: Mexico and the United States are looking into whether armed US federal air marshals could be deployed on commercial cross-border flights, according to a document seen by Reuters and a Mexican official, as Mexico deepens security ties with its neighbor. Since Donald Trump took office, US and Mexican officials have said that Mexico has tried to improve cooperation with its top trade partner on security, immigration, and foreign policy, hoping to convince the US president to take a softer stance on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

In 2003, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the United States, Mexico agreed to place Mexican security agents on certain flights, but said it would never allow US officials on board its commercial airlines, let alone armed. However, in a Jan. 18 meeting

in Mexico's foreign ministry, officials from both countries agreed to "study the convenience of negotiating an agreement for the deployment of Federal Air Marshals on commercial flights," according to the official Mexican document seen by Reuters.

US Federal Air Marshal Service spokesman Thomas Kelly declined to answer questions on the proposed agreement, but said air marshals "are armed Federal Law Enforcement Officers with the mission of in-flight protection of US-flagged aircraft, crewmembers and passengers." Mexico's foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A Mexican official with knowledge of the plan said the hardest part of the negotiations would center on allowing US officials to carry arms, given that the use of weapons by foreigners in Mexico is sensitive and tightly regulated. —Reuters

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International

Kenya opposition leader Odinga sworn in as 'people's president'

Broadcasters shut as Odinga takes symbolic oath of office

NAIROBI: Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga had himself sworn in as an alternative president yesterday in front of thousands of supporters, three months after an election he claims was stolen from him. Authorities have repeatedly warned that such an inauguration was treasonous and that Odinga could face arrest. However as the wording of the oath was different to that in the constitution, the consequences of this act of political theatre were unclear.

"I Raila Amolo Odinga, in full realization of the high calling, assume the office of the People's President of the Republic of Kenya," he said in the brief and chaotic ceremony, prompting the sea of people to erupt with joy. "We have accomplished our promise to Kenyans," said Odinga before quickly departing, the packed venue emptying out in minutes. The ceremony followed hours of uncertainty as supporters waited in the baking sun and commentators speculated over whether the 72-year-old would actually go through with the "inauguration" that was already delayed in December.

It also came as outrage hit the media fraternity after government allegedly warned broadcasters not to cover the event, and pulled major television network Citizen TV off the air mid-morning. "President (Uhuru) Kenyatta expressly threatened to shut down and revoke the licences of any media house that would broadcast live," the Editors' Guild said in a statement, referring to a meeting that media bosses were summoned to last week. "The guild is appalled by the details of the meeting which was held under an atmosphere of intimidation for the media representatives present."



Election and re-run marred by boycott and controversy

long as it is within the law," a senior officer said. "We are not interested in unnecessary confrontations."

Police steer clear

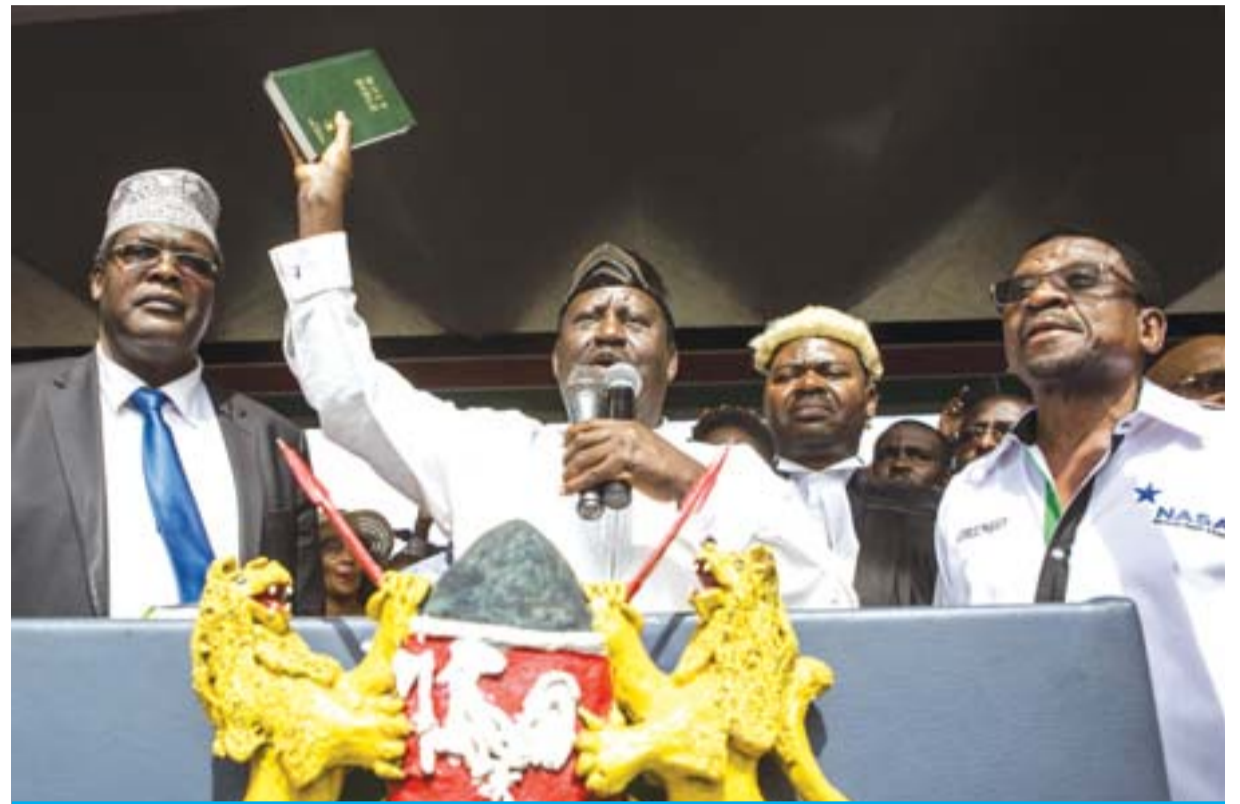
Odinga, a veteran opposition leader, has refused to accept Kenyatta's re-election, which came after a deeply divisive 2017 polls season in which rights activists say at least 92 people were killed. First was an election on August 8, won by Kenyatta and then annulled in a historic decision by the Supreme Court, which ordered a re-run on October 26.

Claiming the poll would not be fair, Odinga boycotted the second vote and Kenyatta won with 98 percent.

Observers had said that the swearing-in would only further divide the nation and the crack-down on press freedom is likely to add to concerns about the state of Kenyan democracy. While government and police had initially vowed to block the inauguration, officers kept their distance on the day. "Let them have the park and carry on with their political activities as long as it is within the law," a senior officer said. "We are not interested in unnecessary confrontations."

'People's assemblies'

At the Uhuru Park venue, a middle-aged businessman in a suit who did not want to give his name, told AFP the swearing-in was highly symbolic. "There is a psychological benefit that people feel their voices are heard, but more important it will mark the real start of our resistance," he said. "The government has completely detached itself from the people, but what are the instruments of power without the people?" Since boycotting the re-run poll, citing a lack of reform at the election commission, the National Super Alliance (NASA) strategy has been to challenge Kenyatta's legitimacy by seeking to establish parallel government structures. Opposition politicians



NAIROBI: Kenya's opposition National Super Alliance (NASA) coalition leader Raila Odinga (2nd left) holds up a bible as he swears-in himself as the 'people's president' yesterday in Nairobi. —AFP

have convened so-called "people's assemblies" in some counties and the inauguration of Odinga as "people's president" is seen as the culmination of this process. The International Crisis Group warned in a statement that both Odinga and Kenyatta "are playing a high-stakes game of brinkmanship." "Given deep social polarization and a history of violent clashes

between protesters and police, the two leaders' actions could result in significant bloodshed. They need to pull back." The group said Kenyatta—who has rejected all efforts to engage with his rival—should agree to an audit of the electoral authorities, while leaders should engage on reforms to lower the stakes of political competition.—AFP

News in brief

Bomb kills eight Shiites

PESHAWAR: A roadside bomb yesterday killed eight people including three women and a child in Pakistan's northwestern tribal belt near the Afghan border, in the latest attack apparently targeting Shiite Muslims. The improvised explosive device exploded in the Shiite-dominated Maqbal area of Kurram tribal district as a van carrying nine people drove by. Eight passengers including three women and a seven-year-old boy were killed, senior local government official Basir Khan Wazir said. He said officials were struggling to identify the mutilated victims but initial evidence suggested all the passengers were Shiite Muslims. A local intelligence official confirmed the incident and casualties. Upper Kurram has been the scene of several bomb attacks targeting Shiite Muslims in the past. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack but mainly Sunni Muslim Pakistan has frequently been hit by sectarian violence in recent years.

2 Niger soldiers killed

NIAMEY: At least two soldiers were killed overnight while fighting off an attack by suspected Boko Haram jihadists in southeast Niger, a source in the security forces said yesterday. "It was an audacious attack repelled by our valiant defense and security forces who lost two men all the same," the source told AFP on condition of anonymity. The insurgents from neighboring Nigeria "came aboard about a dozen vehicles" early Monday evening to attack a National Guard outpost near Chetimari, a village about 20 kilometers from the main regional town, Diffa, the source said. "Since the Niger soldiers put up strong resistance, the Boko Haram elements withdrew to shell their positions from a distance," he added. The arrival of reinforcements led by the head of the National Guard contingent in Diffa, Major Mohamed Alwata, enabled the army to drive the raiders back towards Nigerian territory, where Boko Haram first launched a bloody insurgency in 2009.

Nine killed in DR Congo

KANANGA: Two days of unrest in the Democratic Republic of Congo's southern opposition stronghold of Kasai have left nine people dead, local sources said yesterday. The anti-government Kamwina Nsapu militia "killed four people Monday in the village of Bata Ishama" in Kasai province, local administrator Jacopo Pembe Longo said. The same militia, wearing red headbands and armed with rifles and machetes, on Tuesday "killed five other people in Kakenge", a village some 12 kilometers from Bata Ishama, Longo said. Local priest Wilfrid Imboyo said the fighters had also "set fire to a hospital and more than 30 houses". He added local people sought refuge inside the church during the clashes. Violence broke out in Kasai in September 2016 following the killing by soldiers of tribal chieftain Kamwina Nsapu, the figurehead of a rebellion against the central government in Kinshasa over moves by President Joseph Kabila to prolong his stay in power.

Palestinian-Israeli meeting

JERUSALEM: Senior Palestinian and Israeli officials met at a ceremony yesterday in the first high-level encounter since US President Donald Trump's controversial recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Palestinian economy minister Abeer Odeh and Israeli Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon attended the inauguration of a new cargo scanner at the Israeli-controlled Allenby Bridge border crossing between Jordan and the West Bank. The new device will enable 200 containers to cross between Jordan and the Palestinian territory a day instead of the current 100, Israel's tax authority said in a statement. Other senior Israeli and Palestinian officials were at the event, as well as a Jordanian representative and Dutch diplomats, whose country donated the new machine.

BBC women fume over unequal pay

LONDON: Women working for the BBC have complained they were paid less than men in equivalent jobs and have accused managers of misleading them about their pay to hide widespread gender discrimination at Britain's public broadcaster. Pay has become a tricky issue for the BBC since it was forced to name its best-paid on-air staff last July and disclose their pay bands, revealing that two-thirds of the high earners were men and that some were paid far more than female peers.

A cherished institution funded by a licence fee levied on TV viewers and reaching 95 percent of British adults every week, the BBC stands accused of lavishing excessive amounts of public cash on male employees while short-changing women. Angry female staff have been seeking redress but have become bogged down in opaque internal processes that have failed to address the gender discrepancies, according to BBC Women, a group of 170 staff. "Women have experienced veiled threats made against them when they raised the subject of equal pay," the group said in written evidence to parliament's media committee, which is investigating BBC pay.

BBC Women provided 14 individual

examples of women in a range of roles, all of whom described frustrating battles with managers over the issue of pay discrimination. "I have co-presented with a male colleague for many years ... I estimate he's paid around double what I earn for doing the same job," said one of the unnamed women in a typical submission. "I raised the equal pay issue many times over the years, but nothing was done." The BBC said it was committed to equal pay and had been complying with Britain's equality law.

Pay cuts for men

The parliamentary committee is due to hear oral evidence on Wednesday from Carrie Gracie, the BBC's former China editor who quit this month in protest over being paid less than her male peers, and from BBC Director-General Tony Hall. The BBC will propose a pay cap of 320,000 pounds (\$450,000) per year for news presenters as part of a wider restructuring of pay, its own media editor reported yesterday. But lawmaker Damian Collins, chair of the media committee, said the cap would have made no difference in Gracie's case as her annual pay as China editor had been 135,000 pounds while her counterpart Jon Sopel, North America editor, had been paid between 200,000 and 250,000.

Sopel was one of six high-profile male presenters and journalists who agreed to take pay cuts in the wake of Gracie's resignation. "The focus on top men taking a pay cut really doesn't address the issue of the lack of equal pay throughout the organization," Collins told Sky News.—Reuters

FBI's No 2 official McCabe, blasted by Trump, resigns

WASHINGTON: FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, criticized by President Donald Trump and other Republicans for alleged bias against him and in favor of his 2016 Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton, has stepped down, a source familiar with the matter said on Monday. McCabe, who served as acting Federal Bureau of Investigation chief for more than two months last year after Trump fired agency director James Comey, had been expected to leave his post as the No 2 FBI official in March.

He will remain on leave with the top US domestic law enforcement agency until his retirement date, the source said, speaking on condition of anonymity because a public announcement has not yet been made. Asked about McCabe's departure, White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders told reporters, "I can tell you the president wasn't part of this decision-making process." Sanders also said Trump continues to have "full confidence" in FBI Director Christopher Wray, who the president appointed to replace Comey.

In a recent conversation with McCabe, Wray suggested moving him into a lower-ranking position, prompting McCabe to choose to leave instead, the New York Times reported. Wray voiced concerns during the conversation about a coming Justice Department inspector general report scrutinizing the actions of McCabe and other top FBI officials during the 2016

presidential campaign, the Times reported.

During that period the FBI investigated Trump campaign connections to Russia and Clinton's use of a private email server while she was US secretary of state. No charges were brought against Clinton. An FBI spokeswoman declined to comment on McCabe, who began his career at the agency in 1996 as a special agent investigating organized crime. Trump's firing of Comey in May 2017 as the FBI was investigating potential collusion between Trump's campaign and Russia led to the Justice Department's naming of Special Counsel Robert Mueller to take over the probe.

The president later said he dismissed Comey over "this Russia thing," and the firing has become central to questions about whether Trump has sought to obstruct justice by impeding the Russian probe. Trump last week denied a Washington Post report he had asked McCabe, shortly after he became acting FBI director, who he had voted for in the 2016 election, leaving McCabe concerned about civil servants being interrogated about their political leanings. The Post reported that McCabe told Trump he did not vote in the election. Trump and some other Republicans have been stepping up their criticism of the FBI in a move that Democrats call part of a broader effort by Trump's party to undermine Mueller's investigation.

Republicans have criticized McCabe in connection with the Clinton email server probe. They have noted that McCabe's wife previously ran as a Democrat for a seat in Virginia's state Senate and received donation funds from then-Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, a close ally of Hillary and Bill Clinton, the former president. The FBI has previously said McCabe was not involved in the Clinton investiga-

British Lords gear up for Brexit bill battle

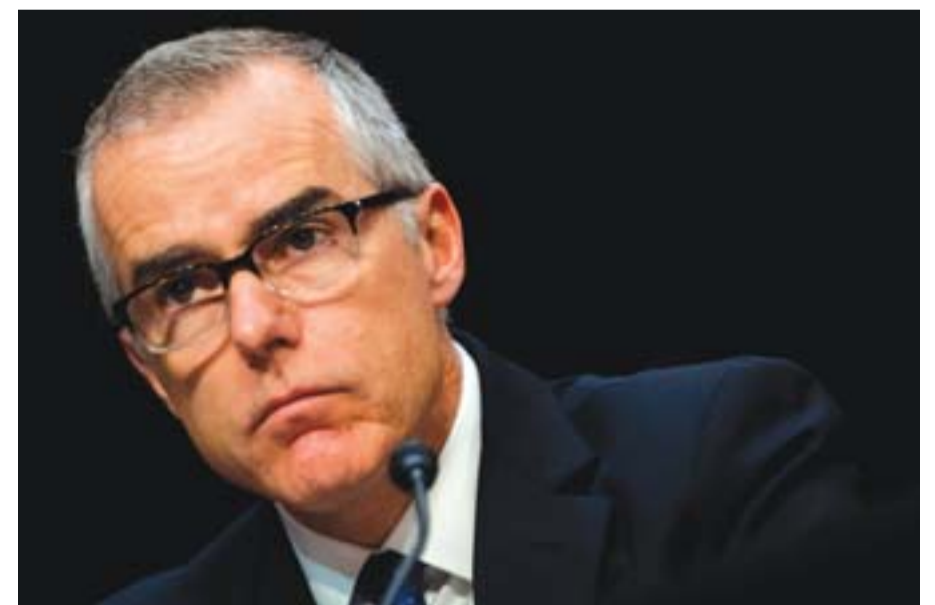
LONDON: Britain's House of Lords began scrutiny yesterday of a key piece of Brexit legislation, as a leaked government report said Britain would be worse off whatever deal it strikes with the EU. Almost 200 peers have requested to speak during the two-day debate on the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, many of them likely to be critical of its provisions to smooth Britain's exit from the European Union, threatening another headache for Prime Minister Theresa May as she battles criticism from her own party. The bill would repeal the 1972 act that made Britain a member of the bloc and transfer four decades of EU regulations onto the British statute books.

May's government suffered one defeat when the bill went through the elected lower House of Commons late last year, after MPs demanded a vote on the final exit deal struck with Brussels. Peers in the unelected upper House of Lords are threatening further amendments, including on new powers for ministers to amend the EU laws as they are moved across, which a Lords committee said were "wholly unacceptable". The main opposition Labor Party and the pro-EU Liberal Democrats will also seek to reject the government's attempt to enshrine Brexit day in the bill.

Britain is due to leave on March 29, 2019, but the opposition argue the government may need some flexibility if the negotiations with Brussels on a departure deal run over. May's Conservative Party commands a slim majority in the House of Commons thanks to the support of a small Northern Irish party, but is outnumbered in the Lords. Labor spokeswoman Baroness Dianne Hayter said this week's debate would give "clear indications... of the strength of feeling within the house that this bill is not fit for purpose".

The Liberal Democrats, who have only a handful of MPs but a strong presence in the Lords, said they would also push for an amendment on a second referendum on any final Brexit deal. Their leader in the chamber, Lord Dick Newby, said that 90 percent of the peers seeking to speak in the debate opposed the bill on legal, constitutional or political grounds. "It's going to be very heart-pounding for the government," he said. No votes are expected on the withdrawal bill until April, after weeks of detailed scrutiny by peers, but the early days of debate will make clear where the battles lie.

Negotiations between Britain and the EU are due to start again in March, but an economic impact assessment, drawn up for the Brexit ministry by various government departments and seen by the BuzzFeed News website, predicted that growth would be lower, whatever the final deal. The January 2018 study, titled "EU Exit Analysis", examined three of the most plausible Brexit scenarios and estimated that growth would be between two percent and eight percent lower over the next 15 years.—AFP



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, Acting FBI Director Andrew McCabe testifies before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. —AFP

tion until he was promoted to deputy director in January 2016. By that time, his wife's campaign was over and his involvement was not seen as a conflict.

Twitter barrages

Trump has repeatedly taken to Twitter to blast McCabe, asking in December how he could be in charge of the Clinton probe when his wife got donations from "Clinton Puppets." Trump on Twitter asked in July, while McCabe was acting FBI chief, why Attorney General Jeff Sessions had not replaced him, and said in December McCabe was "racing the clock to retire with full benefits" and that the FBI's reputation was in "tatters."

Most recently, the Justice Department and the White House have been at odds with one another over Republican-led efforts in the US House of Representatives to release a memo containing classified information that Republicans claim shows proof of wrongdoing by the FBI in the Russia probe. A handful of Republican-led congressional committees have launched inquiries into whether the FBI botched the Clinton investigation and showed bias in her favor. In December, McCabe was grilled behind closed doors by lawmakers on some of those panels for hours. Democrats have said those inquiries are intended to undermine and distract from Mueller's investigation.—AFP

International

60,000 North Korea children face starvation as sanctions slow aid

UNICEF warns of severe acute malnutrition

GENEVA: An estimated 60,000 children face potential starvation in North Korea, where international sanctions are exacerbating the situation by slowing aid deliveries, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) said yesterday. World powers have imposed growing sanctions on North Korea for its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. Last week the United States announced fresh sanctions on nine entities, 16 people and six North Korean ships it accused of helping the weapons programs. Under United Nations Security Council resolutions, humanitarian supplies or operations are exempt from sanctions, Omar Abdi, UNICEF deputy executive director, said.

"But what happens is that of course the banks, the companies that provide goods or ship goods are very careful. They don't want to take any risk of later on being associated (with) breaking the sanctions," Abdi told a news briefing. "That is what makes it more difficult for us to bring things. So it takes a little bit longer, especially in getting money into the country. But also in shipping goods to DPRK. There are not many shipping lines that operate in that area," he said, referring to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Sanctions on fuel have been tightened, making it more scarce and expensive, Abdi added. Reuters, citing three Western European intelligence sources, reported exclusively last week that North Korea shipped coal to Russia last year which was then delivered to South Korea and Japan in a likely violation of UN

sanctions. "We are projecting that at some point during the year 60,000 children will become severely malnourished. This is the malnutrition that potentially can lead to death. It's protein and calorie malnutrition," said Manuel Fontaine, director of UNICEF emergency programs worldwide. "So the trend is worrying, it's not getting any better."

UNICEF had projected 60,000 North Korean children would suffer severe acute malnutrition last year, spokesman Christophe Boulierac said. "Diarrhoea related to poor sanitation and hygiene and acute malnutrition remains a leading cause of death among young children," it said in Tuesday's appeal to donors that gave no

million this year to provide nutrition, health and water to North Koreans but faces "operational challenges" due to the tense political context and "unintended consequences" of sanctions, it said.

It cited "disruptions to banking channels, delays in clearing relief items at entry ports, difficulty securing suppliers and a 160 percent increase in fuel prices." "It's a very close, and tightly monitored interven-

tion which is purely humanitarian in its essence," Fontaine said. UNICEF is one of only a few aid agencies with access to the isolated country, which suffered famine in the mid-1990s that killed up to three million people. North Korea is the least-reported major emergency worldwide, CARE International said earlier this month. Two in five North Koreans are undernourished, the charity said, citing United Nations statistics.—Reuters

“ The trend is worrying, it's not getting any better ”



PYONGYANG: This undated picture released shows North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un (center), accompanied by his wife Ri Sol-Ju (far left), visiting the Pyongyang Pharmaceutical Factory. —AFP

US releases list of Russians eligible for sanctions

WASHINGTON: The US Treasury released a long-awaited list of Russian officials and business leaders eligible for sanctions under a law designed to punish Moscow for its alleged meddling in the election that brought Donald Trump to power. The list published shortly before midnight Monday features the names of most of the senior members in President Vladimir Putin's administration - 114 politi-

cians altogether—and 96 business people the US considers 'oligarchs' close to Putin and worth at least \$1 billion each. The seven-page unclassified list—which does not trigger sanctions right away—features Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and top officials in Russian intelligence agencies.

Also on the list were the chief executives of big state-owned companies such as energy giant Rosneft and Sberbank. A separate, classified annex lists lower-ranking government officials or Russians worth less than a billion dollars. The list was widely expected to infuriate Putin and send shivers through his inner circle and Moscow's moneyed elite, as it threatens to cut them off from world finance. Monday was the deadline for its release under a law passed last year by Congress over the objections of Trump, whom critics in the US say has been oddly reluc-

tant to criticize Russia or Putin. Under the same law, the State Department Monday also declined to punish any US or foreign companies for dealings with Russian defense or intelligence agencies. It argued this was not necessary because governments around the world have already nixed billions in contracts with Russian arms companies due to the mere threat of US action or secondary sanctions. US lawmakers passed the law-called the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act—out of concern that Trump, eager to have warm ties with Putin, might not take tough action to punish Moscow and Russian officials for interfering in US elections and destabilizing Ukraine.

Collusion probe

Special counsel Robert Mueller and two congressional panels are probing Russian interference in the election with

the aim of helping Trump beat Hillary Clinton, whether the Trump campaign colluded in this effort and whether Trump has tried to obstruct the investigation. Before leaving office in January of last year, then president Barack Obama imposed some sanctions on Russia over the election affair, targeting four Russian individuals and five entities and expelling 35 Russian diplomats. In Moscow, the Kremlin said it would take its time to examine the list, which it called "quite unprecedented." "It's not the first day that we live with quite aggressive comments made towards us, so we should not give into emotions," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, who is on the list himself. But other Russian officials expressed anger and disappointment. "We try to explain that sanctions lead us nowhere. We are not afraid of sanctions," the Russian ambassador to the US, Anatoly Antonov, told the TV network Russia 24. —AFP

Under the auspices of H. E the Prime Minister
Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah

the Permanent Committee for National Celebrations and Events is pleased to invite you to the
flag hoisting ceremony on Thursday the 1st of February, 2018 at 1:00 pm
at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre (Flag Plaza)

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Freed from Libya jails, migrants pose challenge to new Gambia

Jobless, restless and frustrated, 24-year-old Saikou Jammeh persuaded his father to sell the family home and give up his life savings to pay for the journey from Gambia to Europe. Jammeh saw no future for himself in Gambia, a tiny impoverished country on West Africa's coast, so he joined an exodus of young men willing to sacrifice everything to leave. But after being robbed, beaten, and locked in a Libyan prison for several months, Jammeh found himself back where he started - in Gambia with no job prospects and empty pockets. "I felt abandoned by the government," he said on a busy street in Churchill's Town, a suburb of the capital Banjul. "I was just sitting, wondering what to do."

Thousands of thwarted migrants like Jammeh are returning to Gambia, straining its fledgling government as officials scramble to get European-funded reintegration projects up and running. President Adama Barrow took office a year ago, ending former leader Yahya Jammeh's 22 years of autocratic rule, and is under pressure to deliver on promises of sweeping economic reforms.

Nearly 2,500 Gambians were flown home by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) last year, most pulled out of prisons in Libya after reports emerged of Africans being sold in slave markets in the lawless country, the UN agency said. The returnees are a noticeable presence in the nation of 2 million, posing a bigger threat to stability than in other West African countries wrestling with migration, experts said. "We are not ready to receive all these people," said Bulli Dibba, permanent secretary of Gambia's interior ministry. "We are very much concerned for domestic security," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone.

In November, a group of newly-returned migrants threw rocks at the IOM offices because they were unhappy with the support they had received, according to IOM spokeswoman Florence Kim. "The government is already struggling to deal with unemployment," added Dibba, a veteran Gambian civil servant. "If we have more people coming in, what will we do with them?"

Out of Reach

Gambians have accounted for about one in 20 migrants arriving in Italy in recent years, making it the country with the highest number of migrants per capita reaching Europe. Trying to stem the flow, the European Union is funding job training and youth empowerment programs across the continent with its 3.2 billion euro (\$4 billion) Trust Fund for Africa. While the fund was created in 2015, most of the programs in Gambia only started last year, according to the IOM. "Thank god my life has grown into a plan," said Saikou Jammeh, who did an EU-funded CCTV installation course after returning, and is now saving money for school.

But many young Gambians are missing out. Of the 2,435 migrants who returned to Gambia in 2017, only 170 so far have received reintegration packages from the IOM, which consist of funding for education or business start-ups. The agency has received complaints, and is striving to avoid tensions and divisions within communities, said Kim of the IOM.

Give one former migrant more money than their peers and you create competition, she said. Offer returnees more support than their neighbors and it could spur others to leave for Europe. Many of the returned migrants are traumatised, illiterate, or live in remote areas - making them difficult to assist. "I know people who have ideas, but they don't have any help," said Donald Greywoode, 36, who quit his office job and set off for Europe on a route known locally as "the back way".

When Greywoode came back, he found himself collecting trash. Without education, training or job opportunities, boredom and resentment could boil over into conflict, analysts said. "The stakes are very, very high," said Franziska Zanker, a researcher at Germany's University of Freiburg, who has studied migration governance in Gambia.

Undeterred

Several returnees told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that they had not wanted to come home, but having been locked up, abused and starved in Libya, were left with no other choice. "We don't see ourselves as voluntary returnees," said Mustapha Sallah, 26, who came back from Libya in April. "They said if you don't want to go home, you die here," Sallah said. "Leaving was the only option."

Coupled with the lack of opportunity, such frustration could drive people to migrate once more, experts warned. Others said broader economic changes would be needed to keep youth at home. "Even after training all these people in all these skills, if the industry is not there, they will still struggle," said Kebba Sillah, head of Sterling Consortium, a vocational training institute supported by the EU Trust Fund for Africa. "I think the EU needs to encourage their businesses to come set up here, not just pump in money," Sillah added.

While many returnees said they would never again attempt the treacherous journey through Libya, some still dream of Europe. Jerreh Cham, 22, has received EU funding to complete a satellite installation course and attend business management school since returning from Libya in August. But it is not enough to keep him at home. "My plan is to get my qualification before reaching Europe," said Cham, sitting in the yard outside his family's small home. "If I go with my qualification and everything, I don't think anybody will discount me. I think they will give me my respect." —Reuters

AFTER VW, BMW AND
DAIMLER, MORE EXHAUST
GASES TESTING
ON HUMANS ...



Ex-army officers pose security threat

In October, Emad al-Din Abdel Hamid, a former army commando who had embraced Islamist violence, led a desert ambush against Egyptian police. His decision illustrates a growing threat from ex-officers ready to turn their guns on the security forces. Abdel Hamid, whose group Ansar al-Islam claimed the attack and hailed him as one of their leaders, was later killed in a retaliatory air strike. But his death has not discouraged more army officers and police from joining Ansar, three Egyptian security sources said. The October attack was the group's first public claim, and the first appearance of the name Ansar al-Islam.

But the group, with links to Al-Qaeda, has history. It is part of an unnamed network that Egyptian security officials have accused of trying to assassinate a former interior minister in 2013 and of killing the country's top prosecutor in a car bomb two years later. Today, Egypt is also battling Islamic State in the North Sinai region. Hundreds of soldiers have been killed there since 2013, when Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, a former army chief who is now president, seized power and vowed to crush Islamist militancy.

The shadowy network that Ansar is part of presents a more daunting national security challenge than the Sinai militants, intelligence officials say, since it is comprised of army officers and policemen who use their training in counter-terrorism and surveillance to attack the forces they once served. "They're more dangerous than those in Sinai even though they're fewer in number," one security source said.

The interior ministry, which oversees the police, did not respond to requests for comment. The military has also not commented. Sisi appointed a new military chief of staff a week after the attack and the interior ministry dismissed several high-ranking officials in an apparent reorganization of the country's security command. The three Egyptian security sources said that in recent months up to 30 more captains and lieutenants in the security forces have joined the Ansar network, which is headed by one of the country's most wanted men, former special forces officer Hisham Al-Ashmawy.

"They've got stronger," an officer in Egypt's National Security service told Reuters. "New numbers have joined, they have new weapons ... they focus only on big operations, so they don't use up manpower or firepower." Ashmawy has been mounting a recruiting campaign in recent years and that is now beginning to bear fruit in terms of numbers joining, two of the security sources said. Like the other officials interviewed, they requested anonymity because of the sensitivity

of the matter. Egypt has had to contend with Islamist sympathizers in the armed forces for years. In 1981, army officers assassinated President Anwar Sadat, whose rapprochement with Israel angered much of the Arab world. US prosecutors say Seif Al-Adel, a former army colonel, helped Al-Qaeda plan bomb attacks against American embassies in East Africa in 1998. In recent months, hundreds of members of the security forces have been discharged because of their political or religious affiliations, the security officials said. Reasons for dismissing officers included refusal to arrest protesters at a demonstration or anti-government social media posts.

Sisi faces a presidential election in March, but the political effect of the violence may be limited. The main opposition candidates have withdrawn, and in any case many Egyptians say they are angrier about soaring living costs than about militant attacks.

movements in advance. "We have information that Ashmawy was able to get hold of devices or somehow listen in on a network that officers use," one of the sources said. The communications network had been secured in the months before the ambush with new wireless technology used only by the National Security branch, he said, so Ashmawy either "had a way of bugging it, or had got hold of one of the new devices."

The security sources said Ashmawy recruits selectively, usually via a network of former officers operating in small cells. But Ashmawy and Abdel Hamid's path to jihad is familiar to military intelligence officials. Both graduated from Egypt's military academy in 1999, according to Abdel Hamid's family, and spent time in a special forces unit called Sa'aika, or Thunderbolt. They were discharged in 2007 and 2006, respectively, after the army saw they had become more religiously observant.

Both men disappeared and became jihadists in the years of chaos that followed Egypt's 2011 Arab Spring uprising, according to Abdel Hamid's family. Abdel Hamid came from a long family line of military and police. He became radicalized nonetheless, raising the suspicions of intelligence agents. "He had started reading more deeply into religion," his mother, Sohair Al-Gohary, said at the family home in Alexandria.

The army locked Abdel Hamid up for a month after he was found carrying Islamic books. In 2006 he was transferred to a civilian service job for several years, his brother Alaa Abdel Hamid said. Abdel Hamid divorced, married a woman who wore the Islamic face veil, and then disappeared in 2013, relatives said, days before the Ashmawy network carried out its failed assassination attempt on the interior minister.

Last Words

Abdel Hamid's family heard nothing of him until he was killed by Egyptian warplanes two weeks after the Western Desert ambush. Alaa recalled his brother's last words to him in 2013. "He said: how can I serve in a military that tries me (for religious piety) ... or live in a country that doesn't follow God's law?" During the October ambush, Abdel Hamid's skill at arms could be clearly seen, a policeman caught up in the firefight said. "I saw Emad shoot an officer in the head from a distance even though the officer was taking cover behind a car," the policeman told Reuters, recalling the incident. —Reuters

More captains and lieutenants have joined the Ansar network



Big Impact

Only about a dozen heavily armed Ansar militants were needed to lure a police convoy into the Western Desert ambush on Oct 20, a survivor of the attack said. "We fell into a trap. We followed banana and orange peels discarded by militants, thinking they'd got careless and left traces," an officer who survived the attack said. Three security sources told Reuters at the time of the attack that dozens of police officers and conscripts were killed. But the interior ministry denied that figure the next day and said 16 police and conscripts died, including some high-ranking officers.

Two sources in Egypt's General Intelligence Service said Ansar al-Islam had likely known about the police's

Indian girls shatter menstruation myths

After attending a menstruation myth-busting class in her village in India, 13-year-old Dhanashree Kantaram Dhere decided to test her newfound knowledge by touching a statue of a Hindu deity in her family home. Although it was believed to be bad luck, nothing terrible happened. According to widely-held beliefs in India, menstruating women are impure and should not enter temples, take part in religious ceremonies, or prepare certain foods, among other restrictions. Those taboos are being challenged in states including Maharashtra, where the government late last year ordered all public schools to begin teaching the truth about periods.

Dhere began menstruating four months ago, but unlike many women in India she was taught that it was healthy. Her mother was not convinced though, and refused to let her help prepare papadums, which are thin, crispy, cracker-like snacks. "I learned in school that nothing would happen if I touched food, so I did," she recalled. "But I was worried and watched. Nothing happened."

Emboldened with her first experiment, Dhere decided to test the taboo further. "So, I also touched an idol after that," she said. The admission drew gasps from fellow students, who were discussing menstruation at their school in Khehare Mehaj, a small village about 150 km from Mumbai. They are among the 300,000 students who have taken classes during the past two years in Maharashtra, according to Yusuf Kabir of the United Nations children's

agency (UNICEF). UNICEF started the menstrual hygiene program five years ago in Maharashtra's Jalna and Aurangabad districts, and is now partnered with the government to expand it to schools across the state. Two years ago, the federal government incorporated the program into its Clean India Mission, which aims to clean up streets and roads in communities throughout the country. Vennelaganti Radha, joint secretary in the federal Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, said the menstrual hygiene program is now being implemented in other states in partnership with various non-governmental organizations. "But Maharashtra is a leader in this," she said. "UNICEF and local officials have done great work."

Battling Discrimination

The first challenge is the teachers, who are in charge of incorporating the class into the curriculum. Trainers from UNICEF have to convince them that there is nothing unclean about menstruation. "The teachers had a lot of inhibitions and believed the myths themselves," said Bharathy Tahiliani, a rights campaigner who drafted the menstruation lesson plans. "Around 80 percent of the teachers believed that menstrual blood is impure," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

She said it takes multiple training sessions to get them comfortable talking to students about their own menstruation experiences. Once they are ready, teachers begin running the program over the course of six-months. The students are all female except for one session in which boys watch an educational video. In addition to traditional textbook learning, the course includes games, songs and drama. —

Investor fears shift to Mexico

ABrazilian appeal court's conviction of former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva last week eased investor fears of the leftist winning this year's presidential vote, shifting the spotlight to Mexico where another populist leads in the polls. The Brazilian market has led strong gains by Latin American stocks over the past two years as President Michel Temer passed market-friendly laws. But the prospect of a Lula victory in October's election - for which he tops surveys of voting intentions - threatened investors' optimism.

While Lula has pledged to continue his campaign, yesterday's court decision makes it all but impossible for the 72-year-old former union leader to run. Brazilian law bans political candidates whose convictions have been upheld by an appellate court. In Mexico, by contrast, polls show leftist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, known as 'AMLO', consolidating his lead ahead of the July election.

An opinion poll on Monday gave Lopez Obrador 32 percent of voting intentions, ahead of conservative Ricardo Anaya on 26 percent. Investors in Mexico, Latin America's second-largest economy after Brazil, must also contend with fears about a potential US withdrawal from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Will Pruett, portfolio manager at Fidelity Investments, said he expected Brazil to continue its outperformance as Lula's conviction increased the prospect of victory by a centrist candidate who would pursue

market-friendly policies and a turnaround at state-owned businesses like Petroleo Brasileiro SA.

While financials and consumer stocks in Brazil offered attractive valuations, Pruett said, in Mexico cheap stocks are hard to find. "With potential shocks with NAFTA and AMLO, I don't think the risk-reward is great right now," he added. More than 80 percent of Mexico's exports head to the United States but US President Donald Trump has threatened to scrap NAFTA if he cannot win more favorable terms. The latest round of talks in Canada concluded on Monday without a breakthrough.

Among other factors unsettling investors in Mexico, Lopez Obrador has vowed to review oil contracts signed with foreign investors under the sweeping 2013-2014 reforms that dismantled a decades-long monopoly by state oil firm Pemex. "If he goes through and reopens every contract signed with Pemex or involving other forms of infrastructure, that halts things," said SMBC Nikko emerging market analyst Roger Horn. "You need foreign investment to come in."

Rally

Latin American stocks have surged by 75 percent since the beginning of 2016 with debt prices also gaining 25 percent over the same period, as measured by the JPMorgan Latin American sovereign bond index. Mexico underperformed Brazil during that period and T. Rowe Price fund manager Verena Wachnitz believes that the combination of Lopez Obrador and NAFTA doubts will weigh on Mexican stocks in the coming months. "Both are quite negative potentially for Mexico," Wachnitz said. —Reuters

Camels left pouting as Saudis ban Botox

AL RUMHIYA, Saudi Arabia: Huddled together on a dusty racetrack, Saudi judges scrutinize pouty lips and shapely humps in a high-stakes camel beauty pageant mired in scandal after Botox and cosmetic fillers were detected. Some 14 camels have been disqualified from the month-long King Abdulaziz Camel Festival, an annual bedouin tradition supported by the Saudi royal family that lures breeders from around the Gulf with prize money of up to \$57 million.

Organizers of the festival - with 30,000 participating camels - are cracking down on cosmetic enhancements, a malpractice that has thrived amid stiff competition and despite strong penalties as some stake millions on acquiring top breeds. "Some breeders cannot afford to buy expensive camels," said Abdullah bin Naser Al-Dagheri, one of the judges, scribbling scores on sheaves of papers as he stood on tracks littered with camel droppings. "They buy cheap, not so good-looking camels and try to beautify them artificially. We're cracking down on such fraud."

Droopy lips, a tall neck and a perfectly placed hump are all winning attributes in camel pageantry. The lure of cash prizes and the prestige of winning propels some to tweak the natural look of camels, an offence that could get the animals banned from the competition for three to five years. Days before the festival began, Saudi authorities caught one vet performing plastic surgery on camels, media reported, prompting furious calls for new penalties on cheats.

Camels were given Botox injections at his clinic and some went under the knife to make their ears more perky, also considered a winning trait. "Cheating is

inevitable - even in a contest about beauty," said chief judge Fawzan Al-Madi. "It is prevalent just like any other animal sport such as horse racing where steroids have found their way." Madi added that specialized vets and a team from the agriculture ministry had been deployed to catch violations, which include beauty products such as oils, anesthetic creams and fillers.

Saudi Arabia is in the midst of historic social and economic change as it seeks to leapfrog into a modern, post-oil era. Women will be allowed to drive from June, and the ultra-conservative kingdom is gearing up to reopen cinemas for the first time in decades. But simultaneously it is also seeking to preserve its bedouin traditions and cultural heritage. "Camels are a symbol of the Arabian peninsula, a symbol of Saudi Arabia," Madi said. "They are our pride."

Thousands of visitors have attended this year's festival, which last year relocated from the remote desert to Al-Rumhiya on the outskirts of the capital Riyadh. The spectator stands erupted in whistles and howls as camels strode down the racetrack, their humps draped in golden belts adorned with tassels and bells. Revellers waved makeshift flags, mounting their chequered headgear on sticks as camels representing their tribes appeared.

The festival, which ends with a closing ceremony presided over by King Salman on Feb 1, also features camel racing and milk tasting, as well as a petting zoo featuring the world's tallest camel which stands at nearly three metres. Desert storms frequently interrupt the festival, forcing VIP visitors inside luxury air-conditioned tents offering sugary pastries, Arabic coffee and



AL RUMHIYA, Saudi Arabia: Saudi men sit in front of a food truck during a camel beauty contest at the annual King Abdulaziz Camel Festival on Jan 19, 2018. — AFP

dried fruit.

The spirit of the festival should not be overshadowed by some cases of cheating, said camel owner Howashel Al-Dosary, displaying to AFP the most expensive

among his flock of 100 camels, worth five million riyals (\$1.3 million). "If I catch a cheat I will tell him: 'May God never help you! I don't want to see your face again.' Our pride is more important than profit." - AFP

Saudi Arabia recovers \$107bn...

Continued from Page 1

to other pending criminal cases". He said he will continue investigating the 56, but provided no further details about their identities.

On Friday, the authorities also released media mogul Waleed Al-Ibrahim, owner of influential Arab satellite network MBC. Another high-profile detainee, former National Guard chief Prince Miteb bin Abdullah, was released recently following a "settlement" with the authorities which reportedly exceeded \$1 billion. The government said most of those detained agreed monetary settlements in exchange for their freedom.

Those caught up in the corruption crackdown were detained at the luxury Ritz-Carlton hotel in Riyadh. In another sign that the investigation was winding down, a Saudi official told Reuters yesterday that all detainees had

now left the Ritz-Carlton. The hotel, where the cheapest room costs \$650 a night, is to reopen to the public in mid-February. Some detainees are believed to have been moved from the hotel to prison after refusing to admit wrongdoing and reach financial settlements: they may stand trial.

The windfall from the settlements will help finance a package announced by King Salman this month to help citizens cope with the rising cost of living. Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan told the World Economic Forum in Davos on Wednesday. He said part of the estimated \$13 billion aid package for this year will come from the proceeds of the financial settlements.

Saudi Arabia relies heavily on oil income, and introduced a string of austerity measures after crude prices began to slide in mid-2014, resulting in massive budget shortfalls. Riyadh twice raised the prices of fuel and power and imposed excise duty on certain products and a five-percent value-added tax (VAT), in addition to taxing expatriates. Saudi Arabia, which pumps 10 million barrels of oil per day, has posted budget deficits totalling \$260 billion over the past four years, and projects a shortfall of \$52 billion this year. — Agencies

giving it a role in regional crises that is unwelcome to some leaders. Sometimes this is helpful to the United States: The Taleban have an office in Qatar, which serves as a back-channel for the US to get messages to their Afghan foe even as their troops fight. But Qatar's ties to groups like the Palestinian movement Hamas, who the United States views as terrorists, have hurt ties.

Nevertheless, Qatar is also host to the huge Al-Udeid air base, a hub for allied aircraft in many Middle East conflict and home to thousands of US personnel and a forward command center. Tillerson and Mattis both praised Qatar's improved cooperation in counterterrorism and praised the military relationship, while expressing the hope that the spat with Saudi would end.

"A united Gulf Cooperation Council bolsters our effectiveness on many fronts, particularly on counterterrorism, defeating ISIS Daesh, and countering the spread of Iran's malign influence," said Mattis, referring to the Islamic State militant group, sometimes called ISIS or ISIL. "It is thus critical that the GCC recovers its cohesion as the proud Gulf nations return to mutual support through a peaceful resolution that provides for enhanced regional stability and prosperity," he added. — Agencies

Opposition cleric accuses Khamenei of abuse of power

LONDON: Instead of blaming others, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei should take responsibility for Iran's economic and political shortcomings, an opposition leader under house arrest said in a letter published yesterday. In rare public criticism of Khamenei, Mehdi Karroubi accused Iran's headline top authority of abusing power and urged him to change the way he runs the Islamic Republic before it is too late.

"You have been Iran's top leader for three decades, but still speak like an opposition," Karroubi said in an open letter to Khamenei published on Saham News, the official website of his reformist political party. By "opposition", Karroubi meant that Khamenei, head of a Shiite theocracy, should not be wielding ultimate power while criticizing the government of elected President Hassan Rouhani, a pragmatist who wants to liberalize an economy dominated by the elite Revolutionary Guards and other state conglomerates.

"During the last three decades, you have eliminated

the main revolutionary forces to implement your own policies, and now you should face the results of that," Karroubi added. Karroubi, 80, a Shiite cleric like Khamenei, and fellow reformist Mirhossein Mousavi ran for election in 2009 and became figureheads for Iranians who staged mass protests after headline conservative President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was returned to power in a vote they believed was rigged. Authorities denied this.

Karroubi, Mousavi and the latter's wife Zahra Rahnavard have been under house arrest since 2011 without trial, by the direct order of Khamenei. The Supreme Leader is commander-in-chief of Iran's armed forces and appoints the heads of the judiciary. Key cabinet ministers are selected with his approval and he has the ultimate say on Iran's foreign policy and nuclear program. By comparison, the president wields little power.

Karroubi also criticized Khamenei for letting the Revolutionary Guards take a commanding role in the economy as this "has tarnished the reputation of this revolutionary body and drowned it in massive corruption". He said that under Khamenei's leadership, bodies formed at the beginning of the 1979 Revolution to wipe out poverty had turned into conglomerates that own half of Iran's wealth without a supervisory organization to question their actions. "Poverty and unemployment are plaguing the country," he said. — Agencies

Yemen separatists seize government's...

Continued from Page 1

The southern port city of Aden has served as the government's base since 2014, when the Iran-backed Houthi rebels - who hail from northern Yemen - took control of the capital Sanaa. While President Hadi now resides in Riyadh, two military officials said Prime Minister Ahmed bin Dagher and a number of senior government figures remain in the Aden presidential palace. For three years, Hadi's Saudi-backed administration was allied with the separatists, driving the Houthi rebels out of the south and back to their northern strongholds.

But tension between the allies began to surface in

April when Hadi dismissed cabinet minister Hani bin Breik and Aden's governor in a move widely seen as reflecting divisions among his supporters. Tensions boiled over into armed clashes between the separatists and pro-government forces on Sunday, fuelling chaos in the impoverished Arabian Peninsula country where a civil war has already left thousands dead and millions on the brink of starvation.

Under the self-proclaimed Southern Transitional Council (STC), the separatists have gained traction since April in their push for self-rule, demanding the reinstatement of South Yemen as an independent entity. The STC this month called on Hadi to make changes in his government, accusing him of corruption and mismanagement. The clashes have sparked fears of a repeat of the 1986 South Yemen civil war, a failed socialist coup which killed thousands in just six days and helped pave the way for the 1991 unification of South and North Yemen. — AFP

US praises ties with Qatar, calls...

Continued from Page 1

consequences economically and militarily for those involved as well as the United States. It is critical that all parties minimize rhetoric, exercise restraint to avoid further escalation and work toward a resolution."

Saudi Arabia is a long-time ally of the United States and is bigger, richer and more influential than Qatar, which lies on a peninsula off its neighbor's Gulf coast in gas-rich waters. But Qatar has parlayed its riches into an outside influence with key economic investments in Western countries underpinning ties and winning prizes like hosting rights for the 2022 World Cup. It has also annoyed its neighbors by funding and hosting the Al-Jazeera satellite network, which broadcasts Arabic news and views across the region that make some governments uncomfortable.

And it has fostered ties with some Islamist groups,



Kuwait Times

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Sports

India thrash Pakistan to reach U-19 World Cup final

Porel, India's hero with the ball with four for 17

CHRISTCHURCH: India crushed arch-rival Pakistan by 203 runs in their Under-19 World Cup semi-final in Christchurch yesterday to set up a tournament decider against Australia. An unbeaten century from Shubman Gill helped India set a competitive total of 272, which Pakistan never looked like reaching as they were skittled for 69 with more than 20 overs remaining.

Ishan Porel was India's hero with the ball, taking four for 17 in a match the tournament favourites utterly dominated. "It was a good performance from everyone... we did a really good job," captain Prithvi Shaw said.

It was the Pakistan youth team's third-lowest total on record, underlining the batting woes of a team that failed to score more than 200 during the tournament in New Zealand. Poor fielding also undermined Pakistan's chances as they squandered seven run-out chances.

"Unfortunately our batsmen didn't really perform and nothing really worked out from the start," Pakistan skipper Hassan Khan said. "We missed a couple of chances and things didn't really go our way." The result sees India square off against fellow heavyweight Australia in Saturday's final in Tauranga.

Both sides have won the tournament three times, with India winning its last title in 2012 when they defeated Australia in the final. India are unbeaten in New Zealand, with five convincing wins from five matches, including a

100-run win over Australia in the group stages. Australia also looked vulnerable in their quarter-final against England before a record-breaking eight-wicket spell from leg-spinner Lloyd Pope turned the match. Against Pakistan, the Indians won the toss and elected to bat first, with openers Shaw and Manjot Kalra scoring at better than a run a ball in the early overs.

Pakistan's vaunted pace attack, which fired them into the final four, failed to make inroads as fielding errors saw Kalra dropped twice.

The 89-run opening partnership was finally broken when Shaw was run out for 41, with the TV umpire ruling he failed to ground his bat properly while diving for safety. Kalra departed on 47 but India still appeared set

for a big total until paceman Arshad Iqbal slowed their momentum with three wickets in as many overs.

Muhammad Musa helped mop up the tail, ending with figures of four for 67 but Gill continued his rich vein of form at the tournament to ensure India's total was competitive. He steadied the middle order and brought up his 93-ball century in the final over, finishing on 102 not out. Pakistan made a disastrous start, slumping to 28 for four as Porel tore through their top order. Shaw led the way in the field with two sharply-taken catches. Only three Pakistan batsman reached double figures, with Rohail Nazir top-scoring on 18 in a one-sided contest. — AFP



Pakistan youth team's third-lowest total on record



CHRISTCHURCH: Pakistan's Rohail Nazir (R) bats as India's wicketkeeper Harvik Desai (L) reacts during the U-19 semi-final cricket World Cup match between India and Pakistan at Hagley Oval in Christchurch yesterday — AFP

South Africa, India battle for top spot again

DURBAN-CORBIERES: South Africa and India will vie for the world number one ranking again when they meet in a six-match one-day international series, starting at Kingsmead tomorrow. The one-day games start just five days after India retained their top ranking in Tests, although second-placed South Africa closed the points gap by winning the series 2-1.

South Africa are on top of the International Cricket Council one-day rankings by a slender one point from India. With the points adjusted after each match, there is the potential for the number one position to change from match to match.

But South African coach Ottis Gibson is less concerned about the rankings than the long-term goal of winning the 2019 Cricket World Cup in England. South Africa picked a big squad of 15 for the first three games and Gibson said there was a possibility other players could be considered for the last three.

"We're the number one team at the moment but that doesn't mean a lot leading up to a World Cup," said Gibson. "Winning isn't the be-all and end-all at this stage. There is a fine line and we will try and ensure that whatever team we pick has an equal chance of winning but we have a goal and a vision leading up to the World Cup and we want to expose as many players as possible."

Unlike the Tests, the one-day internationals could be dominated by batsmen, with six of the world's top ten one-day batsmen in action on pitches which, unlike the Tests, should favour aggressive stroke play.

Indian captain Virat Kohli heads the ICC batting list, closely followed by his South African friend and Indian Premier League teammate AB de Villiers. Indian vice-captain Rohit Sharma and South Africans Quinton de Kock, Faf du Plessis and Hashim Amla are also in the top ten, while India's MS Dhoni and Shikhar Dhawan are at 13 and 14 on the list.

India, meanwhile, will look to the recent example of England in



Ottis Gibson

Australia, where the tourists overturned a Test series defeat with an emphatic one-day triumph. India, too, have a big squad, with only eight of nine of their 17 players having played in the Test series. Nine of the South Africans played in the Tests.

Squads

South Africa: Faf du Plessis (capt), Hashim Amla, Quinton de Kock, AB de Villiers, JP Duminy, Imran Tahir, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Morne Morkel, Chris Morris, Lungi Ngidi, Andile Phehlukwayo, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Khaya Zondo.

India: Virat Kohli (capt), Rohit Sharma (vice-captain), Jasprit Bumrah, Yuzvendra Chahal, Shikhar Dhawan, MS Dhoni, Shreyas Iyer, Kedar Jadhav, Dinesh Karthik (wkt), Kuldeep Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Shami, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Axar Patel, Ajinkya Rahane, Shardul Thakur. — AFP

Smith forecasts S Africa barrage for Aussie batsmen

MELBOURNE: Australia captain Steve Smith expects his touring batsmen to be given a thorough test of their credentials when they face South Africa's formidable attack on pace-friendly pitches in a four-test series beginning in March.

The Proteas flexed their pace muscles to beat world number one India 2-1 on lively home tracks this month, including a spiteful Johannesburg pitch, where several batsmen sustained nasty blows and the match came close to being called off.

"I've seen little bits and pieces (of the series against India)," Smith told reporters yesterday. "I think it's going to be a really exciting series. Two good pace attacks going at it. Batting's going to be hard work."

"They've got some good bowlers and we're going to have to show some good fight and good resilience out in the middle against their quicks, and (Keshav) Maharaj as well, who's come a long way as a spinner."



Steve Smith

Spearhead Dale Steyn is nursing a heel injury and racing against time to be fit for the Durban opener, but the last two India tests proved South Africa have a potent quartet in Vernon Philander, Morne Morkel, Kagiso Rabada and rookie Lungi Ngidi.

Australia's pace attack was equally as impressive in the 4-0 Ashes triumph against England, also completed earlier this month, and Smith had no doubt that Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins would prove potent in South Africa.

"They could go a couple of different ways with their wickets," he said. "For us, it's just about adapting to whatever they throw at us. "I guess the thing with Australia and South Africa is the conditions are probably the two most similar around the world."

"The wickets are generally pretty similar and the pace and bounce. From that aspect it's (easier to adjust)." After the first test starting on March 1, the series moves on to further matches in Port Elizabeth, Cape town and Johannesburg. — Reuters

Melbourne to host final of women's, men's 2020 World T20

MELBOURNE: Melbourne Cricket Ground will host the final of both the men's and women's World Twenty20 when the tournaments come to Australia in 2020, organisers announced yesterday. The women's tournament, made up of 10 teams, will be held from Feb. 21 to March 8 before 16 men's teams play from Oct. 18 to Nov. 15. It will mark the first time the tournaments are held as standalone events in the same year in the same country.

The women's final will coincide with International Women's Day, with the world governing body, the International Cricket Council (ICC), hoping for a record attendance at a women's sporting event. The largest crowd to attend a women's sporting event was 90,185 at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena for the 1999 Women's World Cup soccer final between the United States and China.

"It's very exciting to think about ... to potentially play in front of over 90,000 people," Australia women's captain Meg Lanning told reporters. "I think it just shows where the women's game is at. It's always evolving and it's exciting to see where it is in 2020."

The ICC and Cricket Australia unveiled the venues for both tournaments on Tuesday, with women's pool matches to be played at several smaller venues in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Canberra.

Both the women's semi-finals will be at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Hobart and Geelong will host six pool stage matches in the men's tournament before the country's six main cricket venues, including the new Perth Stadium, host matches.

The men's semi-finals will be in Sydney and Adelaide before the final in Melbourne, where Steve Smith's side will be looking to end a poor run in global tournaments for the shortest form of the game.

Australia's men have made just one previous final, in 2010 in the West Indies, and have been knocked out in the second round of the last two tournaments. "When T20 cricket started, it was just a smash-and-grab sort of game," Smith said. "The game has changed so much and the strategy behind the game is really important."

"Hopefully we can get that trophy that's eluded us for so long." — Reuters

S Lanka curator under fire for slow wicket in Bangladesh

DHAKA: Bangladesh cricket authorities yesterday sought an explanation from their Sri Lankan curator Gamini de Silva for preparing a slow wicket in Dhaka, where the hosts lost the tri-nation final against Sri Lanka.

The islanders defeated much-fancied Bangladesh by 79 runs on Saturday to win the 50-over tournament, which also involved Zimbabwe. Bangladesh were bowled out for 142 while chasing 222 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, where they had

posted 320-7 in the league phase against the same opponents.

"We wanted to know from Gamini why the wicket behaved like that," said Bangladesh Cricket Board media committee chairman Jalal Yunus. "It was a wicket of 320 runs. All of sudden it turned out to be a slow wicket. This is a routine explanation, which we can always seek from an employee," he said.

Officials said the slow wicket was contrary to the requirements of home team with experts identifying it as one of the main reasons behind the hosts' debacle in the final. Former umpire-turned-curator Gamini has been in charge of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium since 2011.

He was subjected to some harsh criticism for producing slow wickets during the Bangladesh Premier League Twenty20 tournament in November. The ground also came under scrutiny from the International Cricket Council, which rated its outfield as "poor" after Bangladesh beat Australia in a Test match in August-September. —AFP

Sports

Russian speed skater Graf rejects Pyeongchang invitation

Russia's skating federation chief respects Graf's decision

MOSCOW: Russian speed skater Olga Graf said yesterday she had turned down an International Olympic Committee (IOC) invitation to compete at next month's Pyeongchang Winter Games. Graf, one of three female speed skaters on the list of 169 Russians cleared to compete in Pyeongchang, is the first eligible Russian athlete to publicly announce she would not compete at the Games.

Russia was banned last month from the Feb. 9-25 Winter Olympics in South Korea over what the IOC called the "systematic manipulation" of the anti-doping testing system at the Sochi Games four years ago.

But the IOC left the door open for athletes without a history of doping to compete at its invitation without the Russian tricolour, national emblems or anthem. Graf said the exclusion of several team mates would prevent "Olympic Athletes from Russia," the term used by the IOC to designate Russian competitors at the Games, from contending for a medal in the team pursuit event.

"I'm glad that the IOC has recognized me as a clean athlete, which is what I am," Graf said in a Facebook post. "I regret that more than half the national speed

skating team did not receive invitations to the Olympics, including my partners in the team pursuit, who I don't doubt are clean.

"Having been deprived of the chance to compete for the Olympic podium in the team pursuit, I do not accept the IOC invitation for the XXIII Olympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang." Graf won bronze medals in the 3000 metres and team pursuit events at the 2014 Sochi Games.

Alexei Kravtsov, president of Russia's speed skating federation, told RIA Novosti news agency it respected Graf's decision. "Two of her partners in the team pursuit did not receive an invitation to the Olympics," RIA quoted Kravtsov as saying yesterday. "This is the event she was preparing for and she won't be able to take part in it."

Russian authorities last month said they would support the athletes who chose to compete in Pyeongchang as neutrals following a ban of the Russian team, as well as those who decided to snub the Games. The Court of Arbitration for Sport is expected to issue its decision this week in the cases of 39 Russian athletes who have been banned from the Olympic Games after being found guilty of doping at Sochi. — Reuters



CHELBYABINSK: File photo taken on January 11, 2015 shows Russian Olga Graf reacting after finishing in the ladies' 5000 m race at the ISU European Speed Skating Championships in Chelyabinsk, Russia. — AFP

“I'm glad that IOC recognized me as a clean athlete”

Injuries overshadow start to Six Nations

LONDON: Injuries during the Six Nations are one thing, but the fact they are a major talking point even before this season's edition kicks off highlights the increasingly brutal nature of professional rugby union. Europe's elite international competition gets underway this weekend, with England looking to become the first side to win three successive outright titles in the long history of the Championship. Yet they could be missing more than 16 players against Italy in Rome on Sunday, with wing Elliot Daly and star No 8 Billy Vunipola already ruled out of the entire tournament.

Scotland, fresh from a hugely encouraging November that included a 53-24 win over Australia and a narrow defeat by world champions New Zealand, are missing six front-row forwards. Meanwhile Wales, the Scots' opening opponents in Cardiff on Saturday, are without several British and Irish Lions in Taulupe Faletau, Sam Warburton, Jonathan Davies and Dan Biggar.

But if any team can deal with a raft of injuries, it ought to be a well-resourced England. Eddie Jones, the title-holders' Australian coach, said the Lions' gruelling drawn series in New Zealand last year partly explained the injury toll. "You just have these runs," he insisted. "For the Lions players you can understand that the injury risk is high because of the lack of a proper pre-season that they have, but obviously they're not all Lions players." Jones has tried to play down England's chances, even though he can still call upon the likes of fly-half Owen Farrell, by installing Ireland, who inflicted the only defeat so far on his Red Rose record when denying them a second straight Grand Slam in Dublin last March, as Six Nations favourites.

'EXPECTATION'

Ireland's provincial sides have impressed in Europe's Champions Cup club competition and Jones said: "I think the expectation on Ireland is high, and it's how they handle it now, isn't it? It's different going into the tournament as favourites, rather than being the underdog." But with their concluding game of the tournament at Twickenham—where England have not lost a home Test under Jones-Ireland coach Joe Schmidt said: "Bookies don't make money by being wrong. You've got a team (England) there that's won 22 out of 23 Test matches over the last two years." Ireland had injury problems, with the experienced Sean O'Brien and Jared Payne both sidelined at the moment.

Meanwhile France have turned to a new coach in Jacques Brunel, the former Italy boss, in a bid to lift them out of a prolonged slump. Rugby Union is not so strong at Test level that it can afford a sustained decline among its traditionally major nations and a French revival would be a welcome boost to the global game a year out from the 2019 World Cup in Japan. Brunel could entrust the key position of fly-half to a 19-year-old in Matthieu Jalibert, having coached the teenager at Bordeaux. "He's come on in leaps and bounds since the start of the season," insisted Brunel, whose side face Ireland in Paris on Saturday. For Italy, under Irish coach Conor O'Shea, the goal remains one of self-respect and the need to improve on a desperate run of just one win in their last 20 Six Nations fixtures.

Last season, excluding matches in Italy, the only away win in the tournament was achieved by England against Wales in Cardiff. By contrast Scotland, for all the attacking threat of Stuart Hogg and Finn Russell, have not won in the Welsh capital since 2002 — one reason why Saturday's clash could have such a huge bearing on their Championship. —AFP

AKSF congratulates HH the Amir on 12th 'versary of his ascension to power

KUWAIT: President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations (AKSF), CEO of Asian Shooting Confederation Eng Duaj Khalaf Al-Otaibi congratulated the Kuwait leadership and people on the 12th anniversary of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah ascension to power, which coincides with the National and Liberation days.

Al-Otaibi, who spoke on the day of hoisting the Kuwaiti flag, officially launching celebrations said "Kuwait was able to overcome challenges and hardships with the grace of Allah Almighty, and the wise leadership of HH the Amir, who was and still supporting stability in the region, and bring brothers closer to overcome the Gulf disputes that could have caused more rifts.

Eng. Al-Otaibi said "HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had an integral role in caring for youth and provide them with opportunities, especially the support of athletes and providing them with all facilities. He said, "HH the Amir's interest in sports had a great influence for Kuwait's shooting excellent achievements at the international and local lev-



Duaj Khalaf Al-Otaibi

els, and Kuwait shooting is considered the leader of Arab and Asian shooting sport.

He said that Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex is the best evidence of HH the Amir interest as it is considered the best international complex that has the most modern facilities and highly skilled and qualified trainers.

He said "we receive Arab and International friends every year be it for training or competition, by organizing HH the Amir Annual Shooting Grand Prix, in which several world and Olympic champions participate, and is held under his patronage. "Indeed, HH the Amir is an exceptional leader as being testified by Arab and International communities", Al-Otaibi concluded.

Two in a billion: Golden couple carry China's Olympic hopes

SHANGHAI: Figure skaters Sui Wenjing and Han Cong have weathered injury, controversy and rampant speculation about their personal lives. Now all that's left is to deliver gold for China at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

Plenty depends on the photogenic duo, who are the pairs world champions and Olympic favourites, as victory would go a long way towards igniting Chinese interest in winter sports before the Beijing 2022 Winter Games.

While China is a powerhouse of the Summer Games, they lag behind in winter sports—something they badly want to fix before Beijing becomes the host city in four years' time. Sui, 22, underwent such extensive surgery in 2016 that she had to re-learn how to stand, walk and skate. But after she returned to win the world title with Han, 25, last year, she is setting her sights high.

"In terms of the 2018 and 2022 Olympics, since we have won the world championship, our goal is to be Olympic champions," Sui said, after they topped the podium at the worlds in Helsinki last March. "The only thing standing in our way is ourselves." It's a bold statement, but Sui's confidence is not unfounded. In November alone, the duo won the Cup of China and the NHK Trophy in Japan back-to-back, and then triumphed in Shanghai to add to their bulging medal haul. Last year they also took gold at the

Four Continents Championships at South Korea's Gangneung—the same venue that will be used for the Olympics. Sui and Han's chemistry on the ice has sparked rumours online and in Chinese media that they are romantically involved, but they laugh off the gossip.

"Han Cong and I are only a couple on screen, not in real life," Sui wrote on Weibo, China's equivalent of Twitter, addressing the frequent rumours. "We are friends or like a Dad and daughter."

AGE CONTROVERSY

Sui and Han's ascension to the top of figure skating pairs has had its challenges, and controversies. In 2016, Sui missed nine months after operations on her right ankle and left foot, and was bed-ridden for three months, unable to even stand. Her brave recovery made last year's world championship victory all the more remarkable—and emotional. As the aptly named "Bridge over Troubled Water" by Simon and Garfunkel came to a rousing denouement in their winning routine, Sui and Han gripped one another in a tight embrace, trembling and fighting back tears—and setting more tongues wagging about the nature of their relationship.

"It was a very moving performance and I think the audience could feel our emotion and our story in this programme," Han said afterwards. "We have been through many, many difficult things. I hope Sui can stay healthy."

Reviving those fears in the lead-up to Pyeongchang, the pair pulled out of the January 22-27 ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships in Taipei after Sui picked up a minor shin injury.

China's figure skating association called it a precautionary move. Both from Harbin, in China's far north, Sui and Han paired together a decade ago. But they and China were accused of flouting the rules in 2011 over apparent discrepancies

KIPCO sponsors Kuwait International Arabian Horse Festival

KUWAIT: KIPCO, the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - is sponsoring the Kuwait International Arabian Horse Festival 2018, held under the auspices of HH the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al Jaber Al-Sabah. The event, organized by the Arabian Horse Center, includes two tournaments: The 7th International Championship on February 2-3; and The All Nations Cup - Straight Egyptians on February 16-17.

The event is supervised by the All Nations Cup and the European Conference of Arabian Horse Organizations. Ms Eman Al Awadhi, KIPCO's Group Communications Director said: "At KIPCO, we are constantly looking for opportunities to highlight and support the heritage of our nation. Horse riding, once a necessary skill and now an art form, is one element of this region's rich history. We are delighted to be supporting the Arabian Horse Center's endeavors to protect our heritage for generations to come."



Eman Al Awadhi



BEIJING: File picture taken on November 4, 2017 shows Sui Wenjing and Han Cong of China showing their medals after winning the pairs free skating event of the Cup of China ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating in Beijing. — AFP

in their ages which suggested that they were ineligible to take part in the junior world championships in 2010, which they won. Chinese officials said they had made a mistake about their ages, blaming poor record-keeping. —AFP

Sports

Man City seal Laporte deal, Aubameyang arrives at Arsenal

Aubameyang at Arsenal's training ground

LONDON: Manchester City completed the signing of Aymeric Laporte yesterday as reportedly arrived at Arsenal's training ground to finalise his transfer from Borussia Dortmund, with clubs scrambling to beat today's deadline. Premier League leaders City are reported to have paid a club record £57 million (\$80 million, 65 million euros) for Athletic Bilbao defender Laporte, eclipsing the £55 million they paid for Kevin De Bruyne.

The 23-year-old is also the second most expensive defender in history behind Virgil Van Dijk, who cost Liverpool £75 million from Southampton earlier this month. Last week, Alexis Sanchez signed for Manchester United from Arsenal in a swap deal with Henrikh Mkhitaryan and with the clock ticking, it appears Arsene Wenger will land Aubameyang to boost his forward options.

"I am very happy to be here," Laporte said in a statement on Manchester City's website. "City are a club with a lot of ambition and they are one of the best teams in Europe. I am looking forward to working under Pep Guardiola and trying to help the club to achieve success."

City boss Guardiola said Laporte was ready to play straight away but may need time to adapt to the Premier League. "He's fit, he's been playing the last period," Guardiola told reporters. "Of course he has to adapt because the Premier League is special in many senses. He is intelligent, he will read what is the situation. Even for English players, when they come into the Premier League it's always a little bit tough. We will be patient because he doesn't come for three months, he comes for five years." Guardiola has now spent more

than £200 million on reinforcing his defence, bringing in Laporte alongside Benjamin Mendy (£52m), John Stones (£47.5m) and Kyle Walker (£45m). A France international at all youth levels, Laporte has been frustrated at continually being overlooked by senior team coach Didier Deschamps.

AUBAMEYANG FLIES IN

Sky Sports News reported later Tuesday that Aubameyang, 28, had arrived in Britain on a private jet before travelling to Arsenal's training ground near London.

Arsenal are understood to have agreed a fee of around £60 million with the Bundesliga club for the Gabon international but the German club will reportedly only sanction the move if they find a replacement.

Arsenal striker Olivier Giroud is reportedly a key cog in the transfer—either as a direct replacement for Aubameyang or as part of a three-way deal, with Giroud

moving to Chelsea and Michy Batshuayi swapping Stamford Bridge for Dortmund. Reports in Italy suggest a Chelsea bid for Roma's former Manchester City striker Edin Dzeko has been unsuccessful. Chelsea boss Antonio Conte refused to confirm speculation that the club are set to complete a deal for Roma defender Emerson Palmieri. He admitted recruiting defensive cover was a priority but would not reveal whether a transfer was likely and suggested a youth player could be introduced to the first team instead.

Elsewhere, Liverpool striker Daniel Sturridge, 28, left Anfield on a loan deal until the end of the season after slipping down the pecking order under Jurgen Klopp. Barcelona winger Gerard Deulofeu has become Javi



DORTMUND: File photo taken on October 31, 2017 shows Borussia Dortmund football club's Gabonese striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (C) taking part in a training session at the BVB training center in Dortmund. Sky Sports News reported yesterday, that Aubameyang, 28, had arrived in Britain on a private jet before travelling to Arsenal's training ground near London. — AFP

Gracia's first signing as Watford manager after arriving at Vicarage Road on loan until the end of the season.

Millwall re-signed veteran Australia international Tim Cahill, 14 years after he left the Den to join Everton.

Celtic have signed Chelsea midfielder Charly Musonda on an 18-month contract, with left-back Baba Rahman departing Stamford Bridge for Schalke in a similar arrangement.— AFP

“He is intelligent, he will read what is the situation”

Fiery Sanchez can spark United, says Herrera

LONDON: Ander Herrera claims Alexis Sanchez's fighting spirit has already ignited Manchester United as the Chile forward prepares to make his Premier League debut for his new club at Tottenham today.

Sanchez is the highest paid player in the Premier League after making a blockbuster move to United from Spurs' local rivals Arsenal last week. The 29-year-old marked his debut by setting up two goals in United's 4-0 beating of minnows Yeovil in the FA Cup fourth round on Friday. Sanchez paraded his sublime skills to lay on strikes for Marcus Rashford and Herrera, but it wasn't just his deft touch that impressed his United team-mates.

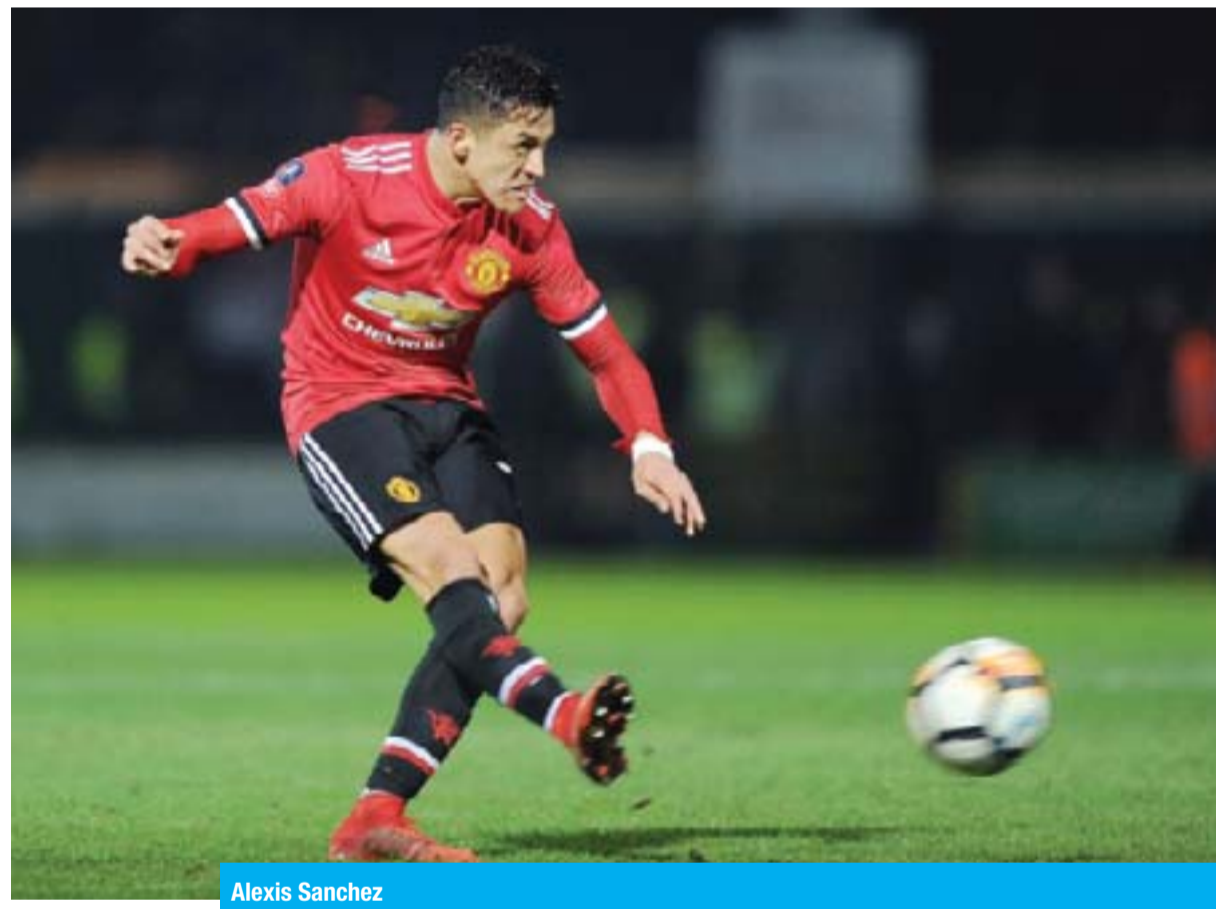
Despite criticism of his attitude in the latter stages of his spell with Arsenal, Spain midfielder Herrera says Sanchez's grit and desire have rubbed off on his new colleagues and are certain to prove a huge asset. "What I really like from him is the way he fights when the team loses the ball," Herrera told MUTV.

"He's always ready to be the first defender for the team, and that's big for us. Obviously we know his quality on the ball, he's amazing, but his fight, the way he defends, he's the first player to defend. I really like it." United manager Jose Mourinho, whose second placed side are 12 points behind leaders Manchester City, clearly agrees with Herrera about Sanchez's catalyst qualities.

Sanchez has now been designated his own locker in the United changing room next to two specific players. The pair on either side of the Chilean are Rashford and Jesse Lingard, and Mourinho is reportedly behind the decision. It is believed that Mourinho wants Sanchez's positive attitude to work to rub off on the youngsters.

'PROPER UNITED PLAYER'

Michael Carrick, who captained United against Yeovil on his first appearance since September, has seen plenty of stars come and go in his 12 years at Old Trafford. The former England midfielder was quick to hail Sanchez's signing as a coup as he labelled the flamboyant playmaker a perfect United star. "He is not bad is he? Not bad for a



Alexis Sanchez

little man," Carrick said. "He is going to be a terrific player, he is a proper Manchester United player, and it's great to have him here. He is so exciting and so dynamic. He's always looking to create opportunities, to play forward and the fans are going to enjoy watching him, hopefully we will enjoy playing with him." Meanwhile, Mauricio Pochettino has warned his Tottenham players that he is ready to act in the final days of the January transfer window. Pochettino suggested recently Tottenham, who have not signed a player in the winter window since Dele Alli in 2015, would not recruit in January. But after surviving an FA Cup scare to draw 1-1 at lowly Newport, Pochettino admitted Tottenham are considering making a move before the window closes

today. "Of course we have some options," Pochettino said. "We are going in the last few days to see if we can add players that add good quality. If not then it won't happen. But it's about in the next few days to see if we have some possibilities with some players."

Tottenham, who are fifth, two points behind fourth-placed Liverpool in the race to qualify for next season's Champions League, have been linked with Paris St Germain winger Lucas Moura.

Asked specifically about Moura, Pochettino replied: "There's a lot of rumours about different players and I never talk about rumours." "But we'll see what happens in the last few days." — AFP

"We want to be good neighbors." Brand Beckham, however, is alive and well in South Florida and, of course, it wasn't long before player names were being thrown into the mix as he took questions.

"Cristiano Ronaldo? You'd have to ask him," Beckham said when quizzed if he would be making a move for the Portuguese superstar. Naturally, a team in Miami needs a big name to push ticket sales and get the marketing men interested.

Yet Beckham knows about the importance of nurturing from within. The former Real Madrid midfielder was part of the famous "Class of 92" who came through the ranks at Manchester United and helped take the club on an unforgettable, trophy-laden journey under Sir Alex Ferguson. Beckham, along with Gary and Phil Neville, Nicky Butt, Paul Scholes and Ryan Giggs were the cream of United's crop and the new owner of the 25th MLS franchise wants to create something similar in Miami. "I have already had so many calls from top players and of course you need to bring some superstars in," said Beckham who stressed close friend Gary Neville wouldn't be considered for a managerial role because "he talks too much."

"There are so many names I would love to bring in," Beckham said. "We want to reach for the stars. Miami needs a star and that's what we plan on doing but my dream is to create a state-of-the-art academy where we have a hotbed of talent and bring kids through just like we did at United.— AFP



MIAMI: David Beckham addresses the crowd during the press conference announcing an MLS franchise in Miami at the Knight Concert Hall on Monday in Miami, Florida. — AFP

English clubs, big spenders in record transfer year

MADRID: Football clubs across the world splashed out a record \$6.37 billion on players during 2017 with English teams again the biggest spenders, FIFA's Global Transfer Market Report said. The total paid out was about 33 percent more than in 2016 as English clubs led the way with a net spend of \$988 million on squad improvement.

Deals such as Romelu Lukaku's 75 million-pound move from Everton to Manchester United and Alvaro Morata's 60 million-pound switch from Real Madrid to Chelsea put English teams at the top of the list.

But those individual deals were eclipsed by Brazilian forward Neymar's move from Barcelona to Paris St Germain in a world-record transfer worth 222 million euros (\$263 million). The fee was over double the previous record which took France midfielder Paul Pogba to Manchester United from Juventus for \$126 million.

"Spending growth is driven by a relatively small group of clubs," the report said, with over two-thirds of the total amount spent by 50 clubs in 13 different countries. The average transfer fee for a player in the top 50 most-expensive moves was \$48.4 million, up from \$35.2 million in 2016. The report shows that only 15.8 percent of transfers involved fees being paid from one club to another.

Fees paid to agents also increased significantly. English clubs forked out a reported \$125.7 million on intermediary payments and \$447 million was handed over worldwide - up from \$387 million in 2016.

Brazil was the country most involved in international transfers with 1,755 of their players switching teams in 2017. Two hundred and fifty four Brazilian clubs conducted international transfer deals with Germany (143), England (132), Argentina (111) and Spain (98) making up the top five.

Spanish clubs received the most money in transfer fees (\$840.4 million), but Portuguese ones posted the highest net receipts of \$707.5 million. — Reuters

'Class of 92' blueprint for Miami: Beckham

MIAMI: David Beckham wants to emulate Manchester United's tradition of youth development as he looks to build success with his new Major League Soccer franchise in Miami. The English football superstar was celebrating Monday after his four-year wait to own an MLS franchise came to end in a glitzy press conference in Florida.

Good luck messages were beamed to the new team's excited "Southern Legion" fan group from the likes of Neymar, Tom Brady, Usain Bolt and Hollywood A-lister Will Smith. There is still no name for the team or logo, while controversy over the building of a 25,000-seater stadium in Overtown, a deprived area of downtown Miami where Beckham's ownership group have purchased a plot of land which will eventually cost in excess of \$25 million.

A legal case against the sale of one part of the land remains ongoing and won't be settled until June. "This is a positive story," said Beckham when asked about appeasing those who are against his plans.

Live		Matches on TV (Local Timings)	
SPAIN COPA DEL REY			
Leganes v Sevilla	beIN SPORTS HD 3		23:30
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE			
Chelsea v Bournemouth	beIN SPORTS HD 5		22:45
Everton v Leicester City	beIN SPORTS HD 9		22:45
Newcastle United v Burnley	beIN SPORTS HD 12 EN		22:45
Southampton v Brighton & Hove Albion	beIN SPORTS HD 7		22:45
Manchester City v West Bromwich Albion	beIN SPORTS HD 4		23:00
Tottenham Hotspur v Manchester United	beIN SPORTS HD 2		23:00
Stoke City v Watford	beIN SPORTS HD 13 EN		23:00

13 India thrash Pakistan to reach U-19 World Cup final



14 Russian speed skater Graf rejects Pyeongchang invitation



15 Man City seal Laporte deal, Aubameyang arrives at Arsenal



KUWAIT: The victorious Qadisiya team with the Crown Prince Cup yesterday.—Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Al-Qadisiya SC wins Crown Prince Cup

KUWAIT: Al-Qadisiya Sports Club was crowned champion of HH the Crown Prince Cup 25th tournament for the 2017/2018 soccer season. This is the ninth time Al-Qadisiya becomes champion after beating Kuwait Sports Club 6-5 in the penalty kicks, as the match ended in a 1-1 in both the regular and extra time.

The sports community was honored with the patronage and presence of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh

Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as he saw the match that was held at Jaber Stadium.

The first half of the match was technically of medium level with Kuwait being the better side and was able to score first through its player Hameed Mido in the 31st minute. Meanwhile the second half saw Al-Qadisiya equalize through its substitute player Diago de Silva in the 84th minute and had to play extra time but none of

them scored so they had to go to the penalty kicks to break the deadlock which Al-Qadisiya won marking the winning of its first title for this season.

The final match was also attended by Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim, Sheikh Faisal Al-Saud Al-Sabah, HH Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, First Deputy Premier, Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser

Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier, Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier, State Minister for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, Ministers, Governors and high ranking officials. Al-Qadisiya qualified for the final by beating Al-Arabi club by a score of 4-2 in penalty shootout, while Kuwait beat Al-Nasser by a goal in the 120th minute of their match as they were tied in regulation. — KUNA

Pacers beat Hornets with late surge

LOS ANGELES: Victor Oladipo and Myles Turner combined for 47 points as the Indiana Pacers won their second straight with a 105-96 win over the struggling Charlotte Hornets on Monday. The teams battled back and forth for the first three quarters before the Pacers pulled away late in the fourth with a 13-4 run. Oladipo sparked the surge with a 19-footer and by the time the run was over, the Pacers had boosted their lead to 94-86 with six minutes remaining. They took over after that. Oladipo scored a team-high 25 points for the Pacers, who have won two in a row and four of five. Kemba Walker finished with 23 points and three three-pointers to lead the Hornets, who have lost two straight games and four of six. Dwight Howard had 22 points and 11 rebounds, while Nicolas Batum made five threes and finished with 22 points for Charlotte. A Turner three-pointer started a 7-0 run that extended the lead to 103-89 with 2:46 left. That marked the biggest lead of the game for Indiana. Charlotte eventually cut the deficit to single digits in the final minute of the contest that included 18 lead changes. The Pacers' next game is today, when they host Memphis.

MILWAUKEE 107, PHILADELPHIA 95

Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 31 points and Matthew Dellavedova added 10 in the fourth quarter as the Milwaukee Bucks extended their winning streak to four games with a 107-95 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers Monday night at the Bradley Center. Milwaukee overcame a slow start to shoot 47.5 percent while hitting 11 of 28 3-pointers despite guard Eric Bledsoe playing just the first 2:32 of the game. Daro Saric scored 19 points to lead Philadelphia, which shot

43.9 percent from the floor but missed 24 of 26 attempts from beyond the arc. Philadelphia was playing shorthanded as well as center Joel Embiid was available to play in the second half of a back-to-back for the first time in his career but was scratched about 30 minutes before tipoff by head coach Brett Brown. Even without Embiid, the Sixers were dominant inside, scoring 22 of their first 26 points at the rim—with the other four coming from the free-throw line. But Philadelphia went 0-for-15 from deep in the opening half while Antetokounmpo and Khris Middleton combined for 26 to send Milwaukee into the break with a 55-53 lead.

CELTICS 111, NUGGETS 110

Jaylen Brown converted the decisive 3-pointer and Kyrie Irving scored 27 points on 11-of-17 shooting as Boston eked out a victory over Denver. Jayson Tatum scored 20 points and Marcus Morris added 14 for Boston, which won for just the second time in the past seven games. Daniel Theis added 11 points and Al Horford tallied 10 for the Celtics, who were 17-of-36 from 3-point range. Nikola Jokic had 24 points and 11 rebounds and Trey Lyles scored 20 points for the Nuggets. Will Barton had 19 points, Mason Plumlee had 16 before leaving with a calf injury, Gary Harris scored 15 and Jamal Murray had 14.

HEAT 95, MAVERICKS 88

Hassan Whiteside scored 25 points and grabbed 14 rebounds as Miami held on for a win in Dallas. Dallas put together a 20-5 fourth-quarter run, cutting its deficit to 91-88 with 44 seconds left. But Goran Dragic cut to the basket, got a pass from James Johnson and hit a reverse layup with 25 seconds left, putting Miami ahead 93-88 and sealing the deal.

GRIZZLIES 120, SUNS 109

Tyreke Evans scored 27 points and Marc Gasol had 12 points and 10 rebounds to help Memphis beat injury-depleted Phoenix. Wayne Selden had 17 points



INDIANAPOLIS: Dwight Howard #12 of the Charlotte Hornets goes to the basket against the Indiana Pacers on Monday at Bankers Life Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, Indiana. — AFP

and six assists and Dillon Brooks and Deyonta Davis had 12 points apiece for the Grizzlies, who have won five of eight. TJ Warren had 24 points and Josh Jackson had 20 points and eight rebounds for the Suns, who lost for the eighth time in nine games while playing without starters Devin Booker, Marquese Chriss and Tyson Chandler.

HAWKS 105, TIMBERWOLVES 100

Kent Bazemore scored 22 points and Atlanta came from behind in the second half to knock off Minnesota. Dennis Schroder added 18 points and 11 assists as the Hawks snapped a three-game losing streak despite committing 21 turnovers. Jimmy Butler scored 24 points and Andrew Wiggins added 18 to lead the Timberwolves. —Agencies

Business

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2018

19 Signs of upswing as slide's over in Singapore's playground for the rich**21** UNHCR, Alghanim Industries launches Syrian Refugee Education Initiative**22** Amid iPhone X angst, Wall Street braces for a weak Apple forecast

This file photo taken on September 8, 2017 shows a general view of the skylines of the Kowloon district (back) and Hong Kong island (foreground) from Victoria Peak. —AFP

US businesses optimistic on China growth

US-China relations may improve in the year ahead

BEIJING: US companies are more confident China will further open up to foreign investment in coming years, a top business lobby said yesterday, but it cautioned that an "astounding" three-quarters of its members do not feel welcomed by the Chinese government. The American Chamber of Commerce in China also said in a report on its annual membership survey "even-handed enforcement of laws and regulations regardless of shareholder nationality" and an open investment environment were needed to reduce trade frictions between China and the United States.

"After several years of contraction, more companies are expanding investment, yet the growth in investment will remain much slower than historical levels," the chamber said. The outlook on sustainable economic growth in China was "generally positive", with 46 percent of respondents expressing confidence that the government would further open China's market to foreign investment within the next three years, up from 34 percent in the previous survey, it said. But the chamber noted that its survey, filled out during October and

November by 411 of the 849 members to whom it was sent, did not include "countless" companies because they are excluded from China's market by government regulations.

It cautioned that US President Donald Trump's visit to China in November might account for a jump in perceptions that US-China relations would improve in the year ahead - 36 percent compared with 17 percent in the previous year's survey. Asked about the report, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said China's door would only open wider and the government would provide an even better investment environment for foreigners, treatment it hoped other countries would also extend to Chinese firms.

Trump's harder line

Trump has taken a hard line on China since that visit, which yielded no major outcomes on trade disputes, saying that he was considering major action against

Beijing for alleged theft of intellectual property. His administration has said the United States mistakenly supported China's membership in the World Trade Organization in 2001 on terms that had failed to force Beijing to open its economy.

"There is a sense that strictly just dialogue has not really brought much in terms of progress. So perhaps some pressure will help get us more progress to a more balanced economic, commercial relationship," the chamber's chairman William Zarit told reporters when

asked about the possibility of Trump imposing further tariffs on China. Forty-six percent of respondents listed either stronger advocacy for a level playing field or applying "investment reciprocity as an approach to improve market access" as the top two ways the US government could help foreign businesses in China. The third most common response, at 14 percent, was pursuing multilateral regional free trade and investment agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership deal from which the Trump administration withdrew.

Fifty-nine percent of companies in technology and research and development-intensive sectors, in which Beijing has unveiled an ambitious Made In China 2025 plan to supplant foreign products, said they were treated unfairly compared to domestic companies, according to the survey. "We see numerous policies that hamper foreign-invested companies, and also major market distortions being permitted in order to force technology transfer," the chamber report cited an unidentified senior executive in the agribusiness sector as saying. —Reuters

“ More companies are expanding investment ”

France clocks up fastest growth in six years: Data

PARIS: The French economy notched up its fastest growth in six years in 2017, expanding by 1.9 percent, the national statistics institute INSEE calculated yesterday. The figure, in line with forecasts by both INSEE and the Bank of France, represented a marked pick-up from 2016, when gross domestic product grew by 1.1 percent. The economy performed particularly strongly in the fourth quarter of last year when GDP expanded by 0.6 percent, the statisticians calculated.

The government had been penciling in growth of 1.7 percent for last

year. But Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire recently hinted that the performance could be better, saying that "growth is solid. It may be close to 2.0 percent in 2017." The acceleration in economic activity was driven largely by increased investment, which was up 3.7 percent last year, INSEE said. Consumer spending increased by 1.3 percent, even if consumption growth slowed in the fourth quarter.

Exports also picked up, growing by 3.5 percent in 2017, compared with 1.9 percent a year earlier, while imports were up 4.3 percent. That meant that France's overall net foreign trade continued to weigh on growth, knocking 0.4 percentage point off GDP, INSEE said. Looking ahead to this year, the institute said it expected the current growth momentum to continue, with GDP projected to expand by 0.5 percent in the first quarter and 0.4 percent in the second quarter of 2018, with activity driven primarily by exports. Unemployment is expected to come down slightly this



NANTES: People enter a French retail giant Carrefour supermarket. France's Carrefour group said on January 23, 2018 it is overhauling its business in a transformation plan involving thousands of job cuts, a product revamp and new partnerships in China. — AFP

year, with the jobless rate set to fall to 9.4 percent by mid-year compared with 9.7 percent at present. Both the

government and the Bank of France are penciling in overall GDP growth of 1.7 percent for 2018. — AFP

Middle East must broaden tax bases, says IMF chief

MARRAKECH: Middle Eastern countries should pursue fiscal policies to support growth and build broader tax bases to fund infrastructure projects and social spending, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde said yesterday. "A key priority is building broader and more equitable tax bases. All must pay their fair share, while the poor must be protected," Lagarde told an economic conference in Marrakech, Morocco, according to a transcript of the speech. That would allow to spend more on social safety nets, health and education services than the current 11 percent of GDP in the region - less than 19 percent in emerging Europe. "Fiscal policy can and must be redesigned to support inclusive growth in the region," Lagarde said. — Reuters

Business

Al-Nahedh: Remarkable improvement in assets and sustainable profitability at KFH

87% of profits from core earnings, 8.1% increase in ToI

KUWAIT: Group Chief Executive Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Mazin Al-Nahedh said that 87% of the total profits of the year 2017 came from core earnings, which reflects the success in implementing the bank's strategy of achieving sustainable profitability and improving assets quality. This percentage might exceed 90% for the year 2018, he added.

Al-Nahedh's statement was made during TV interviews to comment on the bank's 2017 financial results. He indicated that the most significant growth indicators of the financial results despite the challenging circumstances are the surge of financing income of 3.2% compared to last year accompanied by the increase of financing portfolio to reach KD 9.216 billion, ie an increase of 12.7% compared to last year. Net operating income increased to reach KD 408.3 million, ie a growth of 11.9% over the last year. Total operating income increased to reach KD 713.3 million for the year 2017, i.e. a growth of 8.1% over the last year.

This increase is mainly due to the growth in net financing income, commission and fees income as a

result of the focus on core banking business, not to mention the increase of investment income due mostly to exiting non-core investments during the year, in addition to the increase in other revenues, indicating the growth in financing portfolio came from various sectors, especially corporate finance of which is the oil sector.

Optimizing cost

KFH continued its efforts in optimizing cost. The decrease of expenses was 3.1% over the last year despite an increase of staff costs of 13.9 million, i.e. 8% over the last year. He pointed out that the increase of staff costs is due mainly to the impact of amendments made during the year to the Kuwaiti Labor Law which resulted in an additional liability for employees' end of service benefits of KD 17.6 million within staff costs.

Al-Nahedh said that the provisions slightly increased to reach for the Group KD 163.4 million for the year 2017. This comes in line with KFH conservative policy and as per the regulations of regulatory authorities. The provisions include financing, invest-

ment and other provisions. The total provisions for Group reached KD 668.2 million as of end 2017. He reiterated that KFH assets showed remarkable improvement, indicating the non-performing facilities at KFH solo dropped to 1.58% in 2017 compared to 1.67% over 2016, while remained constant for the Group at 2.65%. The total debt coverage is 330% and 161% at KFH and the Group respectively.

Al-Nahedh explained that KFH exited non-core assets of KD 120 million. He expected the year 2018 will witness exiting non-core assets of KD 140-150 million. This allows the bank to focus more on core banking business while achieving further growth in the financing operations. He remarked that KFH is assuming significant role in the participation in financing the public debt issued by Ministry of Finance and the CBK through Tawarruq product. KFH is keen on financing public debt as it is characterized by suitable returns and very low risk, not to mention it increases the level of liquidity and doesn't consume form the capital.

KFH has realized a net profit of KD 184.2 million for

the year 2017 for KFH shareholders compared to KD 165.2 million last year i.e. an increase of 11.5%. Total assets increased to reach KD 17.358 billion, ie an increase of KD 858.6 million or 5.2% compared to last year. Depositors' accounts increased to reach KD 11.597 billion, i.e. an increase of KD 880 million or 8.2% compared to last year. Shareholders' equity increased to reach KD 1.872 billion i.e. an increase of KD 61.8 million or 3.4% compared to last year. KFH's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) reached 17.76%, (after the recommended distributions) i.e. higher than the required limit of 15%, thus reiterating the strength of KFH financial position.



Mazin Al-Nahedh

TAKAUD investment strategies clients post double-digit returns

MANAMA: TAKAUD, the specialist provider of pensions, savings and investment solutions for the MENA region, announced yesterday that the company's investment strategies-designed and managed in house by TAKAUD's investment team-posted record results in 2017 for its Bahrain and MENA region's savers and wealth management clients.

Leading the way in investment performance is the TAKAUD Global Growth Strategy, with total annual returns for Wealth Management investors of 18.36%. The Sharia Compliant Growth Strategy posted 15.04% returns for investors and the Regional Growth Strategy saw gains of 14.74% for the year.

Wealth Management clients benefited from excellent returns for all the Global strategies in 2017. The Global Balanced Strategy produced returns of 10.82% and the Global Prudent gave 5.86% growth in 2017. TAKAUD clients favoring the Regional Investment Strategies saw 11.80% returns for the Balanced Strategy and 7.83% for the Prudent Strategy.

TAKAUD's clients also have access to TAKAUD strategies in Pounds Sterling. These strategies are of particular interest to people transferring UK pensions through a Self-Invested Personal Pension (SIPP) arrangement. TAKAUD's Wealth Managers and Private Client Managers have expertise advising on whether such transfers are advantageous in individual cases, and on executing the investments.

TAKAUD's Sharia Compliant Strategies are available both to Retail and Wealth clients, meaning anyone can invest with as little as BD 40 monthly. In addition to the 15.04% annual return achieved in 2017 by the Sharia Compliant Growth Strategy, the Balanced Strategy provided savers with 11.74% returns and the Prudent Strategy posted 5.62% returns. TAKAUD also offers Retail clients exclusive Managed Index Portfolios from a leading international fund manager. These also posted exceptional returns of up to 13% in 2017.

While TAKAUD offers its Wealth Management clients a competitive fee structure for its strong investment platform, the company also makes all of its strategies and funds available to employees of companies with TAKAUD Employee Savings & Pension Plans. This enables employees to save monthly while investing in top-quality investment products. TAKAUD's Wealth Management services are available in Bahrain and through TAKAUD DIFC in Dubai. The company also provides Employee Savings and Pensions Plans to companies through both offices.

AUB celebrates opening of new branch in Bayan

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced the official opening of its new branch in Bayan district. The event was patronized and attended by Hawalli's governor, Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in the presence of the Bank's CEO, Richard Groves, General Manager of AUB's Retail Banking, Ranjan Sen, AUB's Head of Branches Department, Amer Najem, and Mohamed Al Najar, AUB's Bayan Branch Manager, along with a number of officials from the Hawalli governorate and AUB's executive management.

AUB's new branch in Bayan is the first to be launched in 2018, as part of the Bank's strategic plan to restructure its branch network with the underlying objective to reinforce its presence across the main areas in Kuwait and to provide convenience to customers for their banking requirements in an easy and effective manner.

On this occasion, Richard Groves, AUB's CEO said, "AUB officially welcomes its customers to its new Bayan branch. We are delighted to have had the Governor of Hawalli preside over our branch opening. We reaffirm to our customers that we will continue to provide the best banking services through branches which have been carefully designed and equipped in accordance with the latest technological advancements and to provide the highest standards of customer service. Groves thanked AUB's employees on the opening of the new branch, wishing them every success.

Moreover, AUB's General Manager Retail Banking, Ranjan Sen, said, "AUB reaffirms once again its keenness to provide a unique banking experience for its



customer to facilitate their overall requirements and meet their expectations. The new branch location in Bayan district is situated in an excellent location.

A newly built, standalone building, the Bank provides both comfort and privacy for our customers. In addition, we have also equipped the branch with the latest technological advancements and banking services presented through a specialized team. Nevertheless, ensuring that the branch provides all the services and products of interest to various segments of society, taking

into account the availability of various preparations needed to cater to our customers with special needs."

"AUB's new Bayan branch includes an advanced ATM area which has been equipped with the best technology to serve the Bank's customers, as well as a drive through ATM. The new branch also includes safe deposit boxes to allow customers to deposit their valuable items safely along with multi parking spots to provide more ease for our customers when visiting the new branch," added Sen.

IMF head warns of public frustration in MENA nations

MARRAKESH: IMF chief Christine Lagarde warned yesterday that "public dissatisfaction is bubbling up" in the Middle East and North Africa, calling for reforms that "respond faster to the expectations and sometimes to the frustration of the people". Speaking at a conference in Morocco's Marrakesh, the head of the International Monetary Fund called for "inclusive, sustainable growth" and urged delegates to consider "how do we scale up the reform so it provides for the people?" The two-day "Opportunities for All" conference brought together senior political and business leaders, young people and representatives of civil society from Arab countries, many of them rocked by economic instability since the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings. The gathering focused on fighting corruption, boosting the private sector and creating jobs.

Moroccan Prime Minister Saad Eddine El Othmani spoke of "social pressure, expectations, aspirations and pressures from the population", calling for emergency programs. "The population has expectations for immediate solutions, needs that must be met immediately," he added. Morocco has

in recent months seen mass protests linked to perceived neglect of its northern Rif region and the northeastern former mining town of Jerada. An official report published in October revealed persistent poverty in rural areas. Following revolts born largely out of economic hardship and discontent among the young, IMF-backed reforms have proved a delicate balancing act elsewhere in the region. To benefit from IMF loans, countries such as Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan have had to reduce their budget deficits, resulting in cost of living rises for their citizens.

An austerity budget in Tunisia, along with increases in value-added taxes, sent demonstrators out onto the streets in early January. Speaking at the Marrakesh conference, Tunisia's Prime Minister Youssef Chahed criticized "policies... that only take into account gross domestic product, while citizens measure development by their standard of living". "There is often a focus on financial and monetary stability, to the detriment of the social dimension," he said, welcoming a recent IMF initiative to diversify the indicators it uses to evaluate economic policies.

He said Tunisia's post-uprising transition had made the country "freer" but generated instability that had deterred investment. Lagarde said promoting sustained growth in the region requires a "vibrant" private sector, fighting corruption and developing more equitable tax regimes, as well as supporting "excluded groups" including the youth, women and refugees. As a region, the Middle East and North Africa has one of the lowest employment rates in the world, partly because of low women's participation in the workforce, according to a recent IMF report. —AFP



MARRAKECH: International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde speaks during the IMF economic conference yesterday. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.764
Indian Rupees	4.730
Pakistani Rupees	2.718
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.952
Nepali Rupees	2.957
Singapore Dollar	231.120
Hongkong Dollar	38.426
Bangladesh Taka	3.597
Philippine Peso	5.915
Thai Baht	9.624

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.173
Qatari Riyal	82.575
Omani Riyal	780.795
Bahraini Dinar	798.330
UAE Dirham	81.878

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.500
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.930
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.207
Tunisian Dinar	126.240
Jordanian Dinar	423.770
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.003
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	33.346

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	300.450

Euro	375.860
Sterling Pound	429.340
Canadian dollar	245.870
Turkish lira	80.660
Swiss Franc	324.810
Australian Dollar	245.770
US Dollar Buying	299.250

GOLD

20 Gram	249.070
10 Gram	127.450
5 Gram	64.570

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	300.300
Canadian Dollar	243.695
Sterling Pound	423.015
Euro	372.950
Swiss Frank	283.360
Bahraini Dinar	798.610
UAE Dirhams	82.165
Qatari Riyals	83.390
Saudi Riyals	80.975
Jordanian Dinar	424.830
Egyptian Pound	17.016
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.952
Indian Rupees	4.717
Pakistani Rupees	2.717
Bangladesh Taka	3.642
Philippines Peso	5.842
Cyprus pound	17.875

Japanese Yen	3.765
Syrian Pound	1.585
Nepalese Rupees	2.960
Malaysian Ringgit	77.900
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	47.880
Thai Bhat	10.535
Turkish Lira	79.425

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.416220	0.423720
Czech Korune	0.006700	0.016000
Danish Krone	0.045932	0.050932
Euro	0.365978	0.373478
Georgian Lari	0.133906	0.133906
Hungarian 0.001132	0.001322	0.001322
Norwegian Krone	0.034931	0.040131
Romanian Leu	0.064218	0.081068
Russian ruble	0.005347	0.005347
Slovakia	0.008925	0.018925
Swedish Krona	0.034067	0.039067
Swiss Franc	0.313776	0.324776
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.234150	0.246150
New Zealand Dollar	0.213563	0.223063
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.237747	0.246747
US Dollars	0.296550	0.300970
US Dollars Mint	0.297050	0.300970

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003249
Chinese Yuan	0.045960
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036554
Indian Rupee	0.004248
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018
Japanese Yen	0.002681
Korean Won	0.000270
Malaysian Ringgit	0.074112
Nepalese Rupee	0.002999
Pakistan Rupee	0.002530
Philippine Peso	0.005881
Singapore Dollar	0.224127
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001689
Taiwan	0.010315
Thai Baht	0.009213

Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.790912
Egyptian Pound	0.014079
Iranian Riyal	0.000083
Iraqi Dinar	0.000197
Jordanian Dinar	0.419429
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000154
Moroccan Dirhams	0.0021893
Omani Riyal	0.774591
Qatar Riyal	0.083291
Saudi Riyal	0.079087
Syrian Pound	0.001273
Tunisian Dinar	0.121029
Turkish Lira	0.074187
UAE Dirhams	0.080430
Yemeni Riyal	0.000977

Business

Signs of upswing as slide's over in Singapore's playground for the rich

The only place that foreigners can buy landed property

SINGAPORE: A nascent recovery in Singapore's housing market is showing signs of reaching Sentosa, a tiny isle off the southern tip of Southeast Asia's wealthy island state that is both a playground for partying Singaporeans and home for rich ex-pats. Measuring just 5 square kilometers, Sentosa is a niche market. Offering a resort lifestyle just a bridge away from the city, Sentosa is the only place in Singapore that foreigners can buy landed property.

Once a Malay graveyard and a British military base in the colonial period, Sentosa was developed as a tourist attraction in the 1970s, when it was enlarged through land reclamation to merge with two neighboring islets. It was during the 2000s, when the government actively sought to persuade Asia's jetsetters to take up residence in Singapore, that the Sentosa Cove residential enclave was developed. Constructed on more reclaimed land, and hosting over 2,000 homes, Sentosa Cove has private houses, but 80 percent of the properties are condominium apartments overlooking the marina and man-made waterways snaking through the complex. "That kind of lifestyle, you can't get it anywhere else in Singapore," said realtor Bruce Lye, whose agency SRI is currently marketing several properties including a house that comes with a Lamborghini

sports car. But nowhere is perfect.

When Singapore's property market began a slide in end-2013 that lasted for nearly four years, Sentosa was hardest hit. During the downturn, prices for Sentosa Cove apartments fell 35 percent from where they started 2013 compared with a 10 percent drop on the mainland, according to real estate services firm Colliers International. The Singapore market stabilized in 2017, recording its first annual rise in four years, albeit a meager 1.1 percent, and even Sentosa stopped falling.

"Sentosa prices appear to be finding a footing," Tricia Song, Colliers' head of Singapore research, referring to apartments as the market for houses is more rarefied and difficult to assess. Song expects Sentosa properties to lag prime real estate on the mainland as the location is less convenient for most people.

New tunnel

The sea views, the greenery, the two 18-hole golf courses, a casino and a marina festooned with quayside restaurants are selling points, transport links aren't.

Day trippers visiting the Universal Studios theme park or the bar restaurants that line the beach use a cable car and a monorail. Otherwise, access and connectivity to the

mainland are awkward for residents.

Motorists have to use a causeway, though jams have been reduced by a one-way tunnel for traffic leaving Sentosa that was opened in April. The kids might still have a longer commute to school than their classmates, and residents may pay over the odds for groceries, but these are choices that some people can afford to make.

A Singaporean woman who runs a commercial property business and lives with her husband in a Sentosa Cove apartment that she paid S\$3.8 million (\$2.91 million) for in 2016, and she isn't cribbing.

They enjoy the lifestyle - renting yachts on the weekend and having relaxed brunches at sea-front restaurants. "We have to drive five minutes into the Cove, so it's a bit inside, but we all have cars...so it's not too bad for me," said the 36-year-old mother of three, who did not wish to be named. Getting the kids to school wasn't a problem. "I have a chauffeur for them."

After the hiatus of the past few years, there are signs that interest in buying on Sentosa is reviving, though more slowly than for the rest of Singapore. Property services firm JLL said 65 units were transacted in 2017, more than double the 31 in 2016. It expects deals to



SINGAPORE: This photograph taken on January 27, 2018 shows the private housing Costa Rhu condominium complex in Singapore. — AFP

increase further in 2018. "As prices in Sentosa Cove have fallen significantly, some buyers are seeing value in the properties there, leading to a pick-up in transaction volume," said Ong Teck Hui, JLL's national director of research, Singapore.

Morgan Stanley forecast Singapore prices will increase 8 percent in 2018 and Credit Suisse forecast prices to go up by as much as 10 percent. Ong predicts average prices of non-landed homes on Sentosa could rise 4-7 percent this year. — Reuters

VW CEO stunned by 'repulsive' diesel fume tests

FRANKFURT/BERLIN: Volkswagen's CEO said he was "stunned" by reports the carmaker had sponsored tests that exposed monkeys and humans to toxic diesel fumes and, two years after an emissions cheating scandal, pledged once again to get to the bottom of the wrongdoing. Europe's largest automaker has come under fresh scrutiny after the New York Times said last week that

Volkswagen and German peers BMW and Daimler funded an organisation called European Research Group on Environment and Health in the Transport Sector (EUGT) to commission the tests.

The report came more than two years after Volkswagen (VW) admitted to cheating U.S. diesel emissions tests, sparking the biggest business crisis in its history, and pledged sweeping changes to ensure such misconduct never happened again. "Over the weekend we had to learn once more that there is still a long way ahead of us to regain lost trust," VW CEO Matthias Mueller said at a reception in Brussels late on Monday, in his first public remarks on the tests.

'Deal with setbacks'

"The methods used by EUGT in the United

States were wrong, they were unethical and repulsive," he said. "I am sorry that Volkswagen was involved in the matter as one of the sponsors of EUGT."

The study, conducted in 2014, was designed to defend diesel following revelations that the fuel's exhaust fumes were carcinogenic, the New York Times reported.

Reuters could not confirm the details and purpose of the study and EUGT, which was dissolved last year, could not be reached for comment. BMW and Daimler have also denounced the tests. Mueller, a company veteran who became CEO after the emissions test cheating scandal broke in September 2015, has complained on several occasions that tackling VW's closed-off corporate culture was proving tougher than expected.

He said the New York Times report showed

VW had to raise its game in improving ethical standards, and pledged to take the necessary action once it had finished investigating EUGT's work. "We must live and deal with setbacks," he said. VW said on Monday the EUGT study was never discussed in any management board meetings, after the Bild newspaper earlier reported an internal e-mail showed at least some senior managers were informed about the design of the research.

The study risks dealing another blow to diesel technology, in which the German auto industry has invested heavily. Mueller and CEOs from German manufacturers and suppliers including Daimler and Continental will on Tuesday discuss ways of trying to regain the initiative after the fume test revelations, two auto industry sources told Reuters.

Executives are expected to meet in Berlin

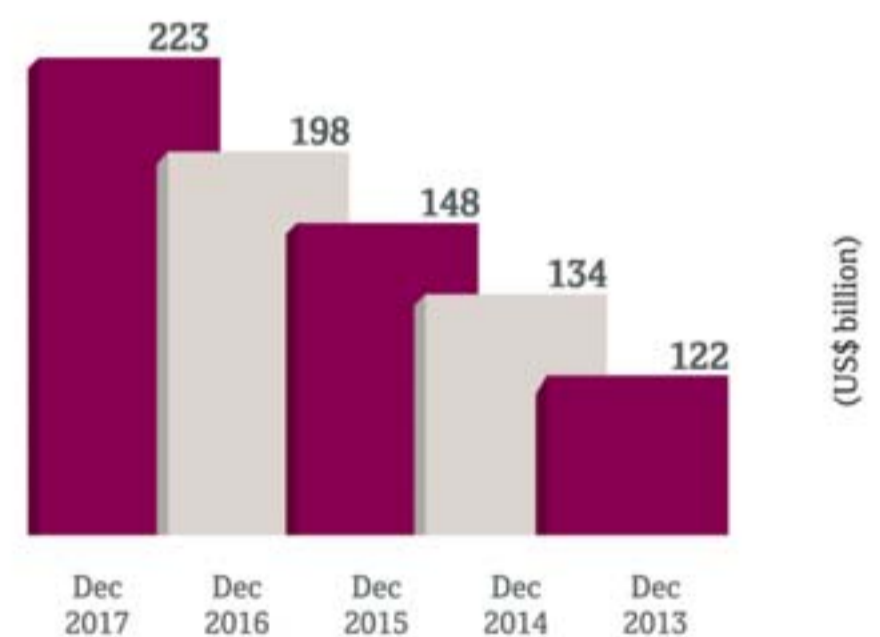
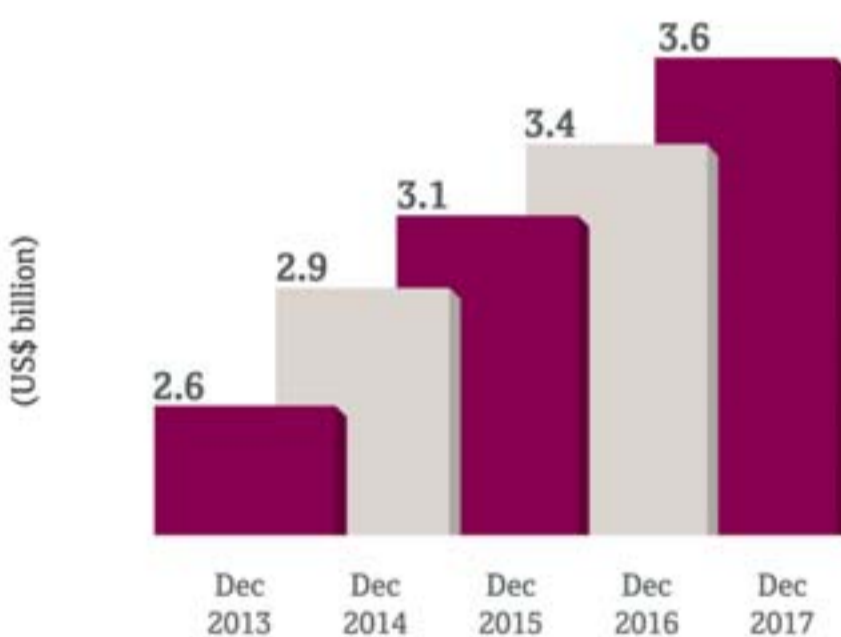
on Tuesday to elect the new head of Germany's VDA car industry lobby. German autos supplier Robert Bosch said yesterday the revelations were damaging for the entire industry and that a decline in demand for diesel could pose a threat to jobs. "Bosch had nothing to do with the animal experiments. I am as appalled as you all are," CEO Volkmar Denner said.

Separately, the VDA said yesterday car-makers were in talks with cities including Berlin and Hamburg about ways to speed up and expand steps to tackle pollution from diesel vehicles in a bid to avoid possible bans. German Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks is meeting with European peers in Brussels to discuss government measures designed to improve air quality in badly polluted cities. — Reuters

QNB Group, the largest financial institution in the MEA region delivers another record result in 2017

Net Profit US\$3.6 billion, up 6% on 2016

Total Assets US\$223 billion, up 13% on 2016



QNB Group achieves record financial results for the year ended 31 December 2017

- QNB Group, the largest financial institution in the MEA region, is currently present in more than 31 countries across three continents
- QNB Group staff exceeds 28,200 serving more than 22 million customers through 1,230 locations and 4,300 ATMs
- QNB Group enjoys one of the highest credit ratings: Capital Intelligence AA+, Fitch A+, Moody's Aa3, Standard & Poor's A

Call +974 4425 2444 or visit qnb.com

Business

Asia stocks off record highs, Wall St flags

TOKYO: Asian stocks retreated from record highs yesterday after a selloff in Apple shares and spike in bond yields knocked Wall Street lower...

cent lower and France's CAC to lose 0.6 percent at the open. The bearish sentiment in Asia followed a softer lead from Wall Street...

dollar index against a basket of six major currencies was 0.15 percent higher at 89.457, having bounced overnight from a three-year low of 88.438...

stocks from highs, but a correction was due after their recent gains. Ichikawa said. The US Treasury Department said on Monday that it expects to borrow \$41 billion through the credit markets...

overhaul and trade. The euro was down 0.2 percent at \$1.2361 after slipping overnight from a three-year peak of \$1.2538.

Dollar firms on higher yields

The dollar, however, enjoyed a reprieve from some persistent selling in the past few weeks. Buoyed by higher US bond yields, the

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Tuesday, January 30, 2018. Includes tables for Index (Price Index, Weighted Index, KXS 15), Trades (Security, High, Low, Volume, Value, Trades, Last, Change), Real Estate, and various market sectors like Consumer Goods, Health Care, and Telecommunications.

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

Business

UNHCR and Alghanim Industries launches Regional Syrian Refugee Education Initiative

Target of reaching 100,000 young and child refugees by 2020

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the MENA region, yesterday announced the launch of its new initiative, named The MENA Philanthropy Leaders Initiative for Refugee Youth and Children. The initiative aims to raise at least \$10 million in private sector funds to help educate and train Syrian refugees in the MENA region.

The initiative has been formally agreed upon during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland, between the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and the Chief Executive Officer of Alghanim Industries, Omar K Alghanim. The announcement builds on a 2017 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Alghanim Industries and the UNHCR. The MoU aims to fund and advocate for a series of educational and social awareness programs, including language skills and homework support groups, to aid the education of Syrian children and youth and prepare them to be contributing members to their host countries or upon their return to Syria.

The initial funding target is \$10 million, with an immediate \$1.5 million commitment from Alghanim Industries, which will be followed by efforts to advocate for additional private sector commitments from the business community in the MENA region. The initiative will be championed by Omar K Alghanim, who will coordinate efforts to mobilize the much needed funds from regional business leaders and philanthropists who share the vision of preventing a lost generation.

The targeted \$10 million in funding will be utilized for activities including vocational and academic education, skills training and support for refugee and internally displaced young people. The aim of the initiative is to reach some 100,000 young refugees and offer them interventions that will



Omar K Alghanim and Filippo Grandi sign the new initiative agreement.



A picture from the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos.

help them be the builders of economic and social progress when they return to their countries of origin.

Announcing the initiative, Omar K Alghanim said: "Private sector leaders in our region must play a role in helping to rebuild economies and societies affected by the refugee crisis. We must focus our attention on ensuring displaced children and youth have access to the education and skills training they need. This is fundamental if they are to become constructive critical thinkers and great problem solvers - the next generation of business, social and political leaders."

He went on to say, "Alghanim Industries has a long track-record in providing others with the support they need to

become entrepreneurs and this represents an opportunity to extend our efforts towards struggling refugees, and bring hope to countries which have experienced the tragedy of conflict and displacement. In addition to pledging \$1.5 million to kick-start the initiative, I will be coordinating efforts to mobilize at least \$8.5 million from other philanthropic sources. We will then work with UNHCR to ensure the funds are deployed to maximum effect."

Applauding this initiative, Filippo Grandi said: "This important initiative by Omar Alghanim is in-line with UNHCR's strategic direction towards a whole-of-society approach: individuals and companies working hand in hand to ensure that

people who have been forced to flee are able to rebuild their lives and take control of their futures. UNHCR welcomes this generous commitment, which highlights the importance of MENA's business community in supporting the region's displaced communities." Omar K Alghanim conveyed his commitment to empowering the underprivileged, supporting education and encouraging entrepreneurship, which form Alghanim Industries' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) pillars. In addition to its partnership with UNHCR, the company is the largest supporter of INJAZ-Kuwait, and collaborates with AMIDEAST to provide language support to children at the Children's Home orphanage in Kuwait.

GE Healthcare & ATC reaffirms position as key tech provider of Ministry of Health's hospitals

DUBAI/KUWAIT CITY: GE Healthcare and its partner, Advanced Technology Company (ATC), have consolidated their position in Kuwait as one of the key technology and solutions providers for the Ministry of Health's hospital modernization program.

Following an agreement announced last year at Arab Health, GE and ATC have delivered a range of advanced healthcare technologies including healthcare IT systems, CT and MRI devices to three hospital projects under the Ministry of Health (MoH) - Al-Razi Hospital, Sabah Hospital, and Jahra Hospital. This year, two more Ministry of Health hospitals - Kuwait Cancer Control Center and Al Farwaniya Hospital - have selected the innovative diagnostic technology solutions provided by GE Healthcare. In all, the five hospitals are expected to create 4,000 extra patient beds in Kuwait.

The Government of Kuwait has led a remarkable overhaul of the country's healthcare sector, investing several billion dollars over three years to construct nine hospitals designed to help address the growing incidence of lifestyle-related diseases. Facilitating greater access for citizens to high quality, specialized cardiovascular, diabetes and oncology treatment in Kuwait is also expected to reduce the number of outbound medical tourists and ultimately over time, the national healthcare bill.

David Mezher, General Manager, GE Healthcare Middle



East, said: "GE is proud to support the government of Kuwait in its ambitious transformation plan. Our technologies and solutions are designed to deliver superior patient care and enable clinicians to focus on prevention, faster diagnosis and treatment of diseases. Together with the Ministry of Health and ATC, we facilitate the high quality, specialized care Kuwait's citizens deserve and ensure that physicians have the technology they need to be able to focus on building stronger, closer relationships with their patients. It's a win-win."

Ghassan M Mamlouk, CEO, Advanced Technology Company, said: "Advancements in imaging technology have revolutionized healthcare delivery, bringing remarkable levels of efficiency in diagnosis and patient care. By equipping two more Ministry of Health hospitals with advanced technology, we are offering the community access to excellent care right here in Kuwait. This is aligned with the National Development Plan, with the Ministry of Health focused on modernizing the infrastructure and boosting the quality of healthcare delivery."

The two new hospitals will be equipped with some of the latest technologies being introduced by GE Healthcare at Arab Health 2018, including the latest version of the Revolution HD,

the spectral CT that ensures excellent image acquisition with 25 percent lower noise. GE Healthcare is also bringing its DISCOVERY (tm) MI, a digital PET/CT system that provides outstanding resolution to improve the detection of small lesions while simultaneously reducing dose and scan time. The DISCOVERY (tm) MI helps medical practitioners diagnose and stage diseases like cancer earlier, and better define treatment strategies. GE Healthcare will also supply its Senographe Pristina, a major advancement in breast cancer screening designed to help reduce the discomfort, pain and anxiety of a mammogram.

The Al Farwaniya Hospital expansion project will include a new state-of-the-art hospital, an outpatient clinic for dermatology and physical therapy, a dental treatment and teaching facility, a services building, and a multi-story car park. The Kuwait Cancer Control Center is a 618-bed hospital, and billed to be one of the largest cancer centers in the region, with radiation oncology, state-of-the-art hybrid and traditional cancer surgery, nuclear medicine, radiology, chemotherapy, hematology, outpatient oncology clinics and a full complement of supporting clinical and material support functions.

excellent service and innovation to our clients. I take this opportunity to thank the management and staff for their hard work and dedication."

Abdullah Al Sumait, Deputy Chief General Manager (ABK-Kuwait) received the 'Most Innovative Bank' award for successfully launching new innovative digital products and implementation of major enhancements including its new core banking system. "At the very heart of our success is the Group's vision to re-imagine a simpler bank," commented Abdullah Al Sumait, Deputy Chief General Manager of ABK - Kuwait.

"We understand the significance of continuously enhancing our products and services to cater to the needs of our customers, and we successfully launched our new core banking system in the UAE and Kuwait in record time and with very low downtime. With an award recognizing our effort, we feel even more motivated to continue serving our customers and we strive to be recognized as one of the leading financial institutions in the region." The IFM Awards recognizes and honors individuals and organizations in the international finance industry that make a significant difference, add value and celebrates excellence in its purest form.

ABK recognized with awards by International Finance Magazine

KUWAIT: Continuing its winning streak this year, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) bagged two prestigious awards at the International Finance Magazine (IFM) Awards, which took place at the Emirates Towers Hotel in Dubai. Recognizing the Bank's standards of innovation and performance, ABK - Egypt won the award for 'Fastest Growing Bank in Egypt' while ABK - Kuwait was rewarded the 'Most Innovative Bank'.

Ali Marafi, Chairman at ABK Egypt said, "We are honored to be recognized as the fastest growing bank in the country today, and are delighted that our hard work has been recognized in the global finance community. We look forward to the year ahead and we will endeavor to deliver

that assesses businesses' endeavors to improve environmental measures and management efficiency. This year's survey was based on a questionnaire sent to 1,724 companies that was answered by 395 companies.

In the manufacturing category, each company's level of environmental management was assessed based on five criteria: promotion of environmental management structure, pollution and biodiversity-related measures, resource recycling, environmental product policy and measures against global warming, and ranked based on their total score.

In this year's survey, Canon achieved a perfect score for resource recycling for such "product to product" recycling initiatives as re-use and recycling systems for used office multifunction devices and toner and ink cartridges. Additionally, the Company also scored highly for other criteria-with such activities as the Company's carbon offset program that reduces CO2 emissions equivalent to those produced by such products as office multifunction devices and some production printers to zero-achieving a total score of 491(out of a possible 500),

placing first in the manufacturing category for the second year running.

Under its Action for Green environmental vision, introduced in 2008, Canon set a goal of annually reducing lifecycle CO2emissions for each product by 3%, and is proactively making efforts through such initiatives as energy-saving activities at manufacturing bases, a modal shift in distribution, reduced energy consumption during product use, product remanufacturing, reusing parts and recycling consumable goods. As a result, in 2016, lifecycle CO2emissions per product were approximately 34% of those in 2008-successfully achieving an average reduction of approximately 5% a year.

Canon's Action for Green environmental vision aims to realize a society that promotes both enriched lifestyles and the global environment through technological innovation and improved management efficiency. Throughout the entire product lifecycle-Product, Use, Recycle-Canon continues to expand activities with its customers and business partners to reduce environmental burden in pursuit of this environmental vision.

KAICO and Michelin unveils new duo offer to retail customers

KUWAIT: Kuwait Automotive Imports Co WLL (Al Shaya & Al Sagar), the exclusive distributor of Michelin Tyres for over 67 years in Kuwait, have launched a mega winter offer to our valuable customers in Kuwait, BUY 3 Tyres and Get A free tyre at all KAICO/Michelin outlets and in addition to this we trade your old of any brand fitted in your vehicle will get KD 5/- each Tyres, which means for 4 tyres you will get additional KD.20/- this is very special and unique offer by Michelin and KAICO for the first time. "We are committed to serve our customers with the best solutions in terms of products, sales, services and after-sales services. We truly believe that "Customer is # 1 and Customer is for life" with the pride that "we sell performance, not rubber", mentioned Ashish Tandon, General Manager of KAICO.

Mr Sadiq Ali, Divisional Manager, Tyres & Lubes explained that customers can now avail a free check-up and have their tires changed at the comfort of their home or office which means they receive a personal, professional and convenient service. With the state-of-the-art equipped vehicle, the Michelin tire experts will reach you wherever you are and offer you new tire fitting, balancing or puncture repair. All you need to do is call a Michelin representative on 69012110 or mail@kaico.net.

Michelin is a leading global manufacturer of tires for all vehicles for more than 120 years. Globally, the company commands about 15% of market share and is present commercially in more than 170 countries. Michelin continues to innovate across all product lines with products that meet the demands of consumers. In the Middle East, Michelin has recently introduced its technology that allows a truck tire to be more resistant and last up to 15% longer. For passenger cars, Michelin has introduced tires with patented technology, allowing the tire to perform well in all areas - a concept Michelin calls Total Performance.

KAICO was established in 1936 and is jointly owned by Al-Shaya and Al-Sagar families with 82 years of collective automotive experience in marketing, sales, parts and service and has integrated all its operations to maximize market penetration. KAICO is also the exclusive distributor in Kuwait for numerous other automotive brands including Mazda, Peugeot, IVECO, Geely & EICHER vehicle brands, ExxonMobil Lubricants, BF Goodrich, Tiger Tyres & ENERGIZER Automotive Batteries. KAICO's business activities also cover a leasing and tender division and Used Cars.



A Tire that evolves as it wears

As your tires wear, their ability to maintain grip on wet roads diminishes with reduced tread depth. Michelin has developed a tire that counters the effects of wear with channels that grow wider, and hidden rain grooves that emerge as the tire is used, along with a special rubber compound for wet conditions.

Michelin says the tire, the Premier A/S, reduces stopping distances in wet conditions and, when worn, better resists hydroplaning - skating on a thin cushion of water - compared with a conventional tire. Tires play a crucial role in translating braking force to deceleration, particularly in wet conditions. "Consumers think brakes are the motivating force that stops your car, when in reality tires stop your car/vehicle.

Developing tyres for driverless race car series

Roborace Ltd, a new venture working to develop a series for driverless race cars, has named Michelin Motorsports its official tire partner. Michelin Motorsports said it will use "next-generation" road-going tires for the series, which will run as a companion to the Formula E electric racing series now in its third season and for which Michelin is the spec tire supplier. "Michelin impressed us every time we met, and they deeply understand the powerful opportunity of what road travel will become. They are pushing us, and themselves, to develop a world that moves from possibility to reality. Their commitment to safety and innovation, and the way we inspire each other to design the best possible solutions makes this a perfect partnership" said Roborace CEO Denis Sverdlow.

Canon ranks first among manufacturing companies for the second year running

KUWAIT: Canon Inc announced yesterday that the Company has ranked first for the fourth time among manufacturing companies in Nikkei Inc.'s 21st Environmental Management Survey, receiving high ratings for each criterion, including a perfect score for resource recycling. Started in 1997 by Nikkei Inc., the Environmental Management Survey is an annual survey

Technology

Amid iPhone X angst, Wall Street braces for a weak Apple forecast

'Apple will have to answer the question of what's next'

SAN FRANCISCO: When Apple Inc announces its first-quarter earnings on Thursday, investors will seek signs of whether the company's \$999 iPhone X launched last autumn was a Steve Jobs-style hit or, as more analysts suspect, a letdown. In recent weeks, Wall Street analysts have come to a consensus that iPhone X sales were slower than previously expected for the first quarter that ended in December and may drop off sharply for the March quarter.

Analysts have lowered their expectations for Apple's second-quarter revenue guidance to as low as \$60 billion from a previous average of \$67 billion. Combined with concerns about the impact of an imbroglio in which Apple acknowledged slowing down phones with worn-out batteries, the weak iPhone X performance has again raised the question of whether the company can keep up its rapid revenue growth without a new hit product.



A far cry from the days of Jobs

tomers may choose to delay an upgrade, especially with Apple cutting the price of a battery replacement to \$29 from \$79. Analysts still believe Apple will report sales of \$272.2 billion for its fiscal 2018, 18.7 percent above its \$229.2 billion in fiscal 2017. That will be driven largely by higher average prices paid for iPhones, they said.

'Wild card'

But Apple does not give data on specific models, and with the wider lineup, analysts must do more guesswork based on surveys and other tools. They also find it harder to predict how much money Apple makes off each phone.

the base of one billion customers and eventually enhanced [augmented reality] capabilities may be part of the answer."

Analysts still expect Apple to post record revenue, hitting the top of its \$87 billion guidance for the holiday quarter. But they have slashed revenue estimates for the March quarter and expect the company to sell fewer iPhones in fiscal 2018 than initially thought. Bernstein analyst Toni Sacconaghi predicted as few as 220 million iPhones will sell in fiscal 2018, just above the 216.7 million sold in 2017 and well below the 2015 peak of 231.2 million.

BTIG analyst Walter Piecyk spotlighted a steadily lengthening replacement cycle as new iPhones offer only small improvements over prior models. Now that it has become clear that a new battery can give life to an old phone, more cus-



"We believe that gross margins are a key wild card for investors, given limited transparency into relative margins across iPhone," Sacconaghi said in a note to investors.

All in all, it's a far cry from the days of Jobs, who shrank the company's product lineup when he returned to the helm in 1997 and kept it limited to a few models of each product at one time until his death in 2011. But

the Apple of today has something Jobs never had: An imposing user base into which it can sell a host of other products and services. Trip Miller, managing partner at Gullane Capital and an Apple investor, believes Apple's services segment is the firm's next hit product. Analyst expect it to hit sales of \$34.7 billion this year, up 16 percent. —Reuters

iPhone-for-everybody

With eight different iPhone models priced from \$350 to \$999 on sale over the holidays, Apple showed that it has moved decisively away from co-founder Jobs' tight lineup of premium-priced products and embraced an iPhone-for-everybody strategy. Analysts are questioning whether Apple can boost its revenue even as iPhone sales essentially plateau. "Apple will have to answer the question of what's next," UBS analyst Steven Milunovich wrote in a note to investors. "More services to monetize

Facebook to deliver more local news to US users

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook said Monday it has decided to deliver more local news to US users, in its latest effort to manage the flow of information on the enormously-influential social network. Earlier this month, Facebook announced it will ask its two billion users to rank their trust in news sources as part of an effort to combat the spread of misinformation. The changes come as the online giant seeks to address charges that it has failed-along with Google and Twitter-to prevent the spread of false news, especially ahead of the 2016 US presidential election.

"Local news helps build community-both on and offline," Facebook co-founder and chief executive Mark Zuckerberg said in a post on the social network. "It's an important part of making sure the time we all spend on Facebook is valuable." Zuckerberg traveled around the US last year, visiting with Facebook users. "One theme people kept telling me is how much we all have in common if we can get past some of the most divisive national issues," Zuckerberg said in the post.

"Many people told me they thought that if we could turn down the temperature on the more divisive issues and instead focus on concrete local issues, then we'd all make more progress together." He also cited research suggesting that reading local news prompted people to be more engaged in their communities. Facebook is showing US members more stories from news sources in their cities or towns, and plans to begin doing the same in more countries later this year.

Recent changes at Facebook include a new "trusted sources" ranking intended to "make sure the news you see is high quality" and to foster "a sense of common ground" rather than sow division, Zuckerberg said in a previous post. Facebook decided to rely on member surveys to rank trust in news sources. A freshly-introduced update highlights what friends and family share on the network, over advertisements, celebrity and media posts. —AFP

India's Ola enters Australia as it battles Uber

MUMBAI: Indian ride-hailing company Ola is launching in Australia, it announced yesterday, making its first foray abroad as it steps up a battle with rival Uber. Ola launched in 2011 and claims to handle around a billion rides every year across India's major cities. The company said it would soon start operations in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth and was inviting private vehicle owners to partner with it. Co-founder Bhavish Aggarwal said Ola saw "immense potential" in ride-sharing.

Ride-hailing apps are booming in India despite stiff opposition from traditional taxi firms and some initial concerns about passenger safety. Ola and Uber are locked in an aggressive fight for a greater share of India's taxi-app market, which is estimated to be worth around \$10 billion. Both companies are backed by Japan's SoftBank Group and recently ventured into the food delivery business, intensifying their rivalry further. —AFP

Amazon opens plant-filled 'The Spheres' buildings

SAN FRANCISCO: Internet giant Amazon on Monday opened its plant-packed "The Spheres" buildings in its home city of Seattle. The Spheres are the newest addition to Amazon's "urban campus" in Seattle, and are billed as a workplace "more like a tropical rainforest in the clouds than an office." The structures, which look like giant glass and steel balls, house more than 40,000 plants and include features such as tree-house meeting rooms, a river and waterfalls.

"Our goal with The Spheres was to create a unique gathering place where employees could collaborate and innovate together, and where the Seattle community could gather to experience biodiversity in the center of the city," John Schoettler, Amazon's vice president of global real estate and facilities, said in a statement. "We are thrilled to officially open the doors." The Spheres were designed to provide a link to nature typically lacking in urban offices, and one which studies suggest inspires creativity and might even enhance brain functioning, according to Amazon.

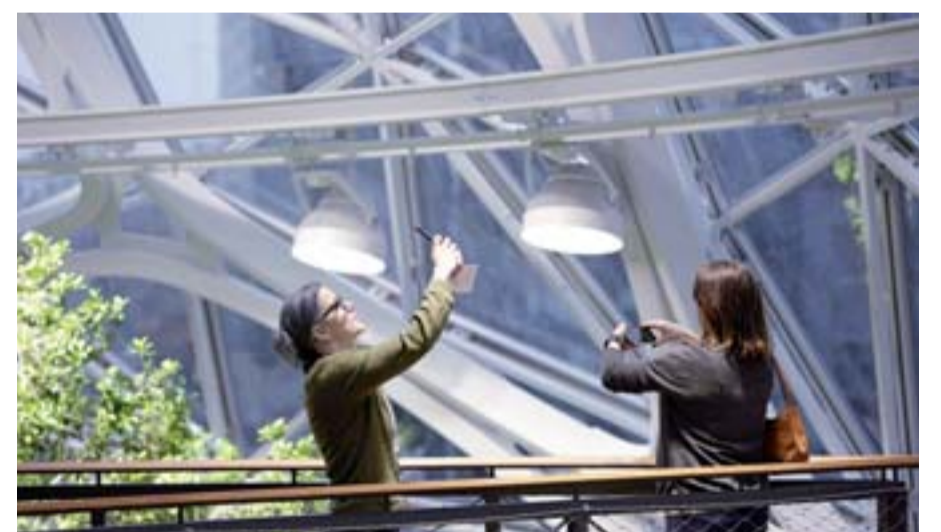
A visitor center called The Understory will be open to the public and provide insight into the science, engineering and plants at the facility. "These unique buildings are so much more than a beautiful creative space for Amazon employees," Washington State governor Jay Inslee said in a statement. "They will help conserve a number of rare plant species from around the world and provide countless educational opportunities for local students."

The largest of the three joined spheres



SEATTLE: People walk past the Amazon Spheres. —AFP

is over 90 feet (27 meters) tall and 130 foot (39 meters) in diameter. There are no closed office spaces, with collaboration taking place along paths or in tree houses. "Plants, trees, sunlight, soil, and water take center stage-the sound of running water and the scent of flowering plants create an instant botanical immersion that takes visitors far away from the urban landscape," Amazon said. Amazon's quest for a second North American headquarters has thrust 20 cities into a cutthroat "Hunger Games" style contest. The technology and lifestyle powerhouse this month narrowed its list of candidates from 238 applications for the prize, which could provide an estimated \$5 billion in investments and 50,000 new jobs. Amazon expects to announce a decision later this year on "HQ2," which will be equal to its Seattle headquarters, and is asking the finalists to refine their pitches. —AFP



SEATTLE: People take a tour during the grand opening of the Amazon Spheres.

Pentagon probes fitness-app use after map shows sensitive sites

WASHINGTON: The US military is reviewing how troops use fitness trackers and other devices, the Pentagon said Monday after an exercise-logging company published a map revealing potentially sensitive information about US and allied forces in places including the Middle East. The map, made by Strava Labs, shows the movements of its app users around the world, indicating the intensity of travel along a given path.

The company says it offers "a direct visualization of Strava's global network of athletes." In large cities and well-known locations, the highlighted routes are hardly surprising, with dense urban areas lit up brightly compared to unpopulated areas or places without many app users. In Iraq and Syria, much of the terrain is essentially dark, but viewers can easily spot beacons of activity in remote places where military bases are located, presumably indicating favorite jogging or walking routes. Such activity in inaccessible desert compounds in the Middle East or around insurgent-held cities makes it

clear the data are being gleaned from military users.

'Situational awareness'

"We are going to take a look at the Department-wide policy to ensure that we have operational security and force protection," Colonel Rob Manning, a Pentagon spokesman, told reporters. "Recent data releases emphasize the need for situational awareness." Strava's map highlights a series of well-known military bases in Iraq, in detail.

Similarly in Syria, areas that appear to be bases in the north-where US troops are aiding local partners in the fight against the Islamic State group — are lit up brightly against an otherwise dark background. The concentration of activity at a base or along a patrol route could be used by insurgent groups to plan attacks on military personnel. Manning said the review would look at the use of all wearable electronics and smartphones. Commanders already have the tools at their disposal to ensure "force protection," he added.

"DoD personnel are advised to emplace strict privacy settings on wireless technologies and applications, and such technologies are forbidden at specific DoD sites and during specific activities," he said, referring to the Department of Defense. Manning said he was not aware of any request to Strava to take down its map.

'Security nightmare'

But the whole issue could have been fairly easily avoided. According to Strava, "athletes with the Metro/heatmap opt-out privacy setting have all data excluded" from the mapping project. Jeffrey Lewis,

director of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies' East Asia Nonproliferation program, said the data revelations represent a "security nightmare" for governments around the world.

"Anyone with access to the data could make a pattern-of-life map for individual users, some of whom may be very interesting to foreign intelligence services," he wrote in a column on the Daily Beast news site. If anyone were to hack Strava, he said, they might be able to connect a particular user with a particular route. "That's charming when it's a celebrity uploading a run. But what about a soldier?" he added, noting that an adversary could track a soldier as he or she moved from one assignment to the next.

Privacy tools

Strava referred queries to its blog posting last year in which it said "nothing is more important" than the safety of its users. "Whether you are concerned about someone knowing where you are, where you ran or where you live, we've got the tools to help you take control," the company said. "We work hard to make it easy for athletes to have access to the information and tools they need to control their privacy, whether you're using our mobile app or a GPS device."

Ned Price, a former CIA official who was seconded as a national security adviser to former president Barack Obama, said that "capable adversaries" had almost certainly been harvesting such data for years. "Imagine how many similar data sources are out there we're ignorant of (because) it's not posted online," he wrote on Twitter. —AFP

Health

Vaping may raise cancer risk

WASHINGTON: Vaping may raise the risk of cancer because it leads to DNA damage, even though it contains fewer carcinogens than tobacco smoke, a US study has found. The report in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences did not compare the cancer-causing potential of traditional cigarettes to e-cigarettes. However, in studies on lab mice, those exposed to e-cigarette smoke "had higher levels of DNA damage in the heart, lungs, and bladder, compared with control mice exposed to filtered air," it said. Similar effects were seen when human lung and bladder cells were exposed to nicotine and nicotine-derived nitrosamine ketone (NNK), a carcinogenic nicotine derivative.

These exposed cells are more likely to mutate and become cancerous than control cells. "Thus, although e-cigarette smoke has fewer carcinogens than tobacco smoke, E-cigarette smokers might have a higher risk than non-smokers of developing lung and bladder cancers and heart diseases," said the study, led by Moon-shong Tang of the Institute of Environmental Medicine at New York University. According to outside experts, much more work is needed to uncover the true risk of vaping, which is widely seen as a safer alternative than traditional cigarettes.

Ed Stephens, senior Research Fellow at the University of St Andrews, called the report a "valuable contribution" to the field of research. "Unfortunately, no direct comparisons were made with tobacco smoke; instead the authors cite another study that found a key biomarker related to such genetic damage to be present in very much smaller quantities (97 percent less) in the urine of vapers compared with smokers," he added.

ties (97 percent less) in the urine of vapers compared with smokers," he added.

"That study and this new research are both consistent with the widely-held view that vaping is not without risk of cancer and other diseases, but that risk is usually considerably lower than smoking." Peter Hajek, director of the Tobacco Dependence Research Unit at Queen Mary University of London, said the study methods are of "unclear relevance for effects of vaping." "Human cells were submerged in nicotine and in off-the-shelf bought carcinogenic nitrosamines. It is not surprising of course that this damaged the cells, but this has no relationship to any effects of e-cigarettes on people who use them," he said.

"No comparison with conventional cigarettes was made, but in the text of the article, the authors acknowledge the key bit of information that is of crucial relevance in this story: Vapers show a reduction in these chemicals of 97 percent compared to smokers. They should have added that his may well be the level that non-smokers obtain from their environment." A comprehensive review of the scientific literature, released earlier this month by the US National Academies of Science, found that vaping is likely less harmful than cigarettes, but may lead to addiction in young people. However, it cautioned that the true health effects of the habit remain unclear, since the trend is relatively new. About 18 million American use e-cigarettes, which are battery-powered devices that heat a nicotine containing liquid. — AFP



SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, California: Vaping products are displayed at The Vaping Buddha California. — AFP

Abortion bans around the world

PARIS: Traditionally Catholic Ireland has announced a referendum in May on easing some of the strictest legislation in Europe that imposes a near-total ban on abortion. The poll will decide if abortion clauses should be removed from the constitution so the government can propose new laws allowing unrestricted terminations up to 12 weeks into pregnancy. The country approved limited abortion for the first time in 2013 when the mother's life is at risk, but not in other circumstances such as rape or malformation of the fetus. While many countries have similar allowances, around 18 ban abortion completely. Here is a snapshot of the global situation based on information from the World Health Organization and US-based Center for Reproductive Rights.

Total ban

Predominantly Catholic Malta is the only European Union country to totally ban abortion, imposing jail

terms of between 18 months and three years if the law is broken. Abortion is also banned in Andorra, the Vatican and San Marino, which are in Europe but not the EU. Globally there are total bans in Congo-Brazzaville, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Madagascar, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Palau, Philippines, Senegal and Suriname. In El Salvador the internationally criticized criminalization of those found to have terminated pregnancies has led to 27 women being jailed, some serving terms of up to 30 years.

Restricted

Many countries allow abortions in cases where the mother's life is deemed to be in danger. A partial list includes: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Guatemala, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Laos, Lebanon, Myanmar, Oman, Paraguay, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Uganda, Venezuela, West Bank/Gaza and Yemen. Unlike the rest of the United Kingdom, abortion is also illegal in the province of Northern Ireland except where the mother's life or mental health is in danger. The British government said in June it will fund abortions in England for women arriving from Northern Ireland. — AFP

Brazil short of ammo in fight against yellow fever

SAO PAULO: Brazil is firing from all barrels to stop a yellow fever surge that has already killed dozens, but with vaccines short, the ammunition is already running out. Hundreds of frustrated and increasingly worried people have been lining up outside medical centers in Sao Paulo over recent weeks in hopes of getting their vaccination—some getting treated and others to be told that none was available. Authorities in Brazil's most populous state, with 45 million residents, are trying to make up for the shortfall by distributing partial doses.

The potentially fatal virus, which is transmitted by mosquitoes, is common in Brazil but the scope this year has taken authorities by surprise in Sao Paulo, while tension is also rising in Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais

states. Last year, there was a total of 53 cases, with 16 deaths, in Sao Paulo. By comparison, there have been 134 cases with 52 fatalities here in the first three weeks of January alone. Brazilian authorities aim to vaccinate almost 22 million people, according to the World Health Organization. However, with vaccines in short supply, 16.5 million of them will be given only partial doses.

Officials say these so-called "fractionated doses" will work for up to eight years, while the full dose lasts a lifetime. "We are distributing the fractionated doses because of the risk of not having any vaccines," said Marcos Boulos, disease control coordinator for Sao Paulo state. Brazil's health minister, Ricardo Barros, says the situation is under control. "We could vaccinate all Brazilians in 60 days if needed," he told AFP. That doesn't reassure people waiting hours outside vaccination centers or showing up to find signs posted with "No vaccines available."

"We are worried because we haven't managed to get vaccinated," said Maria Pereira, a 33-year-old secretary, who was scouring private clinics in Sao Paulo, where a dose costs about \$60, rather than free of charge from public providers. — AFP

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What's On

NBK welcomes trainees from Little Loyacers program

In a visit to the bank's training center

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) recently hosted trainees from Little Loyacers program, who visited the bank's training center in Head Office (2) to know about the learning activities in the banking industry and widen their experiential knowledge.

NBK Senior Trainer, Ahmad Al-Awadi, accompanied the students on their visit where they had the chance to know the kind of learning offered and different levels accessible including the courses that are related to building knowledge, expertise and awareness.

The students had the chance to learn about the broad range of banking basics, saving and managing accounts.

It's worth mentioning that the Training Center offers programs that are designed to fit different levels of trainees ranging from school graduates to university students and diploma holders in addition to employees from different sectors and ministries.

The visit is part of NBK's cooperation with Loyac to support youth. The visit comes also as part of the bank's ongoing commitment to its corporate social responsibility program and to promoting the education and development of the country's youth.

It is worth mentioning that NBK regularly hosts students on field trips from both public and private schools in Kuwait and provides them with information about the banking industry and career opportunities.



Mais Alghanim To Go unveils ultimate offer for New Year

Mais Alghanim To Go recently announced its latest offer, just in time to kick-off the new year season. In keeping in line with its long-held tradition of providing its clients with delectable meals to satisfy every taste and fulfill every preference, this meal is composed of four servings and features eight Meat Kabbab, two Tikka, two Meat Arayes, in addition to two Shish Taouk prepared and marinated in the special Mais Alghanim way. The offer also includes a selection of mouth-watering and nutritious Lebanese Mezzeh, yet another specialty of the Mais Alghanim To Go kitchen, prepared with the utmost care and quality.

Appetizers include Hummus, Moutabal, Batata Harra and Mix Pastries; also, it contains Tabbouleh and Fattoush salad all together with a choice of an addition of either French fries or Basmati Rice with Saffron, topped off with a refreshing Coca Cola drink.

Whether you are at a get-together with your acquaintances at the Diwaniya or looking to spend some quality time with family and loved-ones, then this offer - serving four persons - with its fabulous choices of grilled



meats and appetizers shall never disappoint. A recipient of numerous prestigious awards and recognitions, Mais Alghanim To Go promises enthusiastic foodies a new unique experience, allowing them to sample a selection of the most inviting and delicious signature dishes, anytime, anywhere. In doing so, Mais Alghanim To Go observes the most stringent public health and food safety standards in all its branches, supported by an extensive fleet of delivery vehicles covering various areas throughout Kuwait, and fulfill-

ing its motto, 'Closer and Tastier... Wherever you are!' This exceptional offer is only a phone call away. Call the hotline number to enjoy this delectable deal wherever you may be, or order online via Talabat and Mais Alghanim To Go will deliver straight to your doorstep. Alternatively, you are welcome to personally pick-up your order at the nearest branch in Bneid Al-Qar, Shuwaikh, Fintas, Salmiya, Hawally or from our newest outlet in Ardiya Industrial Area.

Forum hosts media delegation



The Najla Al-Naqi Forum is set to host a press conference on Thursday, February 8, 2018 in honor of an Egyptian media delegation led by veteran media personality Tahani Al-Bartaqali. The event takes place at the Radisson Blu Hotel.

ISF opens amnesty helpline in nine languages

Indian Social Forum Kuwait (ISF) highly appreciated the new amnesty declared by Ministry of Interior. This will help thousands of expatriates including Indians illegally live in Kuwait due to various reasons.

ISF urged all illegal residents especially Indian citizens to utilize this opportunity either to legalize their residency or to leave the country as soon as possible. Indian social forum has opened Amnesty Helpline in various languages to assist the beneficiaries of amnesty during the amnesty period from 29th January 2018 to 22nd February 2018. The on call/WhatsApp support helpline service is available in English (666 24 501/ 659 62 683), Hindi/Urdu (655 97 993/975 94 928), Telugu (975 94 928), Tamil (696 26 284/ 991 33 474), Kannada/Beary/Tulu (99 502 159/659 62 683) and Malayalam (9908 3007/666 24 501).

BSK students explore healthy living topic at Scientific Centre

Throughout January, Year Three students from the British School of Kuwait (BSK) visited the Scientific Centre to broaden their understanding of the human body, as part of their 'Being Healthy' topic. The students were fascinated by the wonderful array of experiments and fact-finding tasks which encouraged them to use their scientific thinking to explore complex problems. Year Three student Anara Perera said, "I liked the experiments, when we arrived we were all buzzing. It felt like we were there for five minutes because we were having so much fun."

The interactive scientific activities included calculating their BMI, finding out how much water was in their body and discovering how long it took to cycle off a packet of fries. They were also able to test their flexibility using a sit and reach machine as well as seeing how high they could jump. Sadie Diamond, Head of Year Three said, "BSK values a hands-on approach and this was a fantastic way to reinforce a healthy lifestyle. Year Three were a credit to the school in their behavior and manner around the Scientific Centre and greatly enjoyed the visit."



Pakistani community honors social worker

The Pakistani community honored well-known businessman and social worker Ishtiaq Malik for obtaining a PhD in Business Administration from a university in New York. The gathering was attended by most Pakistani organizations' office bearers, all of whom congratulated him. They also condemned the high officials' decision to stop all Pakistan International Airline flights from Kuwait to various Pakistani cities. On this occasion, Marketing Director and Managing Editor of Contemporary Magazine Mujahid Iqbal and Chief Organizer PML-N Youth Wing Middle East Irfan Nagra congratulated Malik.



**Indian Social forum
Amnesty Helpline**

Indian Social Forum (ISF) requests Indian expatriates and all residency violators to take advantage of amnesty granted by Ministry of Interior from 29th January 2018 to 22nd February 2018. ISF has opened Amnesty Helpline in various languages to assist the beneficiaries of amnesty during this period.

For assistance, call/WhatsApp on 666 24 501 / 659 62 683

ഇന്ത്യൻ സോഷ്യൽ ഫോറം (ISF) ഇന്ത്യൻ പ്രവാസിമാർക്ക് അനുമതി നൽകാൻ കേന്ദ്ര ഭരണകൂടം 29 ജനുവരി 2018 മുതൽ 22 ഫെബ്രുവരി 2018 വരെ അനുമതി നൽകാനുള്ള അവസരം സൃഷ്ടിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇതിന്റെ ഭാഗമായി ISF ഇന്ത്യൻ പ്രവാസിമാർക്ക് അനുമതി നൽകാൻ കേന്ദ്ര ഭരണകൂടം അനുമതി നൽകിയ സമയത്താണ് ISF-യുടെ അനുമതി രേഖാമാപ്പ് സേവനം ആരംഭിച്ചത്. ഈ സേവനം ഇന്ത്യൻ പ്രവാസിമാർക്ക് അനുമതി നൽകാൻ സഹായിക്കാൻ കഴിയും. 97594928 / 65597993

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INDIAN SOCIAL FORUM-KUWAIT

Classifieds

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

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

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Cool with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 35 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 30/01/2018 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	19 °C	10 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	19 °C	03 °C		
ABDALY	18 °C	05 °C		
BUBYAN	00 °C	00 °C		
JAHRA	19 °C	07 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	18 °C	08 °C		
SALMIYAH	17 °C	13 °C		
AHMADI	17 °C	10 °C		
NUWAISIB	19 °C	06 °C		
WAFRA	19 °C	03 °C		
SALMY	16 °C	06 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	01/31	Cool	19 °C	05 °C	NW	10 - 30 km/h
Thursday	02/01	Cool and some scattered clouds will appear	20 °C	05 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Friday	02/02	Partly cloudy	21 °C	06 °C	NW-VRB	06 - 28 km/h
Saturday	02/03	Partly cloudy	22 °C	08 °C	VRB-NW	08 - 30 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:17
Sunrise	06:39
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:03
Sunset	17:24
Isha	18:44

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	18 °C
MIN. Temp.	04 °C
MAX. RH	70 %
MIN. RH	22 %
MAX. Wind	NW 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation available for executive bachelor in old Reggae. Neat and clean 3 BHK apartment. Interested may contact: 99990278. (C 5377) 29-1-2018

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

REQUIRED

A well reputed company has a vacancy for a Chief Accountant .

Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain internal controls and effective accounting system and policies.
- Lead the accounting department in driving the finance dept to play a proactive role in the organization
- Build strong inter-company communications with the respective departments on revenue improvement and cost reduction initiatives

Requirements:

- Candidate needs to have the following qualifications and to demonstrate experience as follows:
- College Degree in Accounting/Finance- ACCA qualification a plus.
- Strong experience and knowledge of the interrelationship of GL, AR, Revenue Recognition, and financial statements and the profitability of a company.
- Experience in audit and costing is advantageous.
- Excellent communication skills and able to interact with all levels. Arabic is plus.
- Solid experience in MS Excel and knowledge of ERP systems.
- College Degree in Accounting/Finance/ACCA qualification
- Strong experience and knowledge of the interrelationship of GL, AR, Revenue Recognition, and financial statements and the profitability of a company.
- Experience in audit and costing is advantageous.

Please send your CV and cover letter explaining relevant experience and your salary requirements. mcdentalcenter1@gmail.com

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



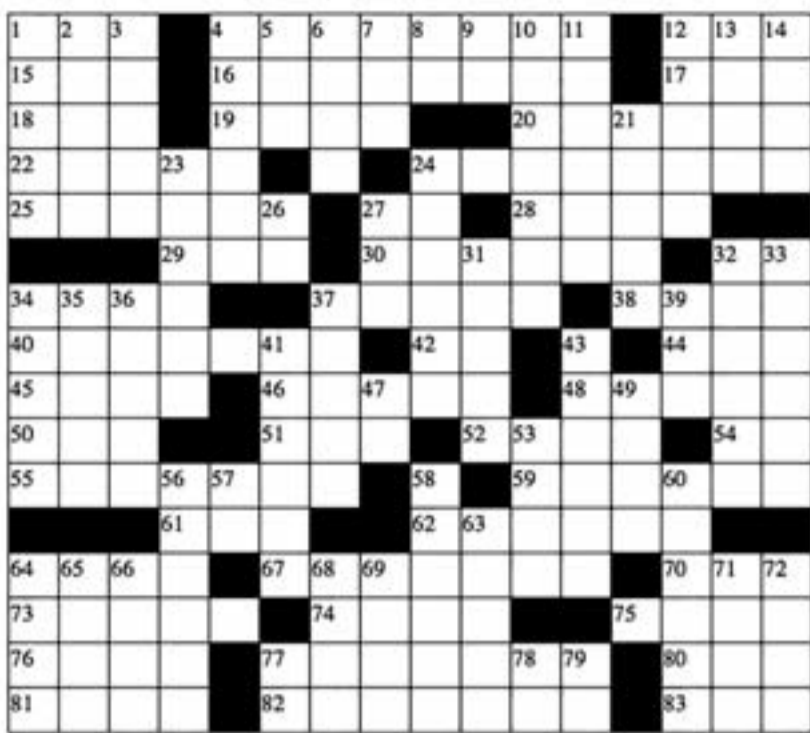
Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 31/1/2018				Departure Flights on Wednesday 31/1/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	607	Kochi	00:10	JZR	528	Asyut	00:15
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
KAC	102	London	01:20	MSC	412	Asyut	01:00
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	JZR	504	Luxor	01:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	142	Doha	01:45
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
JZR	267	Beirut	02:10	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30
WAN	548	KTM	02:40	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KAC	414	Bangkok	03:05	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40
RJA	644	Amman	03:05	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
MSR	606	Luxor	03:05	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	MSR	607	Luxor	04:05
QTR	1090	Doha	04:05	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	MSR	613	Amman	04:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	QTR	1091	Doha	05:05
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	KAC	205	Islamabad	05:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	KAC	303	Mumbai	06:05
THY	6376	Istanbul	05:10	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	JZR	786	Riyadh	06:25
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	RJA	645	Amman	07:05
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	08:10
BAW	157	London	07:15	KAC	165	Rome	08:15
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40	BAW	156	London	08:55
JZR	505	Luxor	07:45	KAC	117	New York	09:00
ETD	995	Abu Dhabi/Bahrain	07:50	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	561	Amman	09:40
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	101	London	09:45
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	ETD	9882	SGN	09:50
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
JZR	787	Riyadh	09:50	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00
WAN	342	Sohag	10:15	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
IRA	675	Lar	10:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:40
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	ZAV	4101	QA	11:00
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	IRA	674	Lar	11:40
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	WAN	953	Baku	12:00
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:40	MSC	404	Asyut	12:15
QTR	8511	Doha	13:55	QTR	1075	Doha	12:30
PAL	668	Manila	14:00	JZR	606	Kochi	12:45
KAC	618	Doha	14:15	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
KAC	516	Tehran	14:20				

Stars

CROSSWORD 1823



ACROSS

- (computer science) A measure of how densely information is packed on a storage medium.
- Tending to promote physical well-being.
- The compass point that is one point east of due south.
- The network in the reticular formation that serves an alerting or arousal function.
- An Old World reptile family of Sauria.
- A close friend who accompanies his buddies in their activities.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- An island in Indonesia south of Borneo.
- Large mostly white Australian stork.
- (Babylonian) A demigod or first man.
- Usually elongate cluster of flowers along the main stem in which the flowers at the base open first.
- Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- (British) Your grandmother.
- An industrial city in central Japan on southern Honshu.
- A flat float (usually made of logs or planks) that can be used for transport or as a platform for swimmers.
- The act of scamming.
- A sedative and tranquilizer (trade name Milltown and Equanil and Meprin) used to treat muscle tension and anxiety.
- A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- One of a set of small pieces of stiff paper marked in various ways and used for playing games or for telling fortunes.
- An area that includes seats for several people.
- American professional baseball player who hit more home runs than Babe Ruth (born in 1934).
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- The executive agency that advises the President on the federal budget.
- The act of drawing or hauling something.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- A member of the majority people of Punjab in northwestern India.
- A laminated metamorphic rock similar to granite.
- Fiddler crabs.
- Having or involving the use of hands.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- Sweet liqueur made from wine and brandy flavored with plum or peach or apricot kernels and bitter almonds.
- A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Cattle that are reared for their meat.
- One thousandth of a second.
- Exhibiting or restored to vigorous good health.
- Antibacterial drug (trade name Nydravid) used to treat tuberculosis.
- A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
- Without strain or anxiety.
- Used of a single unit or thing.

DOWN

- Eurasian rose with prickly stems and fragrant leaves and bright pink flowers followed by scarlet hips.
- A genus of Ploceidae.
- (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
- A mountain peak in the Andes in Bolivia (21,391 feet high).
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Cleanse (one's body) with soap and water.
- A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- A light strong gray lustrous corrosion-resistant metallic element used in strong light-weight alloys (as for airplane parts).
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- A member of the dominant Hindu military caste in northern India.
- Occurring or payable every year.
- The brightest star in Virgo.
- Capital city of the Apulia region on the Adriatic coast.
- The twelfth month of the civil year.
- A pale rose-colored variety of the ruby spinel.
- The cardinal number that is the sum of four and one.
- A written statement of the grounds of complaint made to court law asking for the grievance to be redressed.
- Half the width of an em.
- An inflammatory complication of leprosy that results in painful skin lesions on the arms and legs and face.
- Grind together; of teeth.
- A self-governing colony of Denmark on the Faroe Islands.
- A genus of tropical American plants have sword-shaped leaves and a fleshy compound fruits composed of the fruits of several flowers (such as pineapples).
- Jordan's port.
- A colorless toxic flammable liquid used in the synthesis of nylon.
- Fragrant resin obtain from trees of the family Burseraceae and used as incense.
- 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
- An isogram connecting points having equal barometric pressure at a given time.
- Statesman who led Northern Rhodesia to full independence as Zambia in 1964 and served as Zambia's first president (born in 1924).
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- On or toward the lee.
- God of fire.
- The southern part of the ancient Palestine succeeding the kingdom of Judah.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A stiff chitinous seta or bristle especially of an annelid worm.
- Deciduous round-headed Asiatic tree widely grown in mild climates as an ornamental for its heart-shaped leaves and fragrant yellow-green flowers followed by hanging clusters of fleshy orange-red berries.
- A linguistic element added to a word to produce an inflected or derived form v l.
- Dearly loved.
- (usually followed by 'to') Having the necessary means or skill or know-how or authority to do something.
- A French abbot.
- A bluish shade of green.
- English Quaker who founded the colony of Pennsylvania (1644-1718).
- A dull persistent (usually moderately intense) pain.
- A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- A ductile silvery-white ductile ferromagnetic trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you could find yourself lending council to someone younger, or this could indicate that you will figure out exactly where to go in your own life. You could need to feel like the star of the show just now as feelings of insecurity waver through your day. You would like for your contributions to be noticed and praised. Your accomplishments are many; you are creating important memories that will cause you to smile for a long time. Something you do for someone will show them how much you care for them. The realm of possibilities is wide open to love and artistic energy. You could have problems working with groups just now whether for work or play; your quiet nature could be your most positive asset. Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, your thoughts could be well defined and rich today. Your opinion will affect the opinions of others because you are so well regarded. You have the gift of gab and will use it to benefit a project. You will spend your day working with others toward a new way of doing something highly technical or difficult to understand. You could feel a need to be center stage and in control. As you take care of someone they will return the favor with graciousness and love. You may have warm feelings for an elderly person. When reflecting on your life you will recognize the hard work and efforts paid off very well; others follow your example. The more you work on effecting change and improvement, the more reward you will have for you and yours. Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, your frame of mind and sense of the energy of your environment may not be great for you. Someone is enamored with your quirks and unique way of doing things; use these to progress toward your goals. You will want to make your feelings known and you want them to be respected. You want to produce items or events that will move people and warm their sentiments and smiles. During this cycle, you could overreach by giving too much to someone who happens to be a taker; your choices sometimes do harm to you, try hard to do your best not to fritter away what you have worked so hard to get. You have a deep need to take the spotlight now. Make wonderful memories tonight with a younger person or loved ones. Gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, you are creating memories that will last a lifetime with people you love and like. The timing could be perfect for a domestic or professional move you have thought about for some time. You could join with someone you know very well to build a new business or maybe even buy one. You love to help others when you can, especially those with sincere need. Your mind is open to cosmic mysteries and secrets of life. You will feel connected and in sink with those you come into contact with. You will shine at a gathering where you could be called on to make a toast. A close love relationship takes on more depth this evening. This is the perfect evening for bonding and romance. Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, a new environment will encourage your inventiveness, discoveries and confirmations. Your ability to use what you've learned is what you've longed for; the opportunity has arrived for success! Someone could be bitter and jealous of your success and will try to start a disagreement. Letting people see your true, delightful personality will pave the way for other opportunities in the career realm and possibly the personal as well. You will reach the end of some project that has been a challenge from the beginning. You will let someone see your gentle side as you encourage them through a very trying issue. You may distance yourself from someone who just cannot let bygones be bygones; this is for the best and you should feel relieved not guilty. Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, it will seem as though you sail down the road with nothing but green lights today. You could find yourself alone at the office or home as you go through the day with zero interruptions or irritations; enjoy this rare occurrence! You will draw the attention of a client or friend who finds your energy uplifting. You will say something kind to a stranger and unknowingly make a big difference in his or her day. There is no better karma than doing a kindness to strangers and those who could never repay you. A new client or customer will make you shine in front of the boss or a supervisor later today. This whole day is about putting your thoughtful efforts to work for your company. This day will be a fond memory for some time to come. Virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, through your new work duties your spiritual mindset will shift to a more intellectual level. It is not enough to know certain ways and beliefs exist, you want to experience them fully. You may seek ways to help more with less effort; work smarter not harder and reach more goals. There could be an entire area of people or animals sustained due to your quick thinking and ability to get things started and finished. You may consider someone shady because of the way they do things; a secretive aura surrounds him or her. Your mind may race with different thoughts and considerations. Tonight practice meditation or lose yourself in a new book that appeals to your sense of mystery; sleep well as you enjoy sweet, sweet dreams, idealistic Libra.



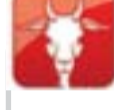
Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

Scorpio, seeing things in a much too positive light is not good for this time. Be realistic when making plans for expanding your business or family. This is not a time for taking risks, especially when you are the only one who sees positive outcomes in this situation. You may have to act quickly to turn on a dime and change directions. A new technical gadget has your attention later today; new ways to make your job easier are always welcomed. Something or someone you absolutely cannot resist could show up later; be careful! Trying times are good for sharpening our self-control. You will see that anything your heart desires can be yours but to realize certain goals we must sometimes hope and plan in silence to keep the energy unblemished. Scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, during this period of time associations deepen and grow stronger; this is important to you now. Work is concentrated and steady, just the way you like and need it. You will notice that you somehow avoid mishaps or illness and you will realize it is because of your guides and angels. The energy of reaching many people with your message is revealed in this cycle; this could involve broadcast, internet or publishing. You enjoy meeting new people and forming new alliances to make something better. You may want to be in the limelight as you make an announcement. Your attitude will take you a very long way. Things could happen so quickly you become confused, just refuse to be muddled and strive to see things clearly. Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, heed your conservative tendencies when you want to walk on the wild side. This is not the time to gamble or take chances on anything you're doing now. Chaotic, needy behavior on your part will cause you to clash with those around you. Try to avoid this as the negative result could be far reaching. You want people to be grateful for what you do for them. You will have difficulty in getting your point across to someone later today. This could be a cycle of creating memories that will last a lifetime; this could indicate a serious romance, either a new one or rekindling an old one. The heavens indicate you could find yourself in many new places, meeting new people. Kick back and go with the flow. Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Aquarius, you want to be noticed and appreciated for your contributions and results. You could find that you have lost an important source of information or product purchase. Someone disagrees with you publicly and a nasty scene could be made. Your taciturn nature will play well with this and you will be shown to be right. You may do well taking risks right now in real estate and financial investments. You will receive a communication from an admirer. Conditions could be favorable now for building your legacy. This is a period of your life you will regard as productive and most successful. This evening may bring interesting information to you via television, film or the written word; pay attention. Aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, this could be one of those day when the simplest things seem to be off track; you put things down and can't find them or the red lights appear at every intersection. There may be a disagreement with more than one person, or perhaps someone else is not responding as you want. Daydreaming will get you through the day even if someone thinks you should be more aware and down to earth. You may break through a complicated situation when the root of the problem becomes clear. You may be asked to house/pet sit for a short time. Exercise is what you need; find a heated pool or walk if the weather permits. You could share a wonderful meal with loved ones where you discuss and elderly person. Your monetary stash is growing steadily. Pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

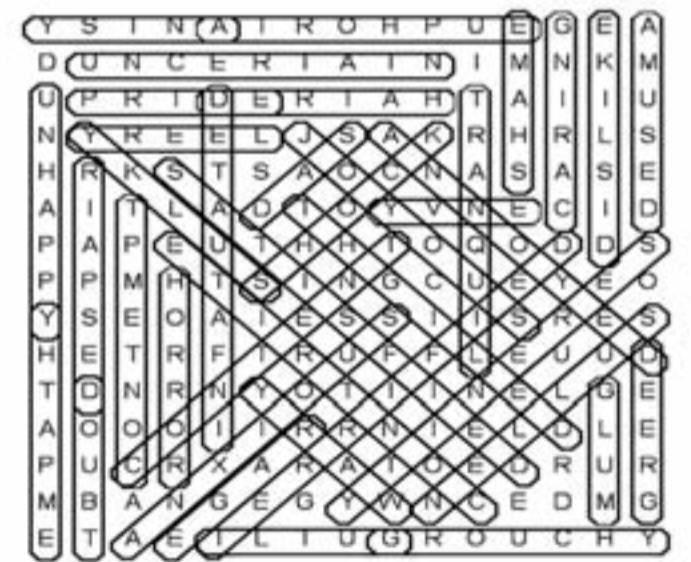
Moods & Emotions 3

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 13 letters spell an additional word.



- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| ANGER | EDGY | GRUMPY | OUTRAGE |
| APPRECIATIVE | ENVIIOUS | HAPPY | PUZZLED |
| ARROGANT | EXUBERANT | HOPE | REGRET |
| BITTER | FEAR | INDIFFERENT | SADNESS |
| CALM | FRANTIC | JEALOUS | SCARED |
| CHEERFUL | FRETFUL | JOLLY | SCORNFUL |
| CONFIDENT | GLAD | JOYFUL | SORRY |
| CURIOUS | GLEEFUL | MOROSE | SURPRISE |
| DISGUST | GRATEFUL | MOURNFUL | TRANQUIL |
| DUBIOUS | GRIEF | NERVOUS | WORRY |

Moods & Emotions 2



- | | | | |
|----------|----------|------------|-----------|
| AMUSED | DISLIKE | HORROR | SHOCK |
| ANNOYED | DOUBT | INFATUATED | SULKY |
| ANTSY | EMPATHY | JOYOUS | SULLEN |
| ANXIOUS | ENVY | LEERY | TERRIFIED |
| CARING | EUPHORIA | PRIDE | TRANQUIL |
| CONTEMPT | GLUM | RAGE | UNCERTAIN |
| CONTENT | GREED | SAD | UNHAPPY |
| CONTRITE | GROUCHY | SATISFIED | WARY |
| DELIGHT | GUILT | SERENITY | |
| DESPAIR | HATRED | SHAME | |

The hidden word is: DISCOURAGED

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





Info Minister commends **Al-Anbaa** newspaper's professionalism



KUWAIT: Kuwait Information Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri said Monday local daily Al-Anbaa succeeded in reporting local, Arab and international stories in a professional manner. Jabri made a recorded speech in a ceremony held by Al-Anbaa marking its 42nd anniversary. The ceremony was also attended by Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of State for Youth Khaled Al-Roudhan. Jabri, who commended Al-Anbaa founder the late Khaled Al-Marzouq, said the Kuwaiti people remembered the daily when it was published in Cairo, Egypt, in 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait, demanding Kuwait's just causes. Chief Editor Yusuf Al-Marzouq said Al-Anbaa succeeded in being a paper and paperless newspaper. He thanked all shareholders and subscribers for enabling Al-Anbaa to continue for 42 years. Kuwaiti and Arab actors and actresses were honored during the ceremony. — KUNA





PALOMA FAITH ALMOST SECURED SIR PAUL MCCARTNEY COLLABORATION

Paloma Faith has claimed Sir Paul McCartney almost appeared on a track with her - but he dropped out of the studio session. The 36-year-old singer has revealed the former Beatles rocker once asked her if the pair could "jam" together in the studio whilst she was working on her 2017 venture 'The Architect', but was disheartened when she failed to secure the iconic musician's talents on a track because he'd been left "snowed under". Speaking to The Sun newspaper, Paloma said: "He came to rehearsals and said, 'I'd love to jam with you'. He didn't make it but sent a cake with a note that said, 'Sorry, snowed under. Let's jam another time.'" There's still hope for a collaboration between Paloma and McCartney, 75, in the future, although the 'Only Love Can Hurt Like This' hitmaker hasn't confirmed their

rescheduled "jam" date. It comes after Paloma recently claimed she has become a "better" singer since welcoming her first child with her partner Leyman Lahcine in December 2016, as it has made her "lung capacity bigger". She said: "I never really felt I was a proper singer. I always felt like I was a sort of impersonator of a singer for a long time. You can even listen to my first album and hear it, that I wasn't very good then. I've learned later in life and on the job. "And this is going to sound mad, but I feel like I can sing better now I've had a baby, that something's changed in my body. My lung capacity is bigger and I feel more alive and stronger, more enduring, and that's affected my voice and opened something up in my brain that's saying 'you can'. Before there was a 'you can't', an almost physical inability." Securing a collaboration with

McCartney may put Paloma's mind at ease, as the 'Never Tear Us Apart' singer is always worried about whether or not her next album will mark the "ruination" of her career. She said previously: "I always feel like the next one's the one that's going to be the ruination of my career. I start thinking, 'OK, what am I going to do if this doesn't work?'. "I don't think it is irrational in this current music climate because look at some of the massive artists that came out at the same time as me - like Duffy, where's Duffy? I don't think anything's guaranteed, everything's changing. With this album, Spotify is the most powerful thing on the planet now, and I don't have a Spotify following, so I am literally trying to build it now."

U2 announce two homecoming gigs in Dublin

U2 have announced two homecoming shows in Dublin, Ireland as part of their 'U2 eXPERIENCE + iNNOCENCE Tour'. Bono and co will perform at the 3Arena on November 5 and November 6, and prior to that on October 27 they'll bring their energetic live show to The SSE Arena in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The Irish rockers will play nine different countries in Europe as part of their upcoming run. The 'With or Without You' hitmakers kick off in Tulsa, Oklahoma on May 2, but the European leg will begin in Berlin, Germany on August 31, and will see them perform in Cologne, Paris, Madrid, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Amsterdam and

Milan, before coming to the UK on October 19 for their Manchester Arena gig and London's The O2 on October 23. Last year, U2 completed their 'Joshua Tree Tour' - in support of the seminal 1987 album of the same name - which hit stadiums around the world in support of their album 'Songs of Experience', the follow-up to 2015's 'Songs of Innocence'. The Irish show news comes hot off the heels of the band performing 'Get Out Of Your Own Way' at the Grammys at New York City's Madison Square Garden last night. 'Havana' hitmaker Camila Cabello introduced the legendary group, and praised their own connection to the "American dream". She said: "Tonight, it is my great honour to introduce one of the greatest bands in music history, U2. "This band from Ireland first rocked the Grammy boat when they won their first four awards 30 years ago for Joshua Tree, an album that explored their own powerful connection with the American dream. 46 Grammy nominations and 22 awards later, they extend their stunning Grammy legacy tonight by celebrating in New York City and the promise that has drawn generations of immigrants here from around the world." U2 also duetted with Kendrick Lamar and comedian Dave Chappelle on a medley of songs from the hip-hop star's record 'DAMN'. Kendrick's 'Humble' was honored as Best Rap Performance, Best Rap Song and Best Music Video, while 'Loyalty', his collaboration with Rihanna, was named Best Rap/Sung Performance and 'DAMN' was named Best Rap Album at the prestigious ceremony. Tickets for the Dublin dates go on sale on Friday (02.02.18) at 9am.



TLC axe Australian Open gig due to 'computer difficulties'

TLC were forced to axe their performance at the Australian Open on Sunday due to "computer difficulties". The 'No Scrubs' hitmakers were due to perform with DJ Horizon, but Melbourne was hit with 40-degree heat and caused havoc with their technical equipment. A spokesperson told the crowd: "We have had a full computer meltdown tonight and unfortunately TLC cannot sing because they can't sing without their computers. "But we will issue full refunds for everyone here." Band members Tionne 'T-Boz' Watkins and Rozonda 'Chilli' Thomas later took to Twitter to apologise to fans and let them they would be able to receive full refunds. T-Boz wrote: "I'm soooooo sorry

it was out of our control we're trying to figure something out to make up to you (sic)" And a Chilli, who had gotten all dressed up for the performance, added: "Omg we are so sorry ... we were dressed and everything but it was out of our hands. Like she said we're trying to figure our how to make it up somehow. (sic)" Fans who were hoping to see the group, can now apply to Tennis Australia to be reimbursed for the price of a Ground Pass ticket for the event. However, anyone wanting to catch the band in Australia, they will be touring with Boyz II Men, kicking off at The Star Event Arena in Sydney today.

Glover confirms the end for Childish Gambino

Donald Glover has confirmed he is retiring Childish Gambino because he thinks change is "important to progress". The 'Redbone' singer picked up a Grammy for Best Traditional R&B Performance for the hit at the award ceremony at the weekend, but told reporters backstage he had not changed his mind that his next album will be Gambino's last. In a video posted on YouTube by Variety, 33-year-old Donald said: "I stand by that. I'm really appreciative of this [Grammy]. I'm making another project right now. But I like endings, I think they're important to progress. "I think if a lot of things had death clauses in them we wouldn't have a lot of problems in the world, to be honest. I think endings are good because they force things to get better." The 'Atlanta' creator - who juggles music with acting and directing - has just signed a new record deal with RCA and has promised fans new music very soon. But during a live show last year he revealed his next Gambino album - the follow-up to critically acclaimed 2016 album 'Awaken, My Love' - will be his last. Speaking about the decision, Donald said previously: "There's nothing worse than like a third sequel, like a third movie and we're like, 'again?'" "You know, I like it when something's good and when it comes back there's a reason to come back, there's a reason to do that." He added: "Like I feel like there's gotta be a reason to do things and I always had a reason to be punk. "Being punk just always felt really good to me and we always looked at 'Atlanta' as a punk show and I feel like the direction I would go with Childish Gambino wouldn't be punk anymore."



Arctic Monkeys confirmed for several European festivals

Arctic Monkeys have been announced for more European festivals. The 'Do I Wanna Know' rockers - who took a break in 2014 - have been busy working on their sixth album and after being confirmed to headline the Firefly Festival in the US in June, Alex Turner and co will also headline Barcelona's Primavera Sound 2018 on June 2, joining the likes of Bjork, Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds, The National, Lorde, Migos and ASAP Rocky on the bill. And the indie rockers will also take to the stage at Sziget festival in Budapest in August, and Portugal's NOS Alive on July 12. It comes after a video which fans believed revealed further tour dates from the Sheffield band was confirmed as fake. The cryptic clip shared on Reddit, which has now been deleted, claimed to be from the band's Instagram Story and sparked speculation the numbers revealed dates and geographic co-ordinates of upcoming gigs. Fans guessed the video's clues teased perform-

ances at Primavera, Mad Cool Festival, Rock Werchter in Belgium, and even a surprise show in London this week. But NME.com reported the video had been dismissed by official sources, and more 2018 tour dates are expected to be announced in coming weeks. Bassist Nick O'Malley recently confirmed the 'Bet You Look Good On The Dancefloor' hitmakers began recording their new album in September for release this year. The band took a hiatus in 2014, following the release of the 2013 album 'AM' and its accompanying tour. Alex released a second album with supergroup The Last Shadow Puppets in 2016 while Matt Helders played the drums on Iggy Pop's album 'Post Pop Depression'. All four members of Arctic Monkeys, Alex, Matt, Nick and Jamie Cook appeared together in 2016 to play a live gig to promote the Sheffield Children's Hospital arts trail. Alex, 32, said in the same year the band were in, "no rush", to release another album.



Paul Cattermole reselling BRIT award after buyer fails to cough up

Paul Cattermole has relisted his BRIT Award after the successful bidder failed to pay out the £66,000 it went for. The former S Club 7 star has been forced to resell the statuette, which the 90s group won for Best Newcomer at the 2000 ceremony, on eBay after failing to receive the payment. In the new listing he wrote: "There are signs of age as you would expect, it has been on display and it is 17 years [sic], the back of the neck and under the helmet and arms there are signs of age. "This item is being re-listed due to a non paying winning bidder." As of Monday afternoon the gong's highest bid is £15,700. And that's not the only nostalgic item the 'Reach For The Stars' hitmaker has put up for sale in order to pay off his bills. A Pulsar Spoon watch, which the 40-year-old singer claims he wore all the time and wished could "talk" because of all of the stories it could tell, is also on the auctioning site. It cur-

rently has zero bids, but Paul is hoping the vintage time-piece, which he wore in the band's TV series 'Miami 7', fetches at least £500. Paul previously said that he needed to flog the items to pay his bills. He said: "I don't want the other members to think that I am dising the band by selling it but there are bills to pay." And it's started a trend, as former Five star Abz Love is now reselling his BRIT, which he won in 2000 for Best Pop Act, after seeing fellow 90s star Paul had [almost] sold his for the impressive figure. He said recently: "I thought 'Jesus, if Paul from S Club 7 is getting £60,000 then I could get that too. "I want an island life and to get out of Hackney, where I'm living at the moment."

Lifestyle | Gossip

Sam Claflin's 'eye-opening' PTSD research with ex-soldiers



Sam Claflin spoke with four former soldiers who suffered with PTSD to research his role in 'Journey's End' and he admits it was an "eye-opening" experience. The 31-year-old actor stars in the movie adaptation of RC Sheriff's classic play as alcoholic serviceman Captain Stanhope and he had the honor of meeting with men who had served in the armed forces. Claflin is most famous for his performances in 'The Hunger Games' franchise and the Brit hopes his fans will go to see his latest movie and get a lesson on World War One. Speaking to Time Out London magazine, Claflin said: "I hope people want to learn what happened in World War One, and want to learn more about what servicemen experience now. We were fortunate enough to sit with four ex-soldiers who shared their experiences

with PTSD. It was the most eye-opening few hours I've ever had." The film - helmed by Saul Dibb - follows C-company arriving to take its turn in the front-line trenches in France led by Captain Stanhope. As the German forces move in, the officers - played by Paul Bettany, Stephen Graham and Tom Sturridge - as well as their cook (Toby Jones) distract themselves with talk of food and their past lives. However, Stanhope continues to soak his fear in whisky but when a young new officer Raleigh (Asa Butterfield) arrives fresh out of training, he is forced to serve under Stanhope - his former school house monitor and object of his sister's affections. Each of the men are trapped in the trenches with the tension rising and the imminent attack draws near. Claflin learned how to play an alcoholic at drama school, but after watching his

performance in 'Journey's End' back he was worried he had gone "too far" in trying to mimic somebody inebriated. He said: "Someone at drama school told me that the key to drunk acting is to not play drunk. There are moments watching the film back where I wince, 'Did I go too far there?' but that's the truth of my character, he doesn't know when to stop. "I had to keep a diary on set so I knew how drunk he was. On the 'Riot Club', all our characters were on drugs or drunk, so we were all finding the atmosphere together, but here it was just me. I almost had to take myself off at times."

Sir Ben Kingsley and Bellucci join spy thriller Spider in the Web

Sir Ben Kingsley and Monica Bellucci have joined a new spy thriller 'Spider in the Web'. Kingsley, 74, is set to play a highly-lauded secret agent, Adereth, in the new thriller by 'The Lemon Tree' filmmaker Eran Riklis. Deadline reported. Former Bond girl Bellucci will play Adereth's target Angela while Israeli actor Itay Tiran is a young Mossad - Israel's intelligence service - agent Daniel. Written by Gidon Maron and Emmanuel Nakache, the film follows Adereth who is haunted by his past and during a last-minute redemption opportunity, he discovers a lead to the sales of chemical weapons to a middle-eastern dictatorship. Not much else is known about the film at the moment but shooting is set to start in spring this year in Belgium and Holland. Kingsley is also set to start shooting 'Operation Finale' where he plays the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann. He will star opposite 'Star Wars: The Force Awakens' star Oscar Isaac in director Chris Weitz's upcoming movie based around the final days of one of the major architects of the Holocaust. Eichmann organized the transportation of Jews from across Europe to concentration camps where around six million people are estimated to have died. 'Operation Finale' will follow the capture of Eichmann, who fled to Austria and then Argentina when World War Two ended to escape capture and punishment for his actions. Eichmann was arrested in 1960 by Mossad



and following a trial he was found guilty of war crimes and hanged in 1962 when he was 56. Isaac will play Peter Malkin, the Mossad operative who led the group of Israeli spies in search of Eichmann. Isaac will join Brian Kavanaugh-Jones and Fred Berger from their company Automatik as producers as well as Inspire Entertainment's Jason Spire.

Hanks to play Mister Rogers in biopic

Tom Hanks is to star as Fred Rogers in a biopic about the beloved star of American children's television. TriStar Pictures has announced it has bought the rights to 'You Are My Friend', a film inspired by the real life of the creator of 'Mister Rogers' Neighborhood', the popular educational children's TV series of the 60s and 70s. Variety has reported Hanks is onboard to play the lead role. 'You Are My Friend' is based on the real-life friendship between Rogers and Tom Junod, a cynical journalist who was sent to interview the TV star only to find the encounter transformed his outlook on life. The title is taken from one of Mister Rogers' signature songs. The film will be directed by 'Diary of a Teenage Girl's Marielle Heller, and shooting is set to begin in September with further casting announcements expected. 'Mister Rogers' Neighborhood' began airing in 1968 and captured the hearts and imaginations of children across America. The show is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with Morgan Neville's documentary 'Won't You Be My Neighbor' recently premiering at the Sundance film festival. Fred Rogers died in 2003 aged 74. Hanks has just appeared opposite Meryl Streep in Steven Spielberg's journalistic drama 'The Post' - which chronicles the Washington Post newspaper's decision to defy threats from then-President Richard Nixon to publish the Pentagon Papers stories in 1971. The 61-year-old actor has spoken about how much he loves hanging out on movie sets. Speaking to Empire magazine, Tom said: "I love the hang more than ever. The atmosphere of making a movie, the creativity of a big ensemble like this. I had a bunch of great people. We had the newsroom. There was no reason to linger in the trailer on this because in the newsroom we had a great place to lie down, we had food. I got to pretend to smoke cigarettes so I always had something to do. And the scenes in Bradlee's house were the same thing. We all just sat around in the living room between shots."



Blunt to star in Jungle Cruise

Emily Blunt is reportedly being eyed for a role in Disney's 'Jungle Cruise'. The 34-year-old actress is believed to be in the running to take on the female lead in the proposed movie based around the popular Disneyland theme park attraction, where she will star alongside wrestler-turned-actor Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson. According to ScreenRant.com, Emily's character would be a scientist who teams up with Dwayne's riverboat captain on the hunt for a magical cure, in the movie which is set to be directed by Jaume Collet-Serra. Disney have been attempting to make 'Jungle Cruise' into a movie franchise - as they did with 'Pirates of the Caribbean' and 'Haunted Mansion' - for several years, and Dwayne's attachment to the latest proposed plans was first announced almost three years ago in August 2015. No official release date has been set to the project as of yet, but ScreenRant.com reports that filming is due to begin this spring, with more casting announcements to come in the next few months. 'Jungle Cruise' won't be the first Disney movie that Emily finds herself in a leading role for either, as she previously starred as The Baker's Wife alongside James Corden in 'Into The Woods', and audiences will see her bring beloved character Mary Poppins back to life in the upcoming movie 'Mary Poppins Returns' at the end of this year. The star is set for a busy year, as she's also been confirmed to be reprising her role as Special Forces warrior Rita Vrataski in the sequel to 2014's 'Edge of Tomorrow', although no shooting dates have yet been confirmed for the project. Director Doug Liman said: "Tom is excited about it, and Emily Blunt is excited about it. The big question is just when we'll do it. But it's not an if, it's a when."



Tom Hardy confirms Venom wrap?

Tom Hardy has seemingly confirmed that filming for 'Venom' has wrapped. The 40-year-old actor is set to star as Eddie Brock and his titular alter ego in the upcoming Sony Pictures movie based on the character from Marvel Comics' Spider-Man franchise, and in new photos shared on his Instagram over the weekend, it would appear that principle photography on the project has now come to an end. Tom shared various snaps on his account, including one of himself with various crew members, which was captioned: "Wrapped SAN Fran Jam DuN "Sound Team Venom MVP crew shout out to all the crew on Antidote legends all. Outstanding work team. Thankyou all. Am humbled and absolute Honour and a privilege "You killed it. Smashed that Thankyou for letting me run with you (sic)" Another snap taken with more crew members saw the hunk dub the whole production team as "legends". He wrote: "team Libertique legend McGuire Legend all this team fln legends "All Killers all magic hunters "chasers 2018 (sic)" A third and final shot of Tom in front of a mirror further confirmed that filming had wrapped, as it was captioned: "Wrapped life back Bye (sic)" Sony Pictures has yet to confirm whether or not the production has in fact wrapped. 'Venom' follows the story of the traditional 'Spider-Man' villain, who is the first character to become the alien symbiote in the comic books. Tom was cast as the lead role in May last year, followed by the addition of Michelle Williams, Riz Ahmed and Jenny Slater. 'Venom' marks the first time a Spider-Man villain will be getting their own standalone movie but the character did appear in Sam Raimi's 'Spider-Man 3' with the character being played by Topher Grace. The symbiote, created by David Michelinie and artists Todd McFarlane and Mick Zeck, was first introduced in the comic books back in 1988 and is still a fan favorite villain and has appeared in other Marvel Comics including Iron Man, Deadpool and the Hulk. 'Venom' has been slated for an October release date.



Hudson to play Aretha Franklin in biopic

Jennifer Hudson is to star as Aretha Franklin in a new biopic. The 'Respect' singer is said to have chosen the 'Dreamgirls' star for the role herself. Record executive Clive Davis made the announcement as he introduced Jennifer's performance at a pre-Grammys party, according to Deadline. The 36-year-old Oscar-winning actress and former 'American Idol' star then sang 'Think' and 'Respect' for the star-studded audience. A movie about Aretha's life and work has been in development at MGM since 2011. The 75-year-old Queen Of Soul's music spans six decades, with her first record deal - a Gospel album - being released in 1956. She has gone on to release a string of acclaimed hits, including '(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman', 'Spanish Harlem' and 'I Say A Little Prayer'. Last year Aretha revealed plans to retire and move to Detroit to open a nightclub. The 'Respect' hitmaker said: "In my retirement plan, I'd like to have a small club here in Detroit. "It would be Aretha's! "From time to time I would sing, and of course, I would have special artists come in to perform for the city that people in Detroit like - Detroit favorites." Aretha's final album, a collaboration with Stevie Wonder, due for release later this year, following a 57-year career. Last year the Queen of Soul was forced to pull out of several live shows due to unknown health issues. In 2010, she cancelled a series of concerts to undergo emergency abdominal surgery. Jennifer won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress in 2007 for her role in 'Dreamgirls', playing Effie White, a character inspired by Supremes member Florence Ballard. — Bang Showbiz



Zac Efron teases another look at Ted Bundy role

Zac Efron has teased another behind-the-scenes look as himself as Ted Bundy in the upcoming biopic. The 30-year-old actor was cast as the serial killer in the upcoming biopic 'Extremely Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile' alongside Lily Collins who is set to star as Bundy's long-term girlfriend Elizabeth Kloepfer. Writing on Instagram, Efron said: "Schemin' #behindthescenes (sic)" John Malkovich will play Judge Edward Cowart, who presided over the serial killer's trial in Florida and sentenced him to death in 1979. Angela Sarafyan and Grace Victoria Cox have also joined the movie. The film - directed by 'Paradise Lost: The Child of Murders at Robin Hood Hills' filmmaker Joe Berlinger - will tell the shocking true story of Bundy, who raped and murdered numerous young women during a killing spree in the 1970s that shocked America and the world. Bundy chose to represent himself at the trial, which was broadcast on national television, and appeared to develop something of a rapport with the judge. The script has been written by Michael Werwie and is thought to explore the crimes of the killer through the eyes of Bundy's girlfriend. Following years of living in denial that Bundy could be responsible for the heinous crimes that plagued the states of Washington, Utah, Florida, Colorado, Oregon, Idaho and California, Kloepfer eventually turned him into the police but she only discovered the true extent of his actions when he began talking about them as he got close to his legally-ordered execution. On the afternoon of his execution, Bundy - who was a self-confessed necrophile as well as a murderer, rapist and kidnapper - claimed that hardcore pornography was responsible for inspiring his violent crimes in an interview he granted to James Dobson, a psychologist and founder of the Christian evangelical organization Focus on the Family.

Lifestyle | Music & Movies

Fun-loving **Bruno Mars** divisive in his Grammy glory

After a tumultuous political year, the Grammys took a stand for the rights of women and immigrants—but the top awards went to a singer whose mind is on sex, booze and parties. The surprise sweep by Bruno Mars has renewed criticism in quarters that the music industry's premier prizes are out of touch with the wider world, but for fans of the retro R&B and funk star, he is an undisputed talent who provides exactly the type of joy the world needs right now. The Recording Academy, the group of 13,000 professionals who vote for the awards, had seemed set to change the narrative this year, with hip-hop for the first time dominating the nominations.

But rap mogul Jay-Z, who led with eight nominations, left New York's Madison Square Garden empty-handed. Kendrick Lamar, who has given musical voice to the Black Lives Matter movement, for the second time swept the rap awards but was shut out in the general categories. During the televised broadcast, President Donald Trump was skewered, stars defended immigrants facing deportation and Kesha's powerful performance punctuated the growing #MeToo movement to end sexual harassment.

The singer, who fought her label to stop working with a producer she says raped her,

delivered her autobiographical song "Praying" with palpable ferocity. But Kesha was also passed over for awards, with "Praying" edged out for Best Pop Solo Performance by Ed Sheeran's "Shape of You" about putting the moves on a woman at a bar.

'Least threatening artist'

Mars won Album and Record of the Year for "24K Magic," whose title track speaks of the sight of hot women "waking up the rocket" in his pants, and Song of the Year for "That's What I Like" about making love in high style. His victory triggered an avalanche of social media postings questioning whether Mars really represented 2017 in music. The satirical site The Onion summed up much of the criticism with the headline: "Bruno Mars Takes Home Coveted 'Least Threatening Artist' Award." Justin Vernon of experimental rockers Bon Iver, who won the Best New Artist Grammy in 2012, wrote on Twitter that while Mars had a "fun voice," the singer

"made a name in the INDUSTRY by making hits OUT of hits of yesteryear." Others faulted the Grammys for snubbing "Despacito," the most-streamed track in history. At a precarious time for Spanish-speaking immigrants as well as hurricane-hit Puerto Rico,



Bruno Mars receives his third Grammy for Album of the Year during the 60th Annual Grammy Awards show in New York. — AFP

"Despacito" would have been the first non-English song to take a top Grammy since the very first awards in 1959. The fate of "Despacito" entered the political arena, with Democratic Senator Bob Menendez tweeting that the song by Puerto Ricans Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee was "robbed."

Proud of roots

But Mars, whose real name is Peter

Hernandez, does not lend to a simple narrative. He is himself partially Puerto Rican and also has Jewish, Filipino and Spanish ancestry. The 32-year-old from Hawaii in an interview last year with Latin magazine voiced pride in his Puerto Rican heritage and suggested that he took a stage name to avoid being pigeon-holed as a Latin artist. He has rarely spoken overtly about politics, instead explaining that he sees music's power to excite and unite. Alisha Lola Jones, an

assistant professor of ethnomusicology at Indiana University, said Mars deserved praise for acknowledging his debt to R&B and funk greats rather than appropriating them.

At the Grammys, Mars credited towering African American songwriters Babyface, Jimmy Jam, Terry Lewis and Teddy Riley for inspiring him. Many scholars of African American culture "actually appreciate that as he draws from the tradition, he's telling us the history," Jones said. "African American tradition does not always have to be protest. Folks who are true to the tradition do as Bruno Mars suggests, which is get people up and moving." But she said that Mars's high-energy dance routines could be an easier sell at the Grammys than Lamar, who put on a symbolism-rich performance with camouflage-clad dancers dropping to the ground to simulated bullets. Mars "does a palatable music industry performance that folks can digest, where Kendrick Lamar in contrast has folks on edge," she said.

Another possibility for Mars's victory is that, with multiple hip-hop stars in competition, he benefited from a split in the vote. Recording Academy president Neil Portnow hinted at that theory, telling reporters: "When you look at five nominations (in a category), the math of how that works out and who votes for whom is a little unpredictable." Whatever the reason, the Grammys also face another issue. Initial figures from Nielsen said that 19.8 million people watched the show, a drop of more than one quarter from last year and the lowest in a decade. — AFP

OSN LAUNCHES NEW LIFESTYLE CHANNEL

Let OSN entice, inspire and motivate you with a veritable smorgasbord of lifestyle programming premiering on its newest channel, OSN Living HD. Whether you're a travel-junkie or food fiend, design obsessed or hooked on home-improvement, OSN Living HD offers a great range of shows that will help you get your lifestyle fix. Available in glorious HD, the channel is set to launch tomorrow. OSN Living HD will be live streamed on OSN Play, with catch-up shows available on OSN On Demand and OSN Play, so you can watch when you want, on-the-move and on any device. Be inspired by some of the world's best chefs, watch as British chef Jamie Oliver invites us into his Essex home to discover his best kitchen secrets on Jamie's Comfort Foods; while the more adventurous can dive into

Chuck's World, following the Canadian restaurateur as he travels across the globe to discover new cuisines.

Those looking for a sugar rush can get their teeth into Sugar Showdown, a fun and intense competition-series that celebrates all things sweet and delicious; while the hugely popular Bake with Anna Olsen is sure to hit the spot. Also coming soon is a special show hosted by actress Pelin Karahan (best known for her role as Mariam in Harem al Sultan). The show will be fully dubbed in Arabic with English subtitles, and will feature different chefs cooking various regional delights. There will also be plenty of Arabic flavour coming to the channel including more localized lifestyle shows so stay tuned!

For those that love beautiful homes, artful architecture and real-life home renovations the new channel offers shows such as Kevin McCloud's Grand Designs UK, following ambitious home-builders on their journeys from the very first blueprint to building the home of their dreams. OSN Living HD joins OSN's already stellar line-up of lifestyle entertainment, and the likes of Fashion TV, TLC, Nat Geo People and E! Entertainment ensuring unmissable entertainment for those who appreciate the finer things in life. Be the first to hear about OSN news by following @OSNnewsME on Twitter. To download press material including releases, images, videos and more, please visit the OSN Media Hub at www.osn.com/media.



Jamie's Comfort Foods on OSN Living HD.

Octopizzo: Rap king from Nairobi slum inspiring Kenyan kids

Like most youngsters in Nairobi's largest slum, Henry Ohanga grew up believing he would never amount to anything. Making it big, even leaving Kibera: these weren't things that happened to an orphan who once robbed people to buy food. Now 29, he is Octopizzo, one of East Africa's most recognised hip-hop stars, and is using his success to break down stigma around the slum and inspire kids in a world devoid of successful role models. Clad in a black Adidas tracksuit, with bling in his ears, a gold-coloured watch on his arm and a large dazzling pendant of Jesus around his neck, Ohanga gestures over the undulating hodge-podge of corrugated iron roofs where he grew up.

"It's everything, everything I rap about... I feel like if I wasn't born here I probably wouldn't be a rapper," he told AFP in Kibera, where most of his friends and family still live. Kibera stretches over an area of about 2.5 square kilometers (one square mile), a poor ethnic melting pot wedged



Kenyan hip hop artist Henry Ohanga (aka Octopizzo) speaks in a recording studio in Nairobi.

among richer areas of the Kenyan capital where its residents work, mostly as casual laborers. The slum's population is subject to heated debate, with the old NGO slogan of "the biggest slum in Africa" challenged in recent years by a government census and other independent studies which say between 170,000 and 250,000 people live there.

While for some a byword for misery and poverty, to Octopizzo, Kibera is the place he loves "more than anything else in the world" and it features in every one of his hits, with some of his slick, foreign-produced videos racking up more than a million views on Youtube. In Kibera it is not the rubbish packed into dirt or debris-choked streams that strike Ohanga. Rather he is inspired by the "uniquely beautiful vibe", children in brightly coloured uniforms making their way to school, music blaring from speakers around every corner, the whirr of sewing machines set-up in open air, the rhythm and beat of the hustle. "I don't blame the people. If you look at Kibera this is the definition of a failed system," he said.



Kenyan hip hop artist Henry Ohanga (aka Octopizzo), who hails from Kenya's largest slum Kibera in Nairobi, looks out over the slum from a garbage mound during a visit. — AFP photos

'Changing the narrative'

While he describes himself as more "socially conscious" than political, it has been hard to avoid tough topics in the slum, which is often the first place sparks fly when political tensions rise. During Kenya's 2007 post-election crisis, when he recalls having to walk everywhere with a machete for protection as the slum was torn apart by ethnic violence he blames on politicians, his anger spilled into his first recorded song: "Voices of Kibera". However his big commercial break only came in 2012, through an arts program at the British Council, which launched other successful artists such as afro-pop band Sauti Sol. Ohanga has moved on to rapping about things like food and fashion from Kibera, to change the negative image of the slum that has long led those who do make it out to hide their roots. "I feel since I started rapping we have changed the narrative, it is cool now to be from Kibera." But politics and Kibera remain deeply intertwined, and when post-election protests broke out last year, Ohanga came to the slum to speak to both protesters and police, and criticized police violence that left scores dead in Kenya, including residents of the slum. "I have a voice and I have to use it, whether people like it or not," he said.

'The face of possibility'

Ohanga had never planned to become a rapper-growing up he wanted to be a horticulturalist. "I like flowers," he said.

But the opportunity never came his way. His father died when he was 14, his mother a year later, and he ended up living with a friend and joining a gang, robbing shops and people. "I never regret being part of that. I never killed anybody," said Ohanga, who has an entire song dedicated to gangsters and drug dealers—the only ones to help him when he was down and out. Through his own foundation, and work with the UN refugee agency, he wants to help youths realize their potential through the arts. In 2016, artists from the Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps who were trained and mentored by Ohanga released an album called "Refugeenius". "I want to be the face of possibility. When we grew up we didn't know anyone who was successful. Kids are told by their teachers, their parents that they will never be anything, it is not our destiny," said Ohanga.

One young man he has inspired is 22-year-old Daniel Owino, who Ohanga described as a "bad kid" in trouble with everyone in the neighborhood. "I told him: 'Even me I used to be there, we've robbed guys it's not a big deal but we change'," said Ohanga. Owino, now known as Futwax, turned his life around, and is working as a motorbike taxi driver as he pursues his passion for music, with 13 songs recorded so far. He was also recently crowned Mr Kibera. "He is a role model to me. I used to go to his house here in the slum, Octopizzo was so hardworking. I felt that even I would make it one day." Owino told AFP. — AFP

Scottish author takes 'Ferrymania' from China to Hollywood

A small-town Scottish schoolteacher has become an international literary sensation with more than a million sales in China and a Hollywood movie deal—but remains relatively unknown in her homeland. Claire McFall has signed over the rights to her "Ferryman" series of teenage novels to Legendary Entertainment, the US production company behind blockbusters such as director Christopher Nolan's "Batman" saga and "Jurassic World". The 35-year-old mother has also been mobbed in China, where her debut novel "Ferryman", first published in 2013, has been a top 10 bestseller for more than two years. "My agent calls it 'Ferrymania', which is slightly cringe worthy," she told AFP.

"It's mind-boggling how successful it's been in China. They seem to be astonished that I would want to come to China to see them, and I was like, 'Are you kidding? You love my book!'" McFall was teaching when her agent called in November to say she had been offered a film deal, prompting her to leave the profession to focus on writing full time. "He didn't actually drop in the name Legendary for about five minutes," she said. "That is when I realized it was actually quite a big deal, so I did a bit of embarrassing dancing round the classroom. It still feels quite surreal. I can't imagine seeing it up on the screen."

Scottish landscape inspiration

Despite being a huge hit in China, "Ferryman" has sold much more modestly in Britain — 30,000 copies by June 2017. "Ferryman", and its sequel "Trespassers", published in September last year, follow a teenage girl on her journey to the afterlife following a train crash. She is accompanied by a guide inspired by the Greek mythological figure Charon, who carries souls across the rivers Styx and Acheron. The desolate wasteland between life and death was inspired by the sparsely populated landscape around Lesmahagow, a small town around 20 miles (35 kilometers) southeast of Glasgow, where McFall grew up and worked as a teacher.

"The idea came to me in a dream about waking up on an empty train," she said. "My commute to Lesmahagow was just fields, sheep and the occasional tractor. "It is an absolutely beautiful, gorgeous landscape but it's also very rugged, it's quite dangerous and the Scottish weather can change at any moment, so for me it was actually quite a threatening environment."

Chinese appeal

"Ferryman" has been translated into simplified Chinese for the China market, complex Chinese for Taiwan, Turkish and Vietnamese. McFall has also recently signed a publishing



Scottish author Claire McFall poses for AFP in Lesmahagow, south of Glasgow. — AFP

deal in France. She said she believed the book's theme of the afterlife found particular resonance with Chinese readers. "In China they have a belief called The Black and White Impermanence, two ghosts that take the spirits of the dead to the afterlife, and that has parallels with the themes in the books," she said. In China, the book was marketed for adults-unlike in Britain where it was targeted at teenagers—and a large part of the Chinese readership are women aged under 25, she added. "The people I spoke to at signings also had a real love for British culture, the books and the landscapes,

and they were really attracted to the male lead. He's handsome, he's charismatic, he's brave, what more do you want?" McFall said.

Rowing comparisons

The afterlife also has echoes of the Christian belief in purgatory, where souls undergo a grueling purification before they are admitted into heaven, but the ebullient author stresses that she is no theological scholar or historian. "I'm not an expert in Greek mythology—I literally know as much as I needed to write the book," she said. "I'm not a religious person and I'm

agnostic in that I'm not quite sure what I believe. My idea for the book was that the afterlife would be like coming home-somewhere that you feel safe, but that you should also have to earn it. "I'm not much of an outdoorsy person. I don't like climbing.

It's wet, it's cold, it's hard work, so being forced to hill march, first of all by the school and then by my husband, just gives me bad memories, so when I was thinking of something tough and gruelling to go through, that was in my head." Her second novel, "Bombmaker", set in a dystopian independent Scotland, raised a few eyebrows when it was released at the height of the independence referendum campaign in 2014. "A lot of people asked me if that is what I thought would happen if we got independence," she said.

"My answer was no: I was just taking it to an exaggerated degree. I just fancied the idea of writing something in a dystopian Britain that was still recognizable." The third and final novel in the "Ferryman" trilogy is due to be published in 2019. Her success has inevitably invited comparisons with J. K. Rowling, whose "Harry Potter" series began in a tiny Scottish flat and grew into an international phenomenon. McFall said: "I wouldn't even hope to pin myself to her but I think she is someone who is really inspiring to show what you can achieve." — AFP



Syrian-Kurdish female volunteers prepare food at a kitchen in Afrin for Kurdish forces on the front-line combating Turkish troops in Syria's border region of Afrin. — AFP photos

Cooking for the 'resistance': Kurds make meals for the front



At a makeshift kitchen in Syria's Afrin, two women with rolled-up sleeves vigorously stirred a large steaming pot of minced meat. The mothers, sisters, aunts and wives of the Kurdish fighters battling a Turkish offensive prepare daily meals for their loved ones on the front. "We help our children, our people. We help the resistance," said Amal Abdu, whose three nephews belong to a Kurdish force facing a Turkish-led operation against the Kurdish-majority enclave. Ankara on January 20 launched an unprecedented military operation in the region to oust the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), unleashing a relentless volley of shells from across its border with Syria into the enclave. The semi-autonomous Kurdish authorities have called for a "general mobilization". Many women are taking part in the war

"I feel that I am also defending, what we do is like a weapon, like fighting"

effort, including at the front with the YPG's Kurdish Women's Protection Units, the YPJ.

Others are working non-stop to provide meals to the fighters. "With our souls, with our children, we will defend Afrin, until the last drop of our blood," said Abdu, mother of a girl and three boys, elegant gold earrings protruding from her navy blue hijab. On the menu was kibbeh-balls of minced meat mixed with crushed wheat, a Middle Eastern specialty. As well as preparing hot food, Abdu placed large loaves of bread, tomatoes and cucumbers in white plastic bags, carefully closing them for delivery to the front. Meanwhile, a young woman vigorously washed large green peppers in a blue basin fed by a garden hose.

Equality even in combat

This kitchen, set up by Kongreya Star, a Kurdish feminist organization, is one of many

that have sprung up across the region. "We came, on behalf of the woman, to support our forces, the YPG and the YPJ," said Amina Hamo, a Kongreya Star member with hair pulled back into a knot. "There are lots of women coming from all over the canton of Afrin to help us. "The Turks must know that our forces are not alone, we are at their side, and whatever we are asked, we are ready," the 23-year-old said. Six women of all ages sat on the floor in front of her, peeling and slicing stacks of onions. In a corner of the room, a pile of egg cartons sat alongside plastic bags bursting with potatoes waiting to be peeled.

Sitting on a low stool, a woman with a grey scarf loosely knotted over her black hair and the sleeves of her green coat rolled up, washed a blue basin. In front of her ripe tomatoes

soaked in a big container. In Syria's conservative society, Kurds see themselves as something of an exception, encouraging gender equality even in combat. Kurdish forces, backed by the United States, were the backbone of the Syrian Democratic Forces that battled the Islamic State group.

Female commanders such as Rojda Fellat played key roles in last year's offensive to oust the jihadists from their northern Syrian stronghold of Raqa. Fatma Sliman's son and daughter are taking part in the fight against Turkish forces and allied Syrian rebels, while she oversees kitchen operations for Kongreya Star. "When we prepare food, we give (the fighters) strength against the enemy," she said. "I feel that I am also defending, what we do is like a weapon, like fighting." — AFP

Oris unveils a contemporary rebrand

This spring, Oris is proud to introduce a stylish rebrand that cements its place in contemporary watchmaking. The company's new logo, claim and creative have been designed to highlight Oris's spirit of innovation and independence, qualities that shine through its collection of industrially produced, beautifully crafted Swiss Made watches. Oris was founded in 1904 in Hölstein, a village nestled in the Waldenburg Valley in the north-west of Switzerland. Today, the company is based on the same site where it was founded over a century ago, and is proud to be not only Swiss, but also made in Hölstein. The new branding focuses on the fact that Oris remains one of the few independent companies in the Swiss watch industry, and

continues to forge its own path, fighting for what it believes in - high-functioning, high-quality watches that make sense in the real world. The new claim, 'Go your own way', is an expression of that freedom and independent thinking, as well as an encouragement to Oris's independently minded customers to follow their own path.

ORIS
HÖLSTEIN 1904

As well as being independent, Oris is also rare because its collection is 100 per cent mechanical. Combined with inventive, useful innovations, that means an Oris watch helps its wearer stand out from the crowd. The new Oris branding captures the spirit and confidence of the company, its heritage, its watches and its customers, and will propel the brand forward in a fast moving market.

Singapore durian-themed cafe smells winning combination



Durian fruit outside Mao Shan Wang cafe in the Chinatown district of Singapore.

A Singapore eatery centered around the pungent tropical fruit durian has caught a whiff of success as patrons flock to the cafe in droves for a bite of its exotic offerings. The spiky fruit long regarded as a delicacy in Southeast Asia has left a divisive trail—you either love it or hate it—and its odor means it is banned in most hotels and metro trains. Detractors often describe its intense smell as a mix of gym socks and onions, while enthusiasts liken the creamy texture and intense aroma to blue cheese.

While the bittersweet fruit is usually eaten on its own or as dessert, the Mao Shan Wang cafe in Singapore's Chinatown district has a special

menu with durian in all dishes, even savory ones.

Customers can opt for chicken nuggets with a durian dip, pizza topped with durian flesh, fries with a side of durian sauce, all washed down with coffee-durian infused, of course. "Durian is (usually) eaten by itself and as sweets or treats, but what our company wanted to do was put it with savory stuff like fries and nuggets," company spokesman Lance Lee told AFP. "We will be looking to expand the offerings as well, with maybe rice, pasta and other things." Mao Shan Wang, Chinese for Cat Mountain King, refers to a strain of durian from Kelantan state in neighboring Malaysia distinguished by its bittersweet taste and small

seeds. When AFP visited the cafe on a week-end afternoon, business was brisk.

While many opted for durian ice cream to beat the muggy tropical heat, the more adventurous customers, most of them tourists, were seen trying the strong-smelling fruit—while wearing gloves. Many were also waiting in line to buy durian-flavored confectionery, and even freshly cut up fruit conveniently sealed in vacuum packs for their plane journey. American tourist Michael Capps, who had been trying fresh durian straight from the husk, said he was a convert. "It's hard to explain the taste to it, but it actually has like a sweet taste to it and it's very good." — AFP



Various dishes including durian flavored ice cream, waffles and pizza at Mao Shan Wang cafe in the Chinatown district of Singapore.



A customer reaching for durian at Mao Shan Wang cafe in Singapore.

NIVEA Care Moisturizer

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With more than 100 years of skincare expertise, NIVEA introduces a new generation of skin care with NIVEA Care: an innovative hydro wax formula cream that aims to meet the ever changing and dynamic needs of today's modern women. NIVEA Care's breakthrough formula offers deep nour-

MENA at NIVEA said: "Our efforts are relentless to continue developing products that match the skin requirements of modern women, and today we celebrate our achievements with NIVEA Care cream. It is a real innovation in the skin care segment that will serve as the first simple skin care solution for intensively nourishing without any greasiness". When applied, the balanced amount of wax enwrapped in a light gel texture immediately melt into the skin while the fine caring wax crystals provide intensive and long-lasting nourishing care leaving the skin feeling and looking supple and smooth. NIVEA Care is also available with Pearl Extracts and Vitamin C that work to restore the skin's natural tone within 4 weeks for nourishing fairness without greasiness, and SPF 15 to protect the skin from sun damage.

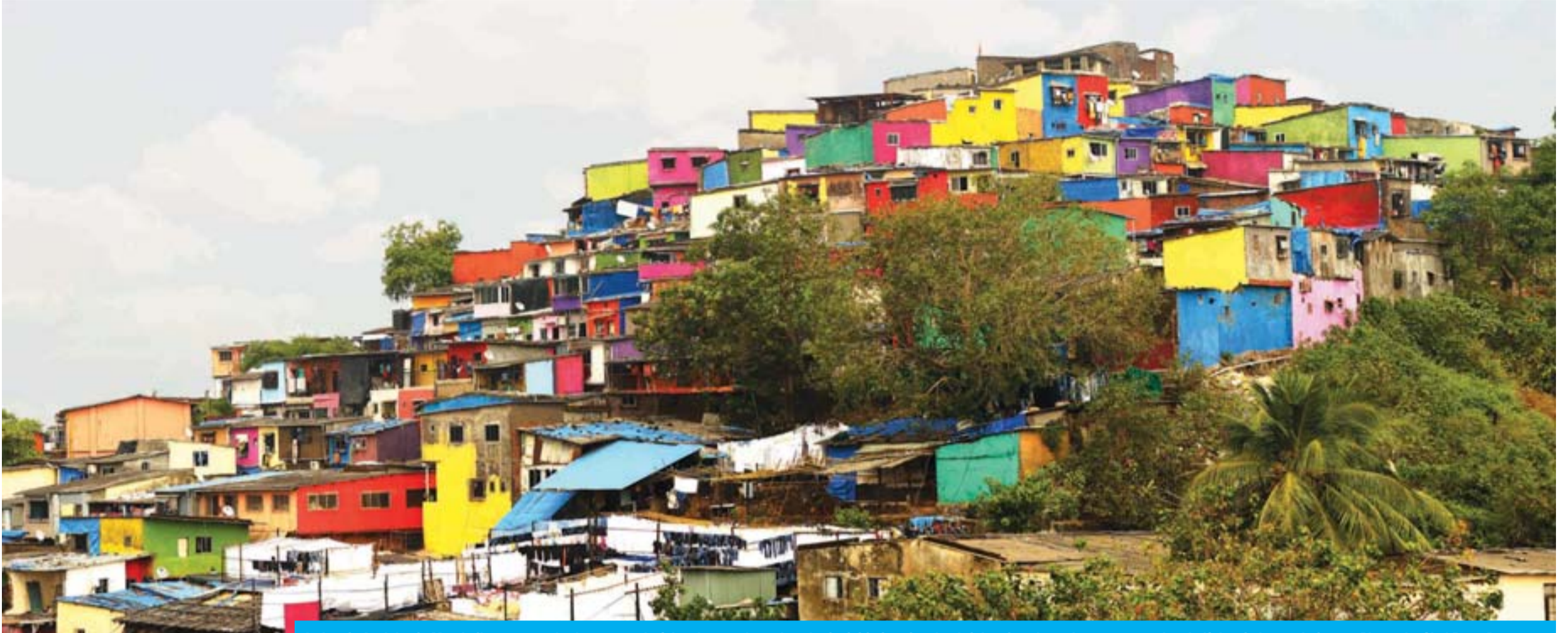
NIVEA Care is available in different sizes, 50ml, 100ml, and 200ml. Whether you want to fit it in your bag or use it before you leave home, make sure to pick your preferred product from any leading supermarket across GCC and the Middle East and don't forget to share your WOW moments through #HydroxaxFormula #WOW and @niveame.



ishment without leaving behind any greasiness, providing a completely new skin feeling. It is easily spread and quickly absorbed by the skin making it the perfect cream for face and body.
Hanne Rolling Bentsen, Marketing Director

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2018



A slum in Asalpa, in Mumbai's eastern suburbs, got a colorful makeover through a charity initiative aimed at brightening slums, home to more than half the city's population. — Photos by Chal Rang De

Colorful makeover puts Mumbai slum on tourist map

'Colors gives resident a sense of pride and dignity about their homes'



A colorful paint job has transformed one of Mumbai's drab hilltop slums into a tourist destination, even prompting comparisons with Italy's picturesque Amalfi Coast. During a recent journey on a Mumbai metro train, Dedeepya Reddy was struck by the grim appearance of a slum in Asalpa in the city's eastern suburbs as she stared out from her air-conditioned carriage. Reddy, a Harvard University-educated co-founder of a creative agency, was keen to brighten the lives of slum residents, while also changing the perception of slums being dirty and dangerous, and decided on a simple makeover.

Armed with dozens of cans of colorful paint, Reddy and a team of about 700 volunteers painted the walls and alleyways of the hilltop slum over two weekends last month. Residents, at first skeptical, also got involved and helped paint quirky murals, the 31-year-old said. "When you look at slums, you think they are shabby and dirty, and that also becomes a reflection of the people who

live there," Reddy told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "We used bright colors to change how slums and their residents are

viewed. It also gives residents a sense of pride and dignity about their homes."

Up to 37 million households, or about a

quarter of India's urban population, live in informal housing including slums because of an acute shortage of affordable housing, according to social consultancy FSG. In space-starved Mumbai, which has some of the priciest real estate in the world, the shortage is even more critical, with hundreds of migrants from rural areas cramming into the city every day to seek better prospects. Reddy's Chal Rang De (Let's Colour It) charity has seven other slums, similarly situated on hilltops, on its wishlist, she said. Locals and tourists have thronged Asalpa in recent weeks, posting pictures on Instagram which have drawn comparisons to Italy's Amalfi Coast.

Their interactions with residents are a welcome change, Reddy said. For resident Aparna Chaudhuri, who has lived in Asalpa for about a dozen years, the paint job was welcome. "Earlier, our house looked dull. Now it looks good," said Chaudhuri, who picked pink for her home. "Everyone is also keeping the neighborhood clean now." — Reuters



RARE PICASSO PAINTING IN HONG KONG AHEAD OF HISTORIC AUCTION



James Mackie (left), Sotheby's senior director and head of the Department Impressionist and Modern Art, introduces Pablo Picasso's 1937 oil painting "Femme au beret et la robe quadrillee (Marie-Therese Walter)" during a media preview at the Sotheby's showroom in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

A rare Picasso painting on auction for the first time made its debut in Hong Kong at the start of a global tour yesterday and is expected to fetch \$50 million, auction house Sotheby's said. The painting—"Femme au beret et la robe quadrillee (Marie-Therese Walter)"—is a colorful and angular depiction of Picasso's French lover with a dark silhouette looming behind her face. "Of all of the artist's styles and decades, this is the one that most epitomizes the legacy of Picasso as a portraitist of women," said Thomas Bompard of the Impressionist and Modern Art department at Sotheby's in London.

Walter began her relationship with Picasso as his mistress and muse when she was 17 and committed suicide in 1977, four years after his death. Picasso painted the portrait a few months after his masterpiece "Guernica" was conceived in 1937 in the depths of Spain's devastating civil war. The portrait is said to explore Picasso's evolving relationship with Walter as French artist Dora Maar emerged as his new lover, according to Sotheby's.

The features of a distraught Maar were the subject of another celebrated Picasso painting in the same year—"The Weeping Woman"—created in the wake of the Guernica series. The piece is making its first stop in Hong Kong and will be on public display in the city until Friday before travelling to Taipei, New York and London. It will go under the hammer on February 28 as part of Sotheby's Impressionist & Modern Art evening sale in London.

A series of 100 etchings by Picasso, which deal with his erotic obsessions and marital strife as well as political turmoil in the 1930s, sold for 1.9 million euros (\$2.2 million) in Paris to an unnamed American collector last November. Picasso held the world record for the most expensive piece of art sold at auction with his "The Women of Algiers (Version O)", which fetched \$179.4 million at Christie's in New York in 2015. But last November, Leonardo da Vinci's "Salvator Mundi" smashed that record by selling for \$450.3 million in New York. — AFP