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Syria army cuts off main towns in rebel enclave

Regime gains ground in intensified assault on Ghouta

Battered maid presses charges against sponsor

KUWAIT: The Philippines Embassy has initiated legal action against the sponsor of a Filipina maid, who said she has been facing abuse since she started working with the family a year ago. A security source said the victim's sponsor - who is a police officer - attempted to resolve the problem by going to the embassy to urge the victim to drop charges, but his request was rejected. The maid was able to escape while the officer and his family were at a camp and headed to the embassy.

The source said instructions were given to the domestic help department to investigate the incident, which revealed inhumane treatment by the family. The interior ministry is expected to take legal action and will refer the person who caused the injuries to court. The ministry added it also reviewed a video clip on social media about the attack on the Filipina. — Al-Anbaa



DOUMA, Syria: Syrian men check the damage following Syrian government shelling on this town in the rebel-held enclave of Eastern Ghouta yesterday. — AFP

DOUMA, Syria: Syrian regime forces yesterday cut off the largest town in Eastern Ghouta from the rest of the opposition enclave in a blow to beleaguered rebels defending their last bastion near Damascus. Government troops and allied militia have recaptured half of the besieged region in a blistering assault launched on Feb 18 that has left nearly 1,000 civilians dead and prompted global outcry. They have pursued a divide-and-conquer strategy, eating away at rebel-held towns and successfully isolating Ghouta's main town of Douma yesterday.

Regime fighters seized control of the road linking Douma with the town of Harasta further west, and also captured the town of Misraba, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "Regime forces have therefore divided Eastern Ghouta into three parts - Douma and its surroundings, Harasta in the west, and the rest of the towns further south," the Britain-based monitor said.

Shelling and air strikes slammed into Douma yesterday, trapping residents inside cellars transformed into makeshift bomb shelters, an AFP correspondent in the town said. Rescue workers and medics were struggling to navigate the town's rubble-littered roads to bring wounded residents back to field clinics. Douma's opposition-run local council issued an urgent "distress call" yesterday to international organizations. "The bomb shelters and basements are full, and people are sleeping in the streets and in public gardens," the statement said. "For three days, it has been hard to bury the dead because of the intense bombing on the cemetery," it added.

Continued on Page 11

News in brief

BAE inks Saudi deal for 48 jets

LONDON: Britain has signed a multi-billion-pound preliminary order from Saudi Arabia for 48 Eurofighter Typhoon fighter jets, military equipment maker BAE Systems said on Friday. The lucrative deal was unveiled on the third and final day of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to Britain. BAE Systems added in a statement that the order would help Riyadh modernize its armed forces under the kingdom's 'Vision 2030' economic plan. The news comes after Qatar inked a deal late last year to buy 24 Typhoon jets for some \$8 billion. Friday's blockbuster announcement follows long-running discussions with Saudi Arabia, which already has a total of 72 Eurofighter Typhoon planes in its fleet. The news also comes just two weeks after BAE posted sliding annual net profits - but forecast improving defense budgets across its major markets. — AFP

Qatar reforms labor complaints

DOHA: Qatar yesterday said it will introduce a labor panel to assess grievances by migrant workers later this month, a major reform agreed by the 2022 World Cup host with the United Nations. A government spokesman confirmed that the panel would begin its work on March 18. Labor disputes have, until now, been dealt with inside the court system, but the panel will be overseen by the labor ministry. The panel was part of a package of wholesale reforms agreed by Qatar last November as it sought to head off an enquiry being launched by the UN's International Labor Organization (ILO). Doha says the proposed reforms will dismantle the "kafala" sponsorship system and place workers on a contractual system instead. — AFP

Turkey-Arab ties 'not in best state'

DUBAI: A senior United Arab Emirates official said yesterday Turkey's policy towards neighboring Arab states was not reasonable and advised it to respect their sovereignty. Relations between the two countries have been strained by Ankara's support for Qatar after Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt imposed sanctions on Doha last year. "It is no secret that Arab-Turkish relations aren't in their best state," UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash tweeted. "In order to return to balance, Ankara has to respect Arab sovereignty and deal with its neighbors with wisdom and rationality," he said. — Reuters



MOSCOW: Russia's President Vladimir Putin speaks with US NBC news network anchor Megyn Kelly at the Kremlin on March 1. — AFP

Putin: Maybe Jews meddled in US election

WASHINGTON: Russian President Vladimir Putin suggested in a US television interview that Ukrainians, Tatars or Jews could have meddled in the 2016 US presidential election - but not the Kremlin. "Why have you decided the Russian authorities, myself included, gave anybody permission to do this?" Putin asked in the often-combative interview with NBC television.

The leading US intelligence agencies concluded last year that Putin personally directed an intelligence effort to influence

the 2016 US presidential election to undermine Democrat Hillary Clinton's campaign and boost Republican Donald Trump. Last month US Special Counsel Robert Mueller, who is conducting a widespread probe into Russia's role in the campaign, indicted 13 Russian nationals and three Russian companies for allegedly backing Trump, maligning Clinton, and engaging in other election interference.

"So what if they're Russians?" Putin said of the allegations, according to transcripts of the NBC interview released late Friday. "There are 146 million Russians. So what?... I don't care, I couldn't care less... They do not represent the interests of the Russian state. Maybe," Putin said, "they are not even Russians but Ukrainians, Tatars or Jews, but with Russian citizenship, which should also be

Continued on Page 11

Madagascar's hidden battle against leprosy

FIANARANTSOA, Madagascar: Joseph Ralaiharo has lived cut off from society in a remote village in central Madagascar for more than half a century. His battle with leprosy, an infection that causes unsightly sores, nerve damage as well as eye and respiratory problems, has left him shunned by society. "I can't go home anymore because nobody wants to see me," said 65-year-old Ralaiharo. "We

can no longer go to wells to collect water, or into the fields. Even our own land has been sold by our relatives."

Despite winning the battle against the infection, having been cured, Ralaiharo continues to live in the colony, such is the lifelong stigma. He came to Ilena in Madagascar with his mother when he was just 13 years old after becoming infected with leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease. He has not left the village since. Ilena lies at the top of a small hill, surrounded by trees, miles from the nearest town, Fianarantsoa, and was built in 1892 as a dedicated community for those with leprosy.

Continued on Page 11



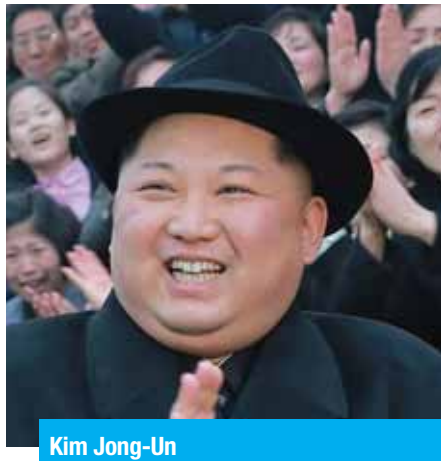
MORAMANGA, Madagascar: Leprosy diagnosed Vololonirina Ranorovelo poses for a photograph at a leprosy treatment center on Feb 28, 2018. — AFP

Kim an enigma for Washington

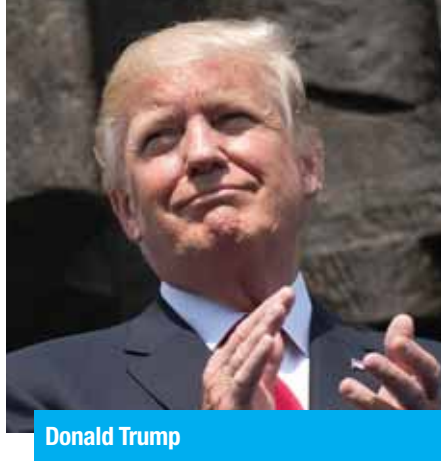
WASHINGTON: Kim Jong Un has been accused of executing generals, murdering relatives, presiding over global criminal operations and has threatened the United States with nuclear Armageddon. But a string of surprising diplomatic openings - including Thursday's stunning offer to meet US President Donald Trump - has only deepened the enigma surrounding the North Korean leader. At a lengthy dinner he hosted for South Korean officials on Monday, the man once dismissed by the West as irrational and paranoid presented himself as gracious and confident.

With Trump now planning to meet Kim possibly in May, US officials are working overtime to get a better understanding of what makes him tick. The prince-like Kim, 34, and his isolated country, remain one of the most impenetrable targets for US intelligence. The most prominent American to have met him is former NBA star Dennis Rodman, who has visited the basketball-mad Kim several times.

Kim's determined push to gain a long range nuclear ballistic missile capability to threaten not only Japan but the United States, and his threats to use it, made US intelligence officials concerned last year that he had a precarious understanding of the world outside Pyongyang. Kim didn't



Kim Jong-Un



Donald Trump

know the kind of danger he was putting his country in, they said. In December, CIA Director Mike Pompeo openly

Continued on Page 11

Kuwait works hard to continue reducing newborns' mortality rate

Third Jahra Hospital International Conference on Pediatrics underway



KUWAIT: Officials pose for a group photo during the opening of the Third Jahra Hospital International Conference on Pediatrics yesterday. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



One of the exhibitors' stands at the conference.

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait will continue its achievements in reducing the mortality rate of newborns and children under five and reach the global level of vaccination coverage against preventable childhood diseases, a senior Health Ministry official said.

Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha made that statement yesterday during the opening ceremony of the Third Jahra Hospital International Conference on Pediatrics, which he attended on behalf of Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah. "The hospital pays great attention to training and continued education in pediatrics, as well as the development of pediatrics and premature departments in hospitals and childcare clinics in primary centers," he said.

The scientific program of the conference allows for exchanging expertise and research to develop and update healthcare protocols and policies in various specialties, in line with the ministry and government's work program, Redha added. The senior official also expressed confidence that the conference will make many recommendations in the field of pediatrics that match the high level and experience of the elite guests and participants in the conference.

The conference includes 30 lectures on pediatric

medicine and new scientific developments, besides several workshops. Head of the pediatrics department at Jahra Hospital and conference's president Dr Fahd Al-Enezi said. He added that the conference will discuss the most notable diseases children suffer from, such as diabetes, obesity, asthma and others, adding that one of the speakers pointed to the high risk of any surgery related to removing part of a child's stomach to reduce weight.

Complicated conditions

Abdulrazaq Al-Kawari from Qatar's Sidra Medicine executive management team said: "Our participation in Kuwait comes at the invitation of our Kuwaiti colleagues, as Sidra is not only a hospital, but also a research center that deals with complicated conditions in women and children." He added that Sidra is the only specialized hospital for children in the region.

"We seek development in relations with our Kuwaiti

colleagues as we have specialties that meet and exceed the demands of the region, and we would like to expand and receive patients from Kuwait and the region," he told Kuwait Times. He said patients from the region normally seek treatment in Europe, which is something that consumes time and effort, but "the presence of our center cuts down on such requirements and patients remain in close proximity with their families".

Kawari said there are 150 researchers in the center who work on various issues including genome sequencing.

Dr Abdullah Al-Kaabi from the board of governors said Sidra Medicine is participating for the third time and is keen to participate with the largest possible number of doctors, "as it is our commitment to continue contacts with our colleagues, as this will contribute to the enhancement of the health level and standards in our countries". Dr Ibrahim Al-Janahi from the Clinical Management



180,000 persons vaccinated this fiscal year



Health Ministry's Undersecretary Dr Mustafa Redha

Group said emphasis is on training in pediatric medicine, as the center is an educational one with three aspects - quality services, research and medical education and training.

Meanwhile, head of the epidemics unit at the health ministry Musab Al-Saleh said 180,000 persons were vaccinated this fiscal year and expected the number to reach 185,000, compared to 50,000 two years ago and 120,000 last year.

Kuwait holds 9th walkathon



KUWAIT: Kuwait Walkathon's 9th edition 'friends of hearts' was organized yesterday under sponsorship and attendance of Minister of Health Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah. The race, organized by the Chest Diseases Hospital, was held at Al-Shuwaikh seaside. Participants represented the blood bank, Kuwait Cardiac Society and Kuwait University. Among the walkers, including veteran athletes and old citizens, was Sheikha Awrad Al-Sabah. The minister inaugurated an exhibition held on its sidelines.—KUNA



Local

Banks to increase nationals' employment to 80%; create 17,000 jobs for Kuwaitis

Health Ministry terminates expats over 65 years of age

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Local banks plan to increase the percentage of nationals amongst their staff to 80 percent by the end of this year instead of the current rates of 65-69 percent, well-informed sources said. Such a step will be taken upon direct instructions from the Central Bank of Kuwait to enhance the private sector's role in employing more national labor and providing more job opportunities for citizens, the sources added.

This move, which is based on article 9 of law number 19/2000 pertaining national labor support, is expected to provide 17,000 job opportunities for citizens in the private sector through mandating non-abiding bodies and companies to pay extra fees per expat employee hired beyond the number allowed, the sources noted. Meanwhile, the government plans to use its powers to prioritize citizens' employment in the private sector to end the problem of waiting for the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to provide enough jobs for citizens, Al-Anbaa daily reported yesterday. The report quotes a high-ranking parliamentary source who said that the Cabinet had issued immediate instructions to various ministries requesting detailed reports about jobs occupied by expats who could be replaced by citizens.

The source also noted that the instructions included mandating the private sector to employ citizens in administrative, human resources, public relations and reception jobs within the next five years. The source noted that such steps will be taken upon the Manpower and Government

Restructuring Program's (MGRP) instructions to increase the number of citizens working for the private sector.

Over 65 years

Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah ordered laying off expats older than 65, with the exception of doctors. Sheikh Basel set special conditions to renew the contracts of expats older than 65, including having excellent performance reports in the last two years, specialize in a field needed by the Ministry of Health (MoH), a request by the expat's direct senior and to have the request approved by the hospital manager, health zone director and the related council. In another medical concern, Kuwait Municipality's assistant director for structural plan affairs Mohammed Al-Zo'by said the social security authority's Kuwait Medical City project was technically approved.

Contracted employees

Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said the total number of non-Kuwaiti employees working on contracts with various government bodies is 78,317, and those working on monthly payments number 6,697, including 2,086 bedoons and 1,639 children of Kuwaiti women. Saleh said the CSC has decided to extend the service of non-Kuwaitis holding university degrees and older than the legal age for one non-renewable year only.

Bedeons' issue

Sudanese Interior Minister Lt Gen Hamed Al-Merghany denied plans to grant stateless people in



Allotments

Kuwait Sudanese citizenships and passports. In a statement he made to Al-Sudani newspaper yesterday, Merghany said Kuwaiti reports about this were mere allegations. "No respectable country will ever agree to act as a dumping ground for other countries' problems," he said, denying that the topic has ever been discussed with any diplomats or politicians. Notably, parliamentary sources had argued that the solutions proposed to resolve the bedoons' issue include granting those registered in the 1965 census the citizenships of Sudan and Somalia and giving them the choice of either living in Kuwait with legal residency visas or leaving to their new countries.

MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei stressed the 'allotments issue' involves billions of dinars and that violators ought to be hanged for it. Tabtabaei added that, as usual, the ideas proposed within the government's economic and financial sustainability program sound good, but remarked that implementing such ideas has always been a problem, in view of the waste and manipulation involving political profiteering, looting of public funds and mismanagement of various state facilities, in addition to overpriced government projects such as the hospitals currently under construction.



Zain takes part in beach cleanup

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its participation in a beach cleanup initiative that came under the patronage and attendance of Hawalli Governor Sheikh Ahmad Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah. The campaign witnessed the participation of students from the schools of Hawalli Governorate, the Environmental Police, the Environmental Public Authority, and the Municipality of Kuwait with the aim of preserving Kuwait's marine life.

This initiative falls under Zain's Corporate Sustainability umbrella, and came as a continuation of its strategy towards the protection of the local marine environment, which is an integral part of the cherished Kuwaiti identity. The initiative received positive feedback by the participation of school students who all contributed as a team to clean the beach from harmful waste and left the beach in a clean and beautiful state.

Zain is keen on shouldering initiatives that contribute to preserving the Kuwaiti marine life, which is considered one of the main pillars of the valued Kuwaiti heritage. The company will spare no efforts to con-

tribute to spreading positive awareness of a better environmental culture in the society, as well as involving its own employees in such campaigns and initiatives that give back to the community.

As part of its environmental contributions, Zain dedicated a brand new boat to the Kuwait Dive Team last year 2017, which is utilized to carry out marine preservation projects throughout the upcoming years. The boat is fully equipped with the latest state of the art equipment, and is being used for removing wrecked ships and boats from the bottom of the ocean, removing abandoned fishing nets, installing and maintaining environment-friendly anchors, monitoring coral reefs, cleaning shores, islands, and beaches, documenting marine life, and more.

Zain's support to the Kuwait Dive Team throughout the past 14 years comes under its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy towards the environmental sector. The company's sustainable goals closely focus on preserving the Kuwaiti environment, especially Kuwait's marine life, and seeks to raise awareness of protecting it within the community.

During October 2016, the Kuwait Dive Team honored Zain in the occasion of completing 800 marine preservation missions using a boat the company dedicated to the team back in 2003. The newly dedicated boat from Zain is much more advanced, and features state of the art equipment that will ensure easy and fast marine preservation missions throughout the upcoming years.

human rights to officials from ministries of justice, health, education and foreign affairs. The program comes in the framework of strong cooperation relations between Kuwait and the OHCHR, including a draft protocol of technical cooperation and programs of consultation, as well as raising capabilities of human rights workers in Kuwait. He affirmed Kuwait's appreciation and support for the noble role played by the office and its keenness to enhance cooperation. — KUNA

OHCHR hosts program for govt bodies

GENEVA: The UN's Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) will organize a guiding program for a number of Kuwaiti governmental bodies, said Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN here Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim yesterday. Ghunaim said in a statement that the program will start mid-March at the Commissioner's headquarter in Geneva, aiming to explain the mechanism of



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Local

UN Women for Peace Association honors Sheikha Rima with peace award

Kuwait participates in 62nd session of UN Commission on Status of Women

NEW YORK/PARIS: The United Nations Women for Peace Association (UNWFPA) honored late Thursday the spouse of Kuwait's Ambassador to the US and Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah with the prestigious Peace Award for her extraordinary philanthropic work for over a decade.

During the UNWFPA's annual awards luncheon, held at the UN headquarters, which also marks the International Women's Day, the US Permanent Representative to the UN Nikki Haley presented Sheikha Rima with the Peace Award describing her as a "a doer, a mover, a shaker and a global game changer," saying "today it is our turn to celebrate you and honor all that you have done."

Haley highlighted in her remarks all the great philanthropic work Sheikha Rima has done, saying "she doesn't sit around and talk about people in need... she goes out, she gets to work and she helps people," having raised over \$18 million over the last 12 years to support different causes. She shed light on the Syrian refugee women on the ground in Jordan and Lebanon and how their lives were changed because of the medical and education resources that Sheikha Rima has helped provide.

"I think about women in the Middle East who have graduate study scholarships and microcredit loans to empower their lives, give them the financial independence and provide for their children because of Rima," she noted. She added "I think about the girls in Afghanistan who have schools and the children in Basra, Iraq who have a hospital all because Rima did something about it," as well as the help she provided the American wounded service members and their families here in the US. "So much good in this world can be traced backed to Rima and the ripple effect of generosity she had for causes including fights against malaria, epilepsy, breast cancer and so much more," she remarked.

Haley stressed that Sheikha Rima "has long used the power of her voice for good as a philanthropist but has done so much more with her voice than talk." Meanwhile, Sheikha Rima said in a speech that for the past three years through her work with the UN Refugee Agency, she has come to "deeply appreciate the critical and live-saving work that it does for refugees and other forcibly displaced persons." On this occasion, Sheikh Rima noted that "Kuwait has been one of the biggest humanitarian donors trying to alleviate the enormous suffering witnessed in our region. A fact that led then UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon to bestow His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the title of Humanitarian Leader in 2014." Meanwhile, she said that UNHCR works hard to "ease the particular struggle faced by women and girls. We do this, first of all, by ensuring that women are individually registered and provided with relevant documentation to ensure their individual security, freedom of movement and ability to register and trace children. "We also work to ensure girls' access to education and manage programs that help women to improve their leadership skills and access livelihood opportunities," she remarked.



Kuwaiti Engineer Bashayer Al-Awwad poses with her award granted by the UNESCO and WFEU.

Engineering contributions

In other news, UNESCO and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEU) granted Friday Kuwaiti Engineer Bashayer Al-Awwad an award for her contributions to use of engineering in women empowerment.

Awwad was recognized for her contributions in engineering and philanthropy during her presidency of WFEU's international women committee for four years. Speaking to KUNA following the award ceremony, Awwad

said she was very proud to have been recognized because it affirmed role of Kuwaiti women at international level. She said support of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to women in Kuwait enabled them to develop their abilities and became creative in many domains.

The award was granted during a ceremony organized by UNESCO and WFEU, during which participants she light on under-representation of women in engineering, what engineering can do to improve lives of rural women and girls in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and successful case-studies of women in engineering. Awwad said participants also highlighted WFEU member countries which sought to empower women over the past 10 years, including France, Kuwait, the US and Nigeria. Awwad, also Deputy President of Kuwait Society of Engineers, thanked WFEU for strengthening role of engineers as well as humanitarian action around the world. WFEU, she noted, was also boosting professional, cultural and civilizational exchange among member countries. She dedicated the award to His highness the Amir, describing him as "our role model that we follow."

Women empowerment

Kuwaiti achievements in women empowerment, boosting their role in sustainable development, as well as



NEW YORK: The spouse of Kuwait's Ambassador to the US and Goodwill Ambassador for UNHCR Sheikha Rima Al-Sabah (center right) poses for a group photo after receiving her award during the UNWFPA's annual awards luncheon. —KUNA

attaining rights will all be displayed before the UN, Chairperson of the Cabinet-affiliated Women Affairs Committee Sheikha Latifa Al-Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah said yesterday.

Sheikha Latifa, in a statement upon her departure to New York, heading the Kuwaiti delegation taking part in the 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, said Kuwait's speech during the Committee will include government steps taken to upgrade status of Kuwaiti women on social and cultural levels, as well as in terms of healthcare and legislations.

Sheikha Latifa further said the delegation would urge the international community to activate Kuwait's initiative tabled at the last session to adopt a more serious stance toward anti-women violence in many turbulent countries, namely Palestine and Syria, where they are continuously under geopolitical distresses.

The Kuwaiti delegation would also seek to implement the Kuwaiti initiative, presented during the 58th session, stipulating dispatch of women delegations to troubled regions in the world and help women there in face of violence, killing and displacement, she pointed out.

Special attention

The Regional United Nations Development Program dedicates special attention to empowering women in the State of Kuwait, said the program regional director, Murad Wehbeh, also the Assistant United Nations Secretary General, said in an interview yesterday that the program policy aims at maintaining cooperation on sustainable basis and in a manner that would not contradict with the Kuwaiti culture. The program works with communities to empower women and limit violence against the females so they may contribute to the civil society development. It also seeks to encourage Arab women in emerging communities to venture into the world of businesses. About his

first visit to Kuwait, Wehbeh said it was fruitful and successful by all standards, noting that he had held talks with the Minister of State for Social Affairs, Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Hind Al-Sabeeh, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, Dr Khaled Al-Mehdi, who all expressed great readiness for cooperation with the UN agency.

The visit aimed at expressing gratitude to the State of Kuwait for its limitless support for the UN and its agencies, its stances toward international peace and relief missions, backing sustainable development in troubled nations namely Syria, Yemen and Iraq.

Wehbeh praised Kuwait's support for needy nations namely countries that host refugees and face difficulties in securing their needs. He indicated at the UNDP activities in Lebanon and Jordan affirming that the Kuwaiti aid eased off the burden borne by these nations in accommodating the refugees.

At the local level, the UNDP cooperation with the State of Kuwait has resulted in great success in empowering the women, he said, also indicating at coordination at other levels namely the environment. Moreover, he praised the Kuwaiti leaders for adopting the policy "of open doors and minds" in cooperating with the UN agencies. The UNDP aspires, this year, to more support from Kuwait and other donating nations to countries neighboring Syria, which host millions of refugees "so we may contribute to improving economic, social and political conditions in them."

The UNDP renovates and builds schools, hospitals and other vital facilities in countries hosting refugees, he said, noting that a third of the people in Lebanon are refugees, which is a major challenge in the face of the Lebanese Government and the concerned UN agencies. —KUNA

Photo of the Day



A white-eared bulbul perches on a twig in a garden in Kuwait City yesterday. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KIB celebrates National and Liberation Days

KUWAIT: As part of its commitment to commemorating national occasions and events, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently participated in the National and Liberation Days celebration organized by the Joint Banking Company (JBC), alongside Ahli Bank of Kuwait (AUB) and Industrial Bank of Kuwait (IBK). The celebration took place in the outside court area of the JBC complex, and was attended by a large number of employees from across all three banks, as well as their families and friends.

The festivities featured a number of fun and entertaining activities, including the hoisting of the Kuwaiti flag and the distribution of traditional Kuwaiti sweets. Furthermore, the three head offices were all decked out in the colors of the Kuwaiti flag,

amidst an atmosphere of national pride and festive celebrations.

On this occasion, Sara Al-Baba, Senior Internal Communications Officer at KIB's Human Resources Department, said: "We are thrilled to once again be a part of this festivity in partnership with our neighboring banks. There is no greater time in Kuwait than our national celebrations, and I pray that our beloved Kuwait continues to thrive and prosper in peace and serenity."

Baba further lauded the efforts of the teams from across all three banks for their dedicated efforts in organizing this event. She also noted that this year's event proved to be a tremendous hit, and one of the biggest and most successful national celebrations organized by the JBC in years.

It serves to note that KIB has always sought to fulfill its national social responsibility towards its local community across all fronts and in all areas. This National Day celebration came in line with the Bank's ongoing commitment to participating in various national events, and sharing the joy of national festivities with the people of Kuwait.



Local

Residency violators since Jan 2016 can settle dues or leave without fine

Thousands of liquor bottles busted at Shuwaikh Port

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: Privately-employed foreign residents, who have exceeded their permitted stay in Kuwait beyond January 3, 2016 after going absent from work, will be allowed to settle their penalties or leave the country without paying a fine, the Interior Ministry said on Friday.

The decision was taken according to a "humanitarian initiative," which covers a further number of non-Kuwaiti violators of the residency law, read a ministry statement. It will grant more "humanitarian incentives," namely the opportunity for violators who wish to remain in the country to "amend their status" after the ministry sought the necessary approvals from its General Directorate of Investigation and the Public Authority of Manpower.

Applications are welcome for those wishing to settle their outstanding dues as of next week until April 22, providing employers drop their legal charges against the absent employee. Those who fall under this category should initially visit the General Authority of Manpower's Department of Labor Relations in order to

terminate the absence charges brought against them.

Afterwards, they should head to the Ministry of Interior's Residency Affairs Department in their relevant governorate to settle their fines. The ministry went to urge those found in violation to grasp the opportunity granted by the initiative, and to do so with haste.

Smuggling foiled

Shuwaikh Port customs officers found 3,000 liquor bottles in a container, then an hour later, discovered another container with 5,208 bottles. Shuwaikh customs officers had suspicions over a container that arrived from a Gulf country with its load recorded as lumber. When the lumber was unloaded, a scan revealed the liquor stash. Then the second container was searched and the liquor was found.

Bad food destroyed

The Imported Food Department at the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition destroyed 366 kg of spoiled meat unfit for human consumption. It also destroyed 3,466 boxes of spoiled fruit. Director of the department Ali Al-Khanfour said that the meat was destroyed because laboratory tests showed it contained pork, in addition to 20 kg of mustard oil and 10 kg of chocolate. He said 3,266 boxes of oranges and 200 boxes of strawberries were also destroyed.

Vehicle found

A vehicle that belongs to a person reported missing was found near the Subbiya coastline, Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) said. An intensive search by marine fire, backup, coastguard and interior minister choppers resulted in finding the vehicle in waters near the coast, but the driver was not found, KFSD

public relations department said in a statement. Search will continue until the missing man is found, the department added.

Deliveryman robbed

Jahra detectives are looking for five suspects who robbed a restaurant deliveryman and burned his motorcycle in Jahra. A security source said the incident took place in Na'em after the Egyptian man delivered a meal. He was held up by five unidentified persons, then two of them took the motorcycle aside and set it ablaze.

Farm fire

Firemen battled a blaze at a Wafra farm, which the owner had turned into a foam and wood warehouse. Wafra, Nuwaiseeb, backup and Fahaheel fire centers responded to a call and found the fire had destroyed a quantity of foam, fertilizer and boxes used for packing produce. No injuries were reported.

Drug possession

Police arrested four persons of different nationalities with possession of illicit substances in Hawally. Police suspected a car with four persons in it who looked abnormal, so they were asked to leave the car, which was searched and drugs were found. All four were sent to the Drugs Control General Department.

Doctor assaulted

An army officer insulted and beat a dentist at a medical center. The officer started a verbal exchange with the doctor, who left the clinic and claimed he was attacked by the officer. The officer said the doctor caused him severe pain while examining him and made him nervous.



KUWAIT: Bad food is loaded off of a truck to be destroyed after being confiscated during recent crackdowns in Kuwait.

Domestic violence



By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

The family affairs committee is currently studying new amendments to the domestic violence law and will draft a final report before submitting it to the National Assembly for approval. The domestic violence law has penalties that vary according to the type of violence, whether verbal, physical or financial, with jail sentences that range from one to three years in prison and fines.

No one can deny that domestic violence has become a global social and psychological phenomenon that affects most societies today, whether advanced or developing societies like ours. But such abuse is more pronounced in extremist societies because of the wrong social upbringing that considers women merely as sex objects or second class citizens. I believe that the status of women in a society and their activities in society are measures of the health of the process of socialization.

Economic factors, for example, have a role in the spread of domestic violence, such as poverty and unemployment, but despite the multiple reasons, the negative impact falls on the female victim. This may result in losing child custody, drug dependence and depression, which may lead to suicide. Violence has become an issue that does not only affect a small number of people or families, but has a significant impact outside the walls of the house. This is why it is important to find the right solutions.

Sociologists say family violence is abuse within the family environment and any form of violence - whether verbal, physical, psychological, social or economic. It seems clear to all that domestic violence appears to be increasing and the family affairs committee is trying to reach what they think is a solution to end this condition. It is good that they are paying attention to this issue, although a recent proposal on the subject seemed strange to the local community and even controversial!

One of the new suggestions to the law is to punish any husband who takes a girlfriend (a mistress), with imprisonment for a period of not less than one month and not exceeding one year, or fines! This suggestion was a hit on social media and everyone had an opinion on it - some were supporters while others were not.

This proposal raised a lot of irony for several reasons. I think this clause will destroy the family by putting the husband in prison. This will lead directly to divorce and displacement of children, so how can the law achieve the goal of family protection? Many also ask about a woman who takes a boyfriend. Sending the father to prison will not restore the family's cohesion or provide safety to the wife or children, because this issue is a moral one. I don't think the law will stop a man from taking a mistress, but will lead to more divorces and fake accusations against husbands.

I believe we need an integrated national strategic plan by concerned authorities to study this serious phenomenon and its negative impact with the participation of academic institutions and administrative and legal bodies.

I see that there are many solutions better than jailing a man for having a girlfriend. Family-oriented dialogue programs can play an important role in raising awareness about the seriousness of domestic violence and the need to enhance the role of women in society and respect the rights and priorities of children and everyone else, including the man.

Another solution is to encourage the opening of counseling centers for families in most areas and health centers, as in developed countries, with a hotline in more than one foreign language or at least English alongside Arabic. The final report of the family affairs committee has not been issued yet, so time will tell which direction it will take.

Kuwait eyes better UN, Arab League cooperation

NEW YORK: The State of Kuwait said Friday it was looking forward to foster institutionalized cooperation between UN Security Council and Arab League, similar to that between UNSC on one side, and EU and African Union on the other. This came by Bader Al-Munayyeh, Kuwait's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, at a UNSC session where president of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was briefing the council.

Kuwait, through its UNSC membership, was keen on seeing Arab League Secretary General briefed the Security Council on a yearly basis just like the OSCE President was doing, he said. Italian Foreign Minister Angelino Alfano, whose country holds rotating OSCE presidency, was briefing the UNSC.

OSCE annual briefing, said Al-Munayyeh, reaffirmed the European organization's commitment to boost cooperation with the UN with the objective of maintaining international peace and security.

The UN is in need of support of regional organizations particularly amidst growing armed conflicts around the world, he said.

"It has become obvious that regional and sub-regional organizations are the best bodies, with less financial cost and manpower, to explain the real nature of conflicts," said Munayyeh. These organizations, he added, were also more capable of analyzing information related to regional peace and security.

The Kuwaiti diplomat said Arab countries, particularly those overlooking the Mediterranean, and OSCE shared com-



Bader Al-Munayyeh

mon concerns and challenges like illegal immigration, human trafficking, transnational organized crime, terrorism, extremism and racism. They also share hatred against foreigners and religions, said Munayyeh, who reaffirmed that violent extremism and terrorism posed threat to all values and cultures, not excluding any faith, gender, race or nationality.

"Violent extremism compel us to boost our cooperation and double our efforts to confront these challenges, as Kuwait is keen on promoting effectiveness of international cooperation in the face of violent extremism and terrorism, by compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions," he said.

The State of Kuwait, he went on, was keen on increasing cooperation with UN counter-terrorism strategy including UN Secretary General's plan to prevent violent extremism. OSCE is the largest regional security organization geographically because it encompasses European, Asian and Mediterranean countries, "which is adding a great value towards ... international peace and stability," he said.

Munayyeh explained pre-conflict criteria included early-warning, preventive diplomacy and scaling down intensity of conflict to contain it, with the objective of reaching a peace resolution and restoring peace. He hoped OSCE succeed in solving the conflicts in Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia, the Balkan and Eastern Ukraine, and that all parties complied with relevant UN resolutions and solve their differences through dialogue. — KUNA



Special security sector martyrs' tournament concludes

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The 8th special security sector martyrs' tournament concluded

Thursday under the patronage of Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Mahmoud Al-Dousary, while Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Special Security Affairs Maj Gen Shukri Al-Najjar, Director General of Facilities Security Brig Yousuf Al-Duraie and Specialized Training Center Director at Special Security Col Dakhil Al-Dakhil attended. The tournament, which was held at the special security forces camp, saw 18 sports competitions. The final football match was between the security and control team against the antiriot team, which won 4-1.

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Modi, Macron sign security deal with an eye on China

Page 8

‘Most hated man’ gets 7 years in jail for defrauding investors

Page 9



SEOUL: People watch a television news report showing pictures of US President Donald Trump (L) and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at a railway station. — A FP

US, China agree to pressure N Korea

Pence says US efforts to isolate Kim have been vindicated

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump enlisted Friday the help of China's Xi Jinping to keep sanctions pressure on North Korea, amid fears that an audacious diplomatic gambit by the US president could lead to backsliding. In an evening tweet, Trump praised a possible future agreement with the communist North as "very good" for the international community as a whole, after the US leader stunned the world by accepting an invitation to meet Kim Jong Un before the end of May.

"The deal with North Korea is very much in the making and will be, if completed, a very good one for the World. Time and place to be determined," Trump wrote. During a telephone conversation, Trump and the ever-more-powerful Chinese president committed to "maintain pressure and sanctions until North Korea takes tangible steps toward complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization," according to the White House.

As aides scrambled to catch up with Trump's decision-taken before consulting key confidantes-the White House sent mixed messages about conditions. "They've made promises to denuclearize, they've made promises to stop nuclear and missile testing," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said. "We're not going to have this meeting take place until we see concrete actions that match the words and the rhetoric of North Korea," she told reporters. Officials behind the scenes said this did not constitute a change of heart.

A day after the bombshell announcement that the US and North Korean leaders would meet, Vice President Mike Pence said the White House would keep "maximum pressure" on Pyongyang and claimed US efforts to isolate Kim had been vindicated. There has been limited reaction from Kim's regime, but South Korean President Moon Jae-in said news of the summit-announced by his national security advisor on a visit to Washington-was "like a miracle."

For his part, Xi urged the two leaders to begin talks as "soon as possible" and praised Trump's "positive aspiration." China has long been North Korea's most important ally but has been on board with the sanctions agreed at the United Nations. A cryptic report by South Korean news agency Yonhap said the South's envoys also delivered a "special message" to Trump from Kim during their US trip, but did not elaborate on what was said.

'Huge gamble'
The UN Security Council has imposed tough economic sanctions aimed at choking off revenue to

Pyongyang's military programs after Kim's regime carried out a sixth nuclear test and advanced missile launches. China and Russia argue that sanctions alone will not push North Korea to change course and have repeatedly called for stepping up diplomatic efforts to achieve a solution. The summit announcement triggered

a rise in global stock markets while world leaders voiced hope the meeting would deflate tensions that had been building dramatically in recent months.

Some observers questioned the US president's wisdom in granting Kim a long-standing wish for a meeting after only agreeing to temporarily halt nuclear tests. Bill Richardson, a former US ambassador to the United Nations who has negotiated with and traveled to the North, told AFP it was a bold move that is "worth taking" but also a "huge gamble". "This is not 'The Apprentice' or a reality TV event... It's a negotiation with an unpredictable leader who has at least 20 nuclear weapons and who threatens the United States," he said.

Republican Senator Cory Gardner said America's approach to North Korea still needs not just a drop

"but a whole bucket of reality." "There is no greater diplomatic tool or lever than the President of the United States," he added. "If this doesn't succeed how much is left of that diplomatic runway is a very good question."

'Little Rocket Man'
Trump has previously ridiculed Kim as "Little Rocket Man," imposing wide-ranging bilateral sanctions on the Pyongyang regime and also leading a drive for international sanctions through the UN. Pyongyang has hit back by calling Trump a "dotard". Pence stressed that the White House has made "zero concessions" to get Kim to the table and emphasized that the sanctions would remain in place.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel was among the world leaders to hail the announcement as a "glimmer of hope," saying North Korea's nuclear drive "has been a source of great concern for all of us." The International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN's nuclear watchdog, voiced hope the summit would produce "concrete progress" and a resumption of long-suspended nuclear inspections. Pyongyang's long race to develop a nuclear weapon capable of reaching the United States has proved a problem for successive US administrations. But the alarm bells have been ringing even louder since July, when Pyongyang conducted two intercontinental ballistic missile tests, declaring the entire United States now within range. — AFP

UK to hold 2nd meeting on Russian spy attack

LONDON: Britain was to hold a second meeting of its national emergencies committee yesterday in response to a nerve agent attack on a Russian former spy. Home Secretary Amber Rudd was to chair the meeting of the committee, known as COBRA, at 1500 GMT to receive updates on the police case, the government said.

The March 4 attack on Russian double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in Salisbury, southwest England, is being treated as attempted murder. Around 180 troops, including chemical warfare experts, have been deployed in the city after investigators requested specialist assistance. Prime Minister Theresa May has said Britain will react with the appropriate response if a state was found to be behind the murder attempt.

Authorities are racing to determine the source of the nerve agent used against Skripal, who came to Britain in 2010 as part of a spy swap. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has been pointing the finger at Moscow. Security Minister Ben Wallace told BBC radio on Saturday that the government stood ready to respond "with the

full force of the UK's resources". He added that the attack was "a very serious incident with horrendous outcomes". "Someone has come onto our soil... has recklessly, brazenly, committed what looks like a very nasty crime, with a nerve agent prohibited, by most international laws... and has potentially put lots of people at risk," he said.

May was "expected to announce sanctions" against Russia "as soon as Monday", according to the Daily Telegraph newspaper. The Times newspaper said British officials were talking to their US and European counterparts about a co-ordinated retaliation, which could include "diplomatic, economic and military measures" if Moscow was behind the attack.

'Time for cool heads'
Skripal was a former colonel in Russia's military intelligence who was jailed in his country for betraying agents to Britain's MI6 secret service. He was pardoned in 2010 before being flown to Britain. In Salisbury, police widened their searches to places frequented by Skripal, 66, and his 33-year-old daughter. The former double agent and his daughter were found slumped on a bench in the city. They are in a critical but stable condition in Salisbury District Hospital. Nick Bailey, one of the first officers on the scene, is also being treated but is sitting up and talking after initially being admitted to intensive care. — AFP

Putin won't change constitution to cling to power

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is expected to be reelected for a fourth term in next weekend's ballot, has said he has no plans to change the constitution to stay in the Kremlin beyond 2024. Asked by US television network NBC whether he would follow in the footsteps of China's Xi Jinping, who is eyeing a limitless tenure, Putin insisted he had no such intentions. "I never changed the constitution, I did not do it to suit myself and I have no such plans to do so today," he said in an interview whose transcript was released by the Kremlin yesterday. Critics accuse Putin, who was first elected president in 2000 and is running for a fourth term in March 18 polls, of harboring ambitions to stay in power indefinitely. The constitution bars him from serving more than two presidential terms in a row.

In 2008, Putin became prime minister but maintained his grip on power, with his protégé Dmitry Medvedev serving as president until 2012 when Putin returned to the Kremlin in the face of huge opposition protests. He rejected suggestions that he could not quit power because it would put him in danger, saying he heard "a lot of ravings on this subject". "Why do you think after me power in Russia will be necessarily taken over by people who are ready to destroy everything that I have done over the past years?" Putin said. He said he had been thinking about his potential successor since 2000. "It never hurts to think but at the end of the day it will be the Russian people who will decide that," he added.

'Creation not destruction'
Putin will run against a motley crew of seven challengers,

with his top critic Alexei Navalny barred from contesting the poll because of a criminal conviction his supporters call punishment for challenging the strongman. Putin declined to say whether he could pardon Navalny.

"Any man can be pardoned if he deserves this," said Putin. The Russian president, who never called Navalny by his name in public, referred to the 41-year-old opposition politician as "certain political forces". "What do I like in principle? It's that they expose problems and this is good, indeed it's right," Putin said. "But it's not enough for the country's positive development. Because concentrating one's attention on problems, it's not only insufficient, it's even dangerous because it could lead to certain destruction and we need creation."

'Not my friend'
Putin also denied having close ties to businessman and restaurateur Yevgeny Prigozhin, one of 13 Russians indicted by US prosecutors for allegedly running a secret campaign to tilt the 2016 US vote in favour of Donald Trump. "He is not my friend," Putin said. "I know such a man but I don't count him among my friends." Dubbed "Putin's chef", Prigozhin is thought to be running a Saint Petersburg-based "troll farm" accused by Washington of interfering in the 2016 election. He has also been linked to a hugely secretive private military company, dubbed Wagner, whose mercenaries fight in Syria and were involved in a direct clash with US troops there in early February. "We don't support him in any way, we are not standing in his way or helping him. That's his personal initiative," Putin said. Putin denied that Russia has meddled in the US election, but said he would "not care" even if individual Russians had been involved. "I could not care less because they do not represent the state," he said, adding that Russia would not extradite them. Instead, Putin said, the US should sign a cybersecurity pact with Russia if it wanted Moscow to look into the matter in earnest. — AFP

International

Love thy neighbor: Sanctuary churches in US protect migrants

Millions facing expulsion under tough new immigration guidelines

GREENSBORO: Business owner Oscar Canales has spent the past three months confined to a church basement in the US city of Greensboro, knowing he could face deportation to El Salvador the moment he steps outside. Expulsion would mean tearing him apart from his wife and three American children, not to mention shuttering the thriving roofing company he founded which today employs six US citizens.

Canales first came to authorities' attention six years ago, when he was arrested for lacking papers following a minor accident at a traffic light. But with no criminal record, past administrations chose to overlook the fact he crossed the border illegally in 2005 and issued him work permits that were renewed every year. Now, he and millions of others are facing expulsion under tough new immigration guidelines instituted by President Donald Trump.

In response, some progressive Christian groups have boosted their efforts to protect vulnerable migrants by exploiting the protected "sanctuary" status of their places of worship while providing shelter and legal aid to would-be deportees. Canales, who received his deportation order last December, has been living in the United Church of Christ since January 17. He cannot imagine leaving America. "All my family is here, my wife, my kids," he says, adding he is fearful of being forced to face the violent gangs of a homeland he left long ago. "They can take one kid and ask for money. If you don't give it today, they can do anything. They can kill people."

“All my family is here, my wife, my kids”

Growing movement

Canales is among more than 40 people currently known to be taking sanctuary in US churches, a figure that has skyrocketed since Trump's election in 2016, when there were just five, according to the Reverend Noel Andersen of the Church World Service which tracks the movement. "Under the Obama era there was a lot more prosecutorial discretion" especially for those who have committed low-level offenses such as traffic violations, or had community or family ties like Canales, he said. "Essentially Trump comes in and gets rid of the priority guidelines, and anyone who is undocumented is a priority"-a group that is estimated to number some 11 million.

In Trump's first year, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement arrested 109,000 criminals and 46,000 people without criminal records-a 171 percent increase in the number of non-criminal arrests over 2016. The goals of the sanctuary movement are to prevent the break-up of families, win legal reprieve for as many people as they can, and effect narrative change. Their philosophy is at odds with the anti-immigration tide that has swept the country's political right, particularly in many southern states which are also a bastion of right-leaning Evangelicals.

Rooted in faith

But for the Reverend Julie Peeples, the Greensboro pastor, her duty to provide shelter to those in need couldn't be more clear. "Jesus teaches us to love our



GREENSBORO: Business owner Oscar Canales works at the Congregational United Church of Christ where he is living in sanctuary. (Inset) The United Church of Christ, a sanctuary church.— AFP photos

neighbor as ourselves, that was the most important command of all," said the soft spoken preacher who has led her congregation since 1991. "We are convinced that Jesus wouldn't call anyone an alien, for starters, that we are all human beings, that we are all children of God-I believe personally that God crosses all our borders and has no interest in or respect for the borders that we create."

Canales is the second person to benefit from sanctuary at the Greensboro congregation-the first was single moth-

er Minerva Cisneros Garcia, 42, who came from Mexico's Guerrero state in 2000 with her first son, who became blind as a baby as a result of cancer.

Like Canales, Minerva was a law abiding citizen who was caught up in an immigrant raid in 2009, after which she was granted stays at her annual hearings. But last spring she received a letter in her mailbox informing her that her time in the US was up, and she would have to leave her three sons behind.—AFP

Migrant weary northerners put faith in Italy's League

VARESE: In the picturesque northern city of Varese, nestled in Italy's rich Lombardy region, voters turned en masse to the anti-immigration League party in the general election, convinced that only nationalists would put their interests first. "With the League in power, I won't have to deal with people coming here from abroad who are willing to earn less than me to do the same job," said Davide Quadri, a 25-year-old law student as he celebrated the League's win at the party's local headquarters.

Though the country was plunged into uncertainty on election night, with no party or coalition obtaining the votes to form a government, the far-right League surged in the polls. Led by ambitious leader Matteo Salvini, it became the biggest party within its coalition-which scooped 37 percent of the vote-emboldening its supporters. "All that (immigration) has to stop, so that young people study, work and have a future here," added Quadri.

Surrounded by party posters emblazoned with the League emblem-a warrior brandishing a sword towards the sky-newly elected MP Matteo Bianchi said young people had been "let down by leftists politics over the last few years". "It explains Italy's brain drain: this misfortune that pushes young qualified people out of Lombardy to start life abroad."

Born in the 1980s as a northern secessionist movement, the League has rebranded itself as a nationalist party, rallying against traditional politics and raging about hundreds of thousands of illegal migrants in Italy. Banners plastered on the walls of the Varese offices denounce "the dominance of Rome," the collusion between "politics and mafia", or simply declare "No, to the immigrant vote."

'Feeling of insecurity'

In the Varese province, where unemployment stands at 8.2 percent-higher than the average for the region but 3.5 percent lower than the national rate-the League made historic gains, with some candidates obtaining one in every two votes. "This result is linked to the wave of immi-



MILAN: In this picture taken on January 10, 2014 the leader of far-right League party (Lega), Matteo Salvini (R) sits next to Toni Iwobi, chief immigration spokesman of the League during the presentation of a demonstration against immigration.—AFP

gration over these last years and to the feeling of insecurity that it has brought with it," says 34-year old legal advisor Chiara Gorone. "Even in little villages, we are confronted with migrants squatting in buildings, its true that we'd like to go back to a calmer situation," she added.

The party has had to fend off accusations of racism, especially after Lombardy's new governor and League representative, Attilio Fontana, called on Italy to defend the "white race" during the election campaign. But supporters say Italy has done more than its fair share to house the migrants who have arrived on the country's shores by boat from Libya. They also point to Tony Iwobi, 62, who became the first black senator ever to be elected in Italy after Sunday's vote and hails from the anti-migrant movement.

Promises to send immigrants back home was not the only string in the League's bow. In Lombardy, it drew

support from residents who believe the party will grant them greater regional autonomy. In a consultative referendum last October in Lombardy and Veneto, an overwhelming majority of voters from these two regions, which together account for 30 percent of the country's GDP, voted 'yes'. In the strongly industrial region, the League also won over small and medium business owners, with the promise of tax cuts.

"Thirty years ago, Italian entrepreneurs were envied worldwide for their creativity, then the decline started and today the best want to go abroad," said 67-year-old Eugenio Malnati, who manages a small business. "Taxes, bureaucracy, all that has smothered us," he added. And don't even mention the concept of basic universal income, promised to poor Italians by the Five star Movement. For those in wealthy Lombardy, the incentive is seen as a reward for laziness.—AFP

3 women, suspect dead in California hostage standoff

LOS ANGELES: A gunman and three women thought to be his hostages were found dead Friday at a California veterans home after an hours-long standoff with police. The assailant struck at 10:20 am at the Veterans Home of California-Yountville in the Napa Valley, the largest veterans' home in the United States with around 1,000 former servicemen and women.

"Shortly before 6:00 pm this evening law enforcement personnel made entry into the room where we felt the hostages were being held by the suspect and unfortunately made the discovery of three deceased females and one deceased male suspect," Captain Chris Childs of the California Highway Patrol told a news conference. "This is a tragic piece of news, one we were really hoping we wouldn't have to come before the public to give."

The Napa County Sheriff's Office had earlier issued an advisory on social media telling people to avoid the area following reports of gunfire, as the California Highway Patrol dispatched officers, air support and a SWAT team to the site. Childs said a sheriff's deputy who was first on the scene exchanged fire with the sus-

pect, adding that "we credit him with saving the lives of others in the area by eliminating the ability for the suspect to go out and find further victims."

The three victims were described by local media as employees of The Pathway Home, an on-site counseling service for veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It was not immediately clear whether they had been targeted or were chosen at random. The San Francisco Chronicle said the gunman-apparently a 36-year-old war veteran wearing "a stash of bullets" around his neck and waist-had been on the PTSD treatment program, adding that his weapon was a rifle.

Gunman was calm

It quoted state senator Bill Dodd identifying the program's executive director, Christine Loeber, as being one of the dead, although the victims' names have not been officially released. Police did not say how they died, although local media, citing unnamed sources, reported that the assailant shot the three women before turning the gun on himself.

Dodd, whose district includes the center, said the gunman had been asked to leave several days earlier, according to the Chronicle. "It's a residential program so guys live in the building, staff work in the building," Larry Kamer, whose wife Devereaux Smith was working at the center, told the local ABC7 News channel. Smith, a development director for The



YOUNTVILLE: Chris Childs, assistant chief of the California Highway Patrol, speaks at a press conference after an active shooter turned hostage situation at the Veterans Home of California.—AFP

Pathway Home, was one of four women released by the gunman, said Kamer.

"There was a going away party for a couple of the staff who were leaving today. They were having cake and toasting and all that and then he apparently just walked in with this rifle," Kamer said the gunman was calm and talked to everyone present. The discovery came after several fruitless hours of trying to contact the man by the sheriff's department, City of Napa Police and the FBI.

California Department of Veterans Affairs secretary Vito Imbasciani said in a statement the agency was "devastated" by the deaths. "Our hearts are heavy for the entire Yountville Veterans Home community and the families and friends who are grieving for those who died," he added. "Nothing matters more than caring for our veterans and employees during this difficult time. We appreciate the tremendous law enforcement response today and unfailing support of this community." —AFP

Protesters held after scaling Iran embassy in London

LONDON: Four protesters were arrested after gaining access to the balcony of the Iranian embassy in London on Friday, police said, prompting a complaint from Tehran about security at the building. "We were called at 4.20 pm (1620 GMT) to reports of four protesters on the balcony of the Iranian embassy in Princes Gate, Knightsbridge," a spokeswoman for London's Metropolitan Police said.

At around 6.40 pm (1840 GMT) all four men were arrested on suspicion of criminal damage and being unlawfully on diplomatic premises. "All four people have been taken to a central London police station. They remain there in custody," the spokeswoman said. It is understood the protesters did not manage to get inside the building. Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi said Tehran had lodged a strong protest with the British government over the incident, according to the IRNA state news agency. The report said supporters of an "extreme cult" living in Britain were responsible. Iran's deputy foreign minister Abbas Araghchi made his protest known to the British ambassador in Tehran, demanding "absolute protection of our diplomats in London and immediate dealing of the police with the attackers", IRNA said.—AFP

Trump to make first trip to Latin America

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump will make his Latin America debut next month, visiting Peru and Colombia after harsh rhetoric towards Hispanic migrants and neighbors to the south. Trump will travel to Peru to attend the Summit of the Americas in Lima on April 13-14, a gathering of leaders from across the Western Hemisphere. From there he will visit Colombia, White House officials said.

The announcement ends speculation that Trump may skip the summit entirely. He is the first president since Bill Clinton not to have visited Latin America during his first year in office. As recently as this week-after Trump spoke to the summit host, Peru's President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski-the White House refused to say whether Trump would attend. When Trump travels south he is likely to encounter protests and perhaps a hesitant welcome from fellow heads of state and government. Trump has long courted controversy in the region. His election campaign was marked by accusations of Mexicans sending "rapists" over the border.

He suggested Colombia was not doing enough to stop cocaine coming to the United States, has promised to build a wall on the US border with Mexico and threatened to tear up a trade deal with Mexico and Canada. Argentina and Brazil also face the prospect of punitive tariffs on steel exports after Trump's controversial announcement on Thursday.

On Friday, Trump spoke by phone with old business acquaintance, Argentine President Mauricio Macri-whose office said he had urged the US president to exempt his country from the tariffs. The first Summit of the Americas took place in Miami in 1994, and it has long been a forum for the United States to influence events across the region. Then president Barack Obama used the last summit, in 2015 in Panama, to meet Cuban leader Raul Castro for the first time and to try to isolate the Venezuelan regime.

Venezuela will likely be a hot topic again this time round. President Nicolas Maduro vowed last month to attend the meeting despite the hosts saying he is unwelcome. "Are they are afraid of me? They don't want to see me in Lima? They're going to see me, come rain, thunder or lightning!" a defiant Maduro told a press conference in Caracas. The leftist Venezuelan president vowed to get to the summit venue in Lima "by air, land or sea!" Maduro is seeking a second six-year term despite the oil-rich country's widespread economic woes. He has barred leading opponents from standing.—AFP

Modi, Macron sign security deal with an eye on China

‘A strong part of our security and the world’s stability is at stake’

NEW DELHI: French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday said defense ties with India had reached a new high after the two nations signed a key security accord for the Indian Ocean to counter China’s growing influence in the region. “Defense cooperation between the two countries now has a new significance,” Macron said as a gushing Prime Minister Narendra Modi stood by his side.

Under the deal, India and France will open their naval bases to warships from each other, a move seen as an attempt to undermine China’s territorial ambitions. “A strong part of our security and the world’s stability is at stake in the Indian Ocean,” Macron said. “The Indian Ocean, like the Pacific Ocean, cannot become a place of hegemony,” he added in an apparent reference to China. Modi, who welcomed Macron with a bear hug on his arrival Friday, said the accord was crucial as the Indian Ocean region would play a “very significant role” in the days to come.

The comments from the leaders followed a slew of agreements signed by the two countries in the spheres of defense, space and clean energy. “From the ground to the sky, there is no subject on which India and France are not working together,” said Modi. A technical agreement was also signed on the French-assisted nuclear power project at Jaitapur in western Maharashtra state. Sources in the French presidency told AFP they were optimistic of a final agreement being signed before the end of the year.

The \$9.3-billion framework agreement for six nuclear reactors was signed during a visit to India in 2010 by then president Nicolas Sarkozy. But the proj-

ect has since run into stiff opposition from environmentalists concerned about seismic activity in the area and fears about the safety of nuclear power in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan.

‘Good chemistry’

Earlier in the day, Macron talked about his personal rapport with Modi which was established after their meeting in Paris last year. “I think we have very good chemistry, our two great democracies have a historic relationship,” the French president said. Modi broke protocol to receive Macron at the airport, exchanging warm hugs and robust handshakes. “You welcomed me in Paris last year with an open heart and a lot of warmth. I am happy that I have got an opportunity to welcome you in India,” Modi said at the start of his speech yesterday.

Today, Macron will attend a solar power summit designed to showcase India and France’s commitment to fighting climate change, which both leaders have made a priority. Travelling with his wife Brigitte, France’s 40-year-old president will also visit the monument to love, the Taj Mahal, a few hours drive from the Indian capital on Sunday. On Monday, he heads to the chaotic Hindu holy city of Varanasi on the banks of the river Ganges, which the Indian premier has promised to modernize and clean up.

Macron’s visit comes after a somewhat misstep-laden visit to India by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Both he and Macron are often compared internationally because of their broadly similar political views, as well as youth and good looks.

But Trudeau’s visit hit a series of embarrassing



NEW DELHI: This handout photograph released by the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday shows Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) and France’s President Emmanuel Macron walking together before a meeting at Hyderabad House. —AFP

bumps and he received a fairly cool reception during his stay in India. Trudeau was pilloried on social media and in the Canadian press for donning traditional Indian clothing at every opportunity. And there were

red faces when it emerged a former Sikh militant was invited to a dinner with him in Mumbai. Macron has so far opted for more sober and predictable dress—a dark suit. —AFP



\$9.3-billion framework agreement

Down but not out: Lord’s Resistance Army haunts C Africa

OBO, Central African Republic: Every morning, Joseph gets on his motorbike to tend to his field of manioc, in the thick bush surrounding the Obo, in southeastern Central African Republic. This day, though, is not ordinary. Joseph is tense with worry. There are rumors that the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), one of Africa’s most notorious and longest-surviving militias, is in the area.

“They recently attacked hunters just 15 kilometers away,” said Joseph, who, despite his fears, picks up his tools to work on his precious crop. The LRA dates back to January 1987, when a voodoo priestess, Alice Auma Lakwena, set up a rebel group to fight Uganda’s new leader, Yoweri Museveni. The following year, Joseph Kony, presented as Lakwena’s cousin, took over the group, which was renamed the LRA and whose mission was to rule by the Bible’s Ten Commandments.

The fanatical Christian movement became a byword across central Africa for mutilations, massacres, kidnappings and the forced enrolment of children. According to a UN toll in 2013, the LRA was to blame for the deaths of more than 100,000 people, the abduction of between 60,000 and 100,000 children and the displacement of 2.5 million people.

Threat to local people

The militia began to be rolled back in 2011 by a force of 2,000 Ugandan troops, supported by about a hundred US military advisors based in Obo. Last March, the US military wrapped up its side of the operation, saying the LRA had been “reduced to irrelevance”, and a month later the Ugandan army began withdrawing its troops from CAR.

Today, according to Laurent Wastelain, a representative of the UN peacekeeping mission in CAR, the LRA has been reduced to about 200 people, women and children included, spread across three groups, one of which is dissident. “The organisation’s political doctrine is falling away,” he said in Obo. “They’ve gone from economic profit-making to economic subsistence, based on looting and trafficking.” The Ugandan and American pullout from southeast CAR, the absence of the state in this strife-torn region and the lack of a UN mandate to fight the LRA means that these marauding remnants are a lethal menace to local people. Since April 19, 2017, when Uganda began its phased withdrawal, the LRA has struck 34 times in CAR, killing nine people and kidnapping 129 others, according to LRA Crisis Tracker, a site run by an NGO that is trying, in difficult conditions, to monitor the problem.

Fleeing abduction

Kidnappings are an LRA specialty, witnesses in Obo said. The militiamen capture adults to carry their loot and turn their children into fighters. “On February 9, I was with nine hunters in a place about 100 kilometers west of Obo,” said Brice, who has fled to the town from his home in Mboki. “The LRA held us up, they took the manioc flour, the smoked fish, the meat and the ammunition,” he said adding that this was the third time he had been robbed by the group.

Francois Apoyo, another man displaced from Mboki, said the LRA seized him on November 24 — “they held us for a week, we carried their belongings.” The two men described small, mobile groups of LRA fighters speaking Acholi, the language of an ethnic Ugandan minority, dressed in combat gear, boots, carrying assault rifles and equipped with solar panels and satellite phones. They were accompanied by women and children who had been abducted. Beatrice, not her real name, described how she was kidnapped in November last year—an ordeal that ended after she ran away three weeks later. —AFP

Philippines slams UN rights chief for ‘disrespectful’ remarks

MANILA: The Philippine foreign minister hit back yesterday at the United Nations’ human rights chief for issuing “irresponsible and disrespectful” comments about President Rodrigo Duterte, warning such remarks could set a dangerous precedent. Duterte’s attacks against UN human rights activists suggest he needs to see a psychiatrist, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al-Hussein told a news conference on Friday.

Zeid’s comments came after the Philippine justice ministry filed a petition in a Manila court seeking the declaration of more than 600 alleged communist guerrillas, including a UN special reporter, as “terrorists”, a development first reported by Reuters. The petition included Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, appointed in 2014 as UN special reporter on the rights of indigenous peoples, who was listed as a senior member of the country’s Maoist rebel group. Tauli-Corpuz called the complaint “baseless, malicious and irresponsible”.

Zeid said Duterte’s attacks against UN special reporters cannot go unanswered and the UN Human Rights Council must take a position. He said the Philippine leader “needs to submit himself to some sort of psychiatric examination”. Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano said: “The Philippines takes grave exception to the irresponsible and disrespectful comments of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that cast untoward aspersions regarding the President of the Republic of the Philippines.”

Duterte has also repeatedly insulted the current UN special reporter on extrajudicial killings, Agnes Callamard, because of her criticism of his bloody anti-narcotics cam-



DAVAO CITY: This photo taken and released by Presidential Photographers Division (PPD) on March 1, 2018 shows President Rodrigo Duterte firing a few rounds with a sniper rifle during the opening ceremony of the National Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Challenge. —AFP

paign. The Philippines welcomed a UN investigation into Duterte’s signature war on drugs but objected to Callamard leading it, saying she was biased and not qualified. Cayetano said in a strongly worded statement the Philippines was bothered by “the manner in which a ranking UN human rights official can overstep his mandate and insult leaders of member-states without first giving them due process”.

“This could set a dangerous precedent that the council

would have to immediately address as otherwise member-states could also fall victim to those who seek to politicize and weaponize human rights to undermine legitimate governments,” he said. Duterte’s spokesman, Harry Roque, said Zeid’s language was an affront to Philippine sovereignty. “I would hope that although you do not have the same democratic system in your home country of Jordan, you will respect the kind of democracy that we have in the Philippines,” he said in a message to Zeid. —Reuters

Hundreds join pro-democracy, anti-junta rally

BANGKOK: Hundreds of pro-democracy Thais rallied in Bangkok yesterday to skewer the ruling junta with T-shirts, signs and speeches, as activists grow bolder in their defiance of a ban on protests. The military regime has kept a tight rein on dissent since its 2014 power grab by outlawing gatherings of more than five people and pursuing activists in the courts. But impatience with the generals has been mounting ever since their latest delay of elections, which are now tentatively set for February 2019.

In one of the largest showings in a recent string of protests, around 500 people turned up for a festive picnic-style rally held on a university field in Bangkok yesterday. “Who out there has a fire for democracy?” one young activist called out to the crowd from the top of a truck, eliciting loud cheers. While organizers raged against the military dictatorship over loudspeakers, vendors handed out free meals and sold shirts with sly references to a spate of graft scandals that have helped fuel the dissent.

One shirt bore the face of a black leopard, an animal that has become a symbol of inequality and corruption ever since a construction tycoon was



BANGKOK: A Thai anti-junta activist holds a banner saying stop prolonging power, stop delaying elections while stepping on a cartoon of a military tank during a pro-democracy rally at a university field. —AFP

caught hunting the wild cat in a wildlife sanctuary in February. In reference to another high-profile scandal, veteran activist Ekachai Hongkangwan showed up in a vest covered with paper watches—a jab at the junta no. 2, who is facing a graft probe after online sleuths spotted him wearing dozens of undeclared luxury timepieces.

The two dramas strike at the heart of public anguish over an entrenched culture of impunity for the kingdom’s wealthy and well-connected. In a nod to junta chief Prayut Chan-O-Cha’s repeated poll postponements, another demonstrator donned a mask resem-

bling the general’s face and the character Pinocchio—whose nose grows longer with each lie.

“This year more people are daring to (come out), especially after the junta government has failed to keep (its) promises on elections,” Ekachai, who helped lead the event, told AFP. Even if a vote is held next year, it will not restore the same level of democracy Thailand enjoyed before the coup. A new military-drafted charter has turned the upper house into an appointed body and also opens a channel for an unelected premier to take office—a set-up analysts say junta chief Prayut is eyeing. —AFP

Myanmar monk returns to preaching after ban

YANGON: Myanmar Buddhist monk Wirathu said yesterday his anti-Muslim rhetoric had nothing to do with violence in the western state of Rakhine, as he emerged from a one-year preaching ban. Wirathu is the most prominent of Myanmar’s hard-line nationalist monks, who have emerged as a political force since the country’s transition from full military rule began in 2011.

Violence has hit Muslim communities across the Buddhist-majority country, but the nationalists’ sharpest vitriol is reserved for the Rohingya Muslim minority in Rakhine, who many see as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, or “Bengalis”. Nearly 700,000 Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh since insurgents attacked police and army posts on Aug. 25, sparking a furious military-led response the United Nations has said constituted ethnic cleansing and possibly genocide.

Rakhine was experiencing “terrorism of Bengalis”, Wirathu said yesterday, dismissing claims he had “created” conflict there. He cited the relative peace of his hometown, Mandalay. “If Wirathu creates conflict, Mandalay would become ash. The world doesn’t know this truth,” the monk said, referring to himself at a ceremony in Myanmar’s largest city, Yangon, to celebrate his return to preaching.

The central Myanmar city of Mandalay was hit by communal riots that killed two people in 2014 after news spread of what turned out to be a false claim that Muslims had raped a Buddhist woman. Wirathu travelled at least twice in the past year to the violence-hit northern part of Rakhine, despite Myanmar’s highest religious authority imposing a one-year preaching ban in March 2017.

The state-linked body’s move was seen as an attempt by the government of Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi to stifle nationalists who threaten to undermine the young administration. —Reuters

International

‘Most hated man’ gets 7 years in jail for defrauding investors

It was difficult to find an impartial jury for the trial

NEW YORK: Martin Shkreli, once dubbed the most hated man in America for ratcheting up the price of an HIV drug, was sentenced to seven years in prison Friday on charges of defrauding investors. The disgraced former pharmaceutical executive and hedge fund manager was convicted in August of conspiracy to commit securities fraud and two counts of securities fraud. Shkreli, who once led Turing Pharmaceuticals, became known as “Pharma Bro” and is infamous for suddenly raising the price of the drug Daraprim in 2015 by 5,000 percent—from \$13.50 a pill to \$750. He smirked through a congressional hearing that scrutinized his actions and has since earned a reputation for an extravagant, self-publicizing lifestyle. Although the drug controversy had nothing to do with his trial before a federal court in New York, so great was the 34-year-old’s notoriety that it was initially difficult to find an impartial jury for the trial. Arrested in December 2015, his bail was revoked in September after he offered a reward for anyone who would grab a strand of former presidential candidate Hillary Clinton’s hair. Shkreli insisted it was a joke. His high-profile lawyer, Ben Brafman, described Shkreli as a mildly autistic, self-taught genius and asked US District Judge

Kiyo Matsumoto to limit the prison sentence to a maximum of 18 months. But even Brafman acknowledged “there are times when I want to punch him in the face” because his client’s behavior complicated the defense, according to reporters who were in the courtroom. Prosecutors were seeking 15 years’ prison, arguing that

“I want to punch him in the face”

Shkreli showed no remorse for his actions and pointing to his provocative and bizarre statements posted on social media.

“I was a fool”

“He wants everyone to believe he is a genius, a whiz kid, a self-taught biotech wonder,” said prosecutor Jacquelyn Kasulis. “He can’t be just an average person who fails, like the rest of us.” In a letter sent last week to

the judge, Shkreli pleaded for leniency and for the first time admitted he had erred. “I made serious mistakes but I still believe that I am a good person with much potential. I was a fool,” he said, expressing a wish to work “for the betterment of humanity.” With a choking voice, he reiterated in court his remorse at the “shameful actions” that led to his downfall. On top of six months of good behavior already spent behind bars, and after charity donations he made before his arrest, the repentance helped to lower his sentence far below what the prosecution requested. On Monday, Matsumoto ordered Shkreli to pay back \$7.36 million to federal authorities, an amount they can recover by seizing his assets. These include a Picasso painting and his unique copy of an album by rappers Wu-Tang Clan. In 2015, he purchased for \$2 million the sole edition of the ensemble’s “Once Upon a Time in Shaolin,” which he put up for sale on eBay in September—while also threatening to “break this album in frustration.” The winning bid was a little more than \$1 million but by then Shkreli was already in jail after his bail revocation, throwing the deal in doubt. Shkreli had been convicted of securities fraud and conspiracy a month earlier. The jury, however, cleared him of more than half



WASHINGTON: In this file photo taken on February 4, 2016 Entrepreneur and pharmaceutical executive Martin Shkreli leaves after invoking his Fifth Amendment rights during a hearing of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on Capitol Hill.—AFP

the charges for allegedly stealing \$11 million in stock from his first pharmaceutical company Retrophin to pay off investors who lost money in two of his hedge funds. The verdict left Brafman suggesting that Shkreli might even avoid jail time. —AFP

Turkey releases more journalists in newspaper trial

SILIVRI: Two Turkish journalists walked free from prison on Friday after over a year behind bars in the trial on terror-related charges of staff from the opposition Cumhuriyet newspaper, seen as a test of press freedom under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Cumhuriyet’s editor-in-chief Murat Sabuncu and investigative reporter Ahmet Sik were ordered to be freed by the judge after a marathon day-long hearing and later walked free from jail. However, they remain under charge and on trial. One more detained suspect, the paper’s chairman Akin Atalay, was ordered to stay in jail. The three were the last remaining suspects in the case to be held behind bars ahead of a final verdict, leaving Atalay the sole suspect still behind bars. A total of 17 staff from Cumhuriyet (Republic) face terror charges in the trial, which opened on July 24. Others have been gradually freed over the last year. It is still not clear when the final verdict will be announced. The next hearing in the trial was set for March 16 and the suspects still face up to 43 years in prison if convicted. Sabuncu and Atalay have spent the last 495 days in jail and Sik, who was detained a little after the initial wave of arrests, 434 days. The decision to release Sabuncu and Sik, delivered in the courthouse in Silivri outside Istanbul—part of a complex that also contains the prison where they are held—was greeted with cheers from supporters in the courtroom. Sik could be seen weeping with emotion. Also present were the defendants who were released last year after long stints in jail but also remain charged, including cartoonist Musa Kart and columnist Kadri Gursesel.

‘Not a day to be happy’

Sik, a staunch critic of Erdogan, said after walking free from Silivri jail there could be no celebration as Atalay remained in jail. “I prefer you to be frustrated because frustration will help us stand tall ... today is not a day to be happy.” Taking aim at the government, he added: “I assure you that day will come when this Mafia sultanate comes to an end.” Sabuncu added: “Turkey’s problems are not resolved just because we are set free. “As journalists,



ISTANBUL: Freed journalists, editor-in-chief of Cumhuriyet Turkish daily newspaper, Murat Sabuncu (C), and Turkish journalist Ahmet Sik (R), are seen surrounded by fellow colleagues. —AFP

our mission is to do our job fearlessly as we did before.” Amnesty International’s Europe Director, Gauri van Gulik said the releases were “long-overdue” and provided a “glimmer of hope” in a country she described as the “biggest jailer of journalists in the world”. The latest hearing came a day after an Istanbul court sentenced 25 journalists to prison terms of up to seven and a half years over links to the group of US-based preacher Fethullah Gulen who is blamed by Turkey for the 2016 failed coup against Erdogan. Dozens of journalists have been detained in the wake of the coup bid, causing international concern. The Cumhuriyet staff are charged with supporting through their coverage three organisations Turkey views as terror groups—the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), the ultra-left Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), and the Gulen movement. In court various witnesses gave statements, including former Cumhuriyet journalist Altan Oymen who was once

briefly a leader of the Republican People’s Party (CHP) and rubbished any idea the paper had backed Gulen. “The allegations are unimaginable,” he said, adding it was Cumhuriyet which had properly reported on the activities of Gulen. Supporters say the charges are absurd, noting that the outlawed groups cited in the indictment are themselves at odds with each other. Indeed, Sik is seen as one of Turkey’s most incisive critics of the Gulen movement and in 2011 wrote an explosive book “The Imam’s Army” exposing the grip the group had on key Turkish institutions. In a separate development, Turkey’s top appeals court quashed the verdict of Cumhuriyet’s former editor-in-chief Can Dunder who was sentenced to five years and 10 months in jail on charges of revealing state secrets in 2016. It ruled he should face an even more serious charge of espionage in a new trial and risk a longer prison term of up to 20 years. Dunder has fled Turkey and is now based in Germany. —AFP

Sri Lanka to probe anti-Muslim riots

COLOMBO: An investigation into anti-Muslim riots that spread in central Sri Lanka prompting the authorities to declare a nationwide state of emergency was announced yesterday by President Maithripala Sirisena. A panel of three retired judges will probe the breakdown in law and order in the picturesque hill resort of Kandy, Sirisena’s office said in a statement. Three people died, 20 others were wounded and more than 200 Muslim-owned businesses and homes were destroyed in four days of rioting that died down on Thursday. Eleven mosques were also damaged or completely destroyed by Sinhalese mobs, according to police who say the situation has been brought under control after a heavy military deployment. A curfew in the district, which is 115 kilometres (72 miles) east of the capital Colombo, was lifted at dawn Saturday but army soldiers continued to patrol alongside police, officials said. Sri Lanka’s Muslim minority held their Friday prayers under military protection across the island amid fears of fresh attacks. However, the weekly religious activity went off without incident, authorities said. Hundreds of Buddhist monks and activists staged demonstrations in Colombo on Friday denouncing the anti-Muslim attacks and urging authorities to take strong action against the perpetrators. Police said nearly 150 people, including the main instigator, have been arrested over the unrest. They named the main suspect as Amith Weerasinghe, a man from the mainly Buddhist Sinhalese majority known for anti-Muslim activism and outspoken social



COLOMBO: A Sri Lankan policeman guards a mosque in Sri Lanka’s capital Colombo on March 9, 2018, amid fears that anti-Muslim riots in the central region of Kandy could spread to other areas of the island. —AFP

media posts, and said he was taken into custody on Thursday. The government declared a state of emergency on Tuesday as the unrest escalated when a Muslim man was found dead in a burnt-out building, a day after a Sinhalese man died of injuries sustained in an attack carried out by Muslim men. —AFP

Premier underlines reform and people’s livelihood

BEIJING: Chinese Premier Li Keqiang called for joint efforts to advance reform and opening-up, promote innovation, sustain economic growth and improve people’s livelihood at the ongoing national legislative session Tuesday. Joining deputies to the 13th National People’s Congress (NPC) from southern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Li stressed following the guide of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. Li said as this year marks the 40th anniversary of China’s reform and opening-up drive, local governments should not only fully implement national reform policies, but launch tailored measures of their own to create a business-friendly environment for the benefit of enterprises and the public. Local governments were also told to practise frugality but increase spending on programs for people’s livelihood and focus on poverty alleviation. Senior leaders including Wang Yang, Wang Huning and Han Zheng, all members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, also joined panel discussions of political advisors and NPC deputies Tuesday. Joining political advisors from ethnic minority groups, Wang Yang called for concrete efforts to secure victory in building a moderately prosperous society in all respects in areas with large ethnic minority populations. He asked them to focus on targeted poverty reduction and environment protection. While attending discussions of NPC deputies from Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions, Wang Huning stressed implementation of the spirit of the 19th CPC National Congress on work related to the two regions, urging efforts to act in strict compliance with China’s Constitution and the basic laws of the two special administrative regions, support the governments and chief executives of both regions in exercising law-based governance. Speaking to NPC deputies from Shaanxi Province, Han Zheng encouraged people to strive to achieve more efficient, fairer, and more sustainable development with better quality by following the philosophy of innovative, coordinated, green, and open development that is for everyone. —(article provided by the Embassy of China)

Death row Iran spiritual leader gets jail term

TEHRAN: The leader of an Iranian spiritual movement, whose repeated death sentences drew UN and US condemnation, has been given a five-year jail term after a second retrial, his lawyer said yesterday. In June 2015 and again in September last year, the courts found Mohammad Ali Taheri guilty of “corruption on earth”—the gravest charge in the Islamic republic. But on each occasion the supreme court overturned the death sentence and ordered a retrial. After the latest retrial, the court convicted Taheri of the lesser charge of “non-aggravated corruption” and sentenced him to five years in prison, his lawyer Mahmoud Alizadeh Tabatabaie said. But Tabatabaie said he would appeal the conviction as it was made on the basis of a 2013 law that the court was applying retroactively and his client had already served a five-year jail sentence and longer in prison awaiting retrial. Taheri founded his Erfan Kayhani (“Cosmic Mysticism”) movement in the early 2000s and quickly became a well-known spiritual leader, appearing on state television and giving classes at Tehran University. He promoted alternative medicine and followed what he said were messages from spirits. But as his popularity grew, he fell foul of Iran’s clerical establishment and the conservative-dominated judiciary launched a crackdown on what they dubbed his “satanic” sect. He was first detained for a short period in 2010 and was then rearrested in May 2011 and held in solitary confinement before being charged with “insulting Islamic sanctities” and “corruption on earth”. In July, August and September, authorities arrested at least 25 of his followers, some of them for organizing protests against his death sentence, Iranian media reported. —AFP

Florida gov signs gun-safety bill into law after shooting

FORT LAUDERDALE: Florida Governor Rick Scott, a staunch ally of the National Rifle Association (NRA), signed into law on Friday a bill imposing a 21-year-old legal age requirement and three-day waiting period on all gun purchases and allowing the arming of some school employees. Within hours, the NRA filed a court challenge to provisions raising the legal age for buying a rifle or shotgun, asserting that the higher requirement - consistent with the minimum age nationally for handgun purchases - violates the US Constitution.

Final passage of the bill by state lawmakers came three weeks to the day after a gunman opened fire with a semiautomatic assault-style rifle at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public in Parkland, Florida, killing 14 students and three faculty members. Swift action in the Republican-controlled statehouse, where the powerful NRA gun lobbying organization has long held sway, was propelled in large part by an extraordinary counter-lobbying campaign waged by young survivors from the massacre and parents of the victims.

The Parkland massacre and response to it by Florida lawmakers signaled a possible turning point in the national debate between advocates for tougher firearms restrictions and proponents of the right to bear arms as enshrined in the Second Amendment of the US Constitution. Gun control supporters said the tragedy - the deadliest US high school shooting ever - has given new momentum to firearms-safety measures pending in at least two dozen states, many in solidly conservative parts of the nation.

"Today should serve as an example to the entire country that government can and must move fast," Scott said in remarks before the signing, surrounded by survivors of the shooting and their families. One of them, Andrew Pollack, whose daughter Meadow was among those killed, hailed the bill as "a start". "We're going to work on moving forward and hitting every other state to make sure they follow the lead of

Florida," he told reporters.

Scott, a Republican who received the NRA's endorsement as governor and its highest rating for supporting the rights of gun owners, said the bill represented a compromise balancing concerns on both sides of the gun debate. The NRA's lawsuit, filed in US District Court in Tallahassee, said that barring adults under the age of 21 from buying rifles was unconstitutional, violating both the Second Amendment and Americans' 14th Amendment rights to equal protection under the law. A statement issued earlier by the NRA had derided the higher minimum age and new waiting period for rifle sales as a prescription that "punishes law-abiding gun owners for the criminal acts of a deranged individual."

Still, other states appeared ready to follow Florida's lead on at least some new gun-safety measures. Five states - Alabama, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Utah - have seen so-called "red flag" bills introduced since the Florida massacre to make it easier for police to confiscate weapons from someone found to pose a threat of violent behavior, according to Kristin Brown, co-president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. Such a provision was included in the Florida package enacted on Friday.

The legislation, while containing a number of other provisions student activists and their parents from Parkland had embraced, left out one of their chief demands - a ban on assault-style weapons like the one used in the Feb 14 rampage.

The bill also was controversial for including provisions allowing school staff to be specially trained and deputized to carry guns on the job as campus "guardians", though local sheriffs and individual school districts may opt out of the program if they wish. Most classroom teachers are excluded from volunteering for the program, a compromise aimed at earning the support of the governor, and many lawmakers, who opposed the idea.

"My daughter is a teacher, and I believe teachers should teach," governor said. The bill left only non-teacher staff eligible to participate, such as administrators, guidance counselors, librarians and coaches. Florida now joins at least six other states - Georgia, Kansas, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Wyoming - with laws allowing public school employees to carry firearms to work, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. — Reuters

Syria army cuts off main towns in rebel...

Continued from Page 1

Eastern Ghouta is the last remaining opposition-controlled zone on the outskirts of the capital, and government troops have zeroed in on it in order to secure Damascus. Rebels in recent days tried to slow the advance with an attempted counter-offensive, but President Bashar Al-Assad's forces steamrolled their efforts. Syrian state television yesterday reported the army had "intensified its operations... and was advancing in three main zones".

It broadcast live footage from a neighborhood in Misraba recently recaptured from the army. Dozens of civilians including women and toddlers could be seen in a dark basement, surrounded by troops. One elderly man broke down into tears as he told state television that his family had fled to Douma under fierce bombardment. The offensive has killed more than 975 civilians, including more than 200 children, and wounded several thousand people, according to the Observatory, which relies on a network of sources on the ground.

Eastern Ghouta is home to around 400,000 people, in desperate need of humanitarian assistance after the five-year siege made food and medical aid exceedingly rare.

On Friday, a joint aid convoy of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent delivered food aid to hunger-stricken residents. It was the second convoy in one week, after deliveries on Monday were interrupted by heavy bombardment.

The UN refugee agency's Syria representative, who

entered Ghouta with Monday's convoy, said the area was "on the verge of a major disaster". "I've never seen such scared faces in my life," Sajjad Malik said. He described seeing a five-storey building that had been reduced to rubble, with a powerful stench emanating from several bodies trapped underneath. In addition to clashes around Douma, fighting yesterday raged to the west near the town of Medeira and further south near Hammuriyeh, Saqba, and Eferis.

Two Islamist groups are the most prominent rebel factions in Ghouta, but militants from Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) - once linked to Al-Qaeda's Syria branch - also have a presence. On Friday, 13 HTS members and their family members were bussed out of the enclave. Rebels said they would be taken to the HTS-controlled northern province of Idlib, in an arrangement struck following consultations with the UN and international players.

Such evacuation deals have been repeatedly agreed in Syria's seven-year war, most notably in the second city of Aleppo in late 2016. After a ferocious month-long government assault, thousands of rebel fighters and civilians were bussed out of the city's east. That paved the way for Syria's government to announce the full recapture of Aleppo - the largest defeat to date for the fractured opposition movement.

Syria's conflict erupted with protests against Assad but has since developed into a full-blown war that has drawn in global powers. Russia has intervened on Assad's behalf while Turkey has backed rebels against his regime, rival militants and Kurdish forces. Yesterday, Ankara-backed rebels advanced against Kurdish militia in northwest Syria, coming to within two kilometres of the flashpoint town of Afrin, according to the Observatory. The move came as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened again to "purge" Kurdish militia from the town. — AFP

Madagascar's hidden battle...

Continued from Page 1

Leprosy was initially recorded in the first century and had almost disappeared from Europe by the 18th century, with only a handful of areas still affected thereafter, mostly in Africa, Southeast Asia and South America. More than 200,000 new cases are identified every year, according to the latest World Health Organization figures. The condition, which spreads via nasal fluids but is not highly contagious, can be treated with a months-long cocktail of drugs.

Ilena is now home to over 400 people, including more than 100 children, all mingling and living together as a community but totally isolated from the rest of society. The residents survive by growing food and rearing livestock as well as producing their own charcoal. Nobody ever leaves, except by dying, they say.

"This village has become a ghetto. Nobody comes or goes from here," Sister Damien Koenig said calmly. She is one of the nuns who have run Ilena for decades. "When we arrived, we tried to explain that leprosy is not a shameful condition, that those infected should not be embarrassed, that they could go out," she added. "But none of the young men or women can find partners on the outside."

Madagascans tend to be extremely proud of their tradition of community support, solidarity and loyalty, described by the catch-all local term "fihavanana". But those living with leprosy are excluded, and face fierce discrimination. In Marana, another village for those afflicted by leprosy in the same region as Ilena, the residents' treatment from outside typifies the prejudice faced by sufferers.

Kim an enigma for Washington...

Continued from Page 1

questioned whether Kim is getting "sound advice" from those around him. Scott Snyder, a Korea specialist at the Council on Foreign Relations, said that the past few weeks, in which North Korea joined the Winter Olympics in South Korea, invited Seoul officials to Pyongyang, and then offered to freeze nuclear and missile tests for talks with Trump, was possible evidence that Kim may have wised up. "He's definitely getting some good advice from somewhere now," he told AFP. He noted that Kim's offer came before he had fully demonstrated he could bomb the United States. That could have been a red line for Washington. "He stopped short of a full capability, a good move," said Snyder.

Former CIA official and Korea negotiator Joseph DeTrani said two changes have become clear with Kim. First is the country's success in its military advances. "He's got to feel good about his nuclear missile program," DeTrani said. But at the same time, he said, Kim now knows how much the international sanctions imposed because of those advances are hurting his country and people. "I think we know that sanctions are biting and mili-

Putin: Maybe Jews meddled...

Continued from Page 1

checked; maybe they have dual citizenship or a green card; maybe the US paid them for this. How can you know that? I do not know either."

Despite Mueller's 37-page indictment, Putin said he has seen no evidence thus far that the alleged meddling broke any laws. "We in Russia cannot prosecute anyone as long as they have not violated Russian law... At least send us a piece of paper... Give us a document. Give us an official request. And we'll take a look at it." Trump has repeatedly denied any collusion with Moscow, and Putin laughed at the mere suggestion. "Could anyone really believe that Russia, thousands of miles away... influenced the outcome of the election? Doesn't that sound ridiculous even to you?" Putin asked.

On announcing the indictment on the Russians, US Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein said the document made no judgment on whether the alleged Russian

The community has had to be relocated three times due to hostility from people living in Fianarantsoa. Marana's 80 residents are now hidden by a ring of trees that shield them from outside view. "When we leave a leper colony, it's difficult to reintegrate into society," said one of them, 61-year-old Robert Razafimahatratra, sighing as he spoke.

"Even my family keep their distance from me. That's what upsets me most - not the illness, but the fact that my family rejected me. It's a mixture of shame, confusion and fear," said Harisoa Marline, another infected resident. "That's my own family, my own blood, who did that." A combination of poverty and limited access to healthcare is to blame for the continued presence of leprosy on Madagascar, an Indian Ocean island nation, which tends to rank among the three worst countries in Africa for new infections.

"Madagascar sees 1,500 new leprosy cases every year," said the head of the health ministry's anti-leprosy programme Andriamirana Andrianatoandro, adding he regretted the "ostracism and exclusion" faced by those living with leprosy. Early diagnosis is crucial to limiting the spread of the infection as there is not yet a vaccine, but identification of leprosy often comes too late - if at all.

"We never give a leprosy diagnosis in the village," said Sister Sabine Ramasinoro, one of the nuns responsible for running Marana. "To prevent people running away, we just say that we're there to care for them. A farmer in the bush has no incentive to get a leprosy diagnosis of their irritable skin lesions," said Bertrand Cauchois, a doctor at the Raoul Follereau Foundation, one of the leading contributors to the fight against the condition. "They won't get a diagnosis because then they'll have a disability and will have probably infected someone else."

To help detect undiagnosed cases, Cauchois has put in place programs to address skin conditions although has struggled to break through the widespread apathy. — AFP

tary exercises are intimidating," he said. One thing Kim is not, DeTrani added, is irrational. "He seems to be an extremely rational actor, a bit unpredictable, also very ruthless."

Michael Madden, whose group North Korea Leadership Watch does deep dives into all things Kim, said the North Korean leader appears to be moving into a new phase. Since inheriting his father Kim Jong Il's mantle in 2011, he spent his first six years consolidating power, reportedly liquidating dozens of opponents, trimming some of the military's independent power, and building his internal surveillance capabilities. Today, Madden said, Kim's regime "is more flexible than we think they are".

That was on display at the dinner with the South Koreans Monday where he showed himself to be "a fairly graceful person", with his rarely-seen wife at his side, readily joking and making fun of himself, Madden said. The North Koreans released photographs and video from the lavish banquet almost immediately. "It confirms he's confident in having consolidated his power," said Snyder.

Former US diplomat Bill Richardson, who met Kim Jong Il several times, said Kim is on the cusp of achieving what his father and grandfather always wanted: To be treated as equals by Washington. At just 34, Kim "is unpredictable, sometimes irrational. But he's been underestimated," Richardson said. "I've long thought he had an agenda, an endgame, and it's obvious that he does. He's evolved from a bomb-throwing leader to a man with a strategic vision," Richardson said. — AFP

propaganda campaign altered the election outcome. "It's not our goal to interfere. We do not see what goal we would accomplish by interfering. There's no goal," Putin said. US intelligence chiefs last month said Russia still seeks to meddle in US politics, posing a threat to mid-term congressional elections in November, and the 2020 presidential election.

Trump has acknowledged that Russia and "other countries" meddled in the 2016 election, but insisted it had "no impact on our votes whatsoever" and vowed to make sure it wouldn't happen again. "We'll counteract whatever they do. We'll counteract it very strongly. You don't want your system of votes to be compromised in any way," Trump said Tuesday. "And we won't allow that to happen."

Russian efforts however are said to go far beyond US elections: US General Curtis Scaparrotti, the commander of NATO forces in Europe, told US lawmakers on Thursday that Russia is working to break up the NATO alliance partly through its online operations spreading false information. "Russia is carrying out a campaign of destabilization to change the international order, fracture NATO and undermine US leadership around the world," Scaparrotti told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday. — AFP



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Sports

Slovakian skier wins first gold as Paralympics get under way

USA clinch a hat-trick of victories

PYEONGCHANG: Slovakian skier Henrieta Farkasova won the first gold medal of the Pyeongchang Paralympics yesterday and the USA clinched a hat-trick of victories as sporting action got underway at Games marked by a rapid inter-Korean thaw. Medals were up for grabs in alpine skiing and biathlon. Russian athletes, competing under a neutral flag after a mass doping scandal, clinched two golds while France also won two.

The Paralympics in South Korea opened Friday with a glittering ceremony that mixed spectacular light shows and fireworks with traditional Korean performances and modern pop music. North Korea was in focus as the country's first two athletes to ever compete at a Winter Paralympics paraded into the Pyeongchang Olympic Stadium under their own country's flag.

It was the latest stage of a detente on the Korean peninsula that began at last month's Winter Olympics, and culminated with this week's announcement that US President Donald Trump had agreed to meet the North's leader Kim Jong Un. Slovakia's Farkasova was the first to take gold, skiing to victory in the women's vision-impaired downhill category, accompanied by her guide Natalia Subrtova.

She completed the course at the Jeongseon Alpine Centre in 1min 29.72sec, beating second-placed Millie Knight of Britain and her guide Brett Wild by 0.86sec. It was Farkasova's sixth Paralympic gold, and she hailed her victory as "great, amazing". "Hopefully we can inspire through our achievements and (show) others to strive and do their best," she said.



Medals up for grabs in alpine skiing, biathlon

USA STRIKE GOLD

The USA, who have the biggest team at the Paralympics with 69 athletes, got off to a good start, wining three golds, one silver and a bronze. In the biathlon—which combines skiing and shooting—the Americans took gold and silver in the women's sit ski, with Kendall Gretsche coming first and Oksana Masters second.

Gretsche said her victory was "pretty unexpected". "It's my first Paralympics, first race, so it's just a great way to kick off the week and hopefully (there's) more to come," she said. American Daniel Crossen, a former US Navy Seal, took gold in the men's sit ski.

Andrew Kurka from Team USA won gold in the men's sitting downhill skiing, with Japan's Taiki Morii clinching silver. In an echo of last month's Winter Olympics, 30 Russian athletes are competing as neutrals after the country was banned over allegations of state-sponsored doping.

Russian biathletes Ekaterina Rummyantseva, competing in women's standing, and Mikhailina Lysova, in the women's vision-impaired category, both won gold yesterday. Marie Bochet and Benjamin Daviet clinched France's first golds, in women's standing downhill skiing and men's standing biathlon respectively. There were also golds for Ukraine, with Vitaliy Lukyanenko winning in the men's vision-impaired biathlon, and Canada, with Mac Marcoux clinching victory in the men's vision-impaired downhill skiing.

The North Korean athletes at the Games are two cross-country skiers, Kim Jong Hyon and Ma Yu Chol.



PYEONGCHANG: Slovakia's Henrieta Farkasova (top) and her guide Natalia Subrtova take part in the alpine skiing visually impaired women's downhill during the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Paralympic Games at the Jeongseon Alpine Centre in Pyeongchang yesterday. — AFP

They had originally been expected to march alongside their South Korean counterparts at Friday's opening ceremony but a row over how their "unification flag" should appear halted the plan.

Their countries' teams took part separately in the athletes' parade—but towards the end of the ceremony a

member of the North's delegation and a South Korean athlete carried the Paralympic torch into the Olympic Stadium together. The rapid inter-Korean detente began at last month's Winter Olympics. Athletes from the two Koreas marched together at the opening ceremony and Kim Jong Un's sister attended the event. — AFP

Hurricanes hold Crusaders off to win tough clash

WELLINGTON: The Wellington Hurricanes used a blistering start to hold off a Canterbury Crusaders' forward pack-inspired fightback and sneak a 29-19 victory in their Super Rugby clash at Wellington Regional Stadium yesterday.

The Hurricanes had stormed out to a 21-0 lead before the visitors slowed the pace of the game and starved the home side of the ball to get back to 26-19 with 25 minutes remaining.

The Crusaders, however, missed the experienced influence of All Blacks duo Ryan Crotty and Sam Whitelock, who were both taken off for head injury assessments and did not return. Both Crotty and Whitelock were the victims of a rampant Hurricanes side, who controlled the ball, stormed over the advantage line, put players into space and smashed into anyone wearing red.

They harnessed that intensity to race

out to a 21-0 lead with tries to prop Chris Eves, TJ Perenara and former All Blacks sevens winger Ben Lam, who finished off a sweeping 80-metre counter-attack. The Crusaders, however, slowly worked their way back into the game as their forwards began to compete in the collision area and give their backs opportunities with replacement winger Manasa Mataele crossing after he beat three defenders.

Hurricanes centre Matt Proctor restored the three-try advantage when Brad Shields charged down a Mitch Hunt clearing kick. The Crusaders, however, sent an ominous message just before the break when Jordan Taufua crashed over from a long-distance rolling maul to reduce the deficit to 26-12.

The eight-times champion Crusaders continued that momentum in the second half, dominated territory and possession and reduced the deficit to 26-19 when Michael Ala'alatoa placed the ball against the post. Fullback Jordie Barrett, however, managed to slam over a long-range penalty with less than 15 minutes remaining that gave the Hurricanes the breathing space they required. — Reuters

Halep, Pliskova advance, Muguruza suffers shock defeat

INDIAN WELLS: World number one Simona Halep and fifth seed Karolina Pliskova eased through their WTA Indian Wells openers on Friday but reigning Wimbledon champ Garbine Muguruza bit the dust in the California desert.

Halep beat Karolina's sister Kristyna Pliskova 6-4, 6-4 while Karolina eased past Irina-Camelia Begu 7-6 (7/4), 6-1 to reach the third round of the combined WTA/ATP hardcourt tournament. Muguruza became the first major casualty of the event, suffering a shock 2-6, 7-5, 6-1 defeat to world number 100 Sachia Vickery. "It slipped away a little bit from me," said Muguruza. "I'm going to learn a lot from this match. I'm going to watch it and I'm going to see what went wrong."

Muguruza, who was seeded third here, was named WTA player of the year last year after winning titles in Wimbledon and Cincinnati. The 24-year-old also reached number one in the world in September and was ranked third heading into Indian Wells. This the Spaniard's first loss to a player ranked in the 100s since she was beaten by Jana Cepelova (124) at Wimbledon in 2016. Muguruza had five double faults and had her serve broken five times in the two hour, 11 minute night match.

Crowd favourite Vickery posted her first



INDIAN WELLS: Simona Halep hits a forehand during her match against Kristyna Pliskova of the Czech Republic during the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden on Friday in Indian Wells, California. — AFP

career win over a top 10 player as she served masterfully and controlled the rallies with her ground strokes. Vickery said the partisan crowd motivated her. "The atmosphere really helped me even though I was feeling it a bit physically. I kept telling myself 'just do your best'," said the 22-year-old who is making her second appearance in Indian Wells. Halep roared into the third round by overpowering Kristyna in straight sets. The 26-year-old Romanian will meet US wildcard Caroline Dolehide who beat Dominika Cibulkova, of

Slovakia, 5-7, 6-3, 6-4.

"I was ready to play. I was ready to work and ready to fight," Halep said. "It wasn't an easy match. But I am really happy I won my first match here and I get a chance to play again." Halep and Caroline Wozniacki have been taking turns at No. 1 this year. Denmark's Wozniacki took the world number one ranking after beating Halep in three sets in the Australian Open final, but Halep reclaimed it from her just prior to Indian Wells. — AFP

WADA seeks new sources for drug test kits

MONTREAL: The World Anti-Doping Agency said Friday it was "actively exploring alternatives" after Swiss manufacturer Berlinger Special AG said it would stop making secure anti-doping sample collection bottles.

Berlinger announced earlier Friday that it was pulling out of the business but pledged to keep sending out collection kits until stocks ran out in a bid to prevent a short-term shortage. WADA said they had contacted anti-doping agencies, accredited laboratories and sample collection agencies, including the International Olympic Committee, to update them on the situation and offer guidance "to secure the integrity of the doping control process".

"In parallel, WADA is actively exploring alternative sources of sample collection kits and, to that end, is also collaborating with the Institute of National Anti-Doping Organizations and a number of Anti-Doping Organizations," the agency's statement said.

WADA said in January it had

looked into reports from one lab that a new-generation test kit produced by Berlinger could be "susceptible to manual opening without evidence of tampering". An older model was used instead at the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics last month.

"WADA wishes to reassure athletes, anti-doping organizations and other stakeholders that it remains resolutely committed to following up with Berlinger and affected stakeholders as necessary until the matter is resolved and that it will keep stakeholders updated along the way," the agency said.

In the 2014 Sochi Olympics doping scandal detailed in a report by Canadian lawyer Richard McLaren, investigators discovered that Russian staff involved had developed a method to open supposedly "tamper-proof" sample bottles undetected.

The far-reaching scandal saw Russia barred from the Pyeongchang Games, although Russian athletes who meet certain criteria were allowed to compete as neutrals. Berlinger said Friday that "increasingly institutionalized forms of doping malpractice" had increased the demands made on the test kits.

"These developments are not only damaging to sport: they have become increasingly incompatible with our corporate values and core competencies," chairwoman of the board Andrea Berlinger said in a statement posted on the company's website. — AFP

Sharapova splits with Dutch tennis coach

INDIAN WELLS: Five-time Grand Slam winner Maria Sharapova has decided to split with her tennis coach Sven Groeneveld following her shock first round exit from the WTA Indian Wells tournament.

After four years of working together, the decision to go their separate ways was a mutual one, Sharapova said on Friday. "After four successful and challenging years of collaboration together, I would like to thank Sven for his incredible loyalty, work ethic and most importantly the friendship that we have formed that will go beyond this working partnership," Sharapova said in a news release.

"Although we have mutually agreed to part ways during this time, I have been incredibly fortunate to have a team leader like him in my corner."

The former world number one, and twice a winner in the California desert, suffered a stunning defeat on Wednesday to Japanese No. 1 Naomi Osaka, losing in straight sets, 6-4, 6-4.

Sharapova was one of the tournament's major attractions after missing the last two.



INDIAN WELLS: Coach Sven Groeneveld (left) watches Maria Sharapova of Russia play Naomi Osaka of Japan during the BNP Paribas Open at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, California. — AFP

"Maria has been one of the most hardworking and professional players I have ever worked with. Her strength and fighting spirit will continue to be a force to reckon with and I have the deepest respect for her as a player and person," said Groeneveld of the Netherlands.

For Sharapova the loss to the 20-year-old Osaka was another painful reminder that it's

back to the drawing board for the Russian as she makes her way back from a 15-month drugs ban. It was her second first round loss in a row after she withdrew from the Dubai tournament with a forearm injury.

In her only Grand Slam appearance this year, Sharapova reached the third round of the Australian Open before losing to Angelique Kerber. — AFP

England romp home, claim ODI series on Bairstow ton

Our bowlers really did set the tone: Morgan

CHRISTCHURCH: A masterful century by Jonny Bairstow complemented an exceptional bowling spell as England cruised to a seven-wicket victory over New Zealand to claim the one-day international series 3-2 in Christchurch yesterday.

SCOREBOARD	
CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand: Completed scoreboard in the fifth one-day international between New Zealand and England in Christchurch yesterday:	
New Zealand	
M. Guptill c Stokes b Rashid	47
C. Munro c Buttler b Woakes	0
K. Williamson b Wood	14
T. Latham c Stokes b Rashid	10
M. Chapman b Ali	0
H. Nicholls c Morgan b Curran	55
C. de Grandhomme c Curran b Rashid	6
M. Santner c Hales b Woakes	67
T. Southee c Bairstow b Woakes	10
I. Sodhi c Stokes b Curran	5
T. Boult not out	2
Extras:(w7)	7
Total: (all out; 49.5 overs)	223
Fall of wickets: 1-1 (Munro), 2-26 (Williamson), 3-60 (Latham), 4-61 (Chapman), 5-79 (Guptill), 6-93 (de Grandhomme), 7-177 (Nicholls), 8-213 (Santner), 9-214 (Southee), 10-223 (Sodhi).	
Bowling: Woakes 10-1-32-3 (2w), Wood 8-0-26-1 (2w), Stokes 4-0-23-0 (2w), Rashid 10-0-42-3, Ali 10-1-39-1, Root 2-0-15-0, Curran 5.5-0-46-2 (1w).	
England	
J. Bairstow hit wicket b Boult	104
A. Hales c Williamson b Santner	61
J. Root not out	23
E. Morgan c de Grandhomme b Sodhi	8
B. Stokes not out	26
Extras (lb4, w3)	7
Total: (for 3 wickets; 32.4 overs)	229
Fall of wickets: 1-155 (Bairstow), 2-177 (Hales), 3-192 (Morgan)	
Bowling: Southee 5-1-20-0, Boult 6-0-50-1 (3w), de Grandhomme 4-0-33-0, Santner 10-0-44-1, Sodhi 7.4-0-78-1.	
Result: England won by sevens wickets	
Series: England won 3-2	

Bairstow's heroics with the bat — 104 off 60 deliveries-backed by 61 from fellow opener Alex Hales saw England overhaul New Zealand's 223 with a colossal 104 balls remaining to wrap up the winner-takes-all showdown.

“Our bowlers really did set the tone,” said captain Eoin Morgan who won the toss and made New Zealand bat first. Chris Woakes, the man of the series, lead the way with three for 32 off his 10 overs while spinner Adil Rashid finished with three for 42. “Johnny (Bairstow) played particularly well... but really the game today was won by our bowling unit.” Morgan added in a sentiment shared by Bairstow who ensured an early end with his 104 from 60 deliveries.

“They set the platform and they have done first up

“England were outstanding and they deserved to win the series”

all the way through the series,” said Bairstow. “The way the guys have taken wickets early on has enabled us to turn the screw through the middle. My job is to go out and try and score big hundreds and contribute to match winning scores and that’s something I’m trying to do.” The stark contrast in performances was highlighted in the middle of the 26th over in each innings when New Zealand were 93 for six while England were 192 for two at the same stage.

‘REALLY DISAPPOINTING’

Disappointed New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson struggled to find something positive say about his side apart from “a good showing” by Mitchell Santner and Henry Nicholls who put on 84 for the seventh wicket.

“It was a really disappointing effort from our part,” he said. “You want to come out and play a performance you’d be proud of and today we (didn’t) in all



CHRISTCHURCH: The England team poses after winning the One Day series following the fifth and final ODI cricket match between New Zealand and England at Hagley Oval in Christchurch yesterday. — AFP

facets. It was a shame. England were outstanding and they deserved to win the series.”

Bairstow toyed with the best of New Zealand's bowling stocks as he smacked nine fours and six sixes. He eventually brought about his own downfall by belting the stumps as he stepped back to cut a wide Trent Boult delivery.

Hales was at the crease for 74 deliveries for his 61 which included nine boundaries. Both sides were hit with late replacements but with marked differences. New Zealand's batting maestro Ross Taylor failed a late fitness test and was replaced by Mark Chapman who made a three-ball duck.

England lost Jason Roy to a back spasm and his replacement Hales opened with Bairstow in a 155-run stand for the first wicket. Hales was the second wicket to fall when England were on 177 and just 47 runs

short of victory.

Morgan had a short stay for eight while Ben Stokes was 26 not out at the end with Joe Root on 23. After the first four ODIs, which had the series level at 2-2, England had the New Zealand batsmen well worked out.

Colin Munro went on the second ball he faced, caught behind off Woakes for the third time in five innings and for his second consecutive duck. Mark Wood bowled Kane Williamson for 14 before spinners Rashid and Moeen Ali stepped up to decimate the middle of the New Zealand innings as Tom Latham (10), Chapman, Martin Guptill (47) and Colin de Grandhomme (six) fell in quick succession.

Santner, who rescued New Zealand in the first match, hit a personal-best 67 while Nicholls was out for 55 to give the innings some substance. — AFP

Raptors halt Rockets’ win streak at 17 games

LOS ANGELES: Kyle Lowry scored 30 points and the Toronto Raptors survived a furious rally by the Houston Rockets in claiming a 108-105 win on Friday at Air Canada Centre, sweeping the season series and ending the Rockets’ 17-game winning streak. DeMar DeRozan answered a game-tying 3-pointer by Rockets guard James Harden with a difficult turnaround jumper over Harden to reclaim the lead with 1:49 left. Lowry and Jonas Valanciunas followed with two free throws each sandwiched around an Eric Gordon trey. The Rockets trailed by as many as 19 points. But Houston shot just 9-of-27 on 3s; Lowry alone finished 7-for-9 from behind the arc. Harden led Houston with 40 points. DeRozan scored 23 for Toronto while Valanciunas paired 14 points with 10 rebounds. Gordon and Chris Paul scored 14 each for Houston but shot a combined 10-for-27.

WIZARDS 116, PELICANS 97

Otto Porter Jr. led six Washington players in double figures with 19 points in a rout of streaking host New Orleans. The Pelicans had won a franchise-record 10 games in a row, but were playing without All-Star forward Anthony Davis because of a sprained ankle he suffered two nights earlier in a victory at Sacramento. Darius Miller came off the bench to lead the Pelicans with 20 points. Markieff Morris added 17 points, Bradley Beal scored 16, Mike Scott had 14, Kelly Oubre Jr. had 11 and Jodie Meeks 10 for Washington, which played its 18th consecutive game without star guard John Wall, who is recovering from knee surgery.



TORONTO: Serge Ibaka #9 of the Toronto Raptors shoots the ball against the Houston Rockets on Friday at the Air Canada Centre in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. — AFP

JAZZ 95, GRIZZLIES 78

Reserve Jae Crowder scored a season-high 22 points as visiting Utah pulled away in the fourth quarter to cruise past Memphis, which has lost 16 straight games. The Jazz won their 10th straight road game and for the 17th time in 19 games despite a quiet showing from rookie Donovan Mitchell, who was held to 12 points on 4-of-15 shooting. Rookie Dillon Brooks scored 18 for Memphis, which is on the longest losing streak in the NBA this season. The skid also is the franchise's longest since moving from Vancouver following the 2000-01 season.

BUCKS 120, KNICKS 112

Khris Middleton had 30 points on 11-for-16

shooting and Giannis Antetokounmpo had 28 points and 10 rebounds as Milwaukee defeated New York in Milwaukee. Tim Hardaway Jr. had 26 points on 10-for-20 shooting and Troy Williams added 18 points off the bench to lead the Knicks, who lost their sixth straight game and for the 14th time in their last 15 games. The Bucks snapped a two-game losing streak by scorching the New York defense. Milwaukee finished 41-for-73 from the field (56.2 percent) and hit 8 of 18 from 3-point range as it won for just the second time in eight games.

PACERS 112, HAWKS 87

Bojan Bogdanovic paced a balanced attack with 21 points, and Indiana routed Atlanta in Indianapolis. Myles Turner finished with 17 points and 12 rebounds, and Victor Oladipo had 17 points, five rebounds and five assists for the Pacers, who bounced back from a 20-point blowout loss to Utah to win for the fourth time in the last five games. The Pacers are getting healthy for the stretch run. Veteran point guard Darren Collison returned after missing the last 12 games recovering from knee surgery. Collison scored 17 points off the bench in 21 minutes.

PISTONS 99, BULLS 83

Blake Griffin scored 25 points with eight rebounds and eight assists as Detroit snapped its four-game losing streak with a rout of Chicago in Detroit. Reggie Bullock added 21 points and Andre Drummond grabbed a game-high 17 rebounds and blocked four shots while scoring only five points for the Pistons. Cameron Payne had 17 points off the bench to lead Chicago. Kris Dunn was the Bulls’ only other double-digit scorer with 13 points as they fell back to earth following Wednesday’s 119-110 victory against Memphis. — Reuters

South Africa edge ahead on the day the music died

PORT ELIZABETH: AB de Villiers scored a stylish, unbeaten half-century as patient South Africa edged ahead of Australia on a slow wicket on the second day of the second test, going to the close at 263 for seven at St George's Park yesterday.

The home side have a narrow advantage of 20 runs with the brilliant De Villiers on 74 from 81 balls and all-rounder Vernon Philander to resume on 14 in the search for what could be crucial first innings runs in an engrossing contest.

Opener Dean Elgar (57 from 197 balls) and Hashim Amla (56 from 148 balls) had earlier put on 88 in 46.2 overs for the third wicket as South Africa crawled towards Australia's first innings total of 243, including adding just 43 runs in 26 overs in the middle session of the day.

But once De Villiers came to the wicket, he immediately started scoring all round the wicket, injecting urgency into the South African innings and putting the pressure back on the Australian bowlers.

The tourists continued to chip

away at the other end though, with the reverse-swinging ball collecting four quick wickets after tea. Amla was bowled by an excellent delivery from Mitchell Starc (1-78) that cannoned into his off-stump, before Elgar edged Josh Hazlewood (1-73) to wicketkeeper Tim Paine.

Mitchell Marsh (2-26), who had been ill on day one, looked full of energy as he got two balls to tail in late and remove home captain Faf du Plessis (9) and Theunis de Bruyn (1) leg before wicket.

When spinner Nathan Lyon (1-29) bowled Quinton de Kock (9), South Africa still trailed by 16 runs with three wickets remaining, but De Villiers continued to play positive cricket as he looked supremely comfortable at the crease, in stark contrast to just about every other batsman in the game.

BAND STAND

One of the elements that had livened up a slow day out in the middle, the brass band that has been a popular fixture at St George's Park for two decades, was asked to stop playing by umpires Kumar Dharmasena and Sundaram Ravi, who claimed they could not hear the nicks off the bat.

That left large sections of the crowd chanting their displeasure but with each run scored by the home side, those jeers turned to cheers as South Africa look to level the four-match series having lost the first Test in Durban by 118 runs. — Reuters

SCOREBOARD

PORT ELIZABERTH: Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of 2nd test between South Africa and Australia yesterday at Port Elizabeth, South Africa.

Australia 1st innings - 243 all out	
South Africa 1st innings	
D Elgar c Paine b Hazlewood	57
A Markram lbw Cummins	11
K Rabada b Cummins	29
H Amla b Starc	56
AB de Villiers Not Out	74
F du Plessis lbw M Marsh	9
De Bruyn lbw M Marsh	1
De Kock b Lyon	9
V Philander Not Out	14
Extras 0b 2lb 0nb 0pen 1w	3
Total (95.0 overs)	263-7
Fall of Wickets: 1-22 Markram, 2-67 Rabada, 3-155 Amla, 4-155 Elgar, 5-179 du Plessis, 6-183 de Bruyn, 7-227 de Kock	
To Bat: Maharaj, Ngidi	
Bowling: Mitchell Starc 26-4-78-1; Josh Hazlewood 24-4-73-1; Pat Cummins 20-6-55-2; Nathan Lyon 16-5-29-1; Mitchell Marsh 9-1-26-2.	

Sports

Ronaldo double gives Real narrow win over Eibar

Real move four points behind second-placed Atletico Madrid

EIBAR: Cristiano Ronaldo came to the rescue again as Real Madrid followed up their thumping win over Paris Saint-Germain with a narrow victory against Eibar. Ronaldo scored twice, his second six minutes from the end, as Real won 2-1 and avoided another slip-up in La Liga. Ivan Ramis had equalised for Eibar shortly after half-time.

His double means Ronaldo has now scored in seven consecutive games and has a remarkable 13 goals over-all in that period. Real move four points behind second-placed Atletico Madrid, who will restore that gap to seven with a win over Celta Vigo today. Eibar stay eighth.

After securing a 5-2 aggregate victory over Paris Saint-Germain on Tuesday, Real swapped the Parc des Princes for the Ipurua Municipal Stadium, the smallest in La Liga with a capacity of just over 7,000.

They were below their best and rode their luck late on when Eibar should have converted a pair of excellent chances. But Ronaldo proved the difference again, the 33-year-old taking his tally for the season to 35 goals in 37 appearances.

Zinedine Zidane had insisted the success in Paris was now "forgotten" and his starting line-up suggested as much, with Karim Benzema the only key player rested.

Gareth Bale started up front alongside Ronaldo, while Luka Modric and Toni Kroos, fit enough only to come off the bench in midweek, returned. Isco and

Casemiro formed the top and tail of a midfield diamond.

Real were ragged early on as Takashi Inui, Kike Garcia and Joan Jordan all went close to giving Eibar the lead. Raphael Varane had to be replaced by Nacho after taking a bang to the head and, against the run of play, Real edged ahead in the 33rd minute.

A sloppy pass out from the back by Anaitz Arbilla conceded possession to Luka Modric who quickly picked out Ronaldo with a sublime bending pass. Ronaldo chested the ball down and slammed it in at the near post. In front, Real improved but five minutes

into the second half and Eibar were level. Sergio Ramos lost his man at a corner and Ramis nodded in from six yards.

Ronaldo should have restored the advantage but failed to convert an excellent Bale cross and from the resulting corner, Bale flashed a glancing header just wide of the post.

Isco and Kroos made way for Benzema and Lucas Vazquez with 19 minutes left but Eibar had two golden chances to score a second.

First, the unmarked Inui headed over from seven yards out and then Kike hit the side-netting with only Keylor Navas to beat. They would soon prove costly misses. In the 84th minute, Pedro Leon gave away possession too easily, allowing Modric to feed Daniel Carvajal out wide. His whipped cross found the leaping Ronaldo and the Portugese made no mistake. — AFP



EIBAR: Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale (L) challenges Eibar's Argentinian midfielder Gonzalo Escalante during the Spanish league football match between Eibar and Real Madrid at the Ipurua stadium in Eibar yesterday. — AFP

Ronaldo has scored in 7 consecutive games

Everton cruise to victory, Newcastle win

LONDON: Wayne Rooney's penalty miss mattered little as Everton continued their fine home form as they earned a 2-0 victory over Brighton and Hove Albion in the Premier League yesterday. The hosts dominated in the first half but couldn't find a way past a Brighton side who travelled to Goodison Park on the back of three wins in their last four games in all competitions.

However, two goals in the second half saw the hosts home. Gaetan Bong put through his own net on the hour mark, before January signing Cenk Tosun smashed into the net in the 76th minute and Rooney could even afford to miss his penalty.

Brighton, who had Anthony Knockaert sent off for a dangerous tackle, dropped to 11th after a first defeat in eight in all competitions, now below Everton, whose ninth Premier League home win of the season lifted them to ninth. Earlier, Newcastle United moved clear of the Premier League's relegation zone after on-loan Brazilian winger Kenedy scored twice and Matt Ritchie added another in a 3-0 home win over struggling Southampton yesterday.

Kenedy, who was loaned to Newcastle by champions Chelsea in January, opened the scoring in the second minute and made it 2-0 in the 29th after a superb breakaway move involving Ayoze Perez and striker Dwight Gayle.

Ritchie scored the third shortly before the hour with



LIVERPOOL: Everton's English striker Wayne Rooney shoots from the penalty spot but fails to score during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Brighton and Hove Albion at Goodison Park in Liverpool, yesterday. — AFP

a crisp low show from 20 metres as Newcastle celebrated their first win in eight Premier League games against the Saints, who have won only one of their last 17 top-flight matches. Having scored his first goals for

the Magpies, Kenedy also became the first Newcastle player to bag a brace at St James' Park this season, with the home side missing several chances to win by an even bigger margin. — Reuters



WEST BROMWICH: Leicester City's Spanish midfielder Vicente Iborra heads the ball to score his team's fourth goal during the English Premier League football match between West Bromwich Albion and Leicester City at The Hawthorns stadium in West Bromwich. — AFP

Mahrez majestic as Leicester come back to beat West Brom

WEST BROMWICH ALBION: Riyad Mahrez produced a majestic performance to create one goal and score another as Leicester City came back from a goal down to hammer bottom side West Bromwich Albion 4-1 in the Premier League yesterday.

The home side got off to a superb start when striker

Salomon Rondon stole the ball in front of his marker to stab home a deft volley in the eighth minute.

The advantage lasted just 13 minutes as Jamie Vardy put Leicester back on level terms with an even better volley, latching on to a superb long pass from Mahrez to fire home his 14th Premier League goal of the season. Mahrez then latched on to substitute Kelechi Iheanacho's pass to dink the ball home and give Leicester the lead just after the hour mark. Iheanacho's 76th-minute header made it 3-1, prompting many of the home fans to head towards the exits.

Vicente Iborra's stoppage-time header rounded off another dismal day for struggling West Brom. West Brom stayed rooted to the bottom, eight points from safety, while Leicester are eighth on 40 points.

Huddersfield held by 10-man Swansea City

HUDDERSFIELD TOWN: Huddersfield Town failed to convert any of their 29 shots and were held to a goalless draw by 10-man Swansea City in yesterday's Premier League clash.

After an even start to the game, Swansea forward Jordan Ayew was shown a straight red card in the 11th minute for a bad challenge on Huddersfield midfielder Jonathan Hogg, leaving the visitors with a tough task on their hands.

Huddersfield's best chance of the half came in the 42nd minute when Steve Mounie's header looped just over the bar as Swansea held on to go into the break with the scores level.

The hosts piled on the pressure in the second half and saw a Tom Ince header strike the woodwork in the 91st minute with the resilient visitors securing a hard-fought draw.

West Ham United could face serious repercussions after several pitch invasions during the second half of a crushing 3-0 home Premier League defeat by Burnley.

West Ham, dangerously close to the relegation zone, dominated the first half but everything turned sour at the London Stadium after the break. Ashley Barnes fired Burnley ahead in the 66th minute, prompting furious home fans to run on to the pitch. If that was not bad enough Chris Wood doubled Burnley's lead minutes later and this time there were scuffles in the stands and one fan ran on and took the corner flag. Wood made it 3-0 as chaos broke out in the stadium, with West Ham's owners David Gold and David Sullivan being asked to leave the directors' box for their own safety. Defeat left West Ham in 16th place, three points above the relegation zone. — Reuters

Papa Messi misses Barca match for birth of third son

BARCELONA: Lionel Messi announced that he and his wife Antonella Rocuzzo had become parents for a third time yesterday. "Welcome Ciro!! Thank God, everything went perfectly. He and his mummy are doing very well. We are super happy!!!" wrote Messi on his Instagram account, accompanying the post with a photo of the baby's hand. Ciro is a brother to five-year-old Thiago and Mateo, who is two. Messi had pulled out of Barcelona's squad for Saturday's La Liga match at Malaga to be present for the birth.

The club tweeted: "Change to the squad. Messi is out for personal reasons and Yerry Mina takes his place." The Argentinian couple, both 30, first met in their home town, Rosario, in 1996 and started going out a decade later. They were married last year in Rosario. Barcelona, who face Chelsea in the second leg of their last-16 Champions League tie at the Camp Nou on Wednesday, have an eight-point lead over Atletico Madrid at the top of La Liga. — AFP

Sports

Ali Makhseed hits the pedal to the gold medal, for the second year running



KUWAIT: In front of 2,500 spectators, defending champion, Ali Makhseed, managed to secure the 2018 Kuwait King of Drift title in an outstanding manner. Second place went to Fahad AlJedei, followed by Mesyar Abu Shaibah who rounded up the podium.

In celebration of ten years since the first ever Red Bull Car Park Drift event in Lebanon, drifters competed to clinch the crown. Having had hosted a successful adrenaline-filled Series Final on December 8, Kuwait was, no doubt, in the position to impress thousands of drifting and motorsport fans alike.

Red Bull Car Park Drift was organized by Basel Salem AlSabah Motor Racing Club and sponsored by Total, Falken Tyres, Drag 965, Acqua Eva, and Talabat. Media partner, Kuwait Times, covered this popular event.

The day started with motorsport spectators lining up to witness the high adrenaline spectacle and thrown-thirsty drifters going head to head for the coveted title.

The drifters then began the first heat consisting of 26 drifters on a challenging track concocted by Abdo Feghali, previous Guinness World Book Record holder for the longest drift. The top eight who broke through to round two were Ali Makhseed, Fahad AlJedei, Mesyar Abu Shaibah, Hamad Al Hajri, Abdulhadi Hjaailan, Louay Abou Ayash, Mohammad Al Azmi, and Mohammad Al Otaibi. This time, only four would make it to the next round.

Spectators and drifters anxiously awaited the final round and action to resume, to ultimately crown the winner. The final four from round three, Ali Makhseed, Fahad AlJedei, Mesyar Abu Shaibah, and Hamad Al Hajri all went head to head, with one aim: to be



crowned the 2018 Kuwait King of Drift.

Consisting of top motorsport and drifting experts and athletes, the judging panel was assigned the task of evaluating the competitors. This year's judging panel table was rounded up by Fouad Abu Arja, experienced motorsports organizer, Jean Pierre Nasrallah and Issam Najadi, rally veterans, and Khaled Al Mudhaf, local racer and Kuwait's first certified FIA racing driver.

Aiming to elevate the competition year after year, Abdo Feghali, had modified the criteria to challenge the drifters. This year their performance was determined based on car look & design (40 points), drifting skills (120 points), boxes (50 points), spiral (20 points), gate (20 points), flipper (60 points),

pendulum (50 points), car sound (20 points), and tire smoke (20 points).

Ultimately, Ali Makhseed edged past the competition and clinched the title with a jaw-dropping performance collecting an impressive 386 points. He was beaming with pride as he held the trophy and explained what it meant to him: "I am ecstatic to represent Kuwait at the 2018 Series Final, for the second year running, and aim to keep Kuwait's head held high".

Ali Makhseed will face a fierce challenge for the King of Drift title, competing against drifters from ten other countries that have participated in the series. The 2018 series kicked off in Oman on January 26 and the competition has continued since then with



qualifiers in UAE and Egypt. Qualifiers will continue in Qatar, Tunisia, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Mauritius, and Lebanon. With only one drifter from each participating country, Lebanon will welcome the 2018 Kuwait King of Drift at the Series Final this September 22 where he will compete to claim the Series Final thrown.

The competition, first hosted by Red Bull in Lebanon, provides drifting amateurs and professionals with the opportunity to highlight their skills and compete for the crown, while capturing the crowd's attention. Last year's Kuwait qualifier witnessed an exciting turnout, with local drifter, Ali Makhseed, claiming Kuwait King of Drift title and continuing to the Series Final to claim the King

of Smoke by Falken Tyres title. Omani competitor, Refaat Al Yahyai, secured the 2018 King of Drift crown after a stellar performance, at the Series Final, hosted in Kuwait, for the first time.

On a global level, the story of drifting goes back to the 1960s on winding Japanese mountain roads. A bunch of likeminded racers set out to beat their A to B times by exceeding the grip limit of their tires when taking sharp corners. It did not do much to help their racing times but instead evolved into an entirely different discipline. Drifting was born, and a Red Bull manager discovered the sport in 2005 and decided to spark a fire in the Middle East, a fire that still burns to this very day.



12 Halep, Pliskova advance, Muguruza suffers shock defeat



13 England romp home, claim ODI series on Bairstow ton



14 Ronaldo double gives Real narrow win over Eibar



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's English midfielder Ashley Young (2L) challenges Liverpool's Egyptian midfielder Mohamed Salah (2R) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Liverpool at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, yesterday.— AFP

Man United sink Liverpool

Rashford hits double in the first 25 minutes

MANCHESTER: Marcus Rashford scored twice in the first 25 minutes as Manchester United held off a Liverpool fightback to move five points clear of their visitors in second place in the Premier League with a 2-1 win at Old Trafford.

United also close to within 13 points of Manchester City, but barring a late season collapse by the runaway league leaders that gap looks unbridgeable. More significantly Jose Mourinho's men moved another huge step closer to guaranteeing a top-four finish by opening up a 12-point lead on fifth-placed Chelsea.

Liverpool were left to rue a slow start as Rashford twice finished impressively after Romelu Lukaku had outmuscled Dejan Lovren. The visitors dominated after the break, but could only find a response via a United player when Eric Bailly turned into his own net 24 minutes from time.

Just a second defeat in 21 Premier League games leaves Liverpool still in third, but they could drop to

fourth if Tottenham win at Bournemouth today. Rashford may not have even have started but for an injury to Paul Pogba suffered in training on Friday.

Without the £89 million (\$123 million) French international, Mourinho moved Alexis Sanchez inside behind Lukaku and handed Rashford his first league start of the year on the left. The Portuguese coach's plans worked to perfection when Rashford brought the game to life with a superb finish after 14 minutes.

Lukaku beat Lovren to a long ball and the England international skipped inside Trent Alexander-Arnold before smashing a shot past the helpless Loris Karius. Liverpool had chances for

an immediate response as Sadio Mane just failed to get on the end of Roberto Firmino's dangerous cross before Virgil Van Dijk skewed a header wide from close range when unmarked from a corner.

But soon Liverpool's task became doubly difficult as United's power and pace again proved too much. Lukaku shrugged off Lovren once more and when his ball through to Juan Mata was cut out by Van Dijk, Rashford swept home the rebound.

EVENTFUL AFTERNOON

An eventful afternoon for Rashford continued moments later when he escaped with just a yellow

card for a late lunge on James Milner. And he should also have had an assist to his name before half-time when a dinked cross picked out Mata perfectly only for the unmarked Spaniard to sent an acrobatic effort well wide.

Liverpool enjoyed almost complete control of the ball in the second-half but failed to find a way through the mass ranks of United defence. The visitors did have two strong appeals for penalties waived away as Ashley Young pulled at Mohamed Salah's shirt before an Andy Robertson cross rebounded off Antonio Valencia's arm. When Liverpool were handed a lifeline, it came via a United boot as Bailly who had excelled on his first start since November-flicked Mane's cross into his own net. Mourinho then drew the ire of his own fans as he replaced Rashford with Marouane Fellaini 20 minutes from time to see the game out. But once again Mourinho was justified as the hosts held out for six minutes of stoppage time.— AFP



Portuguese coach's plans worked to perfection

Chelsea edge Crystal Palace

CHELSEA: Chelsea survived a late scare to secure a 2-1 Premier League win over struggling Crystal Palace yesterday, with a Willian strike and an own goal earning them three points after successive defeats in Manchester.

Brazilian forward Willian picked up the ball on the left, cut inside and fired it along the ground, taking a deflection on the way past a diving Wayne Hennessey and in off the post in the 25th minute.

Six minutes later, a mix up between defender Martin Kelly and Hennessey earned the champions their second when a shot from Davide Zappacosta ricocheted off both Palace players into the goal, with Kelly getting the final touch. Chelsea, fifth in the standings, were in control. Palace, however, looked livelier in the second half after Wilfried Zaha replaced Christian Benteke and Alexander Sorloth hit the post. They halved the deficit late on through former Chelsea player Patrick van Aanholt to make it a nervy finish at Stamford Bridge.

Fifth-placed Chelsea moved to within four points of Liverpool, two behind Tottenham Hotspur - who play Bournemouth on Sunday - in fourth, after a nervy 2-1 win over Crystal Palace in the late kickoff.—Agencies



LONDON: Crystal Palace's English midfielder Aaron Wan-Bissaka (L) clears the ball under the eye of Chelsea's Belgian midfielder Eden Hazard (C) during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Crystal Palace at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday.— AFP

Lewandowski grabs hat-trick as Bayern rout Hamburg

BERLIN: Robert Lewandowski grabbed a hat-trick as Bayern Munich romped to a 6-0 victory over crisis-stricken Hamburg in the Bundesliga yesterday. The victory keeps Bayern on course to wrap up another Bundesliga title-their sixth in a row-before the end of March, and heaps misery on Hamburg, who are now without a win in 13 games.

Bayern have made a habit of recording big home wins over Hamburg at the Allianz Arena in recent years and it took them less than eight minutes to take the lead this time.

Franck Ribery broke away on the left before rounding goalkeeper Christian Mathenia to slot in the opener. Just four minutes later, Lewandowski headed in a Joshua Kimmich cross to double the lead for Bayern. The Polish international struck again in the 19th minute, after a pinpoint long ball from Jerome Boateng had opened up the Hamburg defence.

Arjen Robben fired in Bayern's fourth on 55 minutes, and Ribery made it five with a mazy solo run in the 80th minute. Lewandowski blasted one penalty over the bar on 85 minutes, before converting a second spot-kick minutes from time to complete his hat-trick.

His latest exploits in front of goal mean he is now Bayern's all-time leading foreign goalscorer with 141 from 182 games in all competitions, overtaking the Brazilian Giovane Elber, who played for the club from 1997 to 2003.

Bayern now hold a 20-point lead at the top of the table over Schalke, who won 1-0 at Mainz on Friday, while Hamburg remain seven points adrift of safety as they seek to avoid a first relegation in their history.—AFP

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2018

18 NBK's AGM approves distribution of 30% cash dividends, 5% bonus shares



20 In steel country, a thumbs up to Trump's trade tariffs



21 KFH, KIPCO ink MOC to offer solutions to Hessah Al-Mubarak customers



BRUSSELS: European Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmstrom (center) speaks with US trade representative Robert Lighthizer (left) as they arrive with Japan's Economy Minister Hiroshige Seko for a meeting for talks after US President imposes tariffs of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum, yesterday. — AFP

EU, Japan seek clarity on US tariffs

Crunch talks in Brussels may address China's over-supply of steel

BRUSSELS: The EU and Japan held crunch talks with their US counterparts in Brussels yesterday, hoping to get "clarity" on President Donald Trump's controversial new steel and aluminum tariffs.

Trump's announcement of duties of 25 percent on imported steel and 10 percent on aluminum has stung the European Union, along with other major partners and triggered warnings of an all-out international trade war. The real estate tycoon also faced a backlash at home with his top economic advisor Gary Cohn stepping down in opposition and senior Republican allies venting shock and dismay. Brussels has gone the furthest in fighting back, loudly announcing a list of US products to hit with countermeasures, if its exports are affected by the tariffs, but says it hopes to join Canada and Mexico in being exempted.

Japan has decried the "grave impact" the Trump measures could have on the world economy. The EU's top trade official Cecilia Malmstroem and Japanese Economy Minister Hiroshige Seko met for preliminary talks in Brussels, before being joined by US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, a loyalist to Trump's "America First" mantra. The talks, initially set to address China's over-supply of steel, have long been in the diary, but after Trump's dramatic announcement, they

are now a de facto crisis meeting.

With tensions at a peak, officials kept a tight lid on the content of the meeting and sought to keep low expectations for any breakthrough.

"We are looking for a bit more clarity on the process of what happens next from the US," an EU official said on condition of anonymity. "There are low expectations for any solution today, but maybe we can get an idea of how we can get to one," the source added.

Malmstroem told reporters on Friday that Brussels was "counting on being excluded" from the new duties. She predicted a "long day" of talks yesterday, while European Commission Vice President Jyrki Katainen sought to play down the gathering, saying it was "a meeting, not THE meeting".

Katainen said Brussels wanted "clarity" on how the

tariffs will be implemented and was ready to enforce retaliatory measures to protect European interests if needed.

"We are prepared and will be prepared if need be to use rebalancing measures," Katainen said.

tariffs, saying they risked provoking a mutually destructive "trade war".

Trump said the tariffs, which will come into effect after 15 days, will not initially apply to Canada and Mexico. He also added Australia to the list of likely carve-outs. Complicating matters, Trump indicated that Australia's carve-out was linked to an unspecified "security agreement" outside of trade policy. This shed some light on the tycoon's specific barbs against Germany—the biggest economy in the European Union—that have finger-pointed Berlin for contributing much less than the US towards the funding of NATO.

The EU exports around five billion euros' (\$4 billion) worth of steel and a billion euros' worth of aluminum to the US each year, and the European Commission, the bloc's executive arm, estimates Trump's tariffs could cost some 2.8 billion euros.

Brussels is also looking at "safeguard" measures to protect its industry—restricting the bloc's imports of steel and aluminum to stop foreign supplies flooding the European market, which is allowed under World Trade Organization rules. The EU and Japan last year formally agreed the broad outlines of a landmark trade deal that was announced as a direct challenge to the protectionism championed by Trump. — AFP



Officials tightlipped on agenda

Chancellor Angela Merkel urged dialogue and warned that "no one can win in such a race to the bottom".

French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday warned Trump against forging ahead with the planned

Turkish Airlines to buy 50 Airbus and Boeing jets

ISTANBUL: Turkish Airlines has confirmed plans to buy at least 50 wide-body aircraft from Airbus and Boeing as the flag carrier ramps up its ambitions ahead of a move to a new Istanbul airport.

The company said in a statement late Friday that it had agreed to buy 25 Boeing B787-9 aircraft, known as the Dreamliner, and 25 Airbus A350-900 aircraft. In addition, it has the option to buy five more of each aircraft from both suppliers, meaning the eventual purchase could total 60 planes.

It said six would be delivered in 2019, 14 in 2020, 10 in 2021, 12 in 2022, 11 in 2023 and 7 in the year 2024. A statement by Airbus indicated that the catalogue price of the 25 A350s alone would amount to \$9.5 billion. Turkish Airlines chief executive Ilker Ayci said that the announcement came after agreements signed during recent visits to France and the United States—the homes of Airbus and Boeing—by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He hailed the deals as a "very important initiative to meet the need for wide-body aircraft at the new airport" and strengthen the fleet ahead of the 100th anniversary of the founding of modern Turkey in 2023. "We believe this will not just accelerate the steady rise of Turkish Airlines, but also contribute to Turkish civil aviation as a whole," Ayci said, quoted by the Anadolu news agency. — AFP

Iran, Serbia resume direct flights after 27-year gap

BELGRADE: After a gap of 27 years, direct flights between Iran and Serbia resumed yesterday, when an IranAir jet touched down at Belgrade's Nikola Tesla airport, Serbian media reported. IranAir is offering a direct service between Tehran and Belgrade twice weekly, with all flights fully booked until the end of the summer, the reports said. But the service, which was launched following a visa liberalization agreement between the two countries, has raised fears it could open up a new migrant route for those seeking to stay in the EU illegally, a Serbian charity has warned.

A second Iranian carrier, Qeshm Air, is also planning to launch a service between the two capitals starting from March 19. In August 2017, Iran and Serbia agreed to liberalize visas for travel between the two countries, sparking a surge in interest on the part of Iranians.



According to the Serbian non-governmental refugee support project Info Park, some Iranians are using the visa liberalization agreement to come to Europe and stay there illegally as migrants. Last month, Info Park said a number of Iranians had arrived in Belgrade legally as tourists but had not returned home, proceeding instead to EU countries, notably France and Germany.

"Although they entered Serbia as tourists, interviews have revealed that many Iranians use their stay in Belgrade to establish connections with smugglers, who will transfer them to their desired destination, across the borders of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary or

Romania," Info Park said at the time. It said those interviewed said they were leaving for a variety of reasons including fears for their rights and freedoms, particularly linked to their political, religious or sexual orientation.

New migrant route?

Info Park said an estimated 600 Iranians could arrive in Belgrade in a single week, based on the current transport capacity. "Seeing as most of these new-arrivals do not intend to return, the migration systems in Europe must recalibrate for this new route and demographic among the migrant populations," the NGO said. — AFP

Business

NBK's AGM approves distribution of 30% cash dividends, 5% bonus shares

NBK Group achieved solid growth across all business segments in 2017



KUWAIT: NBK's Chairman Nasser Al-Sayer addresses Bank's Ordinary (AGM) and Extraordinary (EGM) General Assembly meeting yesterday.

KUWAIT: NBK's Chairman Nasser Al-Sayer affirmed that "NBK Group has achieved strong performance across all business segments during the year 2017. The Group witnessed a remarkable increase in profitability while continuing to maintain its leading position in the domestic market through providing a comprehensive range of financial products and ultimately delivering a more complete experience to its customers."

This came in Al-Sayer's message at NBK's Ordinary (AGM) and Extraordinary (EGM) General Assembly meeting that was held yesterday, at which there was a quorum of 78.079 percent. The AGM and EGM approved the Board of Directors' recommendation to distribute 30 percent cash dividend to shareholders (equivalent to 30 fils per share) and the distribution of 5 percent bonus shares (5 shares for every 100 shares owned).

"NBK continued to benefit from Kuwait's solid economy, which remains largely influenced by public sector spending", said Al-Sayer. "NBK is proud of playing a vital role in driving the growth of the national economy through participating in the financing of most of the country's major public/private projects, in Oil and Gas as well as other sectors."

Al-Sayer added that "NBK is keen to enhance its contribution to the economic development embodied in Kuwait's future vision - 'New Kuwait 2035'. The country remains a financial safe haven in a region experiencing both economic and political uncertainty. This is borne out by the strong sovereign ratings that have been issued by Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch."

Solid Performance

"NBK continued its strong performance during 2017 achieving net profits of KD 322.4 million growing at 9.2 percent year-on-year. The solid results confirm the Bank's successful conservative strategy, prudent risk management in addition to the Bank's commitment in applying the highest standards across the different business sectors," said Al-Sayer.

"The Bank continues to enjoy a leading position in the domestic market given its strong financial position and its deep understanding of customers' needs. NBK continues to provide its clients with innovative and diversified products and services while still maintaining the Bank's unique position in leading and financing development projects."

"Growth in revenues from Islamic Banking continued through Boubyan Bank, our fully consolidated Kuwaiti subsidiary, leading to a growing contribution to Group consolidated profits. In 2017, Boubyan Bank's Total Assets grew by 14.0 percent. The Bank is led by a highly experienced and committed management team, which is fully aligned with NBK's corporate culture."

"NBK's International operations saw another year of sustained growth and stability. Our international operations remained highly profitable contributing 27.7 percent of the Group's total profits through improving synergies and business optimization. This reflects the strength of the Bank's franchise and reputation across the world."

Financial Performance

NBK's Group CEO Isam Al-Sager said that "despite a prevailing backdrop of low but stabilizing



NBK Chairman Nasser Al-Sayer

- NBK plays a key role in supporting economic growth domestically
- The solid performance reflects the success of the bank's conservative strategy, its prudent risk management practices and adoption of highest standards
- NBK is keen to continue contributing to the overall economic development and to Kuwait's future vision - 'New Kuwait 2035'
- The Bank continues to be the market leader domestically and enjoys a strong position in leading and financing development projects
- We support Boubyan Bank's positioning in the Islamic Banking market with preserving its total independence

oil prices, NBK maintained leadership across core banking segments in Kuwait, defending our position as the country's foremost financial services provider."

"NBK profits accounted for 40 percent of the banking system's profits in 2017. On the other hand, the Bank accounted for around 43 percent of the system dividends."

"Total assets as of year-end 2017 reached KD 26.0 billion (\$86.3 billion) up 7.4 percent compared to year-end 2016 while customer deposits grew by 9.3 percent year-on-year to reach KD 13.8 billion (\$45.7 billion). Customer loans and advances reached KD 14.5 billion (\$48.1 billion) as of year-end 2017, 6.5 percent up from last year's levels," Al-Sager added.

Al-Sager also mentioned that the Group reported net profits of KD 322.4 million (\$1,068 million) for the period, a 9.2 percent increase on 2016. The growth in operating surplus (Net Operating Income less Operating Expenses) was particularly strong, growing 13.0 percent year-on-year to KD 557.2 million (\$1,847 million).

The contribution to Group earnings from Islamic Banking continued to demonstrate the benefits of NBK's long-established strategy of earnings diversifi-

cation, NBK recorded solid and continued growth at the Bank's Islamic banking subsidiary, Boubyan Bank. Profits at Boubyan Bank grew by 15.9 percent, to KD 47.6 million (\$157.8 million).

International Operations

In the context of international operations, earnings from international operations contributed to 27.7 percent of 2017 Group earnings. The Bank is committed to develop its international operations to further diversify its income and minimize risks.

Al-Sager added that "the strong growth achieved by the Bank in Egypt confirms its continued success in enhancing its position in the Egyptian market, which is one of the main growth markets for NBK Group. NBK-Egypt recorded a net profit of EGP 1,503 million in 2017 compared to EGP 849 million in 2016; growing at 77.07 percent, the highest growth rate in the Egyptian banking sector."

Al-Sager pointed that the strength of NBK-Egypt profits are derived from operating profits resulting from the improvement in the business environment in Egypt and confirming the relevant stability in the market. NBK Group's investments in Egypt are strategic long-term investments and represents approximately one third of the Group's profits from international operation. This reflects the confidence that the Group has in the Egyptian market and pushes for further commitment by the Group to expand in Egypt.

"NBK continues to signify judicious and strategic identification of new and profitable markets. This was translated in 2017 where we began the process of establishing our wealth management business in Saudi Arabia. Having completed the licensing requirements, a CMA-regulated entity will launch in 2018. This new franchise, which will marry the services of both our Private Banking unit and NBK Capital, is designed to tap into the GCC's largest economy, as well as into its considerable depth of investible assets."

"NBK has also been granted an approval SAMA to open two new branches in Saudi Arabia in addition to our existing branch in Jeddah; a branch in Riyadh and a branch in Dammam. Likewise, in China, we opened a new branch in Shanghai, which will service the financing requirements of Chinese contractors participating in Kuwait's strong pipeline of infrastructure projects" said Al-Sager.

Capital and Ratings

The Group maintained a strong level of capitalization throughout the year. NBK's capital adequacy ratio at year-end was 17.8 percent (17.7 percent in 2016). This level of capitalization is in keeping with NBK's risk appetite, and is comfortably in excess of NBK's Basel III capital adequacy requirement as determined by the Central Bank of Kuwait.

"Despite the challenging operating environment, NBK maintained its leadership in the banking sector in Kuwait. NBK continues to enjoy collectively one of the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international rating agencies Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, and its disciplined approach to risk management, in addition to its highly



NBK Group CEO Isam Al-Sager

- NBK Group strengthened its position as the best financial services provider in Kuwait
- Our profits remain the largest among Kuwaiti corporates and among the highest in the region
- International operations contribution to profits at 27.7%
- NBK Group maintained high levels of capitalization with BASEL III CAR at 17.8% in 2017
- Special focus on the Egyptian market given the growth opportunities it offers for the Group
- 77.07% growth in NBK-Egypt profits; the highest growth rate in the Egyptian banking sector
- Expanding into Saudi Arabia through our newly established wealth management entity

recognized and very stable management team," mentioned Al-Sager. Moreover, NBK was named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for twelve consecutive times.

Development Plan

Commenting on the operating environment and the macro outlook, NBK's Deputy GCEO Shaikha Al-Bahar said "In terms of economic development, we remain committed to supporting the program of the government of Kuwait, as outlined by New Kuwait 2035. NBK continues to play a leading role in financing a wide range of mega projects: from clean fuels to education, infrastructure and housing. We have a long history of contributing positively to Kuwait's economic growth and look forward to doing so in the years to come."

Al-Bahar added that "implementation of Kuwait's development plan has been moving rapidly in the last few years. The country's needs are more urgent, and the government is, and has been more dedicated. As a result, project financing opportunities have been more plentiful, in oil and non-oil areas. The sectors that benefitted the most are construction, power and

Business



A view of the NBK's general assembly.

oil. This is an expression of optimism about the positive prospects of the local economy, thanks to Kuwait's strong financial position, substantial buffers and low sovereign debt which puts the country on a more sustainable economic path.

On the project financing side, NBK has been and will continue to be at the forefront of this market segment as the largest and most capable institution in Kuwait in structuring and underwriting large transactions. During 2017, NBK played a role in financing several mega transactions among them are Kuwait Airport Expansion (KD 1.3 billion) and KNPC's LNG Import and Regasification (\$2.9 billion).

"NBK is one of the few financial institutions in the country to have a specialized project financing unit managed and operated by a large group of highly qualified and experienced staff with an exceptional track record in projects finance," Al-Bahar noted.

During the course of 2017, the Bank engaged in a range of initiatives to further diversify sources of funding, already an area of competitive strength for the Group. A major highlight was the establishment of a \$3.0 billion Global Medium Term Notes program. As part of this program, the Group issued 5-year senior unsecured notes amounting to \$750 million, priced at a fixed interest rate of 2.75 percent per annum payable semi-annually in arrears.

The issue was well-received by the market, with bids totaling \$2.2 billion, a 2.9x oversubscription. Other initiatives included the launch of a multi-currency CD program at NBK International (UK), as well as the launch of a range of innovative deposit products for new and existing clients.

Al-Bahar stressed that the Group's focus on the formulation and wise execution of the strategy along with the commitment to the best practices in financial and risk management are the main keys to value creation for our shareholders. The Group also focuses on investing heavily in advanced technologies and innovative solutions that enhances the Bank's competitive advantage, operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

International markets

NBK was among the first banks to capture regional and international expansion opportunities. It is a key to the Bank's diversification strategy and positions the Bank ahead of competition with one of the largest international banking network.

Regionally, NBK focuses on Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The Bank's offering in those two markets is mainly focused on the general macro-economic backdrop with more emphasis on wholesale banking while building corporate relationships with blue chip companies and GREs.

Other than the Bank's GCC offering, as Egypt emerges from a period of instability and while the economic reform program starts to deliver stability, it represents a strong growth opportunity for NBK going forward. Egypt is among the largest in the Middle Eastern markets, with a well-diversified economic base and the largest population in the region. That offers NBK a great opportunity in Egypt with the very low banking penetration rate that currently exists.

Under NBK's presence in international key markets (London, New York, Paris, China and Singapore), we continue to see strong inflows of capital and deposits from HNWIs, financial institutions, oil companies, correspondent banks and government agencies; all seeking the safety and stability of NBK. The Bank continues to leverage our strong



NBK Deputy GCEO Shaikha Al-Bahar

- NBK Group was the largest player in financing the development projects in 2017
- Optimistic about the Kuwaiti economy and its ability to continue with capital spending policy
- Government accelerating pace of capital expenditure despite low oil prices
- The GMTN issuance confirmed the attractiveness of NBK's name among global investors
- NBK plays a primary role in financing and arranging mega deals for government projects
- The Bank continues to attract deposits internationally given its leadership position and high credit ratings

franchise along with our high credit ratings to attract funds in international markets.

Leadership Position

On his behalf, NBK-Kuwait CEO, Salah Al-Fulaij said "NBK maintains a leading position in the banking sector in Kuwait across all KPIs. In order for the Bank to continue to have a long-term and positive impact on the economy, society and environment; NBK's sustainability model is based on six key pillars of focus: economic development, customers, governance, people, caring for the environment and giving back to the community."

Oil Sector

Al-Fulaij mentioned that "NBK is the proven choice and the primary partner when it comes to oil sector related financing. NBK was a mandated lead arranger for a number of prestigious projects, including the financing of KNPC's Clean fuels project (the largest Kuwaiti Dinar syndicated financing in the history of Kuwait) and around KD 1.5 billion long-term senior financing for Equate Petrochemicals for the acquisition of ME Global to become one of the leading producers of petrochemical products in the world. Furthermore, NBK was also one of the largest participants in the first global bond issuance of Equate."

A Year of Innovation

"NBK has a long, established and celebrated track record for stability and conservatism. But this reputa-

tion does not preclude innovation for driving future growth. In 2017, the Bank's leadership and staff made considerable progress in the enhancement of internal technology and systems, as well as in the roll-out of industry-leading digital and smart banking platforms that directly benefit customers. Through constant innovation, NBK secures its future, and ensures both the acquisition and retention of customers," Al-Fulaij indicated.

Banking Technologies

"Innovation also applies to our achievements in developing in-house technology and improving digitization, both in the back-office to control costs and in the front-office to provide new services to customers. In 2017, we took a 'mobile first' approach to digital banking platforms, growing our contactless payment services through 'Tap & Pay', which allows customers to make purchases with wearables and contactless cards. Internally, we are in the process of developing a new and improved cash management offering, as well as enhancing synergy and connectivity between our global branches. The effect of this approach has been to improve cross-selling across the Bank, while delivering a more holistic customer journey. With more digital solutions in the pipeline for 2018, we are confident of maintaining our regional leadership position, distinguishing ourselves from the competition by increasing ease-of-use and our relevance to the millennial generation" Al-Fulaij added.

Human Capital

Al-Fulaij also stated that "in terms of people, we have maintained a commitment to delivering a wide range of high quality training and development programs for employees at all levels. We are proud of the opportunities that we provide for our people, because we know that our ongoing success depends on attracting and retaining the best talent. In the same vein, this year's 'I am NBK' campaign has been vital for instilling the Bank's most important values in employees, allowing them to take ownership and responsibility for the quality of their work."

"During 2017, NBK recruited 341 employees of which 267 are nationals. The Bank enjoys a nationalization percentage of 65.4 percent. This affirms NBK's pride as one of the biggest recruiter of nationals and implementing a principle of investing in young national talents at the top of the Bank's priorities."

"NBK encourages its employees to pursue higher educational and professional degrees. Thus, the Bank has tied promotions and financial incentives to certifications obtained by employees. By applying so, the Bank ensures the continuous development of its staff."

NBK is The Biggest Contributor to CSR

NBK's Chairman Al-Sayer said that "NBK is proud to be at the forefront of private sector organizations when it comes to dedications of social and humanitarian initiatives and programs. The Bank implements such programs and initiatives every year and has been the largest contributor to the community in Kuwait among all corporates in Kuwait since the Bank's inception 65 years ago."

Al-Sayer added that "NBK contributions account for 34 percent of total banking sector contributions to CSR while the Bank is also the biggest supporter for the National Employment Program with a 37 percent of total banking sector national recruitment."

"NBK's CSR activities are formed around four pillars: Social Development, Children's Care, Health and Environmental Development. Our most important



NBK-Kuwait CEO Salah Al-Fulaij

- NBK is a lead arranger for many mega projects in Kuwait
- Innovation is driving future growth through the implementation of improved technology and more digitization
- NBK is the proven first choice and the primary partner in the oil sector
- The bank made significant progress in developing in-house technologies in 2017
- NBK launched digital banking platforms to deliver a more holistic customer journey
- In the process of developing a new and improved cash management offering, as well as enhancing synergy to improve cross-selling across the Group
- Maintaining our regional leadership position with more digital solutions in the pipeline for 2018

recent community contributions include continued investment in NBK Children's Hospital, consisting of Stem Cell Therapy Unit, Pediatric Hematology and Pediatric Oncology, the 'I have a dream' initiative and last but not least the NBK Academy, which allows children and students from a wide age range to gain direct experience of - and guidance on - careers in banking. In the last two decades, NBK's social contributions have exceeded KD 180 million, and we remain committed to directly contributing to the communities in which we work."

Thanks and appreciation

Al-Sayer extended his thanks and appreciation to the authorities for their continued support of Kuwait's economic stability and growth. Thanks and appreciation was also extended to the CBK and CMA for their continuous leadership, support and guidance. He also extended his thanks to NBK's shareholders for their continuous support and faith in NBK as a leader bank in the region. Furthermore, thanks have been extended to employees across the world represented by the executive management, whom made the experience of customers so rewarding.

Distributions Date

Cash dividends and bonus shares will be distributed starting Monday, 2nd of April, 2018. The distribution will be to the shareholders on the bank's records as of the record date Thursday, 29th of March 2018.

Business

In steel country, a thumbs up to Trump's trade tariffs

Pittsburgh-based union with some 850,000 workers a powerful voice

KOPPEL, US: US lawmakers, industry leaders and foreign governments have decried President Donald Trump's tariffs on steel and aluminum imports.

But the controversial measures have been met with a far different reaction in and around Steel City. Workers and companies in the Pittsburgh area, the industrial engine of western Pennsylvania that used to produce much of the world's steel, said Friday they were solidly behind the move. Trump's announcement is not a protectionist measure but a nod to America's workers and a restoration of fairness that has been absent for decades, they argue. "The steelworkers have never asked for special treatment, all we asked is for a level playing field," Bobby "Mac" McAuliffe, who heads the United Steelworkers union District 10 in Pennsylvania, told AFP.

"And those countries that cheat should pay the price through the increase in tariffs."

The Pittsburgh-based union, which represents some 850,000 workers in North America, is a powerful voice in an industry that has been crippled by cheap imports. Labor representatives of industry titans like US Steel lined up behind Trump in the Oval Office Thursday as he announced the tariffs, which drew immediate condemnation from congressional leaders in his own party as well as trade organizations that expressed concern over how the move would impact other industries, and potentially millions of workers. For steel, it marked yet another step in what one executive called "an enormous comeback" for the industry.

"The overall effect is positive," Piotr Galitzine, chief executive of TMK IPSCO, a global leader in producing oil and gas pipes, said in an interview.

'Lose a little, gain a lot'

For Russia-based parent company TMK, the tariffs hit in both directions. "We stand to lose a little on the import side, but gain a lot more on the domestic side," he said.

TMK-IPSCO operates 10 US facilities with 2,000 US-based employees, and "they're delighted" with the

tariffs, Galitzine said. "It's no secret a lot of blue collar voters voted for Trump on the strength

of his promise to bring back jobs" after seeing manufacturing positions exported over the last 40 years, he added. At the company's Koppel plant, tons of scrap metal is melted down in an electric arc furnace that reaches temperatures above 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit (1,650 Celsius). It is turned into seamless pipe in a facility in nearby Ambridge. Talk in Koppel was less about the political or trade ramifications of the tariffs—and the possible trade war that might erupt as a result—than the optimism for the local plant and the industry in general.

"We anticipate a very, very strong year this year," general manager Reagan Kinser said.

Mike Sabat, president of local United Steelworkers union 9305 and a maintenance employee at Ambridge, said workers saw Trump's move as "favorable" to the US industry.

"They feel it's going to create jobs," he said. Not everyone agrees. The president's move will spark "swift and highly targeted" retaliation from abroad, with countervailing tariffs on US exports, said Christopher Plummer, president of Metal Strategies, a consulting firm that analyzes the industry. Prices will also rise on some goods that use aluminum, like cars and canned beer. "The question is whether it causes much pain," Plummer said. The steel industry overall has recovered to a healthy degree from the collapse of oil prices in 2014, Plummer noted. But Pittsburgh, perfectly positioned near highly prized coal and metal

sources and at the confluence of three rivers, has been shifting away from heavy industry for years, said Chris Briem, a regional economist at the University of Pittsburgh. And metal works have moved on to more profitable locations and more flexible, economic and mobile technology. In the 1950s, when Pittsburgh's steel industry was the most competitive and biggest in the world, the region hosted more than 100,000 jobs in iron and steel mills. That number has shriveled to just 5,000 today, as dramatic improvements



KOPPEL: A furnace heats steel at the TMK Ipsco Koppel plant in Koppel, Pennsylvania on Friday.—AFP

in productivity and shifts in technology have changed the industry forever, according to Briem.

"You're not going to rebuild heavy industry in

western Pennsylvania, with the tariffs or without," he said. "There's no steel mill here waiting to restart." —AFP

Bayt.com weekly report

Body language can make you a better job candidate

KUWAIT: Many people have a fear of job interviews, especially if they don't know how to control their body language and gestures! Your body language can say a lot about you and can give the interviewer either a favorable or an unfavorable impression. For instance, if your body language exudes nervousness or a lack of confidence, this can negatively impact your interviewer's opinion of you as a candidate.

To help you be confident in job interviews with the use of body language techniques, here are a few tips from the Middle East's #1 Job Site, Bayt.com, that will make your interview journey much easier.

Greetings

When you enter the room and face the interviewer or panel of interviewers, make sure you greet all panel members well by saying greetings and thanking them for taking the time to interview you. Shaking hands as soon as you greet them will grant you more power and self-confidence. It also helps you seem more friendly and approachable. Be sure to also have a healthy posture and a firm grip as soon as you walk into the room to show your confidence.

Smiling

Nobody likes to see a grumpy face! Let the magic of your 1000-watt smile control the full session. If you start the interview with a smile, you are guaranteed to feel relieved. The interviewer, or panel member, will also feel more comfortable looking at your face and talking to you. You can always negotiate and express yourself with a kind smile. Remember that if you get the job, you will be working alongside the people who interview you, so you want to make yourself seem as engaging and friendly as possible.

Eye Contact

Make sure to always maintain eye contact with the interviewer while they are talking to you. Though, you should avoid staring; a soft glance is more than enough. You do not want to make the interviewer feel uncomfortable or like they are under a microscope. To an extent, you should behave like you are meeting a potential friend for the first time. Make sure they know they have your full attention and that you are listening intently.

If you are being interviewed by a panel instead of an individual, don't forget that you must keep a balanced eye contact with all panel members when it is your turn to speak instead of focusing on one person. As for when a panel member is speaking, you should focus

your attention on them. There will always be one panel member who seems kinder than the others and focusing on them most of the time will help you feel more comfortable, self-confident and empowered. So, whenever you feel nervous or interview fear is setting in, you should look at that person to feel calmer.

Another tip to keep in mind when it comes to eye contact, is that it goes hand in hand with the rest of your facial and body expressions. Make sure that your face is relaxed when engaging in eye contact so that it doesn't look like you are glaring. Check that you have a neutral, not a frowning, forehead when listening to others and paying close attention so that you look interested, not confused. Shift your body with the direction of your eye contact so that it doesn't look like it is an effortless gesture or a 'look down' on someone.

Hand Gestures

The question I get asked the most is, 'What should I do with my hands?!' The best place, in my opinion, is to have them free on top of the table around you. If there is no table, you should place your hands on top of the arms of the chair you are sitting in, or fold them on top of your legs. While speaking, it is good to use your hands and move them while you are explaining as it makes you look more expressive, but be careful not to overact here as it can be distracting for the interviewer. Likewise, avoid being too fidgety with your hands and objects that are in front of you, as that can show that you are either lacking confidence or lacking interest in the interview.

Nodding

Nodding of the head can differ in meaning from one culture to another. Nodding your head in most Arab countries means that you accept what you are hearing and that you are concentrating and following what the interviewer has to say in terms of requests, questions and information. This is a very useful tool that indicates to the interviewer that you are focused and have a genuine interest in the company and position. It also improves the interview flow and smoothens the back and forth between you and the interviewer(s).

Balance

Make it spontaneous! Avoid overacting in the interview by only focusing on body language. You want to seem as natural as possible. Blatantly pretending to be interested, happy, or confident can put you in trouble and counter the impression you are trying to make.

Also remember that it is all about practicing even when it comes to body language and how it can be used during interviews. Going to many interviews and observing will allow you to understand and master the art of body language. This will make it a useful tool in helping you get the job.

You can also practice your potential questions and answers in front of a friend or a mirror and see what type of body language you have and how expressive you seem to be.

BAYAN WEEKLY MARKET REPORT

Boursa Kuwait stocks close on week on a bearish note

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended last week in the red zone. The Price Index closed at 6,778.18 points, down by 0.44 percent from the week before closing, the Weighted Index decreased by 0.95 percent after closing at 410.49 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 950.04 points down by 0.76 percent. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 19.70 percent, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 10.23 million, whereas trading volume average was 63.90 million shares, recording a decrease of 15.47 percent.

The three Boursa indices returned to meet once again in the red zone, after the positive performance it witnessed during the previous week, which came in light of the selling pressures and the speculative operations that concentrated mainly on the small-cap stocks, especially the idle stocks that played a noticeable role in the fluctuation of the Price Index in particular during most of the daily sessions of the week. Also, the Market was affected by the profit collection operations that included some leading stocks, especially the ones that recorded mixed gains during the past weeks, which negatively reflected on the performance of the Weighted and KSX-15 indices, to decline the most on the weekly level compared to the Price Index.

In addition, last week witnessed a trading activity on 145 stock out of 176 listed stock in the Market, where the prices of 76 stock declined against an increase of 50 stock, while 50 stock remained with no change.

On the other hand, Boursa Kuwait lost during the last week over KD 250 million of its market capitalization compared to the previous week, as it reached by the end of last week around KD 27.29 billion against KD 27.54 billion in a week earlier, down by 0.92 percent. By such, Boursa Kuwait gains contracted to around KD 350 million since the beginning of the year, and with a growth of 1.30 percent compared to its value at

end of 2017, where it reached then K.D. 26.94 billion. (Note: The market capitalization for the listed companies in the Primary Market is calculated based on the average number of outstanding shares as per the latest available official financial statements).

Moreover, Boursa Kuwait initiated the first session of the week with a drop to all its indices, in light of the selling pressures and the profit collection operations that included a wide range of listed stocks, especially the small-cap ones that were the most affected by the selling trend that was present in the Market, which was reflected on the Price Index's performance that recorded a loss of 0.59 percent by the end of the session, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices recorded a limited decrease, as it ended the first session of the week with a decline of 0.14 percent and 0.09 percent respectively.

The Market witnessed in the second session of the week a fluctuated performance, where the Price Index was able to realize good gains to compensate a large part of its previous session's losses, supported by the return of the purchasing operations on some small-cap stocks, especially the ones being traded with prices less than its par value; on the contrary, the Weighted and KSX-15 indices ended the session with limited decrease, affected by the continued selling operations that concentrated on a number of the leading stocks, especially in the Banks and Telecommunication sectors.

On the mid-week session however, the three Market indices returned to meet in the red zone, where it ended the session's trading with limited losses, affected by the quick speculative operations that included some small-cap stocks, in addition to some selling operations executed on a number of heavy stocks. On Wednesday's session, the Market witnessed a mixed closing to its three indices, whereas the Price Index was able to record limited gains supported by the speculative trading executed on some small-cap stocks, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices declined in light of the selling operations' control over many stocks in different sectors, especially the Consumer Services sector. Such drop came in light of a noticeable decline in the trading levels, especially in the cash liquidity, which reached by the end of the session around K.D. 7.58 million, its second lowest level since the beginning of the year. The last session of the week witnessed a selling wave on many listed

stocks, which caused all the Market indices to decline with close rates, whereas the Price Index recorded a loss of 0.44 percent, while the Weighted Index declined by 0.39 percent, and the KSX-15 Index lost 0.46 percent.

For the annual performance, the Price Index ended last week recording 5.78 percent annual gain compared to its closing in 2017, while the Weighted Index increased by 2.26 percent, and the KSX-15 recorded 3.84 percent growth.

Sectors' Indices

Four of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the green zone, seven recorded declines, whereas the Health Care sector's index closed with no change from the week before. Last week's highest gainer was the Industrial sector, achieving 1.12 percent growth rate as its index closed at 1,897.60 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Oil & Gas sector's index closed at 974.68 points recording 0.52 percent increase. The Consumer Goods sector came in third as its index achieved 0.35 percent growth, ending the week at 817.58 points.

On the other hand, the Technology sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 3.07 percent to end the week's activity at 525.64 points. The Telecommunications sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 1.45 percent, closing at 529.30 points, followed by the Financial Services sector, as its index closed at 617.27 points at a loss of 1.38 percent.

Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 106.10 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 33.21 percent of the total market trading volume. The Banks sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 26 percent of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 83.06 million shares.

On the other hand, the Banks sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 24.64 million or 48.18 percent of last week's total market trading value. The Industrial sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 9.66 million representing 18.88 percent of the total market trading value. —Prepared by: *Studies & Research Department - Bayan Investment Co.*

Stocks climb on bull market's birthday as inflation fears ebb

NEW YORK: To celebrate the bull market's ninth birthday on Friday, the three major US stock indexes climbed almost two percent and the Nasdaq closed at a record high, as February's jobs report assuaged fears of inflation and aggressive interest rate hikes.

A month ago, the market had been spooked by wage growth that fueled inflation fears, leading to a spike in volatility and a stock market correction. That sentiment has reversed over recent weeks with the market gradually nudging higher. The bull market, which began on March 9, 2009, is the second longest on record, leading to questions about how much longer it can last.

Along with the jobs data, stocks were supported by easing fears of trade wars and signs of a thaw in nuclear tensions with North Korea after US President Donald Trump said he was prepared to meet the country's leader. Inflationary fears dissipated on Friday after US Labor Department data showed nonfarm payrolls jumped by 313,000 jobs last month, while average hourly earnings rose only 0.1 percent compared with a 0.3 percent rise in January. "If we can continue like that - keep the participation

increasing and keep wages steady - that's going to be a positive scenario so the market doesn't get overly worried about inflation running away," said Catherine Avery, President of Catherine Avery Investment Management in Greenwich, Connecticut.

But investors will be watching closely to see if data from one month becomes a trend, Avery said.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 440.53 points, or 1.77 percent, to end at 25,335.74, the S&P 500 gained 47.6 points, or 1.74 percent, to 2,786.57 and the Nasdaq Composite added 132.86 points, or 1.79 percent, to 7,560.81. The S&P spiked higher ahead of the close around the time the Wall Street Journal issued a report that Trump's lawyers are seeking to use an interview with the president as leverage to end special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation. The story cited an unnamed person familiar with the discussions.

"The market is being driven by a very strong jobs report and lack of wage inflation. The Goldilocks economy reappears. But anything that accelerates the (Russia probe) and removes some uncertainty is good. The financial markets really dislike uncertainty," said Tim Ghriskey, chief investment strategist at Inverness Counsel in New York.

While the Dow ended 4.8 percent below January's record high, it was 8.5 percent above its February lows. The S&P closed 3 percent below its January record high but 10 percent above last month's lows.

For the week the S&P rose 3.5 percent while the Dow gained 3.25 percent and Nasdaq rose 4.2 percent. Advancing issues outnumbered declining ones on the NYSE by a 2.77-to-1 ratio; on Nasdaq, a 2.81-to-1 ratio favored advancers. —Reuters

Business

KFH, KIPCO ink MOC to offer financing solutions to Hessah Al-Mubarak customers

Al-Nahedh: Our financing solutions fulfill customers' ambitions



KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH), and Kuwait Projects Company Holding (KIPCO), signed a Memorandum of Cooperation 'MOC' stating that KFH offers sharia-compliant financing solutions for individual purchasers of residential or commercial property in Hessah Al-Mubarak District real estate development project. This project is considered as a masterpiece of urban development projects of the company and the most prominent real estate project in the Capital.

KFH-Group CEO, Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh affirmed KFH support to the Kuwaiti companies and to the mega development projects, while developing its individual finance services, indicating the bank will offer financing solutions to the individuals purchasers to buy units in the project as per the MOC. KFH puts its capabilities and expertise to make this project a success. KFH provides advantages to KFH customers within a range of facilities that encourage all those wishing to purchase from the project.

He added, in a press release on the sidelines of signing the MOC with KIPCO, that

KFH offers a wide range of sharia-compliant financial services to meet customers' financing needs. The bank offers products of Ijara, Murabaha, and financing against collateral. Also, KFH provides customers with financing services for purchasing, finishing and even furnishing not to mention consulting services

encourages the adoption of sophisticated ideas to contribute to solving the housing problem in Kuwait."

Al-Nahedh indicated the scope of KFH's business extends from the local market to the global and regional markets. This confirms the diversity and suitability of KFH's financing solutions. KFH participated in financing terminal II building for Kuwait International Airport, and has signed an MOC to finance the customers of the Hessah Al-Mubarak District project. It also continues to finance the SMEs. He pointed out that KFH operations in the market aims at strengthening partnership and cooperation to serve the national economy.

Meanwhile, KIPCO Group Chief Operating Officer, Samer Khanachet, said: "As the master planner of Hessah Al-Mubarak District, KIPCO is delighted to be working with leading financial institutions to provide financing options for future residents. With this memorandum of cooperation, we are looking forward to working with KFH to offer Sharia compliant financing solutions for individual purchasers of residential or commercial property in the district."

He added: "At the end of 2017, we completed the infrastructure work for Hessah Al-Mubarak District. As the district's master planner, KIPCO has been keen to ensure that future residents and visitors of our district



Construction work to begin soon

by a distinguished group of experienced staff in the construction and finishing stages.

He continued "KFH views Hessah Al-Mubarak District project as a unique investment in real estate. It carries an idea and a call for citizens to live in the capital and adopts the approach of vertical housing, which makes it a model that we hope will succeed. This



enjoy an unprecedented experience. Construction work and the development of land plots will begin once all necessary handovers of public facilities has been made to government entities. This will include our real estate arm, United Real Estate." Hessah Al-Mubarak District is the first-ever comprehensive, mixed-use district in Kuwait. With its

unique location overlooking the sea, and its close proximity to the downtown business hub, the district promises its future residents, visitors and those who work there an unprecedented experience. The urban cluster will combine leisure, shopping, offices and living areas with the assurance of delivering quality lifestyle.

Huawei and Helena Christensen announce global partnership

KUWAIT: Huawei has confirmed a new global partnership with celebrated supermodel and photographer Helena Christensen following a recent post on her Instagram channel that caught the attention of fans and followers. Helena is seen out and about in Paris, the fashion capital of the world, giving a sneak peak of what is to come through her work with Huawei and its eagerly-anticipated new Huawei P20 release.

Renowned for her international modelling career with iconic fashion houses including Chanel, Versace and Hermes, Helena has also become known for her second career as a photographer.

One of the world's biggest smartphone brands, Huawei is constantly looking for new and engaging ways to connect with its customers. By partnering with such an influential figure as Helena Christensen, Huawei is continuing in its tradition of placing high value on collective wisdom, drawing on the experience of its partners to present consumers with the very best products and innovations.

Details of the collaboration will be released to coincide with the worldwide launch at the end of March. Follow @HuaweiMobile on Twitter or the hashtag #SeeMoore for the latest updates.



US jobs surge 313,000 in Feb, jobless rate steady

WASHINGTON: The US employment engine roared in February, adding more new jobs than any month in more than a year as robust hiring picked up in construction, retail and manufacturing, the government reported Friday.

The result shattered economists' expectations, giving President Donald Trump a shot in the arm just as support for his "America First" economic agenda appeared to be on shaky ground. Trump broke with the leaders of his own Republican Party this week, announcing steep tariffs on steel and aluminum imports.

The move was denounced by top congressional leaders and drawing rebukes from industry, who said it could undermine the benefits of December's sweeping tax cuts and spark a global trade war.

On Twitter, an elated Trump wrote: "JOBS! JOBS! JOBS!" adding the hashtag "#MAGA" to invoke his campaign trail slogan: "Make America Great Again." US stocks rallied on the news, with the benchmark Dow Jones Industrial Average soaring more than 400 points to add 1.8 percent. Last month, a jump in hourly pay from the same report had sparked a global selloff.

For Wall Street, the news appeared to hit a sweet spot, pointing to an economy in rude health but not to a pickup in the pace of rising worker wages, which can cause inflation — and invite quicker interest rate hikes.

Employers added 313,000 net new non-farm jobs last month, the biggest monthly increase since July 2016, while

the unemployment rate remained steady at 4.1 percent for the fifth month in a row, according to the Labor Department's highly anticipated monthly report. On top of the exceptionally strong February, the job gains in December and January were revised up by a combined 54,000, bringing average monthly job creation to a strong 242,000 a month for the latest three months. The unemployment rate remained steady even though more workers joined the job hunt, lifting the labor force participation rate up to 63 percent. Hourly wages gained 0.2 percent in the month, matching analyst expectations but putting compensation up 2.6 percent over the same month last year — ahead of consumer inflation of 2.1 percent.

A 'Goldilocks' report for markets?

The goods-producing sector, including mining, manufacturing and the auto sector, added 100,000 new positions while the services sector added 187,000 jobs. The public sector gained 26,000, with hiring added in education and at the state government level. But, the Labor Department noted that gains in the clothing and general merchandise retail sectors, which added 33,000 new positions, suffered some distortion that made the gains appear stronger. Clothing and general merchandise retailers hired less than they were expected to before the holidays but afterwards laid off fewer workers than expected, resulting in apparent gains for the sector after seasonal adjustment, the report said. As a result, over the past four months, "employment in these industries has changed little on net," William Wiatrowski, acting commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, said in a statement. But there also were signs the hunger for increasingly scarce workers was causing companies to dig deeper into the labor pool. The number of discouraged workers or those marginally attached the labor market — such as people working part time who want a full-time position — fell 149,000 from a year earlier to 373,000. —AFP

KGL awarded US government contracts worth almost \$2bn

KUWAIT: Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Company (KGL) announced that two of its subsidiaries have been awarded transportation and supply contracts with the US Army worth up to \$2 billion. One of its subsidiaries, KGL Transportation was awarded the US Army's Heavy Lift 8 (HL8) transportation contract, providing heavy haul transportation services in the Gulf Region, Iraq and Jordan. The maximum value of the contract is \$550 million for a duration of five years.

In January 2018, KGL Food Services, also a subsidiary of Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Company (KGL), was awarded the Subsistence Prime Vendor (SPV) contract with the US Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). The maximum value of the contract is worth \$1.380 billion for a period of 24 months, with option periods increasing the



contract duration to an additional 60 months. KGL will provide food procurement and distribution services to

the US military in Kuwait, Iraq and Jordan.

Sam Khatib, Chief Business Development Officer at Kuwait & Gulf Link Transport Company (KGL), said that "KGL is a premier provider of integrated Supply Chain Management services in the Middle East, fulfilling the Transportation, Logistics, Port Management, Shipping and Freight Forwarding needs of countless regional and international clients since the establishment of the company more than 60 years ago in 1956."

Khatib added that for more than two decades KGL has been one of the leading logistics providers to the US military in the Middle East and that the Prime Vendor contract is the fifth contract awarded to KGL by the US Defense Logistics Agency.

Khatib is looking forward to continuing to work with the US military on solving complex logistics challenges and supporting the US military mission in the Gulf region.

Khatib said that for more than 60 years, KGL has been providing comprehensive logistics solutions for international commercial and government clients throughout the Middle East, most notably with the US Government and the United Nations.

26 new winners in list of Al-Hassad Islamic account

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank recently conducted its Al Hassad Islamic account weekly draw, Kuwait's leading sharia-compliant rewards program that offers a broad range of prizes to the largest number of winners, on the 7th of March 2018. The account provides 26 weekly prizes that are comprised of KD 25,000 as a grand prize and 25 other prizes valued at KD 1,000 each. AUB also offers four quarterly prizes that are valued at KD 250,000 to each winner allowing them to achieve their dreams of travelling, studying abroad, or allowing their dream home or car.

On this occasion Ahli United Bank announced, "With this draw, we are adding 26 new winners and prizes to the Al Hassad Islamic account whereby, the total number of winners annually will include more than 1300.

The weekly grand prize winner of KD 25,000 Milad Sami Bitar.

25 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Elham Hameed Abbas Jragh Ismaeil, Huma Aslam, Nawaf Ahmad Muslat Al-Adwani, Iqbal Saleh Hussain Saleh Hussain, Shoroq Hamdan, Badreya Rashed Al-Shebeeb, Eman Mohamed Salam Jaber, Awatef Hamad Abdullah Al-Subeeh, Saoud Saleh Sharea Majed, Yousef Ahmad Saud Al Khamees, Dahlah Mohammad Munawer, Hasan Yaqoub Jaber Ali, Amer Mohd Abdullatif Al-Dakheel, Saqer Saleh Soudan Al-Anizi, Hebah Hendi Faraj Al Hendi, Ali Ebrahim Ghuloum Ashkanani, Azceezah Jumaah Ismaeil Salman, Dana Mohamed Yaqoub Juma Bin Safar, William B Hendricks, Hameeda Hameed Khalil Al-Halwachi, Hussain Jaffar A Hassan Al-Mino, Mohammed Ahmed Yaqoub Yousif, Abdulla Saleh Ali Janahi, Ali Mohsen Ali Dashti and Faeza Mohamed Ahmed Naser Al-Shawaikh.

Al-Hassad Islamic account's customers in Kuwait and Bahrain are eligible to participate in the draw in line with the program's terms and conditions. Ahli United Bank added, "There are increased opportunities that await our current customers and those who are interested in opening an Al-Hassad Islamic account to benefit from the wide range of prizes and opportunities offered this year."

Individual customers can open their accounts with a minimum deposit of KD 100, qualifying them to enter the draw.

Technology

Ola’s India electric vehicle trial a red flag for Modi plan

India targets electrification of all new vehicles by 2030

NAGPUR, India: Indian ride-hailing firm Ola’s pilot project to test a fleet of electric vehicles in the western city of Nagpur was expected to herald a coming revolution in the Indian autos industry. So far, though, it has only exposed fractures in Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s ambitions to make all new vehicles electric by 2030.

With an initial investment of about \$8 million, Softbank-backed Ola launched the project last year at an event that had all the trappings of a state function, including a big gathering and flagging off by Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari.

But nine months later, the program has hit a snag: Ola drivers, unhappy with long wait times at charging stations and high operating expenses, want to return their cars and switch to fuel-guzzling variants. Out of 20 Ola electric car drivers interviewed by Reuters in Nagpur, more than a dozen said they have either returned their electric taxis and switched to diesel, or are planning to do so.

Ola had said it would make 50 charging points available across four locations in Nagpur – a city of about 2.5 million people – for its fleet of 200 electric vehicles, but on a visit to the city in late January, Reuters found only about a dozen charging points. Ola has since added 10 additional charging points but is still short of its target. Ola did not respond to requests for comment for this article.

Getting infrastructure built in the world’s biggest democracy where a not-in-my-backyard culture proliferates is a barrier for a lot of businesses in India. And it is proving to be the same for charging stations – Ola was forced to close one in Nagpur last year after protests by residents angered by traffic jams caused by drivers. It took more than five months to get government clearances to begin operating another station.

The hurdles faced by Ola in setting up sufficient charging stations for a fleet of expensive electric cars with a limited driving range expose the challenges the Indian government and automakers will face if they are to get anywhere near realising the 2030 vision.

Warning
Global auto makers have repeatedly warned that India is not ready for electrification, saying the government must first lay down a clear, long-term policy, provide incentives to encourage manufacturing of electric vehicles to bring down their cost and create the charging infrastructure.

Gadkari added to uncertainty when he said last month that the government will no longer draft a separate electric vehicle policy. He did not comment on the 2030 vision.

The Ola project has not turned out to be economically viable for either the company or its drivers, said one industry source familiar with Ola’s strategy.

“The project’s not flying as of now and the economics is not working out,” the source said. Electric car sales in India, one of the world’s fastest-growing auto markets, made up less than 0.1 percent of annual sales of more than 3 million passenger cars.

The lack of demand is mainly because they are expensive – due to high battery costs – and as their range is limited and there isn’t a charging infrastructure.

By comparison, in China in 2017, electric vehicles made up about 2 percent of annual passenger car sales of 24.7 million. The Indian government had been determined to promote electric vehicle use, starting with public transport and taxis, to combat rising pollution and reduce the nation’s dependence on imported oil. India’s 2030 ambition was part of a broader move by countries like China and the United Kingdom, which have set similar goals. This has spurred billions of dollars in investments by carmakers like Volkswagen and Ford Motor even as many in the industry say they are unsure who will buy the massive numbers of electric vehicles governments want them to produce.

Global carmakers want long-term policy, sops for EVs

Magnitude challenges
Mahindra & Mahindra is the only electric carmaker in India and the high cost of even its entry-level model, which starts at 760,000 rupees (\$11,665) is a barrier for many first-time car buyers, and a non-starter for taxi drivers who can get a diesel or



gasoline propelled car for about half the price.

Ola has deep pockets and while it has tied-up with Mahindra for the pilot project, its struggle to make the fleet viable in a small Indian city with much less congestion and space constraints than the biggest cities like Mumbai, underscores the magnitude of the challenges. A shortage of stations and the limited range of cars – about 100 kilometers – has meant longer queues to recharge. During summer months when batteries discharge faster and need to be recharged more, the situation may worsen unless more charging points are added, said several drivers, none of whom wanted to be named as they feared retribution from the company.

The cars are owned by Ola and leased to drivers for 1,000 rupees a day, but many complain that the amount is too high and they need to work for 12-16 hours to make a decent living, given they waste 3-4 hours a day on charging. One of the drivers said that after paying Ola the rent for the car and shelling out 500-600 rupees per day for charging, he is left with about 500 rupees (\$7.71) at the end of a 14-hour day giving him little time to rest or spend with his family.

“If they don’t give us the (charging) facility, why should we drive these cars,” said the driver, who had just spent an hour

waiting for his turn to charge the car, and would have to wait for another 90 minutes while it charges.

Ola founder and CEO Bhavish Aggarwal told Reuters last April that the company would pilot a few thousand electric vehicles in several Indian cities in 2017 and then scale up in a major way. However, almost a year later it has still to take the experiment beyond Nagpur.

Huge risks

At India’s biennial auto show in February, electric cars took centre stage but most were at a concept stage or sold only in global markets as automakers like Toyota, Honda and Renault took a circumspect approach to the new tilt toward electrification.

“Once we make an investment there are huge risks,” said Akito Tachibana, managing director of Toyota’s India arm, adding as of now there is no clarity on who would buy such cars and what incentives the government will offer.

Charging infrastructure is a big piece of the puzzle that needs to be resolved for EVs to be viable – India has only about 222 charging stations with 353 charging points, according to a January report by global consultancy EY. —Reuters

Waymo self-driving rigs to haul Google cargo

SAN FRANCISCO: Google-owned Waymo on Friday said that its self-driving trucks will haul cargo bound for the internet giant’s data centers in Georgia.

Rival Uber made a similar announcement on Tuesday, saying it is using self-driving semi trucks to augment human-driven rigs in its on-demand trucking service in the US state of Arizona.

Waymo driverless trucks will go to work in the Atlanta area tomorrow as part of a pilot program intended to help integrate autonomous big rigs with the operations of shippers, ports, terminals, factories, and distribution centers, according to the company.

“Our software is learning to drive big rigs in much the same way a human driver would after years of driving passenger cars,” Waymo said in an online post. “The principles are the same, but things like braking, turning, and blind spots are different with a fully-loaded truck and trailer.” Human drivers will be on board Waymo trucks to take control if needed. Waymo for years has been testing self-driving cars, racing against smartphone-summoned ride star Uber, whose trucking service uses humans to pick up cargo from Uber Freight customers and drive it in trailers to transfer hubs.

There, the trailers are hitched onto self-driving trucks for long highway hauls, according to the San Francisco-based company.

The self-driving vehicles head to transfer hubs close to their destinations, where the trailers are connected back onto human-steered rigs to complete their journeys. Uber has been testing self-driving truck technology since 2016, and began using autonomous rigs for hauls late last year.

The company claims to have made the first commercial shipment ever by a self-driving truck when it hauled a trailer full of Budweiser beer over about 120 miles (193 kilometers) of highway in Colorado.

Paving the road

Autonomous-vehicle technology has been touted as having potential to save fuel, ease congestion, and make transportation safer. Waymo and Uber last month said they had settled a lawsuit over allegedly stolen trade secrets from the former Google self-driving car project.

Waymo filed the suit last year but after four days of testimony before a federal judge, Uber agreed to a financial settlement, a source said. In September, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao released new guidelines that permit more testing of self-driving cars and address regulation between the federal government and states.

She said self-driving technology could reduce accidents and improve mobility for the elderly, disabled and other restricted populations.

But the non-profit Consumer Watchdog warned that roads are being turned “into private laboratories for robot cars with no regard for our safety.” US states set their own rules for roads, and a handful have passed laws allowing self-driving vehicles. California and Arizona have been particularly encouraging, hoping that companies developing autonomous technology in those states will create local jobs and facilities devoted to a promising new industry. —AFP

Concern over China influence shadows chip sector deal

SAN FRANCISCO: Concern over China’s potential influence, and rising US protectionist sentiment, hangs over an effort by California-based Qualcomm to repel a Singaporean firm’s hostile takeover bid.

If finalized, a tie-up between Broadcom and Qualcomm would be worth an estimated \$117 billion and potentially the biggest-ever deal in the tech sector. But Qualcomm rejected multiple Broadcom offers during weeks of parries and thrusts between the two firms since the proposed deal emerged in November.

In the latest move, Qualcomm, which makes most of the world’s microprocessors for smartphones, postponed until April 5 an annual shareholders’ meeting set for this week after secretly requesting a national security review of Broadcom’s bid. Shareholders were to vote whether to replace six of the firm’s 11 board members with candidates backed by Broadcom, essentially endorsing the merger.

The Committee on Foreign Investment (CFIUS) ordered Qualcomm to delay its shareholders’ meeting for 30 days to allow time to fully investigate the proposed acquisition, according to the US Treasury Department.

The Committee can review any acquisition by a foreign corporation of a US firm that may impair national security, and can recommend the president block a deal.

CFIUS has stopped some transactions but foreign companies often withdraw once it appears a deal will be prohibited. The Committee noted that a Broadcom-Qualcomm merger could weaken Qualcomm’s leadership in the field.

New German minister to challenge Google and Facebook’s presentation of news

BERLIN: Germany’s incoming minister with responsibility for digital policy says she will push social media giants to make users’ information feeds more diverse and timely to avoid creating “echo chambers” for the like-minded. Companies such as Facebook have come under pressure from regulators around the world as evidence has emerged of how the recirculation of a particular selection of news and views on their platforms can narrow perceptions of the

This would likely help Chinese competitors such as telecommunications firm Huawei, particularly in the emerging 5G blazing fast wireless internet, where a stronger China could present a national security issue.

The head of Huawei last week defended his company following concerns its equipment could be used for spying, saying the firm had a “very strong track record regarding security.”

Huawei reportedly lost a deal with AT&T in the US that would have given it an improved foothold in the handset market after US lawmakers expressed unease “regarding Huawei and Chinese espionage.”

CFIUS last year opposed the takeover of US semiconductor manufacturer Lattice by a Chinese state group backed by a US investment fund, and President Donald Trump then blocked the deal.

In the semiconductor sector, the committee-whose deliberations are secret-in 2016 recommended that then-President Barack Obama oppose a deal between the German group Aixtron and Chinese fund Grand Chip because there was a US subsidiary of the German group.

Sensitive sectors

Fear of China is not new, said Andrew Hunter of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. “What has changed from 10 years ago is not the level of concern about China per se, but the extent of Chinese foreign direct investment into sensitive sectors of US industry,” he said. The corporate battle has intensified alongside rising protectionist measures in Washington, and as Trump complains of the “massive trade deficit” his country has with Beijing.

Dismissing warnings of a trade war, Trump on Thursday imposed tariffs on imported steel and aluminum which could spark retaliation from China and other economic powers.

“Qualcomm’s work is too important to our national security to let it fall into the hands of a foreign company—and in a hostile takeover no less,” said Senator Tom

world and voter behavior. The minister, Dorothee Baer, said she would open talks with Facebook and Google on the way that posts on social media platforms were sequenced. “At the moment, the algorithms sort according to relevance or popularity,” she told the newspaper Die Welt in an interview published on Saturday. “That pushes to the top old posts that often have little to do with the truth. “I want to see real-time timelines again that confront people not with what they want to know, but what they need to know, what is happening at this moment.”

The shock victories of Donald Trump in the 2016 US elections and of the “leave” camp in Britain’s referendum on European Union membership have led to widespread concern that ‘social media bubbles’ make it impossible to discern what voters are reading and whether it is true or not.

In Germany, where the experience of living under two different totalitarian regimes in the 20th century has created enormous concern at the privacy implications of social media, platform usage is lower, but growing. —Reuters

journal Science Advances.

Until now, official government flood maps and projections have been based solely on estimates of sea level rise. “The ground goes down, sea level comes up, and flood waters go much farther inland than either change would produce by itself,” said lead author Manoochehr Shirzaei, assistant professor in Arizona State University’s School of Earth and Space Exploration.

Most of the San Francisco Bay shoreline is sinking by less than two millimeters a year, but “in several areas we discovered subsidence rates of 10 millimeters (half an inch) a year and more,” said the study.

At particular risk are structures built mostly on landfill, such as the San Francisco International Airport which handles more than 200,000 annual landings



Cotton, from the same Republican party as Trump. Not only security but also US competitiveness is at stake in a Broadcom takeover of Qualcomm, said IHS Markit analyst Lee Ratliff.

“Many, many industry observers believe that Broadcom would stifle innovation at Qualcomm,” Ratliff said. “This would have negative effects far beyond Qualcomm and even the American tech industry.”

Broadcom’s initial offer was tinged by politics, coming just after the company’s chief executive, Hock Tan, appeared at the White House with Trump to announce plans to move the firm back to the United States from Singapore.

Because Broadcom is based in the Southeast Asian financial hub essentially for tax purposes, the US government’s “case is terribly misinformed” regarding a purchase of Qualcomm, said Stacy Rasgon, an analyst at Bernstein, a market research firm.

“I get the concerns about China taking our intellectual property etc.... but I think they are misplaced in this specific case,” Rasgon said.

Broadcom said it will fully cooperate with the security review, but rejected any national security concerns since it is a US-controlled company, and is in the process of relocating back to the United States. Qualcomm is a leader in wireless internet technology, particularly the race to 5G networks considered vital to innovations such as self-driving cars and smart cities.

In that context, it says it has a bright future on its own. —AFP



and sees 56 million passengers passing through each year. “When land subsidence is combined with projected rising sea levels, water will cover nearly half the airport’s runways and taxiways by the year 2100,” said the study.

Another trouble spot is Foster City, also built on reclaimed land between San Francisco and San Jose.

Since real estate is costly and hard to come by, an increasing number of companies have established themselves where “significant parts of the city will be at risk of flooding by 2100,” said the report.

Treasure Island, located between San Francisco and Oakland, is also sinking fast, at a rate of one-half to three-quarters of an inch (12 to 20 millimeters) per year. —AFP

Land beneath Silicon Valley is sinking fast: Study

MIAMI: The San Francisco Bay area’s Silicon Valley is home to a plethora of wealthy tech companies, but the sinking land beneath risks leading to far worse floods in the years to come, researchers said Wednesday.

This sinking, or subsidence, coupled with sea level rise, doubles the territory in the area known as Silicon Valley at risk of flooding by 2100, said the report in the

Anti-cholesterol drug Praluent cuts death risk

MIAMI: The anti-cholesterol drug Praluent (alirocumab), made by France's Sanofi Pharmaceuticals, is linked to a 15 percent lower risk of major cardiovascular events like heart attack and stroke, a study said yesterday. Alirocumab was also associated with a 15 percent reduction in death from any cause, marking the first evidence that this relatively new class of drugs, called PCSK9 inhibitors, can extend lives. The benefit was even greater among those with stubbornly high "bad," or LDL cholesterol, above 100 mg/dL. That group saw a 29 percent reduction in death from any cause after taking the drug for two years.

PCSK9 inhibitors are monoclonal antibodies which target and inactivate a specific protein in the liver, dramatically reducing the amount of harmful LDL cholesterol circulating in the bloodstream. Research has shown these drugs, delivered by injection every two to four weeks, may work even better than statins, which are the traditional first line of treatment for high cholesterol. High cholesterol is a key factor in coronary artery disease, the most common kind of heart disease and the number one killer of men and women worldwide, according to the World Health Organization.

But neither Praluent or its main competitor, Repatha (evolocumab) made by Amgen Pharmaceuticals, has achieved major commercial success due to their hefty annual price tag of

more than \$14,000 (11,300 euros) per patient. Last year, researchers reported similar results for Repatha, which also cut the risk of heart attack, stroke, and hospitalization for blocked arteries by 15 percent. "Now that we have two trials that consistently show benefits from PCSK9 inhibitors, and given the mortality benefit that we are reporting here for the first time, I think these results may change the equation for these drugs," said Philippe Gabriel Steg, chief of cardiology at Hopital Bichat in Paris and co-chair of the study. "We're not just talking about preventing nonfatal events such as heart attacks but actually preserving life."

Cost concerns

The findings described yesterday at the American College of Cardiology conference in Orlando, Florida, were based on an international trial of nearly 19,000 people in 57 countries, randomly assigned to either alirocumab or a placebo. Those enrolled were over 40 and many had been treated with the maximum amount of statin therapy possible but were still unable to get their cholesterol down. The trial included those whose LDL cholesterol remained 70 mg/dL or above, non-HDL cholesterol 100 mg/dL or above. Participants were followed for up to five

years, with 44 percent participating for three years or more. The injections were well tolerated by patients, with mild itching, redness or swelling at the injection site occurring in about three percent of patients receiving the drug and two percent getting the placebo.

"I believe this study is going to change practice," said Mount Sinai Medical Hospital's physician-in-chief, Valentin Fuster, who was not involved in the research. However, he cautioned that drugs' high price remains an obstacle. "Up until now, the feasibility and affordability of using these types of drugs has been extremely difficult," he told a press briefing. "I hope this particular study really is a trigger, is a catalyzer, for making these drugs much more available today in people who need it."

Praluent is approved in more than 60 countries outside the US, according to Sanofi, while Repatha was put on the US market in 2015. In a statement Saturday, Sanofi and Regeneron said they would work to lower the price for patients at high risk. "We commit to working with all health plans that agree to remove access barriers for high-risk patients to offer a more cost-effective net price for Praluent," said Leonard Schleifer, president and chief executive officer of Regeneron. —AFP



GENTILLY, VAL-DE-MARNE, France : In this file photo the logo of French multinational pharmaceutical company Sanofi is pictured on a screen at the company's Val de Bievre Campus, at its headquarters in Gentilly, near Paris. —AFP

Far from home, Venezuelan babies in Brazil face tough start

BOA VISTA, Brazil: Their parents escaped poverty and chaos, but for babies of Venezuelans fleeing into neighboring Brazil the first days of life are still plenty tough. In Boa Vista, capital of Roraima state, births of Venezuelan migrants at the city's sole public maternity hospital rose from 288 in 2016 to 572 last year, providing the latest measure of the growing humanitarian challenge on Brazil's border. In January alone there were 74 Venezuelan babies born at the hospital, double the number seen in January last year, and officials expect there'll be about 700 by the end of 2018.

With mothers enduring terrible poverty and often unsanitary living conditions, many of the births are complicated. "These are never the kind of patients who spend just a day or two here. Many have premature babies or mothers with diabetes," said Luiz Gustavo Araujo, technical director of the Nossa Senhora de Nazare hospital. But anything is better than the economic collapse and political instability under

President Nicolas Maduro, Venezuelan mothers say. "I came because there was no way I could have my baby in Venezuela. It's getting worse and worse there," said Dayana Rodriguez, who arrived in Brazil already pregnant last November. "There were complications with the pregnancy, so we'd both have died if I'd stayed behind." The 17-year-old suffered convulsions when she went into labor and had to spend two weeks in Nossa Senhora de Nazare after giving birth to her daughter Sofia by caesarean section. Today they live with a relative already in Boa Vista, and Rodriguez sees no way back. Sofia "would have virtually no future there," she said.

Too late for some

The maternity ward has clean, spacious rooms with five beds at most each, and often with relatives of the women in attendance. Yulianny Vazquez, also just 17, was close to full term but said she'd had no medical check ups on her pregnancy until she left her home in El Tigre, western Venezuela, four months ago. "I came because of the situation in Venezuela. I was afraid of staying there since there's no way to raise a baby. We don't have food or medicines there," she said, writhing with pain in her bed. Araujo said the breakdown of oil-rich Venezuela's health care system was behind the many problematic births, with conditions like high blood

pressure and diabetes often going undiagnosed or untreated. Forty percent of the births among Venezuelans in Boa Vista last year were considered high risk. "Of the six deaths we registered during childbirth last year, two were of Venezuelans who'd come here in a serious condition," the hospital director said. "They come because of a lack of medicine in their own country, but that leads to increased costs for us, because we're not set up for dealing with this type of population," he added.

Long journeys

About 40,000 Venezuelans are estimated to have poured into Boa Vista, with the influx accelerating over the last year. Many are living in unsanitary shelters. Where migrants used to come from just over the border, now officials are registering people arriving from as far away as Caracas, 1,500 kilometers (930 miles) away. Eurimar Perez, 36, had her first three children in Santa Elena de Uairen, a town on the Venezuelan side of the border. For her fourth, though, she decided to go to Boa Vista. "Things have changed. Everything has got worse. There's nothing left in the hospital where I had my other children. There are no doctors, no medicines. I couldn't risk having my baby there," she said one day after undergoing a C-section. In a neighboring room, Rodriguez looked after her newborn Sofia. What



BOA VISTA, RORAIMA, Brazil: In this file photo Venezuelan refugee Dayana Rodriguez, 17, takes care of her newborn daughter Sofia, 12 days, at the Maternity Hospital Nossa Senhora de Nazare in the city of Boa Vista. —AFP

future did she think the baby girl would have? Rodriguez sobbed and said: "Whether it's in Brazil or Venezuela I just want to see her grow up and to make sure she has what I never had: a mother." —AFP

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M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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Hilton Kuwait invites guests to celebrate March special offers

March is an important month for the celebration of women all around the world, with Women's History Month, International Women's Day and most famous of all, Mother's Day, all taking place. To celebrate, Hilton Kuwait has created a series of extra-special offers that will let you treat the important ladies in your life.

Especially for Mum

Why not show how much you appreciate your beloved mum by gifting her with a truly special Mother's Day (21st March) present. Treat her to a Gift Card that she can use at Hilton Kuwait's five-star spa service, The Spa. The gift card can be used towards spa days or Health Club access or at one of any of the resort's

outlets at the hotel.

Set to be a firm favorite amongst both men and women, treat yourself and your loved one to an hour spa session and get complimentary 30 minutes foot reflexology massage. This special promo is valid until 21st March 2018. After a luxurious pampering Spa session, treat your mum to a delectable gourmet food at Teatro restaurant's international buffet for lunch and dinner, enjoying a 25% off on your total bill.

Attention Ladies!

Treat yourself or your loved ones on Tuesdays throughout March with a special 50% off a luxurious and relaxing session at The Spa, accompanied with a 60 or 90-minute massage of your choice,

Ladies will have access to the hotel's premium facilities including aqua-medic pool, sauna, steam room and ice-room from 03:00pm to 07:00pm. Continue the celebrations by gathering your favorite girlfriends and head to Teatro restaurant or Palm Court Terrace at Hilton Kuwait Resort for a 50% discount on all food & beverages. Happening the entire month of March, the unlimited food is served from 06:00 pm to 11:30pm.

Luck of the Irish

Enjoy a night of authentic Irish cuisine at Hilton Kuwait Resort's Teatro and be the lucky ones to savor a dinner buffet of home-cooked dishes and traditional drinks on Thursday 15th March, from 07:00pm to 11:30pm.



Mais Alghanim recognized as best call center service & social media accounts



Mais Alghanim group of restaurants announced recently that they have been recognized for their commitment in providing high-class customer service in Kuwait's Public Relations Association's annual awards for the year 2018. The awards, under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, saw Mais Alghanim win awards for 'Excellence in Call Center service', for best practices in providing customer service in the food delivery; and 'Excellence in Social Media account'.

The Managing Director of Barakat Foods, Chawki Barakat and Mais Alghanim Restaurant Operations Manager, Walid Yehya has received the award from Her Excellency

Hind Al-Sabeeh, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs, at a ceremony also attended by Sheikh Khalid Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, Head of Amiri Protocols, and Jamal Al-Nasrullah, Head of Kuwait's Public Relations Association.

Commenting on this great achievement Chawki Barakat said, "The Social Media team at the marketing department has done a great job by covering all activities and publishing our various offers to reach our audience in different social platforms, he added that the response rate was 100% with maximum 1 hour to respond to our customers inquiries, and our team at the delivery call

center also did great job in communicating with our customers"

"The administration always seeks to develop the culture of hospitality and we continuously train our staff at all the company's facilities to keep pace with the aspirations of Mais Alghanim's customers by providing them with the best service they could possibly expect. This is how we were finally awarded, and we dedicate this win to our customers who put all their trust in us and we promise to remain at the same level of hospitality as ever." He also praised the efforts of all employees in all business units, without whom Mais Alghanim would not have been able to achieve this success.

NBK supports small and medium enterprises

National Bank of Kuwait's Business Banking unit surprised their customers by covering the cost of their participating booths in Qout Market that took place on March 3, 2018. NBK provides its customers with a vast array of products, services and initiatives especially tailored to meet their business needs. By funding Business Banking clients, NBK demonstrated

its continued dedication and commitment to supporting local small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.

"NBK works closely with clients and customers to understand and anticipate their business requirements," said Mr. Bader Al-Mutawa, Assistant General Manager - Consumer Banking Group, National Bank of Kuwait. "Funding Business Banking clients participating in Qout Market is a substantive means of showing support to local SMEs and young entrepreneurs trying to grow their business." NBK Business Banking offers dedicated relation-



ship officers, point of sale machines, business credit cards, Online Salary Portal, online banking, insurance, business loans, letters of credit and guarantee and local bills.

NBK has 13 dedicated Business Banking hubs at branches around the country including: Head Office, Surra, Shuwaikh, Al Tadamon, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Jabriya, Arraya Tower 2 (fifth floor), Fintas, Sharq, Ras Salmiya, Salwa, Al Ghazali and Hawally. Specialized relationship officers are dedicated to serving the needs of Business Banking clients. Clients will also have access, via their relationship manager, with experts in Credit, Investment Banking, Trade Finance and Treasury. Customers can complete all their necessary business banking transactions in a seamless, efficient and convenient way. Visit NBK.com to learn more about NBK's service and products.

Burgan Bank invites premier customers to attend 'Tomb Raider' screening

Burgan Bank in collaboration with Grand Cinemas announced yesterday that Premier Banking customers will be offered the chance to watch the first screening of the "Tomb Raider" movie for free at the most luxurious movie theatre - Grand Class VIP in Al Hamra Center, on March 15th, 2018. Each Premier customer can reserve two free tickets in one of the 3 show times dedicated to them. Reservations are on first-call-first-serve basis as free seats are limited. To serve its Premier customers better,

Burgan Bank allocated a special number to receive calls from Premier customers to reserve their free VIP seats for any of the three shows that will be available that day. To book for the free seats, Premier customers can call 22988405 from 9am till 5 pm. Burgan Bank is committed to reward its premier customers with exclusive offers and a wide range of benefits that are especially designated for them. Burgan Bank is committed to always provide superior products and services to its esteemed clientele.



The Embassy of the Republic of Armenia recently held a concert by the Aram Khachaturian String Quartet at the Abdull Hussain Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya. The program was held in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters. The Quartet was formed in 1982 by distinguished violinist Zareh Sahakyants and participates in major music festivals around the globe. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

TV



02:00 Warcraft: The Beginning
04:15 Life On The Line
06:00 Allegiant
08:05 Warcraft: The Beginning
10:15 Shanghai Noon
12:10 Hunting The Phantom
13:50 Allegiant
15:55 The Last Survivors
17:35 Jason Bourne
19:40 Death Warrant
21:15 Phone Booth
22:40 Hardcore Henry



00:50 Untamed & Uncut
01:45 Orangutan Island
02:13 Orangutan Island
02:40 Orangutan Island
03:08 Orangutan Island
03:35 Orangutan Island
04:00 Orangutan Island
04:25 Night
04:50 Night
05:15 Night
05:39 Night
06:02 Bad Dog
06:49 Bad Dog
07:36 Escape To Chimp Eden
08:00 Escape To Chimp Eden
08:25 North Woods Law
09:15 The Jeff Corwin Experience
10:10 The Jeff Corwin Experience
11:05 The Jeff Corwin Experience
12:00 The Jeff Corwin Experience
12:55 The Jeff Corwin Experience
13:50 Your Pet Wants This, Too!
14:45 The Bronx Zoo
15:40 Missouri Mountain Family
16:35 Night
17:03 Night
17:30 Night
17:58 Night
18:25 Orangutan Island
18:53 Orangutan Island
19:20 Jaws Strikes Back
20:15 League Of Monkeys
21:10 Wild Africa: Rivers Of Life
22:05 Monster Croc Invasion
23:00 Crocodile Feeding Frenzy
23:55 Untamed & Uncut



00:35 Hold The Sunset
01:05 Liar
01:55 Born To Kill
02:45 Born To Kill
03:35 Liar
04:25 Hold The Sunset
05:00 Doctors
05:30 EastEnders
06:00 Doctors
06:30 EastEnders
07:00 Doctor Who
07:50 Call The Midwife
08:50 Doctors
09:20 EastEnders
09:50 Death In Paradise
10:50 Doctor Who
11:35 Call The Midwife
12:35 Father Brown
13:25 Doctors
13:55 EastEnders
14:25 Death In Paradise
15:25 Doctor Who
16:10 Father Brown
17:00 Call The Midwife
18:00 Doctors
18:30 EastEnders
19:00 Death In Paradise
20:00 The Child In Time
21:35 Line Of Duty
22:30 Death In Paradise
23:30 Doctors



00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Homicide Hunter
02:00 Psychic Kids
03:00 The Haunting Of...
04:00 Homicide Hunter
05:00 Homicide Hunter
06:00 Psychic Kids
07:00 Cold Case Files
08:00 Cold Case Files
09:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
10:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
11:00 It Takes A Killer
11:30 It Takes A Killer
12:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
13:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
14:00 Homicide: Hours To Kill
15:00 Homicide Hunter
16:00 Homicide Hunter
17:00 Escaping Polygamy
18:00 Escaping Polygamy
19:00 Cold Case Files
20:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
21:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
22:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
23:00 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence



00:05 Nightcap
00:30 Chris Hardwick: Funcomfortable
01:20 Nathan For You
02:10 Tosh.0
02:35 Tosh.0
03:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
03:25 Tosh.0
03:50 South Park
04:15 Idiotsitter
04:40 Key And Peele
05:05 Detroiters
05:30 Disaster Date
05:55 Ridiculousness Arabia
06:20 Comedy Central Presents
Comedy 3alwagaf
06:50 Lip Sync Battle
07:15 Lip Sync Battle
07:40 I Live With Models
08:05 Key And Peele
08:30 Disaster Date
08:55 Workaholics
09:20 Idiotsitter
09:45 I Live With Models
10:10 Detroiters
10:35 Friends
11:00 Key And Peele
11:25 Disaster Date
11:50 Ridiculousness Arabia
12:15 Friendszone
12:40 Key And Peele
13:05 Friends
13:30 Friends
13:55 Disaster Date
14:20 Workaholics
14:45 Detroiters

15:10 Friends
15:35 Key And Peele
16:00 Idiotsitter
16:30 Friendszone
16:55 Friends
17:20 Friends
17:45 Disaster Date
18:10 Lip Sync Battle
18:35 Lip Sync Battle
19:00 Friends
19:25 Friendszone
19:50 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
20:12 Friends
20:35 Friends
21:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
21:30 Comedy Central Presents
Comedy 3alwagaf
22:00 Chris Ramsey Stand Up
Central
22:25 Why? With Hannibal Buress
22:50 Martha And Snoop Potluck
Dinner Party
23:15 Real Husbands Of Hollywood
23:40 The Daily Show - Global Edition



00:30 Ultimate Survival
01:20 Everest: Beyond The Limit
02:10 Everest: Beyond The Limit
03:00 Everest: Beyond The Limit
03:50 Destroyed In Seconds
04:15 Destroyed In Seconds
04:40 Destroyed In Seconds
05:05 Destroyed In Seconds
05:30 Destroyed In Seconds
05:55 Destroyed In Seconds
06:20 How It's Made
06:40 How It's Made
07:00 Serious Desert
07:25 Serious Desert
07:50 Serious Desert
08:15 Serious Desert
08:40 How It's Made
09:05 How It's Made
09:30 How It's Made
09:55 How It's Made
10:20 How It's Made
10:45 How It's Made
11:10 How It's Made
11:35 How It's Made
12:00 How It's Made
12:25 How It's Made
12:50 Tanked
13:40 Tanked
14:30 Tanked
15:20 Tanked
16:10 Tanked
17:00 Guinness World Records
Smashed UK
17:50 How It's Made
18:15 How It's Made
18:40 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie
19:30 Keeping Up With The Kruger
20:20 Into The Pride
21:10 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
22:00 Dinosaurs: Return To Life
22:50 Ultimate Survival
23:40 Ultimate Survival



00:50 Ghosts Of Shepherdstown
01:45 A Haunting
02:40 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
03:35 A Checklist For Murder
04:30 Blood In The Sand: People Magazine Investigates
05:25 Married With Secrets
06:20 Kiss Of Death
07:10 Evil Stepmothers
08:00 California Investigator
08:25 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
09:15 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
10:10 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
11:05 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
12:00 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
12:55 I Almost Got Away With It
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 I Almost Got Away With It
15:40 I Almost Got Away With It
16:35 I Almost Got Away With It
17:30 Betrayed
18:25 Betrayed
19:20 Betrayed
20:15 Suspicion
21:10 Lone Star Mystery: A Disappeared Special
22:05 Disappeared
23:00 Murder In The Heartland
23:55 The Grim Sleeper: People Magazine Investigates



00:10 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Hank Zipzer
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:40 Hank Zipzer
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:10 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:00 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Jessie
07:25 Elena Of Avalor
07:50 Descendants Wicked World
07:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
08:20 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
08:45 Tangled: The Series
09:10 K.C. Undercover
09:35 Raven's Home
10:00 Bunk'd
10:25 Bizaardvark
10:50 Liv And Maddie
11:15 Stuck In The Middle
11:40 High School Musical 2
13:20 Liv And Maddie
13:45 Liv And Maddie
14:10 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
14:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
15:00 Raven's Home
15:25 Tangled: The Series

15:50 Elena Of Avalor
16:15 Sofia The First
16:40 Tangled: Short Cuts
16:45 Sofia The First: The Floating Palace
17:35 K.C. Undercover
18:00 K.C. Undercover
18:25 Bizaardvark
18:50 Bizaardvark
19:15 Elena Of Avalor
19:40 Elena Of Avalor
20:05 Bunk'd
20:30 Bunk'd
20:55 Stuck In The Middle
21:20 Stuck In The Middle
21:45 K.C. Undercover
22:10 K.C. Undercover
22:35 Liv And Maddie
23:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
23:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
23:50 Lollipop



00:00 PJ Masks
00:30 Vampirina
01:00 Vampirina
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Loopydoo
02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
02:35 Calimero
02:50 Henry Hugglemonster
03:05 Art Attack
03:30 The Hive
03:40 Loopydoo
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:10 Art Attack
04:35 Loopydoo
04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Henry Hugglemonster
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopydoo
07:00 Henry Hugglemonster
07:15 Calimero
07:30 PJ Masks
08:00 Trulli Tales
08:30 Puppy Dog Pals
09:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:30 Doc McStuffins
10:00 PJ Masks
10:30 Sofia The First
11:00 Vampirina
11:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
12:00 The Lion Guard
12:30 The Lion Guard
13:00 The Lion Guard
13:30 The Lion Guard
14:00 Trulli Tales
14:30 Trulli Tales
15:00 Trulli Tales
15:30 Miles From Tomorrow
16:00 Goldie & Bear
16:30 Doc McStuffins
17:00 Vampirina
17:30 Puppy Dog Pals
18:00 The Lion Guard
18:30 Sofia The First
19:00 Sofia The First
19:30 Vampirina
20:00 PJ Masks
20:30 P-King Duckling
21:00 The Lion Guard
21:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
22:00 Trulli Tales
22:30 Doc McStuffins
23:00 P-King Duckling
23:30 PJ Masks



00:15 Railroad Australia
01:05 Outback Trucks
01:50 Alaskan Bush People
02:40 Dirty Jobs
03:20 Extreme Engineering
04:05 Flying Wild Alaska
04:50 Dirty Jobs
05:35 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Beetle Crisis
06:23 Beetle Crisis
06:45 How Do They Do It?
07:10 How Do They Do It?
07:35 Flying Wild Alaska
08:20 Beetle Crisis
08:45 Beetle Crisis
09:10 Dirty Jobs
09:55 How Do They Do It?
10:20 How Do They Do It?
10:45 Bear Grylls: Breaking Point
11:30 Man v Expert
12:20 Beetle Crisis
12:43 Beetle Crisis
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 How Do They Do It?
13:55 Dirty Jobs
14:40 Alaskan Bush People
15:30 How Do They Do It?
15:53 How Do They Do It?
16:15 Bear Grylls: Breaking Point
17:05 Man v Expert
17:50 Flying Wild Alaska
18:40 Dirty Jobs
19:25 Alaskan Bush People
20:15 Extreme Engineering
21:00 Street Justice: The Bronx
21:50 Gear Dogs
22:40 Jesse James Outlaw Garage
23:30 Flying Wild Alaska



06:00 Milo Murphy's Law
06:10 Phineas & Ferb
06:25 Milo Murphy's Law
06:35 Phineas & Ferb
06:50 Marvel's Avengers: Secret Wars
07:15 Star Wars Rebels
07:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
07:45 Phineas & Ferb: Night Of The...
08:35 Mech-X4
09:00 Mech-X4
09:25 Marvel's Spider-Man
09:50 Marvel's Spider-Man
10:20 Lab Rats
10:45 Lab Rats
11:10 Gravity Falls
11:35 Gravity Falls
12:00 Walk The Prank
12:30 Walk The Prank
12:55 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
13:20 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
13:45 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:15 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
14:40 Right Now Kapow
15:00 Right Now Kapow
15:30 Lab Rats
15:55 Lab Rats

16:25 Kickin' It
16:50 Kickin' It
17:15 Supa Strikas
17:40 Supa Strikas
18:05 Gravity Falls
18:30 Marvel's Ant-Man
18:35 Gravity Falls
19:00 Right Now Kapow
19:25 Milo Murphy's Law
19:50 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
19:55 Mech-X4
20:20 Penn Zero: Part Time Hero
20:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
21:10 Kid vs. Kat
21:35 Marvel's Rocket And Groot
21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Lab Rats
22:35 Phineas And Ferb
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



00:00 Live From The Red Carpet
01:50 E! News
02:50 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
03:40 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
04:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
05:30 Celebrity Style Story
06:00 Botched
06:55 Botched
07:50 Botched
08:45 Live From The Red Carpet
10:35 Red Carpet Icons
11:30 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
12:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
13:20 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
14:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
16:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
18:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
19:00 Red Carpet Icons
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
23:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



00:05 Coronation Street
00:30 Coronation Street
01:00 Don't Tell The Bride
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Coronation Street
03:00 Coronation Street
03:25 Coronation Street
03:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
04:40 Couples Come Dine With Me
05:30 Cannonball
06:25 The Voice UK 2018
07:25 Dancing On Ice
09:05 Endeavour
10:45 Victoria
11:45 Gino's Hidden Italy
12:05 Cannonball
13:00 The Voice UK 2018
14:00 The Voice UK 2018
15:05 Endeavour
16:50 Gino's Hidden Italy
17:15 Dancing On Ice
19:00 The Voice UK 2018
20:05 Victoria
20:55 It's Not Rocket Science
21:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
22:45 Couples Come Dine With Me
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Engineering Disasters
01:00 The Colour Of War
02:00 The Colour Of War
03:00 The Colour Of War
03:50 Million Dollar Genius
04:40 Engineering Disasters
05:30 Engineering Disasters
06:20 The Colour Of War
07:10 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
08:00 The Colour Of War
09:00 The Colour Of War
10:00 The Colour Of War
11:00 Million Dollar Genius
12:00 Engineering Disasters
13:00 Engineering Disasters
14:00 The Colour Of War
15:00 The Colour Of War
16:00 The Colour Of War
17:00 Million Dollar Genius
18:00 Engineering Disasters
19:00 Modern Marvels
20:00 Missing In Alaska
21:00 In Search Of Aliens
22:00 In Search Of Aliens
23:00 United Stuff Of America



00:20 American Pickers
01:05 Ultimate Wheels
02:00 How The World Made America
03:40 Hunting Hitler
04:30 Ronnie O'Sullivan's American Hustle
05:15 The Zodiac Killer: Case Closed?
06:00 Mountain Men
06:50 Forged In Fire
07:40 Pawn Stars
08:05 Storage Wars
08:30 Hunting Hitler
09:20 Mountain Men
10:10 Ax Men
11:00 Forged In Fire
11:50 Pawn Stars
12:15 Storage Wars
12:40 Hunting Hitler
13:30 Mountain Men
14:20 American Pickers
15:10 Mountain Men
16:00 Forged In Fire
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Storage Wars
17:40 Hunting Hitler
18:10 Henry Danger
18:30 Mountain Men
19:20 Forged In Fire
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 Pawn Stars
21:25 Storage Wars
21:50 American Pickers
22:40 Forged In Fire
23:30 Mountain Men



00:15 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
00:45 Lucky Chow
01:10 Sinful Sweets
01:40 Around The World In 80 Dishes
02:35 What's For Sale?
03:00 What's For Sale?
03:30 Carnival Eats
03:55 The Shelbourne
04:25 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
05:20 Restoration Man
06:15 Cesar Millan: Viva Las Vegas!
07:10 Gok's Chinese Takeaway
08:05 Restoration Man
09:00 Poh & Co.
09:25 David Rocco's Dolce India
09:55 Around The World In 80 Dishes
10:50 Confucius Was A Foodie
11:45 Building Wild
12:40 Around The World In 80 Dishes
13:35 What's For Sale?
14:00 What's For Sale?
14:30 Confucius Was A Foodie
15:25 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
16:20 Restoration Man
17:15 Access 360 World Heritage
18:10 World's Best Beaches
19:05 What's For Sale?
19:30 What's For Sale?
20:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
21:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
22:00 Restoration Man
22:55 Access 360 World Heritage
23:50 World's Best Beaches



00:10 Rebuilding Titanic
01:00 Yukon Gold
02:00 Wicked Tuna
03:00 Fish Tank Kings
04:00 India's Mega Kitchens
05:00 Wunsuit Daredevil
06:00 Battle For Two Jima
07:00 Apocalypse: The Second World War
08:00 Chain Of Command
09:00 Locked Up Abroad
10:00 He Named Me Malala
12:00 Woman Raised By Monkeys
13:00 Dog Whisperer
14:00 Dog Whisperer
15:00 Yukon Gold
16:00 Wicked Tuna
17:00 Locked Up Abroad
18:00 India's Mega Kitchens
19:00 Yukon Gold
20:00 Wicked Tuna
20:50 Locked Up Abroad
21:40 India's Mega Kitchens
22:30 Yukon Gold
23:20 The Happenings



00:20 Operation Sumatran Rhino
01:10 America The Beautiful
02:00 Make You Laugh Out Loud
02:50 Savage Kingdom: Uprising
03:45 Maneater Manhunt
04:40 Wild Case Files
05:35 Storm Cats
06:30 Monster Fish
07:25 Monster Fish
08:20 Wild 24
09:15 Snakes In The City
10:10 Natural Born Monsters
11:05 Philly Undercover
12:00 World's Weirdest Brains And Babies
12:55 Born Wild
13:50 The Invaders
14:45 Predator Fails
15:40 Wild Untamed Brazil
16:35 World's Deadliest Killers
17:30 Monster Fish
18:25 Wild Little Cats
19:20 Predator Fails
20:10 Wild Untamed Brazil
21:00 World's Deadliest Killers
21:50 Monster Fish
22:40 Wild Little Cats
23:30 World's Weirdest Brains And Babies



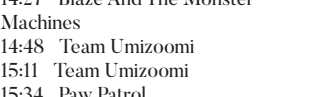
00:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
00:36 Rabbits Invasion
01:00 Rabbits Invasion
01:24 Sanjay And Craig
01:48 Sanjay And Craig
02:12 Winx Club
02:36 Winx Club
03:00 Harvey Beaks
03:24 Harvey Beaks
03:48 The Loud House
04:12 The Loud House
04:36 Breadwinners
05:00 Breadwinners
05:24 Get Blake
05:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:12 SpongeBob SquarePants
06:36 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
07:24 Rabbits Invasion
07:48 Get Blake
08:12 Harvey Beaks
08:36 Sanjay And Craig
09:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
09:24 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
09:48 Henry Danger
10:12 Game Shakers
10:36 Regal Academy
11:00 Winx Club
11:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
11:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
12:12 The Loud House
12:36 Rabbits Invasion
13:00 Breadwinners
13:24 Massive Monster Mayhem
13:48 I Am Frankie
14:12 The Thundermans
14:36 Sanjay And Craig
15:00 Rabbits Invasion
15:24 Harvey Beaks
15:48 SpongeBob SquarePants
16:12 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:36 The Loud House
17:00 Massive Monster Mayhem
17:24 I Am Frankie
17:48 Hunter Street
18:12 Henry Danger
18:36 Nicky, Ricky, Dicky And Dawn
19:00 School Of Rock
19:24 Game Shakers
19:48 The Thundermans
20:12 Harvey Beaks
20:36 SpongeBob SquarePants
21:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles

00:15 V/H/S Viral
01:50 Alive
03:55 The Count Of Monte Cristo
06:05 This Means War
07:45 The Finest Hours
09:45 The Count Of Monte Cristo
12:00 Chloe And Theo
13:25 This Means War
15:05 Last Chance Harvey
16:40 The Best Exotic Marigold

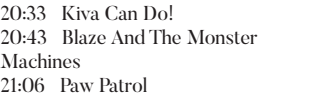
21:24 Sanjay And Craig
21:48 Rabbits Invasion
22:12 Breadwinners
22:36 Harvey Beaks
23:00 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:24 SpongeBob SquarePants
23:48 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles



00:17 Kid-E-Cats
00:23 Shimmer And Shine
00:47 Sunny Day
01:09 Max & Ruby
01:32 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:43 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
01:53 The Day Henry Met
01:58 The Day Henry Met
02:04 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:26 Blaze And The Monster Machines
02:47 Team Umizoomi
03:10 Team Umizoomi
03:33 Paw Patrol
03:56 Paw Patrol
04:20 Shimmer And Shine
04:43 Shimmer And Shine
05:06 Nella The Princess Knight
05:28 Nella The Princess Knight
05:50 Rusty Rivets
06:14 Rusty Rivets
06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
07:23 Paw Patrol
07:37 Dora The Explorer
08:00 Nella The Princess Knight
08:23 Bubble Guppies
08:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
09:08 Team Umizoomi
09:30 Team Umizoomi
09:53 Nella The Princess Knight
10:16 The Day Henry Met
10:22 Paw Patrol
10:46 Rusty Rivets
11:09 Wallykazam!
11:32 Bubble Guppies
11:56 Team Umizoomi
12:18 Kid-E-Cats
12:24 Shimmer And Shine
12:47 Sunny Day
13:10 Max & Ruby
13:33 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:44 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
13:54 The Day Henry Met
13:58 The Day Henry Met
14:05 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:27 Blaze And The Monster Machines
14:48 Team Umizoomi
15:11 Team Umizoomi
15:34 Paw Patrol
15:58 Paw Patrol
16:21 Shimmer And Shine
16:44 Shimmer And Shine
17:07 Nella The Princess Knight
17:29 Nella The Princess Knight
17:51 Rusty Rivets
18:15 Rusty Rivets
18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
19:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
19:24 Paw Patrol
19:37 Dora The Explorer
20:00 Nella The Princess Knight
20:22 Kiva Can Do!
20:33 Kiva Can Do!
20:43 Blaze And The Monster Machines
21:06 Paw Patrol
21:29 Shimmer And Shine
21:52 Nella The Princess Knight
22:14 The Day Henry Met
22:20 Paw Patrol
22:44 Rusty Rivets
23:07 Wallykazam!
23:30 Bubble Guppies
23:53 Team Umizoomi



01:15 Bad Santa
03:00 House Of D
04:45 The Upside Of Anger
06:45 Heartlands
08:30 Tomorrowland
10:45 Welcome To Collinwood
12:15 You Kill Me
14:00 Order Of Chaos
15:30 Bad Santa
17:00 Duplex
18:30 Meet Bill
20:00 Chicago
22:00 The Human Stain
23:45 Monster



00:00 Devious Maids
01:00 Devious Maids
02:00 Grey's Anatomy
03:00 Project Runway All Stars
04:00 Cougar Town
04:30 Cougar Town
05:00 House Of DVF
06:00 Cougar Town
06:30 Cougar Town
07:00 House Of DVF
08:00 House Of DVF
09:00 Project Runway All Stars
10:00 Cougar Town
10:30 Cougar Town
11:00 House Of DVF
12:00 Cedar Cove
13:00 Cedar Cove
14:00 Grey's Anatomy
15:00 Project Runway All Stars
16:00 Cougar Town
16:30 Cougar Town
17:00 House Of DVF



01:15 Miami Blues
02:55 The Beat Beneath My Feet
04:25 Spare Parts
06:20 Far From Men
08:00 Lawrence Of Arabia
11:40 The Dressmaker
13:40 The Challenger
15:25 I Believe In Miracles
17:10 Dare To Be Wild
19:00 The Man Who Knew Infinity
20:55 Charlotte's Song
22:35 A Late Quartet



00:45 The Happy Cricket And The Giant Bugs
02:15 Swan Princess: Royally Undercover
03:45 DinoFroz - An Island In The Sky
05:05 The Happy Cricket And The Giant Bugs
06:40 Felix The Toy Rabbit And The Time Machine
08:10 Free Birds
09:35 The Wish Fish
11:00 Pacific Pirates
12:30 DinoFroz - An Island In The Sky
13:50 The Happy Cricket And The Giant Bugs
15:25 An American Tail: Fievel Goes West
16:50 The Wish Fish
18:15 The Secret Of Kells
19:45 Legend Of The Sea
21:10 An American Tail: Fievel Goes West
22:35 Free Birds



00:30 V/H/S Viral
01:50 Alive
03:55 The Count Of Monte Cristo
06:05 This Means War
07:45 The Finest Hours
09:45 The Count Of Monte Cristo
12:00 Chloe And Theo
13:25 This Means War
15:05 Last Chance Harvey
16:40 The Best Exotic Marigold

Hotel
18:45 Due Date
20:25 The Break-Up
22:15 The Watch



00:40 The Big Brain Theory
01:30 The Big Brain Theory
02:20 The Big Brain Theory
03:10 The Big Brain Theory
04:00 The Big Brain Theory
04:48 How Do They Do It?
05:12 How Do They Do It?
05:36 How Do They Do It?
06:00 How Do They Do It?
06:24 Food Factory
06:48 Food Factory
07:12 Food Factory
07:36 Food Factory
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 The Big Brain Theory
09:14 The Big Brain Theory
10:02 The Big Brain Theory
10:50 The Big Brain Theory
11:38 The Big Brain Theory
12:26 Mythbusters
13:14 Mythbusters
14:02 Mythbusters
14:50 Mythbusters
15:38 Mythbusters
16:26 Food Factory
16:50 Food Factory
17:14 Food Factory
17:38 Food Factory
18:02 Food Factory
18:26 How Do They Do It?
18:50 How Do They Do It?
19:15 How Do They Do It?
19:40 How Do They Do It?
20:05 How Do They Do It?
20:30 Space Pioneer
21:20 Space Pioneer
22:10 Space Pioneer
23:00 Superhuman Showdown
23:50 Superhuman Showdown



00:30 Singham
03:00 10ml Love
04:35 The Front ROW
05:00 Dus Lakh
07:40 Maine Pyaar Kyun Kiya
10:20 Chandni Chowk To China
13:05 Dabangg 2
15:10 Running Shaadi
17:15 Prem Ratan Dhan Payo
20:00 Begum Jaan
21:50 Sarkar Raj



01:15 Bad Santa
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12:00 Cedar Cove
13:00 Cedar Cove
14:00 Grey's Anatomy
15:00 Project Runway All Stars

CROSSWORD 1854

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9	10	11		12	13	14
15					16								17		
18				19			20						21		
22						23						24			
		25								26					
27	28		29				30		31					32	33
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46				47				48	49				50		
		51				52			53			54			
55	56	57						58			59		60	61	62
63					64			65	66						
67				68		69	70						71		
72				73									74		
75				76									77		

ACROSS

1. Common black European thrush.
5. American confederate general known for leading a disastrous charge at Gettysburg (1825-1875).
12. A light touch or stroke.
15. A spread made chiefly from vegetable oils and used as a substitute for butter.
16. A strong metal bar bearing a hook to attach something to be pulled.
17. To make a mistake or be incorrect.
18. Of or relating to or near the sacrum.
20. A return punch.
21. The cry made by sheep.
22. Snarled or stalled in complete confusion.
25. A kind of heavy jacket ('windcheater' is a British term).
26. The sixth month of the civil year.
27. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
29. A hard malleable ductile silvery metallic element that is resistant to corrosion.
34. Any of various systems of units for measuring electricity and magnetism.
37. Earlier than the present time.
39. Antihypertensive consisting of an alkaloid extracted from the plant Rauwolfia serpentina (trade names Raudixin or Rau-Sed or Sandril or Serpasil).
43. A city in southeastern South Korea.
44. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
46. A genus of orb-weaving spiders including common garden spiders and barn spiders.
48. Oval reproductive body of a fowl (especially a hen) used as food.
50. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
51. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
53. A sudden short attack.
55. A village of huts for native Africans in southern Africa.
59. A member of an American Indian peoples of NE South America and the Lesser Antilles.
63. To an ample degree or in an ample manner.
65. A native or inhabitant of Vietnam.
67. A hospital unit staffed and equipped to provide intensive care.
68. Form a mental image of something that is not present or that is not the case.
71. South American armadillo with three bands of bony plates.
72. Vietnamese New Year.
73. A movement that is a response to a stimulus but is not oriented with respect to the source of stimulation.
74. Any of numerous agile ruminants related to sheep but having a beard and straight horns.
75. A strong emotion.
76. (classical mythology) The hideous snake-haired monsters (usually three in number) who pursued unpunished criminals.
77. Make an etching of.
21. The cry made by sheep.
22. Snarled or stalled in complete confusion.
25. A kind of heavy jacket ('windcheater' is a British term).
26. The sixth month of the civil year.
27. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
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77. Make an etching of.

DOWN

1. Tiny leafy-stemmed flowerless plants.
2. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
3. A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
4. Drug (trade name Lorfan) that is related to morphine but that counteracts the respiratory depression produced by morphine poisoning but without affecting its analgesic effects.
5. A unit of force equal to the force that imparts an acceleration of 1 foot/sec/sec to a mass of 1 pound.
6. A heavy brittle metallic element of the platinum group.
7. A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
8. A festival featuring African-American culture.
9. A Spanish river.
10. Covered with paving material.
11. Earnest and conscientious activity intended to do or accomplish something.
12. Bar temporarily.
13. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
14. (informal) Exceptionally good.
19. A conspicuous constellation in the northern hemisphere.
23. A state in the eastern United States.
24. A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
28. An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
30. Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
31. A run that is the result of the batter's performance.
32. Occurring or encountered or experienced or observed frequently or in accordance with regular practice or procedure.
33. An ancient upright stone slab bearing markings.
35. The capital and largest city of Mongolia.
36. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
38. A fee charged for exchanging currencies.
40. A large fan consisting of a frame covered with canvas that is suspended from the ceiling.
41. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
42. A distensible membranous sac (usually containing liquid or gas).
45. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
47. Resembling an eel in being long and thin and sinuous.
49. The mother of your father or mother.
52. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
54. The occurrence of a change for the worse.
56. A kitchen utensil used for ricing soft foods by extruding them through small holes.
57. (medicine) Having or experiencing a rapid onset and short but severe course.
58. Any of numerous composite plants having flower heads with well-developed ray flowers usually arranged in a single whorl.
60. Put in a new, usually larger, pot, as of a plant that has grown.
61. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
62. A job in an organization.
64. (Norse mythology) The primeval giant slain by Odin and his brothers and from whose body they created the world.
66. A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
69. Black tropical American cuckoo.
70. (British) Informal term for information.

Friday's Solution

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

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, your focus is on getting what you want and figuring out who you have to deal with to get it; be careful that you don't appear to be overbearing. Being in pursuit of something very hard to attain is an empowering experience. When you attempt to prove yourself, you run into several different challenges or blockages; this and other instances lead to growth and evolution. You may feel disconnected from the group and this could be due to your own requirements. Quality time spent with a close friend recharges your drained body, mind and spirit. You're able to influence those you work with; strong support for your leadership skills is present. A positive word goes a long way when you take time to encourage a nice, new friend who's down, Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, as you begin something new you become aware of the negative aspects that come with it; you figure out how to diminish the negative and replace with the positive. A nice day at home recharges your spirit and you feel you can tackle just about anything. Someone insists that you do something their way and toss what you wanted to do to the side; perhaps separating yourself from this petty, dominating person would be best. Stay focused on your direction and don't be distracted by busybodies. Time gets away from you as you immerse yourself in a project you enjoy. An ambitious energy takes over as you come near to reaching a big goal. Anything that doesn't create positive energy is irrelevant to you. You know what you're doing now, Taurus, re doing now, Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you could feel thwarted in your attempt to make something better the best way you know how; you could have problems with issues of self-worth. There's a lot going on that you're not comfortable with; keep looking forward, never backward. Temptations abound as your work toward self-discipline; never give up, you can definitely do this. You see something naturally beautiful that makes you remember something you'd forgotten: search for and enjoy everything that brings joy. You could find that someone thoughtlessly piles more on you than you can handle but you somehow manage to rise to the occasion. You feel nostalgic and blessed by having the family you have; your heart's grateful. Your intimate relationships provide contentment, Gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, your focus is on understanding yourself and your motives; this could involve someone who's important to you. Knowing where you stand with someone clears the way for taking action. Some gossip you hear from a reputable person explains something you have been wondering about. You actually want to deal with your secretive side so that your can make improvements; you may realize that something you're hiding from others is nothing to be ashamed of. You know more than you let on regarding a sensitive matter. Staying in a positive spiritual place is a priority; you may have to step away from someone who's against your beliefs. Being with someone you love brings your week to a nice, gently close. Enjoy tonight, Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, you have a natural ability to get your thoughts across to those you're working with on a domestic project. You come to a realization regarding something from the past; this is an issue that's bothered you for some time. You get the go ahead from someone you asked you to tend to an important investment matter. Focus and confidence join to bring you to the end of an assignment. You discover something at home that needs to be repaired; someone who can fix this just happens to stop by. Something you thought of long ago shows up on television for sale; you hate the thought of missing out on this! Your clever mind is active in trying to figure out how to better someone's life you care about. Self-appreciation, rare for you, is strong tonight, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, dealing with your tendency to sabotage yourself is called for today. Realizing the only thing you can truly control is yourself provides strong motivation to pursue this. A kindness you did a while back is repaid! Looking at things from all the different angles sheds a lot of light on a certain situation. You strongly suspect someone of false flattery as they give compliments you don't believe; perhaps they're trying to win you over for a specific reason. Being strongly connected to intuition brings positive results; staying realistic helps with this. Dealing with a difficult person is something you refuse today. When someone has the nerve to tell you what you should and shouldn't do you don't hesitate to put them in their place. Take a deep breath, Virgo.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Physics 1

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 30 letters spell an Albert Einstein quotation.

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

ACCELERATION
ACOUSTICS
AMPLITUDE
ATOM
BLACK HOLE
BUOYANCY
CENTRIPETAL
COLD FUSION
CONVECTION
DENSITY
DISPLACEMENT
DOPPLER
EINSTEIN

ELECTRON
ENERGY
ENTROPY
EXPERIMENT
FARADAY
FREEZING POINT
FULCRUM
GRAVITY
HAWKING
IMPEDANCE
ISOTOPE
KELVIN

LAWS
LENGTH
LEVER
MASS
MECHANICS
MOMENTUM
NEWTON
OPTICS
PASCAL
PENDULUM
POWER
PRINCIPLES

QUARK
REFRACTION
SOUND
STRING THEORY
TESLA
THERMOMETER
TRAJECTORY
VECTOR
VISCOSITY
WAVE
WEDGE
WORK



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, your ideas are well communicated and inspiring to others. Stringent requirements are frustrating but you're definitely able to meet them. Being irritated on an emotional level could prove too much to deal with today; perhaps excusing yourself until this blows over is called for. An old memory crops up and causes you to rethink something in the present. You'd like for someone to step up to the plate and be fair; this could be way too much to expect from this particular person. Wanting more doesn't guarantee getting it but with right thinking and sincere effort you can make this happen; you have definitely got this! Being in the right place at the right time's more than a coincidence; karma's what we make it. Good, good times tonight, Libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, your comebacks and responses are lightening fast today. You may find it easy to find answers others can't seem to find; positive outcomes are likely when you take care of things on your own. You could be challenged by someone regarding a domestic project; even with your accelerated mental ability you might want to listen in the instance. People enjoy spending time with you as the positive aspects of your personality shine. You could want to do something that's not good for you; think about this one carefully. You desire control over everything going on right now; perhaps taking some time to sincerely look at this could help. You discover the secret of a friend they have been hiding. A sense of accomplishment is very noticeable tonight, Scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, trying something new at home could cause problems. You find an item long lost. Pay attention to what intuition is saying; there's important truth linked to this. A gathering of friends at your house creates fun and laughter for your close circle. A small change in decor is more than likely; you find ways to make this happen in an affordable way. Love and security are what you find most important; your sweetheart of mate is key to this as are you. Being able to overlook faults in others is a hallmark of your psyche. A nice person grants a favor you didn't request. A new outlook on life is refreshing! A big step forward sets you on the right path. You don't look back when you make a definite decision. You're open to change and new attitudes, Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, something serious demands your attention which, you gladly give. Taking care of details is important and a big part of finishing a certain thing; knowing exactly what's needed helps. You care nothing for anything that doesn't contribute to your security and abundance. Be aware that when you're focused on work or attainment you tend to be far too harsh on yourself. You instinctively know how to conduct business and cover all the specifics of a project. You love what you do! You could find that someone in authority has their eye on you for something special! Smooth sailing with work is strongly indicated for some time to come; may be a new offer for your soon. There's nothing more attractive than a captivating book tonight, Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Aquarius, an easy does it day for you to spend at your leisure a rare occasion, so take full advantage! You make big progress working on something you love; nothing compares to enjoying a beloved hobby or other interest that stimulates the soul. Those around you support and encourage you to take life by the horns and make it all that you want. Spiritual phenomenon have your full attention and your may find a certain book or video you seek. Someone who feels negative shows up for a very quick visit. Your tastes are sharpened, as though the taste buds of your life have been cleansed! You could adopt a pet or take on another similar situation caring for someone who can't care for themselves. Important goals become clear tonight, Aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, teamwork saves the day as something goes awry at home; someone shows up unexpectedly to help with this. You week out times and attitudes that don't seem to further your ambitions or reaching your goals; be watchful that you don't discard something you may need later. You examine decisions made earlier that no longer fit your lifestyle; hard work pays off in this effort. You discover that you are far more serious about something than your partner or associate. Time to reconsider your position on several things is at hand. Sliding to a budget could prove more difficult than you thought. People enjoy your humor and funny take on a certain situation that's not as bad as it seems; it's better to laugh than cry if at all possible, Pisces.

Friday's Solution

Photography

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

Classifieds

Sunday, March 11, 2018



STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy with light to moderate variable wind to north easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 30 km/h with a chance for haze.

BY NIGHT: Cool with light to moderate north easterly wind to northerly wind, with speed of 08 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	31 °C	21 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	29 °C	19 °C
ABDALY	28 °C	19 °C
BUBYAN	28 °C	13 °C
JAHRA	31 °C	21 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	30 °C	19 °C
SALMIYAH	26 °C	21 °C
AHMADI	00 °C	00 °C
NUWAISIB	32 °C	18 °C
WAFRA	31 °C	19 °C
SALMY	29 °C	17 °C

SFC. CHART

10/03/2018 0000 UTC

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	03/11	Warm and some scattered clouds will appear	30 °C	18 °C	N-NE	08 - 32 km/h
Monday	03/12	Warm	30 °C	17 °C	N-NW	12 - 35 km/h
Tuesday	03/13	Relatively hot	31 °C	16 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	03/14	Sunny and some high clouds will appear	31 °C	15 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:45
Sunrise	06:04
Zuhr	11:58
Asr	15:20
Sunset	17:53
Isha	19:10

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	35 °C
MIN. Temp.	15 °C
MAX. RH	63 %
MIN. RH	12 %
MAX. Wind	S 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

EMERGENCY
112

Automated enquiry
about the Civil ID card is
1889988

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation
For Filipino ONLY
Farwaniya block 1, near
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already, Contact
94418396 or 69972330
11-3-2018

For labor-related
inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

مدرسة الدانة العالمية في الكويت
DANAH Universal School of Kuwait

RECRUITMENT OPEN DAY

ACADEMIC POSITIONS:

- ✦ VICE PRINCIPAL (NATIVE SPEAKERS)
- ✦ CURRICULUM COORDINATOR (NATIVE SPEAKERS)
- ✦ HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (SCIENCE & MATH)
- ✦ SOCIALWORKER (PREFERABLE NATIVE SPEAKER)
- ✦ MATH TEACHER (ES & HS DEPT)
- ✦ ENGLISH TEACHER (MS DEPT)
- ✦ SCIENCE TEACHER (ES DEPT)
- ✦ IT TEACHER (ES DEPT)
- ✦ IT Teacher (Elementary Dept.)

NON-ACADEMIC POSITIONS:

- ✦ REGISTRAR
- ✦ DATA ANALYST

REQUIREMENTS:

- ✦ Native speakers for Vice Principal & Curriculum coordinator, Masters degree and /or PhD is a must.
- ✦ Minimum Bachelor's in relevant subject (Preferably Masters) for teachers.
- ✦ Minimum +5 years' experience of working in any reputable Institution.
- ✦ Must be familiar with American curriculum.
- ✦ Health: No chronic disease likely to affect performance.
- ✦ Note: Please carry your Resume along with your Passport & Degree copy.
- ✦ Please make sure the email address and contact no. in the application are correct.

Venue: Meeting room no. 13 A, Floor no. 13, Symphony Style Hotel, Salmiya.
Date: 17th March 2018 - Time: 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

Contact Us

- Tel : (+965) 2566 2546/7, 6640 2055
- Fax : (+965) 2564 0856 - 2566 2549
- info@dadanbsk.net
- Salmiya, Bld. 1, Salem Bin Towaim Aldawayh St. (S1100)
- P.O.Box: 7701, Salmiya - 22088 - Kuwait

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Jet Airways	22924455
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Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578

JOB VACANCY

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Kuwait
Has a vacancy for

Arabic / English Translator
cum- Secretary
General Requirements

1. University Graduate
2. Well versed in translation work from Arabic to English and vice versa
3. Ability to translate news reports & Media related materials
4. Ability to do simultaneous interpretation during official meetings
5. Transferable residency

For full job description and other related information please visit our website:
<http://kwt.mofa.go.kr>

Submit CV & Related documents to:
kuwait@mofa.go.kr

The closing date for all applications is Saturday, March 17, 2018



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 11/3/2018				Departure Flights on Sunday 11/3/2018							
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time				
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
JZR	125	Bahrain	00:10	JZR	604	Ahmedabad	00:05	SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
KNE	533	Jeddah	00:20	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30	JZR	176	Dubai	13:40
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	MSC	406	Sohag	00:30	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:15
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC	677	Dubai	01:00	JZR	124	Bahrain	14:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05	KAC	67	Dubai	15:05
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	KNE	534	Jeddah	01:10	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	BBC	044	Dhaka	01:30	KAC	785	Jeddah	15:25
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	JZR	142	Doha	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	QTR	1079	Doha	15:30
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
TRQ	230	KRT	02:00	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:45
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45	KAC	283	Dhaka	15:50
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	TRQ	231	KRT	02:55	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KAC	743	Dammam	16:05
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40	PAL	563	Amman	16:10
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55	KAC	669	Manila	16:10
WAN	548	KTM	02:40	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:05	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:40
KAC	414	Bangkok	03:05	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	KAC	615	Bahrain	16:40
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	FEG	932	Alexandria	16:45
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	KAC	103	London	05:00	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00	QTR	1073	Doha	17:15
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:30	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30	JZR	266	Beirut	17:15
UAE	873	Dubai	04:25	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	UAE	874	Dubai	06:15	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
UAE	873	Dubai	04:25	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25	KAC	361	Colombo	17:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	KAC	103	London	05:00	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	RJA	643	Amman	07:05	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	QTR	8512	Doha	07:55	JZR	538	Cairo	18:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:00	JZR	184	Dubai	18:30
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	165	Rome	08:15	JZR	608	Hyderabad	18:40
KAC	678	Dubai	06:00	FEG	934	Sohag	08:30	KAC	381	Delhi	18:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	791	Madinah	08:35	FDB	064	Dubai	19:10
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35	JZR	554	Alexandria	19:20
QTR	8511	Doha	06:25	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	KAC	613	Bahrain	08:55	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:50	BAW	156	London	08:55	QTR	1081	Doha	20:00
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	117	New York	09:00	ETH	3711	Addis Ababa	20:00
FEG	933	Sohag	07:30	JZR	534	Cairo	09:10	RBG	556	Alexandria	20:05
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	561	Amman	09:40	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	KAC	101	London	09:45	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	358	Kochi	07:40	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45	KAC	345	Ahmedabad	20:40
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	IRC	529	Ahwaz	09:55	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:50
JZR	605	Ahmedabad	08:45	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	515	Tehran	10:00	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
IRC	528	Ahwaz	09:05	JZR	482	Istanbul	10:05	KAC	1543	Cairo	21:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10	DLH	624	Bahrain	21:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	KAC	617	Doha	10:15	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20	KAC	411	Bangkok	22:05
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	10:30	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:05
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:40	KAC	203	Lahore	22:10
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:40	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	MSC	416	Sohag	11:15	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:10	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:35
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	JZR	786	Riyadh	11:55	KAC	383	Delhi	22:40
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	WAN	953	Baku	12:00	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	QTR	1075	Doha	12:30	ETD	310	Dhabi	23:05
KAC	792	Madinah	13:20	JZR	606	Kochi	12:45	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
								WAN	337	Alexandria	23:45

MARLI NEW YORK TO LAUNCH FLAGSHIP JEWELLERY BOUTIQUE IN KUWAIT



Maral and Shahed



Group Photo



Jamil Labban

Stating its edgy, confident and urban personality with a fabulously designed new flagship boutique in Kuwait City, MARLI will tell its personal jewellery story of happy luxury to the jewellery enthusiasts in Kuwait, engaging women with an inspiring presentation of personal styling, new age jewellery and striking retail standards.

Teaming up with Ali Al Ghanim the leading retail house in Kuwait, which also carry notable high end luxury brands in Kuwait, MARLI is set to offer carefree

sophistication, Avante Garde craftsmanship and genuinely personalized service in terms of jewellery styling to compliment high society social occasions.

Brand Founder and Artistic Director Maral Artinian, a resident New York jewellery designer and celebrity stylist, will be counting on her expert flair to offer lively, individual and exciting jewellery with added onuses. In Maral's words "We're not only bringing the collection of fabulous jewels, but introducing an entire styling ecosystem by

MARLI New York. How to optimize jewellery with lifestyles; how to create the affluent private composure; how to be style the perfect look for an occasion; what colors to wear and when; this is our philosophy which we want to convey through the MARLI personality to our valued customers in Kuwait".

"Ali Al Ghanem's luxury universe will be enriched with a niche jewellery brand from New York" says the company's jewellery department director Jamil Labban. MARLI New York will offer jewellery

collections which are innovative, distinctive, original and highly personalized, and come with a story and style guide, something our customers expect of us today. According to Ali Al Ghanim, the boutique concept by MARLI will offer a crisp and edgy propositions for all visitors.

With an already prominent retail omnipresence in high profile spots such as Bloomingdales and Harvey Nichols in the Gulf, MARLI plans to introduce the signature Cleo and Avenues

collections as its maiden selections, with Avenues inspired by the excitement of New York City streets, its towering architecture and the passionate heartbeats of a thriving metropolis, whereas Cleo with its colorful array and geometric composites evoking elegance, feminine courage and sophistication that is immediately recognizable, catching and individual.

The boutique is expected to open in 2018 and will assuredly intend to build the "we love this absolutely unique

styling ideas by MARLI" #marlinyc #moments

MARLI NEW YORK Marli is the fine jewelry brand from New York. Created by Maral Artinian and founded on the principles of timeless presence and individuality, Marli has a minimal, magnetic aesthetic that draws inspiration from the world's most dynamic city and the amazing women who live in it. From the avenues of New York to the women of the world, Marli enhances the unique allure of those who choose it.



Maral and Shahed



Maral and Artin



Jamil, Maral, Shahed, Maya, Claude



Cleo by Marli



Cleo by Marli



Cleo by Marli



Cleo by Marli



Avenues by Marli



Avenues by Marli



Avenues by Marli



Avenues by Marli



Harry Style eats a £20,000 bag of chips in Gucci campaign

A fish and chip shop was paid £20,000 for Harry Styles to eat a bag of chips and hold a chicken outside the eatery as part of a new Gucci campaign. The 24-year-old star was spotted outside a fish and chip shop in suburban St Albans whilst shooting images for the fashion brand, who reportedly splashed £20,000 in order to secure the remote location where Harry could indulge in the comfort food whilst promoting the menswear range.

According to Michele Sashoua, the co-founder of agency Fresh Locations - a company that finds suitable locations for private clients - even the most unsuspecting of places can be "worthwhile" for top brands to shoot a

campaign in, and the cost can be anywhere from £1,500 to £20,000 depending on the celebrity involved.

She told the Guardian newspaper: "It's got to be worthwhile to the owner. "It is a lot of disruption, not only to the owners but also to their neighbors. A film shoot is not to be underestimated. It's a minimum of 30 people and 12 hours for an ad, and they will need the run of your house."

The British singer has been sporting quirky suits designed by Gucci's creative director Alessandro Michele for some time now, and it was rumored Harry was working with the fashion brand in a promotional capacity for an unreleased tailoring campaign before the brand finally

confirmed the collaboration on their Instagram page.

Gucci posted a polaroid showing Harry in what looks to be a checked dressing gown, as he stands outside the fish and chip shop whilst holding a chicken. The caption for the photo read: "An inside look on set: @harrystylelessshooting the new #GucciTailoringcampaign. #AlessandroMichele (sic)" Another picture showed just the top of Harry's famous locks underneath the shop sign, and was captioned: "Looking behind the scenes on set: the new #GucciTailoring campaign, @harrystyles. #AlessandroMichele (sic)". — Bang Showbiz



Models present creations by Junko Shimada during the 2018/2019 fall/winter collection fashion show on March 6, 2018 in Paris. — AFP

ELLE FANNING REVELS IN HER 'INCREDIBLE' RUNWAY DEBUT

Elle Fanning says "adrenaline" got her through her runway debut. The 'Maleficent' actress - who opened the MiuMiu show during Paris Fashion Week - could barely contain her excitement after she strutted down the runway to showcase the brand's Autumn/Winter collection, and she subsequently admitted that there was more to modeling than she first realized. The 19-year-old star told WomensWearDaily.com: "The adrenalin, oh my god! "It was incredible. You think it's just walking but it's not."

Elle already has a strong relationship with the fashion brand, after making her first front-row appearance at their 2014 show, alongside her sister and fellow actress Dakota Fanning. Elle used her experience playing a model in the movie 'The Neon Demon' to inspire her on the runway, but later admitted she was worried about messing up in front of Vogue Editor-in-Chief, Anna Wintour. She said: "I used tips of what Abbey Lee [fellow model and actress who starred alongside Elle in the movie] had taught me, of how to walk and the posture of that."

"But in a movie, you have a lot of takes and you're not as nervous. If you mess up, it's OK; but [here] no, because Anna Wintour's staring at me, and I was like no, I'm not messing up." However, Elle is putting her modeling career on hold for the moment as she has a series of movie projects that will keep her busy for the next year. The actress' 'Teen Spirit' and 'A Rainy Day In New York' films are currently in production and she has just been announced as the lead in the upcoming teen drama 'All the Bright Places', which is based on the best-selling book by Jennifer Niven. — Bang Showbiz



Lennon Gallagher hailed as one to watch

Lennon Gallagher has been hailed as "one to watch" in the fashion industry. The 18-year-old model - who is the son of rocker Liam Gallagher and his ex-wife Patsy Kensit - is being tipped for big things by stylist Alex Longmore, who also singled out Jude Law and Sadie Frost's daughter Iris, 17, Kate Moss and Jefferson Hack's daughter Lila-Grace Moss, 15, and former 'Mad Men' star Kiernan Shipka, 18, as future movers and shakers in the fashion world. She said: "Liam Gallagher's son is one to watch and Iris Law, but she is already quite big."

"Lila Moss and the little girl from 'Mad Men' (Shipka) will be big too." David and Victoria Beckham have seen their two older sons, Brooklyn, 19, and Romeo, 15, model for Burberry and Alex - who has styled the likes of Little Mix and Dame Julie Walters - thinks their younger siblings, Cruz, 13, and six-year-old Harper will eventually follow them into the fashion world. She exclusively told BANG Showbiz: "Brooklyn Beckham is just going to get stronger and stronger and the next Beckham will start to be put in the spotlight." "I think they [David and Victoria Beckham] will do it one by one."

Away from celebrity offspring, Alex also predicted actress Margot Robbie - who has just been announced as Chanel's newest brand ambassador - and model Adwoa Aboah will become even bigger names in the next few years. She said: "Margot Robbie is going to go from strength to strength and Adwoa Aboah is definitely one to watch". The stylist also believes in the younger stars with famous parents who are carving out their own successful paths. Alex has proved she is a voice to listen to when it comes to predicting the next big thing, and revealed she was "the first to ever book" model Cara Delevigne after seeing something special in the star on a shoot.

She said: "I'm quite good at predicting the next big thing, I mean I did a shoot with Cara Delevigne, I was one of the first people ever to book her because I knew she was going to be a big thing." Alex Longmore is working with the American Express Nectar Credit Card's rewarding wardrobe campaign showing how points towards coffees, meals out and even flights can be earned on everyday purchases. — Bang Showbiz



Lennon Gallagher



Models present creations by Valentin Yudashkin during the 2018/2019 fall/winter collection fashion show. — AFP photos



Models present creations for John Galiano during the 2018/2019 fall/winter collection fashion show.

Tess Holliday gets ignored by designers

Tess Holliday claims many designers won't loan her clothes. The 32-year-old plus-sized model admitted some fashion houses don't even "respond" to requests from her stylist to dress her for high-profile events. She said: "I've been working with my stylist Megan for a couple of years now. She's reached out to designers that I didn't think would dress me. "I went to Kate Spade's presentation, and Kate Spade dressed me for my book tour. But there are a lot of people that [won't] even respond. Kate Spade was one of the big brands that did." But Tess was full of praise for Christian Siriano, as she "really appreciates" his "use of diversity".

She told InStyle: "I didn't see anything I wouldn't wear personally. "Christian's use of diversity is always really appreciated. I was backstage before the show and not only did he have plus size models, but he had a few different races, he had trans models, even his sister walked in the show! It was just was so beautiful. "If I were to call him tomorrow and say 'I have this event and I need something for it', he would make it." And Tess has called for more "representation" of bigger women on the runway.



She said: "I'm grateful that some of these designers are at least showing 12 and 14, but I think that it's frustrating because I want it to be available for more plus-size women globally. I want to see more representation, I want to see them doing it in a really thought-provoking way and actually understanding how to dress our bodies. "And yes, it is complicated, but we're a huge percent of the market and we have so much buying power, and we're just constantly being ignored."

Rihanna to launch lingerie line

Rihanna is set to launch a lingerie line. The 30-year-old singer has reportedly signed a deal with the online fashion subscription retailer, TechStyle - formerly known as JustFab - which will see her branching out from her successful Fenty Beauty line to launch a range of underwear for the company. Although her publicist declined to comment on the deal, a source told WWD the collaboration with the 'We Found Love' hitmaker - who previously designed underwear for Emporio Armani - has been in the works for over a year, with samples already being produced.

Lloyd Grief - the president and chief executive officer of Los Angeles investment bank Grief & Co - speculated that TechStyle want to add another celebrity to their line of collaborations after already working with Kate Hudson as the co-founder of their successful brand Fabletics, and Kim Kardashian West as the co-founder of ShoeDazzle, which was established in 2009. He said: "They're of a size now that adding another brand, adding another category, would make sense to round out the product offering. What they want to do is show growth. The key to going public is having a growth track record or having growth in their windshield, not in the rearview mirror of the company so I'm sure the Rihanna brand play would be to convince the market that the company has strong growth ahead because IPOs are all about growth ahead."

Rihanna is already dominating the fashion and beauty industry by designing a range of footwear for athleisure brand Puma, as well as launching her own beauty line Fenty Beauty which became an instant success after their products catered to all skin tones. Speaking about her beauty range last year, the

'Work' hitmaker said she had "so much creative freedom" during the design process, and wanted to make sure she focused on a woman's skin in order to highlight their beauty. She said: "I had so much freedom in creating whatever products I wanted to make, and whatever colors or shades, down to the fonts of the packaging." "Skin is the true key to a woman's beauty. "I think if you can make make-up look like skin, that's the best." — Bang Showbiz



Karl Lagerfeld nicknames his girl gang the 'Choupettes'

Karl Lagerfeld calls his fashion industry girl gang the "Choupettes". The 84-year-old designer is one of the biggest influencers in the industry and, speaking backstage at Chanel's autumn/winter 2018 show during Paris Fashion Week, he's revealed that he's particularly enjoying spending time with 20-year-old star Luna Bijl, who recently accompanied him to a show. He shared: "My favorite girl of the moment is a Dutch girl called Luna." The model has recently become a regular on the catwalk for Chanel, for whom she's starred alongside Grace Elizabeth in a spring/summer 2018 campaign. Lagerfeld also revealed that the nickname of his favorite models was inspired by his beloved feline companion.

He told Vogue magazine: "There are people I call my Choupettes. She, and the daughter of Vanessa Paradis, Lily-Rose Depp, they are my Choupettes." Lagerfeld has also recently collaborated with up-and-coming star Kaia Gerber, who is the 16-year-old daughter of catwalk icon Cindy Crawford. Kaia didn't take part in one of his catwalk shows until 2017 as her protective mother wouldn't agree to it, but Lagerfeld has been thrilled by the steep rise of the teenage model.

He previously said: "I had been asking her mom for a few seasons to let Kaia walk in my show after we featured her in our spring 2016 campaign. "I was thrilled when she finally agreed, and she opened our Spring 2018 show. Kaia has that indescribable kind of look, and she was born to play the part."



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2018



Picture shows realistic-looking dolls inspired by impactful women from all different backgrounds and occupational fields.

Chloe Kim, Patty Jenkins, and more get their own Barbie dolls for International Women's Day

This International Women's Day, Barbie is honoring accomplished role models with their very own dolls. From aviator Amelia Earhart to USA Olympic snowboarder Chloe Kim, Barbie created 17 realistic-looking dolls inspired by impactful women from all different backgrounds and occupational fields. "As a brand that inspires the limitless potential in girls, Barbie will be honoring its largest lineup of role models timed to International Women's Day because we know that you can't be what you can't see," Lisa McKnight, Barbie's senior vice president and general manager, said in a press release.

The lineup includes three historical figures and 14 modern-day women. In addition to Kim, the modern-day dolls include Wonder Woman filmmaker Patty Jenkins, wildlife conservationist Bindi Irwin, championship boxer Nicola Adams, windsurfer Cagla Kubat, chef Helene Darroze, volleyball champion Hui Ruoqi, and designer

and entrepreneur Leyla Piedayesh. Professional golfer Lorena Ochoa, journalist Martyna Wojciechowska, soccer player Sara Gama, actress and philanthropist Xiaotong Guan, ballerina Yuan Tan, and fashion designer and entrepreneur Vicky Martin also got dolls created in their likenesses.

"Girls have always been able to play out different roles and careers with Barbie, and we are thrilled to shine a light on real-life role models to remind them that they can be anything," McKnight said. The effort to inspire the next generation of women with modern-day female heroes is part of Barbie's Shero program, which began in 2015. Over the years, the initiative has honored history-making women like Ibtihaj Muhammad, Misty Copeland, Ava DuVernay, Eva Chen, and Ashley Graham. "Sheroes are given the Barbie brand's highest honor, a one-of-a-kind doll made in their likeness, in celebration of their roles in expanding the possibilities

for girls everywhere," the company noted.

In addition to the modern-day Sheroes, Barbie introduced dolls of three impactful women from history this year: aviator Amelia Earhart, artist Frida Kahlo, and mathematician Katherine Johnson. Though the 14 modern-day role model dolls are one-of-a-kind and not currently available for sale, the three dolls in the historical Inspiring Women line are currently available for pre-order, and will be available for purchase in the coming months. To participate in the call to inspire women around the world, Barbie is also encouraging fans to share women who inspire them on social media using the hashtag #MoreRoleModels. — mashable.com



Picture shows aviator Amelia Earhart, artist Frida Kahlo, and mathematician Katherine Johnson.



Mexican Mara Romeo, great-niece of late Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, speaks during an interview with AFP at a family house in the neighborhood of Coyoacan, Mexico City. — AFP photos



View of a doll depicting late Mexican artist Frida Kahlo exhibited at her sister's house in the neighborhood of Coyoacan, Mexico City.

Row erupts over new Frida Kahlo Barbie

The new Frida Kahlo Barbie raised eyebrows, and indeed unibrows, from the moment it was announced. Now the late Mexican artist's family alleges the rights to her image have been stolen, and accuses toymaker Mattel of misrepresenting her appearance and ignoring what she stood for. Mattel announced on Wednesday that Kahlo, a painter known for her searingly intimate portraits as well as her defiantly unplucked eyebrows, would be included in its newest collection of Barbie dolls.

It was perhaps an unlikely choice for the maker of the famously buxom blonde doll, given that Kahlo was known for upending gender norms and traditional ideas about how women should look and act. Released just ahead of International Women's Day, the "Inspiring Women" collection includes dolls based on Kahlo, aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart, African-American mathematician Katherine Johnson and other historic figures. But Kahlo's family soon issued a statement objecting to the doll.

"Mrs Mara Romeo, great-niece of Frida Kahlo, is the

sole owner of the rights of the image of the illustrious Mexican painter Frida Kahlo," it said. "The company Mattel does not have the proper authorization to use the image of Frida Kahlo," it added, threatening to take "necessary measures" against the California-based toymaker. However, an American company called the Frida Kahlo Corporation insisted it was the legitimate owner of the rights. "Mattel has worked in close partnership with the Frida Kahlo Corporation, the owner of all rights related to the name and identity of Frida Kahlo, on the creation of this doll," it said in a statement.

Romeo's lawyer Pablo Sangri said the dispute arose after the family established the Frida Kahlo Corporation in 2005, in partnership with another company called Casablanca Distributors. The latter has violated their now-expired contract by failing to inform Kahlo's relatives about the uses of her "brand," he told AFP.

And the contract never granted the Corporation rights to Kahlo's image in the first place, only "certain uses of her name," he said. "The Frida Kahlo

Corporation doesn't hold, never held and will never hold the rights to Frida's image."

Pop icon

But the problem goes deeper than just a dispute over image rights, said Romeo, the granddaughter of Kahlo's sister Cristina. Kahlo was known for her assertive embrace of her Mexican identity and her unabashed, unmanicured femininity. "I would have liked the doll to have traits more like Frida's, not this doll with light-colored eyes. I would have liked her to have a unibrow, for her clothes to be made by Mexican artisans," she told AFP.

"It should be a doll that represents everything my aunt represented, her strength. It should be a Frida that represents Mexico." With her slender face and almond eyes-topped by just the slightest hint of hair between her brows-the Frida Kahlo Barbie looks only vaguely like the real-life Frida. In recent years, Kahlo's image has been stamped onto an explosion of consumer products: nail polish, bags, shoes, coffee mugs and much, much more. Her instantly recognizable look-unibrow, thick black braids, flowery, hand-embroidered Mexican "tehuana" dresses-and the boldness with which she wore it have turned her into a pop icon. But Romeo said the companies behind such products are making them without the family's permission, and violating Kahlo's legacy in the process.—AFP



Picture of a shoe with the image of late Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, which alongside other commercial products, is exhibited at her sister's house in the neighborhood of Coyoacan, Mexico City.



View of commercial products with the image of late Mexican artist Frida Kahlo exhibited at her sister's house in the neighborhood of Coyoacan, Mexico City.