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China parliament allows Xi to remain president indefinitely

Leader's political mantra to be inscribed in the constitution

Kuwait 'agrees' to conditions to lift ban on Filipinos

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait and the Philippines have made progress in negotiations for a bilateral labor agreement, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement yesterday, hoping that more pragmatic measures could be included so that it could recommend its signing and the lifting of the ban on the deployment of new workers.

According to the statement, Kuwaiti authorities have reportedly agreed to the conditions laid down by Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte shortly after he declared a ban on the deployment of new workers to Kuwait. The negotiating panel led by Philippine Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III and Ambassador Renato Villa were able to secure Kuwait's commitment that would guarantee Filipino domestic workers a minimum monthly salary of KD 120; rest hours of at least eight hours per day; possession of their passports and mobile phones; and limiting their work to only one household.

"Our negotiations with Kuwait have so far been going well but we need to put in place more practical measures that would ensure the safety and welfare of our [compatriots] working there," Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Alan Peter S. Cayetano said. Cayetano also commended officials from the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait and the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) for convincing their Kuwaiti counterparts to Duterte's conditions.

Continued on Page 11



BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping votes during the third plenary session of the first session of the 13th National People's Congress at the Great Hall of the People yesterday. — AFP

BEIJING: China's Xi Jinping yesterday secured a path to rule indefinitely as parliament abolished presidential term limits, handing him almost total authority to pursue a vision of transforming the nation into an economic and military superpower. The move reverses the era of "collective" leadership and orderly succession that was promoted by late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to ensure stability following the turbulent one-man rule of Communist China's founder Mao Zedong.

The historic constitutional amendment cleared the rubberstamp parliament with 2,958 in favor, two against, three abstentions and one invalid vote, despite an unusual bout of online criticism that censors have scrambled to extinguish. Xi stood up first at the imposing Great Hall of the People in Beijing to cast his paper ballot in a red

box, as delegates of the National People's Congress applauded after each vote on the constitutional amendment to lift the two five-year term limit for the presidency.

The first constitutional amendment in 14 years had been expected to breeze through the legislature, which has never rejected a Communist Party diktat in its half-century of existence. "This is the urgent wish of the common people," Ju Xiuqin, a delegate from northeastern Heilongjiang province, told AFP, echoing party claims that lifting term limits had the unanimous support of "the masses". But the vote sparked some negative comments on Twitter-like Weibo, with one user defying censors to write "we're over" while another said "we are back in the Qing Dynasty", referring to China's last imperial era.

Continued on Page 11



KAFR BATNA, Syria: Smoke billows following Syrian government bombardment on this rebel-controlled town in the besieged Eastern Ghouta region yesterday. — AFP

Regime bombs splintered Ghouta as bodies pile up

HAMMURIYEH, Syria: New air strikes and barrel bombs pounded Syria's Eastern Ghouta yesterday as government forces pressed a three-week advance that splintered the rebel enclave and trapped dozens under collapsed buildings. Defying global calls for a ceasefire, Syria's government has pursued a ferocious Russian-backed air campaign and ground offensive to capture the

region, the last rebel bastion on the capital's doorstep.

In three weeks of fighting, it has overrun more than half the area and split the remainder into three pockets, isolating the urban hub of Douma from the rest of the enclave. Yesterday, government troops battered the edges of each pocket with air raids, barrel bombs, and rockets, said the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. After fighting all morning, they captured the town of Meideira, which lies at the heart of the three zones, Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said. State news agency SANA had reported troops were focusing on the town in order to cut rebel access routes in Ghouta.

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Amir, Crown Prince meet senior state officials

Amir congratulates Kuwaiti diplomat's spouse on accolade



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

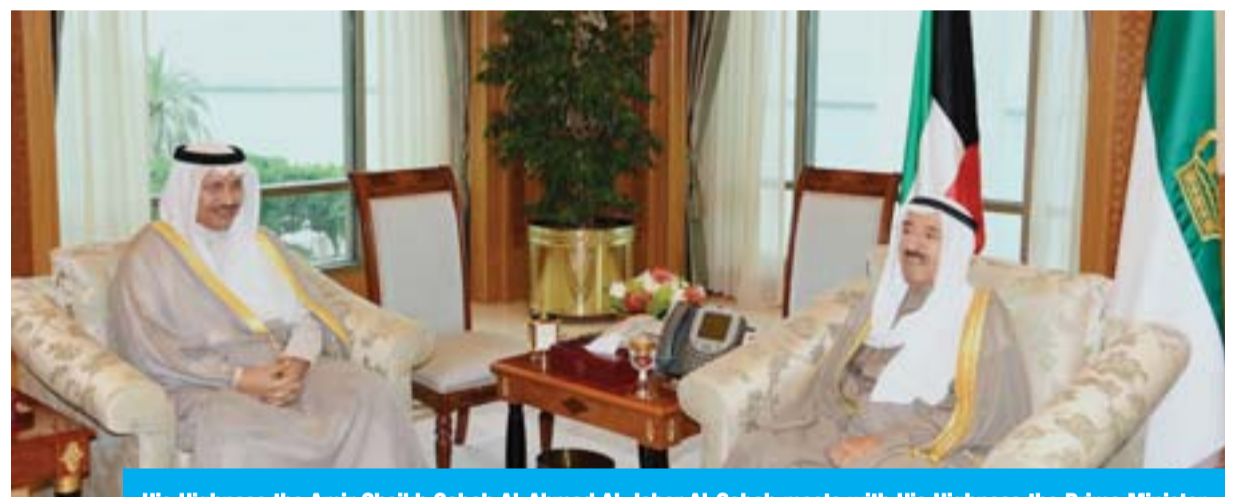
KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, His Highness the PM Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi were also among those to have met His Highness the Crown Prince. Separately, Ghanem received in his office

yesterday Turkey's Ambassador to the State of Kuwait Aisha Hilal. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir congratulated yesterday the wife of Kuwait's ambassador to the United States after she was honored by the UN-affiliated Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

In a letter he sent to Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's better half, His Highness the Amir applauded her for being the recipient of WILPF's "Peace Women Award", in recognition of her decade's worth of contributions towards humanitarian causes. His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister also sent similar messages to the Kuwaiti activist.

In other news, His Highness the Amir is set to patronize and attend the honoring ceremony of outstanding graduates of colleges and institutes of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) for the academic year 2016/2017. The event takes place at 10:30 am today at PAAET's new building in Shuwaikh. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Adel Al-Kharafi.



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with Turkey's Ambassador to Kuwait Aisha Hilal.

Kuwaiti FM cables Russian counterpart on anniversary

KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov exchanged cables of congratulations on the 55th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties on March 11, 1963. Both top diplomats stressed the importance of boosting and enhancing bilateral ties, to better serve the interests of both nations, as well as peoples' aspirations.

Perpetual progress

A Kuwaiti diplomat meanwhile spoke highly of his country's ties with Russia, fondly reminiscing about how Moscow stood in solidarity with the Kuwaiti people during the Iraqi invasion. Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Foreign Minister for

European Affairs Waleed Al-Khbaizi pointed out that bilateral ties have been on a perpetual progress over the years. He spoke of high-profile visits officials from both nations have exchanged, in addition to political discussions on the level of deputy foreign ministers, with the next round of talks due shortly. Earlier yesterday, the Kuwaiti envoy and Russia's ambassador to Kuwait Alexey Solomatov exchanged well wishes in an amiable encounter to celebrate more than five decades of diplomatic ties.

FM meets GCC's Zayani

In other news, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled received in his office Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani. The meeting was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah; Assistant Foreign Minister for Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's Office Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah; Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Ambassador Dhari Al-Ajran; Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Affairs Ambassador Nasser Al-Mezyen and Assistant Foreign Minister for Al-Jarallah's Office Affairs Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, as well as a host of the ministry's senior officials. — KUNA

Defense Minister receives ambassadors

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday the UAE's ambassador to Kuwait Rahma Al-Zaabi. The envoy handed over to Sheikh Nasser an official invitation from Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan to visit the UAE. Sheikh Nasser thanked Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan for his generous invitation which he accepted, Defense's Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations said in a press statement.

Also yesterday, Sheikh Nasser separately received ambassadors of Oman Adnan Al-Ansari, Belgium Piet Heirbaut and Vatican (Holy See)



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with UAE's ambassador to Kuwait Rahma Al-Zaabi. — KUNA

Archbishop Francisco Montecillo Padilla. The First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister and the envoys exchanged friendly talks,

and also discussed issues of common interest as well as latest developments on the regional and international scenes. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani. — KUNA



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Belgium's ambassador Piet Heirbaut.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah meets with Oman's ambassador Adnan Al-Ansari.

Local

Court of cassation sets May 6 to rule on Assembly storming case

Turajji files new complaint at Anti-Corruption Authority

By B Izzak and A Saleh

KUWAIT: The court of cassation yesterday set May 6 a date to issue the final ruling on 69 opposition activists accused of storming the National Assembly building more than six years ago. The activists, who include three present lawmakers and several ex-MPs, were handed harsh jail terms last year by the appeals court which considered their action as a major offense.

The appeals court issued jail terms ranging between one and nine years against 67 defendants and suspended jail terms against the remaining two. It also ruled that the jail terms be carried out with immediate effect even before the court of cassation, the highest in the country, had looked into the case.

MPs Jamaan Al-Harbash and Waleed Al-Tabtabaei as a result spent three months in the central jail before they were freed two weeks ago by the cassation court. Activists and lawyers criticized the appeals court ruling and even the public prosecution told the cassation court the ruling was not in line with the law because a number of defendants were not allowed to make their defense arguments in the court.

A large number of protesters stormed the Assembly building in Nov 2011 following a demonstration outside the Assembly to protest against alleged graft by 13 members of the then parliament. Those MPs were interrogated by the public prosecution but no charges were pressed against them because of insufficient legislation to take them to court. But the cassation court yesterday rejected a request by some defendants to lift a travel ban against them, although the interior ministry has already removed the ban. In a related development, former MP Abdullah Al-Turajji yesterday filed a new complaint at the Anti-Corruption Authority against the Assembly, claiming the parliament failed

to release an investigation report on some officials obtaining state land illegally. The investigation was carried out by the previous Assembly in which Turajji was a member and also headed the probe. The ex-lawmaker has already filed a number of similar complaints to the Anti-Corruption Authority calling for an investigation. One of the complaints claimed that some MPs had received fresh bribes worth millions of dinars.

Six colleges

Education Minister Hamed Al-Azmi stressed that the initial launch of six colleges at Sabah Al-Salem Academic City (Shadadiya University) will take place during the first half of 2020, adding that most construction works are scheduled to conclude in 2019. Azmi added that there will be parking spaces for 24,114 vehicles, with the possibility of future expansions. Azmi explained that the six colleges - engineering, science, administrative sciences, life sciences, education, and arts - will be initially handed over during the last quarter of 2018. He added that all guarantees had been taken to fine contractors who fall behind schedule.

KD 15 billion

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and its subsidiaries made revenues of KD 15 billion in nine months from April to December 2017, well-informed sources said. Crude oil revenues were KD 9 billion, while those of oil products were KD 325 million and those of gas KD 122 billion, the sources added. Meanwhile, Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) announced net profits of over KD 24 billion during the last three fiscal years (April 2014-March 2017). KIA's report emphasized its role in managing the investments of state reserves as well as the future generations funds.

Technology complex

The Public Authority for Industry

(PAI) offered for public bidding a tender to conduct advisory studies to build a technology complex in Shadadiya industrial area over an area of 200,000 sq m at a total cost yet to be determined by the study. PAI Director Abdul Kareem Taqi said funding sources will be sought through local or foreign banks and stressed that building the project's infrastructure will start before the end of this year. Taqi said PAI had an agreement with Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) to prepare a study on the project's strategies and goals and development plan, while the recent bidding will be for building the project's infrastructure and its costs and revenues.

Taqi also noted that the project aims at contributing to technical industrial research, encouraging creativity and technological industrial innovations as well as their applications in petrochemicals, renewable energy, water resources and others. Notably, the deadline for the bidding is April 12, 2018 and bids should be submitted to PAI. These remain valid for 90 days effective from their opening.

Considerable retreat

Statistics issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) showed a considerable retreat in total amounts allocated for subsidies, be they for construction or food items, and that subsidies fell by 11.9 percent in 2017. Figures showed that total subsidies paid for food items



Abdullah Al-Turajji

Social aid allowances

Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) Undersecretary Saad Al-Kharraz said 7,600 social aid files have been referred to the public prosecution over suspicions of unlawfully receiving social aid allowances with a total value of KD 25 million, of which only KD 7 million has been recovered. Kharraz stressed that law number 24/1962 pertaining clubs and NGOs authorized MSAL to supervise these bodies to protect charity work from "intruders" and the possibility of exploiting charity funds by terrorist groups. "This is done through issuing special laws, decisions and regulations that will help put UN resolutions related to fighting money laundering and funding terrorism into practice," he added.

Considerable fall in amounts allocated for subsidies



Statistics issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) showed a considerable retreat in total amounts allocated for subsidies, be they for construction or food items, and that subsidies fell by 11.9 percent in 2017. Figures showed that total subsidies paid for food items were KD 94.2 million, while those paid for construction materials were KD 77.5 million, especially after implementing housing welfare law number 19/2014 which provides applicants with KD 30,000 in construction material subsidies. Relevant sources said that the fall in subsidies happened due to drop in international prices of the subsidized items. The sources added that another reason for the fall in subsidies is citizens' decreased consumption of subsidized materials, namely construction material, in view of suspending some new housing projects.

First Deputy Prime Minister chairs supreme council meet

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, chaired yesterday the council's seventh meeting of its first term in 2018. Emerging from the meeting, Minister of Social Affairs, Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs, Hind Al-Sabeeh, said the discussed agenda included a proposed memo to refer a government bill on holding public contracts and funding local and international markets.

The discussions also dealt with proposals regarding the health insurance system and its impact on the state health sector. A health ministry's team present-



Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah

ed proposals on reforming the system for medical treatment abroad, minister Sabeeh said. The meeting concluded with discussions about a memo presented by the human and construction development committee on the state fourth structural scheme and extent of its harmony with the State of Kuwait 2035 Vision, she said. — KUNA

National Guard security plan well on course

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti National Guard continues to pursue its strategy for the year 2020, in which security is the key

focal point, its deputy chief Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said yesterday. In a speech before a class of freshly graduated Kuwaiti cadets who had just taken their oaths, Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad sought to instill patriotism in the officers, telling them to be "obedient to the nation's leaders." He went on to congratulate the new National Guard recruits on their graduation, as they assume their responsibilities of protecting the country and ensuring security for its people. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti National Guard's deputy chief Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah honors a freshly graduated Kuwaiti cadet. — KUNA

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Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: The cityscape's silhouette during sunset in Kuwait City. —KUNA

Kuwait International Law Society holds 5th Model United Nations

Developing students' writing, critical thinking and public speaking

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: The closing ceremony of the 5th annual Kuwait International Law Society's Model United Nations (MUN) conference was held on Saturday at the United Nations House in Mishref. Kuwait International Law Society is a student club at Kuwait University's Faculty of Law. The three-day Model United Nations conference was a great experience for participants, as they learned new skills such as debating, public speaking and teamwork. The participants represented countries and played the role of diplomats. US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R



Participants represented countries as 'diplomats'

chance to represent the delegate of a specific country. MUN allows students to develop writing skills, critical thinking and public speaking.

Silverman was the chief guest. UN Resident Coordinator Dr Tarek El-Sheikh lauded the organizers for the job well done and for the experiences gained by the participants. Model United Nations is a miniature UN conference where students negotiate political topics.

It is an academic activity found in many universities around the world. Kuwait International Law Society has annually organized this conference since 2013. Students from schools and universities learn about diplomacy and international relations, and the experience gives students the



KUWAIT: Officials pose with children during the closing ceremony of the 5th annual Kuwait International Law Society Model United Nations (MUN) conference. —Photo by Joseph Shagra



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah attended yesterday the opening of the 'antiquities and civil heritage' conference at the Kuwait National Library.

Conference necessary to safeguard Gulf relics: official

KUWAIT: The 'antiquities and civil heritage' conference is significant for conserving the Gulf region's heritage, Director of Antiquities and Museums Department at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) Sultan Al-Duweish said yesterday.

Duweish made the statement in his capacity as the chairman of the permanent bureau of the conference that opened yesterday at the Kuwait National Library. Conferees during the two-day meeting are set to discuss recommendations by the 22nd conference session, held in Kuwait in November 2016, in addition to preparing agenda of the 23rd session due in Jordan in April. The bureau is tasked with educating the generations about the heritage in the Arab world and necessity of preserving the priceless treasures.

Duweish, during the meeting, called for shedding light on developments and events affecting the relics in the Arab region and urged for fighting trafficking in the historic items. Hayat Guermazi, director of the department of culture and heritage protection at Alecco, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, praised Kuwait's sponsorship of joint Arab cultural activities and its annual hosting of a meeting grouping Arab archeologists.

Future Generations Festival

The 29th Future Generations Festival aims to foster the talents of children and promote their culture, supervisor of child culture department of the NCCAL Maryam Salmin said Saturday. The festival, organized by NCCAL under the patronage of Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri at Al-Tahrir Theater in Kaifan, lasts until March 23.

Speaking on the sidelines of the opening ceremony, Salmin said that the event's agenda includes several theatrical and

singing performances, symposiums and workshops. She invited parents to the event to share the joy with their children. The ceremony featured a performance themed 'Kids Island Area' produced by Abdulaziz Behbehani. The performance has a lot of underlying noble values and highlights the importance education and culture, Behbehani said. It portrays the suffering of a number of illiterate children living on an island with no access to education, he added. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Sultan Al-Duweish (center right) chairs a meeting for the permanent bureau of the antiquities and civil heritage' conference yesterday. —KUNA

Local

GCC Traffic Week aims for safety of road users

Accidents kill more than 400 people every year: Shuwaye



KUWAIT: Traffic General Department officers pose for a group photo during the launch ceremony of the GCC Traffic Week at Shaheed Park yesterday. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shalkh



By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: 'Your life is a trust' is the slogan of the GCC unified traffic week being held from March 11-15, 2018. The event aims to spread traffic awareness for the safety of road users. The Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Maj Gen Fahd Al-Shuwaye appreciated the important role of the private sector in supporting the traffic department in traffic awareness issues. "Social participation has become essential in facing the traffic issue and finding suitable solutions for it. One of the most important solutions is to spread traffic awareness inside and outside the company," he said during the launch ceremony yesterday at Shaheed Park.

The GCC Traffic Week will include various activities. "We will spread traffic awareness through exhibitions that will take place in The Avenues and The Gate malls. Awareness competitions will also be held for students in schools and some competitions will be posted on the official website of the interior ministry, in addition to other activities," added Shuwaye.

This year's slogan 'your life is a trust' targets all road users by emphasizing that by respecting traffic laws, we can protect lives. "The traffic department is working hard to deliver awareness messages to all the road users in cooperation with the security media and public relations department. Of course we can only spread the traffic culture and awareness among the community through the media, including the press, television, radio

and others," he explained.

"Every year we lose more than 400 people in car accidents. The number of traffic accidents reached around 70,000 in 2017, and caused many injuries too. We aim to decrease the number of car accidents and traffic fines as well. The number of fines registered daily is very high compared to Kuwait's population and number of vehicles," stressed Shuwaye.

The Traffic Week is an awareness week and not a week for boosting traffic fines. "Our goal is not to register more fines, but to protect motorists. We are still ticketing violations including not using seatbelts, not wearing a helmet for motorcycle riders, using mobile phones while driving and others. But we have stopped seizing the vehicles for these violations," he concluded.



Maj Gen Fahd Al-Shuwaye



Officers distribute cards to motorists in order to spread awareness about safe driving.



Brutal end to 'staring contest'

KUWAIT: A fight broke out between two men after each one of them accused the other of staring at him in a provocative manner. They brawled afterwards and stabbed each other, and both were admitted to the intensive care unit in critical condition. Police responded to a call about the fight, and when they arrived, the two were still fighting and stabbing each other. Both will be questioned when their conditions improve.

Drug possession

A bedoon's attempt to flee was foiled by two policemen after they pulled him over and found shabu, hashish, four imported liquor bottles and drug paraphernalia with him. He was taken to the Drugs Control General Department.

Forgery felony

A couple traded accusations at Naeem police station. The husband accused his wife of stealing his money, but the wife claimed what her husband said is untrue, and that she withdrew the money after he gave her the ATM card and PIN code, as the family is in need of money. Investigations are underway in the forgery felony case. — Translated from the Arabic press



KUWAIT: Director General of Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) Major General Khalid Al-Mikrad and Chairman of the Board of the Electronic Media Association Faisal Al-Sawagh signed a memorandum of understanding yesterday to activate joint cooperation between the two sides. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

More tests for Australian melon shipments

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Food and Nutrition stressed the need to take preventive measures by holding melon shipments arriving from Australia for further tests to make sure they are free of listeria. In an administrative directive it issued, the authority explained that the Australian consulate in Kuwait stressed that Australian authorities are investigating

the spread of listeria monocytogenes in melons planted in a farm in New South Wales, adding that preventive measures had to be taken with all Australian melon shipments.

No extension

Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations Manager Abdul Mohsen Abalkhail stressed that removing spring camps will start as scheduled by mid-March and strongly denied any plans to extend the period. He also noted that Municipality machinery and labor had already started preparations to remove camps that remain beyond this period. Abalkhail said approval from the Environment Public Authority (EPA) is needed to refund the KD 300 deposit paid by campers and stressed that EPA will need to notify the Municipality that the vacated site is clean.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality Inspectors removed 114 cubic meters of used tires and wastes and impounded 14 abandoned vehicles during a recent campaign in Farwaniya, the Public Relations Department said in a statement.

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Scuffles in Hong Kong at key vote for democrats

Cuba vote opens final chapter of Castro era



BAGHDAD: Ibrahim Al-Jabiri, one of the leaders of Iraq's Shiite Sadr Movement, gives an interview during a demonstration by the movement in the capital Baghdad's Tahrir square against corruption in the Iraqi government. —AFP

Iraq's Sadr and communist sickle join forces

'For more than two years we've been fighting together'

BAGHDAD: Supporters of a black-turbaned Shiite cleric are seeing red in the run-up to Iraq's May elections thanks to an unprecedented alliance with the once-powerful communist party. Populist preacher Moqtada Sadr has defied his clerical rivals and opted to campaign for the May 12 poll alongside former enemies, Marxists who demand a secular state.

"This alliance is a first in Iraq," said Ibrahim Al-Jaberi, a Sadr official. "It's a revolution by Iraqis who want reforms—both secularists, like the communists, and by moderate Islamists." Jaberi, a 34-year-old cleric who sports a red beard along with his black turban and gown, heads every Friday to central Baghdad's Tahrir Square to address hundreds of anti-government protesters. "This alliance is no surprise because for more than two years we've been fighting together in every province against sectarianism," he said.

Civil society activists launched the protest movement in July 2015, demanding reforms, better public services and an end to corruption. They were later joined by followers of Sadr, the populist scion of a dynasty of religious elders. "The demands weren't at all sectarian—they were for the rule of law and for a civil state for the citizen," said Raed Fahmi, secretary of the Iraqi Communist

Party and an ex-science and technology minister. "The important thing is that it allowed people from the Islamist movement and secularists to work together," he said.

'Open to all'

Communists dominated Iraqi politics in the 1950s, but were crushed and marginalized under dictator Saddam Hussein's Baath Party. Today, the party has just one member of parliament. Shiite religious parties have come to play a greater role in the years since the US-led 2003 invasion of Iraq that toppled Saddam. Fahmi said the protest movement had given rise to cooperation "between people who, in principle, have nothing in common ideologically". "That then evolved into a political alliance," he said.

His office was adorned with a red flag bearing the hammer and sickle alongside the Iraqi flag with the inscription: "God is Greatest". The alliance, dubbed

"Marching towards Reform", is made up of six mostly non-Islamist groups, including the communists, and a Sadr-backed technocratic party called Istiqlama ("Integrity"). Sadr has withdrawn his Ahrar bloc from parliament and urged its 33 MPs not to stand in the May poll, in order to make way for the joint list.

On Tahrir Square, women in black chador smiled but didn't talk to their unveiled counterparts. Nadia Nasser, a 43-year-old teacher in chador, said their goal was "to change the horrible leaders that have governed us for 14 years". "I'm sick of corruption. I'm in favor of this alliance because I want to see new faces," she said.

Qassem Mozan, a 42-year-old day laborer, said the alliance was natural. "The Sadr movement is open to all parties and confessions," he said "For me, we're one people with a single flag."

Yet 44-year-old populist Moqtada Sadr was not so ecumenical during the years following the 2003 inva-

sion. His militia, the Mahdi Army, was accused of setting up death squads targeting Sunni Muslims. Sadr himself was accused of ordering the 2003 murder of rival Abdelmajid Al-Khoei. Sadrist militiamen also attacked bars and beat homosexuals until he ordered them to stop in 2016.

'Sick of corruption'

Jassem Al-Hilfi, a smiling, greying 58-year-old communist who helps organize the protests, said he remembered his first meeting with Sadr, in 2015 in the Shiite holy city of Najaf. "We presented him with our plans to fight corruption and create a civilian state through the ballot box. He listened to us and said he was willing and ready to cooperate," he said.

Hilfi and Sadr have met every two weeks since. Jaberi said some say "it's impossible" for secularists and the religious to work together. But "it's not an ideological alliance", he said. "Everyone has their convictions." That hasn't shielded the coalition from heavy criticism by other powerful Shiite religious parties. "They launched a war against our list and attack us on their TV channels," Jaberi said, smiling. "That shows how weak the corrupt are and how strong we are." —AFP

Five years on, Pope under fire over sex abuse scandals

VATICAN CITY: As Pope Francis marks the fifth year of his papacy next week, the pontiff once hailed as a fearless reformer is under fire for his handling of the sex abuse scandals that have rocked the Roman Catholic Church. Since taking over in March 2013, the 81-year-old Argentinean has championed the cause of the marginalized, saying he wanted a "poor church for the poor" and shunning papal palaces and ostentatious displays of wealth.

His reform agenda has introduced the possibility in certain cases to allow divorced and remarried believers to take communion, although he still agrees with the Church's traditional positions on other issues, such as abortion, artificial contraception and gay marriage. But the sex abuse scandals have haunted his papacy and last month the Vatican announced it was reviving its anti-pedophile panel.

A trip to Chile in January was seen as a resounding failure after he defended a bishop accused of covering up the crimes of a pedophile priest. Francis, who like his predecessor Benedict XVI, promised a "zero tolerance" approach to sexual abuse, sparked uproar when he said: "The day they bring me proof against Bishop (Juan) Barros, then I will speak." But he later apologized to the victims and sent a Vatican top expert on sex abuse to hear the witnesses in the case.

'Repeating mistakes of the past'

Marie Collins of Ireland, who was raped as child by a priest, told AFP that while it might be "human nature to want to defend your institution... the Church, instead of learning from the past, is repeating the mistakes of the past." "The Church tends to make the same mistake—in every country where survivors start to come forward, they are treated in the same way," said Collins, who resigned last year from the now revived anti-pedophilia commission.

Francis was similarly lenient towards Don Mauro Inzoli, an Italian priest nicknamed "Don Mercedes" for his expensive tastes. Don Inzoli had been effectively defrocked by Benedict, but Francis overturned that ruling, mitigating his sentence to "a life of prayer." Nevertheless, after the priest was sentenced to nearly five years in prison in Italy for sex abuse of adolescents last June, the pope dismissed him of clerical duties. When Francis set up the commission in December 2014 to look into how to protect minors and vulnerable adults in the Church, Collins was one of two abuse survivors to sit on the panel.

Children 'continue to be raped'

Collins walked out in March 2017, denouncing the "shameful" lack of cooperation within the Vatican and complaining that a tribunal announced in 2015 to deal with paedophile priests has never actually been set up. German Cardinal Gerhard Mueller, the Church's top doctrinal watchdog who has since been ousted by Francis, argued that the tribunal would double up with already existing bodies.

Catherine Bonnet, a French child psychiatrist who also sat on the commission, complained that "in three years we only had six plenary meetings in Rome". "We did have regular e-mail exchanges, but it's hard to debate in that way," she told AFP in an interview.

"We have made proposals on important points, but, to my knowledge, Pope Francis has not given answers, which is really worrying. "The problem is that the pope is extremely busy with many issues. But the issue of protecting today's children is urgent. Children continue to be abused and raped within the Church."

Collins, too, said "the words coming from the pope and the Vatican are very good. The problem is, the actions don't follow through." For her, the problem was "that those within the Vatican don't see how their actions are viewed from outside." The decision, for example, to hold the funeral of disgraced US Cardinal Bernard Law in the St. Peter's basilica in December may have been within liturgical tradition. But it caused offence to survivors of sexual abuse in the US.

Law, a former Boston archbishop, became one of the main faces of the sex abuse crisis in the Roman Catholic Church



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis kneels in confession during the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, on March 9, 2018 at St Peter's basilica. —AFP

after admitting that he failed to protect children from predator priests, despite evidence they had been molesting youngsters. Another case casting a shadow over Francis' papacy is the Vatican's finance chief Cardinal George Pell, who is facing committal proceedings in Australia to determine whether he should stand trial on multiple historical sexual offence charges.

As the Vatican's number three, 76-year-old Pell is the highest ranking Catholic official to face such charges. The pope did however, oversee a change in Church law in 2016

allowing bishops to be dismissed in cases of "negligence" when reporting incidents of pedophilia. The Vatican also organizes awareness classes and the Pope regularly meets with survivors of abuse. But Church law does not oblige the hierarchy to denounce suspected cases of abuse to the civil authorities. "We must be as transparent as possible, it is the duty of the Church to do everything possible to avoid abuses," said German theologian Hans Zollner, regarded as one of the leading experts in the field. —AFP

International

Trump to make his first trip as president to defiant California

The 'Golden State' and the president are at odds over several issues

LOS ANGELES: US President Donald Trump is heading to California, a state at the forefront of resistance to his anti-immigration agenda, for what is almost certain to be a contentious trip. Trump's first trip to California as president, on Tuesday, comes at a time of high tensions between his Republican administration and the Democratic-leaning most populous US state, especially on immigration issues.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has accused the state of deliberately obstructing enforcement of federal law by offering undocumented immigrants sanctuary protections. Governor Jerry Brown said the Trump administration "is basically going to war against the state of California," after the Justice Department sued to block its sanctuary laws.

"Sanctuary jurisdictions are the best friend of smugglers, gang members, drug dealers, human traffickers, killers and other violent offenders," the president said in his weekly address. "The state of California is sheltering dangerous criminals in a brazen and lawless attack on our constitutional system of government." The president will land at the Miramar air base in southern California and then go see prototypes of the wall he wants to build on America's southern border.

California was among the plaintiffs that launched an unsuccessful court challenge to waivers to environmental regulations that were granted so the construction of the prototypes and the replacement of existing border fencing could proceed. "We're going for what we hope to be an incredibly positive trip," White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said Friday, while also taking aim at California for "refusing to follow federal law," a reference to the state's efforts to shelter illegal immigrants from deportation. Trump will also meet with members of the US military, Sanders said. And he is expected to wrap up the visit with an evening of fundraising in Beverly Hills to raise money for his 2020 re-election campaign.

'A place with money'

The "Golden State" and the president are at odds over issues ranging from immigration and the environment to marijuana and guns. Trump's visit is "part of a bigger concerted effort to push back on liberal efforts on immigration in California," said Julian Zelizer, professor of history and public affairs at Princeton University. "He's trying to shore up the California GOP (Republican Party) for the mid-terms and 2020," Zelizer said, referring to 2018 Congressional elections and the presidential race two years later.

Despite its generally liberal leanings, "California is a place with money," and the president has had success with people such as Peter Thiel, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur known for his conservative positions, as well as in wealthy Orange County, Zelizer said. The Los Angeles Times reported that donors will contribute up to \$250,000 a

person to Trump's re-election campaign and the Republican party at a fundraiser in Beverly Hills, citing an invitation obtained by the newspaper.

Focus on Republican areas

Trump has taken longer to visit California following his election than any president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt, according to US media. "His whole focus till now has been... on Republican areas," Zelizer said. "He's not someone who wants to see the whole country, not a traveler interested in sensing the pulse of the nation." Trump's visit to California will be marked by protests, both for and against the president and his policies. Alliance San Diego, which namely advocates on behalf of immigrants, is planning a news conference and a protest the day before the president's arrival "to set the tone for Trump's visit," said executive director Andrea Guerrero. Events and demonstrations could last until after his departure, she said. Jeff Schwilk, the founder of San Diegans for Secure Borders, told the Los Angeles Times that he is planning an event to support Trump's visit to inspect border wall prototypes. In another sign of the tensions at play as Trump readies for his trip, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a complaint in San Diego federal court challenging the Trump administration's practice of "forcibly separating" asylum-seeking parents and young children. — AFP



MOON TOWNSHIP: President Donald J. Trump speaks to supporters at the Atlantic Aviation Hanger. —AFP

Le Pen to force name change for National Front

LILLE: French far-right leader Marine Le Pen is to force through a controversial name change for her National Front party yesterday after being re-elected for a third term as leader. Meeting in the northeastern city of Lille, the 49-year-old was expected to unveil the party's new identity, burying the National Front (FN) name that has been associated with her father Jean-Marie since 1972.

The switch is meant to signal a new beginning for the anti-immigration movement and a decisive break from the toxic past of Jean-Marie who was finally banished

from the party yesterday. Le Pen scored a lower-than-expected 34 percent as she lost to President Emmanuel Macron last May and has since struggled to assert her authority after admitting to mistakes during her campaign. "Without a name change, we will not be able to forge alliances. And without alliances we will never be able to take power," she said last month as she faced questions from many skeptical members. She will address the party faithful later after being re-elected as leader with 100 percent of votes yesterday morning after standing unopposed but has kept the new name a closely-guarded secret. The party is expected to keep the word "national" in its new name. "Rassemblement national" (national union) has been mooted as an option.

Bannon support

Le Pen won a major boost on Saturday from former Donald Trump aide Steve Bannon who appeared alongside her at the National Front conference and told delegates that "history is on our side". Bannon's appearance reinforced the links between the Trump campaign and France's far-right party which hold similar views on immi-

gration, Islam, trade, the European Union and Russia. Trump came close to endorsing Le Pen as she sought to defeat Macron last year. "Let them call you racists, let them call you xenophobes, let them call you nativists. Wear it as a badge of honor. Because every day we get stronger and they get weaker," Bannon told the audience. The presence of the former head of Breitbart News drew a stinging response from Macron's government. "The king of fake news and of white supremacists at an FN summit... why am I not surprised?" remarked parliamentary affairs minister Christophe Castaner, who is also the head of Macron's centrist Republic on the Move party. "Change of name but not of the political line."

Name debate

Le Pen's bid to change the party's name does not have unanimous support at the grassroots level and has been heavily criticised by Jean-Marie, who sees it as an attack on his legacy. The party canvassed 51,000 members last year about the new name proposal and on Saturday it emerged that just 52 percent had voted in favour among the 30,000 who responded. —AFP





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International

Scuffles in Hong Kong at key vote for democrats

China takes increasingly tough line against any challenges

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's best-known young activists were heckled by Chinese nationalists in tense scenes yesterday as the city's pro-democracy camp tries to claw back lost seats in controversial by-elections. Yesterday's vote once more exposed the city's deep political divide and comes as China takes an increasingly tough line against any challenges to its sovereignty. High-profile candidate Agnes Chow was barred from standing because her party promotes self-determination for the semi-autonomous city.

Soon after polls opened, several men and a woman heckled Chow as well as leading pro-democracy activists Joshua Wong and Nathan Law near a polling station where they were supporting pro-democracy candidate Au Nok-hin, according to an AFP reporter at the scene. One of the men barged into Wong, who led mass demonstrations in 2014 calling for greater democratic freedoms.

"Traitors and running dogs!" a man repeatedly yelled-insults commonly used by Beijing loyalists against political opponents—while others hurled obscenities. Wong told reporters that threats to freedoms in the city "prove that it's more necessary for us to vote". Beijing has been incensed at the emergence of activists advocating independence and views calls for self-determination as part of a dangerous splittist push.

The vote comes on the day the Chinese Communist Party decided to give President Xi Jinping a mandate to rule for life, fueling fears that Hong Kong's freedoms will come increasingly under threat. The by-election was triggered after Beijing forced the disqualification of six rebel lawmakers who had swept to victory in citywide elections in 2016. Some were former protest leaders, others openly advocated independence. All

were ousted from their posts for inserting protests into their oaths of office.

Four of the six vacant seats are being contested yesterday. Au said it was a "vote for justice" after stepping in to contest the Hong Kong Island seat after Agnes Chow was disallowed. The seat was originally held by Law, also a 2014 protest leader, who was among the six thrown out of office. But pro-establishment politician Judy Chan, standing against Au, said the vote was a chance for "the silent majority, who are tired of a politicized Hong Kong, who detest those who humiliate the country" to push out destabilizing opponents.

'Systemic violence'

Democracy activists urged voters to the polls as by 6:30 pm (1030 GMT) only 31 percent of the 2.1 million eligible had turned out, lower than the rate in the landmark elections of

2016. Some voters yesterday hoped a legislature weighted more towards the pro-Beijing establishment would help on livelihood issues in a city with a huge wealth gap and poverty issues. Some accepted that Beijing was in charge.

"China is the big brother now," said a retired policeman who gave his name as Kwan. But others were worried about rule of law in the city. "I want my children and grandchildren to live in a place with a fair system," a banker who gave his name as Hong, 56, told AFP. One 25-year-old university student named Lui slammed the government for using "systemic violence" to disqualify legislators. The six lawmakers were retrospectively barred from office by Hong Kong's high court after Beijing issued a special "interpretation" of the city's mini-constitution, stipulating legislators had to take their oath "solemnly and sincerely" or face



HONG KONG: Supporters stand next to banners (C) of pro-establishment by-election candidate Judy Chan of New People's Party before she arrives for a campaign event for the Legislative Council by-elections. —AFP

being banned. Pro-independence lawmakers had inserted expletives and waved "Hong Kong is not China" banners during their swearing in. Others added phrases supporting the democracy movement. The pro-democracy camp has come under increasing pressure since the failure of the Umbrella Movement to win political reform, with some leading activists

jailed on protest-related charges. Even if it wins back all four seats Sunday, it faces an uphill struggle in a legislature which is only half elected, with the rest selected by traditionally pro-establishment interest groups. Of 70 seats, the democracy camp currently holds 24, only just clinging on to the one-third needed to veto important bills. —AFP

“Traitors and running dogs!”

Taiwanese protesters rally for 'nuclear-free homeland'

TAIPEI: Hundreds gathered at an anti-nuclear rally in Taiwan yesterday to demand the government keep its pledge to abolish the use of atomic energy by 2025. Waving placards reading "nuclear go zero," and "abolish nuclear, save Taiwan," protesters rallied outside the presidential office in Taipei on the same day as Japan marked the seventh anniversary of the Fukushima disaster.

Protesters were worried by a recent decision by the cabinet-level Atomic Energy Council to allow state-owned energy company Taipower to restart a reactor at a facility near Taipei, pending parliament's final approval. The reactor has been offline since May 2016 after a glitch was found in its electrical system, which the company said has since been resolved. Anti-nuclear groups are now questioning whether President Tsai Ing-wen's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) will keep its promise to phase out nuclear energy.

"It would be violating the spirit of creating a nuclear-free homeland by 2025 pledged by the DPP," said Tsui Shu-hsin of the prospect of restarting the reactor. Tsui is spokeswoman for Nuclear Go Zero Action Platform which organized the rally. Lawmaker Huang Kuo-chang, head of the opposition New Power Party, echoed the sentiment. "The government should move forward, not backwards and restarting the reactor would be a regression," he told reporters at the rally. Taiwan currently generates about one-fifth of its energy from three nuclear plants.

Although concerns have grown over power supply suf-



TAIPEI: Activists dressed in costumes take part during an annual protest against the use of nuclear energy in front of the Presidential Office. —AFP

iciency following massive power failures across the island in August last year, many in the island remain adamantly against nuclear energy. In 2014, authorities were forced to seal off a nearly-completed fourth nuclear plant after public opposition. Some at yesterday's rally wore sunflowers on their hats to symbolize clean energy. "I would rather the government restrict the use of electricity than relying on nuclear energy which is unsafe and generates a lot of waste," said 22-year-old college student Yao Hsing-yu.

Taiwan started annual anti-nuclear rallies to commemorate Japan's nuclear disaster on March 11, 2011 when the Fukushima energy plant was hit by a tsunami following an earthquake, knocking out power to its cooling systems and sending reactors into meltdown. Taiwan, like Japan, is prone to frequent quakes as the island lies on a number of fault lines. Last month, 17 people were killed and nearly 300 injured when a 6.4 magnitude quake hit eastern Hualien, leaving almost 2,000 buildings damaged. —AFP

Fresh anti-Muslim attack in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO: Vandals attacked a Muslim-owned restaurant in Sri Lanka yesterday in an alleged "hate crime", police said, as tensions remain high across the island following a week of violent riots. The restaurant in Anamadua — 130 kilometers north of the capital Colombo — was targeted despite police being on high alert after a spate of anti-Muslim attacks.

The government declared a state of emergency last week as 11 mosques were torched and 200 Muslim-owned businesses destroyed in riots by Sinhalese mobs that left at least three people dead and around 20 wounded. A curfew was lifted in the central district of Kandy, the epicentre of the violence, but soldiers remained on the streets, equipped with emergency powers to detain people to maintain law and order.

Some social media networks including Facebook remain blocked across Sri Lanka. Officials say this was done to prevent the spread of hate speech against Muslims. A senior police official said disciplinary action would be taken against officers in the Anamadua area for failing to prevent the restaurant attack. "We are treating this as a hate crime. An investigation is on to identify those responsible," he told AFP on condition of anonymity.

President Maithripala Sirisena announced Saturday that he will appoint a three-member panel of retired judges to investigate the unrest that drew concern from rights groups and the international community. Police were deployed to mosques across Sri Lanka on Friday to guard worshippers from the island's minority Muslim community during weekly prayers. There were no reports of violence. Muslims make up 10 percent of Sri Lanka's 21 million people. The majority are Sinhalese, a largely Buddhist ethnic group. Hundreds of Buddhist monks and activists staged demonstrations in Colombo Friday, denouncing violence and urging authorities to punish those responsible. —AFP

UN to seek \$1bn for Rohingya refugee effort in Bangladesh

DHAKA: UN officials said yesterday that nearly \$1 billion will be needed this year to feed and care for the roughly one million Rohingya refugees living in overcrowded camps in southeastern Bangladesh. The \$950 million for this year's aid effort was "a very legitimate and valid" request given the magnitude of the crisis, the UN resident coordinator in Bangladesh said.

"It's a new and evolving crisis. The needs are huge. These people came with nothing. We hope the support will continue," the UN country head Mia Seppo told AFP. The funding request could be raised this week at a UN conference in Geneva. In October, nations pledged \$345 million in response to the Rohingya crisis. The UN said at the time it needed \$434 million to care for the displaced Muslims until February.

Food, shelter and healthcare remain pressing needs for the Rohingya, who fled a Myanmar army crackdown in Rakhine state en masse over the past six months. But there are other urgent considerations. As the monsoon season nears, aid groups need to relocate an estimated 100,000 refugees living in areas prone to landslides and floods, Seppo said.

The UN-backed Inter Sector Coordination Group has also factored into the relief budget the cost of mass vaccination

drives against diseases like cholera, diphtheria and measles, the group's head Sumbul Rizvi said. Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed in November to begin repatriating Rohingya who volunteered to return to Rakhine state where the persecuted Muslim minority have lived for generations. But the process has stalled and it is not clear when it will begin, said Bangladesh's refugee commissioner Mohammad Abul Kalam.

A quarter of the proposed \$950 million funding for the remainder of the year would go to Bangladeshis living in Cox's Bazar whose lives have been upended by the massive refugee influx. Nearly 700,000 Rohingya Muslims have crossed the border since August, clearing forests and camping on hillsides already crowded with more than 300,000 refugees from previous waves of migration.

Prices for local goods have skyrocketed and competition for jobs and resources intensified in the largely-rural border district, said Kalam. "We will try to compensate these farmers," he said. Separately, police in Cox's Bazar briefly detained 39 foreign aid workers yesterday for questioning over alleged visa violations. Afrujul Haq Tutul, the deputy police chief of Cox's Bazar, said the aid staff had been working on tourist visas, but were later released. — AFP

Student hurls shoe at ex-PM Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE: An Islamic seminary student hurled a shoe at Pakistan's former prime minister yesterday, an act considered a major insult in the Muslim world. Nawaz Sharif, who was ousted last year over graft charges, appeared visibly shocked as the shoe hit his shoulder while he was addressing a gathering at a seminary in Lahore.

The incident came a day after an individual hurled ink at Foreign Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, a member of the ruling party and a close Sharif aide, while he was speaking at a party rally in eastern Pakistan. The shoe hurling was broadcast live on Pakistani TV channels. In the Muslim world, such a gesture is considered particularly insulting. The perpetrator then jumped on stage where Sharif was standing and began chanting before he was overpowered by the crowd and handed over to the police. According to police officials, the man is a student at the seminary.

Minutes later, Imran Khan, leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf opposition party and an arch rival of Sharif who has frequently criticized the former prime minister, condemned the incident. "This is not the way to express yourself and I condemn whoever did it," Khan said. Sharif, a three-time prime minister, was ousted by the judiciary in July 2017 over corruption charges which he is currently facing in Pakistani courts. —AFP



LAHORE: Pakistani security personnel and organizers hold a student (C) after he hurled a shoe at former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, during a ceremony. — AFP

International

Cuba vote opens the final chapter of the Castro era

‘The next president will not have that surname’

HAVANA: Cubans vote to ratify a new National Assembly, a key step in a process leading to the election of a new president, the first in nearly 60 years from outside the Castro family. The new members of the National Assembly will be tasked with choosing a successor to 86-year-old President Raul Castro when he steps down next month. As voting was about to begin, however, the foreign ministry issued a statement insisting that even without a Castro as president the Cuban revolution they led will endure into the next generation.

“Some hear siren songs and announce the end of the ‘Castro era.’” it said on Twitter. “The next president will not have that surname. But without a doubt, it will be a son of the Revolution.” Raul took over in 2006 from his ailing brother Fidel, who had governed since seizing power during the 1959 revolution. Eight million Cubans are expected to turn out to ratify 605 candidates for an equal number of seats in the Assembly, a process shorn of suspense and unique to the Communist-run Caribbean island nation.

“They’re the most important elections of recent years, because we are going to vote for new people who will govern from then on,” day-care center guardian Ramon Perez told AFP. The general election is the first since the death in 2016 of Fidel Castro, and marks the beginning of major change at the top in Cuba. Candidates may be either members of the Cuban Communist Party or not, and may also belong to trade unions or be students. “The designa-

tion of candidates is based on merit, abilities and the commitment of the people,” Raul Castro said when he announced the elections last year. “Nobody exchanges promises for votes, or boasts of his abilities to get supporters... This is the true and exceptional face of what we proudly call socialist democracy,” the official daily Granma wrote.

Succession

More than half of the candidates, 322, are women. Cuba’s president is designated by a 31-member Council of State, whose head is automatically president of the country. But the Council of State first has to be selected by the National Assembly. Castro had already announced that he would not be seeking a new term, although he

The beginning of major change



is expected to remain head of the all-powerful Communist Party until 2021.

His first vice president, Miguel Diaz-Canel, 57, is widely expected to succeed him and is committed to guaranteeing continuity. Born after the revolution, Diaz-Canel, an engineer, slowly climbed to the top rungs of Cuba’s hierarchy over a three-decade career under Raul’s mentorship. “There will still be a president of Cuba in the process of defending the revolution,” he said in November.

Julio Cesar Guanache, a professor of law and history, said on the OnCuba website that the legitimacy of the country’s next president would come more from “institutional performance” than personal history such as involve-



HAVANA: Cuban youtubers take selfies at Havana Malecon. —AFP

ment in the 1959 revolution. Turnout for the election is expected to be around 90 percent. Although voting is voluntary, not voting is frowned upon and going to the polls is considered an act of sovereignty and of “revolutionary affirmation.” The final results will be known later today. Opposition criticism of the process centers around the fact that the president is not chosen in direct elections.

Cuban dissident Rosa Maria Paya, of the Cuba Decide movement, wants a referendum on modifying the island’s

government system and says her group will be watching for signs “of rejection of the electoral process, in which in reality we cannot elect” anyone. Cubans who want to demonstrate opposition typically spoil their ballots. The Otro18 opposition movement is also calling for change. “The citizens do not participate in the choice or the election of the president and we think it’s a decisive moment for the citizens to push a request” to change the electoral system, said Manuel Costa Morua, Otro18’s leader. —AFP

Colombian elections seen as test for a peace deal

BOGOTA: Colombians went to the polls yesterday to elect a new Congress with a resurgent right, bitterly opposed to a peace deal that allows leftist former rebels to participate, expected to poll strongly. The election is set to be the calmest in half a century of conflict in Colombia, with the former rebel movement FARC spurning jungle warfare for politics, and the ELN—the country’s last active rebel group—observing a ceasefire.

“This is the first election in half a century when we will vote in peace, without the FARC as an armed group, but as a political party,” said President Juan Manuel Santos, who signed a peace deal with the FARC in November 2016. The peace accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) guarantees their new political party 10 of the 280 seats in the new Congress.

The party uses the same Spanish acronym, which now stands for the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force, and replaced its crossed-rifles insignia with a red rose. But opinion polls give it little chance of adding to its 10 free seats, following a disastrous campaign during which its rebels-turned-politicians were largely drowned out by a tide of public revulsion over crimes committed during the conflict. Candidates were mobbed by angry crowds at rallies and the party had to cancel its public meetings. “What is at stake for the FARC is positioning and the possibility of establishing itself with an eye to what really interests it politically: elections” for mayor and governor in 2020, said Carlos Arias Orjuela, a political consultant at Externado University. The fledgling party suffered a fresh blow only days before the election when its leader, Rodrigo “Timochenko” Londono, pulled out of the presidential race after undergoing heart surgery.

Right closing on victory

With the left divided, the stage is set for hardline conservatives who oppose the agreement to win an absolute majority in Congress, and push on to win the presidential election in a few months. Opinion polls predict a triumph for ex-president and senator Alvaro Uribe and his Centro Democratico party, along with other parties opposed to the peace agreement that has polarized the South American country.

Under the peace accord, FARC disarmed its 7,000



MEDELLIN: People vote at a polling station in Medellin, Antioquia Department, during parliamentary elections. —AFP

fighters in order to join the political process, agreed to confess to wartime crimes and pay reparations to victims. This infuriates many Colombians, in particular the right wing, which is vowing to win the presidential election and amend the peace deal. But much of the peace agreement has already been implemented, including the rebels disarming and demobilizing.

Analysts say a hard-right government could block the implementation of the rest of the pact, including agrarian reform and the special justice deal under which repentant rebels can avoid jail by paying reparations. “The mere fact of not applying what has been signed would be enough for this agreement to be ineffective,” said Frederic Masse, an expert on the conflict at Colombia’s Externado University. “It would be a more pernicious strategy than to negotiate.” Felipe Botero, political scientist at the University of the Andes, said resurgent conservatives could even let the laws implementing the deal lapse, to the extent that they “are never voted on or not presented” to the new Congress.

two decades in power. “We would consider any use of nuclear weapons of small, medium or any other power against Russia or its allies to be a nuclear attack on our country. The response would be immediate and with all its attendant consequences,” he said. The speech followed the first major direct clash between Russian and US forces in Syria, where a US-led coalition struck pro-regime forces in February, killing dozens of people including Russian mercenaries. The former Cold War rivals have also been feuding over allegations that Russia meddled in the 2016 US presidential election, with Putin telling US television network NBC that he did “not care” if individual Russians had been involved.

Poisoned relations

But the latest diplomatic row casting a shadow over the election campaign is with Britain, after former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal was poisoned with a nerve agent in England. The attack in the southwestern city of Salisbury revived memories of the 2006 poisoning of former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko in London, and UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said Britain would respond “robustly” if Russia was found responsible.

The Gazeta editorial said Russia’s ties with the West were “the most toxic since the end of World War II” and no matter who was behind the attempted murder—“the Skripal case can poison Russian ties with the West even further”. But analysts say that far from hurting his chances at the ballot box, the controversies surrounding Putin



MOSCOW: In this file photo taken on December 06, 2017 visitors stand next to a painting depicting Russian president Vladimir Putin at the “SUPERPUTIN” exhibition at UMAM museum. —AFP

reinforce a besieged fortress mentality that prompts Russians to rally behind their leader despite a fall in living standards.

March 18 will mark four years since Putin signed a treaty that declared Crimea part of Russia following its annexation of Ukraine, an action that led to the war in the east of the former Soviet state. “It will not be an election in the true sense of the word, but rather a sort of celebration of the post-Crimea majority’s identity,” said Andrei Kolesnikov, an analyst at the Carnegie Moscow Centre. Running against a motley crew of seven challengers, Putin barely campaigned, promising

“victories” to tens of thousands of supporters at a rally this month.

‘Pseudo-elections’

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny—seen as the only politician with enough stamina to challenge Putin—has been barred from running and is awaiting a court hearing that could put him in jail for 30 days for organizing an unauthorized protest. Navalny has called on Russians to boycott the “pseudo-elections”, but official polls suggest that Putin will take nearly 70 percent of the vote with a turnout of more than 60 percent. —AFP

Egypt army kills 16 jihadists in Sinai

CAIRO: Egypt’s military said yesterday 16 jihadists, an officer and a soldier were killed in the past four days during a major military operation against Islamic State group jihadists in Sinai. The army launched a sweeping campaign after Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who is standing in elections for his second term this month, gave them a three-month deadline to crush IS in Sinai.

He issued his ultimatum in November after suspected IS gunmen massacred more than 300 worshippers in a Sinai mosque associated with Sufi Muslim mystics. Since the military, then led by Sisi, ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013, security forces have sought to quell attacks by the Egypt branch of IS. The jihadists have killed hundreds of soldiers, policemen and civilians, mainly in North Sinai but also elsewhere in Egypt.

They have also killed scores of Christians in church bombings and shootings, as well as bombing a Russian airliner carrying tourists from an Egyptian resort in 2015, killing all 224 people on board. The military says it has evidence IS has sought to move members to Sinai following its defeats in Iraq and Syria. —AFP

German minister vows to speed up migrant repatriations

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s incoming interior minister yesterday vowed to take a tough line against convicted criminal migrants and speed up repatriations of rejected asylum seekers. Horst Seehofer, of Merkel’s conservative Bavarian sister party the CSU, also promised a broader “zero-tolerance” law and order drive under their new government to be launched Wednesday.

Seehofer was long the harshest critic within Merkel’s conservative bloc of her decision to open Germany’s borders to a mass influx of refugees and migrants since 2015. Most of those who came across the Balkans route passed through Seehofer’s southern state of Bavaria, at times more than 10,000 a day, sparking a strong backlash in the region. In an interview with newspaper Bild am Sonntag, Seehofer said that as the new head of an expanded ministry of interior and homeland affairs, he was working on a “masterplan for speedier asylum procedures and consistent deportations”.

Repatriations and deportations must be “raised significantly”, he said, vowing to especially “get tougher” on those who break German law or are deemed a security threat. “We want to remain a country that is open to the world and liberal,” Seehofer said. “But when it comes to protecting the citizens, we need a strong state. I will take care of that.”

Germany’s mass migrant influx brought more than a million people to Europe’s biggest economy, about half of them from war-torn Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. It sparked a backlash and bolstered the rise of the anti-immigration Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, which entered parliament last September with almost 13 percent of the vote. Merkel’s fourth-term government, a coalition with the centre-left Social Democrats that is due to be sworn in this week, has vowed to keep the annual intake of new asylum seekers below 200,000. —AFP

Putin’s saber-rattling raises tensions with West ahead of vote

MOSCOW: Vladimir Putin’s pre-election nuclear saber-rattling has raised the stakes in Moscow’s confrontation with the West on the eve of his fourth Kremlin term. The 65-year-old former KGB officer is all but guaranteed to extend his rule until 2024 in a presidential election on March 18 that follows an anemic campaign punctuated by international scandal.

Since taking power 18 years ago, Putin has stamped his total authority on the country, silencing opposition and reasserting Moscow’s lost might abroad. This has included sparking a fresh rivalry with the West, which Russia remains at odds with on numerous fronts, from its support for the regime of President Bashar Al-Assad in the Syrian war, to the annexation of Crimea, sports doping and accusations of interference in foreign elections.

“It appears that on the eve of the Russian presidential election a conflict between our country and the West—which both sides are not embarrassed to publicly call a new ‘Cold War’—can enter a new, even more dangerous level,” the Gazeta.ru news site said in an editorial. Earlier this month Putin rolled out a new arsenal of nuclear weapons in a pre-election address that many analysts called the most aggressive and militaristic speech of his nearly

Analysis

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How infertility treatment has left sperm science behind

They can make test-tube babies, grow human eggs in a lab and reproduce mice from frozen testicle tissue, but when it comes to knowing how a man's sperm can swim to, find and fertilize an egg, scientists are still floundering. Enormous advances in treating infertility in recent decades have helped couples conceive longed-for offspring they previously would not have had. Yet this progress has also been a workaround for a major part of the problem: Sperm counts are falling drastically worldwide - and have been doing so for decades - and scientists say their honest answer to why is: "We don't know".

Infertility is a significant global health problem, with specialists estimating that as many as one in six couples worldwide are affected. In more than half of those cases, experts say, the underlying problem is in the male. Most of the focus of infertility research has been on women, however: on what can reduce their fertility and on how that can be averted, compensated for or corrected with treatment. While this approach has produced results - and babies - it has also left male infertility scientifically sidelined.

Treatments such as in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), where the sperm is placed into the egg rather than next to it, bypass the male problem rather than treating it, said Richard Sharpe, professor at the University of Edinburgh's center for reproductive health. "The treatments - some of them quite invasive - are to the female partner. So the female is having to bear the burden of the male's sub-fertility ... (And at the same time), we have a very crude snapshot of what is going on in the male."

We know that sperm counts are dependent on high levels of testosterone, and there is some knowledge of links between sperm count and infertility, experts say. But beyond these basics, sperm's intricacies remain largely undiscovered. "Without understanding the biology of how normal sperm work, we can't possibly understand how they don't work, or how to correct the problem," Sarah Martins Da Silva, a reproductive medicine specialist at the University of Dundee told a London briefing this week.

Sperm counts in men from America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand have dropped by more than 50 percent in less than 40 years, according to pooled research published last year, described by one of its authors as an "urgent wake-up call" for further investigation.

Still in the 1950s

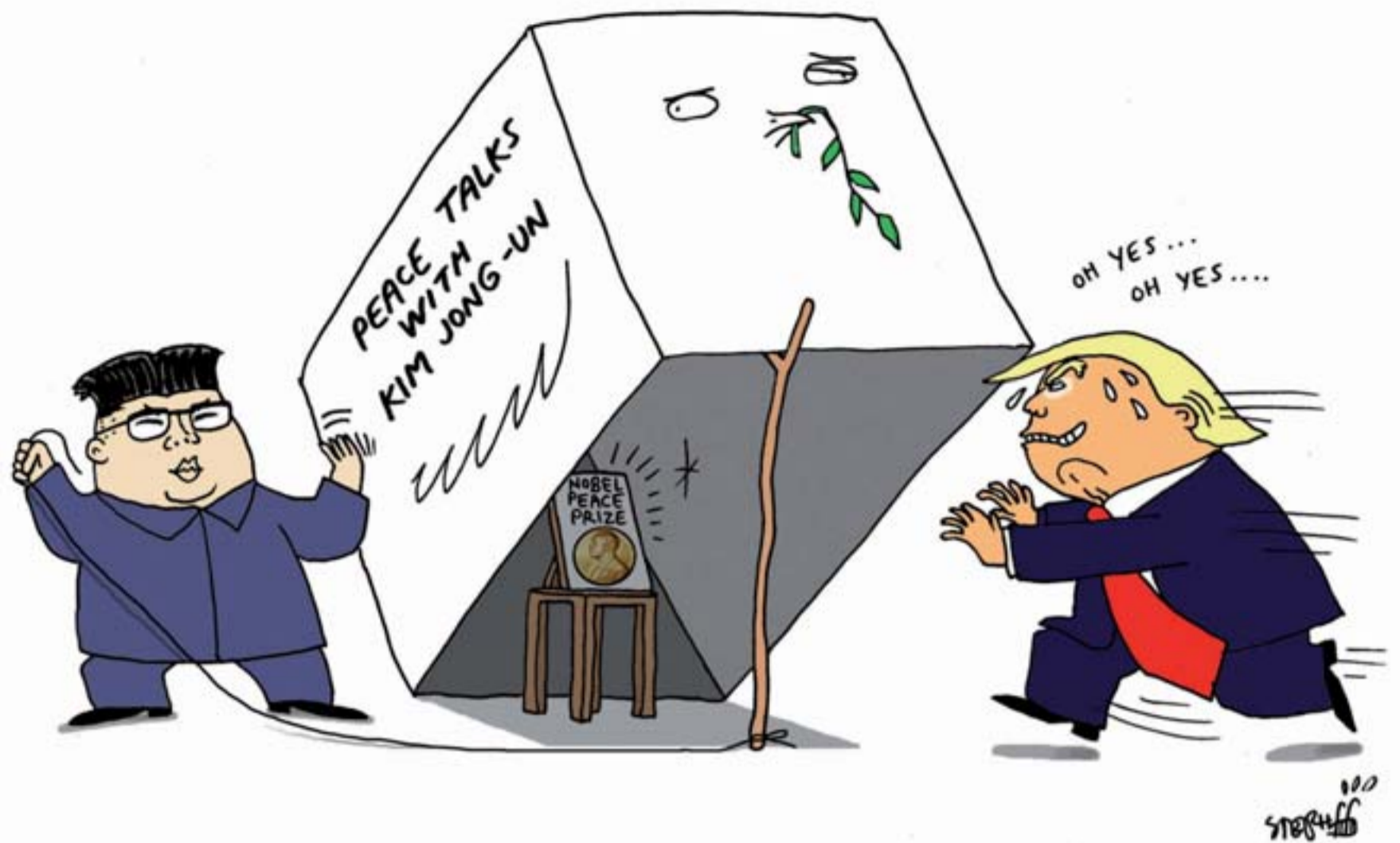
Experts say that to address the basic unanswered clinical and scientific questions in andrology - the study of male reproductive health - would require research ranging from large, ideally international, epidemiological studies to detailed lab work to decipher exactly how sperm cells function. Allan Pacey, a senior lecturer in andrology at Britain's Sheffield University, said even at a basic level - the diagnosis of a possible male fertility problem - the science is lagging. The techniques of sperm analysis - examining ejaculate under a microscope, counting the sperm, assessing how well they swim, and seeing what they look like - were invented in the 1950s, he said. "And we are still doing the same thing now."

So while estimates suggest as many 1 in 20 young men now have sperm counts low enough to impair fertility, that remains educated assumption, rather than data from specific studies. "The quality of evidence we have got in this area falls way behind that of other branches of medicine," Pacey said. Attracting funding for fundamental research into possible environmental impacts on sperm counts - chemical exposure, for example, or smoking, obesity, or sport and exercise - is tricky, partly because such studies need vast numbers of people, take many years and may not give clear answers.

"In the competitive world of grant funding, there is a view that male infertility is a problem solved," Sharpe said. "We have ICSI. OK, this doesn't fix the problem in the affected men, but it treats the 'symptoms', and that's good enough. "So from an urgency and priority perspective, it's easy to downgrade when compared to cancer, obesity or cardiovascular disease."

Comprehensive European or global data on funding going to male fertility research are not available, but in Britain, for example, only around 3.6 percent of the Medical Research Council Populations and Systems panel budget was provided for male infertility research from 2014 to 2017. Pacey told Reuters he has "a filing cabinet full of failed applications over the years" and Sharpe noted that once research falls behind, future studies have less to build on. "If you're not producing sexy research that's going to come up with a magic bullet, then people are not going to give you the money," he said. —Reuters

THE TRAP ...



Xi mandate seals march of strongmen

The Chinese Communist Party's decision to give President Xi Jinping a mandate to rule for life is further evidence of the world's slide towards more nationalist, authoritarian regimes, analysts said. China's rubberstamp parliament, meeting in the imposing Great Hall of the People for an annual session, made Xi the most powerful leader since Mao Zedong yesterday by scrapping term limits that would have forced him to step down after 2023.

The decision moves one-party China further away from adopting a democratic system that many Western thinkers and politicians had once assumed was inevitable as the country opened up to global trade. It fits a pattern worldwide that has seen the model of liberal democracy - based on individual rights, the rule of law and the free press - lose ground as many countries turn instead to more authoritarian forms of government.

"We think it (liberal democracy) is normal and obviously it's not, because in the whole of human history, democracy has not existed for all that long in terms of the international order," said George Magnus, associate at the China Centre at Oxford University. Regimes with illiberal leaders "reject the kind of democratic model we have kind of grown up with," he added.

These include Vladimir Putin of Russia, Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and the Philippines' Rodrigo Duterte, who all came to power through the ballot box but have since trampled democratic norms. Other global contemporary strongmen include Egypt's Abdel Fattah Al-Sissi, who took part in a coup against a democratically elected Islamist government. "It is certain that the club of managed (or guided) democracies is growing," said Caroline Galacteros, director of the Planeting strategic intelligence consultancy in France.

In Europe, Hungary's Viktor Orban has become a posterboy for what he calls a form of "illiberal democracy" while US President Donald Trump also embodies a spreading strain of aggressive nationalism worldwide. Trump's "America First" mantra and attacks on institutions such as the FBI, the judiciary and the free press are testing the democratic checks and balances in the US constitution.

Putin: Villain abroad, hero at home

To the West he is public enemy number one: Snatching land from his neighbors, interfering in foreign elections and unveiling weapons that he says render Washington's missile defense systems obsolete. But despite - or because of - his reputation abroad, Vladimir Putin is still widely popular in Russia and is all but guaranteed to win a presidential election this week with a landslide. In part this is because over almost two decades in power he has cracked down on dissent and consolidated Kremlin control over the media.

The president's most vocal opponent is also barred from appearing on the ballot on March 18 owing to a criminal conviction. For millions of Russians, however, Putin is the man who brought stability after the political and economic chaos of the 1990s, as well as restoring Moscow's standing on the world stage following the humiliating collapse of the Soviet Union. "Putin is a mirror and everyone can see in him what they want," independent political analyst Konstantin Kalachev told AFP. "For some he is the man who got Russia back off its knees, got the army and defense back on track. For others he raised the quality of life and made sure pensions were paid on time," he said.

'Pole of evil'

For those abroad, Putin - who in recent years has been variously portrayed as an octopus, The Terminator, Hitler and Batman's nemesis The Joker on the cover of Western news magazines - means something else entirely. "But being the West's main enemy is an acknowledgement that he is the number one politician. If they're scared of you, it means they

Chinese model

Human rights campaigners warn that authoritarians and autocrats worldwide are exploiting discontent over globalization, industrial decline, terrorism and migration to justify their actions. According to the Freedom House human rights watchdog, democracy "faced its most serious crisis in decades" in 2017, which was the 12th year in a row that individual freedoms were found to have declined. Furthermore, under Trump the US has lost the moral authority to effectively condemn abuses in other countries, critics say, while Europe is struggling with its own nationalists in Hungary and Poland.

"This illiberal temptation is something we should not take lightly today and will doubtless constitute one of the battles France, but also the European Union, will have to undertake in 2018, including with some of its members," French President Emmanuel Macron said in January.

'Managed democracies'

In the 1990s, intellectuals such as Francis Fukuyama questioned whether humanity had reached the "end of history", with liberal democracy and capitalism apparently victorious over communism and totalitarianism. But by the turn of the century, analysts were warning of the emergence of semi-authoritarian states - countries that like Turkey and Russia fall somewhere between democracy and dictatorship. China's trajectory was always unknown, but

the country has taken a decisive turn away from the idea of a more pluralistic society with greater political freedoms.

And, thanks to its fast economic growth and growing military might, it is serving as a counter-example for the democratic model - with fans in sometimes surprising places. "The great leaders of the world come from countries that are not great democracies," said former French president Nicolas Sarkozy at a conference in Abu Dhabi last weekend. Sarkozy, who faces multiple investigations over corruption allegations related to his one term in office from 2007-2012, said strong leadership in China, Russia and Saudi Arabia meant there was "no populism" there.

Kenneth Roth, director of Human Rights Watch, said democratic leaders have a responsibility to speak out against autocracies and despots who depend on large-scale repression to keep their grip on power. "It is important for democratic leaders both to highlight the emptiness of the autocrats' political programs and to stress the danger of enabling leaders who claim to speak for the majority," he said. "China has been providing economic support to autocrats around the world and increasingly is trying to silence criticism of its own autocratic model even within liberal democracies." He cited Beijing's close financial links to repressive regimes in countries such as Venezuela and Zimbabwe. —AFP



respect you," said Kalachev. The US and Europe hit Russia with sanctions in 2014 over the annexation of Crimea and Moscow's backing of rebels in Ukraine's east. Since then Russia's support of the Syrian regime in a bloody civil war, allegations that Moscow interfered in US presidential elections and the discovery of a state-sponsored Olympic doping program have further hurt the country's reputation abroad. Putin often frames negative foreign coverage of his leadership as a sign that Russia is under attack from a West uncomfortable with the country's new global role.

As he unveiled what he called "invincible" new weapons in his state of the nation address this month, he reminded the audience of the time in the early 2000s when "no one listened to us". "Listen to us now," he said before playing video montages that displayed the weapons' capabilities. The Russian moderator of a televised discussion last year jokingly told Putin he was the "pole of evil" around which Western powers "consolidate and mobilize". "Can you imagine how they would manage without you?" the moderator asked an appreciative president.

No other option

While support for Putin in Russia has dipped slightly in recent

months, according to official polls, around 70 percent of those who are planning to vote say they will back the current president. His closest competitor, Communist candidate Pavel Grudinin, is projected to garner less than eight percent of the vote. "(Putin) expertly exploits all the fears and the complexes of the population," Kalachev said, adding that the greatest fear was a return to the instability of the 1990s.

"People are afraid of losing what they already have...and this fear is especially strong in the provinces, where it is hard, but still possible, to live," he said.

Despite Putin's campaign promises when he returned to the Kremlin in 2012 after four years as prime minister, his last term was marked by recession and a fall in living standards. Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who has called for a boycott of the polls since he was barred from standing, rejects the idea that Putin retains real support in the provinces. "They say there: well alright, Putin, there's nobody apart from Putin, I'll vote for him! That's the only reason why he gets any votes," Navalny told AFP in a recent interview.

At a recent campaign rally in Moscow, supporters of the president expressed a similar sentiment. "I do not see another candidate who could be our commander in chief," Oscar-winning director Nikita Mikhalkov told the 100,000-strong crowd. "He's the only one. Putin is our president." —AFP





Kyrgyz chefs cook the largest noodles with meat dish in the 'Besh Barmak' national style, including 117-m of horse sausage in the Kyrgyz 'Chuchuk' style as they attempt a Guinness Record yesterday in Bishkek. The total weight of the 'Besh Barmak' was 1,464 kg, organizers said. — AFP

Regime bombs splintered Ghouta...

Continued from Page 1

Bombing runs across several towns in Ghouta killed a dozen civilians yesterday, bringing the total toll from the offensive to at least 1,111 civilians, the Observatory said. They include dozens of decomposing bodies still trapped under pulverized residential blocks in the towns of Hammuriyeh, Saqba, and Misraba. In Hammuriyeh, AFP's correspondent saw a young man scrambling frantically over the rubble of a collapsed building in search of his loved ones. His father, mother, and three siblings were killed in an air raid, but rescue workers have been unable to pull them out.

Hassaan, a 30-year-old rescue worker, said there were around 20 more families under the rubble. "We need heavy machinery to get them out, but we can't bring the machines out into the streets because the regime may bomb them," he said. In the main town of Douma, bodies piled up in the morgue as bombardment prevented families from reaching the cemetery, AFP's correspondent there said. Families grew desperate for news of loved ones who had fled to other areas that were now inaccessible.

On Saturday, Syrian troops and allied militia cut off the main road leading out of Douma in a major blow to beleaguered rebels attempting to defend their enclave. Government forces also captured the town of Misraba. Some residents fled from the advancing troops, but dozens stayed as soldiers recaptured their neighborhoods. SANA reported yesterday that troops transported "dozens of civilians, including women and children," from Misraba to temporary shelters in government-held zones. The Observatory told AFP that Misraba was left abandoned after 75 to 100 people were moved out of the town by regime forces.

Kuwait 'agrees' to conditions to lift...

Continued from Page 1

"As we move forward in the negotiations, we hope to incorporate more practical measures that would better protect [Filipinos] working there from exploitation and

Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad is keen to recapture Eastern Ghouta from rebels, who have used the region as a launch pad for attacks on the capital. Yesterday, four people were killed and six wounded in rebel rocket fire on a government-controlled district in eastern Damascus, state television reported. It broadcast live footage from the battered skyline of Meideira, saying yesterday's gains linked Syrian soldiers advancing from the east with troops based on the western edges of Ghouta.

In recent years, government forces have recaptured several areas around Damascus and other parts of war-ravaged Syria from rebels by pursuing fierce military offensives culminating in evacuation deals. A delegation representing Hammuriyeh residents were yesterday considering such an agreement after talks with the regime, a negotiator and the Observatory told AFP. The delegation met government representatives on Saturday and discussed a proposal that would offer safe passage to rebels and civilians who want to leave, one of its members said. "The committee is meeting on Sunday to take a decision and inform the regime," the source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The Observatory confirmed talks were taking place in Hammuriyeh as well as the towns of Jisreen and Saqba. The two main rebel groups in Eastern Ghouta have firmly and repeatedly denied negotiating with the Syrian regime. Faylaq Al-Rahman, the opposition faction that holds Hammuriyeh, insisted late Saturday there were "no direct or indirect negotiations" on an evacuation. Eastern Ghouta is home to around 400,000 people living under a crippling government siege since 2013.

The United Nations has demanded a month-long ceasefire there to allow for aid to be brought in and for desperately sick and wounded civilians to seek treatment. Syria's regime has also been accused of using chlorine gas against civilians in Eastern Ghouta in recent weeks. Yesterday, US Defense Secretary Jim Mattis warned it would be "very unwise" for Assad to use weaponized gas against civilians, but declined to say whether doing so would trigger a US military response. — AFP

abuse," Secretary Cayetano said. Among the measures Secretary Cayetano said he would want to see in the agreement would be payment of salaries direct to the bank account of Filipino workers whenever feasible. "This will ensure that our citizens do not get short-changed and will receive the salary they originally signed up for," Secretary Cayetano added. The secretary said he also wants to see an effective mechanism that would allow Filipino workers to file their complaints directly with Kuwaiti authorities.

China parliament allows Xi to remain...

Continued from Page 1

The package of amendments included major provisions to inscribe Xi's eponymous political mantra in the constitution, give the Communist Party an even larger role in the country's affairs and expand the president's anti-corruption campaign. Xi, 64, has consolidated power since 2012 when he was appointed to the country's top office: General secretary of the Communist Party. While the position has no term limits, his two predecessors both gave it up after two terms as part of an orderly process established by Deng.

The country's presidency is a largely ceremonial office, but the constitutional limits meant Xi would have had to give it up in 2023. But with the new amendments, he could now have a lifetime to push his goal of turning China into a global economic powerhouse with a "world-class" military by mid-century. His rise has been accompanied by tighter restrictions on civil society, with the detention of activists and lawyers, and stricter limits on the already heavily controlled internet.

At the same time, he gained a measure of popularity among Chinese people through a relentless crackdown on corruption that has punished more than a million party officials, and sidelined potential rivals. "I think that during the past five years, he has been carrying out a soft coup, including making the politburo a mere figurehead," Chinese political commentator Wu Qiang told AFP, referring to the 25-member Communist Party body one level under the ruling council. "He wants to prevent power from falling into the hands of technocrats like Jiang (Zemin) and Hu (Jintao)," Wu said, referring to Xi's two predecessors.

The Communist Party has argued that the move merely aligns the presidency with the limit-free titles of party secretary and military chief. Shen Chunyao, chairman of the legislature's legal affairs panel, brushed aside a foreign reporter's question about fears that a return to one-man rule could spark a power struggle, telling a press conference: "Those assumptions, guesses and extrapolations don't exist."

The party has claimed that "the masses" unanimously called for the removal of term limits. But the proposal was kept secret until it was revealed in a state media report on Feb 25, a week before the legislature's opening session. The party later disclosed that Xi had

presided over a meeting of the politburo in September during which the leadership decided to revise the constitution. The party then sought proposals and opinions, culminating in a decision in late January to introduce constitutional amendments at the NPC.

"Xi Jinping has presided over so many important projects such as economic reforms and the fight against corruption. There was a consensus that we supported him having more time to finish his work," said Dou Yanli, a delegate from eastern Shandong province. "Protecting the country's long-term stability is an extremely good thing," Cheng Bingqiang from Sichuan province told Reuters shortly ahead of the vote, when asked if he worried about Xi being in office forever.

He Guangliang from the southwestern province of Guizhou said it wasn't fair to draw comparisons with North Korea. "China has its own national characteristics," he said. "There's no one system that suits all countries." However the question was too sensitive for several legislators, who scurried away when asked about Xi being in office forever. "You can't ask me that," said one lady, laughing nervously and declining to give her name.

In a further measure of Xi's strength, a key Xi ally, former top graft-buster Wang Qishan, could be elected vice president on Saturday, having stepped down from the Standing Committee in October. He cast his vote right after the seven members of the Standing Committee. The amendment also lifts term limits for the vice presidency. "We've not got around to discussing that yet," Chen Yunying, a senior defector from self-ruled Taiwan who is married to Justin Yifu Lin, the World Bank's former chief economist. "We'll get it in the next few days," she told Reuters, referring to the candidate list for vice president, and adding "everyone has been saying" it will be Wang for the position.

Activists fear that removing term limits may lead to a further tightening of already strict controls on media, civil society and religion, as Xi tries to impose his highly ideological vision of socialism on every aspect of society. Since the move was first announced, online censors have blocked phrases and words such as "I disagree" and "emperor" and the image of Winnie the Pooh, the cartoon bear to which Xi has been compared. Beijing-based activist Hu Jia, who says authorities forced him to leave the capital during the congress, called the amendment "illegal". "Xi asked all people to obey the constitution, and then used the amendment to place himself above it," he said. "He used the constitution as the ultimate legal weapon that binds officials and all citizens." — Agencies

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Sports

Cheers as North Korea rookies finish last in Paralympics debut

Ma and Kim suffered serious leg injuries in car accidents

PYEONGCHANG: Two North Korean rookie skiers finished last as they made their country's Winter Paralympics debut in the South yesterday, but a flag-waving crowd cheered enthusiastically at the latest sign of an Olympics-fuelled rapprochement. With spectators packing out the stands and waving the blue-and-white Korean unification flag, teenager Kim Jong Hyon and Ma Yu Chol—who both only started skiing three months ago—were the first over the start line in the cross-country race.

But they were no match for their more experienced rivals in the men's 15km sit ski category, and rolled in 26th and 27th, with Ma completing the course in 1hr 4min 57.3 sec, and Kim finishing in 1hr 12min 49.9sec. The gold medal winner, Ukraine's Maksym Yaroviychuk, finished in around 41 minutes. There was a silver lining to their less than triumphant debut—while they finished last, a Georgian and a Belarusian failed to complete the course at all, meaning they did worse than the North Koreans.

Still, the North Koreans' participation was not so much about winning and more about extending a rapid rapprochement between Seoul and Pyongyang that began with last month's Winter Olympics.

The Olympics-driven detente has triggered a flurry of diplomatic activity, which culminated in the shock announcement last week that US President Donald Trump had agreed to meet the North's leader Kim

Jong Un. It is a turnaround from last year, when tensions soared as the North fired missiles that could reach the US mainland and tested what it said was an H-bomb.

'STILL THE SAME PEOPLE'

In the stands of the Alpensia Biathlon Centre, spectators watching the North's first Winter Paralympians welcomed their presence as a sign of improving ties, and said they hoped the rapprochement would last. Yun Mi-hyun, who was clutching the reunification flag that shows an undivided Korean peninsula, said that the easing of tensions with the North "warms my heart".

"We have been separated by war and politics, but we are still the same people," the 38-year-old property agent told AFP. Ahn Sun-yong, 48, added: "We were one country before, and we want reunification some day." Still there is much scepticism about the upcoming meeting between Trump and Kim, which is pencilled in for the end of May. The North has before dangled the prospect of halting its weapons programme before the US, only to backtrack later.

The background of the North's athletes suggests their presence is part of Pyongyang's political manoeuvring—the pair, both students, only started skiing in December, having previously played disabled table tennis, according to Games organisers.

“We were one country, we want reunification”



PYEONGCHANG: Ma Yu Chol (R) and Kim Jong Hyon (L) of North Korea attend a training session with their coach Ri Ung Chol (C) at the nordic skiing venue of the Pyeongchang Paralympic games, in Pyeongchang. — AFP

Ma is 27 and Kim is 17, and both suffered serious leg injuries in car accidents. Pyongyang sent 22 athletes to last month's Olympics, and teams from the North and South marched together under a unified flag at the opening ceremony.

Most of the North's Olympic athletes also had humiliating finishes, and a hastily-assembled joint women's ice hockey team lost every one of its five matches, scoring just twice while conceding 28 goals. — AFP

Shooting tournament begins on March 15

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Shooting Sport Club will organize the tournament of Late Sheikh Faisal Al-Duajj Al-Sabah in the Skeet, Trap and Double Trap events for men, women and juniors, from March 15 until March 17, 2018.

Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Secretary General Obaid Al-Osaimi said, KSSC always appreciates those dignitaries who con-



Obaid Al-Osaimi

tributed to the sport. He said Sheikh Faisal Al-Duajj participated with the first national team representing Kuwait in the tournament that was held in Saudi Arabia.

He said shooters from the club and National Guard will participate and registration will continue until Tuesday evening.

Kuwaiti women choose competitive shooting as launchpad for success

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti woman has excelled in all fields in the midst of the society's decades-long efforts to empower and provide her with the role she so rightfully deserves. Her success story has become a model women's rights activists from around the region look to follow.

Competitive sports are one of these fields illustrating a clear example of these successes, particularly in shooting, once categorized as a male-only affair. Kuwaiti women, aged 9-22, gather every day at Kuwait Shooting Club to train. Their training covers all disciplines of the sport, using both pistol and rifle. The potential shooters are cleared to join the club on the conditions of good conduct and physical ability, former women's shooting team chief Amina Ismail told KUNA. They are all allowed to compete locally, however, international competition is only granted to those with the highest points, according to Ismail. The most notable of Kuwaiti women shooters is Maryam Erzouqi, who competed in both the women's 10m air rifle and women's 50m three position events at the London 2012 Summer Olympics.

The shooter, who was 25 years old at the time, managed to come 28th and 44th, respectively in both competitions. Others have also made their mark in the sport. Trap shooter Shahad Al-Hawal was the first Arab woman to have qualified for a World Cup, back in 2009 in San Marino, and came fourth in the subsequent tournament a year later in Italy.

She has also clinched Arab Championship gold for three consecutive years and an Asian Clay Shooting Championship silver medal at Almaty, Kazakhstan, in 2009. As for the difficulties that face the shooters, these include impaired visibility due to sandstorms that occur from time to time in the country's harsh desert climate, Iman Al-Shamaa says.

Another hindering factor is the extreme heat, with temperatures sometimes rising to above 50 degrees Celsius, adds the trap shooter, who has also won several local accolades. — KUNA



Shahad Al-Hawal



Iman Al-Shamaa

Serena sets up Indian Wells showdown with sister Venus

INDIAN WELLS: Serena Williams set up a mouth-watering Indian Wells third round showdown against her sister Venus with a straight-sets victory over Kiki Bertens on Saturday. Venus and Serena have faced each other 28 times in their legendary careers and they are now meeting in Serena's first tournament back on the WTA Tour since she beat Venus 6-4, 6-4 in the 2017 Australian Open final.

"(We are) having to play each other in the third round, one of us is going to be gone," Serena said. "I would prefer to play someone else, anybody else, literally anybody else, but it has to happen now. So it is what it is."

Serena, who lifted her 23rd Grand Slam title in Melbourne last year, was then already pregnant with daughter Alexis Olympia, who was born in September. Venus did her part to set up the marquee match when she dismantled world No. 35 Sorana Cirstea 6-3, 6-4 in just 79 minutes.

Serena then took center stage, needing just under two hours to dispatch Bertens, of the Netherlands, 7-6 (7/5), 7-5. "I mean, she looked like she never lost a step," Venus said of her younger sister. "Great way to come back."

Serena, 36 and vying to become the first woman to win three Indian Wells titles, clinched the victory against Bertens on her second match point when Bertens blasted a forehand wide. Serena won 54 percent of her second-serve points and broke Bertens's serve six times. Still showing some rust from her long layoff, Serena hit just one ace and made 37 unforced errors to 32 for Bertens.

She takes a career head-to-head

record over Venus of 17-11 into their third-round clash. They met for the first time in the second round of the 1998 Australian Open which Venus won 7-6 (7/4), 6-1.

This is the earliest they will face each other since that Melbourne meeting 20 years ago. Serena, unseeded in the wake of her long layoff, admitted she would have preferred not to come up against her sister so soon in the draw.

"It's a huge difference to play her in the semi-finals or even the quarter-finals or a final as opposed to the third round. You know, we can always stay in the tournament longer if the both of us are in the tournament," Serena said.

In 2001 they were slated to meet in the Indian Wells semi-finals when Venus withdrew, handing Serena a walkover. Fans who felt cheated of a chance to see the siblings play, thinking it was a tactic orchestrated by their father Richard, booed Serena during her final triumph against Kim Clijsters.

14-YEAR BOYCOTT

The crowd's treatment led to a 14-year boycott by the sisters, which Serena finally ended in 2015. This is just her third appearance in the California desert in 17 years. Asked about the semi-final match that never happened, Serena said she has tried to forget.

"That's totally gone out of my mind," she said. "First of all, 17 years ago seems like forever ago." Venus is enjoying a resurgence on the Tour after a string of injuries limited her playing time for several seasons. "I still have a lot to give. I don't think my dad wants me to ever stop playing," the 37-year-old, seven-time Grand Slam champion said. Venus won 61 percent of her first-serve points and broke Cirstea's serve six times.

She fell behind 3-1 early in the second set but rallied by holding serve in the fifth game. She won four of the final five games of the second set, breaking Cirstea three times to close it out. — AFP

Kuwait Ninth Tennis Open 2018

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Activities of Kuwait Ninth Tennis Open 2018, which started on March 4th under the patronage of President of Arab and Kuwait Tennis Associations, Honorary President of Asian Tennis Association Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Sabah continued at the Tennis Center of KTA, in Yarmouk Sports Club.

This is the biggest tennis tournament organized and supervised by KTA during the entire tennis season, and attracts a large number of players both citizens and expats in various age groups of both genders including members of the diplomatic core.

Results of Friday saw Mohammad Qilli defeat Yousuf Al-Faraj 9/2, Mahdi Abbas defeat Al-Bader 9/3, Tariq Masoud defeat Khal Al-Mutairi 9/3, Yousuf Fabian defeat Ahmad Al-Humaidan 9/8, Fahad Al-Daihani defeat Mohammad Al-Tarkeet 9/1, Ali Bu Abbas defeat Shamlan Ali 9/8, Ibrahim Firas defeat Musaed Maddouh 9/7, Fadi Michael defeat Ali Al-Shimmari 9/0, Ozhan Canon beat Mohammad Al-Failakawi 9/0, in under 11 category.

Meanwhile in the U13 Arian Shako defeated Fignaisuh Suhail Ram 9/7 and Maxwell Indiset defeated Abdallah Humoud 9/0.

In the U-17, Satish Mani defeated Hassan Al-Bahrani 6/0-6/0.

In the U-18 girl's category Ritaj Hussein defeated Hussa Al-Ajmi 9/0, Farida Al-Ayyat defeated Marian Safar 9/0, Kafni Ranbara defeated Anja Alisic 9/5, Silma Al-Samrani defeated Farah Al-Bahar 9/0, and Salhitchia Edvi defeated Muna Al-Haddad 9/3.

In the women's individual category Sarah Behbehani defeated Jacklene Marbio 9/1, Manar Al-Jazaf defeated Nouf Al-Sebeeh 9/0, Fatima Al-Awadhi defeated Nada Al-Sabah 9/0, Jairood Odail defeated Farah Al-Haqqaan 9/7, Tamara Elcidic defeated Dana Khaja 9/0 and Ayesha Al-Dayouli defeated Sheikh Ibrahim Al-Duajj 9/0.



KTA Secretary General (center) with participants.

In the men's individual: Hussein Shams defeated Shadi Safi 6/4, 6/3, Essa Qabazard defeated Hussein Al-Mousawi 6/2, 6/2, Omar Al-Othman defeated Mishal Al-Jenfawi 6/1, 6/2, Ahmad Murad defeated Abdallah Jaouli 7/6, 6/0, Daniel Namour defeated Fawzi Al-Hudrub 6/0, 6/0 and Tariq Al-Qaderi defeated Salman Murad 6/3, 3/6, 10/6.

In the men's doubles Rashid Al-Jaafar and Jassem Al-Jaafar defeated Abdelwahab Al-Sharaf and Ali Al-Qallaf 7/5, 6/4 and the Dashti brothers defeated Abdallah Al-Haraz and Abdallah Bu Hamad 1/6, 7/6, 11/9, Ahmad Murad and Ali Murad defeated Paul Robert and Daniel Namour 6/3, 6/4, and Hani Shams and Hadi Jamal defeated Salman Murad and Ikram Al-Haq by 7/5, 5/7, 11/9.

Sports

Panthers set home record in shootout win over NY Rangers

Erik Haula scores as Vegas edged host Buffalo

FLORIDA: Frank Vatrano scored in his Florida Panthers debut, leading his new team to a franchise-record, eighth straight home victory, a 4-3 shootout decision over the New York Rangers on Saturday in Sunrise, Fla. Aleksander Barkov and Vincent Trocheck scored in the shootout for Florida. The Rangers had just one shootout score, from Mats Zuccarello. Vatrano had been out due to an ankle injury since being acquired from the Boston Bruins on Feb. 22. However, his goal helped the Panthers improve to 15-3-1 overall since Jan. 30, making them the hottest team in the NHL during that span. Jonathan Huberdeau and Jamie McGinn had goals for Florida, and goalie Roberto Luongo made 34 saves. Zuccarello, Mika Zibanejad and Kevin Hayes scored for the Rangers, and goalie Henrik Lundqvist made 32 saves, but New York lost its third game in a row.



Patrick Marleau, Mitchell Marner and Kasperii Kapanen also scored for Toronto, which had been outscored 17-10 during its 0-2-2 skid. Sidney Crosby and Patric Hornqvist scored for the Penguins while Tristan Jarry allowed four goals on 16 shots as Pittsburgh had its three-game winning streak halted. Casey DeSmith replaced Jarry and made nine saves.

OILERS 4, WILD 1

Connor McDavid scored twice in less than three minutes of the second period, and he also had an assist as Edmonton beat visiting Minnesota.

With 33 goals and 51 assists, McDavid is tied for second in the NHL with Pittsburgh's Evgeni Malkin with 84 points, just three in back of Tampa Bay's Nikita Kucherov. Leon Draisaitl and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins (empty-netter) scored third-period goals for Edmonton, which got 32 saves from Cam Talbot. Charlie Coyle had the lone

Kinkaid made 34 saves through regulation and OT

DEVILS 3, PREDATORS 2 (SO)

Brian Boyle scored once in regulation and netted the shootout winner in the fifth round, and Keith Kinkaid made 34 saves through regulation and overtime and just enough in the showdown as visiting New Jersey beat Nashville. The loss snapped the Western Conference-leading Predators' 10-game winning streak. The Devils won for just the second time in six games. Boyle netted his second game-deciding shootout tally by ripping a top-shelf offering over the shoulder of Predators goalie Juuse Saros. The Devils nearly won in regulation but regrouped and had to kill a penalty in overtime.

MAPLE LEAFS 5, PENGUINS 2

Nazem Kadri lit the lamp twice and Frederik Andersen made 38 saves as host Toronto snapped a four-game losing streak with a win over Pittsburgh.

goal for Minnesota, and Devan Dubnyk made 24 saves.

FLYERS 2, JETS 1

Claude Giroux and Andrew MacDonald each scored a goal to lift Philadelphia to a win over visiting Winnipeg. Goaltender Petr Mrazek stopped 27 shots for the Flyers, who halted a five-game losing streak (0-4-1). Patrik Laine scored his 40th goal of the season for the Jets, who had been red hot with four consecutive victories. The 19-year-old has scored at least one goal in 10 of the last 11 games and five games in a row. Winnipeg goaltender Connor Hellebuyck had 33 saves in the loss.

BRUINS 7, BLACKHAWKS 4

David Pastrnak, Brian Gionta, Rick Nash and Sean



SUNRISE: Mats Zuccarello #36 clears the puck after goaltender Henrik Lundqvist #30 of the New York Rangers stops a shot by the Florida Panthers at the BB&T Center on Saturday in Sunrise, Florida. —AFP

Kuraly all lit the lamp in the third period to help Boston rally from a goal down to beat Chicago in Boston. The win was the Bruins' sixth in a row during a dominant homestand in which they outscored opponents 30-19. Boston became only the seventh team in NHL history to win all six games on a homestand. The Bruins also got two goals from David Krejci. Pastrnak tied the game 4-4 just 6:23 into the final period before Gionta made it 5-4 at the 8:02 mark and Nash provided some insurance 9:18 into the period. An empty-netter for Kuraly with just over 21 seconds left sealed the result.

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 2, SABRES 1 (SO)

Erik Haula scored the decisive goal in the fifth round of the shootout as Vegas edged host Buffalo. Haula gave Vegas its 44th win when he lifted a wrist shot over Buffalo goaltender Robin Lehner's glove side. David Perron also scored in the opening round of the shootout for the Golden Knights, who won for the third time beyond overtime. Marc-Andre Fleury stopped Sam Reinhart and Jason Pominville in the shootout. Fleury made 31 saves in the first 65 minutes to move within one of becoming the 13th goaltender with 400 career wins. — Reuters

Khawaja leads fightback but SA strike late

PORT ELIZABETH: Usman Khawaja scored 75 runs to lead an Australia fightback on the third day of the second Test against South Africa at St George's Park, but succumbed just before close of play after seeing the tourists cancel out a first innings deficit.

Australia will take a 41-run lead into the fourth day after finishing yesterday's play at 180 for five wickets. Khawaja and Mitchell Marsh put together a 87-run partnership for the fifth wicket before Khawaja, whose place in the team has been under threat because of a lack of form, was trapped leg before wicket by Kagiso Rabada in the second last over of the day.

It was a blow to the tourists who had been showing strong resistance after teetering at 86-4 just after tea. Marsh played a solid supporting role to be 39 not out at the end of the day. He will resume on Monday with Tim Paine, who has five runs to his name.

Australia lost three wickets in the second session after lunch, including that of captain Steve Smith, and then Shaun Marsh with the second ball of the last session before Khawaja dashed home hopes of rattling through the Australian batting line-up.

Smith, ranked the world's top test batsmen, went cheaply as he was caught behind for 11 after he got a slight edge to the spin bowling of Keshav Maharaj while David Warner, also key to their hopes, was bowled by Kagiso Rabada for 13.

South Africa had a first innings lead of 139 after being bowled out for 382 just before lunch. AB de Villiers notched up his 22nd Test century in scoring an unbeaten 126 in a busy morning session to help South Africa into a good lead. He had not scored a ton in his last 13 tests but featured in an 84-run partnership with Vernon Philander (36) for the eighth wicket and further 58 with Keshav Maharaj, who swatted at the Australian bowling to score 30 off 24 balls. Australia lead 1-0 in the four-Test series. — Reuters



PORT ELIZABETH: Australia's batsman Usman Khawaja plays a shot during day three of the second Test cricket match between South Africa and Australia at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa: Scores at close of play on the third day of the second Test between South Africa and Australia at St George's Park yesterday:

Australia, first innings, 243	30-5-98-2, Cummins 24-6-79-3 (1w), Lyon 22-5-58-1, M. Marsh 9-1-26-2.
South Africa, first innings (overnight 263-7)	
D. Elgar c Paine b Hazlewood	57
A. Markram lbw b Cummins	11
K. Rabada b Cummins	29
H. Amla b Starc	56
A. de Villiers not out	126
F. du Plessis lbw b M. Marsh	9
T. de Bruyn lbw b M. Marsh	1
Q. de Kock b Lyon	9
V. Philander c Bancroft b Cummins	36
K. Maharaj b Hazlewood	30
L. Ngidi run out (Smith)	5
Extras (b9, lb2, w2)	13
Total (118.4 overs)	382
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), 8-311 (Philander), 9-369 (Maharaj)	
Bowling: Starc 33.4-5-110-1, Hazlewood	
Australia, second innings	
C. Bancroft b Ngidi	24
D. Warner b Rabada	13
U. Khawaja lbw b Rabada	75
S. Smith c De Kock b Maharaj	11
S. Marsh c De Kock b Rabada	1
M. Marsh not out	39
T. Paine not out	5
Extras (lb10, w2)	12
Total (5 wts, 63 overs)	180
Fall of wickets: 1-27 (Warner), 2-62 (Bancroft), 3-77 (Smith), 4-86 (S. Marsh)	
Bowling: Philander 14-5-38-0, Rabada 16-7-38-3 (1w), Maharaj 20-2-70-1, Ngidi 10-4-21-1, Markram 3-1-3-0.	
Match situation: Australia lead by 41 runs with five wickets remaining in the second innings	

Wallace overcomes Sharma to bag Indian Open golf

NEW DELHI: England's Matt Wallace carded a four-under 68 to win the Indian Open golf yesterday after local favourite Shubhankar Sharma floundered in the final round to squander his joint overnight lead.

Wallace pipped compatriot Andrew Johnston in a playoff after tying on 11-under 277 at the end of the regulation 72 holes at the DLF Golf and Country Club in Gurgaon. "I feel amazing. It was a hard week and a hard golf course but you can't be off your game," said Wallace after bagging his second European Tour title. "I think I played great, I didn't miss too many shots. It's satisfying to master the course."

Sharma, riding high after winning two European Tour titles in the last three months, slipped down the leaderboard to finish joint seventh after a three-over 75 in the last round. "I am disappointed obviously... these things happen and it's not an easy course," said the 21-year-old Sharma.

"I was just trying to keep up with Matt (Wallace). He was playing so well. I made a bad swing on the fifth hole which put me out of contention. "I was trying to come back but I made another bad swing on the seventh. You can't really drop too many shots on this course and I dropped nine." Despite his lacklustre show, Sharma continues to lead the European Tour Race to Dubai and the Asian Order of Merit.

Sharma's next big-ticket event will be the US Masters in April where he will be rubbing shoulders with the game's elite. Sharma was invited for the Masters earlier this month, becoming just the fourth Indian ever to make it to the top-flight tournament. — AFP



GURUGRAM: Matt Wallace of England poses with a trophy after winning the Hero Indian Open 2018 golf tournament at DLF Golf and Country Club in Gurugram on the outskirts of New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

New Zealand suffer batting headache as World Cup looms

CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand's one-day batting frailties have been brutally exposed by England 15 months out from the next World Cup, causing deep concern for coach Mike Hesson. Three years on from being finalists in the 2015 World Cup, where they lost to Australia in Melbourne, New Zealand are now struggling to get an innings underway as they build towards the next showpiece in May 2019. England's 3-2 victory in the just-completed ODI series in New

Zealand may suggest a close fought battle, but two of England's wins were by runaway margins including Saturday's series decider.

New Zealand's meagre 223 all out at Hagley Oval in Christchurch was easily overhauled by England with seven wickets remaining and 104 balls to spare. "Our top order hasn't set the platform, that's pretty clear," Hesson acknowledged on Sunday as he reviewed the ruthless way the tourists wrapped up the series.

New Zealand, sent into bat, stumbled to 93 for six as the top order fell with an all-too-familiar regularity before Henry Nicholls and Mitch Santner put some steel in the innings with an 84-run stand.

In the fourth ODI, New Zealand were two for two before Ross Taylor saved the day with his unbeaten 181. The best and longest stand by openers Martin Guptill and Colin Munro was 12 off 13 deliveries in the

third ODI. By comparison, England progressively improved their opening partnerships from 10 to 15, 25, 77 and then 155 in the decider.

BATTING LACKS BALANCE

In all five ODI innings against England, New Zealand had to rely on a handful of individual performances to get them through with two centuries by Taylor, one from Kane Williamson and an impressive total of 216 runs by number eight batsman Santner.

"I think, certainly, as a batting unit we didn't really fire in terms of the balance we wanted to put out there," Hesson said. "We didn't allow ourselves to use the power we have at the back end, so that's certainly something we're going to have to look at. "Throughout this series, there were some very good one-off performances, but it probably overshadowed a batting line-up that hasn't quite fired." Hesson said

the players in the New Zealand squad deserved to be there "based on previous performances" but did not fire when it mattered. "We went in with a batting-heavy line-up and it'd be fair to say we never got ourselves in a position to utilise that," he said. New Zealand now turn their attention to two Tests against England, starting on March 22.

They do not play another ODI until Pakistan late in the year, with Hesson noting there was "plenty of thinking to be done" before then. Captain Williamson said New Zealand definitely missed the injured Taylor in the final ODI against England but the star's absence did not excuse the overall batting failure on a good surface.

"The disappointing thing was too many soft dismissals through that middle order," Williamson said. "There were definite decision-making errors on our part." — AFP

Sports

Westbrook triple-double lifts Thunder over Spurs

Lou Williams scores 25 points to lead Clippers to victory

LOS ANGELES: Russell Westbrook notched his 19th triple-double of the NBA season and the Oklahoma City reserves contributed 50 points Saturday as the Thunder beat the reeling San Antonio Spurs 104-94. Westbrook scored 21 points and added 12 rebounds and 10 assists as the Thunder improved to 6-3 since the All-Star break. The Thunder held Spurs star LaMarcus Aldridge to 11 points on five-of-16 shooting as San Antonio lost for the eighth time in 10 games. "They were very aggressive," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "They did a good job. He didn't have one of his best nights, that's for sure, but his effort was great. It just didn't work for him tonight, and OKC was a big part of that."

The Spurs, who have slipped to seventh in the Western Conference, are now assured of having a losing road record for the first time in 21 seasons. Their chances of extending their NBA record streak of 20 straight playoff appearances also look to be dwindling, although the San Antonio could be bolstered next week by the return of Kawhi Leonard from a 20-game injury absence.

The Thunder jumped to fifth in the West, but will be concerned after Steven Adams sprained his left ankle when he came down hard early in the third quarter. Nick Collison, a 37-year-old reserve forward, helped fill the void, entering the game in the fourth quarter and scoring seven points in less than three minutes.

"He puts in the work and he's always ready to go," Westbrook said. "Tonight was one of those nights where he got his number called and he answered like he does every time. It's a blessing to be on the floor with a guy like him. He's so unselfish. It's good to see."

“It's a blessing to be on the floor with guy like him”

In Los Angeles, Lou Williams scored a game-high 25 points to lead the Clippers to a 113-105 victory over the Orlando Magic. The victory kept the Clippers in the eighth and final playoff spot in the West a half-game ahead of the Denver Nuggets and Utah Jazz. Against an Orlando team lying last in the East, Los Angeles jumped to a 10-0 lead. But the Magic responded and led 58-56 at halftime. Los Angeles buckled down on defense in the fourth, out-scoring the Magic 26-16 in the final period to gain the much needed victory a night after an impressive win over LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers. "Tonight was a struggle. You could just see it," Clippers coach Doc Rivers said. "You come off the game last night. I just thought it was a mental struggle for us."

HEAT ROUT WIZARDS

The Miami Heat moved within half a game of the sixth-placed Philadelphia 76ers in the Eastern Conference with a convincing 129-102 victory over the Washington Wizards.

James Johnson scored 20 points to lead eight Heat players in double figures. Up 60-48 at halftime, the Heat out-scored the weary Wizards 43-28 in the third quarter and cruised home despite the absence of center Hassan Whiteside, who was a late scratch with a sore left hip. "We were doing shootaround and I felt something," Whiteside said. "I strained my hip flexor." The Heat also saw veteran Dwyane Wade depart in the fourth quarter with a strained hamstring, but that proved no obstacle as the team avenged an overtime loss to the Wizards in Washington on Tuesday.



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

"Our energy was great, both ends of the court," Heat coach Erik Spoelstra said. "Right from the beginning, it looked like we were the more aggressive, faster, quicker team. "And they're coming off a back to back

and they had to travel from New Orleans. That was part of what we wanted to do. But again, our depth and multiple guys being able to contribute, that's the strength of our team." — AFP

Man City seek end to unhappy Mondays at Stoke

MANCHESTER: Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola is hoping his side don't suffer another Monday hangover as they look to edge ever closer to the Premier League title at relegation-threatened Stoke. Two of City's rare slip-ups this season have come on Monday nights as hopes of an unprecedented quadruple were ended by a shock FA Cup defeat at third-tier Wigan last month, while Everton escaped with a 1-1 draw from the Etihad Stadium back in August. And Guardiola said he would have preferred to play over the weekend as Manchester United cut their city rivals' lead at the top of the table to 13 points with victory over Liverpool on Saturday.

"I prefer to play at weekends, when all the teams play," said Guardiola. It's just from my experience, and I don't like it." However, one of Guardiola's most famous victories as a coach came on a Monday when his Barcelona side thrashed now United manager Jose Mourinho's Real Madrid 5-0 in 2010. "I don't like to play on Monday because at the weekend everybody is involved. When the weekend is over, they are like: 'The weekend is over, there are no more games.' But we have to play."

City will also be keen to bounce back from just a fourth defeat of the season in all competitions when they let slip an early lead to lose 2-1 to Basel on Tuesday. But Guardiola's men still progressed to the Champions League quarter-finals 5-2 on aggregate. Guardiola rested a host of first-team regulars for the visit of Basel, including Kevin De Bruyne and David Silva. They are set to return, while Guardiola could also have the luxury of welcoming back Fernandinho and Raheem Sterling from injury. But striker Sergio Aguero, who has scored 30 goals in all competitions this term, has been ruled out of action for two weeks with a left knee problem.

STOKE BID TO SURPRISE

Stoke are mired in the bottom three on the back of just one win in 10 league games. But manager Paul Lambert insists his side can unsettle City by taking Guardiola's men out of their comfort zone.

And the Scot has drawn inspiration from his own playing days, when he was part of the Borussia Dortmund team that beat Juventus in the Champions League final 21 years ago.

"On any given day you can win a game of football. If I go back to my own playing career, did anyone give Borussia Dortmund a chance against the great Juve side in 97? Probably not. Everybody and their dog thought Juve would win. "In a one-off game you can win, and that's the beauty of football." Chelsea manager Antonio Conte was much-criticised for his defensive approach in a 1-0 defeat by City last weekend. But Lambert insisted his side also can't take on City in a wide-open encounter. "Obviously we won't have much of the ball, but when we do have it we have to be ruthless with it and try and hurt them - and take them out of their zone of being comfortable," he added. "If we try to play football the same way they do then we will be beaten - that's the reality. We have to have an idea of another way to try to beat them." — AFP

Barcelona stroll past Malaga without Messi

MADRID: Lionel Messi was away attending the birth of his son but Barcelona still had more than enough to beat 10-man Malaga 2-0 on Saturday and move 11 points clear at the top of La Liga. Messi was watching the game on a television in hospital as Luis Suarez and Philippe Coutinho put his team two up inside half an hour at La Rosaleda Stadium, before Samuel Garcia was sent off in the 30th minute for a dangerous tackle on Jordi Alba. Down a man and without a win in 12 matches, Malaga might have feared a rout but Barca settled for a straightforward victory, perhaps with one eye on Wednesday's Champions League last-16 clash against Chelsea. Messi is expected back at the Camp Nou, where the score is 1-1 from the first leg, but Ernesto Valverde will have been delighted with how his attackers filled the void, as Suarez, Coutinho and Ousmane Dembele all delivered excellent displays. In particular, Dembele's brilliant turn and pass was bettered only by Coutinho's flicked finish for what was a superb second goal. The win means Barca extend their advantage over second-placed Atletico Madrid, who can pull the deficit back to eight points with a win over Celta Vigo on Sunday.

Malaga, meanwhile, remain rooted to the bottom of the table. Earlier on Saturday, Zinedine Zidane labelled Cristiano Ronaldo as "from another galaxy" after the striker's double dragged Real Madrid to a 2-1 win over Eibar. Ronaldo headed in an 84th-minute winner at the Ipurua Municipal Stadium, having earlier put Real in front with an emphatic near-post finish. Eibar's Ivan Ramis had equalised in between to give the home side hope. But Ronaldo's two goals mean he has now scored in seven consecutive games and boasts a remarkable 13 goals overall in that period.

The 33-year-old's tally for club and country this season stands at 35 goals in 37 appearances. "For me he's from another galaxy," Real coach Zidane said. "He knows



MALAGA: Barcelona's Brazilian midfielder Philippe Coutinho (L) vies with Malaga's Spanish forward Samuel Garcia during the Spanish league football match between Malaga CF and FC Barcelona at the La Rosaleda stadium in Malaga on Saturday. — AFP

that he will score. He is a different, special player. The statistics speak for themselves."

Real move four points behind second-placed Atletico Madrid, while Eibar stay eighth. After securing a 5-2 aggregate victory over Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League last 16 on Tuesday, Real swapped the Parc des Princes for the smallest ground 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, before Ronaldo made them pay. Gareth Bale started up front alongside the Portuguese, while Luka Modric and Toni Kroos, fit enough

only to come off the bench in midweek, returned. Modric was excellent throughout, the Croatian providing a sublime pass with the outside of his foot for Ronaldo's opener.

"It's true that after 15, almost 20 days, Luka came in and played a great game," Zidane said. "He is an important player for us and what he has done, he has done very well." Valencia remain a point behind Real and all but ended Sevilla's hopes of finishing in the top four by beating Vincenzo Montella's men 2-0. Sevilla trailed Valencia by eight points before kick-off but that gap was stretched to 11 after two goals from Rodrigo Moreno sealed a comfortable victory. — AFP

Fiorentina commemorate Astori

FLORENCE: Fiorentina returned to action a week after the sudden death of captain Davide Astori in a home game yesterday played in an emotional atmosphere.

Last Sunday's Serie A fixtures were postponed after Astori's body was found in his hotel room ahead of an away game against Udinese. After emotional scenes on Friday night as Roma, one of Astori's former clubs, beat Torino, and a commemoration on Saturday at the Verona derby, Fiorentina kicked off Sunday's schedule at their Artemio Franchi stadium against last-place Benevento.

For the warmup, all the Fiorentina players and coach Stefano Pioli wore shirts bearing the number "13" and the name "Astori". The ground was packed on three sides, only the space reserved for visiting fans was largely empty. The screens played a video homage to the club's late skipper. The flags above the curved stands at either end of the long, narrow stadium flew at half mast. The stadium announcer included "Number 13, forever our captain, Davide Astori" in the line-up.

As the Fiorentina and Benevento teams re-emerged, accompanied by mascots in the shirts of Fiorentina or another of Astori's clubs, Cagliari, all the advertising hoardings round the pitch turned purple and bore only the words "Davide Astori" and the club crest.

The pre-match ceremony began with the two sides lining up as Italian star Jovanotti sang his hit "Terra Degli Omini". Players, from both teams, wept. The Fiorentina players held a long, home-made, banner saying "Ciao



TURIN: Players and referees respect one minute of silence for Fiorentina's captain Davide Astori before the Italian Serie A football match Juventus vs Udinese yesterday at the Juventus stadium in Turin. — AFP

Davide". Both teams had the same phrase sewn on their left shirt shoulders. The words were repeated on many of the banners in the crowd. Others read "Linked forever", "Florentine forever", "Ciao Davide" and "True captain, man from another time."

In the top deck of the Curva Fiesole, home of Fiorentina's Ultras, all the fans held purple, white and red flags spelling "Davide". Fans remained eerily silent as the teams shook hands, the referee conducted the coin toss and then the players reassembled in the centre circle for a formal silence.

As that ended, some in the crowd started a brief "Davide" chant. Before kickoff, fans in the main stand released a cloud of purple and white balloons that floated

heavenwards. The match finally started six minutes after the scheduled kickoff. The advertising billboards switched to their normal slogans. There remained one more planned commemoration. After 13 minutes, Astori's shirt number, the action simply stopped, the players and match officials, like the fans, stood and clapped for 60 seconds. The supporters in the Curva Fiesole held up their flags again and, as the clapping ended, they waved them.

Eleven minutes later, as the rain began to fall, Fiorentina, who had been applying steady pressure, took the lead. Vitor Hugo, who had stepped into Astori's place in the centre of defence and wears 31. The reverse of Astori's number, leapt to meet a high ball and headed it powerfully into the net. — AFP

Sports

Arsene Wenger gets boost as Arsenal sink Watford

Ends a run of three successive Premier League defeats

LONDON: Arsene Wenger received a welcome boost as Arsenal eased a little of the pressure on their beleaguered boss with a 3-0 win over Watford yesterday. After a wretched run left Wenger fighting to save his job, a 2-0 win at AC Milan in the Europa League on Thursday offered the Frenchman temporary respite from the torrent of abuse he has endured this season.

Maintaining the momentum from that last-16 victory in the San Siro, Wenger's side ended a run of three successive Premier League defeats with a solid display at the Emirates Stadium. Shkodran Mustafi's early opener and a cool finish from Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang put them in control.

In a moment of sweet vindication, Watford captain Troy Deeney, who had questioned Arsenal's spirit earlier this season, had a second-half penalty saved by Petr Cech. Henrikh Mkhitaryan's strike wrapped up the points, but there was concern for Wenger as Mustafi limped off in the closing stages.

Arsenal, who had lost eight of their previous 14 matches in all competitions, remain in sixth place and trail fourth-placed Tottenham by 10 points ahead of their rivals' trip to Bournemouth later.

Winning the Europa League guarantees qualification for next season's Champions League and, with Arsenal's hopes of achieving that goal via a top-four finish looking bleak, it was no surprise Wenger prioritised the continental competition.

With the second leg against Milan looming on Thursday, Wenger rested Aaron Ramsey and Laurent Koscielny and left Jack Wilshere on the bench. Aubameyang was one of the established stars who

started for Arsenal and the Gabon striker should have opened the scoring when he raced onto Mesut Ozil's pass and shot straight at Watford goalkeeper Orestis Karnezis.

For the second successive home game, a significant amount of seats were empty as fans stayed away in protest at Wenger's woes. The subdued atmosphere lent an 'end of an era' feel to the match, but it didn't bother Arsenal, who had a point to prove to Watford captain Deeney.

Deeney had infuriated Arsenal by accusing them of a lack of "cojones" after Watford beat Wenger's men in October. Fuelled by that jibe, Arsenal took the lead in the eighth minute. When Ozil swung a deep

free-kick towards the far post, Mustafi punished slack marking by Jose Holebas and Adrian Mariappa as the German defender powered a close-range header past Karnezis.

RARE SMILE

Watford weren't fazed and Abdoulaye Doucoure's low strike deflected off Mustafi to force a good save from Cech. Cech alertly kept out Richarlison's dipping free-kick, but Roberto Pereyra should have done better than blaze the rebound over.

Ozil was equally profligate when he weaved through on goal, only to clip his shot too close to Karnezis. There was less assurance about Arsenal towards the end of the half and Cech had to plunge to his left to save Richarlison's header.

But Watford couldn't take advantage and Granit Xhaka's 20-yard blast after the interval almost deceived Karnezis before he grabbed the ball just



LONDON: Arsenal's Gabonese striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scores Arsenal's second goal past the outstretched arms of Watford's Greek goalkeeper Orestis Karnezis during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Watford at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. — AFP

before it crossed the line. With the momentum back in their favour, Aubameyang doubled Arsenal's lead in the 59th minute.

Mkhitaryan was the catalyst, slipping a pass to Aubameyang, who beat the Watford offside trap and rounded Karnezis before slotting in his third goal since his club-record move from Borussia Dortmund in January. There was more cause for Wenger to wear a

rare smile a few minutes later. Ainsley Maitland-Niles conceded a penalty with a foul on Pereyra, but when Deeney stepped up to take the spot-kick, Cech made a fine save that preserved his 200th clean sheet in the Premier League.

Mkhitaryan bagged his second goal in successive matches with a low strike that crept under Karnezis in the 77th minute. —AFP

10-man Celtic bounce back to beat Rangers

GLASGOW: Celtic bounced back from twice going behind and down to 10 men to beat Rangers 3-2 at Ibrox yesterday and take a huge step towards a seventh consecutive Scottish Premiership title. Brendan Rodgers's men now lead their Glasgow rivals by nine points and have a game in hand at the top of the table.

Rangers' wait for a first league win over Celtic since 2012 continues, but they looked well set to stretch their recent fine form when they went in front through Josh Windass and Daniel Candeias in the first-half.

Both those strikes were quickly cancelled out by Tom Rogic and Moussa Dembele and despite Jozo Simunovic's red card just before the hour mark, Celtic still found the winner thanks to substitute Odsome Edouard. Celtic were forced to hand a debut to goalkeeper Scott Bain due to a late injury picked up by Dorus de Vries, and he too was to play a big part in helping the champions seal a record fourth straight win at Ibrox. However, Bain's first involvement was to pick the ball out of his net after a terrible error by Dedryck Boyata just three minutes in.

The Belgian defender gifted possession to Windass inside the Celtic half and the Rangers winger strode forward before blasting home his 17th goal of the season into the roof of the net. Rangers' early joy lasted just eight minutes as Rogic replied in spectacular fashion but curling into the top corner from 25 yards. However, they quickly reestablished their lead thanks to more poor Celtic defending. Declan John's low cross evaded a host of bodies in the middle and fell for Candeias to fire home at the far post. Again Celtic responded brightly and Wes Fotheringham was forced into brilliant saves to deny Dembele and Callum McGregor. The visitors pressure paid off in first-half stoppage time when Dembele rounded off a frantic first period by lobbing Fotheringham for his sixth goal in eight games against Rangers. After a brief lull in the action after the break, Rangers seemed to have been handed the upper hand once more when Simunovic was controversially shown a straight red card for what the referee's assistant deemed to be an elbow on Morelos. —AFP

Aguero sidelined for two weeks with knee injury

LONDON: Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero will miss today's Premier League trip to Stoke due to a knee injury. However, the Argentine is hopeful of being sidelined for just two weeks, which should see him return in time for City's next fixture at Everton on March 31.

"During yesterday's training I had a discomfort on my left knee," Aguero posted on his official Twitter account. "The club's doctors told me I'll be back with the team in approximately two weeks. Now it's time for a full recovery!" Aguero is also a doubt for Argentina's World Cup warm-up friendlies against Italy and Spain on March 23 and 27 respectively. The 29-year-old's next goal for City will be his 200th for the club having netted 30 times already this season.

Pep Guardiola's men seem destined to land the Premier League title as they hold a 13-point lead and have a game in hand over closest challengers Manchester United. However, Aguero will have a big part to play if City are to land a first ever Champions League after easing into the quarter-finals for just the second time in the club's history with a 5-2 aggregate win over Basel in the last 16. —AFP



BOURNEMOUTH: Bournemouth's English midfielder Junior Stanislas (R) hits the bar with this early attempt during the English Premier League football match between Bournemouth and Tottenham Hotspur at the Vitality Stadium in Bournemouth, southern England yesterday. — AFP

Spurs rally to beat Bournemouth

BOURNEMOUTH: Tottenham Hotspur overcame a worrying injury to talismanic striker Harry Kane to beat mid-table Bournemouth 4-1 with a Son Heung-min double and goals from Dele Alli and Serge Aurier to move up to third in the Premier League.

The loss of England international Kane, Tottenham's top scorer, who went off with an ankle injury on the half-hour, took some of the gloss off a hard-won come-

back victory with the visitors slightly flattered by two late goals.

A high-octane Bournemouth start led to Junior Stanislas hitting the bar and then scoring after six minutes but Alli, who had not found the net in 15 games, ended his worst barren spell by equalising from a position usually occupied by Kane.

Alli also played a major part in Spurs' second goal, crossing for Son to score with a scuffed shot before the South Korean netted his seventh goal in four games from a late breakthrough.

Full back Serge Aurier made it 4-1 late on after Bournemouth goalkeeper Asmir Begovic failed to clear his lines. —Reuters

Griezmann among goals again as Atletico ease past Celta

MADRID: In-form Antoine Griezmann scored one goal and made another as Atletico Madrid cruised to a 3-0 win over Celta Vigo in La Liga yesterday, consolidating their grip on second place. Griezmann opened the scoring just before the break at the Wanda Metropolitano with his 16th goal of the season in La Liga, his 11th in the last nine games.

The France star then set up Vitolo to make it 2-0 before Angel Correa, on as a substitute, wrapped up the points for Diego Simeone's side. It was a seventh win in eight La Liga outings for Atletico, the exception being last weekend's 1-0 loss at Barcelona.

As a result, the 2014 champions remain eight points

behind league leaders Barca, but they are seven clear of Real Madrid in third. Celta are ninth.

Griezmann's goal yesterday came a minute before the break as he controlled the ball at the back post following a corner and showed some brilliant footwork to take a Celta defender out of the game before firing into the far corner.

He turned provider in the 56th minute with a pass for Vitolo, who beat Ruben Blanco in the Celta goal with a clipped finish. Vitolo's last three goals in La Liga have now been for three different teams—he previously netted for Sevilla and then scored for Las Palmas against Celta earlier this season.

Correa came in for Vitolo just before the hour and got on the scoresheet four minutes later, finishing low into the net after his initial effort had been blocked. It was Atletico's second 3-0 win at home in four days after they beat Lokomotiv Moscow by the same score-line in their Europa League last 16, first leg on Thursday. They head to Russia for the return this mid-week, before visiting Villarreal next Sunday. Earlier yesterday, Gerard Moreno got the winner, his 12th goal of the season, as Espanyol beat Real Sociedad 2-1. Villarreal are at Las Palmas and Athletic Bilbao host Leganes later. —AFP

Dybala double sends Juventus top of Serie A

TURIN: Paulo Dybala scored in each half to give Juventus a 2-0 home win over Udinese and put them top of Serie A yesterday. Dybala curled home a superb free kick from the edge of the area in the 20th minute to put Juventus ahead, and he was pulled down for a penalty later in the first half only for fellow Argentinian Gonzalo Higuain to miss the spot kick. Dybala added his second four minutes after halftime, Higuain expertly holding up the ball before playing it into the path of the 24-year-old, who slotted it home right-footed. The win put Juventus on 71 points, two ahead of Napoli with both sides having played 27 games. Napoli, though, will regain the lead if they can beat Inter Milan in Sunday's late kickoff at the San Siro.

The sudden death last week of Fiorentina captain Davide Astori cast a pall over Sunday's proceedings in Serie A. Many of last weekend's matches were postponed following his passing and this week's games began with both silence and applause as the 31-year-old Italian international was remembered.

In the day's early kickoff, Vitor Hugo scored the only goal as Fiorentina beat Benevento 1-0 at the Artemio Franchi stadium in a game filled with emotional tributes to Astori, who was buried on Thursday.

Lazio's Ciro Immobile scored both goals, including a superb backheel deep into stoppage time, to give his side a share of the spoils as they drew 2-2 away to Cagliari. The brace puts Serie A top scorer Immobile on 24 goals from 24 games this season, six ahead of Inter's Mauro Icardi who has 18 in 22. Having started the day second from bottom, Crotone hammered Sampdoria 4-1 at home to climb out of the relegation zone, with Marcello Trotta scoring twice and missing a penalty in an eventful outing for the home side. Newcomers SPAL slipped into the bottom three following a 1-1 draw with fellow strugglers Sassuolo while Dutch midfielder Marten de Roon netted the winner seven minutes from time to give Atalanta a 1-0 victory at Bologna. —Reuters

Live		
Matches on TV		
(Local Timings)		
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Stoke City v Manchester City	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Deportivo Alaves v Real Betis	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 3
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Werder Bremen v FC Koln	22:30	beIN SPORTS HD 5
ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE		
Lokomotiv Tashkent v Al Duhail	15:00	beIN SPORTS HD 1
Al Wahda SCC v Zob Ahan Isfahan	18:00	beIN SPORTS HD 1
Al Rayyan v Al Hilal	18:15	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Esteghlal Tehran v AlAin	18:30	beIN SPORTS HD 3
AFC CUP		
Manama v Al-Zawraa	18:30	beIN SPORTS HD 5
Al-Jaish v Al-Ahed	18:30	beIN SPORTS HD 4

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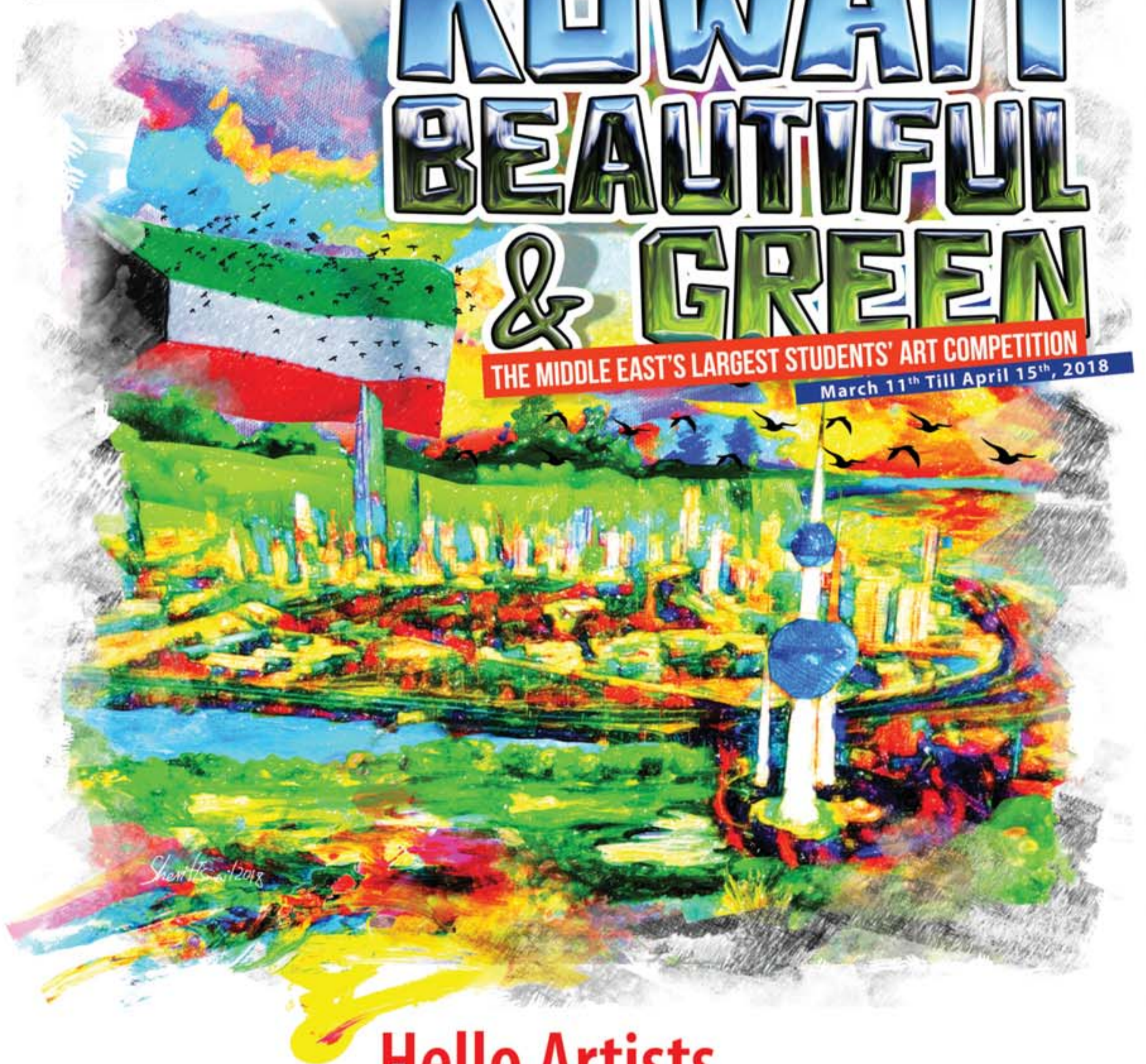
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- Competition is open to students from (6 - 8) (9 - 11) (12 - 14) (15 - 17) and Special needs.
 - The competition is open to all schools in Kuwait (Government and Private)
 - 5 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
 - All participants will receive a certificate of appreciation.
 - All schools participating in the competition will receive a certificate of appreciation.
- Any school or individuals interested in participating are welcome to visit the office of Kuwait Times and collect the drawing sheet.
 - Drawing sheets will be given to schools FREE of charge.
- Only drawing sheets provided by the Kuwait Times will be permitted for use in the competition.
 - You may use any drawing material such as color pencils, paint or crayons.

You can collect the drawing sheets from **Hardee's** branches: Jahra, block 3 - Mushref - South Surra - Jabriya - Fahaheel - Mougherah

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Business

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2018

18 NBK awarded 'Best Private Banking Services Overall in Kuwait' for 2018**19** Macron pledges \$700 million euros for new solar projects**21** Boubyan Bank's net profit grows 16% to reach KD 47.6m in 2017

Zain Group partners with Apigate

Deal to enable Zain to tap Google's Apigee Edge API Platform

After Cohn, Mnuchin positions himself as economic moderate

WASHINGTON: With President Donald Trump's top economic advisor Gary Cohn out the door, US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is working to assume the mantle of the White House's main economic voice of reason. The former banker and Hollywood producer is intensely loyal to the president and, in his public remarks at least, has always strived to put a softer finish on Trump's confrontational "America First" economic agenda. At first, Mnuchin sided with Cohn in opposing Trump's plans to impose punishing steel and aluminum tariffs. But he soon hedged to the president's position, under pressure from the administration's trade hawks: Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and trade adviser Peter Navarro.

Cohn stepped down Tuesday, having lost the bruising battle over the direction of Trump's trade policy. As markets roiled in the wake of Trump's tariff announcements and European leaders spoke of retaliatory trade measures, Mnuchin toured television studios to deliver a message of appeasement. "The president is not a protectionist," the Treasury secretary told CNBC on Friday. "This is not a conventional president and because of that we're getting results we wouldn't have otherwise seen."

Mnuchin pointed, for example, to Trump's intensification of economic sanctions on North Korea, which the administration believes extracted Pyongyang's proposal for Trump and Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un to meet. Earlier in the week, Mnuchin told Bloomberg TV the tariffs were "a natural evolution of what the president's economic policies are". The Trump stalwart - who frequents the corridors of the White House, which abuts the main offices of the Treasury Department - said the administration was considering "exemptions". Mnuchin's mollifying words notwithstanding, US trading partners appear

no less concerned by the prospect a trade war, given that the hard-liners in the White House now have the upper hand.

Trade hawks ascendant

"The protectionists are clearly running the show right now," Brian Gardner, managing director at the investment banking firm Keefe, Bruyette & Woods, told The Washington Post. "If they replaced (Cohn) with another economic nationalist, then it really gets dicey for the markets and investors." Navarro, the anti-globalization advocate with China as his crosshairs, is in line to be Trump's chief trade advisor, according to The Wall Street Journal.

Long in the shadow of Cohn - the former Goldman Sachs president whom Navarro had to copy on emails to Trump - the Harvard-trained economist is a tough-talking former professor who made his name with anti-Beijing diatribes. But Navarro triumphed with Cohn's departure. "I don't worry about getting outmaneuvered," he told The Wall Street Journal. "I just worry about getting things done."

In any event, the pitched White House battle between the proponents of free trade and those who favor protectionist barriers seems to have delighted Trump, arousing his taste for conflict. "I like having two people with different points of view," Trump told reporters Tuesday. "But I like watching it. I like seeing it. I think it's the best way to go. I like different points of view." The president even hinted Thursday that Cohn could return to the White House. "I have a feeling you'll be back. I don't know if I can put him in the same position, though," Trump said, teasing old rumors that Cohn could replace White House Chief of Staff John Kelly. "He's not quite as strong on those tariffs as we want but that's okay." — AFP



A group photo following the newly-formed partnership between Zain Group and Apigate

KUWAIT: Zain Group, the leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, yesterday announced a strategic partnership with Apigate, a subsidiary of Axiata Digital, to procure and provide API services via Zain's API Hub for its operating companies and end users.

This newly formed partnership allows Apigate to deliver a Digital Enablement Hub in support of Zain's API Hub, as well as a hub-to-hub connection for Zain's API platforms to facilitate a single technical, commercial, and financial integration. This will enable faster deployment for businesses to distribute and monetize their services. The integrated platform will address multiple operating companies across Zain's footprint.

Under the agreement, Zain and Apigate will also look to explore further business opportunities of mutual interests and leverage and develop go-to-market collaboration. Established to support the increasingly digital lifestyles of mobile users across the globe, Apigate's portfolio currently consists of 26 digital brands focused on digital financial services (e-wallets, remittance, micro-insurance and micro-lending), digital advertising and platform services focused on APIs.

Recently at the MWC Barcelona, Zain announced the launch of its Group-wide

Application Program Interface (API) Platform with the aim of connecting its operating companies across the region onto a single enablement platform, tapping Google's Apigee Edge API Platform. By exposing its APIs, Zain is removing a significant barrier to developing new digital partnerships from across the globe.

Zain will initially launch the API platform with a pilot phase in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and will be thereafter gradually extended to all Zain operations.

Commenting on the partnership with Apigate, Scott Gegenheimer, Zain Group CEO-Operations said, "Technology is a key enabler for service differentiation and digital advancement, driving our ambition to ensure a superior customer experience. We believe opening up our APIs and partnering with globally renowned entities like Apigate will help us to drive continuous delivery of the best user experience while also expanding our contribution to the development of digital services to a whole new universe of contributors." Gegenheimer added, "This strategic API initiative is set to bring about greater agility to Zain as it considers new market opportunities, accelerating innovation and expanding revenue streams, bolstering our digital lifestyle provider aspirations."

Chief Executive of Axiata Digital, Mohd Khairil Abdullah said, "We are thrilled to partner with a valued partner like Zain Group. This marks another important milestone for API businesses to bring longer term value to customers through partnerships such as this in the digital ecosystem and in our partner regions across Apigate's hubs."

Zain's API program is set to give opportunities for large digital players and individual developers alike to be able to launch services to Zain customers in a reduced amount of time. In due course, with the new open source digital enablement platform available at each of its operations, Zain will be able to offer internet service providers, other mobile network operators, and its own customers a host of features.

These group-wide agreements with Axiata Digital's Apigate and Google's Apigee will bolster Zain's efforts to further leverage the capable operations of FOO, a leading mobile digital solutions developer in which Zain holds a strategic stake. FOO's expertise in implementing and managing this platform played a critical part of the development of the API and FOO will further support the rollout of the API platform and digital services across all Zain markets.

Trump presses EU on trade barriers in tit-for-tat

MOON TOWNSHIP, United States: President Donald Trump renewed his demand Saturday that the European Union halts its trade barriers to US products in order to spare his allies new steel and aluminum tariffs. The American president made his comments after crunch talks in Brussels between EU negotiators and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer in an effort to defuse a bitter row that many fear could turn into an all-out trade war.

The EU's top trade official said the US failed to provide full clarity on how Europe and Japan could be spared set to continue next week. "The European Union, wonderful countries who treat the US very badly on trade, are complaining about the tariffs on Steel & Aluminum," Trump tweeted.

"If they drop their horrific barriers & tariffs on US products going in, we will likewise drop ours. Big Deficit. If not, we Tax Cars etc. FAIR!" President Donald 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 including Japan, whose Economy Minister Hiroshige Seko also attended the talks in Brussels.

"As long-standing security partners of the United

States, (the EU and Japan) underlined to ambassador Lighthizer their expectation that EU and Japanese exports to the US would be exempted from the application of higher tariffs," an EU statement said after the talks.

But after two-way talks with Lighthizer, European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstroem tweeted: "No immediate clarity on the exact US procedure for exemption however, so discussions will continue next week."

Match 'stupid with stupid'

Brussels has gone the furthest in fighting back against Washington's shock measures, loudly announcing a list of US products to hit with countermeasures if its exports are affected by the tariffs. In announcing the measures, European Commission head Jean-Claude Juncker taunted Trump, saying the EU could match "stupid with stupid."

Trump pushed back as he visited western Pennsylvania, in the heart of US steel country, where he boasted of his tariffs and denounced low-quality imports.

"It's not good steel-you guys know what I mean. It's crap," Trump said, earning cheers from the crowd. Trump said the move would spur economic growth in the region.

"A lot of steel mills are now opening up because of what I did," he said. "Steel is back, and aluminum is back." Lighthizer, a loyalist to Trump's "America First" mantra, made no official comment after the talks, but the three sides did agree on a series of next steps to address the oversupply worldwide of steel and other materials, mainly by China. This progress was "unexpected" and a source of cautious optimism on solving the tariff row, an EU official said on condition of anonymity. "If Trump wants his allies to demonstrate that they are united in tackling problems



NANTONG, China: This photo taken on Saturday shows workers loading ships at a port in Nantong in China's eastern Jiangsu province.— AFP

with China, this is precisely that," the source added.

Any trade war with the United States will only bring disaster to the world economy, Chinese Commerce Minister Zhong Shan said yesterday, as Beijing stepped up its criticism on proposed metals tariffs by Washington amid fears it could shatter global growth. After pressure from allies, the United States has opened the way for more exemptions from tariffs of 25 percent on steel imports and 10 percent on aluminum that US President

Donald Trump set last week.

On Saturday, the European Union and Japan urged the United States to grant them exemptions from metal import tariffs, with Tokyo calling for "calm-headed behavior."

But the target of Trump's ire is China, whose capacity expansions have helped add to global surpluses of steel. China has repeatedly vowed to defend its "legitimate rights and interests" if targeted by US trade actions.—Agencies

Business

NBK awarded 'Best Private Banking Services Overall in Kuwait' for 2018

Euromoney's Annual Survey for industry experts worldwide

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) has been awarded the "Best Private Banking Services Overall for 2018" in Kuwait in Euromoney's Annual Survey surpassing global banks in wealth management and private banking services. NBK topped the list of nominees, outmatching local and international banks in the field of Private Banking Services.

Euromoney's Annual Survey data is compiled from the industry's experts and analysts worldwide. NBK's Best Private Bank awards include: "Best Private Banking Services Overall in Kuwait", "Best Asset Management in Kuwait, Best Investment Banking Capabilities in Kuwait, Best Commercial Banking Capabilities in Kuwait, Best Family Office Services in Kuwait, Best International Clients and "Best Private Bank for Super Affluent Clients in Kuwait". Malek Khalife, NBK's General Manager, Private Banking Group, received the awards at a glittering dinner and awards ceremony recently held in London.

"Awarding NBK the prestigious title of " Best Private Banking Services Overall for 2018" in Kuwait for consecutive year, surpassing renowned global banks and financial institutions, reflects the constant confidence the customers vest in NBK and their appreciation of the outstanding quality of its services and products," said Khalife. "This award is another testimony of NBK's leading position as the highest-rated bank in the Middle East and among the 50 safest banks in the world."

Khalife added "the excellent, strong and durable relationships NBK has always maintained with its high

net-worth customers, enabled the bank to assume a unique and leading position in the field of wealth management and private banking on both local and regional markets. NBK also succeeded in maintaining the highest service quality standards while consistently endeavoring to provide the most innovative spectrum of investment and wealth management products and solutions to satisfy the increasingly changing needs of customers."

"Thanks to its largest local and international network strategically located in the major world financial centers, NBK has always maintained a dominant and advanced position to provide the best banking and investment solutions that covers a wide range of international markets, taking into consideration the specific profile of each and every customer," noted Khalife.

"I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to both the trust of NBK clients as well as the invaluable efforts of the Private Banking team at NBK that enabled the bank to win such a prestigious title," said Khalife.

Euromoney is a leading British Financial magazine that organizes annually this event. The Private Banking Awards event covers over 60 countries each year. The results are voted by experts and analysts worldwide. The results are also based on other major criteria such as the services provided, asset management, wealth management and client relationship management. For more information on this award please visit www.euromoney.com



Award reflects confidence of private banking customers



Malek Khalife, NBK's General Manager, Private Banking Group receiving awards from Euromoney.

NBK continues to enjoy collectively the highest credit ratings in the region 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 recognized and very stable management team. NBK was also named among Global Finance's

list of the 50 safest banks in the world for the twelve consecutive times.

NBK enjoys the widest banking presence with a local and international network reaching 4 continents. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including New York, Europe, GCC, Middle East, Singapore as well as China (Shanghai).

Ooredoo's Ambassador Al-Jeraiwi wins in Abu Dhabi Triathlon

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait's brand ambassador, the triathlete Najla Al-Jeraiwi won the first place in Abu Dhabi's World Triathlon 2018 which was held earlier this month in Yas Island, Abu Dhabi. The title she earned is in the first Female Solo Category, for overall Olympic distance.

Ooredoo Kuwait's Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alayoub lauded the achievement, noting that it is a big achievement for all the youth of Kuwait. He added: "We have great pride in the achievement of our young promising Kuwaiti female triathlete Najla Al-Jeraiwi. Our commitment to supporting youth and empowering women is deep-rooted within our core values in Ooredoo Kuwait. We hope to see more success in the future, and we look forward to bigger achievements on an international scale."

Last month, Ooredoo is proudly announced its sponsorship to Kuwaiti Triathlete Najla Al-Jeraiwi as its

first female brand ambassador for the current season 2018-2019. The sponsorship comes in alignment with the company's commitment to enriching youth and supporting their passions and also the company's dedication to empowering women.

Al-Jeraiwi was the first Arab female triathlete representative in the 17th Asian Games, South Korea and the first GCC representative in UCI Road World Championships 2016. She was also the runner-up in the ATU African Triathlon & Pan Arab championship and the GCC cycling champion in both Time Trial and Road race. Al-Jeraiwi is currently the national champion of Kuwait in both triathlon and cycling. She has come in the top 3 in multiple regional triathalons - her next race will be this upcoming March in the Abu Dhabi World Triathlon series

Supporting youth and empowering women is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. The company signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs in 2017, to support youth projects and initiatives. Ooredoo is continu-



Mijbil Alayoub



ously working with the Ministry to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields, with a focus on volunteerism.

DR Congo enacts law to hike tax on minerals

KINSHASA: DR Congo President Joseph Kabila enacted a law to hike taxes on so-called strategic metals and ordered government consultations with foreign companies worried by the change, an official said yesterday. "The law has been promulgated in the same form as was adopted by parliament," a presidential adviser who asked not to be named told AFP.

The new text replaces the Democratic Republic of Congo's 2002 mining code, which the government considered to favor foreign investors at the expense of the economy.

The new code allows a levy of up to 10 percent on key minerals, expected to include copper and cobalt. There would also be a tax of 50 percent on windfall profits-so-called super-profits that occur when prices go at least 25 percent above a given benchmark. —AFP

German energy giant EON to buy RWE subsidiary Innogy

BERLIN: German energy giant EON plans to take over Innogy, the renewables subsidiary of competitor RWE, in a complex deal valued at around 20 billion euros (\$25 billion), both companies said yesterday.

The in-principle agreement involving asset swaps is part of a major restructuring of Germany's energy market as Europe's top economy switches from conventional to renewable power.

The aim is for EON to focus on the retail, energy networks and customer solutions business, while RWE would take over the renewables power generation of both companies. RWE plans to sell its 76.8 percent stake in Innogy to EON in a deal that includes "a far-reaching exchange of assets and participations", said EON, which also plans a cash offer to the remaining Innogy shareholders.

RWE would, in turn, gain an effective participation of 16.67 percent in EON. EON would also transfer to RWE most of its renewables business and the minority interests held by its subsidiary PreussenElektra in two RWE-operated nuclear power plants. RWE would receive the Innogy renewables and gas storage business and Innogy's stakes in the Austrian energy supplier Kelag.

The deal, still subject to antitrust clearances, would also see RWE make a cash payment of 1.5 billion euros to EON. Following approval of both companies' boards, the

deal was expected to be signed shortly, said EON. Business daily Handelsblatt said that "for decades EON and RWE were bitter rivals. Now they have agreed on a spectacular deal that will shake up the European energy market." Germany's energy market has been rapidly transformed since Chancellor Angela Merkel announced a phase-out of nuclear power after Japan's 2011 Fukushima disaster.

Under the country's "energy transition", Germany has raised the share of solar, wind and other renewables to about one third of electricity production. As wholesale power prices have dropped, the big utilities have been forced into an ongoing process of restructuring.

EON has spun off its fossil fuel operations and invested heavily in renewables, while RWE remains the biggest power producer and still operates major coal-fired plants. —AFP



ESSEN: This file photo shows the logo of German energy company Innogy at its headquarters in Essen, western Germany. —AFP

Trump's tariffs jeopardize jobs and prosperity, says Germany

BERLIN: US President Donald Trump's tariffs on steel and aluminum imports will cost jobs and growth, German Economy Minister Brigitte Zypries told Reuters yesterday, adding that Europe and other free traders should not let themselves be divided.

Trump set import tariffs on Thursday of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum, to come into force in 15 days, stoking fears of a tit-for-tat trade war that could drive up prices and depress growth around the globe. The European Union responded by saying it would ask the World Trade Organization to impose its own measures, adding that it was still hopeful the 28-member bloc would be made exempt.

Europe is the biggest exporter of steel to the United States, accounting for nearly 5 million tons out of total US imports of about 35 million tons a year. "Trump's policies are putting the order of a free global economy at risk," Zypries told Reuters in an emailed statement.

"He does not want to understand its architecture, which is

based on a rule-based system of open markets. Anyone, who is questioning this, is jeopardizing prosperity, growth and employment," Zypries said. US steel- and aluminum-consuming industries have also criticized the tariffs as damaging them with higher costs. Germany and its allies must now safeguard the free trade order and avoid being divided by Trump's offer to exempt some allies such as Mexico, Canada and Australia from the proposed tariffs, Zypries said.

Cracks in the alliance

"It is important for Europe to show collectively that there can be countermeasures and that there won't be cracks in the alliance of free traders," the minister said.

The European Union and Japan urged the United States on Saturday to grant them exemptions from the metal import tariffs, with Tokyo calling for "calm-headed behavior" in a dispute that threatens to spiral into a trade war. Trump has threatened to hit Europe's car makers with import tariffs if the EU retaliated in response to the metal measures.

Such a move would be particularly hurtful for Germany, Europe's largest economy, since the US is one of the biggest export destinations for German auto manufacturers and cars and vehicle parts are also its biggest source of export income. European Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager told German newspaper Bild am Sonntag that Brussels would continue to seek dialogue with Washington and to be exempt from the tariffs. "But if the new tariffs really hit Europe, we will take countermeasures," Vestager said. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.411689	0.419189
Czech Koruna	0.006566	0.015866
Danish Krone	0.045694	0.050694
Euro	0.365173	0.372673
Georgian Lari	0.133973	0.133973
Hungarian O.001133	0.001323	
Norwegian Krone	0.034659	0.039859
Romanian Leu	0.064258	0.081108
Russian ruble	0.005283	0.005283
Slovakia	0.008932	0.018932
Slovenian Krona	0.032487	0.037487
Swiss Franc	0.310228	0.321228
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.228329	0.240329
New Zealand Dollar	0.213073	0.222573
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.229545	0.238545
US Dollars	0.296700	0.301120
US Dollars Mint	0.297200	0.301120
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003191	0.003775
Chinese Yuan	0.046022	0.049522
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036573	0.039323
Indian Rupee	0.004183	0.004824
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002748	0.002928
Korean Won	0.000272	0.000287
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073147	0.079147
Nepalese Rupee	0.003001	0.003171
Pakistan Rupee	0.002531	0.002821
Philippine Peso	0.005667	0.005967
Singapore Dollar	0.223369	0.233369
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001644	0.002224
Taiwan	0.010320	0.010500
Thai Baht	0.009241	0.009791
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.791205	0.799705
Egyptian Pound	0.014088	0.019806
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000202	0.000262
Jordanian Dinar	0.419642	0.428642
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000154	0.000254
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022694	0.046694
Omani Riyal	0.774981	0.780661
Qatar Riyal	0.078332	0.083272
Saudi Riyal	0.079127	0.080427
Syrian Pound	0.001274	0.001494
Tunisian Dinar	0.121892	0.129892
Turkish Lira	0.073592	0.083892
UAE Dirhams	0.080471	0.082171
Yemeni Riyal	0.000977	0.001057

Business

Macron pledges \$700 million euros for new solar projects

World leaders meet in New Delhi to promote renewable energy

NEW DELHI: French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday pledged hundreds of millions of dollars for solar projects in developing countries, as world leaders met in India to promote greater investment in renewable energy. Macron, who in December warned that the global shift to a green energy future was too slow, said France would extend an extra 700 million euros (\$861.5 million) through loans and donations by 2022 for solar projects in emerging economies.

France had already committed \$300 million euros to the initiative when it co-founded with India a global alliance in 2015 to unlock new cash for solar projects in sunny yet poor nations.

"We need to remove all obstacles and scale up," Macron said at the launch of the International Solar Alliance in New Delhi yesterday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi—who has committed to reducing India's sizeable carbon footprint through a massive scale-up in renewable energy—said it was vital that nations were not priced out.

"We have to make sure that a better and cost effective solar technology is available to all," Modi told the gathering of investors and world leaders from about 20 mainly African nations.

"We will have to increase solar in our energy mix," India,

the world's third-largest polluter, is undergoing spectacular growth in its solar sector and is on track to become one of the world's largest clean energy markets. It pledged at the Paris climate summit in 2015 to source at least 40 percent of its energy from renewables by 2030, mainly via solar. The energy-hungry giant of 1.25 billion people is banking on solar to electrify homes for hundreds of millions of its poorest citizens without adding to its considerable emissions output.

Macron and Modi hope the alliance will spur \$1 trillion in new solar spending by 2030 in 121 countries lacking investment in the sector. These countries have "the paradox of being the sunniest in the world while

enjoying the least solar energy," said Ségolène Royal, a former French minister in India as a special envoy for the alliance. Macron told world leaders

in Paris in December that "we are losing the battle" against climate change and urged faster action to combat global warming. The French leader called on private sector attendees in New Delhi to engage more actively because "solar investments are becoming more profitable".

He and Modi will open a new 100 megawatt solar plant near the holy Indian city of Varanasi today. The French leader also visited the Taj Mahal in Agra later. —AFP



International Solar Alliance launched



NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (front right) and French President Emmanuel Macron (front left) pose with world leaders and representatives for a group picture at the start of the founding conference of the International Solar Alliance in New Delhi yesterday. —AFP

NBK Money Markets Report

Trump's proposal for tariffs on steel, aluminum ignites fears of trade war

KUWAIT: US President Donald Trump formally adopted new tariffs on steel and aluminum imports on Thursday while allowing US allies to apply for exemptions. The 25 percent steel and 10 percent aluminum tax on imports are expected to be implemented in two weeks' time. Despite potentially exempting certain countries, the tariffs could spark a trade war from those excluded. Indeed, European trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström threatened to retaliate with 90 days if not exempted while Chinese producers called on Beijing to place a similar tax on US Coal.

While the tariffs were welcomed broadly by steel and aluminum producers, they drew criticism from a wider array of industry and business groups that use steel. According to a study released by the Council on Foreign Relations, the higher steel prices resulting from the tariff could lead to a 4 percent fall in car sales and the loss of 45,000 automobile sector jobs. Even members of the Republican party criticized the decision fearing it would undermine the benefits of the tax reforms passed last year. Orrin Hatch, the Republican chairman of the Senate finance committee, said, "Simply put, this is a tax hike on American manufacturers, workers and consumers."

In other news, the US released a mixed job report on Friday where job growth surged in February, recording its biggest increase in more than a year, but a slowdown in wage gains pointed to only a gradual increase in inflation so far this year.

Nonfarm payrolls jumped by 313,000 jobs last month, boosted by the largest rise in construction jobs since 2007, the Labor Department said on Friday. The payrolls gain was the biggest since July 2016 and triple the roughly 100,000 jobs the economy needs to create each month to keep up with growth in the working-age population.

Average hourly earnings however, only edged up 0.1 percent to \$26.75 in February slowing down from the 0.3 percent rise in January. That lowered the year-on-year increase in average hourly earnings to 2.6 percent from 2.8 percent in January. The slow wage growth could temper expectations the Fed will raise its rate forecast to four hikes this year from three.

Overall, the labor market is benefiting from strong domestic demand, an improvement in global growth as well as robust US business sentiment following the Trump administration's \$1.5 trillion income tax cut that came into effect in January. The tightening job market could still spur faster wage growth this year and pull inflation toward the Fed's 2 percent target.

Looking at the US dollar last week, the currency's movements revolved around the development of the proposed tariffs. Fears of a trade war and retaliations from other countries saw the US dollar index drop further mid-week before rebounding higher after President Trump mentioned possible exemptions to US allies. The rise was short lived however, blocked by the disappointing wage growth showing US inflation still had room to grow. The US dollar index opened the week at 89.834 and closed at 90.093.

The euro saw some volatility last week jumping on Tuesday after initial thoughts that the US tariffs were merely a "political show" and reports that the European Commission was planning a retaliatory tax on the US if the tariffs were passed. The EUR/USD then spiked higher Thursday after the European Central Bank removed its easing bias from its monetary policy statement. However, dovish statements made afterwards from ECB President Draghi on the removal of the bias, reversed the EUR/USD's gains dropping the pair to earlier levels. The EUR/USD opened the week at 1.2322 and closed at 1.2305.

The British pound failed to recover from the previous week's losses after the Brexit negotiations took a rough turn. Furthermore, disappointing manufacturing data on Friday suggested Britain's economy remains on a slow path ahead of Brexit. The GBP/USD pair managed to close the week higher at 1.3847 however after the mixed US jobs report.

The Japanese yen lost value against the US dollar last week as risk aversion diminished on the developments of the week. US President Donald Trump has agreed to meet with North Korean President Kim Jong Un to discuss the denuclearization of the North Korean regime while suspending nuclear and missile tests in the meantime.



Furthermore, to the market's relief, Trump also softened his stance on the steel and aluminum tariffs by potentially excluding Mexico, Canada and other US allies. The risk-on attitude saw the USD/JPY pair increase from the week's open of 105.68 to 106.77 at the close.

In commodities, industrial metals hit multi-month lows on concerns about escalating trade tensions after the US announced the tariffs on steel and aluminum imports. Oil prices on the other hand managed to gain supported by a rebound in US equities. Oil prices were also supported after Libya's 70,000 barrels per day El Feel oilfield failed to reopen as planned after being shut in February by local militias. Benchmark Brent crude closed the week at 65.49.

Bank of Canada

The Bank of Canada held the benchmark overnight lending rate at 1.25 percent and indicated it's no rush to pursue aggressive rate hikes amid growing global trade tensions and softer housing data. The statement repeated dovish language about moving cautiously in an economy that will require continued stimulus. Though policy makers made no explicit mention of Donald Trump's threats to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum, they did mention that recent trade policy developments were a growing source of uncertainty.

European Central Bank

The European Central Bank left its monetary policies unchanged in their March 8 meeting while also signaling a move towards ending its crisis-era stimulus measures. More specifically, the Bank left out its usual pledge to increase their asset buying program if their outlook becomes unfavorable or inconsistent with maintaining the progress in inflation. This omission indicates the ECB's confidence that the European economy has progressed enough that growth in the region can survive without its extraordinary monetary support. While the current 30 billion euro per month asset-buying program is due to expire by the end of the year, the bank did however reiterate its readiness to extend it if necessary.

Inflation however, remains the main reason preventing the ECB from unwinding its stimulus and in their statement, the ECB said "measures of underlying inflation remain subdued and have yet to show convincing signs of a sustained upward trend." As such, the ECB expects inflation of 1.4 percent this year, but revised the inflation estimate for 2019 downwards from 1.5 percent to 1.4 percent. They still expect 2020 inflation of 1.7 percent.

UK Services PMI

UK service providers experienced a modest rebound in business activity growth during February, supported by the fastest rise in new work since May 2017. The latest survey also pointed to stronger job creation across the service economy, with payroll numbers rising to the greatest extent for five months as firms sought to boost operating capacity in response to improved order books. The seasonally adjusted IHS Markit/CIPS UK Services PMI Business Activity Index registered 54.5 in February, up from 53.0 in January, to signal the strongest rate of service sector output growth for four months.

UK Manufacturing

The pace of manufacturing growth in the UK slowed in January, growing by 0.1 percent compared with 0.3 percent in December according to the Office for National Statistics. Industrial production, which includes the output from the UK's North Sea oil and gas fields, as well as utilities such as water and gas, grew 1.3 percent during the month. Construction output on the other hand, fell 3.4 percent month on month in January, primarily due to a sharp drop in new housing work. Overall the data was fairly disappointing and could dampen the first quarter's GDP growth.

Bank of Japan

The Bank of Japan left all its monetary policies unchanged as widely expected in their March 9 meeting. The key overnight rate remained at -0.1 percent, the 10-year Japanese Government Bond Yield was kept at 0 percent and the bond buying program will continue to be 80 trillion yen annually. The Bank also kept all of its growth and inflation assessments unchanged while mentioning the economy was still expanding moderately. Nonetheless, inflation remains subdued and the Bank reiterated continued support until the sustained annualized target of 2 percent is reached. As it stands, the BoJ expects to reach its inflation target by 2019. As such, no major adjustments in policy are expected until then.

China Caixin Composite PMI

The Caixin China Composite PMI data, which covers both manufacturing and services, signaled a further strong rise in overall Chinese business activity in February despite the pace of expansion softening since January. Growth in services activity held close to January's 68-month record and remained solid overall while manufacturing output increased by the second-fastest seen in the past year. However, while manufacturers registered a slightly stronger increase in new orders mid-way through the first quarter, growth in new business placed at services companies softened slightly. Nonetheless, sales rose solidly across the service sector overall, with a number of firms commenting that greater efforts to secure new clients and new projects had lifted sales. At 53.3 in February, the Composite Index fell only slightly from a seven-year record of 53.7 at the start of the year.

China Inflation

China's consumer inflation surged to the fastest in more than four years as millions traveled home to feast with family and friends for the Lunar New Year holiday pushing up food prices. The consumer price index climbed 2.9 percent in February versus a forecast of 2.5 percent. Although the reading is close to China's target of 3 percent the data is slightly distorted.

Due to the extremely low CPI reading during the same time last year, the year on year comparison is slightly inflated. As such, CPI figures may readjust lower in coming months.

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.29995
The USD/KWD opened at 0.29995 yesterday morning.

KFH wins Best Islamic Bank in Middle East, Kuwait 2017 Awards



DUBAI: Al-Roshood and Al-Sumait receiving the awards from EMEA Finance

DUBAI: The global EMEA Finance Magazine Europe, Middle East and Africa has awarded Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Best Islamic Bank in the Middle East, Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait, and Best Bank in Kuwait awards, in addition to Most Innovative Bank in the Middle East 2017 award.

Group Chief Treasury Officer, AbdulWahab Al-Roshood and General Manager Treasury Kuwait, Ahmad Eissa Al-Sumait received the awards in an award ceremony held recently in Dubai.

Al-Roshood said that the awards came in recognition of KFH outstanding performance in the field of Islamic finance and its distinguished methodology of offering high end and innovative banking services and products as per highest standards of technology and quality.

He added that the awards reflected the bank's success throughout 40 years of operation since establishment in 1977. KFH established concrete pillars for Islamic financing industry by developing staff, offering innovative services and products. He indicated KFH expanded globally where it operated in Bahrain, Saudi and in 1989 in Turkey. Then, the bank penetrated Asia by KFH Malaysia and Europe by KT Bank AG "KFH-Germany". KFH's performance and professional commitment underscore its reputation that is based on its robust financial status, and its leadership in the Islamic finance industry.

Meanwhile, Al-Sumait pointed out that the awards are of great importance, since such awards highlight the bank's integration and performance locally, regionally, and globally. They culminate the bank's efforts in offering highest standards of Islamic financial services in different geographies in the world and confirm the bank's global pioneering position in the Islamic finance industry. They are an impetus for further achievements and success towards better addressing the customers' needs and ambitions.

EMEA Finance magazine is relevant and informative supplements that provide analysis and investigation of special topics are frequently included with the magazine. EMEA Finance produces a premier magazine, related conferences, and a website. The criteria of selection were evaluated by a world-class panel of judges, bankers, corporate finance executives and analysts throughout the world.

Business

Wall Street Week Ahead

Fund managers look overseas amid trade jitters

NEW YORK: President Donald Trump's announcement of import tariffs, and the prospect of retaliation by other countries, is prompting some fund managers to pare their holdings of US stocks and look for opportunities overseas.

The high turnover of key staff in the White House, including the exit of Gary Cohn, the director of the National Economic Council this week is undermining confidence in policy making also. President Trump said Thursday that he would begin imposing import tariffs of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on alu-

minum in 15 days, sparking fears of a global trade war. Gary Cohn, the chief economic adviser to Trump, who argued against trade protectionism, resigned late Tuesday after Trump first announced the tariff plan and his successor has yet to be named.

Fund managers from Oppenheimer, Federated, and Wells Fargo are among those that now see international and emerging market equities as more attractive than the US, where the prospect of higher interest rates contributed to a slump in stocks in February, leaving the benchmark S&P 500 stock index

up about 2.0 percent for the year-to-date, after turning in a 7.0 percent gain in January.

Overseas stocks, by comparison, are benefiting from synchronized economic growth in both Europe, Asia and the Americas, but offer lower valuations. The gross domestic product of countries in the eurozone, for example, expanded at a 2.7 percent annual rate in the fourth quarter, outpacing the 2.5 percent gain in the US economy over the same time. The Stoxx 600, an index of companies in the eurozone, trades at a trailing price to earnings ratio of 14.9, compared with a 22.7 P/E ratio

for the S&P 500, according to Thomson Reuters data. "You're still seeing an earlier stage of an expansion cycle overseas versus the United States, which is likely to bounce between expansion and slowdown in the year ahead," said Brian Levitt, senior investment strategist at OppenheimerFunds.

Emerging markets such as China and Russia also look attractive given their prospects for economic growth and low equity valuations, he said. In the US, meanwhile, a Democratic party takeover of at least one branch of Congress in elections in November

would bring more stability to Washington by curbing President Trump's ability to expand protectionist policies, he said.

"History suggests markets do better with divided government because there is less uncertainty with policy because it becomes harder to get anything enacted," he said.

The prospect of import tariffs could damage the US economy by raising costs for US manufacturers and consumers, while prompting its trading partners to impose their own levies on US exporters, increasing their costs also and sapping overseas demand.—Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report				Global			
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	Volume	Value (KWD)	Number of Trades	
Price Index	▼ -15.31	6,762.87	6,778.18	54,167,948	8,723,931	2,441	
Weighted Index	▼ -0.27	410.22	410.48				
KSX 15	▲ 0.66	950.70	950.04				

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
IPG	400	399	18,210	7,274	4	399	▼ -1.0
NAPESCO	814	810	35,522	28,865	17	814	▲ 14.0
ENERGYH	27.5	27.5	1,000	28	2	27.5	▲ 1.5
GPI	28.6	28.0	716,610	20,159	25	28.2	▼ -0.8
ABAR	90	87	5,000	443	2	87	▲ 2.0
Oil & Gas			776,342	56,767	90	956.26	▼ -18.40
KFOUC	234	227	300	69	2	234	▲ 11.8
BPCC	704	700	47,000	32,038	17	700	▼ -8.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	680	▼ -0.0
ALQURAIN	340	339	5,164	1,736	3	340	▼ 2.0
Basic Materials			52,464	34,762	22	1396.48	▲ 3.50
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	445	▼ 0.0
CABLE	413	409	13,000	5,359	5	409	▼ -1.0
BHP	218	215	158,097	36,418	16	217	▼ -0.0
PCEM	1,100	1,090	68,140	74,447	16	1,100	▼ -35.0
PAPER	250	250	10,000	2,500	1	250	▼ 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▼ 0.0
AGICO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	232	▼ 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	▼ 0.0
NICBM	188	180	54,430	9,153	11	187	▼ -2.0
EQUIPMENT	36.9	33.7	242,170	8,541	17	35.7	▲ 0.7
NCI	95	95	100	9	1	95	▲ 14.4
GYPSSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	▼ 0.0
SALBOOKH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	▼ 0.0
AGLTY	857	854	262,119	224,199	90	855	▼ 0.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	301	▼ 0.0
CLEANING	79	68	2,836,100	209,258	128	69	▲ 0.1
KGL	109	106	1,155,109	124,475	73	108	▲ 3.0
KPCPC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	150	▼ 0.0
HUMANSOFT	3,900	3,880	43,964	171,417	45	3,899	▼ -1.0
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64	▼ 0.0
SHOOTING	19.0	18.1	1,040,550	19,116	30	18.3	▲ 0.1
GOC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	474	▼ 0.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	▼ 0.0
UPAC	699	699	1,188	830	2	699	▼ -1.0
ALAFAC	360	368	141,772	52,665	11	377	▼ -2.0
MUBARRAD	71	68	202,079	13,981	19	69	▼ -1.8
LOGISTICS	54	53	1,810,379	96,701	92	53	▲ 0.3
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▼ 0.0
GCEM	80	80	283,000	22,675	5	80	▼ 0.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	82	▼ 0.0
FCEM	76	75	9,368	712	2	76	▲ 1.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	▼ 0.0
SPEC	64	62	58,500	3,652	6	62	▼ -2.0
Industrials			8,500,749	1,076,377	530	1896.51	▼ -7.10
FAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▼ 0.0
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	224	▼ 0.0
DANAH	75	73	150,507	11,133	11	75	▲ 0.1
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,604	▼ 0.0
Consumer Goods			150,507	11,133	11	1,604	▲ 0.30
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,100	▼ 0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	125	▼ 0
Health Care			0	0	0	1391.79	▼ 0.00
KCIN	1,100	1,099	100	110	2	1,100	▲ 1
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	197	▼ 0
SULTAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	67	▼ 0
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	18.1	▼ 0
IFAHR	130	130	200	26	1	130	▲ 7
OULAFUEL	113	113	5,993	666	6	113	▲ 1
MUNTAAZAHAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	▼ 0
JAZEERA	600	590	91,653	54,940	16	600	▲ 1
BOUR	114	114	3,085	352	4	114	▼ -1
FUTUREKD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	110	▼ 0
ALRAI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	119	▼ 0
Jiyad	88	87	1,834,802	161,318	155	88	▲ 0
Mezzan	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	797	▼ 0
Consumer Services			1,935,733	217,412	184	662.86	▲ 2.50
ZAIN	457	450	1,869,248	840,811	190	452	▼ -2
QORDDOO	1,028	1,001	2,574	2,609	8	1,023	▲ 22
AAAN	22.3	21.5	593,583	12,813	46	21.5	▼ -1
VIVA	786	781	22,439	17,117	37	786	▲ 4
Telecommunications			2,487,844	879,350	281	530.40	▲ 1.10
NBK	774	773	3,735,157	2,887,278	52	774	▲ 1
GBK	252	251	75,000	18,855	3	251	▼ 0
CBK	440	427	5,101	2,196	8	427	▼ -3
ABK	345	325	971,392	324,409	36	341	▲ 16
ALMUTAHED	331	330	100,000	33,020	4	330	▼ -4
KJB	234	234	315,250	73,769	10	234	▼ 0
BLRG	289	284	662,685	190,049	33	289	▲ 4
KFIN	585	582	1,020,402	566,703	102	584	▼ -1
BOUBYAN	477	473	640,448	303,800	29	475	▼ -3
ALUR	215	214	1,004,803	215,183	28	214	▼ 0
ITHMR	37.2	34.0	3,008,252	105,446	64	34.5	▼ -2
WARABANK	239	237	211,803	50,411	58	237	▼ -1
Banks			11,750,283	4,800,159	427	929.30	▼ -2.80
KNS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290	▼ 0
GNS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	695	▼ 0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	510	▼ 0
WNS	67	60	12,934	866	5	67	▲ 0.1
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	▼ 0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	62	▼ 0
WETHAQ	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	30.0	▼ 0
BKOWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365	▼ 0
Insurance			12,934	866	5	1030.31	▲ 0.10

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKDUK	44.5	44.4	202,124	8,975	5	44.4	▼ -0.4
KRE	52	52	657,831	34,362	21	52	▼ -0.3
URC	68	68	38,822	2,940	1	68	▼ 0.0
NRE	117	115	56,627	6,570	6	117	▼ -1.0
SRE	344	344	4,000	1,376	1	344	▲ 4.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	340	▼ 0.0
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	181	▼ 0.0
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	39.9	▼ 0.0
ARABREC	34.3	33.8	116,380	3,947	9	34.3	▼ -0.2
ERESCO	34.9	34.0	261,000	8,877	5	34.0	▼ 0.0
MABANEH	720	711	149,900	106,836	9	715	▼ 0.0
INJAZZAT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	92	▼ 0.0
INVESTORS	16.2	15.7	2,339,235	37,292	70	15.8	▲ 0.1
IRC	29.4	29.4	50	1	1	29.4	▼ -0.1
ALTUARIA	86	85	423,900	36,082	8	85	▼ -0.4
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	32.0	▼ 0.0
AAYANRE	70	67	34,604	2,380	4	69	▼ -1.3
ADAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	78	▼ 0.0
ALAGARIA	30.0	30.0	100	3	1	30.0	▲ 3.2
MZAYA	111	111	2,478,748	275,141	16	111	▼ 0.0
TUARA	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	▼ 0.0
TAAMEER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	29.4	▼ 0.0
ARKAN	88	86	29,175	2,511	5	88	▼ 0.0
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	160	▼ 0.0
ABYAR	20.7	20.2	1,261,675	25,822	42	20.4	▲ 0.3
MUNSHAAT	82	80	662,900	53,635	16	80	▼ -2.0
FIRSTDUBAI	47.5	45.0	251,410	11,420	16	45.2	▼ -2.7
KBT	54	54	129,500	6,984	12	54	▼ -0.1
REAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1.672	▼ 0.0
MENA	29.9	28.6	51,668	1,486	5	29.8	▼ -0.1
ALMADON	38.2	35.0	99,788	3,564	10	36.0	▼ 0.0
MARAKEZ	20.0	25.0	21,101	540	9	25.4	▼ -4.8
REMAL	40.5	37.0	317,900	12,385	25	40.5	▲ 2.0
Mashar	63	55	15,000	870	4	63	▲ 7.0
Real Estate			9,693,436	643,701	362		

Business

Boubyan Bank's net profit grows 16% to reach KD 47.6m in 2017

Chairman Mahmoud Yousef Al-Fulaij's message



KUWAIT: By the Grace of Allah, the Almighty, Boubyan Bank has successfully achieved a commendable performance and remarkable financial results during 2017 in line with the business plans and the strategic vision of the Bank, along with maintaining the leadership position in innovative technology banking products and services in the Kuwaiti market.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Executive Management of the Bank, I am pleased to present the Annual Report of 2017, which includes the financial statements and a summary of the Bank's activities during the year, including achievements and successes at various levels.

Remarkable Performance

Boubyan Bank maintained the growth momentum in earnings, with a net profit growth at a rate of 16 percent in 2017. The net profit of the Bank amounted to KD 47.6 million compared to KD 41.1 million in 2016, with earnings per share of 18.71 fils compared to 16.94 fils for the previous year.

It is worth mentioning that the growth in profitability of the Bank is mainly attributed to the success bestowed by Allah, the Almighty, upon us as well as the confidence of the shareholders and customers in the Bank, and the efforts exerted by the employees and their unwavering dedication and keenness on delivering the highest service levels to customers. This success is driven as well by the innovation and creativity, which have been adopted by the Bank since launching the first 5-year strategy in 2010, and continuing the same strategy as a part of the second 5-year strategy of 2020.

Most of the Bank's indicators witnessed a remarkable growth during 2017 where the total assets increased to approximately KD 4 billion at a growth rate of 14 percent while the operational revenues increased to reach KD 125.6 million with a growth rate of 22 percent in addition to the increase in deposits of customers by 15 percent to reach KD 3.4 billion.

Furthermore, the total equity of the Bank increased to KD 375 million from KD 345 million last year; and there was an increase in the financing portfolio to reach KD 2.9 billion at a growth rate of 14 percent in line with the steady growth of the customer base of the Bank.

Based on the financial performance of the year ended December 31, 2017, the Board of Directors proposed the distribution of cash dividends of 7 percent per nominal share value (7 fils per share) and 5 percent in bonus shares (5 shares for each 100 shares). Furthermore, the Board of Directors proposed a board remuneration of KD 360 thousands for 2017 similar to the previous year.

With regard to the market share, our share in local finance increased to reach approximately 7.9 percent compared to 7.2 percent for the previous year, while the share of the retail finance increased to reach more than 10.5 percent.

Innovative Technology Services and Products

Since creativity and innovation are primary pillars in Boubyan's business model, we focused in 2017 on banking innovation by providing the customers with new and unique digital banking services to facilitate their life and offering them with alternative channels

that are available 24/7 to meet their banking needs. Accordingly, Boubyan Bank introduced in 2017 a set of innovative digital and electronic products and services for the first time in the Kuwaiti market, such as UTap service, ATM card issuing service, and Murabaha Digital service.

As a leading initiative, Boubyan Bank established a Digital Innovation Center to support the implementation of agile method-

Choice and the Preferred Bank for Corporate Banking". Hence, we succeeded in launching remarkable and innovative e-products and services, which we introduced for the first time to the local corporate sector in response to the Bank's aspiration to meet all the banking needs and requirements in line with the principles of the Noble Islamic Sharia. We have accelerated the technological developments in this regard in 2017, as reflected in the Corporate Online Banking and Corporate Mobile Application.

The Corporate Banking Group enjoys strong relationships with a number of active national companies while targeting performing businesses in various productive economic sectors in order to provide the best banking services. The corporate structured finance team had splendidly succeeded during the year as Initial Mandate Lead Arranger and Book Runner on several high

profile Islamic deals in the region. The Corporate Banking Group managed to achieve remarkable growth in its credit portfolio, with a growth rate of 16.3 percent during 2017. We have achieved this growth by attracting a number of companies known for their financial and economic creditworthiness, without compromising the highest credit quality standards and at the same time reviewing and diversifying risks. It is worth mentioning that the growth achieved during 2017 was made through diversifying the financing to various economic sectors, while giving a preference to the aviation, oil, education, and other services; and maintaining the quality of assets as per the best banking risk management practices.

Young and Ambitious Human Resources

Boubyan Bank gives a special attention to its human resources as a part of the Bank's strategy for being a modern bank, which keeps up with international and regional developments through our young management team. The Bank is differentiated for entrusting the youths with more leading roles, especially that all training and academic facilities and capabilities are available to provide them with a unique opportunity to gain professional and practical expertise, which would boost their experiences at a young age. Boubyan Bank has succeeded over the past years in creating many job opportunities for ambitious Kuwaiti youths by expanding its services and branches. This made our Bank an attractive choice to the Kuwaiti youths who are interested in working for the private sector in general, and the banking industry in specific, due to the environment of creativity and innovation prevalent at the Bank, which unleashes the youths' energy and ambitions.

Accordingly, the Bank managed to increase the ratio of national manpower to 77 percent. This percentage is not only considered as the highest amongst Kuwaiti banks, but also in the Kuwaiti private sector. The Bank continues to be a role model to follow in the field of recruiting domestic manpower and creating distinctive job opportunities in the region.



Bank maintains growth momentum in earnings

ology to provide innovative leading technology services. The Center augments transforming the vivid innovative concepts in the pipeline into reality and success stories.

This strategy has crowned the Bank with many achievements such as being "The Global Winner" of the "World's Best Islamic Digital Bank" Award for the third year in a row in the field of e-banking "digital" services from Global Finance for the year 2017.

Best Customer Experience Retail Banking In addition to leading innovative banking products and services in the local market, Boubyan Bank focused on the customer experience and customer centric by continuously upgrading the level of services offered to the customers and unifying all the communication with the customers through all the channels.

Hence, we managed to stay as the best bank in Kuwait Banking Industry in the field of customer services. This is evidenced by the recent accomplishments, whereby the Bank won from the Service Hero the award for the "Best Islamic Bank in Service Level Across Kuwait" for 7 years in a row and the award for the "Best Service Level in Kuwait Among All the Business Segments" in 2017. Such awards reiterate our Bank's superb competitive abilities to provide customers with the highest level of services and the best products in the Kuwaiti market.

Furthermore, Boubyan Bank was keen to launch new products such as the "Graduation Account" designed especially to encourage customers to save money for their children education in an innovative and unique way in cooperation with Boubyan Takaful. We targeted as well the salary mass segment by developing a special package offering the customers with customized benefits and features, which suit their various needs and life styles. Boubyan Bank successfully achieved a milestone of its geographical expansion by having 40 branches, where we opened three new branches during 2017. In conjunction, the Bank expanded the network of Boubyan Direct by having 23 machines spread all over Kuwait.

Distinguished Corporate Banking Services

Boubyan Bank is aspiring to be "the First

Effective Social Responsibility

The social responsibility is the cornerstone of the Bank's dealings with all groups of the society in contribution to development, and to building a society which is able to keep pace with all regional and international changes. Therefore, the Bank took the lead in launching a variety of social initiatives and sponsoring many activities and events targeting various groups of the society.

The Bank's social responsibility emanates from the fact that it is a bank operating in compliance with the principles of the Noble Islamic sharia, and based on the spirit of Islam that enjoins cooperation, selflessness and helping various groups of the society, especially those in need or not able to afford the basic needs of life. The Bank continued its interaction with various segments of the society, especially the youth, who received support from the bank at various levels and in different domains. There were more than 100 events and activities organized or sponsored by the Bank's departments in addition to the effective role played by the Bank's branches

ational segregation between both banks in order to comply with the principles and rulings of the Noble Islamic Sharia and, thus, enhancing the sound governance environment at Boubyan Bank.

Thank You!

Finally, for myself and on behalf of all Boubyan Bank's employees, I would like to take this opportunity to express deepest thanks, and appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah protect him as well as to HH the Crown Prince, Sheikh Nawwaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, may Allah protect them all. Moreover, I would like to express the deepest thanks to the executives of the Central Bank of Kuwait, headed by the Governor Dr Mohammed Al-Hashel, who spared no effort to take the actions deemed appropriate to develop and safeguard the Kuwaiti banking system.

I would also like to express deepest

Growth of Boubyan Bank's Key Financial Indicators

From 2010 to 2017 in KD Million

Indicator	2017	2010
Net profits	47.6	6.1
Operational revenues	126	41
Customers' deposits	3,399	941
Financing portfolio	2,877	825
Assets	3,970	1,316

in providing services to their neighborhoods and interacting with various sectors.

Sound Governance

Boubyan Bank is committed to following a sound and effective governance framework by adopting the best sound governance and risk management standards. The Bank complies with these standards in concluding all transactions according to the principles and rulings of the Islamic sharia. Boubyan Bank continuously updates its governance structure in a manner that meets the requirements of the Central Bank of Kuwait, and the banking industry-specific governance procedures. This included compliance with the recent sharia governance requirements of the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Without doubt, the acquisition of the National Bank of Kuwait of a significant stake in the Bank's in 2009, along with all its long-established expertise and deeply-rooted history, played a major role in supporting the Bank's strategy and the entry and expansion in the Kuwaiti market without compromising the Bank's crystal-clear Islamic identity. This is being achieved while maintaining full oper-

thanks to all the Bank's esteemed shareholders and customers who have always been the key factor behind our success for their support to confront the challenges. My deepest thanks are also extended to all members of the Bank's Fatwa and sharia supervisory Board, headed by Sheikh Dr Abdulaziz Khalifa Al-Qasar, for their great efforts in guiding the Bank's Islamic activities, services and dealings.

Finally, I would like to extend deepest appreciation to all Boubyan Bank's management and employees and thank them for their dedication as they spared no effort all through the past years, and I am pleased to express my appreciation of their constant adherence to the one-team spirit, to realize more success for our promising Bank. I hope that the coming years will be a new stage driving the Bank towards an unprecedented development leading it to more achievements and realization of objectives that place it among the leading Islamic banks in the region.

Peace be with you!
Mahmoud Yousef Al-Fulaij
Chairman

CBK announces winners of Najma account draw

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the daily draw on Al-Najma Account yesterday at the bank's head office to select 5 winners to win a cash prize of KD 7000 for each. The draw was held in the presence of Latifa Al-Jaan, representative of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. The following names were announced as winners of the prizes:

1. Khalifa Abdullah Alghanim
2. Hatim Shabbir Gabbuti
3. Hesham Adel AbdulKhaleq Shtayah
4. Hasan Faleh Al-Ajmi
5. Samer Sameer Mohammad Yousef

Al-Najma Account allows its customers to win a daily prize of KD 7000 which is the highest daily prize in Kuwait. In addition, the Account offers quarterly draws that provide customers with opportunity to get their dreams turned to reality by winning great prizes starting from KD 100,000 for the first quarter escalating thereafter by KD 50 thousand for each quarter to reach KD 250,000 in the last quarter. Customers can enjoy additional benefits including obtaining ATM card and a credit card against the customer's account along with enjoying all other banking services.

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

Burgan Bank announces winners of Yawmi account draw

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

The lucky winners are:

1. Salwa Radhi Alswayed Al-Azmi
2. Othman Eyfaan Kayed Abbas
3. Osama Adli Ghazal
4. Hood Yousef Abdulrasoul Bouabbas
5. Ahmad Emad Abdulwahab Al-Sahaf (minor)

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, offering the chance to one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The



Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, wherein the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for two months prior to the draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

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

Gulf Bank celebrates Mother's Day with exclusive automotive offers

KUWAIT: In celebration of Mother's Day, Gulf Bank has decided to reward its female customers who are planning to benefit from its exclusive automotive offers, in cooperation with top car dealers in Kuwait. Gulf Bank female customers can benefit from these offers when visiting the cars showrooms and meeting the bank's representatives to finance their new car and instantly receive their special gift.

Gulf Bank will continue to embark on collaborations with car dealers to present the best offers to its customers throughout the year, in its effort to cater to its customers various needs while offering the best services.

The offer is valid in top car dealers in Kuwait including: Ford, KIA, Nissan, Honda, in addition to Chevrolet and Cadillac and is valid until 21 March 2018. Gulf Bank representatives are available at all car dealers across Kuwait, to present the best services and facilities to the bank's customers and non-customers when purchasing their dream car.

Technology

'Citizen scientists' track radiation 7 years after Fukushima disaster

Safecast now has around 3,000 devices worldwide

KORIYAMA: Beneath the elegant curves of the roof on the Seirinji Buddhist temple in Japan's Fukushima region hangs an unlikely adornment: a Geiger counter collecting real-time radiation readings. The machine is sending data to Safecast, an NGO born after the March 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster that says it has now built the world's largest radiation dataset, thanks to the efforts of citizen scientists like Seirinji's priest Sadamaru Okano. Like many Japanese, Okano lost faith in the government after the nuclear meltdown seven years ago. "The government didn't tell us the truth, they didn't tell us the true measures," he told AFP, seated inside the 150-year-old temple.

Okano was in a better position than most to doubt the government line, having developed an amateur interest in nuclear technology two decades earlier after learning about the Chernobyl disaster. To the bemusement of friends and family, he started measuring local radiation levels in 2007, so when the disaster happened, he had baseline data. "The readings were so high... 50 times higher than natural radiation," he said of the post-disaster data. "I was amazed... the news was telling us there was nothing, the administration was telling us there was nothing to worry about."

Making informed choices

That dearth of trustworthy information was the genesis of Safecast, said co-founder Pieter Franken, who was in Tokyo with his family when the disaster hit. Franken and several friends had the idea of gathering data by attaching Geiger counters to cars and driving around. "Like how Google does Street View, we could do something for radiation in the same way," he said. "The only problem was that the system to do that didn't exist and the only way to solve that problem was to go and build it ourselves. So that's what we did."



The dearth of trustworthy info was the genesis of Safecast

Within a week, the group had a prototype and began getting readings that suggested the 20 kilometer (12 mile) exclusion zone declared around the Fukushima plant had no basis in the data, Franken said. "Evacuees were sent from areas with lower radiation to areas with higher radiation" in some cases, he said. The zone was eventually redrawn, but for many local residents it was too late to restore trust in the government. Okano evacuated his mother, wife and son while he stayed with his flock. But a year later, based on his own readings and after decontamination efforts, he brought them back. He learned about Safecast's efforts and in 2013 installed one of their static counters on his temple, in part to help reassure worshippers. "I told them: we are measuring the radiation on a daily basis... so if you access the (Safecast) website you can choose (if you think) it's safe or not."

Forty kilometers away, in the town of Koriyama, Norio Watanabe was supervising patiently as his giggling teenage pupils attempted to build basic versions of Safecast's Geiger counter. Dressed in blazers and tartan skirts, the girls pored over instructions on where to place diodes and wires. Watanabe has been a Safecast volunteer since 2011, and has a mobile Geiger counter in his car. In the days after the disaster evacuees flocked to Koriyama, which was outside the evacuation zone, and he assumed his town was safe. "But after I started to do the measurements, I realized there was a high level of risk here as well," he said.

'You can't ignore it'

He sent his children away, but stayed behind to look after his mother, a decision he believes may have contributed to his 2015 diagnosis with thyroid cancer. "As a scientist, I think the chance that it was caused by the Fukushima accident might be 50-50, but in my heart, I think it was likely the cause," he said. His thyroid was



KORIYAMA: A schoolgirl checks an application connected to the geiger counter kit by the Safecast non-governmental organization (NGO) to measure the radiation in a classroom in Koriyama city, Fukushima prefecture. —AFP

removed and he is now healthy, but Watanabe worries about his students, who he fears "will carry risk with them for the rest of their lives." "If there are no people like me who continue to monitor the levels, it will be forgotten."

Safecast now has around 3,000 devices worldwide and data from 90 countries. Its counters come as a kit that volunteers can buy through third parties and assemble at home. Because volunteers choose where they want to measure at random and often overlap, "they validate unknowingly each other's measurements," said Franken, and anomalies or exceptions are checked by Safecast staff. The NGO is now expanding into measuring air pollution, initially mostly in the US

city of Los Angeles during a test phase.

Its radiation data is all open source, and has been used to study everything from the effects of fallout on wildlife to how people move around cities, said Franken. He says Safecast's data mostly corroborates official measurements, but provides readings that are more relevant to people's lives. "Our volunteers decide to measure where their schools are, where their workplaces are, where their houses are." And he believes Safecast has helped push Japan's government to realize that "transparency and being open are very important to create trust." "The power of citizen science means that you can't stop it and also that you can't ignore it." —AFP

Facebook moves ahead on music with last major label deal

NEW YORK: Facebook has announced a licensing deal with Warner Music, the last of the major label groups to sign with the social media behemoth which is promising more personalized music. Facebook's two billion users will soon be able to post in more creative ways with the catalog of Warner, whose artist roster includes Ed Sheeran, Coldplay and the late Prince.

"Our partnership with Facebook will help expand the universe of music streaming and create supplementary revenue for artists," said Ole Obermann, chief digital officer of the Warner Music Group. "Fan-created video is one of the most personal, social and often viral ways that music is enjoyed, but its commercial potential is largely untapped," he said in a statement. Warner said it had been holding out for "the best possible deal" after its two rivals, Universal Music and Sony Music, signed deals with Facebook in recent months.

Facebook has said that it is looking at more personalized ways in which users can post music, including through Messenger and Instagram, the picture-driven social media platform owned by Facebook. Mark Zuckerberg's company has largely taken a back seat on music streaming as other mega-companies such as Apple and Google invest heavily in the growing sector. While music postings are omnipresent on Facebook, the company has sought to take down embedded content that is copyrighted without licensing. Fans, when not uploading their own homemade videos, link to other sites such as YouTube and Spotify. —AFP

DeepMind admits 'risks' of artificial intelligence

LONDON: Artificial intelligence offers huge scientific benefits but also brings risks depending on how it is used, Demis Hassabis, the head of leading British AI firm DeepMind, said. "There's a whole bunch of interesting and difficult philosophical questions... that we're going to have to answer about how to control these systems, what values we want in them, how do we want to deploy them, what do we want to use them for," he said. Hassabis was speaking at a screening of a documentary about AlphaGo, the AI system developed by DeepMind that stunned the world in 2016 by beating an elite human player in the complex Chinese strategy game "Go".

In a question and answer session at University College London, he said AI is an "incredible tool to accelerate scientific discovery", adding: "We believe that it will be one of the most beneficial technologies of mankind ever." However, like other powerful technologies, "there are risks", he said, adding: "It depends on how we as a society decide to deploy it that will resolve in good or bad outcomes." He said ethical questions were at the "forefront of our mind" at DeepMind, which he founded in 2010 and is now part of Google. —AFP

Kuwait University launches 2nd ICCSE

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwait University launched the second International Conference on Computing Sciences and Engineering (ICCSE 2018) yesterday at Sheraton Hotel, with the participation of a group of professors and scientists to present their latest scientific research and technological experiments in vital fields such as medicine, energy production, electronic security and social and educational services.

Kuwait University President Dr Hussein Al-Ansari said the conference aims to provide an opportunity for professionals in industry and academia around the world to share the technical knowledge, research and developments in computing and engineering sciences in a variety of real-life applications. Ansari noted that the conference aims to develop strategy for improving and elevating KU's scientific stature and standing worldwide, create skills among Kuwaiti engineers and enable them to be competitive in the Kuwaiti market.

He indicated that the conference will draw on the experience of its multifaceted activities (keynote speeches, tutorials, regular paper sessions and poster sessions) to provide its attendees global technical perspectives. The conference will also offer an opportunity for interdisciplinary and social gatherings. Dean of the Faculty of Computer Science and Engineering Dr Mustafa Abdullar said the conference provides an opportunity for multidisciplinary and social gatherings.

He reviewed topics to be discussed at the conference, including emerging technology trends including smart systems, cyber security, networks and computing systems.

Conservationists use hi-tech, apps to fight Indonesia wildlife crime

JAKARTA: From cutting-edge DNA barcoding to smartphone apps that can identify illegal wildlife sales, conservationists are turning to hi-tech tools in their battle against Indonesia's animal traffickers. Spread across more than 17,000 islands, the Southeast Asian nation's dense tropical rainforests boast some of the highest levels of biodiversity in the world, from scaly pangolins to the endangered orangutan.

But that enormous array of flora and fauna means Indonesia is also on the frontline of an illicit global trade estimated to be worth as much as \$23 billion a year—a shadowy operation bringing some species to the brink of extinction. To tackle the problem, conservationists have begun using a slew of new gadgets to protect the archipelago's rare and threatened wildlife. "Without a doubt (technology) is probably one of the largest resources that will help the good guys get the bad guys," Matthew Pritchett, from anti-trafficking group Freeland Foundation, told AFP. "The criminals that are behind the illegal wildlife trade are large organized syndicates that are extremely sophisticated." To keep pace with these vast trafficking groups, activists are now deploying the kind of technology once reserved for combating drug cartels and crime lords. For instance, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), which works with Indonesian authorities to halt wildlife crime, uses similar computer software to map criminal networks and extract data from seized electronic devices.



He pointed out that 40 researchers are participating with research papers, representing more than 20 countries, including Canada, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Egypt

and Kuwait. Speakers from the world's top universities in computing and information technology will give keynote lectures.

Hunting hotspots

Conservation group International Animal Rescue Indonesia (IAR) is examining crime scene evidence with the help of DNA barcoding—a taxonomic method that relies on short genetic sequences to identify species. Tissue samples from confiscated animals can be cross-referenced with a database of stored genetic codes, helping to unambiguously differentiate between species and sub-species—not all of which may be endangered.

For instance, IAR is building a barcode database for different species of slow loris, a cute but venomous primate being hunted to extinction for use in traditional Chinese medicine. "If we have animals with a known origin and we have animals that appear, for example, in Jakarta, we can then compare the genetic samples," Christine Rattel, IAR program advisor said. "We can then track down the hunting hotspots and what the trading routes are."

Despite a raft of laws aimed at protecting Indonesia's wildlife, forest rangers and police are under-resourced and lack specialized scientific knowledge, experts say. Detection is often left to NGOs that scan wildlife markets and social media for threatened species, carry out investigations in the field and then notify police. "What a lot of people don't realize is that law enforcement officers are not biologists," Pritchett said. "There might be some of them that specialize, but when it comes down to it we are talking about something like 25,000 to 30,000 species across the world that are protected from international trade."

Few prosecutions

This is a gap that the Freeland Foundation wanted to plug when it developed its smartphone identification app WildScan. Law enforcement officials and members of the public can swipe and click through questions and photos to determine whether they have a protected species in front of them. If it turns out they do, they can then photograph and



BOGOR: A veterinarian looks at an X-ray of a rescued slow loris, a cute-looking but venomous primate which are being hunted to extinction for traditional Chinese medicine, at the centre in Bogor. —AFP

report it to authorities across Southeast Asia using the app. Pritchett said reports generated through the app—which has a database of some 700 species and 2,000 photos—have already resulted in authorities taking action in Indonesia and Thailand. Still, despite the best efforts of conservationists and huge advances in technology, many experts believe the battle is being lost.

Outdated laws, scarce enforcement resources and low prosecution rates remain key challenges in halting the trade, according to a 2015 report by development agency USAID. Above all, there is a lack of political will to tackle the lucrative black market, said Ian Singleton, director of the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Program (SOCP), which uses drones to keep track of orangutans and illegal forest clearing that threatens their habitat. —AFP

Health

Indian doctors suspended; severed leg used as pillow

NEW DELHI: Indian authorities have suspended two doctors and launched an investigation after a patient's severed leg was used as a pillow to prop up his head, a hospital official said yesterday. Administrators at the government-run hospital in Uttar Pradesh state vowed "strict action" after images emerged showing the patient on a stretcher with the amputated limb being used as a headrest. "We have set up a four-member committee to find out who put the severed leg under the patient's head," said Sadhna Kaushik, principal of the Maharani

Laxmibai Medical College and Hospital in Jhansi, said. "Strict action will be taken if our staff is found at fault." Two doctors have been suspended pending investigation, she added. The man, identified as 28-year-old Ghanshyam, was seriously injured in a bus accident. His relatives told the local NDTV news network that hospital staff ignored their requests that Ghanshyam, who goes by one name, be given a pillow. "When we reached the hospital, we saw his leg being used as a headrest," Janaki Prasad, a relative, told

NDTV. "I repeatedly asked the doctors to intervene but they refused," Prasad added, saying Ghanshyam's relatives eventually bought a pillow from a local market. Kaushik said the patient was given "immediate" medical attention and one of his relatives placed the leg under his head, the Press Trust of India reported. "The doctor looked for something to raise his head. The patient's attendant used the leg," she told PTI. India's state-run hospitals are often ill-equipped, severely underfunded and stretched to breaking point.

Just a handful of specialists are available to treat millions. Uttar Pradesh, which is home to 200 million people, is one of India's poorest states, and long waits are common for even minor treatments. Medical negligence is not uncommon either. Last year, dozens of children died in a single week at a government hospital in Uttar Pradesh that suffered oxygen shortages. And an unlicensed doctor was arrested last month for allegedly infecting at least 46 people with HIV by re-using a syringe. —AFP

Sumatran tiger kills Indonesian

JAKARTA: Indonesian man has been mauled to death by a Sumatran tiger in a remote village, authorities said yesterday, the second deadly attack this year. Yusri Effendi, 34, was found with fatal wounds to his neck by workmates and local villagers in Riau province on Sumatra island on Saturday evening, the local conservation agency said. The victim was working on a building to lure the edible-nest swiftlet in Tanjung Simpang village when the tiger began lurking around the construction site.

Several hours after first seeing the big cat, Effendi and his three workmates—thinking the coast was clear—made a dash for safety, only to come face-to-face with the animal a short distance away. Effendi's colleagues, who all survived the incident, told authorities they scattered to evade the animal, but the victim was not so lucky. A search party found the victim unconscious at the edge of a river a short time later, authorities said.

"[When] they opened his clothes they saw a gaping wound on his neck," the Riau conservation agency said in a statement. Human-animal conflicts are common across the vast Indonesian archipelago, especially in areas where the clearing of rainforest to make way for palm oil plantations is destroying animals' habitats and bringing them into closer contact with people. Earlier this month, locals from Hatupangan village in North Sumatra disemboweled a Sumatran tiger and then hung the big cat from a ceiling after it attacked a pair of villagers. Sumatran tigers are considered critically endangered by protection group the International Union for Conservation of Nature, with 400 to 500 remaining in the wild. —AFP



PELALAWAN: The body of Yusri Effendi, 34, who was mauled to death by a tiger, is brought in by boat in Pelalawan, Riau Province yesterday. —AFP

Vitamin D linked to lower cancer risk

PARIS: Higher levels of Vitamin D in the blood may be linked to a lower risk of developing certain cancers, a study in Japanese adults reported. "These findings support the hypothesis that Vitamin D has protective effects against cancers at many sites," researchers reported in a study published in The BMJ medical journal. Vitamin D is made by the skin in response to sunlight. By maintaining calcium levels in the body, it helps keep bones, teeth and muscles healthy. While the benefits of Vitamin D on bone health are well known, there is some evidence that it may protect against chronic diseases as well, including some cancers.

Studies to date, however, have been carried out mainly in European and North American people. As natural Vitamin D concentrations can vary by ethnicity, researchers from half-a-dozen Japanese medical schools and institutes set out to determine the potential for lowering cancer risk in Asians. They analyzed the public health records of 33,736 men and women aged 40 to 69.

At the start of the study, participants provided detailed information on their medical history, diet and lifestyle. Blood samples were taken to measure Vitamin D levels. The researchers did not specify whether the trial participants used vitamin supplements or not. Taking into account seasonal variations, the group was divided into four groups, ranging from the lowest to highest concentration of Vitamin D. Participants were then monitored for 16 years on average, during which time 3,301 new cases of cancer were recorded.

After adjusting for well-known cancer risk factors—age, weight, smoking, and alcohol intake, for example—the researchers found that, overall, higher Vitamin D levels was associated with a 20 percent lower cancer risk for both genders.

The risk of liver cancer dropped even more, by up to 50 percent, especially for men. Vitamin D did not appear have any impact in warding off lung or prostate cancer, however. None of the cancers examined showed an increased risk associated with higher Vitamin D levels. Previous studies have shown that low levels of Vitamin D increase the risk of bone fractures, heart disease, colorectal cancer, diabetes, depression, Alzheimer's disease and death. But others have found no evidence of a link to disease risk. —AFP

CLINIC PAGE



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What's On

ACK organizes 'Sports Day' for Kuwait private schools

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) organized a "Sports Day" for Private High schools in Kuwait. Held on campus the sports day witnessed various competitions between participating high schools, including: The English School Fahheel (ESF), The British School of Kuwait (BSK), Gulf English School (GES), American Creativity Academy (ACA), Dasman Bilingual School (DBS), American Academy for Girls (AAG) and Philippine International English School (PIES). The School teams were divided into boys and girls, and competitions included volleyball, soccer and basketball.

Games started at 10:00am, and ended with the crowning ceremony, whereby medals and trophies were delivered to winning teams. ACK students took part in refereeing the matches. The sports day was held amongst very cheering and competitive atmosphere, featuring various different activities. On this occasion, Basel Dana, Manager of Students Life at ACK, commented: "The championship witnessed intensive attendance by the parents and friends of students, who came to cheer. Hence, we realized the objective of this event, which was helping students to enjoy sports and encouraging them to interact successfully."



ASSE organizes technical meet

American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), Kuwait Chapter is a premier voluntary, Non-profit Health, Safety and Environmental organization, which strives to provide professional guidance, training, consultancy and resources to the industrial and social sectors in the region. As a part of continuous efforts in its professional journey, ASSE-Kuwait Chapter organized its 225th technical meet (7th for the term 2017-18) on "Awareness on Project HSE reviews SIMOPS & MOPO" in Kuwait Oil Company Tent on 15th January 2018.

The Technical Meet began with the opening address by Sunil N Sadanandan, Chapter Secretary, who briefed them about the chapter activities. Muhammad Alamgir, president of ASSE Kuwait welcomed the participants and appreciated their participation in the technical meet. ASSE Kuwait chapter Chairman Fadhel Al Ali highlighted the importance of attending the Technical meets. Mazharuddin Shaik, Head of HSE Events Committee introduced the speaker for the Tech event Dr Tamer Hafez Said.

Dr Tamer Hafez Said, Sr Technical Process Safety Engineer, HSE Lead and Process Safety SME, Shell Canada/Shell gave a presentation on SIMOPS & MOPO, which can be elaborated as Simultaneous Operations (SIMOPS) study that addresses the hazards and the risks arising out of Simultaneous operations like brown field construction activities and Manual of Permitted Operations (MOPO) which is the matrix derived out for various simultaneous operations. Attendees actively participated in the technical session and found it interesting. The presentation was



followed by Question and Answer session.

ASSE Kuwait chapter Core Committee along with Fares Al-Mansouri, Team Leader QHSE KOC honored the speaker Dr Tamer with a memento. The Technical Meet concluded with close out speech of Jahid Thakor, Treasurer of ASSE Kuwait Chapter who thanked Dr Tamer Hafiz Said for giving an insight on the topic and Fares Al-Mansouri, Team Leader and all Advisory & Executive Committee members for gracing the occasion. He thanked the Technical Events committee for the arrangements and all the participants, who attended the technical meet.



IEI Kuwait Chapter organizes 'Family Day' event at Wafra

The Institute of Engineers India (Kuwait Chapter) held their mega 'Family Day' event at a Wafra Farm. The event is held every year for the family members of IEI, Kuwait chapter - giving the family members an opportunity to meet each other. The event was attended by large number of families with their children. The day started off with the welcome to all the family members by the Chairman Engr Ajay Sharma. Then the Yoga class was conducted by the trainer Engr Mitra who emphasized on the advantages of Yoga and its benefits to the whole family. The live session of the Yoga rejuvenated the families and made a good start.

Then the master of Ceremony Jaison took over the platform after the Yoga session and started with the Family Fun games for the children and the adults. The DJ Shanis performance and live music by Engr Tarun and Ray enthralled the families. The whole group was divided into 4 groups and each group had a leader. The culmination of the team event was the tug of war and the teams par-

ticipated with vigor and valor.

After the sumptuous lunch the evening session started off with the talent show organized by the ladies wing and the children which was well coordinated by Kanika and Archana. The hidden talents in the children were very much brought to light by this program. Many Raffle draws were conducted and the winners were gifted with precious gifts. The General Secretary Engr Thomas John thanked all the members who flocked to the venue for all the fun and frolics throughout the day. A group photo session was also conducted after the vote of thanks by Engr Thomas John. The families appreciated the full day event and were happy with different types of games and funfair arranged by IEI, Kuwait chapter.



LOYAC launches blood donation campaign

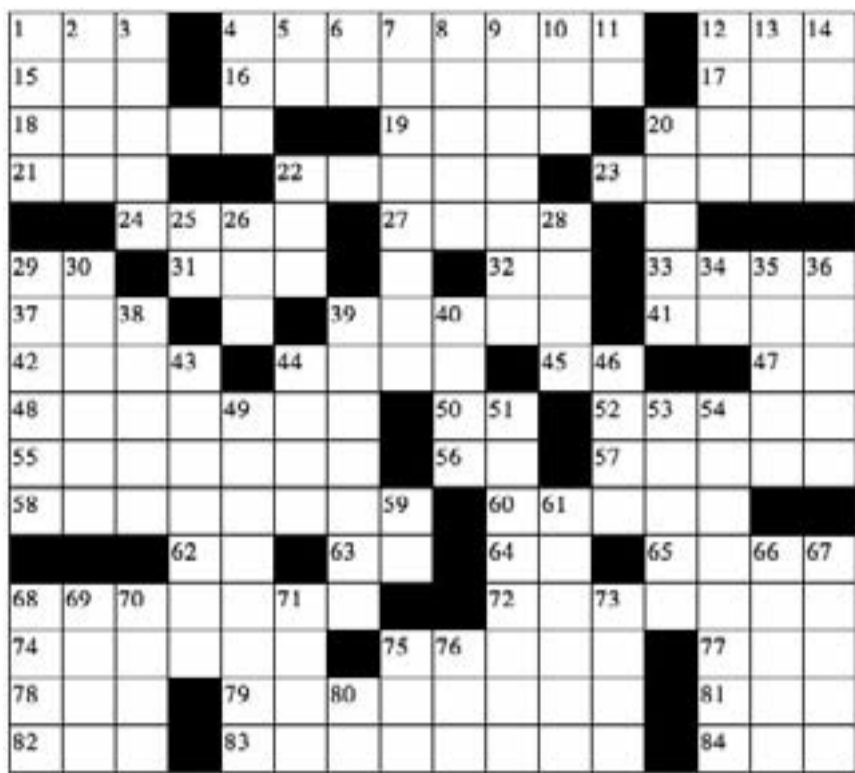
LOYAC recently launched its sixth blood donation campaign at the Boulevard. The program was sponsored by Ahli Bank, TriStar Motorcycles and the Central Blood Bank. The event was attended by ABK's Manager for Board Affairs,

Fauzi Al-Thenayan, TriStar's Managing Director Ja'far Behbahani and LOYAC's Co-Founder and Executive Board Member Fetouh Al-Dalali. Speaking on the occasion, Al-Dalali highlighted the significance of humanitarian activities organized by LOYAC. "LOYAC's name has been associated to humanitarian activities - not only in Kuwait, but also throughout the Arab world", she said, expressing gratitude to cyclers who took part in the campaign. She also thanked ABK - the event sponsor.



Stars

CROSSWORD 1855



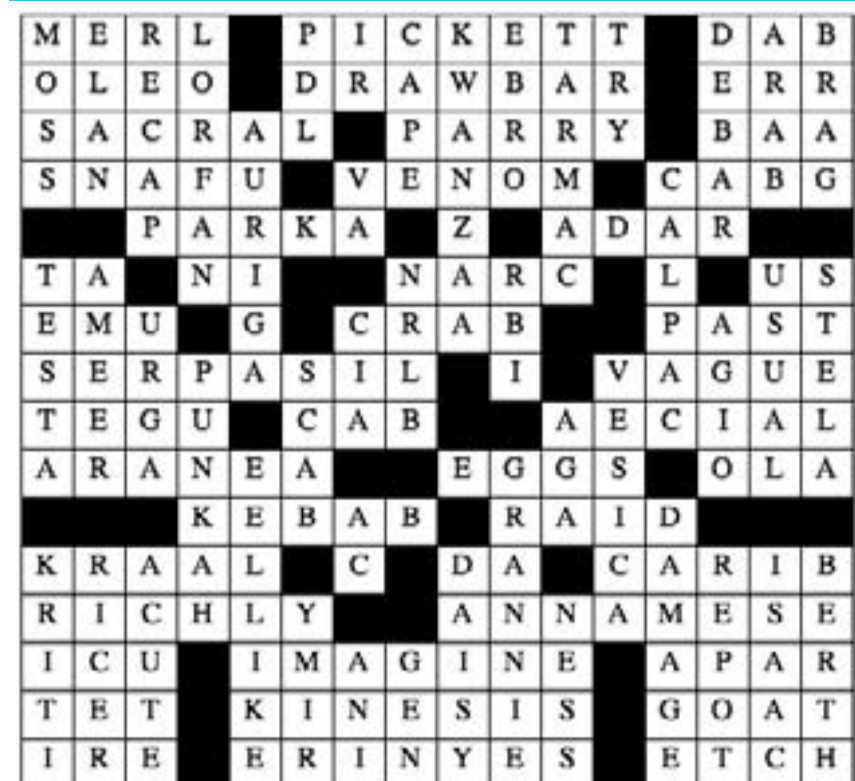
ACROSS

1. Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
4. Of or relating to the head.
12. Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand.
15. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
16. Important edible sunfish of eastern and central United States.
17. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
18. Ratio of the hypotenuse to the opposite side.
19. A river in central Italy rising in the Apennines and flowing through Florence and Pisa to the Ligurian Sea.
21. How long something has existed.
23. A support that steadies or strengthens something else.
24. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
27. Hard strong durable yellowish-brown wood of teak trees.
29. Informal terms for a mother.
31. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
32. Of or relating to the stomach and intestines.
33. Speaking a Slavic language.
37. Any of various trees of the genus Ulmus.
41. Surrealist Spanish painter (1904-1989).
42. Basically shredded cabbage.
45. A logarithmic unit of sound intensity.
47. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
48. A mountainous island in eastern Indonesia.
50. A very poisonous metallic element that has three allotropic forms.
52. Made of wood of the aspen tree n.
55. Small genus of bitter-rooted herbs of eastern North America and Asia.
56. Of or related to the genital and urinary organs or their functions.
57. So adjusted as to be appropriate or brought into harmony.
58. Small genus of tropical herbs and subshrubs of South Africa.
60. Tired to the point of exhaustion.
62. A bivalent and trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
63. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
64. Conforming to truth.
65. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
68. Large semi-evergreen tree of East India.
72. A person who is pursuing and trying to overtake or capture.
74. Oriental moth that produces brownish silk.
77. The compass point that is one point east of due south.
78. A religious belief of African origin involving witchcraft and sorcery.
79. A sandal with flat heels and an upper of woven leather straps.
81. Of a light yellowish-brown color n 1.
82. The foot of a human being.
83. Gentian of eastern North America having clusters of bristly blue flowers.
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
2. Highly excited.
3. Covered or protected with or as if with a case.
4. Counting the number of white and red blood cells and the number of platelets in 1 cubic millimeter of blood.
5. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
6. A radioactive transuranic element that is similar to uranium.
7. Any plant disease in which the central part of a plant rots (especially in trees).
8. Be in accord.
9. The descendants of one individual.
10. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.
11. Being ten more than one hundred forty.
12. Informal terms for a mother.
13. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
14. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
20. An honorary arts degree.
22. An enclosed space.
25. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
26. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
28. Scottish sea captain who was hired to protect British shipping in the Indian Ocean and then was accused of piracy and hanged (1645-1701).
30. One of two alternative forms of a genes that can have the same locus on homologous chromosomes and are responsible for alternative traits.
34. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
35. American dramatist (1928-).
36. A choice or delicious dish.
38. Celebes megapode that lays eggs in holes in sandy beaches.
39. Any expected deliverer.
40. Small beads made from polished shells and formerly used as money by native Americans.
43. The condition of containing or being covered by a liquid (especially water).
44. An investment trust that owns and manages a pool of commercial properties and mortgages and other real estate assets.
46. Cook and make edible by putting in a hot oven.
49. Loud confused noise from many sources.
51. A space that is contained within another space.
53. An area that includes seats for several people.
54. Moths whose larvae are corn borers.
59. A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
61. Of questionable taste or morality.
66. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
67. A particular environment or walk of life.
69. Not very intelligent or interested in culture.
70. Goddess of fertility.
71. An aggressive and violent young criminal.
73. Tall woody perennial grasses with hollow slender stems especially of the genera Arundo and Phragmites.
75. (prefix) Coming before or being preliminary or preparatory.
76. Legal document setting forth rules governing a particular kind of activity.
80. A soft yellow malleable ductile (trivalent and univalent) metallic element.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, you may actually enjoy your own company and have kind feelings regarding yourself; this is rare. You have a lot of respect for someone older or in authority that takes you under their wing. Someone asks for your help in a secretive, sensitive personal matter. You may engage in heated discussion relating to religion, politics or the law; be careful that you don't make enemies. You may contemplate starting an organic garden or purchasing only natural, non-processed foods; this is part of the changes you're attempting to make in your life. Being outdoors is most appealing right now! Someone expects you to be quiet and do what you're told; when this person doesn't do what they have agreed to do, you could feel resentful of the treatment you receive, Aries.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, an invitation to a social gathering causes and uproar that you don't want to deal with; be mindful of the possible long-lasting problems that could result if you attend. You could sense that nothing you do today can please anyone but yourself. A strong sense of self-worth is prominent today; when people see that you can't be discouraged, they give up. Coming to terms with something you detest but can't change is indicated. Staying in control of your temper could prove difficult today as someone seems determined to make you lose it! Someone shows up to take you away from the tensions of the day; this creates an abundance of positive energy. Your values change and deepen with each passing day. Laughter, good times for you tonight, Taurus.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, you reach out for companionship and sharing your time with people; friends notice that you're less focused on yourself and more on others. Seeking justice in a certain situation could cause frustration as this doesn't appear to happen; reexamine your motives and attitudes regarding this! Peace comes by exercising your right to avoid someone in particular. You may enjoy the company of those who possess intellect and excellent communication skills; you find the lack of this to be disappointing. You come to the aid of a friend who simply can't do something on their own; your compassion is admirable. You experience something for the first time. New circumstances put your eye for value in charge when considering a purchase, Gemini.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, though your thoughts are clear and very precise you could find that making important decisions today isn't practical; you'll know when a better time to do this arrives. You try doing something routine in a new way which proves successful. Vibrations of accomplishment are strong and readily available to you. Attention to details is strongly suggested today as you have the mental acuity to deal with this now. Mystery surrounds something that went missing but today you learn a fact that explains and clears this up. Spending time with those whose support you can depend on creates a strong sense of security. You're called upon to address a group regarding their needs. Communicating with an intelligent friend brings good information, Cancer.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, you could find that circumstances irritate you to the point of distraction. A difficult elderly person refuses to let you take care of a matter that can be easily taken care of, instead they insist on going the long way to complete this. You long to rid yourself of unnecessary pettiness. A nice day is on tap as out of town visitors arrive for a long overdue visit. Plans for a vegetable or flower garden start to take shape. You have a strong wish to have an edible landscape. You appear at your best physically and mentally. A decision you made in the past turns out to be the very best it could have been. Your thoughts go to spiritual, paranormal matters you find fascinating. A walk, jog or yoga practice could do wonders for helping you sleep tonight, Leo.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, you rebel against doing what you believe is the right thing when you refuse to be taken advantage of in a specific situation. You're not able to ignore your own needs as your body, mind and spirit require more today. You could put too many demands on yourself which results in an emotional meltdown; it's best to separate yourself from anyone contributing to this. You struggle to focus on the positive aspects of your life just now as your opinions are very different from that of others. You're learning to ignore petty complaints from a negative person. A good book entertains and inspires you. You're starting to realize some things about yourself you have need to; the changes you need to make become clear. Recharge for the new work week, Virgo.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, you'd like to keep your mind occupied with flights of fancy and wonderment but you're schedule says no. Someone could accuse you of unfairly choosing sides, but the proof is in the pudding and it's perfectly clear you didn't do this! Expect abundance and get it; expect failure, that's what comes. You make sure someone is taken care of before you take care of yourself. When someone suffers a hard personal blow, you care just how truly fortunate you are; you acknowledge that your choices have been pretty good ones. You receive praise for your taste; this is a big deal considering who this is coming from. Need for sensual interaction is strong now, as is being appreciated or loved. Making plans for a flower or vegetable garden is fun, Libra.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, doing something social appeals to you very strongly; this could be something unusual that you wouldn't normally do. You could find that two friends argue over something having to do with you. Seeking approval from a critical person nags at you today; letting go of this would probably be best for you. A new way to do things gets your full attention. Getting over someone from your past could seem impossible, but you're more than capable of doing it. Your focus on prosperity pays off. Someone makes known their disagreement with something you do. A tough project demands your attention and the attention of others. Knowing exactly what you want pushes you to go for it! You understand the suggestions of someone who loves you, Scorpio.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, you overhear something that gives you the wrong idea; give yourself a chance to cool down and let the truth become clear! If allowed your imagination could create negative thoughts and conclusions; try to separate imaginings from reality. A fine young person looks to you for guidance on a very personal level; this person looks up to and respects everything you say. You can change your bad mood if you choose; look for the cause of this and eliminate it. You may decline an invitation from a judgmental person; you hold your tongue but inside you fume. When someone claims they want to help, they actually want to change your mind. Growing up with a person doesn't mean you owe them. Being surrounded by loved ones brings joy now, Sagittarius.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Capricorn, you're in a happy place and decide to enjoy it while it lasts! You use the wisdom you have gained from past experience to help in the present. Being able to learn is something you have worked on for some time. Congratulations! Being complimented lightens your day. You intend to maintain control involving a hard project that requires certain knowledge; you have a way of putting the correct people in the right, most productive places. You come across a natural seasoning that brings pleasure; new tastes in food evolve as you open up to new flavors. Your teamwork is better than ever with no end in sight! A clear answer to a good question becomes known when you share a meal with someone in the know. A good night for thinking, Capricorn.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Aquarius, you could receive a challenge a dare, of sorts from someone you enjoy competing against; this is a friendly exchange. Someone could feel left out of your new plans if you're not careful; should you want to separate yourself from this person, now is the time. Looking inside at your true feelings is enlightening, you have got a lot to think about. A decision to hold off on making decisions on a very personal level works best. With time comes answers of all kinds; keep your eyes and mind open to see them. You answer the vivid urge to demand to be heard or exercise some type of rights; retain your dignity through all of this. Your attend a different genre of movie or perhaps a play; afterward, a meal originating in an exotic foreign culture, Aquarius.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Pisces, it falls to you to take the lead on a certain, difficult project that arises unexpectedly. You could take this opportunity to try out some of the new methods you have discovered; nobody is in a position to protest as you're the only one willing to try to solve this problem! You seem to walk a dreamy path as you enjoy poetry, music or any other form of creative effort. Taking in a movie with someone fun is indicated; this could be the beginning of a new friendship. Your body feels healthy and responsive to a new diet and exercise program; stay on this path for certain success. You take the bull by the horns and explain a sticky situation to someone difficult. Learning about mystic principles captivates your thoughts and actions as you understand more about this, Pisces.

Wordsearch Puzzle

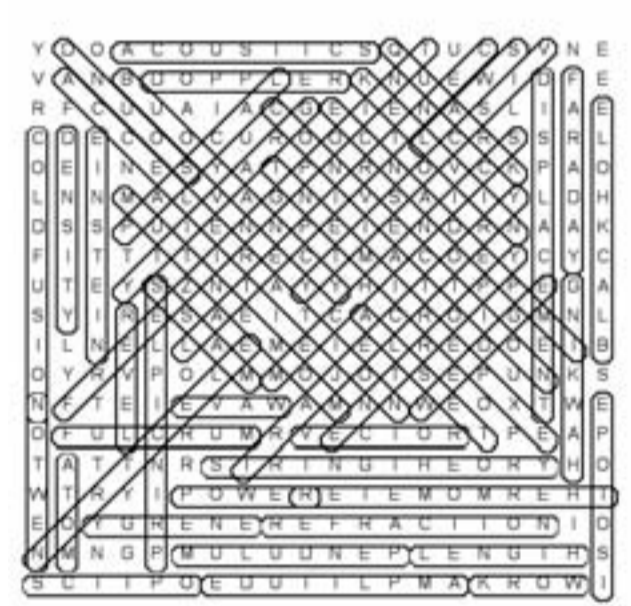
Physics 2

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 58 letters spell a Bruce Feirstein quotation.



- ABSOLUTE ZERO
- ADHESION
- AERODYNAMICS
- AIR MASS
- AMPLIFIER
- BIG BANG
- BOILING POINT
- CENTRIFUGAL
- CHAIN REACTION
- DECIBEL
- DIFFRACTION
- DISTANCE
- DRAG
- ELASTICITY
- ELECTRONICS
- ENTROPY
- FARADAY
- FORCE
- FRICTION
- FUNCTION
- GALILEO
- HALF LIFE
- HEAT
- INERTIA
- IONIZATION
- Joule
- KINETICS
- LIGHT
- LIQUID
- MOLECULE
- MOTION
- NEUTRON
- NIELS BOHR
- PARTICLE
- PHOTON
- PRESSURE
- PROTON
- PULLEY
- REFLECTION
- SCIENCE
- SPEED
- TEMPERATURE
- TORQUE
- VACUUM
- VELOCITY
- VOLUME
- WAVELENGTH
- WEIGHT

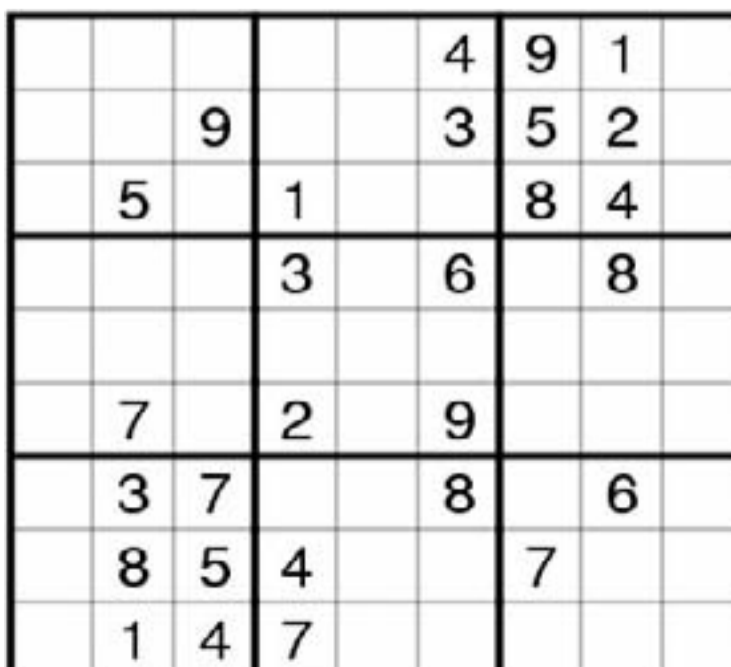
Physics 1



- ACCELERATION
- ACOUSTICS
- AMPLITUDE
- ATOM
- BLACK HOLE
- BUOYANCY
- CENTRIFUGAL
- COLD FUSION
- CONVECTION
- DENSITY
- DISPLACEMENT
- DOPPLER
- EINSTEIN
- ELECTRON
- ENTROPY
- EXPANDEMENT
- FARADAY
- FREEZING POINT
- GRAVITY
- HAWKING
- IMPEDANCE
- ISOTOPES
- KELVIN
- LAWS OF PHYSICS
- LEVER
- MASS
- MECHANICS
- MOMENTUM
- NEWTON
- OFFICES
- PASCAL
- PENDULUM
- POWER
- PRINCIPLES
- QUARK
- REFRACTION
- SOUND
- STRING THEORY
- TESSLA
- THERMOMETER
- TRAJECTORY
- VECTOR
- VISCOSITY
- WAVE
- WEDGE
- WORK

The hidden message is: YOU NEVER FAIL UNTIL YOU STOP TRYING

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Classifieds

Monday, March 12, 2018

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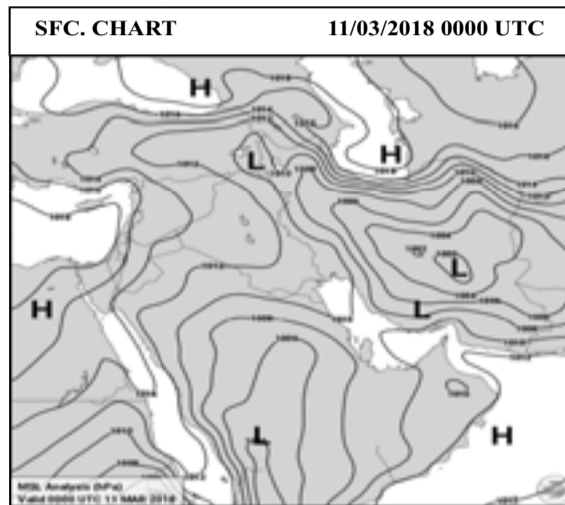
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Partly cloudy with light to moderate northerly wind to north easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

BY NIGHT: Fair with light to moderate north easterly wind to northerly wind, with speed of 10 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

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

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	29 °C	19 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	30 °C	19 °C
ABDALY	34 °C	15 °C
BUBYAN	28 °C	13 °C
JAHRA	32 °C	19 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	25 °C	19 °C
SALMIYAH	24 °C	20 °C
AHMADI	00 °C	00 °C
NUWAISIB	26 °C	20 °C
WAFRA	29 °C	17 °C
SALMY	30 °C	15 °C



4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Monday	03/12	Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will appear	30 °C	18 °C	NW-N	15 - 35 km/h
Tuesday	03/13	Relatively hot	31 °C	16 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	03/14	Relatively hot and some scattered clouds will appear	32 °C	15 °C	VRB-SE	08 - 32 km/h
Thursday	03/15	Clouds will increase gradually + causing rising dust with a chance for scattered light rain	32 °C	15 °C	SE-SW	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:44
Sunrise	06:03
Zuhr	11:58
Asr	15:21
Sunset	17:54
Isha	19:10

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	28 °C
MIN. Temp.	18 °C
MAX. RH	68 %
MIN. RH	26 %
MAX. Wind	E 46 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
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Qatar Airways	22414400
KLM	22423888
Royal Jordanian	22425747
British Airways	22418064/5/6
Air France	22425635
Emirates	22430224
Air India	22921555
Sri Lanka Airlines	22438184
Egypt Air	22424444
Swiss Air	22421578
Saudia	22421516
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Lufthansa	22423073
PIA	22422493
Bangladesh Airlines	22421044
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Turkish Airlines	22958787
Aeroflot	22453820/1
	22404838/9

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

Arrival Flights on Monday 12/3/2018				Departure Flights on Monday 12/3/2018			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:01	AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
JZR	185	Dubai	00:05	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:05	FDB	072	Dubai	00:35
JZR	607	Kochi	00:10	PIA	206	Lahore	01:00
KAC	504	Beirut	00:30	MSC	502	Alexandria	01:00
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:05
JZR	539	Cairo	00:50	BBC	044	Dhaka	01:30
KAC	102	London	00:50	JZR	502	Luxor	01:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	00:55	JZR	142	Doha	01:45
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	KAC	285	Dhaka	01:55
DLH	625	Bahrain	01:45	KAC	363	Colombo	02:00
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:15	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	PGT	859	Doha	02:30
QTR	1086	Doha	02:20	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	QTR	1087	Doha	03:40
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55
KKK	1268	Istanbul	02:55	KKK	1269	Istanbul	03:55
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
QTR	1076	Doha	03:50	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05
KAC	382	Delhi	04:15	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
KAC	1544	Cairo	04:25	QTR	1077	Doha	05:30
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	KAC	303	Mumbai	05:30
UAE	873	Dubai	04:25	FDB	070	Dubai	05:45
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:35	UAE	874	Dubai	06:15
KAC	284	Dhaka	04:50	JZR	560	Sohag	06:25
FDB	069	Dubai	04:55	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
JZR	609	Hyderabad	05:10	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
JZR	143	Doha	05:25	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:25	KAC	413	Bangkok	07:20
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	KAC	167	Paris	07:35
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KAC	501	Beirut	08:00
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	KAC	161	Geneva	08:20
KAC	362	Colombo	06:25	FDB	054	Dubai	08:35
KAC	678	Dubai	06:30	KAC	787	Jeddah	08:40
WAN	338	Alexandria	06:40	BAW	156	London	08:50
BAW	157	London	07:10	KAC	691	Muscat	08:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	07:25	KAC	117	New York	09:00
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
FDB	053	Dubai	07:35	KAC	671	Dubai	09:45
JZR	503	Luxor	07:45	KAC	101	London	09:45
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	UAE	856	Dubai	10:00
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	KAC	541	Cairo	10:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
RSB	1071	Baku	09:00	KAC	773	Riyadh	10:10
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	617	Doha	10:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	QTR	1071	Doha	10:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:10	KAC	155	Istanbul	10:25
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	10:30
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
WAN	342	Sohag	10:15	JZR	778	Jeddah	10:40
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	ZAV	4101	IQA	11:00
AXB	890	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	IRA	666	Esfahan	11:00
QTR	1074	Doha	11:20	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	JZR	786	Riyadh	11:55
WAN	134	Doha	11:55	RSB	1071	IQA	12:00
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:00
RBG	553	Alexandria	12:15	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:10
JZR	561	Sohag	12:45	QTR	1075	Doha	12:30
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	JZR	606	Kochi	12:45
KAC	774	Riyadh	13:40	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	RBG	554	Alexandria	13:00
KAC	692	Muscat	14:15	ZAV	4101	IQA	13:00
KAC	618	Doha	14:15	JZR	176	Dubai	13:40
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00



Sam Smith's release fear

Sam Smith had an "insane fear" of the reception his second album would receive. The 25-year-old singer felt a huge worry to live up to the success of his 2014 debut LP, 'In the Lonely Hour', and felt "really shaky" before the release of 'The Thrill of It All's lead track, 'Too Good at Goodbyes' because he was convinced no one cared about his music anymore. He said: "I don't think you ever get over that insane fear of how it will be received. "There's no pressure on myself to repeat those numbers but I was worried. "I just want people to like the songs - if they don't, it's like they don't like me and that's not ideal. "Before 'Too Good at Goodbyes' dropped, I was really shaky because I convinced myself that no one wanted to hear me anymore. And that happens to artists all the time." Sam is known for his songs about heartbreak, and even though he's now found love with actor Brandon Flynn, he's not expecting his music to get any more cheerful. He said: "I don't think I'll ever write happy songs because that's not my style. "I'm all about depressing, heavy music. "I think people think I'm really depressed and miserable all the time and I can understand why they do based on the music, but that's really not the case at all." The 'Money On My Mind' hitmaker credits his parents for him being able to be free with his emotions. He told Britain's OK! magazine: "My parents are very emotional people and I grew up in a home where it was always perfectly OK to express every feeling. It's a central part of who I am now."

Alexandra Burke scrapped songs

Alexandra Burke "scrapped" a lot of her new album. The 'Hallelujah' singer - who recently got engaged to Josh Ginnely after three years of dating - has been working on 'The Truth is' for five years, but ditched some of the early tracks after experiencing a number of changes in her life, including the death of her mother, Melissa Bell, last August, that made her want to pour her own experiences into the record. She said: "I've always been the kind of person to sugarcoat how I feel. "When people asked me how I was, I used to reply that I was great and everything was fine. "But now I'm learning to be honest and that if something is wrong, I talk about it. "I started writing this album five years ago, but so much has changed in my life since then. "So I scrapped some of the original songs and wrote new ones, wearing my heart on my sleeve about where I'm at now. "I've poured my heart and soul into my new music and it reflects the incredible journey I've been through - the highs and lows, love and loss. "It's a mixture of everything I've gone through in the past couple of years." And the title track for the record is dedicated to Melissa. Alexandra said: "I wrote it for her... "I owe everything I have in my life to her. "This passion inside me, I absolutely inherited it from her. "Losing her is still quite raw for me so I'm taking it one hour at a time." And the 29-year-old singer hopes people going through similar experiences will take comfort from her album. She told Britain's HELLO! magazine: "Music will always be my first love. "It's my way of dealing with anything in life. "I hope that when people listen to my new album, they will be able to relate to it and see there is light at the end of the tunnel. "I'm still on my journey to find my light. But the way there for me is through my voice, through singing."



Robert Downey Jr says Avengers are 'like a family'

Robert Downey Jr says the cast of 'Avengers' feels "like a family" to him. The 52-year-old actor - who plays Iron Man in the hit Marvel movies - stars alongside the likes of Chris Evans, Scarlett Johansson, Chris Hemsworth, Jeremy Renner and Mark Ruffalo in the 'Avengers' films, and Downey Jr has revealed that the star-studded cast have developed a close, family-like relationship over the years. Looking ahead to the release of 'Avengers: Infinity War' this year and its as-yet-untitled sequel in 2019, he shared: "We're going to pull out the stops, and stop exploring conventions, and look to do stuff where we go, 'Oh, but if we do that, that's very, very definitive'. Well, great, let's get definitive for a change! "We're like a family now. Ten years later, we're hanging out and having lunch, and kind of wondering when the draft is going to come in. Which one of us bites it and when?" Meanwhile, Kevin Feige, the president of Marvel Studios, has hailed the upcoming movie as a pioneering moment for the film studio. While remaining tight-lipped about the upcoming movie's plot, Feige said that the next 'Avengers' releases will take Marvel in a new direction. He told Entertainment Weekly magazine: "The notion of an ending, the notion of a finale, became very intriguing to us, in large part because you don't see it that often in this particular genre."



Nicolas Cage happy to shun TV work for movie roles



Nicolas Cage wants to keep making movies for as long as possible. The 54-year-old actor has teamed up with director Brian Taylor to make the thriller film 'Mom and Dad', having previously worked with him on 'Ghost Rider: Spirit Of Vengeance' in 2011, and Cage has revealed he's eager to remain working in cinema, rather than switching his attention to TV work. He explained: "Brian and I, having done 'Ghost Rider: Spirit Of Vengeance', had a terrific working rapport on that. I really like his style, I like his sense of humor, I like the way he works with the camera, he keeps things moving. We had talked about doing something else together and we weren't able to find anything. "He actually asked me to do television with him, which is something that I thought about but wasn't really ready to do. "I kind of wanted to stay making motion pictures as long as possible, and so when he sent me this script to a show called 'Happy', which I thought was very good by the way, I said I don't think I'm ready to make the format change. And then about a week later he sent me the script to 'Mom And Dad', and with a message saying, 'Now this is something I think could be absolutely one of the best.'" In fact, Cage didn't require any real convincing to accept a role in the movie. He told SciFiNow magazine: "I read it and within about two hours I called him and said 'I've gotta make this movie, this is really irreverent, it's punk rock, it's hilarious, it's taboo, it's all wrong and it's the kind of thing that I think really, I've never seen in a film before."

Vin Diesel confirmed as Bloodshot

Vin Diesel has signed up for 'Bloodshot'. The 50-year-old action hero will star as the titular super soldier in the Sony Pictures adaptation of the Valiant comic book series, according to Deadline. Bloodshot is a former soldier who is able to regenerate and metamorphose due to nanocomputers being injected into his bloodstream, enabling him recover from injuries quickly and shape shift. Brought back from the dead by this super technology, he finds he must battle memory loss as well as coming to terms with his new powers. Dave Wilson - who has long collaborated with 'Deadpool' director Tim Miller - will make his feature debut at the helm of the movie, with the studio keen to invoke the tones of 80s action classics such as 'Terminator', 'Robocop' and 'Total Recall'. The tone is expected to be dark and R-rated as supposed to a fun family movie. Diesel will be reunited with 'Fast and the Furious' producer Neal H. Moritz on the project, which is due to begin filming this July. Bloodshot is a central character in the Valiant Expanded Universe which incorporates many tones, genres and demographic groups, but focuses on ordinary people in extraordinary situations, in contrast to the gods and superheroes of other comic book worlds. Valiant could be the next big thing in comic book movies as the franchise has more than 2,000 characters and has sold more than 80 million comics. Diesel previously appeared as tree creature Groot in the 'Guardians Of The Galaxy' movies, part of the Marvel universe. Last year he was named Forbes' top grossing actor of 2017, earning \$1.6 billion in 12 months, largely due to his appearance as Dominic Toretto in the 'Fast and Furious' franchise. — Bang Showbiz



Demi Lovato fakes it till she makes it



Demi Lovato has to "fake it until [she] makes it" on stage. The 25-year-old singer is opening her 'Tell Me You Love Me' concerts with the deeply personal ballad 'You Don't Do It for Me Anymore' and Demi - who has spoken openly about her struggles with addiction, self-harm and an eating disorder - admitted she doesn't always want to relate to the song. She said: "It's so vulnerable, so raw. I'm not singing it about a guy. I never sang it about a guy. It's about my relationship with my bad habits. I sing it onstage, and sometimes I have to fake it until I make it. "Sometimes I don't want to believe it. But I'm telling myself through those lyrics, 'You're going to get through this.' "The 'Sorry Not Sorry' hitmaker has upped the production values on the tour, with dancers, video projections and a local choir from each city she performs in, who join her for her finale, and admitted she made the change because she didn't enjoy the stripped back set she had last time she went out on the road. She told Billboard magazine: "The thing that I didn't love about the last tour is that I didn't have anybody onstage with me. "I didn't have dancers, my band was hidden. There was a lot of pressure on me and my voice." But Demi isn't worrying too much about her wardrobe on stage. She said: "I might pop up in the opening [number] one day and be in Fabletics. Because that's what I want to wear. I'm loving myself-not for what I look like, but for who I am." And she knows her fans aren't interested in going to see her because they're expecting elaborate outfits. She said: "[The clothes] maybe won't be as sexy. Because that's not where I am in my life right now. "I think I'm going to wear an oversized hoodie and boots. "I really honestly don't care. That's not why people come to my concerts anyways."

Kevin Feige: We have a plan for Black Panther 2



Kevin Feige has admitted there is already a "solid direction" in place for 'Black Panther 2'. The original 'Black Panther' movie - which stars Chadwick Boseman as T'Challa and his titular alter-ego - may have only just hit cinema screen in February this year, but Marvel Studios boss Kevin has revealed there are already plans in place for a sequel to the blockbuster hit. When asked what he could reveal about 'Black Panther 2', the 44-year-old studio president said: "Nothing specific to reveal, other than to say we absolutely will do that. One of the favourite pastimes at Marvel Studios is sitting around on a Part One and talking and dreaming about what we would do in a Part Two. There have been plenty of those conversations as we were putting together the first 'Black Panther'. We have ideas and a pretty solid direction on where we want to head with the second one." Chadwick's Black Panther character will next be seen on screen in the Marvel ensemble movie 'Avengers: Infinity War' which will see him star alongside the likes of Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.), Captain America (Chris Evans), and Spider-Man (Tom Holland). And Kevin has revealed that Black Panther's home world of Wakanda - which features heavily in the upcoming ensemble feature - will act as an "anchor point" to link the 'Avengers' franchise with the 'Black Panther' series. When asked what role Wakanda would play in the Marvel Comics Universe (MCU), Kevin told Entertainment Weekly magazine: "Anchor point is a good way of [describing] it, particularly as some of our other anchor points, Asgard for instance, are gone." 'Avengers: Infinity War' - which will also feature the stars from the 'Guardians of the Galaxy' movies, including Chris Pratt and Zoe Saldana - is set to be released on April 27.

Lifestyle | Features



Artdeco launched its spring summer 2018 collection

Habchi & Chalhoub w.l.l launched the famous German makeup brand ARTDECO on the 1st of March at Lifestyle (Centerpoint) at the Grand Avenues. Key media from many lifestyle magazines and

dailies were invited to discover Artdeco new Spring Summer 2018 collection, in the presence of the brand's international marketing director Christian Kafer, the international Make-up artist Macedonia Bezerra and the

international marketing assistant Eleftheria Tzirbinaki. The event was hosted by the iconic Dr Kholud, she explained about the brand's basics & the latest make-up collection available in many major stores in Kuwait. VIP

customers & press enjoyed the great atmosphere & took memorable photos of the event.

CAPE TOWN INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

The 19th Cape Town International Jazz Festival will be held on 23 and 24 March 2018 at the Cape Town International Convention Centre in Cape Town, South Africa. This proudly South African produced event is hosted at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC) each year on the last weekend of March or the first weekend of April. The Cape Town International Jazz Festival (CTIJF) is the flagship event for the leading events management and production company espAfrika, which has staged and produced several world-renowned events.

Affectionately referred to as "Africa's Grandest Gathering", the Cape Town International Jazz Festival (CTIJF) is the largest music event in sub-Saharan Africa. The festival, now preparing for its 19th year, is an annual event famous for delivering a star-studded line up of some of the Best South African and International Jazz artists. The programming - unique to the CTIJF is made up of a 50/50 split between South African artists and international artists respectively. The festival annually boasts 5 stages with more than 40 artists performing over 2 nights. The festival hosts in excess of 37,000 music lovers over the 2 show days.

Some of the top musicians that will perform this year are:

- ALISTAIR IZOBELL (South Africa)
- AMANDA BLACK (South Africa)
- BILLY MONAMA: GRAZROOTS PROJECT (South Africa)
- BLINKY BILL & SIBOT'S AFROFUNK SPACESHIP (Kenya / South Africa)
- CLAIRE PHILLIPS (South Africa)
- CORINNE BAILEY RAE (United Kingdom)
- espYOUNGLEGENG 2018 winner - JARRAD RICKETTS (South Africa)
- JORDAN RAKEI (New Zealand)
- KEENAN AHRENS QUINTET (South Africa)
- LOUIS MOHOLO - MOHOLO presents 5 BLOKES 1 DOLL (South Africa)
- MABUTA (South Africa)

- MI CASA (South Africa)
- MILES MOSLEY (United States of America)
- MULATU ASTATKE (Ethiopia)
- NDUDUZO MAKHATHINI: INNER DIMENSIONS COLLECTIVE (South Africa / Swiss)
- NICHOLAS PAYTON: AFRO-CARIBBEAN MIXTAPE (United States of America)
- SEKUNJALO EDUJAZZ BAND (South Africa)
- THE SETTLERS HIGH SCHOOL BAND (South Africa)
- SEU JORGE presents THE LIFE AQUATIC / A TRIBUTE TO DAVID BOWIE (Brazil)
- SISONKE XONTI (South Africa)
- THE FEYA FAKU SPIRIT UNIT (South Africa)
- THE LOUIZ BANKS QUARTET (India)
- THE SOIL (South Africa)
- TROMBONE SHORTY (United States of America)
- VIJAY IYER SEKTET (United States of America)
- INCOGNITO (United Kingdom)
- MANNY WALTERS (South Africa)
- MIGUEL ATWOOD-FERGUSON: SUITE FOR MA DUKES (United States of America)
- N8N (Belgium)
- SIBUSISO MASHILOANE (South Africa)
- SIMPHIWE DANA (South Africa)
- THE LIBERATION PROJECT ACOUSTIC BAND (South Africa)
- THE SURGE (South Africa / Russia / Slovakia / Morocco / United States of America / Kyrgyzstan)
- THE BOY'S DOIN' IT "A CELEBRATION OF HUGH MASEKELA'S LIFE AND MUSIC (South Africa)
- TANK AND THE BANGAS (United States of America)
- MASEGO (United States of America)
- BLACK MOTION (South Africa)

Luis Fonzi's daughter loves Justin Bieber collaboration

Luis Fonzi's collaboration with Justin Bieber earned him a lot of "cool points" with his daughter. The 39-year-old singer - who has Mikaela, six, and Rocco, 14 months, with wife Agueda Lopez - has been working in the music industry for two decades but it's only recently his little girl has started to like his songs, largely thanks to 'Despacito' and his new duet with Demi Lovato, 'Echame la Culpa (Blame Me)'. Asked if Mikaela is a fan of his music, he said: "I think that happened this past year. 'The fact we did a remix of 'Despacito' with Justin Bieber gave me a lot of cool points, especially with her little friends from school."

"My collaboration with Demi Lovato also gave me more cool points. 'Mikaela is very shy and gets embarrassed when they talk about Dad the singer, but she is enjoying it because she loves music.' Because of the huge success of 'Despacito', Luis has been away from his family a lot over the last year, but they do their best to stay in touch as often as possible. Agueda told Britain's HELLO! magazine: "Mikaela asks me a lot about her dad - where is he, in which city, in what country. 'But we are super proud of him and very grateful to God for all the blessings he has brought to our lives. 'Even when he's away, our family bonds are very strong,



Justin Bieber

unbreakable. "We talk and do FaceTime every day." And having children has given Luis a new focus and purpose with his career. He said: "I've been in the business for 20 years and each stage has been different. "I'm still as hungry for success now but I have a different purpose. It's to achieve it not only for me, but for my family, to leave my children a good legacy so that one day they will be proud of their dad." — Bang Showbiz

Kuwait Times celebrates 15 years of 'Kuwait Beautiful & Green' painting competition

Sponsored by: Zain and Americana (Hardee's)
Hosted by: Symphony Style Hotel



With the aim of boosting environmental public awareness, developing an aesthetic sense and caring for environmental issues in Kuwait, Kuwait Times' 15th students' art competition seeks to invest in the success so far achieved since the contest's inception in 1994. In 2017, over 15,000 students aged 6 to 18 from over 135 public, private, Arab and foreign schools in Kuwait participated. We hope participants in 2018 will exceed 18,000.

Kuwait Times has been organizing the 'Kuwait Beautiful & Green' students' art competition with the aim of promoting students' environmental awareness and encouraging them to effectively take part in various environment-oriented activities with an ultimate aim of acquiring more knowledge and skills, sense of responsibility as well as positive attitudes. It also aims at boosting the principles of moderation and tolerance among students and encourages them to be ambitious, protect public resources and take part in sustainability-related initiatives that will help protect the environment.

Environmental protection is not just a motto or meaningless words. It is in fact an integral part of our history and heritage. It is a way of life because we have been and will always be committed to peaceful co-existence between man and nature.

All students aged 6 to 18 in various stages are invited to participate in the competition with drawings and paintings expounding their environmental passions, as the environment is base of sus-

tainable development, in the form of planting rather than desertification, cleanliness rather than negligence and public safety rather than lethal pollution. This is how we want our Kuwait to be - a green, beautiful

oasis that reflects the beauty and high taste within our souls. The competition is open to all students and schools. Students can collect drawing sheets from Kuwait Times' reception or fill the application form so

we can send you the drawing sheets. For more information, you can call us directly, follow us on Instagram and Facebook or message us by WhatsApp on 67004268.





Zimbabwe music icon Oliver 'Tuku' Mtukudzi plays his guitar during a rehearsal with a group of young musicians who are incubated at his Pakare Paye Arts and Music Centre in Norton. — AFP photos

'Drop in, play, learn': Zimbabwe music legend Tuku's open door to new talent

If you've ever dreamt of playing alongside Afro-jazz legend Oliver "Tuku" Mtukudzi, just drop into his studio in Zimbabwe and pick up an instrument. Mtukudzi—one of Africa's most famous and admired musicians—has an open-door policy at his arts center in Norton, 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of Harare. Aged 65 and with more than 60 albums under his belt, the self-taught singer and guitarist says the center provides a home for all musicians, particularly youngsters who often face disapproval from their parents at home. Named "Pakare Paye",

he began singing still existed. Zimbabwean parents often frown on the arts as a profession, preferring their children take up careers in the law or medicine.

For decades, young artists seeking a supportive mentor would head to Mtukudzi's house in the town of Kwekwe, carrying their song scripts or just showing off their dancing and choreography stunts. His daughter Shami jokes that "our house was the first arts center", recounting how the home was flooded with aspiring artists.

"These children are not appreciated at home, they are looking for somewhere to be appreciated and I offer that," Mtukudzi said. "Then I thought—let me look for a place where I can attend to the youngsters." Set on a three-hectare (seven-acre) plot and equipped with a recording studio, multiple indoor and outdoor stages and accommodation chalets, the center has fostered many musicians and performers since it was opened in 2004.

Mtukudzi allows students to just come along and try out instruments. He listens carefully and when he has identified which ones they are good at, he encourages them to practise hard. His approach is to set them on the path to becoming self-taught, like he was, rather than being the teacher, but he helps them later on to fine-tune their talent. Guitarist Rodwell Roda, 33, is one graduate who started music when he was just 14 years old. "My parents did not want me to play a guitar," said Roda, who now plays in Tuku's resident band, The Black Spirits. "So I used to borrow a guitar from friends and practice outside. "The moment I came here, I started to learn more things, and learnt to be more humble... It doesn't mean to play with him, you have to have pride."

“We don't deal with education here—we deal with talent”

which translates as "same old place" in the Shona language, it charges no fees, employs no tutors and follows no curriculum.

"This is not a school," Mtukudzi told AFP during a break from rehearsals at the sprawling complex of thatched and brick one-storey buildings. "We don't deal with education here—we deal with talent."

A college says, 'we will teach you' but we say 'you have got it, let's learn'. The husky-voiced Mtukudzi, whose stage name is Tuku, said he started to plan the center after realizing the problems he confronted in the 1970s when



Zimbabwe music icon Oliver 'Tuku' Mtukudzi speaks with Agence France-Presse as a portrait of his late son Sam Mtukudzi looks over his shoulder after a rehearsal with a group of young musicians incubated at his Pakare Paye Arts and Music Centre in Norton.

A 'free platform'

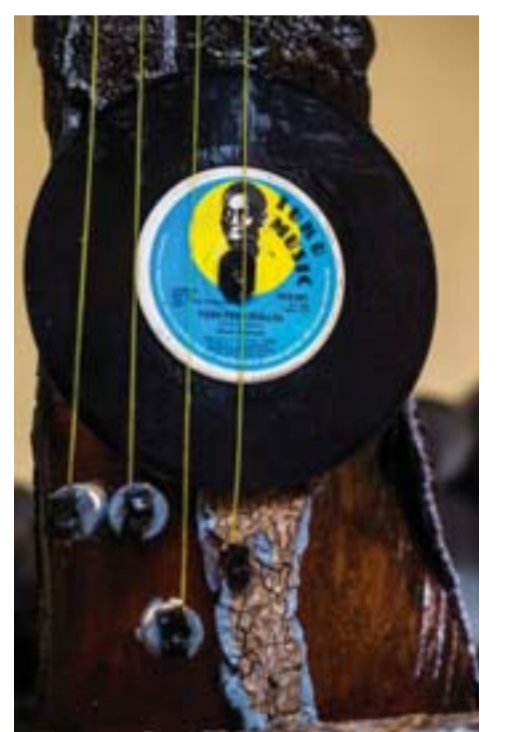
Fiona Gwena, 26, is another graduate who also now sings with Tuku and plays percussion. "I just had a passion for music so after school I heard of this place and came here in 2012. It's a free platform," said Gwena. Three years ago, Bright Shumba, 31, quit his job as a heavy-duty machine operator in the western coal-mining town of Hwange to pursue his dream. "My wife and mother didn't understand that I chose to leave my job (for music). Luckily I met Tuku. To me he is not just an artist... he is like a spiritual father," said Shumba. Using his personal savings, Mtukudzi bought an old factory, tore it down and built the centre, which also teaches

sound engineering, theatre and dance. Funding now comes from income earned on the chalets as well as a traditional restaurant open to locals and tourists. "I want to showcase what they can do, and from there I inspire them by appreciating them," said Mtukudzi.

Shrugs off celebrity

Through nearly four grim decades of brutal repression of dissent and economic collapse under former president Robert Mugabe, Mtukudzi has come to embody achievement. He made his first recording in 1973 at the then Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation.

He later toured the world and is still releas-



ing albums—the 67th named "Hanya'Ga" meaning "Concern" in February—and he was rated by Forbes magazine one of Africa's 10 most bankable artists. But he shrugs off such acclaim. "I don't even understand the word celebrity," he said. Instead he sets great store by the words of his mother, who said that he would never sing a note better than his first scream after his birth. "It means when I was born I had already started singing. This is who I am." — AFP

BONO SORRY AFTER BULLYING CLAIMS AT ONE CHARITY

U2 front man Bono has apologized after claims emerged yesterday that workers at his ONE charity were subjected to a culture of abuse and bullying. The Irish singer, 57, said he was "deeply sorry" and "furious" about the allegations, which appeared in The Mail yesterday newspaper, and pledged to meet victims to apologize in person. The British tabloid detailed a string of incidents, including claims from a married woman who said she was demoted after refusing to have sex with a Tanzanian member of parliament.

"We are all deeply sorry. I hate bullying, can't stand it," Bono said in a statement. "The poorest people in the poorest places being bullied by their circumstance is the reason we set up ONE. "So to discover last November that there were serious and multiple allegations of bullying in our office in Johannesburg left me and the ONE board reeling and furious." The

board of directors includes former British prime minister David Cameron, Facebook chief Sheryl Sandberg and African telecoms magnate Mo Ibrahim. Bono said things had gone "badly wrong" and he needed to "take some responsibility for that". He added he would like to meet the complainants and "apologize in person".

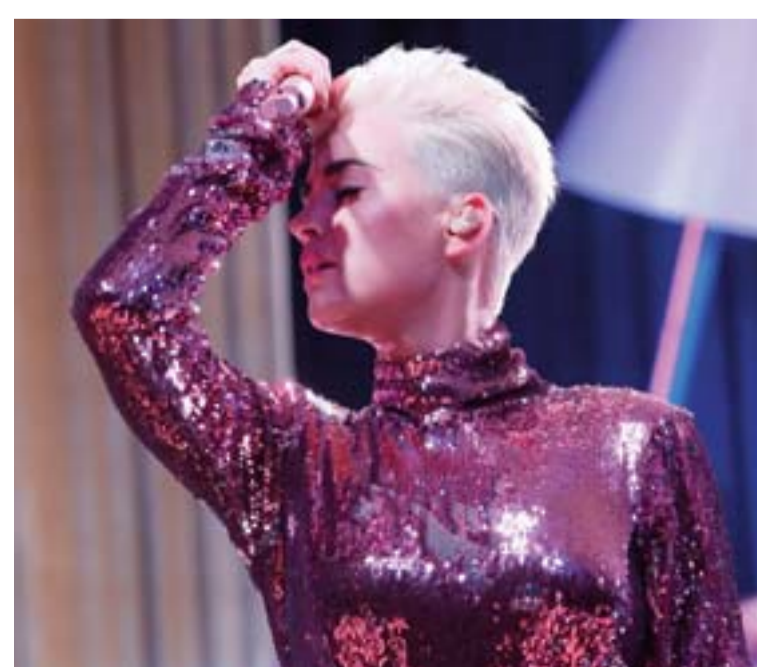
The Mail yesterday also claimed that ONE failed to pay South African taxes and said it was alleged to have illegally employed foreign workers on tourist visas. ONE describes itself as a campaigning and advocacy organization taking action to end extreme poverty and preventable disease, particularly in Africa. Bono co-founded the non-governmental organization in 2004. Its headquarters are in Washington. The NGO's president Gayle Smith said she was "troubled" by the allegations. She said an investigation found evidence of "unprofessional conduct" as well as "bullying and belittling of



Bono

staff" between late 2011 and 2015. Lawyers acting for seven former ONE staff last week launched a compensation case, seeking damages for "emotional, physical and psychological abuse". The Mail yesterday reported. — AFP

NUN FIGHTING SALE OF CONVENT TO KATY PERRY DIES IN COURT



Katy Perry performs during Byron Allen's Oscar Gala Viewing Party to Support The Children's Hospital Los Angeles at the Beverly Wilshire Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

An 89-year-old Roman Catholic nun who has battled pop star Katy Perry for years over the sale of a Los Angeles convent collapsed and died during a court appearance, according to media reports and supporters. Sister Catherine Rose Holzman, one of two aging nuns who were fighting the sale of the 8-acre (3-hectare) convent, died on Friday during related legal proceedings in Los Angeles County Court. Fox affiliate KTTV reported.

"To Katy Perry, please stop. It's not doing anyone any good except hurting a lot of people," Holzman had earlier told KTTV as she entered the courthouse with Sister Rita Callanan. On Saturday a website set up to back the nuns' legal battle carried a picture of Holzman with the caption, "Rest with the angels our most precious treasure." A spokeswoman for Perry,

one of the world's top-selling pop stars, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Los Angeles County medical examiner and the Archdiocese of Los Angeles did not respond to queries about the cause of death.

At the center of the legal dispute is the property Holzman and other members of the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary had once lived in. Holzman and Callanan, among five nuns who had lived at the convent, had sought to sell the property for \$15.5 million to restaurateur Dana Hollister, who wanted to convert the property into a hotel.

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles sued to block the sale in 2015, arguing the nuns did not have authority to sell the property to Hollister. A judge ruled in 2016 that the sale was invalid, paving the way for Perry to buy the site from the archdiocese. — Reuters



This image released by ABC shows, from left, Lionel Richie, Katy Perry, Ryan Seacrest and Luke Bryan in New York. — AP

ONE-TIME STAR 'AMERICAN IDOL' TRIES FOR A SECOND ACT ON ABC

In its heyday, "American Idol" dominated television and online chatter. It even inspired a New Yorker cartoonist. "The voices in my head want to sing on 'American Idol,'" a patient confides to his shrink in a 2006 Leo Cullum panel, proof of its cultural imprint. Two years after the singing contest ended its run on Fox amid dwindling ratings and steep production costs, it's getting the chance to prove itself again in an ABC version debuting 8 p.m. EST yesterday. In the early episodes, the show is marginally revised and instantly familiar.

This "American Idol" retains the show's original host, Ryan Seacrest, along with the same logo and production companies. Also intact is the goal of finding a music star — one such as Carrie Underwood, who built a blockbuster career after winning "Idol" in 2005 and whose voice-over opens the ABC show. The reboot's early episodes include pre-taped auditions held in cities including New York; Savannah, Georgia; Los Angeles and New Orleans. We see, as before, crowds of would-be contestants eager to prove they have what it takes for a "golden ticket to Hollywood" and next-round tryouts.

"There's been a lot of talk about how is this show different," Seacrest said at a news conference with next-generation judges Luke Bryan, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie. "You've got three different faces. You have different contestants. But to change the show drastically in terms of for-

mat, I think, would be a mistake." (The show arrives under a #MeToo shadow for Seacrest. A woman who worked as his wardrobe stylist at E! News nearly a decade ago suggested he engaged in inappropriate behavior, which Seacrest has denied. The E! channel said an investigation found insufficient evidence to support the claims.)

For the judges, the new "American Idol" represents a chance to put their stamp on a job held by a succession of celebrity panelists. "I think we can inspire people and show people how it's done too, in our own way," Bryan told The Associated Press. Richie said the goal is to find more than a singer: "We are looking for an artist, and that's going to require our expertise." The judges also may help the contestants set new goals, Perry said.

Right decision

"Some people, they don't know that there are other lanes in the freeway so it's not just pop stardom," she said. "Maybe you're a Broadway star, maybe you're in voiceover, maybe you're gonna do jingles. Maybe you're a songwriter. ... There's so many different ways to go at it." What ABC wants is more predictable: Ratings proof that it made the right decision in reviving "American Idol," which first debuted in 2002 with judges Paula Abdul, Simon Cowell and Randy Jackson. It reigned as TV's No. 1 series for nine years, peaking with 30 million viewers an episode in 2006. — AP



A giant SOS carved into an oil palm plantation in Sumatra by Lithuanian artist Ernest Zacharevic to draw attention to the damage caused by deforestation to wildlife and indigenous people in Indonesia. — Reuters

Women subvert domesticity in US art show



A woman views the artwork, "Dollhouse," by artist Miriam Schapiro, in the exhibition, "Women House," featuring global artists and their reinterpretations about women in the home, during a preview showing at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC. (Center) Museum guests walk past a yurt titled, "Topak Ev," by artist Nil Yalter, as they tour the exhibition. (Right) The artwork "Mr Siit," by artist Sheila Pepe, appears in the exhibition. — AFP photos

Is home a burden, tied to endless chores and confinement, or a liberating shelter? Turns out it can be both for women artists exploring and deconstructing notions of domestic space and gender in a show opening Friday at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington. Running across several generations and featuring 36 international artists working in various media, the result is full of humor—both the dark and the laugh-out-loud kind. In "Housewives-Kitchen Apron" (1975), Austrian photographer Birgit Jurgenssen carries a literal "bun in the oven."

A loaf sticks out of an open door to an oven she carries with a strap around her neck. It's a

heavy, awkward apron. The show could not be more topical in a #MeToo era punctuated by revelations of widespread sexual misconduct and abuse of women across multiple industries, and coincides with International Women's Day. Traditional gender roles become a chess game in British artist Rachel Whiteread's 2005 sculpture "Modern Chess Set," where the husband's seating areas and television face off against the wife's trash cans and dusters. The husband's "king" is the fridge. The woman's? The stove. "The artists we chose, they are indeed interested in gender. But sometimes it's poetic... everything is not brutally feminist," said Camille Morineau, who curated the show with Lucia

Pesapane, both from the Monnaie de Paris, the French national mint.

Breaking out, post-#MeToo

In one especially jolting installation, London-based Palestinian Mona Hatoum transforms ordinary kitchen utensils into a menacing situation. A live current hums loudly and runs through the instruments laid out on a table behind horizontal metal wire, lighting up colanders and graters. "Since I was a kid, I always had fantasies of anthropomorphizing objects around me," said Laurie Simmons, whose "Walking House" (1989) shows a heavy tilting home carried by a svelte pair of legs. "That kind of collides with my idea

that women have a way of morphing into where they live and what they have, and they identify themselves oftentimes through objects and a sense of place and a sense of home," she told AFP. "Women House," as the exhibition is titled, was inspired by a groundbreaking 1972 Los Angeles show organized by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro that explored similar themes. Some of the works here poignantly reflect on the sometimes oppressive nature of women's condition, and their struggle to make a break. In her 1998 video "Hammering Out (an old argument)," Italy's Monica Bonvicini shows a woman's arm using a hammer to repeatedly pound on a wall in a desperate effort to break it. The woman only

manages to expose the underlying brick. The work is juxtaposed with one by Dutch artist Lydia Schouten, shown in a tight-fitting white dance outfit rubbing against the bars of a color-coated iron cage.

There's also some of Louise Bourgeois's "Femme Maison," where women literally become a house, or a house becomes a woman, as well as sketches for Niki de Saint Phalle's various "Nana Maisons" (Chick House). Morineau said it's high time for women to get the place they deserve in the canon of art history. "We should be allowing new names, theories, movements and vocabulary to enter this space," she said in an interview. The show runs through May 28. — AFP



Museum guests walk past the artwork, 'Body Architecture - Collective Wear 4 Persons,' by Lucy Orta, as part of the exhibition.



Artwork titled 'Modern Chess Set,' by artist Rachel Whiteread, appears in the exhibition.

FEMALE MECHANIC BREAKS SOCIAL BARRIER IN WAR-TORN YEMEN

Dressed in a baggy jumpsuit and a grey paisley veil, 24-year-old Dalia al-Moqadam is an understated pioneer in Yemen a rare female mechanic in a conservative Middle Eastern country at war. This week in the rebel-controlled capital Sanaa, Moqadam's cavernous garage full of gleaming cars—was a refuge from the three-year conflict that has claimed thousands of lives. For this young Yemeni woman, the biggest worry when starting out was that society, not the violence, would make it hard for her to take on the challenge and follow her passion.

"The difficulties that I faced in the beginning were first of all the field itself—it's cumbersome. Then there was a fear of how society would view a woman working in this field—would they accept it?" Moqadam recalled. "And what if

society doesn't accept the idea? Would I be able to work in the field that I love?" She said that her family and fellow mechanical engineering students at Sanaa University, from which she graduated in 2017, fully supported her entrance into the field.

"But others reject the idea because they don't have an accurate idea of what mechanics do," Moqadam told AFP. "They think it's all strenuous body work, and that it's not a suitable field for girls. The society just finds the concept very weird," she added, standing in front of a Porsche Cayenne. Yemen, an impoverished Muslim-majority country on the tip of the Arabian Peninsula, came bottom in the rankings of the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report released in November.

The Geneva-based organization's report,

which tracks disparities in education, health, economic opportunity and political empowerment, placed Yemen below other conservative Middle East states such as Saudi Arabia and Iran. Yet no one bats an eye as Moqadam shuffles around the workplace, her navy and tan jumpsuit customized with a skirt instead of pants, international car logos and the garage name Natco embroidered across her back. She checks an oil leak, swiping brown liquid with a bare finger, then dons thick mechanic gloves to work under the hood.

'Not exclusive to men'

At the auto shop, located in the upscale southern district of Hadda, clients consult with the young woman about their vehicles. "Honestly, I was taken aback by Dalia—by her

expertise and professionalism in this mechanical work. Despite her age and gender, she's taken on this tough occupation," customer Emad al-Azzab told AFP. "She proved that this job is not exclusive to men," he added, smiling. Wearing a smart suit and a pressed shirt, the general manager of the repair centre, Majid Othman, said Moqadam had brought new ideas to the workplace.

"We admire Dalia's creativity with mechanics," Othman told AFP. He said that while it was new for "a conservative society" like in Yemen to have a woman doing the job of a mechanic, it was a good thing, especially for female drivers. "There are a lot of women driving now in the capital, and so it could be really positive for the maintenance sector to have women available. The female clients may feel

more comfortable dealing with another woman than a man," he said. Moqadam said it is just "a matter of time" before society gets used to the idea of seeing a woman working under the hood. "I was the only girl in my class," she said. After graduating in 2017, Moqadam took on various traineeships at automotive centers, but a full-time job is more elusive. The devastating war and a Saudi-led blockade aimed at weakening the Huthi rebels and restoring the government to power has decimated the economy. Moqadam, who describes mechanics as "awesome", still has an uphill battle when it comes to securing her role in an all-male field. There are currently no women enrolled in mechanical engineering at her old university, but Moqadam said it was a supportive environment. "It was society that looked at me strangely." — AFP

Lifestyle

MONDAY, MARCH 12, 2018



Traditional boats are anchored at a small port during sunset on Serangan island in Denpasar on Indonesia's resort island of Bali. — AFP

Mexican regional cuisine drives booming food scene



A woman prepares meals with mole at a restaurant during the Mole Fair in San Pedro Atocpan, Milpa Alta borough, Mexico.



A vendor places meat and sausages at the food zone of Oaxaca's market, in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Sure, every foodie loves tacos and enchiladas. But what about lesser-known Mexican classics like cochinita pibil, the impossibly flavorful, slow-roasted meat dish from the Yucatan peninsula? Or escamoles, the ant larvae from central Mexico known as "insect caviar"? Or empanadas de mole, pastries filled with the savory chocolate sauce of the Oaxaca region? Mexico has always been a major player on the world food scene. But increasingly, top chefs are embracing and promoting the country's richly varied regional cuisine, driving the Mexican gastronomic experience to a whole new level.

One of the poster boys for the trend is Alejandro Ruiz, whose Mexico City restaur-

ant Guzina Oaxaca drew a rave review in The New York Times with its "chic interpretations of traditional classics." Ruiz comes from the village of La Raya in the southern state of Oaxaca, where he grew up grinding corn and cooking for his family to help his mother, who worked full-time washing clothes. His restaurant, which opened in 2014, is a celebration of his home state, a mountainous region known for its huge diversity of ingredients and deep culinary traditions. "Where I come from, the kitchen is the most important part of the home," Ruiz told AFP. "What I do (in the kitchen) is who I am, it's where I was born, it's my mother's milk. It's in my DNA. What's my identity? Oaxaca."

'Whole other level of flavor'

Oaxaca isn't the only region whose traditional cuisine has been elevated to new levels of chic. Mexico stretches from the deserts of the northern border to the tropical forests of the south, with long Caribbean and Pacific coastlines in between, giving it immense biodiversity and a sprawling palette of ingredients. Its flavors are also shaped by its complex history, blending influences from its many indigenous groups, the Spanish conquistadors, European elites, slaves from Africa, immigrants from all over and the ever-present United States. Laura Siciliano-Rosen, co-founder of the food blog Eat Your World, loses count listing her culinary adventures in Mexico's myriad regions and sub-regions. Dining in Mexico, she says, one minute you can be eating sinfully delicious tacos. Then, a few hours by bus—or a few Mexico City blocks and market stands away—"suddenly you're eating turkey and hard-boiled eggs and these really rich pastes, 'recados,' from the Yucatan peninsula, which is just a whole other level of flavor that only exists there." Mexican food's strength is its "regionality," she says—something that is only just starting to be exported abroad. "The more people are learning about the regionality of the cuisine and how distinct and complex it is, the more they're blown away, like 'Wow, this is real Mexican food,'" she says.

Peruvian fusion, Mexican diversity

William Drew, of the prestigious World's 50 Best Restaurants list, says this is exactly what has propelled Mexican restaurants onto the closely watched ranking. "The diversity is extraordinary," he says. "If you think you know what Mexican cuisine is, then you probably haven't experienced enough of it." Mexico has two restaurants in the current top 50, which remains dominated by Europe: Enrique Olvera's Pujol and Jorge Vallejo's Quintonil, both in Mexico City. But Mexico's top chefs are nervously eyeing their col-

leagues to south, in Peru—whose fusion-fueled cuisine makes it a rival contender for the title of Latin America's hottest food destination. Peru's mix of Andean, European and Asian influences—symbolized in recipes like "ceviche," a refreshing dish of raw fish marinated in lime—has made its cuisine all the rage. In fact, Peru has two spots on Restaurant's current top 10: Virgilio Martinez's Central at number five, and Mitsuharu Tsumura's Maido at number eight. The top Mexican restaurant, Pujol, comes in at 20.

Street food

That is making some people in Mexico nervous. Mauricio Avila works at the Mexican culture ministry, and his job is to compile and preserve Mexico's gastronomic heritage. "Mexicans love food, and we're proud of our food, but we don't advertise it. We've always believed it wasn't fancy enough for foreigners," he says. His office is actively encouraging the trend of celebrating Mexico's traditional regional cuisines. The government has released a 78-volume collection on "Indigenous and Popular Cuisine"—each dedicated to a place, an ingredient or an ethnic group. It is also working on an index of ingredients.

Sasha Correa, a Venezuelan gastronomy expert at Spain's renowned Basque Culinary Center, says Mexico has an allure all its own. "In a short time, Mexico has not only joined the phenomenon (of high-end dining in Latin America), it has done it with force, personality and a lot of distinctive elements," she says. And pity the misguided foodie who travels to Mexico City and only eats in trendy restaurants, when it is bursting with amazing food at nearly every street corner. "An ideal trip to Mexico City is doing a mix" of the two, says blogger Siciliano-Rosen. "But if you can't do the high-end, just do the low-end 100 percent, because there's so much variety, it's so accessible, and you can try anything and it's all going to be good." — AFP



This combination of pictures shows different kinds of Mexican dishes at Mexican chef Alejandro Ruiz's Guzina Oaxaca restaurant, in Mexico City. — AFP photos

1923 LEICA FETCHES WORLD RECORD AT VIENNA AUCTION



A 1923 Leica camera fetched a world record 2.4 million euros (\$2.9 million) at auction Saturday in Vienna, the city's Westlicht museum said. The minimum price had been set at 400,000 euros but the Leica O-series no. 122, one of a 25-strong series of prototypes made two years before the reputed German marque began retailing, was the subject of ferocious bidding given its pristine condition. It finally went to an Asian bidder, the museum said, adding there only three of the series remained in their original condition.

The previous record for a 1923 Leica saw a buyer spend 2.16 million euros in 2012, Westlicht said. Andreas Kaufmann, an Austrian, bought the iconic high-end marque favored by pioneering photojournalists such as Robert Capa and Henri Cartier-Bresson in 2005 to relaunch a company, one of the world's oldest photography brands which was struggling at the time. — AFP