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Hoveizeh unveiling part of arms exhibition in Tehran

Interior ministry denies general amnesty rumors

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The interior ministry has denied social media rumors which claimed an amnesty for visa violators has been announced from Jan 29, 2019 till February 24, 2019. “This report is untrue and lacks credibility,” the ministry’s relations and security department said in a statement yesterday, noting that it would launch an awareness campaign ahead of making any announcement.

Notably, the interior ministry had announced a general amnesty last year between Jan 29 and Feb 22, which allowed expatriates in violation of residency laws to either leave the country through any port without getting permission from any authority and without paying any penalties or legalize their status and continue residing in Kuwait after paying all fines and obtaining a valid visa without being referred to the investigation department. The amnesty was later extended for two more months.

TEHRAN: Iran announced the “successful test” of a new cruise missile with a range of over 1,350 km yesterday, coinciding with celebrations for the country’s 1979 Islamic revolution. “The test of the Hoveizeh cruise missile was carried out successfully at a range of 1,200 kilometers and accurately hit the set target,” Defense Minister Amir Hatami said, quoted on state television which broadcast footage of its launch. “It can be ready in the shortest possible time and flies at a very low altitude,” he said.

Hatami described the Hoveizeh as the “long arm of the Islamic Republic of Iran” in defending itself. It is part of the Soumar group of cruise missile, first unveiled in 2015 with a range of 700 km, according to the minister. The Hoveizeh unveiling was part of an arms exhibition titled “40 years of defensive achievements” held in Tehran. Friday marked the beginning of 10 days of celebrations of the Islamic revolution that ousted the pro-Western shah.

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An image grab taken from a video broadcast yesterday reportedly shows the testing of a new cruise missile with a range of more than 1,350 km. — AFP

Qatar punch above weight; Amir sends congratulations

ABU DHABI: Coming from nowhere to win the Asian Cup is just part of the process for Qatar as they look ahead to this year’s Copa America and then the big one – a home World Cup in 2022. Felix Sanchez’s team are keeping their expectations in check for the South American championship despite snatching the Asian title from a lowly world ranking of 93. But it is hard to overstate their achievement in going from zero points at the last Asian Cup to their first continental title in record-breaking style. It also means that resource-rich Qatar are finally making headlines for the right reasons after the turbulence that has surrounded their successful bid to host the World Cup.

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Friday sent a cable to Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to congratulate him on Qatar’s victory. In his cable, the Amir hailed the outstanding performance of the Qatari team during the competition, which qualified it to grab the trophy. He also lauded the great spirit of all the participating teams. He described Qatar’s win as a victory for Gulf

and Arab football and an embodiment of the high level it has reached. HH the Amir also expressed appreciation for the United Arab Emirates’ preparations and its employment of all potentials to render the championship a real success which helped materialize its aspired noble goals.

HH Sheikh Sabah also sent a cable of congratulations to UAE President Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan to congratulate him on the successful hosting of the 17th AFC Asian Cup. He praised the great efforts exerted by the authorities in sisterly UAE to set the stage for the Asian youth to meet at this championship and realize the desired targets of sports. He also commended the fair play and high spirit of sports that featured in the matches and provided great joy to lovers of football inside and outside Asia. He expressed best wishes to President Khalifa and the people of UAE.

HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables of congratulations to Sheikh Tamim and President Khalifa.

Almoez Ali’s bicycle kick epitomized a stylish win as it sparked Qatar’s 3-1 final victory over Japan and broke Ali Daei’s 23-year-old mark for goals at single Asian Cup. “I’m sorry for breaking Mr Daei’s record,” a humble Ali said after scoring his ninth of the tournament. “I expected to score goals – maybe three or four – but I didn’t expect to score nine,” he added.

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DOHA: Qatar’s Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani welcomes the Qatari national football team at Doha airport yesterday. — AFP

Man smuggles leopard cub on plane to India

NEW DELHI: A passenger who smuggled a month-old leopard cub in hand luggage on a flight from Bangkok to Chennai has been arrested, Indian authorities said yesterday. The cub, weighing just over one kilogram, was found in a plastic grocery basket hidden inside a bag after the passenger arrived in India on the Thai Airways flight. Officials said they grew suspicious after hearing sounds coming from the bag,



CHENNAI: This handout picture taken yesterday shows a leopard cub after it was seized from a checked baggage of a passenger. — AFP

and stopped the passenger as he tried to rush out of the terminal in the capital city of southern Tamil Nadu state.

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Private TV channel launched in Kuwait

KUWAIT: Kuwait Media House Company yesterday launched the “Sawt Al-Arab” television channel in collaboration with its European sister concern Sawt Al-Arab for Media. The company’s Chairman Sheikh Sabah Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah said at a ceremony marking the occasion at the new station’s studios in Kuwait yesterday that the channel would broadcast 24 hours from the country.

The station’s general manager and chief editor Hisham Al-Diwan said “free media under the current circumstances is not an easy profession”. However, freedom that exists in Kuwait “has largely helped us enjoy unique freedom in news broadcasting”, which is unavailable in many other countries, he added. The station’s staff has been working over the past four years in preparation for the 24-hour broadcasting via Al-Shahed satellite channel. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Media House Company launches a private TV channel yesterday. — KUNA

Egypt unveils more than 40 Greek mummies

MINYA, Egypt: Researchers in Egypt have discovered more than 40 mummies at a burial site in central Egypt dating to the Ptolemaic era, the antiquities ministry said yesterday. The mummies, including adults, children and animals, had been laid on the floor or in open clay coffins in a crumbling underground chamber in Minya governorate, said Antiquities Minister Khaled El-Enany. “So far we have more than 40 mummies,” he told officials and journalists during a ceremony at the Tunah Al-Gabal site,

260 km south of Cairo.

Archaeologist Rami Rasmi told AFP that “40 mummies were discovered, including 12 children and six animals, while the rest were adult men and women”. While mummification is mostly associated with ancient Egypt, the practice continued under the kingdom founded by Ptolemy, a successor to Alexander the Great, which lasted from 323 BC to 30 BC. The Minya graves, discovered during an excavation that started in February last year, are in a communal tomb “probably belonging to a petty bourgeois family”, the ministry said.

Archaeologist Mohamed Ragab said two tombs were discovered nine meters underground and contained more than six rooms. Shards of pottery and pieces of papyrus found at the site helped researchers to determine its date, said the head of Egypt’s

Supreme Council of Antiquities Mostafa Waziri. Ancient Greek rulers reached the height of their power between the conquests of Alexander the Great and the rise of the Roman empire.

The mummies, 12 of which were of children, were discovered inside four, nine-meter deep burial chambers. The identities of the mummies were still unknown, said Mostafa Waziri, secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities. “We have not found names written in hieroglyphics,” he said, adding it was obvious from the mummification method that the individuals whose remains were found had to some extent held important or prestigious positions. Visitors, including ambassadors from several countries, gathered at the discovery site where 40 of the mummies were exhibited during the announcement ceremony. — Agencies



TUNAH AL-GABAL, Egypt: Newly-discovered mummies wrapped in linen found in burial chambers dating to the Ptolemaic era are seen at a necropolis in southern Minya province yesterday. — AFP

Souq Al-Mubarakiya: Traditional market with modern appeal

Historical market continues to stand the test of time

KUWAIT: Most people in Kuwait tend to seek high-end malls and markets to spend their leisure time wandering about, shopping, or eating different assortments of meals. With that being said, Souq Al-Mubarakiya — a location steadfastly rooted in the past — still remains as a relevant market in our modern times. Souq Al-Mubarakiya was established some 120 years ago and it took its name from then Amir Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah who was the first to build a 'Kishk' (kiosk) after a year from his reign in 1897. Back then, the merchants in Mubarakiya used to import goods from Iraq, Africa, and India after they returned from their journeys and voyages abroad.

Mubarakiya market is well-known for being a place where families in Kuwait could enjoy shopping for traditional and modern clothing, eating a variety of cuisines ranging from Iranian, Indian, and Kuwaiti, exchanging currencies, and other activities. The market also consists of booths and shops selling dates, incense, perfumes. Al-Mubarakiya has gold market in the center and also it has shops selling kitchen tools, traditional Arab tea and coffee pots, and other attractive items. What makes Al-Mubarakiya eye-catching is that the market still retains its old aura despite the passage of time, making the location very popular among Gulf, Arab, and foreign tourists. While people from the older generations still frequent Al-Mubarakiya, the youth of today have become attached to the market, which saw in recent years the emergence of various outlets, selling numerous products and foods.

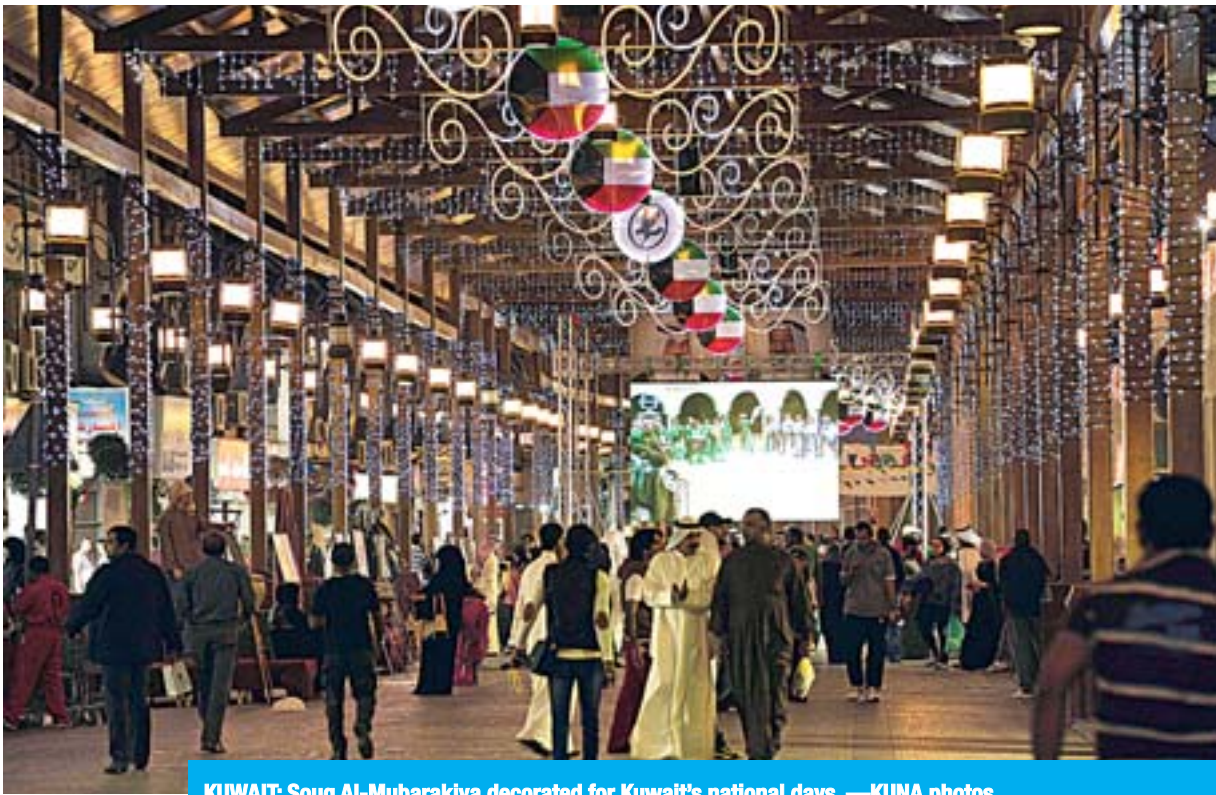
Dear to all

"Souq Al-Mubarakiya is very dear to Kuwaitis and expatriates alike," said Director General of the Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi in a statement. He revealed that the municipality of Kuwait was the author-

ity that handles the maintenance of the market and safe keep its facilities. Manfouhi added that the municipality also was in charge of modernizing facilities in Mubarakiya to accommodate the increasing number of people visiting the market, indicating that such effort won recognition from the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) secretariat last November.

Similarly, head of Kuwait markets development at the municipality Hassan Al-Kanderi said that the municipality — since establishment in April 13, 1930 — was tasked with safekeeping Al-Mubarakiya market. He pointed out that various strategies were implemented recently to upgrade services from installing shades to protect Al-Mubarakiya from weather shifts to establishing paths for the elderly and people with special needs. The development of the market is a great example of cooperation between the municipality and the private sector, affirmed Kanderi, adding that services will continue to be upgraded to tend to the needs of the increasing number of visitors.

Meanwhile, traditional and historical buildings, supervisor at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Abdullah Al-Bishi said that the council was sanctified by the Amiri Diwan to preserve traditional and historical land markets such as Souq Al-Mubarakiya. Al-Mubarakiya is one of the locations that still remains dear to the hearts of Kuwaitis and it is imperative to protect and safe keep this land market, said Al-Bishi. On the visual appeal of the market, historical researcher Hussein Al-Qattan said that Souq Al-Mubarakiya's overall layout was similar to the markets in old Kuwait. The hallways, the booths, and the streets all speak of the olden days, but the fact still remains that the Souq is here to stay for years to come, said Qattan who indicated that the market has in recent years renovated the original booth owned by the late



KUWAIT: Souq Al-Mubarakiya decorated for Kuwait's national days. —KUNA photos

Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Mubarak, which is another location of historical importance.

Only in Al-Mubarakiya

In regards to the inner activities of Al-Mubarakiya, shop owner Mahdi Al-Bahrani affirmed that there were products in the market that could not be found anywhere else in Kuwait. A number of most sought items could be found under one roof, which made Souq Al-Mubarakiya more important for local and foreign visitors, said Bahrani. The appeal of Mubarakiya went beyond the borders of the State of Kuwait with visitors

from around the world coming to enjoy their time there. Bahrani national Ahmad Bahazad said that he made a point to always visit Al-Mubarakiya, which is considered as an important Kuwaiti landmark. The place breathes of Kuwaiti history and thus it is important to maintain it, affirmed the GCC visitor. Reflecting the same sentiment, Omani Suleiman Al-Fajri said that he was amazed by Souq Al-Mubarakiya, which still has a traditional feeling to it. Fajri affirmed that the presence of different nationalities at the market displayed its importance both as a traditional market and a place for people to spend their free time. —KUNA



Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah's Kishk (kiosk) which was established some 120 years ago.



Souq Al-Mubarakiya decorated for Kuwait's national days.



Dates market at Souq Al-Mubarakiya.



Food market at Souq Al-Mubarakiya.



Goods displayed at a Souq Al-Mubarakiya shop.



Fish Market at Souq Al-Mubarakiya.



Fruits and vegetables displayed at Souq Al-Mubarakiya.



Goods displayed at a Souq Al-Mubarakiya shop.

Local

Kuwaiti men break the mold, seek to become topnotch chefs

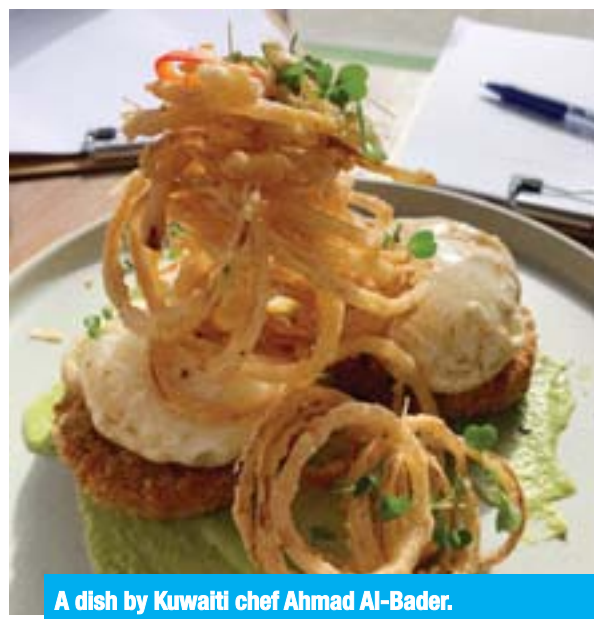
Chef credits female relatives for teaching him secrets to excellent cooking



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti chef Ziyad Hamada. —KUNA photos



A seafood dish by Kuwaiti chef Ziyad Hamada.



A dish by Kuwaiti chef Ahmad Al-Bader.



A dish prepared by Kuwaiti chef Ahmad Al-Bader.

KUWAIT: Usually men in Kuwait seek jobs that are more akin to their abilities and social status; however, there are many who venture forward towards realizing their dreams in becoming topnotch chefs. In their gatherings and even on social media, those Kuwaiti men not only know the names of local and international dishes, they also provide intricate details about how to cook the said meals and what were the best materials used to reach that 'finger-licking' taste.

"I first began cooking for family and friends before venturing on to the masses

and opening a restaurant," chef Ziyad Hamada said. Hamada, who specializes in Kuwaiti cuisine at a famous hotel, said that he was interested in becoming a chef since he was a little boy. The chef indicated that his first teachers were his female relatives who taught him the secrets of cooking excellent Kuwaiti meals. Hamada added that he was curious about the process of cooking, asking questions whenever he ate a delicious 'Machbous Dajaj' (rice topped with chicken) or any other Kuwaiti meal.

The Kuwaiti chef affirmed that he

developed his skills locally by joining the cooking staff of a well-known hotel and working for 13 hours daily. Chef Hamada also indicated he went on various specialized courses abroad to add to his arsenal. On his future plans, Hamada said that he would hope to open a cooking academy catering to the needs of local chefs and developing their skills in the food service sector.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Al-Bader, another Kuwaiti chef and owner of a number of local restaurants, said that the future of promoting the profession was in attract-

ing youths. He affirmed that becoming a chef was a legitimate profession for Kuwaitis that would reward those who have a passion for cooking, indicating that his parents and family played a huge role in encouraging him to seek work in the food industry. Bader also called on Kuwaiti youths to seek ventures beyond cooking whether they were interested in carpentry, sewing, or mechanics, stressing that it was about time that Kuwaitis pursued their passions rather than settling for jobs beyond their scope of interest. — KUNA



Kuwaiti chef Ahmad Al-Bader.

Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai organizes session

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of the Swiss Embassy Kuwait, the Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai (SISD), one of the leading boarding schools in the GCC region, organized an exclusive session to help parents and students learn more about the school and its unique offerings. The event was held at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Salwa. The school hopes to encourage Kuwaitis and other nationals to fulfill their academic dreams and consider a full boarding school in Dubai - which is 'closer' to their home - taking pride in its academic excellence and perfect facilities for students.

SISD offers a full boarding scheme which includes tuition, accommodation, all meals and snacks, airport transfers, three internal after-school activities per week, selection of weekend activities, evening activity program, student visa, books and exams fees, one set of uniform, use of all school facilities and dry cleaning.

SISD is a Dubai-based private school offering multi-lingual (French, German, English and Arabic) education through the full International Baccalaureate (PYP, MYP, DP) and Swiss Matura curriculum from Pre-KG to Grade 11 (Grade 12 opening in 2019 pending KHDA approval). It is a unique international day and boarding school where future generations are inspired to become confident and enthusiastic lifelong learners, ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges in a global world. The school is supported by the Swiss canton of Valais in terms of professional development for teachers, exchanges on best practices and learning resources.



KUWAIT: (From left) Nathan Edwards from SISD, the Ambassador of Switzerland Dr Benedict Gubler and Caterina Perlini from SISD.



(From left) The Ambassador of Switzerland Dr Benedict Gubler and Clethe Gubler with Fred Abou Saada and Caterina Perlini from SISD.

DUBAI SME, Kuwaiti Business Council discuss franchise rights

DUBAI: 'DUBAI SME' and the Kuwaiti Business Council in Dubai yesterday discussed operational aspects related to commercial franchise operations in a dialogue session attended by more than 120 interested entrepreneurs. The Dubai Entrepreneurship Academy, the educational arm of the Mohammed bin Rashid Establishment for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises, organized the session in order to convey the experience of entrepreneurs and share their successes and their entrepreneurial journey with those interested in entering the business world. The discussion focused on the importance of franchise and how it is different from other areas of investment such as commercial agencies and what is the right mechanism for obtaining successful commercial franchise opportunities. It also discussed the ability to assess franchise opportunities and reduce risks, as well as addressing the future of commercial excellence in light of the growth of e-commerce and the possibility of young people in the Gulf region to create brands that can expand regionally and globally. —KUNA



DUBAI: A decision panel held during the session. — KUNA

NBK grants John's wish to be a performer



KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues its 'I Dream to Be' initiative, a first-of-a-kind initiative that aims at granting wishes of children with severe illnesses around Kuwait, giving them the chance to live their dreams.

John Daniel, who is undergoing treatment at NBK Hospital, has always dreamt to sing and become a performer as it is his passion and number one hobby. NBK Public Relations approached the Kuwaiti talent Zak Al-Mousawi whom with his band helped in making John's dream come true.

NBK's family arranged a concert for John at NBK's Children Hospital attended by his friends, the doctoral board, patients and families, where he had the chance to sing and entertain. NBK managed to prepare an effigy for "HULK", John's favorite character as part of the surprise which encouraged him to perform and enjoy the surprise.

"John's dream to perform and sing is yet another wish granted through NBK's initiative 'I Dream to Be'. We are proud to be a part of the children's wishes and expand our support to them as much as possible to fulfill their

dreams," said Joanne Al-Abdul Jaleel, NBK Public Relations Officer. "The 'I Dream to Be' initiative is a lifetime experience for children," she added. "This initiative is a great way to spread joy and show that there's always a positive side to a difficult situation."

NBK gives top priority to children through its commitment to its corporate social responsibility. NBK works closely with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospitals (KACCH), Bayt Abdullah for the Care of Children in Hospice (BACCCH) and several other special needs organizations to maximize its reach to all the children in numerous hospitals and schools through its 'I Dream to Be' initiative.

NBK has been at the forefront of supporting Kuwait's community through a range of initiatives towards education, health, sports and social responsibilities. The establishment of NBK's Children Hospital stands as one of many ongoing corporate social initiatives towards health and children. 'I Dream to Be' aims at focusing and supporting NBK's efforts towards children and addressing their needs as much as possible.

Tajikistan eager to contribute to Kuwait Vision

KUWAIT: A Tajik official said that his country was willing to contribute to Kuwait's Vision 2035, an ambitious development plan launched by His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Tajik Minister of Transport Khudoyorzoda Khudoyor said that his country's own development vision was similar to the Kuwaiti one, affirming that the two nations could be working together to realize their plans especially within the electrical power domain. Tajikistan is home for the soon to be opened Rogun Dam, which expected to be the highest structure of its kind in the world by 2020, indicated minis-

ter Khudoyor who affirmed that his country was willing to lend its expertise to Kuwait if needed. The minister lauded the relations with Kuwait, calling it 'highly exceptional.' The Tajik Transport minister welcomed Kuwaiti investments in his country especially within the infrastructural and transportation sectors. The official revealed that building roads in his country was a costly venture, adding that Kuwait, through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), had contributed to the construction and renovation of significant highways in Tajikistan at a cost of nearly \$51 million. The KFAED also is providing assistance to help Tajikistan to build roads linking the country to other nations in the region including China, Afghanistan and others. The Tajikistan government had embarked on a strategy building and renovating roads, bridges, railways, and airports to bolster the economy of the country and link its parts together. — KUNA

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A silhouette of Kuwait City during sunset. —Photo by Noura Edhbayah (KUNA)

Kuwait relief efforts widely acclaimed

KUWAIT: The State of Kuwait scaled up its efforts to help disaster-hit countries in Asia and Africa last week, which won the country resounding praise from international organizations. Under aegis of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti government and non-government aid agencies focused on refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Syria, Turkey, Yemen, Gaza Strip, Benin and Togo last week.

Syria

The UN World Food Program (WFP) on Friday appreciated Kuwait donation of \$4 million to the disaster relief for nearly 20,000 Syrian IDPs. The Kuwaiti contribution will help rehabilitate the rural communities and increase the productivity of minor farmers in Syria, according to a WFP statement. "This contribution will support WFP in its efforts to help Syrian families recover from the devastating effects of displacement and give them the means to gradually rebuild their lives," said WFP Country Director and Representative in Syria Corinne Fleischer. "It is vital that families who have lost everything in the war can rebuild their livelihoods and once again become self-sufficient," he added.

After almost eight years of conflict in Syria, poverty is endemic and many lack the means to rebuild their livelihoods. Some 6.5 million people across the country do not know where their next meal is coming from. Director of WFP in the UAE and Representative to the GCC Region Mageed Yahia said, "Kuwait is a committed humanitarian supporter of WFP."

"These funds will make a real difference for Syrian families who have lost so much and who continue to suffer as their country struggles to recover," he said, noting that Kuwait has been at the forefront of humanitarian support for Syria since the beginning of the crisis. Al-Najat Charity, a non-government society, distributed foodstuff and clothes to more than 10,000 Syrian refugees in Sanliurfa city, south Turkey, amid the arctic weather conditions. A delegation from the agency, made up of 35 members, males and females, visited the refugee camps in the Turkish city and to deliver the aid as part of the "warmth and peace" campaign, head of Al-Najat's resources and media sector Omar Al-Thwaini said.

"The assistance included foodstuffs, clothes, blankets, tents, heaters and household items to the Syrian families," he said, noting that the aid campaign is backed by the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The delegation also visited five schools in Sanliurfa and offered modern educational equipment to the Syrian refugee students and honored the outstanding students, he went on. Thwaini revealed that Al-Najat plans to build 25 schools to serve more than 35 students in Turkey besides the two schools under construction. Director of the overseas education department of Al-Najat Ibrahim Al-Badr said the delegation of the society would visit Mohammad Ayyub Orphanage in the city to inspect the needs of the Syrian female

orphans. The delegation will be accompanied by Sanliurfa Governor Abdullah Erin, he said, noting that the society patronizes 70 female orphans. The orphanage is one of the pilot humanitarian projects being carried out by Kuwait to provide comprehensive care, including education and health services, for the Syrian child refugees, Badr went on.

On Wednesday, January 30, Kuwait Representative to the UN urged all concerned parties to ensure immediate, secure and durable delivery of humanitarian assistance to the residents of the Rukban camp on the Jordanian-Syrian borders. The camp is home for more than 42,000 Syrian refugees, 80 percent of who are women, who battle to survive and depend primarily on humanitarian assistance, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said in an address to the UN Security Council debate on Syria. Speaking on behalf of Kuwait, Germany and Belgium - the co-sponsors of the Syrian humanitarian dossier, he said it is totally unacceptable to ignore millions of Syrian refugees who suffer from lack aid amid the harsh winter. The humanitarian disaster in Syria has worsened further in 2018 with nearly 12 million internally displaced people (IDPs) being in dire need of aid; these include more than five million children, he said, citing UN figures.

Yemen

Regarding the situation in Yemen, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) dispatched a five-truck convoy carrying 100 tons of famine relief to nearly 41,000 conflict-hit people in the governorates of Maareb, Al-Jawf, Aden and Hadramaut on Thursday, January 31. Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, Chairman of KRCS said that the relief operation was part of the "Kuwait by Your Side" campaign. The Kuwait-funded humanitarian campaign is carried out in coordination with Estijabah Network for Humanitarian Action and Relief, a private Yemeni philanthropic agency based in the southern city of Aden, he said. Besides the relief convoys, KRCS funds local medical centers, hospitals, orphanage houses and schools in Yemen; it has also installed a solar power system in a village on Socotra island. KRCS distributed 25,000 food parcels to nearly 20,000 Yemenis who were displaced in Taiz, Abyan and Hudaydah, he went on. Dr Sayer added that KRCS healthcare projects in Yemen including conducting 100 orthopedic surgeries and 65 neurological surgeries and offered medical treatment to 1,500 patients, including women and children.

Palestine

In the occupied Palestinian territories, Rahma International distributed clothes to 900 children in Gaza Strip. Director of the agency in Gaza Emad Kehil said the Kuwaiti donation aims to alleviate the suffering of the impoverished people in the Strip due to the Israeli embargo coupled with harsh winter. In Khartoum, capital city of Sudan, the Patients Helping Fund Society organized a health day in collaboration with the Higher Institute of Islamic Studies. The initiative offered medical checkups, analysis and med-



SANLIURFA, Turkey: Food and clothes parcels donated by the Kuwait-based Al-Najat Charity to Syrian refugees in Sanliurfa city, south Turkey. —KUNA

ication to 250 patients. On Monday, January 28, Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed a loan agreement with the government of Benin to extend a worth KD five million (\$17 million) for the latter to finance a water project in three cities. The project aims to support socio-economic development in Boukoumbe, Cove and Zagnanando, through the expansion and rehabilitation of the existing water supply systems, to provide adequate and sustainable quantities of water to meet growing water needs, the fund said in a statement. It is also intended to improve the health and social conditions of the local residents, according to a KFAED statement. By signing this fresh loan, the KFAED will have provided Benin with a total 14 loans, as it has already offered 13 loans totaling around KD 36 million (\$122.4 million) to participate in the financing of transport, water and power projects. In Lome, capital of Togo, KFAED also inked a loan agreement with Togolese government to offer \$23 million for the West African country to finance a drinkable water project in the northern region of Kara. The loan took to \$92 million the total value of loans offered by KFAED to Togo in addition to technical assistance worth \$745,000 and two grants worth \$600,000.

Red Network

In Istanbul, KRCS and other Red Crescent and Red Cross societies from more than 20 countries joined forces and founded a new charity network called the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Red Network. The new network is a regional initiative aiming to step up the collective response to humanitarian emergencies, KRCS Secretary General Maha Al-Bargas said at the founding conference of the network. "The OIC Red Network will help expand our humanitarian partnership and ensure more effective response to emergencies inside and outside the 57 OIC members," she pointed. Meanwhile, President of the Turkish Red Crescent Kerem Kinik said that the charity spent some 3.1 billion Turkish liras (TL) for humanitarian work last year and they wanted to increase it to about TL 4.5 billion in 2019, reaching some 33 million people. The charity also explored new channels for donations and switched to a digital system. "We are in a growing trend in terms of financing. More and more people donate, and donations also increase. The network will be a new actor in the humanitarian aid world," he said. Kinik highlighted the need to improve the standing and impact of non-profit organizations in the Islamic world.

Director of the KRCS legal affairs department Dr Musaad Al-Anzi said the consultative meeting of the Red Crescent and Red Cross societies of the OIC member states agreed to designate May 9 as world day of humanitarian law. The conferees agreed to task KRCS with reviewing the implementation of the resolutions of the consultative meeting by the national societies including the decision to promote awareness about the rules of the international humanitarian law and the relevant provisions of the Islamic Sharia, he added. —KUNA

Local

Renewable energy necessary to limit growing reliance on fossil fuel: Report

Power, desalination plants eat up 10 percent of annual oil revenues

local spotlight

Air pollution



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Air pollution is an environmental problem. There is no doubt that the rapid increase in the population and development in the urban, industrial and social sectors have led to an increase in pollution rates, especially air pollution, due to the large number of vehicles and the expansion of construction in industrial facilities.

Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research has carried out many studies and research projects to monitor and evaluate air pollution in factories, hospitals and oilfields that are associated with urban growth, which increase pressure on available resources such as electricity and water and exacerbate sand and dust storms.

In 2015, the director general of Kuwait Municipality revealed that the rate of solid waste in Kuwait reached 4,000 tons per day, which is very high, and makes Kuwait one of the top countries in the world in this domain and not only in the Gulf region. In July 2018, Kuwait recorded the highest air pollution score of 301 on the air quality index AQI, which measures the level of air pollution. Anything above 300 is considered to be hazardous with serious health effects. Some pollutants have increased due to the dust, gases and vapors.

The Environment Public Authority (EPA) confirmed the increase in pollution due to dust, gases and other industrial pollutants. The Green Line Environmental Group warned against a "sharp increase in particles causing cancer" and called for "caution, especially for people with respiratory diseases."

I believe this topic is extremely important because it has an impact on the health of people and creates suspicions of the spread of diseases related to the respiratory system and cancer. The director of the Kuwait Cancer Center said in a press release in Feb 2018 that cancer is the second largest cause of death in Kuwait. I think the government's continued denials and what newspapers and environment groups have mentioned through the years has created confusion with no clear answers.

We need to know the truth because inhaling this polluted air is causing a dysfunction in the performance of the body and leads to diseases. I believe that in order to protect the health of people, it is necessary to issue a special legislation for clean air, which will determine air quality standards and the percentage of pollutants allowed from each source, along with the development of a system to measure these elements to support air pollution research and organizing programs and awareness campaigns on pollution to raise awareness among the public.

Also, I think we need to conduct a comprehensive environmental survey of traffic in terms of the number of vehicles, study the efficiency of fuel combustion and the existence of systems to control pollution resulting from it. Also, a technical team should be readied to evaluate pollutants and the criteria for selecting air quality monitoring stations, as well as to make these data and information available to everyone and exchange information and experiences with environmental bodies in the GCC.

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The 2019-2020 development plan report submitted by the government to the parliament warned that fuel subsidies needed to operate power and desalination plants have grown to more than 10 percent of Kuwait's annual oil revenues. The report also stressed that such a situation calls for more reliance on renewable energy projects as one of the main targets of sustainable development as well as a major aim of the state leadership represented by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who called for generating at least 15 percent of the energy needed in Kuwait through renewable and clean resources by 2030.

The report said that although Kuwait faces a major challenge, it can overcome it easily with using solar and wind power, in addition to biomass from solid waste. In addition, the report said that there are four renewable energy projects (three of them executed by government bodies) in the pipeline, and that some of them are already under construction while others are still being prepared. The report elaborated that the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) is currently working on the Al-Shaqaya renewable energy complex and a renewable energy-operated water desalination plant, while the Ministry of Electricity and Water is working on a project to install solar panels on Subbiya water reservoirs and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation is working on the Debdeba solar power plant. The estimated total cost of the four projects is KD 769.6 million, the sources added.

Price control

The Ministry of Social Affairs' assistant undersecretary for cooperation Abdul Aziz Shuaib announced launching an e-program for follow-up and control of vegetable prices at various cooperatives, adding that the program was developed in collaboration with the ministry's information technology department and the co-ops union. Speaking during a ceremony held at

Preparations for national celebrations in full swing



KUWAIT: Boy scouts prepare Kuwait's flag to be raised at a square in Kuwait City as part of preparations for national celebrations. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Director General of the Kuwait Municipality Ahmad Al-Manfouhi yesterday affirmed that preparations for the upcoming national celebrations are in full swing under the banner of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In a press release, Manfouhi congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the occasion of the National Day and the 13th anniversary of His Highness' assumption to power. "When we recognize the national holidays, we are proud to belong to a country, even if it is small in size, but it is great in its actions, positions and political leadership," he said. He added that it is fortunate that the national holidays coincide with the 13th anniversary of His Highness's accession to rule in the country and this is an event in itself. Meanwhile, Director of Public Relations in Kuwait Municipality Abdul Mohsin Aba Al-Khalil said that the municipality's campaign aims at educating citizens and residents to keep streets and squares that are witnessing the activities clean, as well as respecting the freedom of others and adhering to public morals during those celebrations. —KUNA

Program helps improve teachers' positive thinking

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Sheikha Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah hailed the Education Ministry's efforts as a main supporter of the Bareeq program, noting that the project started with three teachers focusing on positive thinking and now includes participants from 36 schools. "The change in teachers is now positively reflected on their students," she said, noting that such initiatives help develop Kuwait through improving teaching staff members. Sheikha Intisar added that she is about to publish a book about Kuwait's history over 400 years, during which Kuwait only suffered famine twice although it did not have enough resources, water resources or agriculture.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Education's assistant undersecretary for educational development and activities Faisal Maqseed stressed his keenness on attending such activities, noting that cooperation with Sheikha Intisar and the Bareeq team was very fruitful in encouraging more teachers to take part in the program for the greater good of students and Kuwait in general. Maqseed added that the ministry's undersecretaries council discussed the program and decided integrating it as a co-curricular activity starting next year.

Responding to a question whether the program would replace social and psychological workers in schools, Maqseed stressed that the main element in the educational process is teachers themselves, while social and psychological workers effectively complete teachers' roles. "Accordingly, we will urge the program organizers to hold more training courses for teachers and increase the number of schools taking part in it," he underlined.



KUWAIT: Photovoltaic panels at Al-Shaqaya renewable energy complex. —KUNA

Rabiya Co-op Society to honor outstanding students on behalf of the minister, Shuaib stressed that the ministry fully trusts that all co-ops will use the program, adding that it will have a positive impact on vegetable quality and prices. Shuaib said that the ministry's cooperation sector is getting prepared to automate its systems to have full control on various goods and prices, starting with receiving them at various outlets until selling them. He also noted that voting in co-op board elections will also be automated. In addition, Shuaib said meetings had been recently held with various co-op boards to mandate them to fill vacant leading positions. He also noted that he weekly meets with four co-ops to discuss Kuwaitizing various jobs in them and promised that 90 percent of these jobs would be Kuwaitized by Ramadan.

New undersecretaries

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare is getting prepared to bid five assistant undersecretaries (deputy directors) farewell soon because Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Housing

Affairs Jenan Bushehri is refusing to extend their services, said informed sources. The sources added the Cabinet will issue a decision next week terminating a decree appointing the authority's deputy director for distribution and documentation Fauzia Dashti. The sources said Bushehri is currently preparing a new younger team with engineering experience to replace the outgoing officials with the aim of developing the authority's performance and boost the process of executing developmental housing projects.

Higher studies

Well-informed sources at the Civil Service Commission (CSC) said that a new charter concerning higher studies and government bodies' needs of holders of such certificated is being studied. The sources added that CSC is keen on providing a suitable atmosphere for employees going abroad on scholarships and academic leaves and that it approves most of their applications according to the budget and in collaboration with the finance ministry.

Incense burner causes Salam house fire

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: An incense burner placed in a cupboard in a Salam house caused a fire, prompting Mishref fire station to respond. The house was evacuated and the fire put out. No injuries were reported.




KUWAIT: Heavy damage caused by a fire inside a Salam house.

Municipality campaign

Hawally Municipality Public Cleanliness and Road Occupancy carried out inspections around the governorate, resulting in the removal of 3,170 tons of rubbish as well as plant and tree debris; 160 side roads were cleaned along with 88 main roads; 255 dumpsters were washed; 71 warning stickers were placed on abandoned cars; 41 abandoned cars were removed along with a boat and 150 tires were sent to Salmi landfill, the department's Director Saad Al-Jalawi said.

Officer honored

Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Essam Al-Naham honored Lance Corporal Hassan Mandani in recognition of his efforts in the service of the country. The ceremony was attended by Assistant Undersecretary for Outlets Affairs Mansour Al-Awadhi.



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US spies elevate China rivalry to a proxy war of ideologies

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Russia suspends its nuclear missile treaty after US move



ONTARIO: A person takes a selfie beside on the US side of Niagara Falls as seen from Niagara Falls. — AFP

US thaws from Arctic deep freeze

Will go down in memory for its scenes of winter at its most bitter

CHICAGO: A brutal cold spell that paralyzed the US Midwest, freezing water mains, causing power outages and canceling flights, eased on Friday, with forecasts predicting a rapid thaw. The two days of intense cold from the so-called polar vortex that descended on the US Midwest and Northeast will go down in memory for its scenes of winter at its most bitter.

Blocks of ice floated down the river that runs through downtown Chicago, the rushing waters of the Niagara Falls were frozen in some places, and half the Great Lakes were covered in ice. US media reported as many as 21 weather-related deaths since a snow storm hit the Midwest early in the week, followed by plunging temperatures Wednesday and Thursday. Temperature readings were nosing up on Friday and “will continue to moderate,” the National Weather Service said.

The concern, though, turned to the threat of flooding and further stress on already strained infrastructure as the region thawed out. “In some areas of the Midwest, the coming wild temperature swing will be the most extreme warm-up from record winter cold ever seen in such a short time period,” Jeff Masters, meteorologist at Weather Underground, told AFP.

Hundreds of new records

The Arctic air mass that veered off its normal polar route broke more than 340 records in communities across a cluster of states, according to the Midwestern Regional Climate Center. With wind chill factored in, temperatures dropped to as low as -64 degrees Fahrenheit (-53C) in Minnesota, -59F (-51C) in Wisconsin, -58F (-58C) in Iowa and -55F (-48C) in Illinois.

By Monday, the weather was expected to be comparatively balmy — around 50F (10C) in Chicago and Detroit. “It’s important to remember that the rapid change in weather and snow melt could lead to dangerous flooding,” James Joseph, the regional director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), said in a statement.

In the region around Niagara Falls, officials worried that ice jams could raise water levels in the Upper Niagara River, according to local TV station WIVB. Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster said they were also working “to avert possible creek flooding once thaw comes.” In Illinois, state officials said they were discharging warm water from a nuclear power station into a river in order to prevent ice jams and flash flooding. In Detroit and Chicago, which

have already contended with dozens of broken water mains over the last several days, more pipes could burst as rapid warming puts pressure on aging systems.

Return to normalcy

Elements of normal life resumed in fits and starts, including transportation. Thousands of flights were scrapped this week, especially at Chicago’s two major airports, which experienced more than 1,500 cancellations a day. The city is a regional hub, and passengers were left stranded or looking for alternate routes. “The majority of our customers have already been rebooked,” American Airlines spokesman Ross Feinstein told AFP on Friday.

Delta Airlines spokesman Drake Castaneda said the company had “fully recovered from the polar vortex and have operated normally today.” Children — some of whom have been at home for almost a week — returned to class in many school districts, while others were off for another day because frozen school buses would not start. Milwaukee schools in Wisconsin were open, but Chicago schools were not. In Minneapolis, students

were back in class but food deliveries for school lunches were disrupted.

Death toll rises

Hypothermia and frostbite proved to be major dangers this week. Officials repeatedly warned the homeless to take advantage of increased shelter capacity, and for others in need, such as the elderly, to use the hundreds of warming centers opened throughout the region. They also warned residents to not spend more than a few minutes at a time outside.

Despite those efforts, there were still reports of fatalities. A 69-year-old FedEx worker was found dead outside of an Illinois delivery hub, according to TV station WQAD. The University of Iowa confirmed that Gerald Belz, a pre-med student, had died Wednesday. Local media reported that the 18-year-old was found unconscious outside a university building when temperatures were in the negative double digits in Iowa City. In Wisconsin, a 38-year-old woman was found frozen Wednesday night in an unheated home, and a man froze to death in his back yard Thursday afternoon, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported. — AFP

Trump to pitch optimism in SoU address

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump’s State of the Union speech will urge optimism, pulling back from Washington’s current climate of strife, a top official insisted Friday. Previewing next Tuesday’s speech before Congress, a senior administration official said Trump will “cast an inspiring vision of American greatness.” The president — in open warfare with opposition Democrats, as well as railing almost daily against prosecutors looking at allegations that he colluded with Russia in his 2016 election — will take the high ground, the official said.

“Optimistic and unifying, but I think it can also be considered visionary,” the official said of the speech. However, the speech is bound to be one of the most politically fraught in years, coming against the backdrop of a bitter row with opposition Democrats who refuse to fund Trump’s plan for more walling along the US-Mexican border. The dispute even led to Congress delaying the date of the speech. And Trump himself hinted Friday that he will use the delayed event to declare a national emergency, allowing himself to unilaterally appropriate wall building funds, bypassing Congress altogether.

The senior administration official refused to confirm any specific details of the speech and emphasized that the president’s main goal was to present a more healing tone. According to an

excerpt given to journalists, Trump will say: “Together, we can break decades of political stalemate, we can bridge old divisions, heal old wounds, build new coalitions, forge new solutions and unlock the extraordinary promise of America’s future.” The administration official, who spoke on condition of not being identified, said that Trump would focus on five areas:

- The contentious debate on illegal immigration over the Mexican border.
- An “update” on trade negotiations with China and other countries where Trump says he is strengthening markets for US workers.
- Asking Congress to approve “substantial investments” on US infrastructure projects.
- Lowering sky-high prescription medicine costs.
- Foreign policy and efforts in countries like Syria and Afghanistan to “bring an end to our endless foreign wars.”

The official refused to give concrete details of policy announcements. However, he did say that Venezuela, where Washington is supporting the opposition’s bid to push out leftist President Nicolas Maduro, would feature. Speaking at the White House, Trump gave his strongest indication yet that he is readying to declare a state of emergency on the border, something that would undoubtedly deepen partisan bickering in Washington.

“Listen closely to the State of the Union, I think you’ll find it very exciting,” Trump said. Trump’s threat comes well before the expiration of a February 15 deadline that he set for Congress to agree on funding for wall construction. But on Thursday he described negotiations with opposition Democrats “a waste of time.” — AFP

After joining IS, German woman asks to go home

BAGHOUZ: Four years after leaving Germany to live under the Islamic State group, 19-year-old Leonora has fled the jihadists’ last bastion in eastern Syria and says it’s time to go home. “I was a little bit naive,” she says in English, wearing a long billowing black robe, and a beige headscarf with white spots.

US-backed forces are fighting the last IS jihadists in a final shred of territory in eastern Syria near the Iraqi border, causing thousands of people to flee. Just beyond the frontline village of Baghouz, Leonora and her two small children are among the thousands of men, women and children to have scrambled out this week. The young German woman says she first came to Syria aged 15, just two months after converting to Islam.

“After three days, I married my German husband,” she tells AFP, at a screening centre for the displaced run by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces. Leonora says she became the third wife of German jihadist Martin Lemke, after he travelled to Syria with his first two wives. IS had the year before swept across large swathes of Syria and neighboring Iraq, declaring a “caliphate” in areas it controlled. Leonora first lived in the extremist group’s de-facto Syrian capital of Raqqa, but says she was just a housewife. “I was just at home, in (the) house cooking, cleaning — stuff like this,” says the pale faced German, clutching the youngest of her two children, an infant aged just two weeks.

‘Change house every week’

Syria’s Kurdish authorities hold hundreds of foreign alleged IS fighters in detention, as well as thousands of their wives and children in camps for the displaced. The Kurds have repeatedly urged Western governments to take back their

nationals, but these powers have been reluctant. At first life in Raqqa was easy, Leonora says, but that changed when the SDF started advancing against the jihadists, with support from US-led coalition air strikes.

The Kurdish-led SDF overran Raqqa in 2017, after years of what residents described as IS’s brutal rule, which included public beheading and crucifixions. “Then they lose Raqqa, and we started to change our house every week because they lost every week a city,” she says. When they came under attack by the Kurdish-led SDF, Leonora says the IS fighters left their families to fend for themselves.

“They left the women alone, no food, they don’t care about you,” she says. The enemy was advancing “and you were sitting alone in an empty city with your kids”. They ended up in a tiny patch on the eastern banks of the Euphrates in Deir Ezzor province. The SDF have cornered IS into a patch of less than four square kilometers in recent days.

‘Big, big mistake’

Eventually, she says, she picked up her children, and fled with her husband, and his second wife into SDF-held territory. US-backed forces detained Lemke on Thursday. Leonora claims Lemke worked mostly as a technician for IS. “He makes technical stuff, computer stuff, repairs computer, mobiles,” she says. But investigations published in German newspapers portray Lemke, who is now believed to be 28, as an influential figure among foreign jihadists in Syria. More than 36,000 people have fled the SDF assault on the so-called “Hajin pocket” since early December, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor that relies on a network of sources inside the country. Among them, 3,200 have been detained as alleged jihadists.

On arid farmland near Baghouz, a group of men sit on the ground as SDF and coalition personnel stroll nearby. Not far off, a group of women and their children — most from neighboring Iraq — wait to be driven north to a Kurdish-held camp for the displaced. After four years under a now near-extinct IS caliphate, Leonora says she wants to go home. “I want to go back to Germany to my family, because I want my old life back,” she says. “Now I know that it was a big, big mistake.” — AFP

International

Democrat Cory Booker announces his bid to run for the Oval office

Booker joins a crush of Democrats vying to run next year

WASHINGTON: Democrat Cory Booker announced Friday he is running for US president, bringing a charismatic African-American voice to a crowded field jockeying to take on Donald Trump in 2020. Making the announcement in a video, the senator from New Jersey highlighted his roots in a racially divided urban America and evoked the civil rights movement in describing his own barrier-busting experience.

"Together, we will channel our common pain back into our common purpose. Together, America, we will rise," said Booker, whose career and political appeal echoes that of former president Barack Obama. "We are a nation that leads and we have to get back to doing that together," Booker told reporters outside his home in a low-income neighborhood of Newark. "I think that people are tired of the demeaning and ready for some redeeming."

Booker joins a crush of Democrats vying to run next year — with eight other declared candidates ranging from Trump nemesis Elizabeth Warren, to Kamala Harris, a senator from California who aspires to be the nation's first black female president. The 49-year-old Booker's star rose as the telegenic mayor of Newark, a New Jersey city with a history of racial conflict and urban ills. In his video, he recalled the racial discrimination his family fought, with the help of white civil rights lawyers, to buy a home in a neighborhood with good public schools.

"The history of our nation is defined by collective action; by interwoven destinies of slaves and abolitionists; of those born here and those who chose America as home; of those who took up arms to defend our country, and those who linked arms to challenge and change it," he said. A standout high school football player, Booker attended Stanford

University, studied at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, and went to Yale Law School.

As a young community activist in Newark, he once staged a 10-day hunger strike to draw attention to problems of housing and urban development. "My record as a mayor, my record as a senator is fighting those interests that are trying to screw people," Booker said. "And when it comes to defending folks I will be ferocious." Another distinction: Booker is single, and if elected would be the first unmarried US president since 1884. As New Jersey's first black US senator, he has focused on criminal justice reform, reaching out to likeminded Republicans in an otherwise gridlocked Congress.

Kavanaugh interrogator

Booker gained attention as a passionate interrogator of Brett Kavanaugh, Trump's Supreme Court nominee, during high-profile confirmation hearings last September. With a flair for the dramatic, the senator compared himself to "Spartacus" as he revealed confidential emails referencing Kavanaugh's positions on racial discrimination. Booker declared he was prepared to lose his Senate seat to make the emails public, but the Senate ethics committee decided not to punish him for the rules violation.

Preferring an upbeat approach to politics, Booker has avoided open conflict with Trump, making no mention of the president in Friday's announcement. Among his rivals for the White House nomination, Senator Harris likewise made a mark with her tough, prosecutorial questioning of Kavanaugh. Harris also identifies as African American, as well as South Asian American, in a nod to her Jamaican-born father and Indian mother.

part of a tribe is cultural and includes living under tribal laws, rather than simple genetic links. "Senator Warren has reached out to us and has apologized to the tribe," the Cherokee Nation said in a statement quoted by US media. "We are encouraged by this dialogue and understanding that being a Cherokee Nation tribal citizen is rooted in centuries of culture and laws, not through DNA tests," it said.

"We are encouraged by her action and hope that the slurs and mockery of tribal citizens and Indian history and heritage will now come to an end," it added. Meanwhile, Donald Trump Jr, the president's son, said on Twitter: "How about apologizing to Americans and actual minorities she likely displaced in schools/jobs over the years with fake claims of minority status?"

Warren, 69, the US Senate's consumer protection champion, became the most high-profile Democrat to throw her hat into the ring when she announced a presidential exploratory committee on December 31. She is on the party's left flank, and built her reputation by

Bolsonaro faces political test as new Congress sits

BRASOLIA: Plans by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro to shake up Latin America's biggest economy with pro-business reforms and anti-crime measures are about to run into their first real test, with his country's new Congress beginning work Friday. Bolsonaro, a far-right 63-year-old former paratrooper and veteran legislator, took office at the beginning of the year on promises to do away with decades of center-leftist policies.

Chief among his vows are an easing of gun-ownership laws so "good" citizens can counter armed criminals, an eradication of graft, and a liberalization of a protectionist economy that is still limping after exiting its worst-ever recession. On the first pledge, Bolsonaro acted swiftly, decreeing much looser regulation for possessing up to four firearms at home. On corruption, however, actions have not yet followed stern rhetoric. Indeed, the president is dogged by an expanding suspicious payments scandal involving his son Flavio Bolsonaro, a lawmaker in the upper chamber.

And on the economy, there have been no concrete measures unveiled. Bolsonaro delivered a much-anticipated speech to the high-powered crowd at the World Economic Forum in Davos last week, but disappointed for his lack of any detail on pension reform and privatizations — the two key changes investors are looking for.

No majority

Much of Bolsonaro's credibility rests on the shoulders of his economy minister, Paulo Guedes, a US-trained free-marketeer, and his justice minister, Sergio Moro, a former star anti-corruption judge. What Bolsonaro lacks, however, is a ruling-party majority in Congress to push through legislation. The president's ultraconservative Social Liberal Party (PSL) holds around 10 percent of the 513 seats in the lower Chamber of Deputies. That means he is relying on ad-hoc alliances with likeminded lawmakers.

Such alliances should be forthcoming in the early period of Bolsonaro's four-year mandate. The president enjoys high public support, and backing from Congressional caucuses representing the powerful evangelical, beef and pro-gun lobbies that helped swing his electoral victory. Whether that support for Boslonaro survives unpopular moves to overhaul Brazil's unsustainably generous pension system, by raising the retirement age and cutting benefits, remains to be seen. Such changes would need modifications to the constitution.

"In whatever country, that's a really difficult reform



NEWARK: US Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) announces his run for US president in 2020, on February 1, 2019, outside his home. —AFP

Others in a remarkably diverse Democratic field include Senator Warren of Massachusetts; former San Antonio, Texas mayor Julian Castro; Hawaii congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard; and New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand. Former vice president Joe Biden also is mulling a run, citing his deep experience as outweighing reservations over his age, 76. And former

Starbucks CEO Howard Shultz, a billionaire one-time Democrat, made waves on Sunday when he said he might run as an independent, potentially positioning himself as a spoiler for Democrats. The Democratic primaries are still a year away, beginning with the Iowa caucuses, and unlike 2016 when Hillary Clinton dominated the field, there is no clear frontrunner. —AFP

Warren apologizes to Cherokee Nation for DNA test: Report

WASHINGTON: White House hopeful Elizabeth Warren has apologized to the Cherokee Nation after she took a DNA test when President Donald Trump cast doubt on her claim of indigenous heritage, US media reported Friday. The Massachusetts Democratic senator said she took the test to silence Trump, who regularly calls her "Pocahontas" and claims she benefited in schools and the work force from minority status.

The results showed she did have Native American DNA dating back six-10 generations. But the test was controversial for Native Americans, for whom being

'Golden handshake' for DR Congo's outgoing ministers

KINSHASA: In the weeks leading up to Democratic Republic of Congo's controversial election, those leaving power quietly passed two decrees guaranteeing themselves money and benefits that would ensure their financial security for decades to come. Ministers in the outgoing government of now ex-president Joseph Kabila awarded themselves "golden-handshake" benefits in two decrees which were passed on November 24, that safeguarded lifetime cash payments.

It was a highly controversial move in a country where millions of people live on less than \$2 a day, but it also came with a proviso: that former ministers are "banned from divulging or revealing secrets of state". Outgoing Prime Minister Bruno Tshibala will receive a monthly housing allowance of \$5,000 (4,400 euros) plus a separate monthly stipend — amounting to 30 percent of his current salary — for life. Such "advantages" for former prime ministers will be paid for by "the public treasury", it said.

Tshibala will also have full-time bodyguards "for life", one plane ticket per year "in business class on international routes" and a new vehicle every five years. As news has spread about the payments on social networks, anger has grown. "It's an unjust enrichment, an attempted robbery that must be punished" wrote one user, Emmanuel Tshamala.

'Scandalous and immoral'

Former members of the government will also be granted benefits "at the expense of the public treasury". Like the outgoing prime minister, they will receive a monthly allowance worth 30 percent of their current salaries and an international business class flight. They will also be granted a \$1,000 housing allowance each month.

In total, the decrees will benefit 47 outgoing ministers, 11 deputy ministers and two government secretaries, along with "personalities who carry out duties equivalent in rank to members of the government in the cabinet of the president of the republic and the cabinet of the prime minister". The payouts are in addition to a one-off "leaving office" payment that all former government ministers receive, equating to six months of salary and benefits.—AFP



Elizabeth Warren

holding Wall Street accountable for its missteps. The New York Times reported that Warren was concerned that the DNA test issue could have hurt her relations with minority communities. —AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: In this file photo taken on November 24, 2018 Brazil's President-elect Jair Bolsonaro gestures during the graduation ceremony of new paratroopers at the Parachute Infantry Battalion, Vila Militar, in Rio de Janeiro. — AFP

to do. If the government manages it, it will have a lot of (political) capital," said Carlos Pereira, a political analyst at the Getulio Vargas Foundation. "If not, I'd fear for his ability to govern afterwards," he added. The scandal around Flavio Bolsonaro could make the president's task even more difficult, according to Pereira. "Without a stable coalition, the suspicions of corruption could make the president very vulnerable," he said.

'Different' legislature

The new Congress is atomized, with some 30 parties present in the lower chamber. The two biggest are the PSL and the opposition Workers Party. It is estimated that Bolsonaro can currently count on support of around 300 deputies — close to the 3/5 majority, or 308 votes, needed to push through constitutional amendments. That bloc will also be important for Bolsonaro to expand an easing of gun laws to also allow citizens to carry weapons, something currently prohibited except for the military, police and licensed private security guards.

One deputy, Andre Figueredo of the opposition left-wing Democratic Labour Party, told AFP that the make-up of the Congress and the leadership of Bolsonaro made for a "different moment from previous years" of rule. "We have a president who, although is not in our political field, was elected by the majority of the Brazilian population," he said. Pension reform was obviously on the cards, he said, but "we hope that this reform will be one that does not bring so much damage to the great mass of the workers." —AFP

Virginia governor 'deeply sorry' for racist yearbook photo

WASHINGTON: Ralph Northam, the Democratic governor of the US state of Virginia, is facing calls to resign after he confirmed he appeared in a racist yearbook photo and said he is "deeply sorry." "Earlier today, a website published a photograph of me from my 1984 medical school yearbook in a costume that is clearly racist and offensive," Northam said in a statement Friday. "I am deeply sorry for the decision I made to appear as I did in this photo and for the hurt that decision caused then and now," he said.

The photo, which was carried by various US media outlets, depicts two people, one in blackface, the other dressed in a Ku Klux Klan robe and hood. Northam did not specify which outfit he was wearing in the image, which has prompted calls for him to resign — including from several Democratic presidential hopefuls. "These images arouse centuries of anger, anguish, and racist violence and they've eroded all confidence in Gov. Northam's ability to lead. We should expect more from our elected officials. He should resign," tweeted Senator Cory Booker, who is black, hours after announcing he would run in 2020.

California Senator Kamala Harris, another African-American White House hopeful, meanwhile tweeted that "the stain of racism should have no place in the halls of government." The governor has also been under fire over remarks about a bill that would have rolled back restrictions on late-term abortions. Republicans took particular issue with comments he made when asked if the bill would allow for abortions to be performed when a woman was already in labor.

"If a mother is in labor, I can tell you exactly what would happen. The infant would be delivered. The infant would be kept comfortable. The infant would be resuscitated if that's what the mother and the family desired," he said. "And then a discussion would ensue between the physicians and the mother." Though his spokeswoman, Northam said his words were taken out of context, and were only meant to apply if a woman in dire circumstances went into labor. —AFP

Venezuelan air force general declares allegiance to Guaido

CARACAS: A Venezuelan air force general rejected the authority of President Nicolas Maduro yesterday, becoming the highest-ranking military officer to recognize opposition leader Juan Guaido as the country's acting president. The crack in the military's united front behind Maduro came as Guaido was mobilizing a mass protest in Caracas to back his call for Maduro's resignation and early elections.

Dressed in full uniform, Major General Francisco Yanez appeared on a video posted on social media to declare his support for Guaido, the National Assembly head who has led the most serious challenge yet to Maduro's rule. "I address you to inform you that I disavow the vitiated and dictatorial authority of Nicolas Maduro and recognize Deputy Juan Guaido as the president in charge of Venezuela," he said. Yanez, who is strategic planning director of the air force high command, asserted that "90 percent of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces is not with the dictator, it's with the Venezuelan people."

"With the events of the past hours, the transition to democracy is imminent: to continue ordering the armed forces to continue repressing our people is to continue with the deaths from hunger, from disease and, God forbid, combat between ourselves," he warned. Y—AFP

International

Russia suspends its nuclear missile treaty after US move

Trump: Get everybody in a big and beautiful room and do a new treaty

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin yesterday said Russia was suspending its participation in a key Cold War-era missile treaty in a mirror response to a US move the day before. Moscow and Washington have long accused the other of violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces agreement, which was signed in 1987 and resolved a crisis over Soviet missiles. President Donald Trump last year announced plans to withdraw unless Russia fulfilled its obligations.

“Our American partners have announced they are suspending their participation in the deal, and we are also suspending our participation,” Putin said of the agreement, following a US deadline for cooperation. Putin said during a televised meeting with foreign and defense ministers Sergei Lavrov and Sergei Shoigu that Russia would no longer initiate talks with the US on disarmament. “We will wait until our partners have matured enough to conduct an equal, meaningful dialogue with us on this important topic,” the president said.

Brokered by US president Ronald Reagan with last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the treaty ended a superpower buildup of warheads that had frightened Europeans. It banned ground-launched missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers. The deal addressed Soviet nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles targeting Western capitals, but put no restrictions on other major military actors such as China. President Donald Trump said Friday that Washington was starting a process to withdraw from the agreement in six months. Trump said he would like to “get everybody in a big and beautiful room and do a new

treaty,” but in the meantime, the United States “can’t be put at a disadvantage.”

Disputed missile

The US in December gave Moscow a 60-day deadline to dismantle missiles it said breached the agreement. But Moscow has insisted the disputed 9M729 missile is allowed under the treaty. The defense ministry last month invited journalists and foreign military attaches to a briefing on the weapon system.

Lavrov yesterday repeated Russian accusations that Washington itself has been in violation of the deal for many years. The foreign minister said Russia had “tried everything to save the treaty” in several rounds of diplomatic talks. Putin meanwhile said Russia would seek to develop medium-range missiles in response to what he said were similar projects in the US. He has previously warned of proliferation of weapons but yesterday told the ministers Russia would “not be drawn into a costly new arms race”. Russia would only deploy intermediate- and short-range missiles in Europe or elsewhere in answer to similar moves from the US, he added. European leaders have voiced fears over the consequences of the treaty’s demise and called on Russia to address concerns before the United States formally leaves in August. Beijing yesterday also expressed concern over the mutual suspension, calling for the US and Russia to engage in “constructive dialogue”.

China’s foreign ministry has ruled out the possibility of negotiating a new multilateral pact that includes Beijing. NATO earlier said that US allies “fully support” its with-



MOSCOW: Russia's President Vladimir Putin (C) attends a meeting with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (L) and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu. — AFP

drawal and agreed that Russia’s 9M729 ground-launched cruise missile systems, whose range is the cause of US concerns, violated the treaty. Lavrov at yesterday’s meeting voiced concerns that Washington’s decision to with-

draw from the INF could jeopardize the extension of the New START treaty. That agreement, which caps the number of nuclear warheads held by Washington and Moscow, expires in 2021. — AFP

Catalan separatists’ trial date set for February 12: Court

MADRID: A dozen Catalan separatists will go on trial on February 12 over their bid to make the region independent from Spain, the Supreme Court said Friday, naming former Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy among those called to testify. Nine of the accused are charged with rebellion for their role in the dramatic breakaway attempt in October 2017. They face up to 25 years in jail.

Rajoy, who ruled Spain until last June, will be one of “hundreds” of witnesses to testify at the trial, a Supreme Court document said. He sacked Catalonia’s regional government and called snap local elections after the Catalan parliament declared independence in October 2017 following a banned independence referendum. Rajoy was unseated by a no-confidence vote backed by Catalan separatist parties last year.

The trial will last “around three months”, with a verdict expected within three months, the president of Spain’s Supreme Court, Carlos Lesmes, told reporters in Madrid. “This is the most important trial which we have known in democracy,” he added. The trial will be broadcast in full on Spanish TV and it is expected to have national political implications. Tensions are likely to flare up between the central government and the separatists who rule Catalonia despite Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez’s attempts to defuse the independence issue.

That makes it unlikely Catalan separatist parties will give their crucial backing for his minority government’s 2019 budget, said Eurasia Group analyst Federico Santi. “Failure to pass the budget, in turn, is likely to prompt Sanchez to resign and bring the 2020 elections forward to later this year,” he added.

‘Fake justice!’

Rajoy’s deputy prime minister Soraya Saez de Santamaria and Barcelona’s current mayor Ada Colau are among those summoned to testify at the trial. The court said it would also hear testimony from police officers and citizens who were injured during clashes during the October 1, 2017 independence referendum. Riot police beat protesters and stormed polling stations on the day of the referendum in an attempt to stop it from going ahead. In pre-trial detention for months, the nine jailed defendants were being transferred from the north-eastern region of Catalonia to prisons near Madrid on Friday. Supporters in Barcelona cheered them as they were taken away, waving the region’s red, yellow and blue separatist flag and holding up umbrellas to guard against the rain. Some held up black and white signs in English that read “Fake justice!” Three others will also stand trial, accused of disobedience and misuse of public funds. Catalan President Quim Torra read a statement in English and Catalan in support of the defendants, saying “they have not committed any crimes”.

‘Farce’

Supporters of independence for Catalonia call the trial a “farce”. But many Spaniards support it, having looked on in disbelief as the rich region’s then executive tried to secede. Catalonia’s president at the time of the secession bid, Carles Puigdemont, is also accused of rebellion. But he fled Spain after the region’s majority-separatist parliament made a short-lived declaration of independence on October 27, 2017 which triggered Spain’s worst political crisis in decades. He is not among the 12 going on trial this month in Spain, which does not try suspects in absentia. The trial’s main protagonist is former Catalan vice president Oriol Junqueras, who opted to remain in Spain. He faces up to 25 years in jail on charges of rebellion and misuse of public funds.

‘Not a crime’

Puigdemont and fellow separatists have all denied any wrongdoing, saying the 2017 referendum gave them the authority to break away from Spain. The Catalan government claimed some 2.3 million people took part in the referendum and that 90 percent had backed independence. Those figures could not be independently confirmed. Far from curbing the desire for independence, the prosecution of the separatist leaders has energized the movement for Catalan self-determination and helped to keep the movement united despite deep divisions over strategy. — AFP

Riot control guns: The different choices made by EU nations

PARIS: The use of rubber bullets by security forces has become a major source of controversy in France because of dozens of injuries to people during violent demonstration by “yellow vest” protesters. Campaigners lost a legal bid on Friday to suspend their use in France. Elsewhere in Europe, few countries use an equivalent of the handheld “defensive ball launcher”, known by its French initials “LBD”, which fires a 40-millimetre rubber projectiles.

Rarely authorized

Scandinavian nations have decided to do without this weapon, which is marketed as being non-lethal. Security forces in Ireland and Austria have also declined to buy it, as have their counterparts in Kosovo, a nation that has a history of violent demonstrations. Rubber bullets have officially been outlawed there since 2007, after the deaths of two protestors associated with Vetevendosje, a leftist, nationalist opposition party.

Elsewhere in the Balkans, the Serbian police can use these weapons, but only in cases of particularly violent demonstrations. In practice, they have not been used in more than a decade. In Croatia, they are also legal. But according to a police spokesperson, they haven’t been used since the nation’s independence in 1991. In Germany, rubber bullets aren’t authorized in most of the country. Only one in 16 states allows their use during law enforcement operations, according to a parliamentary document cited by Sebastian Roche, a criminologist at the French National Center for Scientific Research.

More than 10% of Niger population requires aid: UN

NIAMEY: Just over 10 percent of Niger’s population need humanitarian aid because jihadist violence that forced people to flee their homes has exacerbated the country’s food crisis, the UN said yesterday. “For 2019, the analysis of humanitarian needs reveals that 2.3 million people, or 10.4 percent of the population of Niger, need humanitarian aid,” said a statement from the UN’s Niamey office.

Drought and flooding last year hit cereal production in Niger, causing the food shortages, say experts. Prime Minister Brigi Rafini launched an appeal for \$383 million (334.2 million euros) to help 1.6 million “extremely vulnera-

In the United Kingdom: Memories of the Troubles

Following the conflict in Northern Ireland, the use of rubber projectiles by police forces had become taboo in the United Kingdom. The bullets used at the time, which were of a different caliber than those currently allowed in other European countries, were blamed for the deaths of several people before they were replaced by a safer weapon. After riots in several large British cities in 2011, the police once again obtained the right to use rubber bullets, known as attenuating energy projectiles (AEP), and also armored vehicles, in case of civil unrest.

But their use, as well as the use of tear gas, remains rare in the United Kingdom and is authorized only when police face armed individuals. In Belgium, the federal police don’t have a weapon like the LBD. “We don’t anticipate equipping ourselves in this way,” a spokesperson said. However, some local police have them at their disposal. For example, the Belgian FN303 launcher is furnished to police in the city of Mons. The parameters for use are narrow: intervention in prisons or the urgent neutralization of a dangerous person in a public place.

Controversy in Portugal and Spain

In Portugal, police may resort to the use of defensive ball launchers. Earlier this month, police used them in response to demonstrators throwing stones on the in Lisbon, wounding an 18-year-old man in the forehead by one of these projectiles. In Spain, riot police are authorized to use rubber projectiles, but their use is a controversial topic.

A protester lost an eye on October 1, 2017 during clashes police at the time of the interdiction of the referendum for self-determination in Catalonia. Regional police in Catalonia and Basque country have renounced the use of rubber bullets after two incidents in 2012: the loss of an eye by a demonstrator in Barcelona and the death of a supporter of the football club, Athletic Bilbao. In November 2018, a Basque police officer was sentenced by a court in Bilbao for having ordered the attack during

ble” people, state television reported. Adding to that, deteriorating security in those regions had forced local people to flee, which meant more aid was needed, said the UN.

Many of those in need live in the western regions of Tahoua and Tillaberi, near Mali, the site of regular jihadist attacks, said the UN. Others lived in the southeast region of Diffa, where the Nigerian jihadist group Boko Haram has committed atrocities. Diffa is sheltering more than 300,000 people who have fled Boko Haram’s violence, including thousands supported by local people, who themselves are already poor.

Tahoua and Tillaberi have has 52,000 who have fled jihadist violence since January last year and since 2012 has been home to more than 57,000 Malian refugees. Last December the UN refugee agency UNHCR denounced the violence in these regions, where armed groups murdered or abducted civilians, burned down schools and pillaged homes, businesses and cattle. Security was so poor there that it also interfered with distributing aid, the UNHCR added. — AFP



A group of migrant men, mainly from Niger and Nigeria, have a rest on January 22, 2019 before carrying on with their journey across the Air dessert, northern Niger, towards the Libyan border post of Gatrone. — AFP



MORLAIX: A protester with fake eye and head injuries and holding a Brittany's regional flag, takes part in an anti-government demonstration called by the ‘Yellow Vests’ (‘Gilets Jaunes’) movement at a round-about in Morlaix. — AFP

which the fan was mortally wounded. The officer was deemed unfit and the attack unjustified. According to a Catalan organization, “Stop Bales de Goma” (Stop Rubber Bullets), which campaigns for their ban, rubber bullets have led to at least nine deaths since 1976. — AFP

Belgium to take in ex-Ivory Coast president Gbagbo

BRUSSELS: Belgium has agreed to take in former Ivory Coast president Laurent Gbagbo following his acquittal at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, a foreign ministry spokesman said yesterday. But under the terms of his release, he has to remain in a host country until the tribunal rules on whether to grant the prosecutors’ request for a new trial. He is also forbidden from contacting witnesses in the case and speaking publicly about it.

“In response to a request from the International Criminal Court, Belgium has agreed to take in Laurent Gbagbo,” said spokesman Karl Lagatie. “That is also part of the framework of our support for international criminal jurisdictions,” he added. The ICC finally freed Gbagbo on Friday after his shock acquittal last month on charges of crimes against humanity. He and his aide Charles Ble Goude were cleared on January 15 over the wave of violence after disputed elections in the west African nation in 2010.

His release was also on condition that he stay in whichever host state accepted him until the court decided whether to let a new trial go ahead. Defense lawyers had argued for the two men’s immediate and unconditional release. Under further conditions, Gbagbo also had to surrender his travel documents, report weekly, avoid contacting witnesses in Ivory Coast and refrain from making public statements about the case, the court documents said.

According to Belgian press reports, Gbagbo’s second wife, 47-year-old Nady Bamba, lives in Belgium. Gbagbo, now 73, was the first former head of state ever to stand trial at the ICC. More than 3,000 people died on both sides after Gbagbo refused to concede defeat to his internationally backed-rival — and now-president — Alassane Ouattara.

He had been held by the ICC in the Netherlands since 2011. The ICC’s unwillingness to let Gbagbo return to Ivory Coast may be because of the country’s refusal to surrender Gbagbo’s wife Simone, despite an outstanding ICC warrant for her arrest. She was convicted and jailed by the courts there in 2015, but Ouattara granted her an amnesty last year, allow her release after seven years in detention. — AFP

International

US spies elevate China rivalry to a proxy war of ideologies

Something much deeper than a contest over markets, technology and geopolitics

WASHINGTON: In a move that could harden Washington's posture toward Beijing for years, the US intelligence community has characterized relations with China as a global ideological showdown that will not be doused by trade deals or commercial theft crackdowns. US spy chiefs abruptly shifted their view of the superpower rivalry this week to something much deeper than a contest over markets, technology and geopolitics.

The annual Worldwide Threat Assessment released by Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats instead said China is seeking to propagate "authoritarian capitalism" to counter Western liberal democracy, in an echo of the decades-long Cold War. "Chinese leaders will increasingly seek to assert China's model of authoritarian capitalism as an alternative — and implicitly superior — development path abroad, exacerbating great-power competition that could threaten international support for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law," it said.

It added the "coming ideological battle" will be marked by "a period of increased Chinese foreign policy activism and a Chinese worldview that links China's domestic vision to its international vision," including the idea that market-oriented authoritarian regimes are superior. China policy analysts said the assessment marks an important modification of US thinking — and reflects President Xi Jinping's ideological transformation of Chinese foreign policy. They also say it goes far beyond the views of Trump, who has treated relations with China as more transactional.

'Ideological competition'

"This is more than just economics," said James McGregor, chairman of China business consultancy APCO Worldwide. "Now that China is so successful, there is an ideological battle for which system works best," he said. "There are a lot of poor and developing countries which have looked at what China has accomplished with awe and admiration, and they are wondering if that system will work for them."

Aaron Friedberg, Princeton University professor and

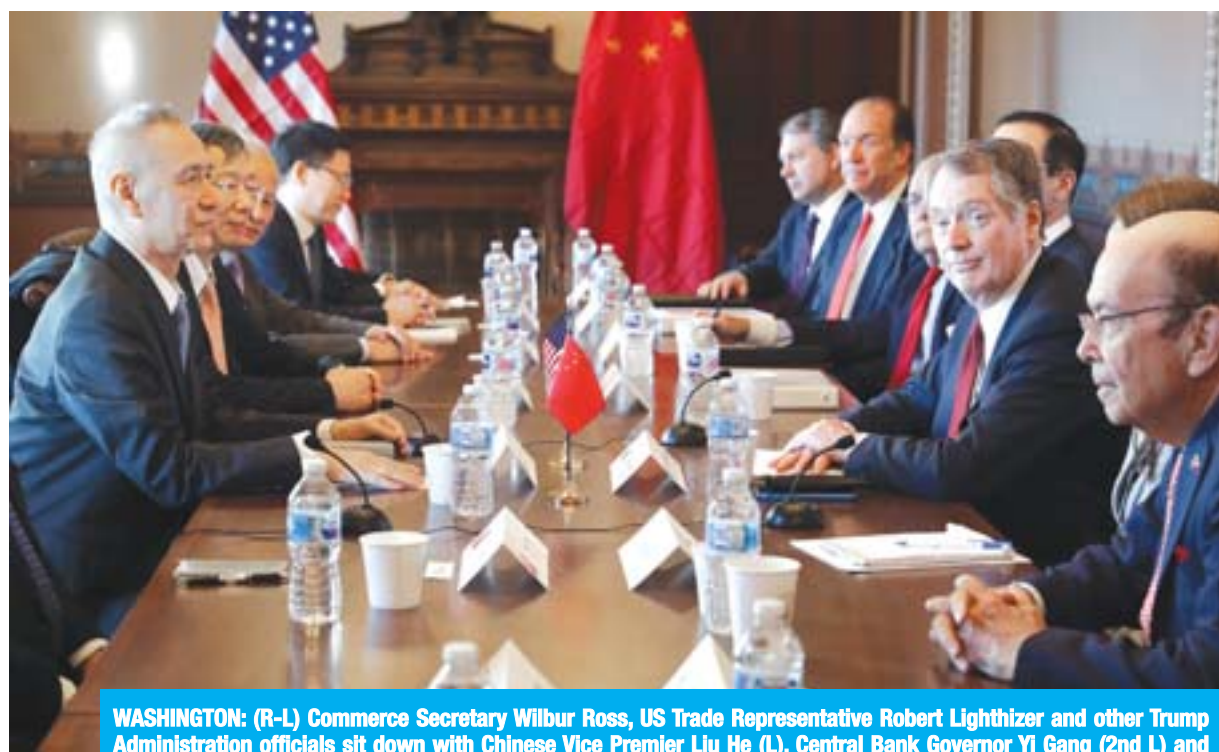
China expert, said the shift is significant but not surprising after Xi last year severed the country's decades-old anchor to a non-ideological foreign policy. "For a long time Chinese officials went out of their way to say that they didn't see themselves as presenting an alternative model," he said. "Now it is an ideological competition because the Chinese see it that way." But Xi differs from Mao Zedong, the iconic leader who sought to advance his version of Marxism-Leninism throughout the developing world in the 1950s and 1960s, Friedberg said. Xi's government is, he explained, "doing things that have the effect of weakening democratic institutions in places where they are not perhaps deeply rooted," such as Central Europe and Africa.

"In Africa and elsewhere their preferred partners are often authoritarian rulers, reducing the chances that those countries will have liberal political systems," he said. According to Tarun Chhabra of the Brookings Institution, the US intelligence community now believes China is deliberately attacking fundamental US values on the world stage. "Our values are inherently threatening to the Chinese Communist Party by virtue of our fundamental commitment to free speech," said Chhabra. "A commitment to the idea that the state doesn't have a monopoly on the truth is 'ideological' and profoundly dangerous for the CCP," he said. He cited two developments driving the decision to brand it an ideological battle.

First is the interment of nearly a million Muslim Uighurs in western China in an effort to "stamp out" their identity, he said. That "really lays bare a fundamental clash between those who believe in upholding the individual dignity of all people, and those who justify virtually anything in the name of internal security." Second, Chhabra said, was Beijing's combining massive digital surveillance with a social credit apparatus, which could one day give the CCP social control "to a degree that Mao himself probably never dreamed about."

Message to Trump

US-China relations have deteriorated steadily over



WASHINGTON: (R-L) Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and other Trump Administration officials sit down with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He (L), Central Bank Governor Yi Gang (2nd L) and other Chinese vice ministers and senior officials for negotiations in the Diplomatic Room at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building. — AFP

the past five years of Xi's determined projection of China's influence around the globe. Friedberg said the new stance by US spy chiefs was a message to Trump, who unlike previous presidents speaks little of liberal democratic values, and avoids seeing the Washington-Beijing relationship as a fundamental fight between models of governance.

"I think that this statement by the Director of National Intelligence is drawing attention to something which the administration for various reasons has chosen to downplay. It's their interpretation of reality, that differs somewhat from the people at the top of the administration." "He seems to be oddly sympathetic to illiberal regimes," Friedberg said of Trump. — AFP

Greenpeace India shuts two offices, cuts staff

NEW DELHI: Environmental group Greenpeace said yesterday it had been forced to shut two of its regional offices in India and had asked many staff to leave due to a block on its bank account after accusations of illegal donations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nationalist government has tightened scrutiny of non-profit groups over the past four years. It says they often act against India's interests and has revoked licenses for thousands of foreign-funded groups.

Known for its campaigns against India's coal-fired power plants, Greenpeace has been barred from receiving foreign donations since 2015. India's financial crime investigating agency froze the group's main bank account on Oct 5. On Saturday, the group said 40 of its 60 India staff positions had been made redundant. Two of its regional offices — in the capital city of New Delhi and the eastern city of Patna — have been shut, it said in a statement. Greenpeace staff across New Delhi and Patna, as well as in southern city Bengaluru, were committed to work as volunteers, the group said.

"The government can only freeze our accounts and shut our offices but Greenpeace is an idea that can never be extinguished," it said. Since Modi took office in 2014, India has cancelled the registrations of nearly 15,000 non-governmental groups under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act. Critics say the government has been using the foreign funding law as a tool to silence non-profit groups which have raised concerns about the social costs of India's rapid economic development or questioned its human rights record. — Reuters

Grim outlook for Aussie right points to another switch of PM

SYDNEY: While much of the West embraces the populist right, Australians are baulking at their government's climate-skeptic tough-on-migrants message, with polls pointing to a change in government at this May's election. As things stand, folksy Aussie Prime Minister Scott Morrison risks being turfed out after less than a year on the job — a short innings even in the self-styled coup capital of the democratic world.

Current polls show his conservative Liberal Party heading for its worst electoral defeat since 1983 and Australia getting a seventh change of prime minister in ten years. "The polling has really been consistently showing that the Labor Party are ahead by a significant margin," said Glenn Kefford, a campaigns expert at Macquarie University. "The sentiment out there is that the Labor party are headed for victory, it's just a question of what the size of that victory will be."

Facing an uncertain future, three of Morrison's cabinet ministers have called it quits before the campaign gets into full swing. All three cited personal reasons for their departure, a common occurrence in the dog days of a two-term government. But the prospect of a contentious campaign followed by long periods languishing on the opposi-

tion benches undoubtedly made their decision easier. Minister for Women Kelly O'Dwyer publicly described her motives for retiring as "complex", but privately she is said to have complained that the coalition was seen as a bunch of "homophobic, anti-women, climate-change deniers".

Liberal ministers sticking it out are increasingly facing difficult contests against a resurgent Labor and independent women furious at the government's "blokeish" attitudes.

One commentator has dubbed it the revolt of the SPECS — socially progressive but economically conservative liberals. This week Health Minister Greg Hunt became the latest member of the cabinet to see his political future thrown into doubt. His former party colleague-turned-independent MP Julia Banks announced she would challenge him at the election, citing "unfinished business" with the party and railing against the pro-coal government's failure to tackle climate change. The Liberal response oscillated between furious denunciations of unspeakable treachery and an insistence she cannot possibly win.

Populist backlash?

Rather than propelling him along, some analysts believe the rise of the populist right may have sown the seeds for Morrison's downfall. His short tenure has seen some clouds gathering in Australia's long-glimmering G20 economy, stirred by Trump's trade fight with China and jitters over Brexit. Morrison has also been plagued by a debilitating battle between traditional small government liberals and Trump-emboldened supporters of a more hardline view of liberal politics.

The wounds from their successful ouster last August of centrist former party leader and Prime

Minister Malcolm Turnbull have festered. "It was a catastrophic blunder," said political pundit William Bowe, who runs a popular blog called The Poll Bludger, pointing to public disdain for the continued musical chairs in Canberra. The party's hard right "got a rush of blood to the head and I think Brexit and Donald Trump fed into it," said Bowe. "Trump and Brexit have shown that populist right-wing programs work if they are pursued aggressively and sold by an aggressive spokesperson."

They sought to get rid of "this 'milquetoast plutocrat' Malcolm Turnbull and put in a tough political fighter, a bomb-thrower". The polls and a recent shock by-election win for an independent woman in a Sydney seat that the party held for decades seemed to show the Liberals badly misjudged the public mood. But Morrison, a devout Christian, shows few signs of easing off, continuing to play to the base and presenting himself as a "fair dinkum" Aussie who you can have a beer with at a barbecue.

"There is a lot of rehashing of old debates and old culture wars," said Kefford. "They want to try to get the base energized." It is an unusual and perhaps fateful strategy in a country where compulsory voting makes turnout — the normal aim of appeals to the base — almost irrelevant. In some sections of the Liberal Party the postmortem has already begun. But Trump and Brexit have shown that conventional wisdom can be wrong. "The political environment is challenging for the government," admitted former Liberal foreign minister Julie Bishop at a speech in Hong Kong. But she cautioned: "It is likely to become a much closer contest than many anticipate. My strong advice is do not write us off. That would be a mistake. Big mistake." — AFP

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Washington Watch

As 2020 presidential contest begins, Dems need to refocus

By Dr James J Zogby

We're off to the races - the 2020 presidential races, that is. Since the beginning of the year, at regular intervals, new candidates have been coming forward to announce their intention to compete for the presidency. Some are interesting and/or exciting, while others frankly leave me scratching my head and asking "What are they doing? How on earth do they think they're going to be elected?" While reading reports on the proposed strategies and "visions" of these fledgling presidential aspirants, I have been struck by two quotes that are important because they define two fundamentally flawed approaches to politics. Both quotes are only half right, and both are recipes for defeat.

The first of them came from Howard Schultz, the billionaire founder of the Starbucks coffee empire. He is exploring running for president as an independent. Schultz has described his political philosophy as being "socially liberal and fiscally conservative". This formula is the one that has been adopted by so-called "centrists" - moderate Democrats and liberal Republicans. They have embraced it with such conviction that it has become, for some, the accepted wisdom of what's needed to fix American politics. The problem with this "wisdom", however, is that it isn't wise at all. It doesn't work and it fails to consider the aspirations of millions of hard working Americans - the very voters who are supposed to be the intended audience of this centrist message.

Two decades ago, working with polling conducted by my brother, John Zogby, I wrote "What Ethnic Americans Really Think", a study of the attitudes and voting behaviors of white ethnic Americans. The groups we initially covered were the communities of European-Mediterranean immigrants and their descendants who, for decades, have been dominant in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwestern states.

What we found was that their views on a range of political and social issues were the exact opposite of what the centrists believed them to be. Our study found that these ethnic voters were proud of their heritage and their traditions. They believed in supporting their families and communities, and in the values of hard work and playing by the rules. At the same time, they saw government as playing an essential role in providing for the common good. They were deeply committed to providing quality education for all, strengthening Social Security and Medicare, protecting the environment, imposing stricter gun control, and support for the rights of organized labor. The bottom line was that these voters were socially traditional and fiscally liberal.

And when we compared the attitudes of these white ethnic voters with Black and Latino voters - we found that they closely matched one another. The point was that most Americans want the same things for their families and communities (good paying jobs, quality education, healthcare, and a safe and secure environment) and they see the role of government as playing a positive, not negative, role in realizing these goals.

The second quote came from a senior advisor to one of the Democrats who recently announced their candidacy to run in the presidential primary. The advisor described their campaign's strategy as focusing on "base Democratic voters". Now while a primary, by definition, is for Democratic voters, Democrats have, for too long now, made the mistake of shaping their message and narrowly targeting their efforts on what they defined as their "base" - which has included: Minority communities, educated women, and young voters. This worked for Obama in 2008 and 2012 and it was a key factor in Doug Jones' successful 2017 senate race in very Republican Alabama. But as an overall strategy this approach of focusing on some groups, while excluding others, is a recipe for disaster.

'Base voters'

I had an argument about this very issue at a Democratic Party meeting shortly after Democrats had suffered major losses in the 2014 congressional elections. At that meeting, the party's pollster/strategist presented his analysis of the election insisting that the strategy of targeting only "base voters" wasn't the reason for the loss. With slides full of tables and graphs he demonstrated that indeed, Democrats had won the Black vote, the Latino vote, the youth and educated women vote, but he concluded "we just didn't win enough of them". His solution was that "in the future, we need to expend greater resources going after 'our' voters".

At that point, I strenuously objected, saying that Democrats also needed to have a message and a strategy to win the support of other voters. I noted, especially, voters from European-Mediterranean ancestry who had been Democrats a few decades ago but had since left the party - primarily because the party stopped speaking to them. The pollster/strategist countered "why should we throw money away going after voters who are never going to support us." That attitude, I responded, is why Democrats had lost control of governorships and legislatures in the Midwest.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute



Former US Representative and 2020 Democratic presidential candidate John Delaney speaks with patrons during a campaign stop at TC Mae's restaurant on Jan 31, 2019 in Fort Dodge, Iowa. — AFP

2020 Democrats pour into early-voting Iowa

Even as bitter cold ravages several US states, the 2020 presidential race is heating up in Iowa, where Democrats both renowned and unfamiliar are seizing early opportunities to engage critically important American voters. One full year before the first-in-the-nation voting contest for nominating who will take on incumbent Donald Trump, White House aspirants braved dangerous sub-zero temperatures this week to present their presidential pitch on hallowed political ground.

Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio was among the hopefuls making the pilgrimage, testing a pro-worker theme for a possible campaign. "Whether it's labor, whether it's environment, whether it's women's rights or LGBT rights, I will always be there as a progressive," Brown said Friday to dozens of people crammed into an elegant brick home in Waterloo, on his first trip to Iowa to explore a presidential bid.

Brown casually worked the room, learning attendees' names, posing for selfies, denouncing Trump's "phony populism," and deftly switching between football talk and policy priorities - building relationships that could make or break a campaign in the coming year. Brown says he will decide in March whether to run for president.

Groundwork underway

Several hopefuls have already officially entered the fray, such as US senators Kamala Harris of California and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York. Both rushed to Iowa recently after launching their bids to become the nation's first female commander in chief. Yet another senator, New Jersey's Cory Booker, announced his candidacy Friday and

will troop to Iowa next week, while congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard was slated to kick off her presidential campaign yesterday. Several more are mulling jumping in, including former vice president Joe Biden, Senator Bernie Sanders, ex-congressman Beto O'Rourke, and multiple current and former governors and mayors.

The Iowa caucuses - the peculiar series of precinct meetings across the state where people get together to discuss candidates before casting their votes - are set for next Feb 3. But the groundwork is well underway, and the state's residents are relishing their quadrennial period in the spotlight. While the big names may draw the lion's share of national attention, Iowa is all about retail politics, and its residents will not stand for anyone phoning it in.

"We are not impressed by stadium candidates," 60-year-old Erin Rial, who works for an animal feed company near Fort Dodge, said at a meet-and-greet with candidate John Delaney. "We want to get to know candidates over time. We want to look them in the eye." Delaney, who in 2017 became the first prominent Democrat to enter the race, has been getting to know Iowans for 18 months now, fine-tuning his message of political moderation and his call to "restore a sense of moral aspiration to our politics."

Delaney barely registers on the national radar. But he has visited Iowa 22 times, holding more than 250 events, many of them like the one Thursday night in Fort Dodge. As if a scene in a Norman Rockwell painting, Delaney was visible through windows of the brightly-lit TC Mae's Family Diner, making his political pitch to 17 voters and three restaurant staff. "Once you get on the map here, the

whole country knows who you are," the confident Delaney, a former congressman and successful businessman from Maryland, told AFP. "We need a problem solver as our president and that's one of the reasons I'm running."

Likability or ideology?

So, will Democrats choose an outsider like technology entrepreneur Andrew Yang, who this week in Iowa warned of automation's impact on American jobs, or an experienced statesman like Biden to do battle with Trump? And will likability - that elusive quality that helped propel Barack Obama into the political stratosphere - be the factor voters seek, or will ideology rule the day?

Troy Price, chairman of the Iowa Democratic Party, says it is too early to tell. But he is already impressed with the caliber of candidates, and his fellow Iowans' passion for the process. "Iowa in particular is a place where you have to convince people to go out on a cold night ... and talk about why you are the person to lead our party forward and the person to lead our country forward," Price said in an interview at the Democrats' non-descript office in Des Moines.

Price added Iowans tell him they are prepared to elevate a nominee who is "authentic (and) true to who they are," and who can bring the fight to Trump. Ultimately, the heartland state is "literally a level playing field" that will set the bar for 2020, noted Sue Dvorsky, a former Iowa Democratic Party chair who remains a key political influencer in the state. "It isn't about who has a chance in Iowa, it's that everyone has a chance in Iowa," she said. — AFP

The refugee documenting 'Aussie history' offshore

When Kurdish-Iranian journalist Behrouz Boochani won Australia's most valuable literary prize this week, he could not attend the ceremony to accept it. But as he has done for almost six years, living in Papua New Guinea under Canberra's harsh offshore detention policy, the asylum-seeker still managed to speak out. "With humility, I would like to say that this award is a victory. It is a victory not only for us, but for literature and art and above all, it is a victory for humanity," he said in pre-recorded acceptance speech given to media. "A victory against a system that has never recognised us as human beings. It is a victory against a system that has reduced us to numbers," the 35-year-old added.

Boochani, who was sent to Manus after fleeing Iran in 2013, won the Victorian Prize for Literature for his book "No Friend But the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison". Under a harsh policy meant to deter asylum-seekers from reaching Australia by boat, Canberra has for years sent arrivals to remote Pacific camps on Nauru and Papua New Guinea's Manus Island for processing, barring them from ever resettling in Australia. The UN, rights groups and leading health professionals have slammed Canberra for its treatment of asylum seekers, as stories of violent riots, self harm, dire living conditions and even murder have emerged from the camps over the years.

'I ended up in another prison'

Boochani has been at the center of many of these reports - the loudest voice within the Manus asylum seekers, providing a key source for journalists and rights groups while documenting the conditions himself. His journalism has been published widely in Australian media, he has given speeches remotely to universities around the world and produced a film from the island shot on his phone - all while continuing to write about Iranian and Kurdish politics for publications in Iran. Born in Ilam in the west of Iran in 1983, Behrouz graduated from Tarbiat



Behrouz Boochani

Moallem and Tarbiat Modares Universities in Tehran with a master's degree in political science, political geography and geopolitics. He was a close collaborator on the Kurdish-language magazine Werya, which in February 2013 was ransacked by the members of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, and nine of his colleagues were arrested.

Some of his friends were released, others were sent to prison. Fearing for his life Behrouz fled the country in May that year. "I left Iran because I didn't want to live in prison for a long time, or be killed by the system there," he told AFP from Manus yesterday. "Unfortunately I ended up in another prison, but a prison that was created by a country that claims it is a liberal democracy." His boat carrying more than 60 asylum-seekers was intercepted on its way to Australia from Indonesia in July 2013 by the Australian Navy, and soon sent to Manus.

He has spent years writing the book through his experiences on the island, documented via short messages in Farsi to translators using WhatsApp. The book crosses a number of genres, from "Australian dissident literature" to "Kurdish literature" to "prison and philosophical literature", translator Omid Tofighian told AFP. "It describes systematic torture. For so long Behrouz-through journalism and his film and through public speaking - has been trying to explain what systematic torture means in this particular site," Tofighian said. "I think the book does that successfully." The prison is geographically offshore, but the book conveys it is very much part of "Australian society, history and culture", Tofighian added. "It positions what is happening in terms of border politics, in a much broader narrative that relates to Australia's colonial character - or colonial past or present." — AFP

Chavez-era ex-officials turn backs on Maduro

They embraced the socialist revolution of late leader Hugo Chavez along with millions of other Venezuelans, but four former officials have now been left disillusioned by Nicolas Maduro's regime. These officials from the Chavez era consider Maduro "illegitimate," but they are torn between supporting self-proclaimed president-elect Juan Guaido and looking for another way out of the political crisis.

Maduro, with the backing of the powerful military, is desperately trying to hold onto power in the face of opposition leader Guaido's audacious challenge, supported by the United States. Twenty years after Chavez came to power, the country is in the grip of economic and political crises, and the four "Chavistas" have turned their back on his hand-picked successor.

'Two sides of the same coin'

Gustavo Marquez, a former minister of commerce and ambassador, sees little hope in either pretender to the presidency. Maduro, he says, is "clinging to power with his legitimacy compromised," while Guaido is building a "parallel state" with the help of the US and economic sanctions. They're "two sides of the same coin," says the 72-year-old Guaido, he says, is reading from a "script" prepared in Washington to asphyxiate the country and control its oil reserves, the largest proven ones in the world.

Backed by the military, Maduro has turned his "back on reality". The opposition, Marquez says, is putting "the lives of millions in jeopardy" and exposing Venezuela to the risk of being plundered. "Whether through negotiation or war... the pie will be divided up. The United States, Russia and China

want their piece." Marquez hit out at Venezuela's oil-dependent economy - 96 percent of its revenue comes from crude - and tight economic controls leading to an attitude that "it's cheaper to import than produce". "They adopted Cuba's failed statist model," he said.

'Up against the wall'

Luisa Ortega used to be Venezuela's attorney general, but she fell out with Maduro and paid the price. She was sacked after hitting out at the breakdown of democracy and the repression of protesters in 2017 that left 125 dead. She fled to Colombia and is now firmly behind Guaido, whom she calls "a brave man". "I'm banking on Juan Guaido... his success is the success of all Venezuelans. We have Maduro up against the wall," she said.

The 61-year-old hasn't always been a defender of democracy and critic of repression, though. While she was attorney general, the public prosecutor's office accused then-opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez of a raft of charges that human rights organizations claimed were politically motivated, and saw him jailed for almost 14 years.

She says she doesn't "regret" supporting Chavez, "but I've apologized for the mistakes I made... most of all for not saying certain things quickly enough." Ortega says Chavez's original movement was "humanistic" but that it became mired in corruption before Maduro "consolidated" its "destruction". For Ortega, the legacy of Chavism is "misery, hunger, repression, exile, tragedy".

'The revolution collapsed'

"Venezuelans are aboard" two high-speed trains that are about to crash headlong into each other, says Hector Navarro, who held four ministerial positions under Chavez. He was a friend of the late leader since Chavez was jailed in 1992 for a failed coup attempt. Maduro is on his last legs, the 69-year-old says. However, "the question is whether this terminal phase will drag the country into the hands" of foreign interests, or whether politics will triumph "and the people will be the ones that decide." — AFP

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12 A third of UK firms mulling post-Brexit overseas moves



13 Zain unveils Range Rover Evoque 2019 as mega prize of 'All Zainers are Winners' campaign



14 KIPCO to raise its capital through a rights issue



KIB records KD 21 million net profit, 18% growth in 2018

11% cash dividends and 4% bonus shares proposed for 2018

KUWAIT: Chairman of KIB, Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah, announced that the Bank recorded a net profit of KD 21 million for the year ended 31 December 2018, registering a growth of 18 percent compared to 2017. EPS also increased by 18 percent, reaching 22.4 fils compared to 19 fils during the last year.

Al-Jarrah pointed out that the improvement in KIB's performance reflected positively on its operating income, which reached KD 66.6 million compared to KD 64.2 million in 2017. This was a result of 20 percent increase in financing income (KD 15 million), to reach KD 89.5 million compared to KD 74.6 million in 2017. Revenue from fees and commissions also increased by 6 percent, to reach KD 9.9 million compared to KD 9.3 million in 2017.

As for dividends, Al-Jarrah stated that KIB's Board of Directors proposed payment of cash dividends of 11 percent of the nominal value of shares (11 fils per share) and 4 percent bonus shares from issued and paid up capital (4 shares for every 100 shares), subject to the approval of the Bank shareholders' general assembly and regulatory authorities.

KIB's total assets increased by 13 percent, reaching KD 2.2 billion compared to KD 1.9 billion as recorded at 31 December 2017. This increase is attributable to a growth in the financing portfolio by KD 301 million to reach KD 1.6 billion compared to KD 1.3 billion last year, registering a 23 percent growth. Additionally, the investment portfolio increased by KD 20 million, or 14 percent, reaching KD 166 million compared to KD 146 million in 2017.

Depositors' accounts rose to KD 1.3 billion compared to KD 1.2 billion at the end of the previous year, an increase of KD 115 million representing a growth of 10 percent.

KIB significantly improved all its asset quality matrices, achieving an NPL ratio of 0.97 percent. Total provision and collateral coverage was

343 percent at 31 December 2018, compared to 193 percent in 2017.

Positive financial results resulted in a steady growth in distributions to depositor's accounts in 2018, whereby the annualized return on Arzaq KD Deposit progressively increased to 2.73 percent in Q1 2018, 2.75 percent in Q2 2018, 2.81 percent in Q3 2018, and 3.25 percent in Q4 2018. Average annualized rate for 2018 stood at 2.886 percent. Meanwhile, Al-Boushra three-year KD deposits were offered an annualized return of 3.65 percent in Q4 2018 with an average rate of 3.55 percent for second half 2018. Profits were credited to depositors' accounts upon announcement of financial results. Furthermore, with regards to KIB's deposit accounts, Al-Jarrah shed light on Al-Ithmaar Call Account, which combines the benefits of both current and savings accounts, and which is offered to corporate customers. This unique account offers corporate customers instant access to funds through unlimited deposits and withdrawals, and provides an opportunity for companies to earn a profit on the account balance. Businesses are able to enjoy greater flexibility, better returns and unrestricted access to funds at the same time with a cheque book option.

Ithmaar Call Account offered an average annual net return of 1.443 percent at the end of 2018. The Saving Investment Account also registered notable success in 2018, yielding the highest return in the market, whereby the net annualized return on Saving Investment Account in Kuwait dinars progressively increased to 1.64 percent in Q1 2018, 1.65 percent in Q2 2018, 1.69 percent in Q3 2018, and 1.95 percent in Q4 2018. This account is designed specifically for individuals and offers the benefits of savings and investment combined into one single account. It can be opened in Kuwaiti Dinars or in any other major foreign currency. Moreover, there is no minimum amount required to open the account and profit distribution takes place on a quarterly basis.

Al-Jarrah stated that KIB's strong financial performance reflects its strong growth in a number of business areas, in line with its newly implemented strategy. KIB's new strategy implementation is forging ahead, taking the customer banking experience to the next level and delivering much more than just 'banking' in the traditional sense. Al-Jarrah added: "At KIB, we always strive to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers. For this reason, we adopt cutting-edge technology and digital solutions that are accessible at any time and any place to truly satisfy our customers."

During the annual credit review in 2018, global credit rating agency Fitch Ratings affirmed KIB's Long Term Issuer Default Rating (LT-IDR) at "A+" with a Stable Outlook. "Fitch" also affirmed the Bank's Viability Rating (VR) at "bb-".

Al-Jarrah concluded by lauding the impressive roster of awards and recognitions garnered by KIB during 2018, including: the "Excellence in Islamic Banking Products and Services Award" for

the year 2018 from the World Union of Arab Bankers (WUAB); the 'Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait' for the year 2018 and the 'Islamic Banking Chairman of the Year' for 2018 and 'Best Customer Acquisition in GCC' awards from World Finance. KIB also received 'Best Customer Acquisition in Kuwait' and 'Best Branding in Kuwait' from CPI Financial.

The Bank was also awarded 'Best Sharia-compliant Bank in MENA' and 'Fastest Growing Islamic Bank - MENA' from Capital Finance International (CFI.co). Al-Jarrah himself was awarded the Red Purple Sash adorned with the Golden Medal Award of Merit and a patent certificate in the category of Wise Leadership in the Arab region from Tatweej Academy for Excellence Awards in the Arab Region. He added that this achievement was made possible due to the combined effort and constant support of KIB's board of directors, executive management, employees, and customers - all of whom helped KIB achieve this outstanding performance.



KIB Chairman Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah

HIGHLIGHTS

- 20% growth in financing income
- 23% increase in financing receivables
- 10% growth in depositors' accounts
- Annualized gross profit rate in Q4 2018 on Arzaq deposit (KD) increased to 3.25%
- Annualized return in Q4 2018 on Al-Boushra KD (3 years) deposits were offered at 3.65%
- 0.97% NPL ratio
- Total provision and collateral coverage of 343% Profits were credited to depositors' accounts upon announcement of financial results
- Al-Ithmaar Call Account ideal for companies
- The highest return in the Kuwaiti market yielded with the Investment Savings Account (KD), with distribution on a quarterly basis

UAE's Noor Capital buys 3 tons of gold from Venezuela

CARACAS: Abu Dhabi investment firm Noor Capital said on Friday that it bought three tons of gold on Jan 21 from Venezuela's central bank, at a time when President Nicolas Maduro is seeking to keep his crisis-stricken government solvent. Noor Capital said in a statement it would refrain from further transactions until Venezuela's situation stabilizes and its purchase was in accordance with "international standards and laws in place" as of Jan. 21.

Reuters reported on Thursday that Venezuela had shipped 3 tons of gold to the United Arab Emirates on Jan. 26 and would sell 15 tons more to the country in the coming days.

Venezuela's plan was to sell 29 tons of gold held in Caracas to the UAE by February in order to provide liquidity for imports of basic goods, a senior official said. Two high-level Venezuelan central bank officials were made to resign on Thursday and Friday because they did not want to authorize the sale of gold, three sources familiar with the situation said, declining to be named because the situation was sensitive.

The bank did not immediately respond to a request to comment. The United States, which is backing an attempt by the opposition to oust Maduro and call new elections, warned

bankers and traders on Wednesday not to deal in Venezuelan gold. US Republican Senator Marco Rubio tweeted on Thursday that a "French national" working for Noor Capital was in Caracas "to arrange the theft of more Gold from #venezuela." Maduro's government resorted to selling off gold about a year ago after falling oil production, economic collapse and mounting US sanctions hit public income and made it hard for the country to access credit. The sale of large volumes of the reserves underpinning the currency is an escalation that countries only generally resort to in the most dire financial straits. Venezuela had gold reserves of 132 tons between the central bank's vaults and the Bank of England at the end of November, according to central bank data. —Reuters

Financial Results

for 2018

	2018	2017	%
Net Profit "KD Million"	20.9	17.7	18% ↑
Earnings Per Share "fil"	22.38	18.96	18% ↑
Financing Income "KD Million"	89.5	74.6	20% ↑
Financing Receivables "KD Billion"	1.60	1.30	23% ↑
Customer Deposits "KD Billion"	1.32	1.20	10% ↑
Total Assets "KD Billion"	2.17	1.92	13% ↑

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Business

A third of UK firms mulling post-Brexit overseas moves

EU looks set to benefit the most from the shift: Survey

LONDON: Almost a third of British companies are considering moving or setting up overseas operations because of Brexit, according to a survey published Friday by business lobby group the Institute of Directors. The IoD survey of over 1,200 company directors found that 16 percent had already decided to relocate or open operations abroad due to Brexit, while a further 13 percent said they were considering such plans.

Over a quarter of large businesses have already taken action or will do so in the future, compared with 12 percent of small businesses. The finance, manufacturing and science sectors were the most affected, with a third of manufacturers planning to set up foreign operations.

The European Union looks set to benefit the most, with 91 percent of those planning new foreign operations looking to set up in the bloc.

"It brings no pleasure to reveal these worrying signs," said IoD interim boss Edwin Morgan. "Change is a necessary and often positive part of doing business, but the unavoidable disruption and increased trade barriers that no-deal would bring are entirely unproductive," he added.

Britain's MPs voted on Tuesday to send Prime Minister Theresa May back to Brussels to renegotiate the unpopular divorce deal she struck with the EU. Brussels

has ruled out any big changes to the deal, leaving Britain staring at a no-deal Brexit with only 56 days left until the official departure date, which would lead to the imposition of trade tariffs.

"The UK's hard-won reputation as a stable, predictable environment for enterprise is being chipped away," warned Morgan. "Our political leaders must keep this in the front of their minds as we enter this critical phase of negotiations."

Some 64 percent of IoD members export to the EU, compared with a national average of around only 10 percent of businesses, although many more rely on supply chains dependent on the bloc. British industry is ramping up plans for a no-deal Brexit, with companies reporting on Friday sharp rises in both purchasing activity and stockpiling of inputs at warehouses.

"Brexit preparations were... a major contributing factor underlying the trends in input buying activity and stocks of purchases," according to the manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index report released by information provider IHS Markit on Friday.

Inventory holdings increased at the fastest pace in the 27-year survey history, according to the report.

"Businesses did their best to develop forward purchasing programs to avoid potentially disappointing



Nearly one in three British businesses is thinking about a move abroad after Brexit — AFP

clients and in case of a bad Brexit outcome," said Duncan Brock from purchasing body the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply. "Supply chains were closer to breaking point with stretched capacity and delivery times lengthening again for the 33rd month. "This begs the question of how much longer suppliers can deliver and businesses can retain stocks for every eventuality," he added. — AFP

US job growth surges in Jan despite govt shutdown

WASHINGTON: US job creation had another blockbuster month in January, blowing past the government shutdown, but that disruption helped to push the unemployment rate higher, the Labor Department reported Friday.

Employers added 304,000 net new positions last month-the highest in nearly a year and almost double what economists had predicted-while growth in worker pay held steady above inflation, according to the report. The new numbers were welcome news for President Donald Trump, whose already-low public approval rating suffered in the wake of the longest government shutdown in US history.

"Those numbers were very impressive," he said at the White House. "Other countries in other areas are not doing well and we are doing fantastically well." The construction, health care, hospitality and retail sectors added tens of thousands of workers, another sign that the robust labor market remains a fundamental source of strength with the US economy expected to slow in 2019. However, the five-week government shutdown-the result of an impasse between the president and Congress over his plans for a wall on the US-Mexico border-was at least partly responsible for an uptick in the jobless rate to 4.0 percent, the highest in seven months.

And hiring in December was revised sharply downward to a still-strong 222,000, but far lower than the 312,000 positions initially reported.

While the partial shutdown of the federal government between December and January idled 800,000 government workers, the Labor Department still counted furloughed employees-who would receive back pay-as employed, leaving the monthly job creation numbers unaffected.

Shutdown boosts unemployment

But the shutdown helped to drive the rise in the unemployment rate, since the separate survey of households used to determine joblessness counted furloughed workers as well as contractors as unemployed. Meanwhile, the increase in unemployment also was the result of more workers coming off the sidelines to join the job hunt.

That increased the size of the workforce pushed the closely-watched labor force participation rate up to 63.2 percent, its highest level in more than five years. The shutdown also sent about a half million people into part-time work, swelling this group to 5.1 million, its highest level in 16 months. Hourly pay grew a token 0.1 percent over December but was up 3.2 percent over January of last year, well above consumer inflation rate of 1.9 percent in the same period, leaving American workers with greater purchasing power.

Employment in leisure and hospitality grew by 74,000 jobs for the month, with restaurants and bars adding 32,000, while construction added 52,000 workers and hospitals and ambulatory care centers together added about 41,000 net new positions.

Economists said the robust job growth was likely more than strong enough to keep the unemployment rate heading downward. This could put pressure on the Federal Reserve to resume raising interest rates later this year, even though markets now expect no more Fed hikes this year.

Wall Street breathed a sigh of relief this month as policymakers sent strong signals they intended to pause, meaning investors could be in for an unwelcome surprise. "We expect the labor market to gradually cool in 2019 but the combination of solid payroll gains, rising wages and falling unemployment rate will continue," Oxford Economics said in a client note.

"Barring further tightening in financial conditions that would negatively impact economic activity, the very strong labor market picture supports our expectations that the Fed will keep a tightening bias this year."

Wall Street rose following the report, with stocks boosted by the jobs numbers and a rosy report on activity in the US manufacturing sector. The Dow Jones Industrial Average wrapped up a strong week on a high note, gaining 0.3 percent at the close. — AFP

Trump hails 'great news' that Foxconn Wisconsin factory back on track

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump on Friday cheered the "great news" that Taiwanese electronics giant Foxconn said it was going ahead with plans for a major factory in Wisconsin. The company announced that following a conversation between Trump and Foxconn chief Terry Gou it was "moving forward with our planned construction of a Gen 6 fab facility."

It was a reversal from news earlier this week that the company was scaling back its plans to open a factory and create manufacturing jobs. "Great news on Foxconn in Wisconsin after my conversation with Terry Gou!" Trump tweeted. The reports that plans were being scaled back were a blow to the administration since Trump had publicly claimed credit for the investment, which was backed by \$4 billion in controversial local tax breaks.

Foxconn, which makes devices and components for a host of major tech firms including Apple, had planned to build a factory producing LCD flat screen televisions and create around 13,000 jobs. Trump bragged about the plan and appeared alongside Gou at a groundbreaking ceremony last summer wielding golden shovels.

The company previously said the changing global economic climate-roiled by Trump's trade war with China where Foxconn has most of its assembly lines-prompted it to revise its original plans. But the firm now says it is going ahead after "productive discussions between the White



WASHINGTON, DC: In this file photo taken, US President Donald Trump shakes hands with Terry Gou (center), Chairman of Foxconn, an electronics supplier, during an announcement that the company will open a manufacturing facility in Wisconsin, during an event in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP

House and the company, and after a personal conversation between President Donald J. Trump and Chairman Terry Gou," according to the statement, which was published Friday in media reports. "This campus will serve both as an advanced manufacturing facility as well as a hub of high technology innovation for the region."

Foxconn said the decision also was based on a "comprehensive and systematic evaluation to help determine the best fit for our Wisconsin project." It did not provide details on employment or products, although it said it intended to "broaden our investment across Wisconsin far beyond our original plans." Speaking to thousands of Foxconn employees at a Chinese New Year carnival in

Taipei Saturday, Gou said investing in the US "is undoubtedly a right decision and fits with future economic trends." Gou, who described the ongoing US-China trade war as a "major concern," said he had spoken with Trump by phone on Friday night. "US President Trump... shared with me the progress on the US China trade negotiations and said it is going smoothly, and there will be a deal soon," Gou said. Media reports earlier this week quoted Louis Woo, an assistant to Gou, suggesting the company might scrap the flat screen factory in favor of hiring more high-skilled engineers for research and development-a move that would lead to far fewer blue-collar jobs and run counter to Trump's promises. — AFP

Goldman Sachs may yank top execs' bonuses over 1MDB scam

WASHINGTON: Investment bank Goldman Sachs said Friday it could withhold multi-million-dollar bonuses for former CEO Lloyd Blankfein and other executives as a result of the 1MDB corruption scandal. In a statement filed Friday with securities regulators, the company said stock awards for senior executives could be

cut depending on how pending investigations into 1MDB turn out.

The case has left the storied US banking giant with a black eye. The Justice Department in November charged two former Goldman bankers for their alleged roles in misappropriating 1MDB funds, one of the largest financial frauds ever. US prosecutors also said an unnamed "high-ranking executive," which a source later identified as Blankfein, met with the scam's alleged mastermind Low Taek Jho in 2009, the year 1MDB was created.

Goldman helped 1MDB to issue \$6.5 billion in bonds but US and Malaysian authorities say about \$3 billion was stolen. According to Friday's statement, the compensation committee on Goldman's board will have the "flexibility to reduce the size of the award... if it is later deter-

mined that the results of the 1MDB proceedings" would have affected decisions on year-end compensation.

Blankfein, who stepped down as chief executive at the end of September and left the board in December, received \$20.5 million in annual compensation for 2018, down from \$24 million the year before. The company will withhold his long-term performance bonuses initially granted in 2011, which The Wall Street Journal reported Friday is now worth about \$14 million.

Current CEO David Solomon received \$23 million in 2018, up from \$21 million in 2017. In December, Solomon defended the bank, rejecting much of the criticism directed its way as unfair. "I cannot stress enough how integrity is a cornerstone of our culture," Solomon said in a year-end message to employees. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	303.650
Euro	351.170
Sterling Pound	400.670
Canadian dollar	233.760
Turkish lira	59.540
Swiss Franc	308.270
US Dollar Buying	302.450

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.774
Indian Rupees	4.269
Pakistani Rupees	2.208
Srilankan Rupees	1.704
Nepali Rupees	2.665
Singapore Dollar	226.600
Hongkong Dollar	38.699
Bangladesh Taka	3.554
Philippine Peso	5.816
Thai Baht	9.727
Malaysian ringgit	77.660

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.027
Qatari Riyal	83.455
ani Riyal	789.214
Bahraini Dinar	806.830
UAE Dirham	82.727

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.850
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.167
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.220
Tunisian Dinar	103.630
Jordanian Dinar	428.370
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.022
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.372

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.290
Canadian Dollar	232.220
Sterling Pound	399.230
Euro	349.970
Swiss Frank	304.560
Bahrain Dinar	806.560
UAE Dirhams	82.975
Qatari Riyals	84.215
Saudi Riyals	81.775
Jordanian Dinar	429.055
Egyptian Pound	17.181
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.711
Indian Rupees	4.256
Pakistani Rupees	2.193
Bangladesh Taka	3.617
Philippines Peso	5.814
Cyprus pound	18.045
Japanese Yen	3.770
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.671
Malaysian Ringgit	74.880

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.440
Thai Bhat	10.680
Turkish Lira	58.640
Singapore dollars	224.363

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.391061	0.404961
Czech Korune	0.005572	0.014872
Danish Krone	0.042626	0.047625
Euro	0.341090	0.354790
Georgian Lari	0.131717	0.131717
Hungarian 0.001144	0.001334	
Norwegian Krone	0.032052	0.037252
Romanian Leu	0.065028	0.081878
Russian ruble	0.004661	0.004661
Slovakia	0.009065	0.019065
Swedish Krona	0.029576	0.034576
Swiss Franc	0.298932	0.0309932
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.212398	0.224398
New Zealand Dollar	0.203641	0.213141
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.226790	0.235790
US Dollars	0.299550	0.304850
US Dollars Mint	0.300050	0.304850
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003043	0.003844

Chinese Yuan	0.043649	0.047149
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036940	0.039690
Indian Rupee	0.003717	0.004489
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002707	0.002887
Korean Won	0.000262	0.000277
Malaysian Ringgit	0.071081	0.077081
Nepalese Rupee	0.002603	0.002943
Pakistan Rupee	0.001562	0.002332
Philippine Peso	0.005768	0.006068
Singapore Dollar	0.220258	0.230258
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001336	0.001916
Taiwan	0.010135	0.010315
Thai Baht	0.009355	0.009905
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.790868	0.807368
Egyptian Pound	0.017071	0.019671
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000208	0.000268
Jordanian Dinar	0.423977	0.432977
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021661	0.045661
Omani Riyal	0.783083	0.788063
Qatar Riyal	0.079115	0.084055
audi Riyal	0.079887	0.081187
Syrian Pound	0.001287	0.001507
Tunisian Dinar	0.095983	0.103983
Turkish Lira	0.051598	0.063098
UAE Dirhams	0.081248	0.082948
Yemeni Riyal	0.000987	0.001067

Business

Zain unveils Range Rover Evoque 2019 as mega prize of 'All Zainers are Winners' campaign

Latest promotion on the occasion of Kuwait's national celebrations

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, unveiled the all-new Range Rover Evoque 2019 as the mega prize of its latest promotional campaign entitled "All Zainers are Winners". Throughout the campaign, Zain offers all its postpaid and prepaid customers with instant prizes on the occasion of Kuwait's national celebrations in February.

Zain is keen on sharing the joys of Kuwait's national festivities with all its customers through launching the biggest promotional campaigns refreshed with the most wonderful offerings during February of every year. At this celebrated time of year, the company is always committed to launching unique promotional campaigns with the best offerings to celebrate this much cherished occasion along with its customer base, considered the biggest in Kuwait.

Zain's new campaign, which continues until the 28th of February, offers valuable instant prizes to all prepaid and postpaid customers, including free minutes, free Internet GBs, free bonus credit, and many

more. To be eligible for one of the instant prizes, prepaid customers can simply recharge their lines with KD 5 or more, while postpaid customers can simply pay their bills through one of Zain's digital channels (Zain's website, Zain app, or Zain Connect portal) with KD 5 or more. Customers will receive their gift instantly as soon as they pay/recharge.

The surprises of Zain's new campaign are not limited to the instant prizes only, but extend to offering a chance to all Zain prepaid and postpaid customers to win the all-new Range Rover Evoque 2019 mega prize during the final draw to be held at the end of the campaign. Every customer will receive one point for each KD 1 paid/recharged during the campaign period, and they can simply check their current accumulated points/chances balance by dialing *2526#. The more points a customer has, the more chances they will have for winning the mega prize.

Zain has long considered itself a key partner of the Kuwaiti society, especially in such national celebra-

tions. The company launched this exciting campaign to show its commitment in sharing the joys of Kuwait as a leading national company, and will spare no efforts in being an integral part of the many occasions that are of interest to the local community.

By launching this exciting limited time promotional campaign, Zain continues to reinforce its leadership position and its pledge in offering the best services and offers to meet customers' professional and personal telecommunications needs. Zain always aspires to new levels of excellence in all services it offers to its customers. Through the launch of this new campaign, Zain affirms its continuous efforts in meeting customers' needs and aspirations, and deliver its promise to offering the best services and latest technologies. The company constantly looks at ways to improve the experience of its customers, including providing them with the latest solutions to better serve their needs through the biggest and most advanced network in Kuwait.



Gulf Bank launches Feb/March campaign: Win up to KD 5,000 cash

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced the launch of the Gulf Bank Travel Spends Campaign on Credit and Prepaid cards. The campaign provides Gulf Bank cardholders with the chance to win cash prizes of up to KD 5,000, when using their credit or prepaid cards on all travel transactions - flights, hotel stays, car rentals or holiday packages.

Gulf Bank's travel spends campaign will run from 1st February to 31st March 2019, with customers getting chances to the draw when using their credit or prepaid card on all travel related spends. The campaign includes travel transactions for both local and international spends, on hotels, airlines, car rentals and travel/tour agencies. For every KD 10 spent on travel transactions, customers will receive one



Ahmad Al-Amir



entry into the draw, with a minimum total travel spend of KD 100 during the campaign period.

Following the campaign, a raffle draw will be held in the presence of Ministry of Commerce officials on 21st April 2019, during which five lucky cardholders will be selected. The first cash prize of KD 5,000 will be awarded to one lucky winner, followed by the second prize of KD 2,000. Finally, three winners will be awarded with the prize of KD 1,000 each.

Commenting on the campaign Ahmad Al-Amir,

Assistant General Manager for External Communications, Gulf Bank said, "In anticipation of the coming holiday season, Gulf Bank has launched the Travel Spends campaign, to enhance the existing benefits of its Credit card and newly launched Prepaid Cards. Through the campaign's spending program and Gulf Bank's commitment to continuously advance and improve customers banking experience, customers are given an opportunity to earn back some of their travel holiday spends."

'Good vibe' US-China trade talks followed by soybean purchases

WASHINGTON: The US-China trade talks this week had a "good vibe" with much work remaining, White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said on Friday as China followed through on a pledge to increase soybean purchases with orders of at least 1 million tons.

But US President Donald Trump's optimism about prospects for a deal was tempered by China trade watchers, who questioned how much real progress was made on core US demands for structural policy changes in China. Trump

said on Thursday he would meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping, perhaps twice, in the coming weeks to try to seal a comprehensive trade deal with Beijing, but acknowledged it was not yet clear whether a deal could be reached.

Kudlow, who participated in the talks as the director of the White House's National Economic Council, said China's engagement on core issues such as US complaints of Chinese policies that force the transfer of technology was far more extensive than in previous talks.

They talks "had a good vibe, they covered a lot of ground. Both sides looked at more specifics than ever before," Kudlow told Fox Business Network.

"We're not ready to put things down on paper," Kudlow said later on Bloomberg Television. "We're a ways from that. Much hard work is still in front of us." A day after Chinese Vice Premier Liu He closed the talks by telling Trump that China would increase purchases of US soybeans by 5 million

tons, traders told Reuters that state-owned firms on Friday bought at least 1 million tons of the oilseed for shipment between April and July.

The news sent benchmark Chicago Board of Trade March soybean futures to their highest point since mid-June, before China imposed retaliatory soybean tariffs in early July. But China's new commitment, which drew a positive reaction from Trump, only doubles the modest soybean purchases made by state firms since returning to the market in December after an initial truce between Trump and Xi. It falls well short of the 31.9 million tons of American soybeans shipped to China in 2017, a level some analysts say may never be seen again. Several people briefed on the talks said that while Chinese negotiators engaged US officials on structural issues surrounding intellectual property and technology transfer practices, they did not bring any new proposals to the table. —Reuters

Modi's promised handout to Indian farmers gets lukewarm response

MUMBAI: "Peanuts" was how one rural politician described a 6,000 rupee (\$84) yearly handout to small farmers promised in Friday's budget as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tries to secure the support of rural voters in a forthcoming election.

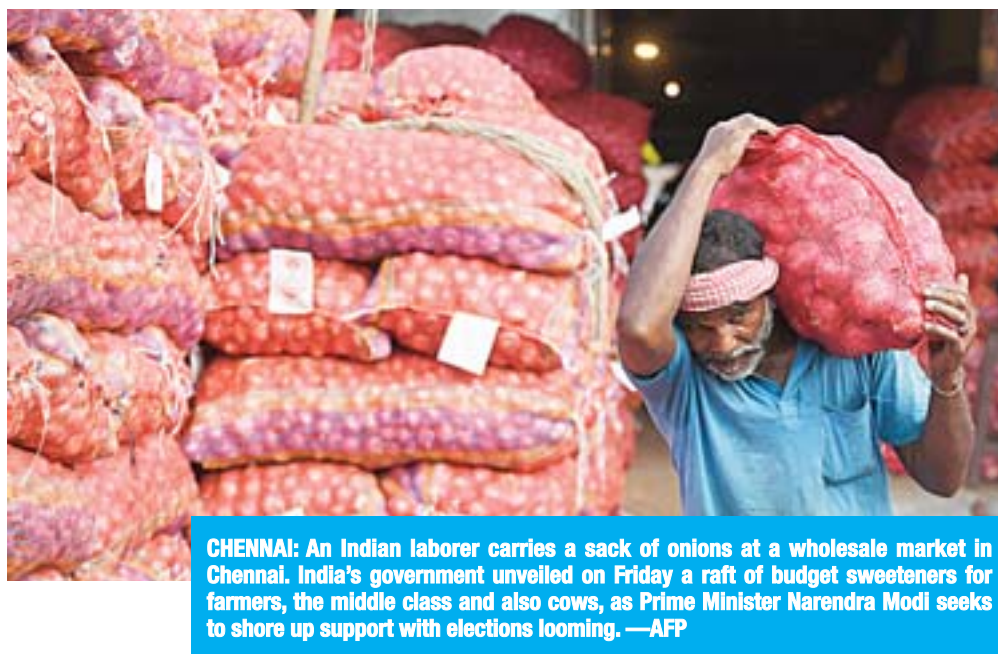
Recent polls predict Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to emerge as the biggest party in the vote which is due by May, but that it will fall short of a majority as the main opposition Congress party gains ground. Late last year the BJP lost power in three big agrarian states to Congress, which has promised to forgive farm loans as Indian farmers struggle with huge debts and falling crop prices. Several farmers told Reuters after interim Finance Minister Piyush Goyal finished presenting this government's last budget that it had not swayed them to vote for Modi's party.

The announcement of a new national cow board for bovine welfare was meanwhile a nod to India's majority Hindus-Modi's voter base-who believe the animals are sacred.

"This government will never shy away from honoring our mother cow," a hoarse Piyush Goyal, interim finance minister, told a raucous parliament as he unveiled the interim budget.

"The government is trying to lure farmers by offering peanuts," said Raju Shetti, a farmer leader and member of parliament in the western state of Maharashtra. "These measures will hardly make any difference to our earnings."

Shetti said the proposed sum was negligi-



CHENNAI: An Indian laborer carries a sack of onions at a wholesale market in Chennai. India's government unveiled on Friday a raft of budget sweeteners for farmers, the middle class and also cows, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks to shore up support with elections looming. —AFP

ble compared to the losses incurred by farmers due to the fall in crop prices in recent years, blaming Modi for resorting to big imports despite bumper local crop production in a bid to keep inflation in check.

A steep drop in prices of crops like vegetables and pulses led to protests across the country in 2018. In response, the southern state of Telangana, run by a regional party, has started paying farmers 20,000 rupees per hectare a year. "Our debt burden has risen because we have been making losses," said Jitendra Nirwal, who grows sugarcane in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. "The government should have waived farm loans."

Indian farmers borrow from banks to buy seeds and fertilizers, but erratic weather and falling crop prices cripple their ability to repay. After defaulting on bank loans, farmers were forced to borrow from private money-lenders charging exorbitant interest rates.

In 2008, the then Congress-led federal government announced a national loan waiver program costing nearly 720 billion rupees in a move that helped it retain power the next year. Its new governments in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh have promised or already forgiven farm loans worth billions of dollars.

Congress President Rahul Gandhi has also promised to provide the poor with a minimum income if they come back to power. "Giving them 17 rupees a day is an insult to everything they stand and work for," Gandhi said in a Tweet.

The BJP, in response on Twitter, said Gandhi had not "understood a thing from the budget" and that the 6,000 rupees to be paid to farmers was "not their net income but a relief measure to supplement their income; along with host of other steps taken for their welfare". —Agencies

US oil giants report strong profits despite volatile prices

NEW YORK: US oil giants Exxon Mobil and Chevron reported strong annual profits on Friday, concluding with a solid fourth quarter despite a dive in crude prices at the end of the year.

Exxon Mobil reported profits of \$20.8 billion in 2018, up 5.8 percent from 2017, while Chevron notched annual earnings of \$14.8 billion, up 61.2 percent, capping the best year in terms of earnings since 2014. Shares of both companies surged following the earnings releases, with fourth-quarter profits topping analyst expectations for both companies due in part to higher oil and gas output.

Exxon Mobil boosted its 2019 capital budget plan to \$30 billion from the prior plan of \$28 billion, while Chevron announced both a dividend increase and a new \$25 billion share repurchase program. In the fourth quarter, Exxon Mobil's oil output rose 4.3 percent, with increases in US and Asia oil more than offsetting declines in worldwide gas production.

Exxon Mobil also notched much higher refining profits due to lower downtime at US plants and gains from asset sales, including the divestment of a plant in Italy to the Algerian state energy firm Sonatrach.

Exxon Mobil Chief Executive Darren Woods said the oil giant's business model insulated it from lurches in commodity prices in places like the Permian Basin in Texas, where oil transportation bottlenecks have been minimized by the company's vast scale and infrastructure in the region. —AFP



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Business

KIPCO to raise its capital through a rights issue

Increase will help KIPCO maintain a prudent capital structure: Al-Ayyar

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - announced that it intends to perform a rights issue, whereby the company's capital will be raised by issuing 452,748,662 underwritten shares with a premium to be determined at a time closer to subscription.

KIPCO's Board of Directors met yesterday and approved the rights issue, subject to com-

pleting procedures required by the regulatory authorities. The rights issue will be open to existing shareholders.

Faisal Al-Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), said: "KIPCO has a strong portfolio of growing companies, including our banking, insurance, industrial and education businesses. Just recently, Burgan Bank completed its own

rights issue. One of the ways to ensure that we maintain the healthy growth of these companies is for KIPCO to raise its own capital. This increase will ensure that we continue to maintain a prudent capital structure."

The KIPCO Group is one of the biggest holding companies in the Middle East and North Africa, with consolidated assets of \$33

billion as at 30 September 2018. The Group has significant ownership interests in over 60 companies operating across 24 countries. The group's main business sectors are financial services, media, real estate and manufacturing. Through its core companies, subsidiaries and affiliates, KIPCO also has interests in the education and medical sectors.



Faisal Al-Ayyar

My Ooredoo App exceeds 1 million downloads

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announced that its smart-phone application My Ooredoo has exceeded a record breaking 1 million downloads, and is currently dominating the top ten free app list. This achievement showcases the company's continuous aim in embracing the digital age and delivering products that keep up with the needs of its customers, which enables customers to be in total control of their usage at the convenience of their fingertips.

This achievement is yet another milestone for the company's plans to further embrace digitalization and solidify its position as a leading local telecom service provider. The app aims to keep up with the needs



Mijbil Alayoub

and modes of usage of Ooredoo Kuwait customers, and provide them with the best in-class services conveniently at the tap of a finger without the need to speak to customer service agents.

It is worth mentioning that Ooredoo is the first telecom operator in Kuwait to integrate a full catalog of digital services through its application which allows customers to purchase and control their subscription with content provider services such as StarzPlay for movies, series and entertainment content; Anghami for Arabic, English, and International music content; and Gameloft for mobile video game content. Ooredoo is also the first telecom operator to integrate a special offers section within the app, which allows customers to directly avail from the company offers, such as the Ooredoo Surprise offers.

The My Ooredoo App has many exciting features which include new Android P Support, login with fingerprint and facial recognition, enabling customers to view and control their bills and control subscriptions of their other numbers, in addition to more controls on Nojoom points. Customers can also redeem points from Nojoom partners through the app, or transfer points to other subscribers donate points to the United Nation's World Food Program. The My Ooredoo App update also enables customers to view and control usage and capacity of internet subscriptions, with the ability to buy additional packs at the click of a button.

Commenting on the My Ooredoo App, Mijbil Alayoub, Senior Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said "We are continuously enhancing and improving the My Ooredoo App, which comes in tandem with our digital transformation strategy and enriching the lives of our customers. We are continuously seeking to provide our customers with a seamless digital experience".

App users are logged in automatically without the need to enter credentials, for convenience and flexibility. The app enhances the portal, giving customers access to view their real-time usage of data, calls and SMS. Customers can control Ooredoo Passport roaming plans, all conveniently from within My Ooredoo app. The app also includes a branch locator to direct customers to the nearest Ooredoo branch. The official and free app is available on both Android and iOS operating systems.

NBK celebrates graduates of its leadership program

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) celebrated the graduation of participants in its "Leading the Execution of a Strategy in Financial Services" program that was held in partnership with the Harvard Business School and the Institute of Banking Studies. Having taken place between January 26 and 31, 2019, the program was attended by 12 managers of various departments in NBK.

The graduation was attended by Isam J Al-Sager, Group Chief Executive Officer, Yousef J Al-Obaid, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait, Emad Al-Ablani General Manager of Group Human Resources and Dr Yaqoub Al-Rifai, Director General of the Institute of Banking Studies.

Ensuring the program covered the latest studies and advancements made in the banking and financial sector, Harvard Business School focused on providing a series of real-life situations and interactive activities that aimed at improving the participants' problem-solving and analytical skills. Participants received a degree from the Harvard Business School at the end of the program.

The program was designed specifically for executive managers of divisions at NBK, and adopts the high educational standards of the Harvard Business School and is based on practical case studies that the School is renowned for.

The program is also one of the development initiatives organized by the Institute of Banking Studies. The principal objective of these initiatives is to develop professionals and executive manager in Kuwaiti banks. The first of these programs was held in 2010 and participation was limited to the



Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwaiti banks that are members of the Institute. The success of these programs expanded the reach in 2011 to include the GCC countries.

NBK has the largest participation in the program this year. The program is held annually, each year in a GCC country, with Kuwait the most recent one which was attended by manager at the Central Bank of Kuwait, Kuwaiti banks, and other Gulf banks and financial institutions.

Harvard Business School is one of the oldest and most

prestigious American universities in the world. The School has graduated leading figures in the American and world's business community since 1636 and ranks first among the top 100 universities in the world.

NBK is committed to the professional development of its employees and enrolls them in development programs held in partnership with leading international universities and institutions. The Bank also supports and encourages employees to seek self-development through training programs and continued education.

KFH launches the first banking robot in Kuwait

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Finance House (KFH) launched the first banking robot in Kuwait in its efforts to offer the highest standards of banking and customer service by adopting the latest advancements and technologies, and in particular, "robots".

KFH's new robot functions with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and will complete transactions in consumer and installment financing. Its performance will help reduce processing time and save customers the time and effort by reducing the turnaround time from 60 minutes to 10 minutes.

Speaking of the revolutionary introduction, the Group Chief Executive Officer of KFH, Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh, said: "This is an unprecedented milestone to the banking sector in Kuwait and we are proud to be the first bank to introduce it. The step to employ robots to complete banking transactions comes as a continuation to our investments in digital transformation and global standards of banking in the digital era."

"KFH has already introduced the XTM machines and "KFH-Go", the first digital self-banking branch in Kuwait, as well as adopted the latest technologies in all its banking operations to enhance our customer experience. The Bank also offers mobile payment and e-payment services and launched innovative solutions that make transferring funds easier thanks to the Blockchain secure and trusted technology. The later reduces banking fees and paper transactions, increases safety, accuracy and speed of remittances without the need for intermediaries. The service reduces operating expenses and enables customers to make financial transfers quickly, safely and at a lower cost", he said.



Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh

Al-Nahedh reiterated KFH's commitment to making its customers' banking experience easier as it introduces new technological solutions to facilitate transactions and achieve the financial inclusion. With that, the robot technology integrates an advanced software into KFH's systems to make operations faster, safer and more reliable.

He said: "With banking robot, customers' credit position can be determined within four minutes only, in addition

to setting their credit limit and checking for their historical transactions in services such as K-net. The new system increases the quality of our service in order to achieve customer satisfaction and helps attract new customers to continue expanding our market share."

Al-Nahedh further explained that KFH's employees were trained to deal with the new banking robot technology, which will help them achieve the maximum benefit and improve their performance. He pointed out that the technology doesn't mean a reduction in the role and importance of the human element. Robots support their responsibilities to improve their overall performance.

Al-Nahedh concluded: "I have confidence that robots will contribute to increasing the efficiency of our employees and channeling their potentials towards more significant aspects in everyday activities."

KFH invests in the latest technology developed for the banking and financial sector to advance services provided to customers and make them faster, safer and at a reduced cost. The increase in productivity increases the quality of services, and ultimately, the Bank's profitability. KFH remains at the level of the leading international banks, and ensures along the way to serve and cater to the needs of customers through innovative services and products.

TKSC reports \$211 million net profit for 2018

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Styrene Company (TKSC), the first and only Kuwait-based styrene monomer (SM) producer and exporter, yesterday announced realizing a net profit of \$211 million for the fiscal year ending in December 31, 2018, compared to \$94 million in 2017.

Commenting on the results, TKSC CEO Adel Al-Munifi stated, "TKSC achieved record results in 2018 with an increase of 124 percent in net profit and a production exceeding our 450,000 metric tons annually (MTA) name-plate production capacity of SM, while we continued to deliver a significant performance in major markets including China, South East Asia and India."

Al-Munifi added, "TKSC's competitive position witnessed additional growth in 2018 with financial results reflecting continued measures taken to optimize costs and enhance operational reliability and safety, resulting in high-quality production for our expanding customer base. We must note that the US-China trade uncertainty supported firm prices in TKSC's markets, leading to this unprecedented growth in our overall profitability during 2018."

Since commencing its operations in 2009, TKSC has significantly contributed to the success of its shareholders, as well as to Kuwait's global industrial and economic presence.

Al-Munifi concluded, "I would like to extend utmost gratitude to all TKSC's shareholders, EQUATE Petrochemical Company, Kuwait Paraxylene Production Company (KPPC) and The Kuwait Olefins Company (TKOC), public institutions and customers for their continued support throughout our remarkable journey."

The Kuwait Styrene Company (TKSC) was established in 2004 as an international joint venture between the Kuwait Aromatics Company (KARO) and the Dow Chemical Company (Dow). TKSC is part of Greater EQUATE, which also includes Kuwait Paraxylene Production Company (KPPC) and The Kuwait Olefins Company (TKOC). The firms are operated by EQUATE Petrochemical Company under one integrated umbrella in Kuwait.



Adel Al-Munifi

Deutsche Bank insists best to come after first profit in years

FRANKFURT: Germany's biggest lender Deutsche Bank reported Friday a profit for the first time in four years, with executives looking to convince investors and media a phase of "controlled growth" has begun. The firm reported 267 million euros (\$305 million) net profit, compared with a loss of 751 million in 2017 and 8.2 billion euros over the previous two years combined.

The result, however, was short of expectations of 505 million euros from analysts surveyed by Factset.

Weighing on earnings was a final quarter last year that brought losses of 425 million euros, with Deutsche blaming "challenging financial markets" and "negative" media headlines.

But there was no repeat of the massive 1.4-billion-euro charge related to tax reform in the US that hit in late 2017. Deutsche's performance still fails to match major American competitors or European rivals such as Spain's Santander or BNP Paribas in France.

Revenues fell four percent, to 25.3 billion euros, but the bank was able to increase pre-tax profit eight percent to 1.3 billion euros. Much of that increase was down to a cost-cutting drive, which saw outgoings fall five percent to 23.5 billion euros as bosses slashed almost 6,000 jobs, bringing headcount to 91,700. Deutsche said it had a comfortable capital ratio—a measure of a bank's cash buffer to withstand sudden economic shocks—of 13.6 percent.

'Discipline and integrity'

"We achieved all of our objectives for 2018," said chief executive Christian Sewing, who replaced crisis-fighting British boss John Cryan last April after years of struggle to turn the bank around. "A new phase is beginning, one of controlled growth" in all the bank's sectors, he added.

"We won't lose sight of cost discipline and integrity," Sewing promised. The Deutsche boss refused to be drawn by analysts or journalists on a potential merger with Frankfurt rival Commerzbank, after reports the German government favors a tie-up to create a new national champion.

"We have our plan and we are working very hard on realizing this plan," Sewing said.

Executives aim to continue cutting costs, with the payroll set to fall below 90,000 in 2019, while betting on a solid performance from Deutsche's strongest areas in investment banking.

The lender claims a place among global leaders in fields such as managing international financial flows or

bond trading. Although early 2019 has been marked by pessimism about global growth prospects, Deutsche will target a return on tangible equity of four percent—a broad measure of profitability—compared with 0.5 percent in 2018.

The plans will "certainly be tested" if the "extremely adverse" market conditions seen in the last quarter persist, Sewing acknowledged.

Legal woes dispelled

Equinet Bank analyst Philipp Haessler told AFP he was "not optimistic that the bank will achieve its return on equity target. To do that it would have to make significant gains in market share, which will be difficult." Deutsche can point to one major factor in its favor this year, as it sees itself largely free of the thicket of legal entanglements that throttled performance in the past.

By the end of 2018 its provisions for litigation costs were down to 1.2 billion euros, compared with 7.6 billion euros at the end of 2016. Board member Karl von Rohr said some 19 out of 20 major legal risks threatening the bank had been "completely or partially resolved".

Deutsche sees no danger from recent scandals linked to the so-called "Panama Papers" leak of information about offshore companies, which saw prosecutors raid the bank's twin-tower headquarters in Frankfurt in November. Neither do bosses judge there is a major risk from a money-laundering scandal at Danske Bank. — AFP

What's On

Blink opens 2nd branch at Avenues



(Left to right) Nawazish Khan, Vice President of Blink, Dr. Waleed Al Bastaki, President of Blink, Mohamed Sabri, Sales Manager and Jamal Al-Masri, General Manager pose for a picture.



By Faten Omar

Gamers can now enjoy their favorite games and latest gaming gadgets as Blink opened its 2nd branch on January 31, 2019 at Avenues - Phase 4. On the sidelines of the opening ceremony, General Manager, Jamal Al-Masri told the press that Blink's management responded to local market desires for a modern branch that meets the diverse needs of the professionals in the gaming field to provide distinguished services with competitive prices, adding that Blink-Gaming Gadget branch in Avenues will be a destination for gaming fans and professional gamers of all kinds where the company offers leading brands specialized in this field all under one roof.

"This is our second high-end branch in Kuwait, the first one is in Hawally at Ibn Khaldun Street," he said. Al-Masri noted that Blink was founded in 2003 and continued its success until it is now representing the world leading companies in high-performance gaming hardware, software, and systems in Kuwait, the Gulf and the Middle East such as ASUS, Razer, GAEMS, DXRacer, Logitech, and Cyber Clean. "Blink has pioneered the provision of unique devices in the field of games and technology to the local market through its branches in America and China," he added.

According to Al-Masri, Blink is keen to satisfy its customers through offering special services. "We offer the possibility of customizing Gaming PC depending on our clients' request and providing this service either in our branches or through advanced software on our website." He pointed out that Blink offers the Loyalty program "The higher your purchases the more discounts and benefits you get. Our Program offers additional discounts, free fast delivery and much more."

He added that they provide with express delivery services with order tracking system where they have the fastest delivery service in Kuwait up to 1 hour. "Also, our website offers instant delivery of digital cards such as iTunes cards, Sony cards, etc. In addition to a professional customer service available 24 hours and refund or exchange within 14 days of purchase," he said.



Waleed Al Bastaki, President of Blink



He noted that customers can order through the website www.blink.com.kw, which contains more than 18,000 different products of all international brands, at both branches in Avenues and Hawally. Customers can also contact Blink through WhatsApp, or via their hot-

line. Blink is an international electronic commerce company with its headquarters in Kuwait and the largest online retailer in the Middle East in its field. Blink is currently serving Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan.

Symphony Style Kuwait chefs win at HORECA 2019

Symphony Style Kuwait, a Radisson Collection Hotel, prominently demonstrated its culinary expertise with its role in the recent HORECA 2019, the largest B2B hospitality exhibition in the country, held at the Kuwait International Fair collecting a staggering 14 wins at Kuwait's largest B2B hospitality exhibition. A team of nine culinary experts from 'The Exceptional' joined hundreds of fellow hospitality professionals in showcasing their talents in a range of live competitions during the eighth edition of the wide-ranging event covering the hospitality, catering and food industry sectors.

Hundreds of the leading chefs competed in live demonstrations and Symphony Style Kuwait, A Radisson Collection Hotel's food and drinks experts came out on top winning many number of awards: Chef Chinthaka Sandaruwan Gamwara claimed the first gold medal in the Ice Carving category. There were more awards for Chef Chinthaka in the Fruit and Vegetable Carving contest claiming silver, and a merit certificate in the Chocolate Carving category.

Chef Perangopalreddy earned silver with his talented demonstration in the Mystery Basket category. Chef Mehmet Ali Eksim won bronze in the Fresh Pasta Competition and a Merit Certificate in the Six-course Set Dinner Menu category. Chef Nalin



Chaturangabalasarigo was a silver medalist in both the Cold/Hot sandwich and the Six-course Set Dinner Menu categories. The Exceptional was bronze in Sushi as Chef Dhanusha Tharaka demonstrated his expertise in the category. Bronze medals were also won in the Asian Cuisine, and the Kuwaiti Traditional Dish categories. Lastly, chef Nalaka earned a merit certificate in the Best Burger Challenge.

"Symphony Style Kuwait seeks to always demonstrate its team's talent and experience through sup-

porting events and promoting local culture; this was one of the best opportunities to do so," expressed General Manager, Peter Schuler in support of the winners and the exhibition. Symphony Style Kuwait, A Radisson Collection Hotel's prominent participation in HORECA 2019 cements its reputation as a hospitality leader in the region and highlights its commitment to supporting events that promote local culture and Kuwait as a business and leisure destination.

KANA Kuwait holds family picnic



Kerala Arts and Nataka Academy (KANA), Kuwait organized a family picnic last week at a farm house in Kabd for their members and families. The family get-together was held primarily to honor all the artists including the actors who worked for the successful staging of KANA Kuwait's mega drama Mazha (Othello) which was staged on November 29 and 30, 2018 at the Boy Scouts Theatre Auditorium Hawally.

KANA, Kuwait Patron Babu Chakola, President Kumar Thrithala, Vice President Punnoose Anchery, General Secretary Jiju Kalayil, Advisor K P Balakrishnan, Advisor Sajeev K Peter, Treasurer Dennis Tharakan, Technical Advisor Idiculla Mathews, PRO Regi Mathew and Ladies Convener Sindhu Babu Chakola, among others, spoke during a session held on the sidelines of the picnic to review the play.

KANA Kuwait also bid farewell to its long-serving member and technical Advisor Idiculla Mathews on the occasion who is leaving Kuwait for good after serving in the country for more than 35 years. KANA



office-bearers recounted the dedicated service Mathews rendered to the association in their speeches. Mathews was presented a memento as a token of appreciation by Babu Chakola. The two-day picnic was held in an atmosphere of fun and frolic with all the participants joining in several cultural programs and games.

Symphony Style Kuwait launches BBQ nights



Symphony Style Kuwait, a Radisson Collection Hotel, hosted the alluring launch of Chococafe & Garden's BBQ nights attended by senior management and media at a time in which ambience, great food and live music were enjoyed by those attending. The BBQ night held marked the launch of nights of flair that can be attended by guests at a reasonable price every Saturday between 5 pm and 11 pm.

Guests enjoyed the lavishly prepared, extensive local and international hot and cold dishes, and chefs served up the finest grills and a wide array of seafood from the live BBQ station throughout the evening. Symphony Style Kuwait ensures delivering memorable nights at Choco cafe & Garden with 10 types of salads alongside an all you can eat BBQ. Furthermore, guests can indulge in a complimentary tea istikana or Arabic coffee, to reflect the personalized thoughtful service provided. The atmospheric ambience can have an extra touch of delight, should guests desire to order any beverage or sheesha.

NITCAA Kuwait Chapter to hold MahaQuizzer

Spearheading quizzing excellence in Kuwait, the National Institute of Technology Alumni Association (NITCAA) Kuwait chapter, will hold the 7th International written quiz, on February 15, 2019. MahaQuizzer Middle East - Kuwait 2019 timings are from 2 pm to 3.30 pm and will be held across three venues in Kuwait viz. Indian Public School (IPS) - Salmiya, Fahaheel Al Watanieh Indian School (FAIPS DPS) - Fahaheel, and United Indian School - Jleeb Al Shuyoukh.

MahaQuizzer Middle East - Kuwait 2019, is an annual solo quiz researched and conceived by Karnataka Quiz Association (KQA). KQA has been successfully conducting MahaQuizzer simultaneously across several Indian cities since 2005. In India, this event attracts the who's who in the quizzing circuit as contestants and has attained the status of "Mighty Quizzer" as its name literally translates.

In the last seven years, MahaQuizzer has enticed many knowledge seekers in Kuwait too and this year the organizers expect massive participation from enthusiasts across all age groups. NITCAA's organizing team is led by Kannan K (President), Prasanth Warriar (General Secretary), Jayadeep (Treasurer), and M B Vijayakumar (General Convener - MahaQuizzer).

MahaQuizzer Middle East - Kuwait 2019 convener, M B Vijayakumar says, "It is an open general written quiz contest, for participants irrespective of age, nationality or affiliation. The only quizzing event in Kuwait where adults too can sharpen or rekindle their quest for knowledge. In fact, anyone with a passion and quest for knowledge is welcome."

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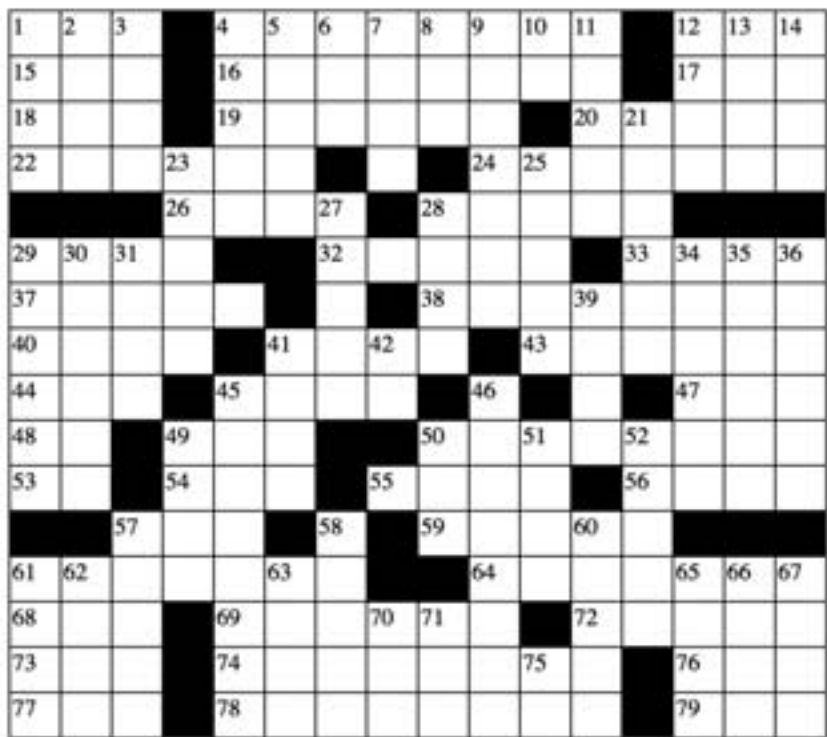
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ACROSS

- 1. 3 to 30 gigahertz.
- 4. A French policeman.
- 12. A former monetary unit in Great Britain.
- 15. A pass between mountain peaks.
- 16. Resembling an umbel in form.
- 17. Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
- 18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 19. An officer of the law.
- 20. The capital of Morocco.
- 22. A dwarfed ornamental tree or shrub grown in a tray or shallow pot.
- 24. A needle-like part or structure of a plant or animal or crystal.
- 26. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
- 29. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
- 32. Green algae common in freshwater lakes of limestone districts.
- 33. United States inventor who manufactured the first elevator with a safety device (1811-1861).
- 37. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- 38. Any beetle of the genus Calosoma.
- 40. One thousandth of a second.
- 43. The quarter of many North African cities in which the citadel is located.
- 44. An unabridged dictionary constructed on historical principles.
- 47. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- 48. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- 53. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- 54. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- 55. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- 56. A wine bottle made of leather.
- 59. Type genus of the Caviidae.
- 61. One species.
- 64. United States politician and orator (1782-1817).
- 68. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- 69. Great coolness and composure under strain.
- 72. A French river that flows through the heart of Paris and then northward into the English Channel.
- 73. The residue that remains when something is burned.
- 74. Medieval plate armor to protect a horse's head.
- 76. Small cubes with 1 to 6 spots on the faces.
- 77. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
- 78. An elementary particle with negative charge.
- 79. A doctor's degree in education.

DOWN

- 1. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- 2. A disreputable vagrant.
- 3. Open pastry filled with fruit or custard.
- 4. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
- 5. (computer science) A system of world-

- wide electronic communication in which a computer user can compose a message at one terminal that is generated at the recipient's terminal when he logs in.
- 6. The compass point that is one point west of due north.
- 7. A visual presentation showing how something works.
- 8. A flat wing-shaped process or wing-like part of an organism.
- 9. Elongate very slender water scorpions.
- 10. A unit of weight equivalent to 1000 kilograms.
- 11. Suggestive of the supernatural.
- 12. Used as a Hindi courtesy title.
- 13. A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated silica of variable color.
- 14. The 2nd letter of the Greek alphabet.
- 21. Placed crosswise.
- 23. Wood of a sumac.
- 25. A soft whitish calcite.
- 27. The formation of frost or ice on a surface.
- 28. (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
- 30. Seal again.
- 31. In bed.
- 34. Island in West Indies.
- 35. A hostel for pilgrims in Turkey.
- 36. The world's largest desert (3,500,000 square miles) in North Africa.
- 39. A kiln for drying hops.
- 41. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
- 42. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- 45. Arrange or combine in pairs.
- 46. Fictional character created by Charles Dickens.
- 49. Electrical device that can interrupt the flow of electrical current when it is overloaded.
- 50. British informal term.
- 51. The central area of a church.
- 52. Lower in esteem.
- 57. Capital and largest city of the Czech Republic.
- 58. Not in accordance with the fact or reality or actuality.
- 60. Realistic Norwegian author who wrote plays on social and political themes (1828-1906).
- 62. Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
- 63. German industrialist who was the first in Germany to use an assembly line in manufacturing automobiles (1871-1948).
- 65. The periodic rise and fall of the sea level under the gravitational pull of the moon.
- 66. A town in north central Oklahoma.
- 67. Tall woody perennial grasses with hollow slender stems especially of the genera Arundo and Phragmites.
- 70. (of securities) Not quoted on a stock exchange.
- 71. An engineering university in Cambridge.
- 75. An artificial language for international use that rejects rejects all existing words and is based instead on an abstract analysis of ideas.

Fridy's Solution

T	A	A	L		E	M	P	A	L	E		A	C	E	R
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STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Everyone has different ideas about beauty. All aesthetic issues are essentially subjective, and you will be much happier today if you understand and accept that, when you have to deal with some conflicting opinions about a work of art. But don't be afraid to say what you think. And don't judge other people (especially if they are from other cultures) for what they say, even if they are criticizing you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

There is a lot to be said for being hopeful and having a positive attitude, but you must balance your sanguinity with caution today. If you let yourself get too caught up in your fantasy life, you will miss out on some important information that pertains to your real life. So temper your optimism with a healthy dose of realism, and you won't be disappointed. This is not a time to take major risks — there is too much instability in the air.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Working with another person will be challenging but very rewarding today. The idea of partnership is very appealing to you right now — it will be a real win-win situation that lets you showcase all your strengths and lets the other person shine, too. So try to put together some sort of task for a duo today, even if it's as simple as a carpool. Okay, so you might not solve all the world's problems — but you'll at least be able to drive in the carpool lane!



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Guess who could use a little tender loving care today? You — that's who! Spend some quality time by yourself, listening to your own thoughts and waiting for the universe to give you some answers (silence does count as a reply, by the way). The pace of the world is much too fast for you right now, so why don't you simply step aside and let the crazy parade of people run on by? Their destination doesn't really appeal to you anyway.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

The level of romance in your life is on a steady climb! This means very exciting things for you, especially since you're ready to share more of yourself with someone else. If you're currently involved with someone, let your partner show you how he or she feels about you (without prompting on your part). You won't be disappointed! If you're single, this day will prove to you that there are good people out there waiting for someone like you.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Letting go of negative things will be extremely easy for you today — so let yourself be a slippery surface! Try to release yourself from being responsible for other people's happiness; let them take care of themselves. Forget old problems that have been nagging at you lately. Instead, focus on the new opportunities that are coming your way soon. Have faith that things are only going to get better.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

It's all well and good for someone to speak about big ideas for saving the world — but at a certain point, talk has to turn into action. Beware of people who talk the talk but cannot walk the walk today. Aligning yourself too closely with someone like this could mar your reputation and leave you feeling frustrated. You don't need anyone's help to get momentous things done! You are much better off going it on your own.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

If you are contemplating a session of retail therapy today, think again. Buying things to make yourself feel better may provide temporary relief. But in a couple of day's time, whatever has been bothering you will still be bothering you. Any impulse buys you make today could drain your bank account of much-needed funds. Save your money for another day and don't take any financial risks — especially with new technical gadgets that you have not researched.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

If you think you can fake your way through an intimidating situation today, you are in for an unpleasant surprise! You cannot bluff your way into confidence right now, so don't even try. It's wisest to frankly admit any anxieties or insecurities you have today. If you let everyone involved know that you might be feeling like a fish out of water, they will respect you for it. A key mark of intelligence is knowing when you don't know something — and admitting it.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You can feel free to turn a deaf ear toward anyone who is telling you that your life needs more discipline and structure. This person is projecting his or her own feelings of inadequacy onto you. Do not let someone with status or a powerful position intimidate you and force you to adopt a style of living that isn't comfortable for you. The way you manage things is working just fine — all that matters is that it works for you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This morning, dress in clothes that can take you from a formal appointment to a wild party, because this will be an expansive day full of opportunity. You never know where a conversation will take you, especially today — so you should be prepared for anything. Put yourself in the middle of a group of friendly people. Even if you have nothing to say, you will be warmly welcomed. Lasting relationships will be formed in a moment.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Get ready to build a much cozier relationship with someone who holds a great deal of authority in your life right now. You will be spending a lot more time in this person's company, and you will be expected to act more as a peer than a subordinate. Try not to be intimidated by her or his somewhat chilly demeanor. Focus on getting your ideas across, not on being charming. Work for this person's respect, not for a laugh or a smile (that will come naturally later).

Wordsearch Puzzle

Summer

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

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

ANTS	FISHING	JULY	SUNBURN
AUGUST	FLIES	JUNE	SUNGLASSES
BARBECUE	FLOWERS	MOSQUITOES	SUNSCREEN
BASEBALL	GARDENING	NO SCHOOL	SUNSHINE
BEACH	GOLF	PICNIC	SUNTAN
BEES	GREEN GRASS	ROLLER BLADES	SWEAT
BICYCLE	HAT	SANDALS	SWIMMING
BLUE SKY	HIKING	SKATEBOARD	U V RAYS
BOATING	HOLIDAYS	SOCCER	WASPS
BREEZE	HOT	SOLSTICE	WATER FIGHTS
CAMPING	ICE CREAM	SPRINKLERS	WATERMELON

Fridy's Solution

St. Patrick's Day

BEER	DANCING	HOLY DAY	POTATOES
BELFAST	DUBLIN	IRELAND	SEVENTEENTH
BISHOP	EVENTS	IRISH	SHAMROCK
CABBAGE	FESTIVAL	LEPRECHAUN	SNAKES
CELEBRATION	FESTIVAL	LIMERICK	SODA BREAD
CELTIC CROSS	GREEN	MARCH	TRADITION
CHRISTIAN	GUINNESS	MISSIONARY	YEARLY
CLOVER	HERITAGE	MUSIC	
CORK	HISTORY	PARADE	
CORNEBEEF	HOLIDAY	PATRON SAINT	

The hidden message is: SAINT PATRICK LIVED IN THE FIFTH CENTURY

Daily SuDoku

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

hard

Fridy's Solution

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

medium

Lifestyle

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2019



This photo shows panda keepers holding cubs as they pose for photos to celebrate the Lunar New Year at the Shenshuping breeding base of Wolong National Nature Reserve in Wenchuan, China's southwestern Sichuan province. Eleven panda cubs born in 2018 were presented to the public to mark the upcoming Lunar New Year of the Pig, which starts on February 5. — AFP

Bring home the bacon: The Taiwanese woman living with four pet pigs



This picture shows Jenny Tsai posing with pillows with pictures of her pet pigs in her apartment in Taichung, central Taiwan. —AFP photos



Jenny Tsai feeding biscuits to her pet pigs in her apartment in Taichung, central Taiwan.



Jenny Tsai (right) and her roommate with Tsai's four pet pigs in their apartment in Taichung, central Taiwan.

Every year is the Year of the Pig in Jenny Tsai's ninth-floor apartment in Taiwan's Taichung City which she shares with one fellow human and four pampered porcine housemates. Website designer Tsai says her pigs are so clever they've worked out how to open the fridge, which is now protected from wandering snouts with a rope. "Pigs are very affectionate," she says. "When I am sick they stay by my side and keep me company. But you can't pretend to be sick or they'll find out and wreak havoc." It is difficult to underestimate the importance of pigs in Chinese culture—especially when it comes to food.

One of Taiwan's most prized treasures is the "meat-shaped stone", a small piece of carved jasper with an uncanny resemblance to a chunk of stewed pork belly that draws huge daily crowds at the island's national museum. But Tsai's pigs are the lucky ones—they have avoided ending up on a plate. The 43-year-old first started keeping pet pigs 12 years ago when her family gave her "Little Du", a piglet who has grown into a somewhat robust 65-kilogramme (143-pound) hog. "When our neighbors' pig gave birth, I stopped by to watch the piglets every day so my father and brother bought one for me," she told AFP.

Over the years, she has taken in six more pigs that were abandoned or given away by their owners, three of which have since died. The remaining four pigs live a life of luxury under Tsai's care, staying in the largest room in her small apartment while Tsai and her flatmate occupy the tiny bedrooms to the side.

'Difficult to raise'

Each pig has its own blanket, clothes, bowl and leash while the apartment is festooned with pig-themed figurines, cushions and paintings as well as bowls and cooking pots. But keeping a pig is no easy task. Tsai once nursed a five-day-old piglet that required bottle-feeding every four hours, as well as a disabled pig rescued from a garbage dump that she wheeled in and out of her house in a cart. "Pigs are difficult to raise, they can wreak havoc, they bite and they eat a lot." Unlike dogs or cats, there is no pet hotel that accommodates pigs so their owners "can't travel far and have to make a lot of sacrifices," she added. Despite the challenges, Tsai said her beloved pets have brought



Jenny Tsai (left) guiding her pet pigs into her apartment in Taichung, central Taiwan.

her much joy over the years.

But she worries that the arrival of the Year of the Pig next week might lead to a spike in abandoned pets. Two Facebook pages she helps run with around 2,000 fans and fellow pig owners have already seen a rise in requests from people wanting to know more about keeping or giving away the animals. "I hope the public will understand that pigs are not that easy to keep. I hope they will do some homework, speak to those who have experience keeping pigs and see if they have the time and space before keeping a pig." Tsai said she often ends up taking in abandoned pigs—especially fully grown ones. "Nobody wants a grown pig and if some people do want it, they might have an ulterior motive—such as killing the pig to eat." — AFP



Jenny Tsai (top left) walking her pet pigs in a park in Taichung, central Taiwan.



Jenny Tsai (left) walking her pet pigs in a park in Taichung, central Taiwan.



Dior gowns that made headlines star in London exhibition



From Princess Margaret's 21st birthday gown to Oscar winner Jennifer Lawrence's red carpet dress, Christian Dior outfits that have made headlines go on show in a London exhibition dedicated to the French fashion house. With a supporting cast of accessories, sketches and perfume bottles, "Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams" takes a close look at the history of the luxury brand he founded in 1946 and which remains the epitome of haute couture. In all more than 500 items, the legacy of the late couturier and his six successors are on display at the Victoria & Albert Museum from Feb 2. "Not only did (Dior) ...revolutionize fashion design... but he was also important in how he did business," Oriole Cullen, Fashion and Textiles curator at the V&A, told Reuters.

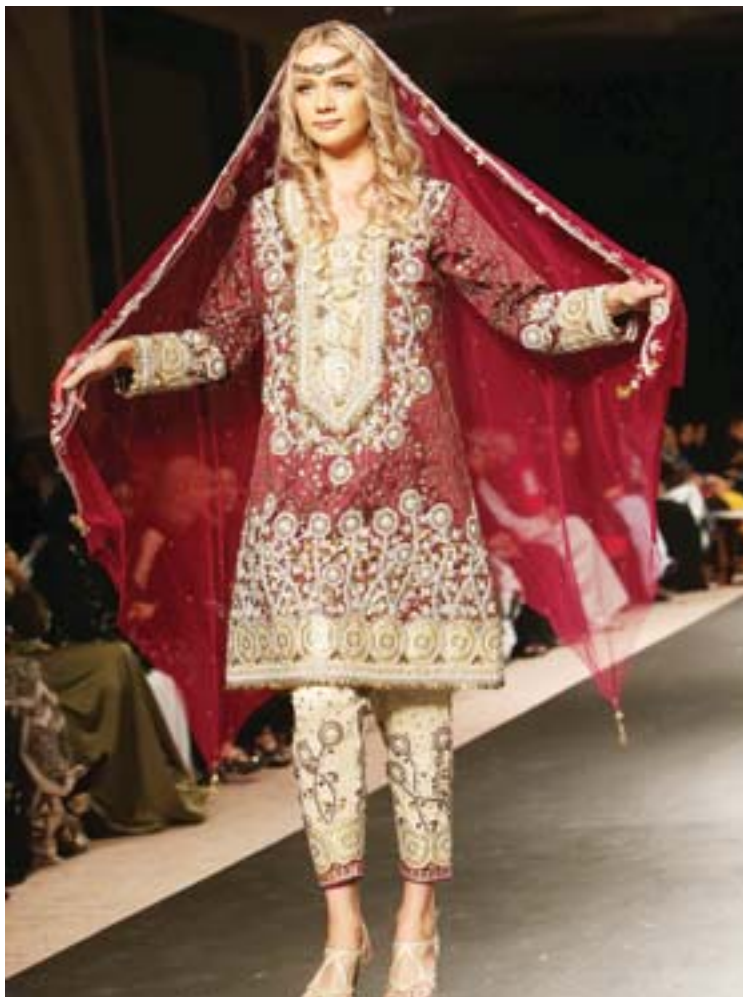
"His business model was very much something which is still in use today. He wanted to look globally and at different markets." One of the earliest outfits on show is Dior's signature Bar suit: a sculpted off-white jacket synched at the waist and black pleated skirt. The 1947 design revolutionized womenswear and was dubbed Dior's "New Look". Another highlight is the gold straw embroidered silk bodice and full-skirted gown Dior designed for Britain's Princess Margaret's in 1951. She wore the gown for her official 21st birthday portrait. Dior's love of Britain - where he staged several fashion shows - is also explored in the exhibition, which is based on a previous Paris House of Dior display. "He was a self-confessed anglophile," Cullen said. "For him it was an important market." Dior died in 1957, aged 52. A young Yves Saint Laurent took over and was followed by successive creative directors Marc Bohan, Gianfranco Ferré, John Galiano, Raf Simons and Maria Grazia Chiuri, at the helm since 2016.

Their designs, worn by royals and celebrities, are mixed alongside the founder's, each loyal to his legacy and fascinations. Dior was superstitious - his lucky star is on display - and Chiuri has paid homage to that in her creations. "The lovely thing is to see how different these designers are but how they always reference back to the heart of Dior, different themes such as the garden, travels and historicism," Cullen said. — Reuters



Costumes and accessories are on show at 'Christian Dior: Designer of Dreams' exhibition at the Victoria and Albert museum in London. — AFP photos

The 6th edition of the Ladies A La Mode fashion show



Models display creations by Omani designer Shaimaa Al-Wahibi during the launch of the 6th edition of the Ladies A La Mode fashion show in the Omani capital Muscat. — AFP



Models display creations by Omani designer Soumia Al-Shairje during the launch of the 6th edition of the Ladies A La Mode fashion show in the Omani capital Muscat. — AFP



Children display creations by Omani designer Saimah Al-Monje during the launch of the 6th edition of the Ladies A La Mode fashion show in the Omani capital Muscat.

Beyonce, Jay-Z offer chance of lifetime tickets to fans who go vegan

Music's first couple Beyonce and Jay-Z are encouraging fans to go vegan for a month with a contest to give one lucky winner a lifetime of free tickets to their shows. Queen Bey announced the challenge to her 123 million Instagram followers late Wednesday, saying it was in support of the Greenprint Project that promotes adopting even a partial vegan diet to limit environmental footprints.

Fans can sign up for the contest online and one will be chosen at random to win a pair of tickets annually for 30 years to concerts by Beyonce and/or Jay-Z, an estimated retail value of \$12,000.

The superstar known for her groundbreaking "Lemonade" album said she was going meatless on Mondays and eating plant-based breakfasts, while husband and rap mogul Jay-Z vowed two of

his daily meals would be plant-based. Beyonce's personal trainer, Marco Borges, is behind the project. The superstar musicians wrote the introduction to his December book elaborating on its vision.

The pop-inflected R&B idol has been vocal about embracing veganism in the past, having adopted the diet prior to her stunning May 2018 performance at the Coachella music festival one year after giving birth to twins. She is joined by fellow singers Miley Cyrus and Ariana Grande in promoting veganism, which prohibits consumption of all animal products including meat, dairy products, eggs and honey as well as wearing leather. Research has shown that cutting meat and dairy products can boost the planet's health by reducing farm-land use and planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions. —AFP



In this file photo Beyonce (left) and Jay Z perform during a Get Out the Vote (GOTV) performance in support of Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton at the Wolstein Center in Cleveland, Ohio. — AFP

Stars flock to funeral of legendary film composer Legrand

The legendary French film composer Michel Legrand was laid to rest Friday after a final standing ovation in a Paris theatre decorated to look like one of his favorite movies. The musician who scored such French screen classics as "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" and "The Young Ladies of Rochefort"—both starring Catherine Deneuve and directed by Jacques Demy—died on Saturday aged 86. Legrand won three Oscars for his work in Hollywood, most famously for writing "The Windmills of Your Mind" for "The Thomas Crown Affair" in 1969, as well as the music for Barbra Streisand's "Yentl" (1984) and the "Summer of '42" (1972).

A magic forest reminiscent of another Demy film, "Donkey Skin"—which also starred Deneuve—was created inside the Marigny theatre in Paris where his coffin was taken after a funeral service at the Alexander Nevsky Russian Orthodox cathedral. Clearly on the verge of tears, Demy's widow, the legendary French director Agnes Vardy, led the moving tributes to Legrand at the theatre. After the audience had risen to give him one last standing ovation, she said, "Having to talk next to Michel's coffin is a little difficult. The last time we saw each other we held each other's hands and I felt transported back to our years together with Jacques Demy."



In this file photo French music composer Michel Legrand speaks on stage during the festival international de Musique et Cinema in Auxerre.



In this file photo French composer Michel Legrand (right) arrives with his partner French actress Macha Meril for the screening of the movie "La Rançon de la Gloire" presented in competition at the 71st Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido.

coming straight from the music when we were recording "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg," she told French television on Thursday. "I can still remember entire passages of the lyrics" from the hugely influential musical, in which every line was sung.

Brigitte Macron, the wife of French President Emmanuel Macron, was among the mourners, with Legrand taken from the theatre for burial at the Pere Lachaise cemetery in the east of the city. Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo had a giant screen set up outside the city's town hall to show the highlights of Legrand's seven-decade career. A musical prodigy, Legrand worked with the greats of jazz and popular music on both sides of the Atlantic from Miles

Cardi B appears in Queens court over strip club brawl

Grammy-nominated rapper Cardi B briefly appeared in a New York criminal court on Thursday over her alleged involvement in a strip club brawl. The 26-year-old artist signed the renewal of two protection orders against the alleged victims, which bar her from making remarks on social media that could be deemed threatening to them. Cardi B strolled into the Queens basement courtroom in high spirits, sporting a long poncho-style fur coat with a matching hat, pointy heeled boots, distressed jeans and bold taupe-framed sunglasses. Her long neon yellow-green nails were on display as she clutched her demure black purse, despite the icy weather.

The star, whose real name is Belcalis Almanzar, is due to appear again in court on April 4. On August 29, Cardi B was in the Angels Strip Club in Queens when her group reportedly lobbed bottles, chairs and a hookah smoking device, which police said bruised a female employee in the legs.

In October, police charged her with one count of assault and two counts of reckless endangerment over the incident. US media reports say she allegedly ordered an attack on two sisters working at the club because one of them slept with her husband, the rapper Offset. In December, she said she and Offset had separated. Prior to Thursday's minutes-long court appearance, rumors were swirling that the pair were back together. "We're working things out, baby," she told a throng of journalists as she swooped out of the courtroom. — AFP



Rapper Cardi B leaves the courtroom after a hearing at Queens Criminal Court in New York. — AFP

Hip-hop turns 40 — and its parents are beaming with pride



In this file photo guests look at memorabilia at the Hip-Hop Museum Pop Up Experience in Washington, DC. —AFP photos

Forty years ago, hip-hop was little known outside its birthplace, New York—until the Sugarhill Gang decided to record their rhymes, launching the genre's rise as a dominant cultural and commercial force. The result was the group's 1979 smash "Rapper's Delight"—which is credited as the commercial start of an unforgettable era in music. Once an underground style centered on live performance in New York's Bronx borough, rap and hip-hop are the most influential styles in contemporary music today.

To mark hip-hop's big anniversary, a pop-up museum has been established in the US capital through mid-February. "I never thought it would reach those proportions," said Grandmaster Caz, an icon of early hip hop who wrote parts of "Rapper's Delight." "Back in the day, we were discouraged from doing hip-hop—nobody respected it." But the track found runaway success, becoming a global sensation and selling millions of copies. In 2011, "Rapper's Delight" was even added to the prestigious National registry at the Library of Congress—a nod to its role in ushering in a brand new genre.

"Putting it on record was the smartest thing that could happen to hip-hop," one of the three Sugarhill rappers, Master Gee, told AFP at the opening night of the museum, which boasts more than 500 pieces of autographed memorabilia. "Commercially we are the first of our kind," Master Gee said. "We landed on the moon, if you will."



Curtis Fisher, aka Grandmaster Caz looks at Hip-Hop memorabilia at the Hip-Hop Museum Pop Up Experience.



Curtis Fisher, aka Grandmaster Caz looks at Hip-Hop memorabilia at the Hip-Hop Museum Pop Up Experience.

'A release'

At the beginning, making music wasn't necessarily Master Gee's end goal. "I just wanted to get a date," he said. The rap pioneer, now 57, was then in his last year of high school, and performed at neighborhood parties. "All the lyrics I wrote were in the effort for people to know which one I was out of the three" in the band, he said. In those days, hip-hop was a fledgling cultural movement that revolved around four elements: dance, graffiti, vocals—known as "MCing"—and controlling the turntables, or "DJing."

The MCs—short for "masters of ceremony"—were primarily on stage to support the DJs. But they ultimately became the true stars of the genre. Hip-hop took some musical cues from disco and funk: "Rapper's Delight" features the famous bassline of "Good Times" by the band Chic—which was later sampled in 1980 by Queen in "Another One Bites the Dust." Early rap and hip-hop were focused on the principles of "peace, love, unity and having fun"—a cocktail that blended a festive atmosphere with a medium used by black people to express themselves. "It's a release; it's self-expression," said Grandmaster Caz, who at 57 still proudly wears his blingy chains. "It was a fun and new way to express yourself." — AFP



Guests look at memorabilia at the Hip-Hop Museum Pop Up Experience.

Johnny Hallyday show to go ahead despite family's anger



In this file photo French singer Johnny Hallyday performs on stage during his concert at the Numa-Dely stadium in Noumea. — AFP

Show about the life of legendary French rocker Johnny Hallyday is to go ahead despite the opposition of his family, the producers have said. The death of the "French Elvis" in December 2017 prompted the biggest outpouring of grief seen in the French capital since the funeral of Edith Piaf half a century before. But plans for a new musical tribute to Hallyday, who died of cancer aged 74, has divided his fans and sparked a furious response from his manager and his widow.

"Johnny Hallyday is a commercial brand and you cannot use it like that," Hallyday's manager Sebastien Farran told the Parisien daily. "We do not endorse this show and we still do not know its content. They have never contacted us," he added. The newspaper reported that Hallyday's widow Laeticia was annoyed and has called in her lawyers to stop the show because it had not got her permission. The producers, however, said they were going ahead with the "celebration of the career of an artist unlike any other", which is due to open in Paris for the second anniversary of his death in December.

"The show is not an abuse of the image rights of Johnny Hallyday since it will be played live and will not be recorded," producer David Michel of the Fenix Corp said in a statement Thursday through his lawyers. He argued that there were already more than 40 shows about the rocker, called the "Idol of the Youth", doing the rounds "between professional lookalikes and homages by his fans". Tickets are already on sale for the show at the Casino de Paris, whose website said 27 Hallyday hits will feature in the extravaganza with seven singers, musicians and dancers "celebrating the legend who is an eternal star in the hearts of the public." — AFP

Classifieds

Sunday, February 3, 2019



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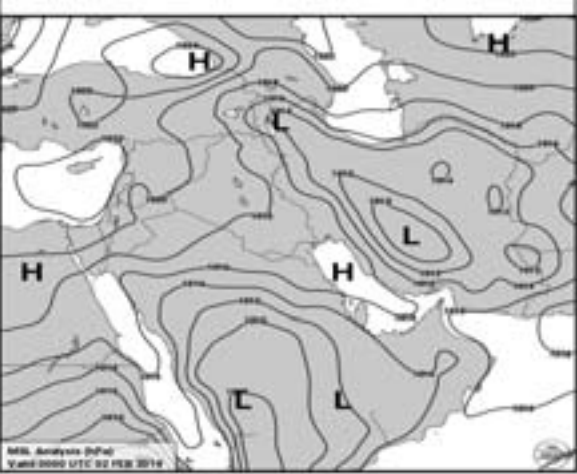
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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Fair and Partly cloudy with light to moderate north westerly wind to northerly wind, with speed of 12 - 30 km/h .

BY NIGHT: Cold with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h and some high clouds will appear.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<div>SFC. CHART02/02/2019 0000 UTC</div>	
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	16 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	22 °C	14 °C		
ABDALY	22 °C	11 °C		
BUBYAN	** °C	** °C		
JAHRA	23 °C	15 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	20 °C	15 °C		
SALMIYAH	19 °C	16 °C		
AHMADI	19 °C	16 °C		
NUWAISIB	19 °C	16 °C		
WAFRA	20 °C	14 °C		
SALMY	21 °C	11 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	02/03	Fair and some scattered clouds will appear	21 °C	11 °C	NW	12 - 40 km/h
Monday	02/04	Cool	18 °C	09 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h
Tuesday	02/05	Cool	19 °C	09 °C	NW	12 - 32 km/h
Wednesday	02/06	Fair with a chance for light fog forming at night	21 °C	11 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:16
Sunrise	06:37
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:05
Sunset	17:27
Isha	18:46

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	00 °C
MIN. Temp.	00 °C
MAX. RH	00 %
MIN. RH	00 %
MAX. Wind	N 00 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
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Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

THE INDIAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL, KUWAIT TEACHERS REQUIRED

English, Physics, Chemistry, Biology,
Mathematics, Commerce, Economics,

Senior Secondary (XI, XII) : Computer
Science, Physical Education, Home Science,
Fine Arts, Fashion Studies, Sociology,
History, Psychology, Painting, Informatics
Practices, Entrepreneurship, Mass Media
Communications, Multimedia & Graphic
Designing

Secondary (VI - X) : Physics, Chemistry,
Biology, History, Geography, Economics,
English, Hindi, French, Mathematics

Primary (I – V) : Mathematics, English,
Science, Social Studies, Hindi, Arabic

(Eligibility)

(Senior Secondary- Masters Degree with
minimum 3 years experience in teaching)
(Secondary and Primary) Graduate with B.
Ed and 2 years experience in teaching)
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Arrival Flights on Sunday 3/2/2019				Departure Flights on Sunday 3/2/2019				Arrival Flights on Sunday 3/2/2019				Departure Flights on Sunday 3/2/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
JZR	254	Amman	00:05	AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05	JZR	221	Riyadh	12:00
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	JZR	407	Ahmedabad	00:05	MEA	405	Jeddah	12:00
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	TRQ	231	KRT	00:30	SAW	702	Beirut	12:55
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC	792	Madinah	14:05	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40	JZR	1075	Doha	13:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	BBC	044	Dhaka	00:45	JZR	113	Damascus	13:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:00	KAC	672	Dubai	14:25	JZR	707	Luxor	01:00	MSR	611	Doha	13:30
KAC	504	Beirut	01:15	KAC	364	Colombo	14:30	JAI	571	Mumbai	01:15	UAE	872	Dubai	13:40
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	KAC	618	Doha	14:40	JZR	111	Doha	01:45	AXB	394	Cairo	14:10
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	KAC	363	Colombo	01:50	JZR	103	Kozhikode	14:15
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45	KAC	677	Dubai	01:50	QTR	1079	Bahrain	14:40
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	KAC	692	Muscat	14:55	KAC	417	Manila	02:20	FDB	060	Doha	15:00
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05	DLH	625	Frankfurt	02:25	GFA	222	Dubai	15:10
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10	THY	773	Istanbul	02:30	KAC	673	Bahrain	15:25
RBG	551	Alexandria	02:25	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	PGT	859	Istanbul	02:55	SVA	501	Dubai	15:40
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	JZR	222	Riyadh	15:30	IGO	1758	Kochi	02:55	KAC	775	Jeddah	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KNE	530	Riyadh	15:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	562	Amman	15:35	RBG	552	Alexandria	03:05	KAC	615	Jeddah	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KAC	304	Mumbai	15:40	UAE	854	Dubai	03:40	KAC	563	Bahrain	16:05
RJA	648	Amman	02:55	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	KLM	446	Amsterdam	03:55	KAC	619	Amman	16:10
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	JZR	732	Cairo	15:50	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	ETD	304	Doha	16:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	283	Abu Dhabi	16:20
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:10	KAC	118	New York	16:05	QTR	1087	Doha	04:00	OMA	646	Dhaka	16:30
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY	127	Sharjah	16:05	KKK	1269	Istanbul	04:00	KAC	785	Muscat	16:35
JZR	1736	Cairo	03:30	KAC	516	Tehran	16:20	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:05	ABY	128	Jeddah	16:40
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:00	JZR	212	Jeddah	16:25	MSR	613	Cairo	04:15	SAW	706	Sharjah	16:45
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	542	Cairo	16:30	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:25	KAC	675	Damascus	17:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	502	Beirut	16:30	JZR	701	Asyut	04:30	KAC	675	Dubai	17:05
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	QTR	1072	Doha	16:35	LMU	511	Cairo	04:30	KAC	503	Dubai	17:15
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	FDB	051	Dubai	16:40	IGO	752	Chennai	05:00	FDB	052	Beirut	17:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	JZR	114	Doha	16:40	KAC	103	London	05:10	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	406	Kochi	04:45	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:10	QTR	1077	Doha	05:10	QTR	1073	Doha	17:50
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:15	FDB	070	Dubai	05:30	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:30	JZR	215	Doha	05:50	JZR	721	Alexandria	18:00
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	JZR	104	Bahrain	17:45	KAC	303	Jeddah	06:00	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	UAE	875	Mumbai	17:45	JZR	713	Mumbai	06:10	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	FDB	063	Dubai	18:00	JZR	713	Sohag	06:15	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:15	JZR	124	Dubai	18:15	THY	771	Dubai	06:35	KAC	621	Bahrain	18:25
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	MSR	620	Cairo	18:20	GFA	212	Istanbul	06:40	JZR	127	Doha	18:35
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	QTR	1080	Doha	18:30	RJA	649	Bahrain	07:15	JZR	403	Dubai	18:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	SYR	341	Amman	18:30	RJA	649	Amman	07:15	JZR	501	Hyderabad	18:40
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	RJA	640	Doha	18:30	JZR	115	Doha	07:30	JZR	403	Lahore	18:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:25	ABY	123	Damascus	19:00	KAC	171	Doha	07:30	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
QTR	8511	Doha	06:40	RBG	555	Sharjah	19:25	KAC	171	Frankfurt	08:10	JZR	253	Amman	19:15
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	KAC	156	Alexandria	19:25	QTR	8512	Doha	08:20	FDB	064	Amman	19:15
BAW	157	London	07:05	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:30	FDB	054	Doha	08:40	UAE	876	Dubai	19:20
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:30	KAC	501	Dubai	08:50	MSR	621	Dubai	19:30
JZR	708	Luxor	07:15	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	KAC	787	Beirut	09:00	QTR	1081	Cairo	19:30
KAC	358	Kochi	07:35	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	KAC	613	Jeddah	09:05	RJA	641	Doha	19:55
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:50	KAC	791	Dhaka	09:05	SYR	342	Amman	20:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	104	London	19:55	BAW	156	Madinah	09:10	RBG	556	Damascus	20:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	166	Rome	20:10	JZR	731	London	09:10	ABY	124	Alexandria	20:05
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	08:45	OMA	647	Doha	20:15	KAC	691	Cairo	09:20	GFA	218	Sharjah	20:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	620	Muscat	20:20	KAC	541	Muscat	09:30	FDB	058	Bahrain	20:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35	KAC	561	Cairo	09:40	KAC	345	Dubai	20:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	DLH	624	Dubai	20:35	KAC	671	Amman	09:45	KAC	353	Ahmedabad	20:40
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	FEG	1441	Frankfurt	20:45	KAC	741	Dubai	09:45	JZR	401	Bengaluru	20:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	172	Asyut	20:45	ABY	126	Dammam	09:45	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	ALK	229	London	21:15	KAC	101	Sharjah	09:45	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:00	MEA	402	London	21:20	UAE	856	London	09:45	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	UAE	859	Dubai	21:35	JZR	301	Dubai	10:00	DLH	624	Muscat	21:20
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	676	Beirut	21:45	ETD	302	Istanbul	10:05	FEG	1344	Dammam	21:30
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	GFA	219	Dubai	21:45	FDB	056	Riyadh	10:10	QTR	1089	Sohag	21:45
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	KAC	564	Bahrain	21:45	IGO	1754	Abu Dhabi	10:10	KAC	203	Doha	22:00
JZR	122	Dubai	11:10	JAI	574	Ahmedabad	21:55	IRA	664	Doha	10:35	KAC	1543	Lahore	22:15
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	QTR	1082	Mumbai	22:00	JZR	211	Shiraz	10:35	KAC	403	Cairo	22:15
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	ETD	309	Doha	22:05	QTR	1071	Jeddah	10:40	ALK	230	Beirut	22:20
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	AIC	981	Abu Dhabi	22:15	KAC	155	Doha	10:45	GFA	220	Colombo	22:25
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	KAC	622	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25	IRC	529	Istanbul	10:55	KAC	383	Bahrain	22:30
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	786	Doha	22:30	SVA	513	Doha	11:00	JAI	573	Delhi	22:30
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	JZR	128	Jeddah	22:45	KAC	117	Jeddah	11:25	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:55
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	FDB	071	Dubai	23:15	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
								KAC	515	New York	12:00	KAC	411	Mumbai	23:00
								KAC	515	Tehran	12:00	ETD	310	Bangkok	23:00
								KAC	515	Doha	12:00	QTR	1083	Abu Dhabi	23:05
								KAC	515	Tehran	12:00	QTR	1083	Doha	23:25

11 dead as war-damaged flats collapse in Aleppo

DAMASCUS: Four children were among at least 11 people killed when a war-damaged block of flats collapsed in Syria's second city Aleppo yesterday, state media said. One child was pulled out alive from the rubble of the five-storey block after rescue teams toiled, many of them with their bare hands, to remove the shattered breeze blocks that had buried him, AFP photographers reported. He was the sole survivor of the collapse in the formerly rebel-held neighborhood of Salaheddin, the official SANA news agency reported.

Salaheddin was heavily bombed before the army overran rebel districts with Russian support in late 2016. What little reconstruction there has been among the ruins has been carried out privately. The state has limited public works to the restoration of basic infrastructure. Many of the buildings around the block that caved in still bear the scars of the ferocious four-year battle for the northern city, with several on the brink of collapse.

Washington has estimated the costs of rebuilding Syria's devastated housing and infrastructure at between \$300 billion and \$400 billion. But it warned last month that, while overthrowing President Bashar Al-Assad was no longer a goal of US policy, it would contribute no reconstruction funds without fundamental reform in Damascus.

Meanwhile, a roadside bomb struck a bus carrying teachers in Manbij killing one person yesterday, the latest in a spate of attacks in the northern Syrian city since mid-January, a war monitor said. The device exploded as the bus passed, killing the driver and wounding at least four others, Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said. Sherfan Darwish, a spokesman for Manbij's military council, reported on Twitter a "terrorist explosion with an explosive device against a vehicle of teachers". — AFP



ALEPPO: Syrian civil defense workers carry away a rescued child from the rubble of a collapsed five-storey building in the Salaheddin district of this northern city yesterday. —AFP

Abandoned Yemen churches remnants of a fading past

ADEN: Vandalized, caught in the crossfire, burnt to the ground: Yemen's churches, once filled by small but diverse Christian communities, are now abandoned after years of devastating conflict. As Pope Francis prepares to make his first trip to the Gulf, neighboring Yemen - in the grip of a conflict that has triggered what the UN calls the world's most humanitarian crisis - is losing the last remnants of the cultural diversity that marked its rich history.

Today, four official parishes in Yemen are listed by the Catholic Church, and officials say the country is still home to a handful of Christians who mostly live in hiding as religious conservatives on all sides grow stronger. Sanaa, the rebel-held capital, and Aden, the bastion of the rival government, are each home to a Catholic cathedral - or what was once a cathedral. In the southern port city of Aden, the church has been targeted by arsonists, vandalized and closed for the foreseeable future.

The metal gates surrounding the St Francis of Assisi church in the Tawahi neighborhood of Aden are locked, riddled with bullet holes, rusting. Scrawled on the church wall, in black spray paint, are the words "No entry" and "To you your religion, and to me mine", a reference to a Quranic verse. Atop the church is a statue of Jesus (PBUH), arms outstretched. The statue has no head. "This was a practicing church from the days of the British (protectorate), and even before, for 140, 150 years," said Mohammed Seif, a longtime resident of Tawahi.

"People were praying in here until the war of the Houthis," he added, referring to the March 2015 rebel takeover of Aden. The pro-government alliance, led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, drove them out months later. "It's stopped ever since. The church has

been vandalized, robbed," Seif added, before trailing off.

In 2015, assailants blew up a church - already abandoned - in the Mualla district of Aden. The attack was never officially claimed. In 2016, 16 people were shot dead in a Catholic retirement home in Aden, including four nuns of the Missionaries of Charity, the congregation founded by Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Father Tom Uzhunnalil, an Indian priest, was also taken hostage before being released the following year. Local authorities blamed the Islamic State group for the attack.

For centuries, Yemen hosted minorities including Ismaili, Bahai and Jewish communities. Christianity is believed to have arrived in southern Yemen in the 19th century, as missionaries - mainly but not exclusively from Britain - found their way to what was then a British protectorate. The Catholics arrived around 1880, according to Father Lennie Connolly of the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia. With the 1967 revolution of southern Yemen - then Marxist - against the British, the priests fled to Bahrain and the UAE.

"It all started in Yemen, therefore Yemen is very important to us," Connolly, who heads the parish at St Mary's Catholic Church in Dubai, told AFP. Yemen's minuscule Catholic community is mostly made up of foreigners, according to Bishop Paul Hinder, head of the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia. "It is unfortunately a sad reality and we pray that peace be soon restored in Yemen, especially as people suffer from hunger and the famine is affecting millions of people," Hinder told AFP. "Our services are at present suspended because of the war. But there are still nuns, the Sisters of Mother Teresa of Calcutta that have been serving the people for several decades and continue their good work."

The remaining two Catholic parishes in Yemen are located in the two main frontlines in the war today: The Red Sea city of Hodeida, home to the country's most valuable port, and southwestern Taiz, controlled by the government and surrounded by rebels. Hodeida was for months the main front line in the Yemen war after government forces supported by Saudi Arabia and its allies launched an offensive to capture it in June. — AFP

A mobile video issued by the airport authorities shows officials giving the cub milk from a baby's bottle. "We have taken the custody of the passenger and are questioning him on the source of the animal," A O Limatoshi, head of Chennai wildlife crime bureau, told AFP. He said they are investigating whether the man was carrying the cat as part of an international smuggling ring.

Leopards are found across the Asian continent but are highly vulnerable, with their population declining because of habitat loss and poaching for the illegal trade of skins and body parts. They are an endangered species in India - with official estimates saying there are between 12,000 and 140,000 in total - and smuggling them in or out of the country is illegal. — AFP

UN Security Council Resolution 2231 adopted after the deal calls on Iran "not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons". The US has repeatedly accused Iran of violating the resolution. But Tehran denies seeking any nuclear weapons capability, and insists that its missile development program is "purely defensive" and compliant with the resolution.

Iran's space program has also come under Western criticism, with Washington charging that an abortive satellite launch in mid-January was cover for a bid at an intercontinental ballistic missile capability. Iran tried unsuccessfully to put a satellite into orbit on Jan 15 and plans to "vigorously carry on" and make a second attempt, Shamkhani said.

Iran's newly-tested missile takes its name from a city in the southwestern province of Khuzestan that was devastated in the 1980-1988 against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Several Iranian cities were battered by missiles during the eight-year conflict in a bombing campaign dubbed the "war of the cities". Iranian officials say Western sanctions have starved its air force of spare parts and replacement aircraft, limiting its operational capacity and forcing it to rely on the missile program. — AFP

India protests at US detention of Indian students

NEW DELHI: India yesterday said it had lodged a protest with the United States government after several Indian students were detained there in connection with their enrolment in a fake university, following an undercover operation by US agents. US authorities this week said eight individuals who exploited the country's student visa system had been indicted. They had helped foreign nationals illegally remain in the United States by enrolling them into a metro Detroit private university, which was actually being operated by US agents themselves.

The recruiters helped the students to fraudulently obtain immigration documents from the school in a bid to deceive authorities, the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement said. The foreign students, however, had no intention of attending school, it added. Though the US government did not disclose nationalities of those involved, the Indian foreign ministry yesterday said

UAE Catholics abuzz ahead of pope's visit

DUBAI: Like millions of his compatriots, Filipino migrant Ray Ervin adores Pope Francis. This weekend, he is counting down the hours to a historic papal mass in Abu Dhabi. "We are very grateful," he told AFP. "It's a chance of a lifetime." Ervin, 44, will be among 135,000 worshippers expected to gather on Tuesday when "Lolo Kiko" (Grandpa Francisco), as the pontiff is affectionately known in the Philippines, holds a vast open-air mass in the Muslim-majority Arabian Peninsula.

The pope's three-day trip, which starts today, is the first ever papal visit to the Arabian Peninsula - the birthplace of Islam. While Muslims make up nearly four fifths of the UAE's population, the country is also home to nearly a million Catholics, according to the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia. Most are from India or the Philippines - like Ervin, who has a wife and two daughters and has lived there for 20 years. Migrants from Asian countries make up about 65 percent of the population.

Decked out with Vatican flags and a lifelike picture of the pope, St Mary's Catholic Church in the neighboring emirate of Dubai has been abuzz with worshippers preparing for the pontiff's arrival. The church, which can hold about 2,500 worshippers, was packed during mass on Friday. People lined the walls inside while others stood in the open air to watch the sermon on two big screens. Indian Irene Ann Tomi, 16, said the pope's

Qatar punch above weight...

Continued from Page 1

Fittingly for a team that has punched above its weight, Akram Alif struck a boxing-style pose as he celebrated the late penalty that ended Japan's resistance. Qatar conceded just one goal all tournament and scored 19, winning all seven games and beating former champions Saudi Arabia, Iraq and South Korea, as well as Japan. They also thrived in a hostile environment in the United Arab Emirates owing to the ongoing Gulf blockade, with their fans largely barred from visiting and home spectators pelting them with shoes and bottles in the semifinals.

The title raised the beguiling possibility of Qatar being crowned champions of both Asia and South America, when they compete at the Copa America as guests in June-July. But Ali said the Copa was all about learning for Qatar, continuing the methodical approach which has already paid dividends. "We're not expecting to win, but just to learn because after the World

"several Indian students" had been detained, Indian media said more than 100 students had been detained in the United States.

The Indian government had issued a rare "demarche" to the US Embassy in New Delhi, telling it that Indian officials needed immediate consular access to the detainees. "We underlined that students, who may have been duped into enrolling in the 'University', should be treated differently from those recruiters who have duped them," India's foreign ministry said in a statement. The Indian government also urged the United States to release the students from detention at the earliest, without resorting to deportation against their will.

The United States agency had said that the defendants in the case "intended to help shield and hide" the students from United States immigration authorities for money. They collectively profited in excess of a \$250,000, the agency said. "These suspects aided hundreds of foreign nationals to remain in the United States illegally by helping to portray them as students, which they most certainly were not," Special Agent in charge Steve Francis said this week. China, India and South Korea together sent 56.1 percent of all international students in the United States in 2017-18, an annual survey by the Institute of International Education showed last year. — Reuters

visit would be "an eye opener for all the Christians and the Muslims in the UAE". "We are all human," she said. "I believe we are connected by one thread, and that is faith."

Yesterday, the last day to collect tickets for the mass, hundreds of people queued for passes while others lined up in front of a kiosk distributing goodie bags of memorabilia. Irene, who is involved in youth activities at the church, said the congregation is influenced by the teachings of Pope Francis. "We all try to incorporate his idea of smiling even when we have difficulties in our life," she told AFP. Irene said the UAE had given her and her family "a lot of freedom to pray in our churches".

The UAE prides itself on its religious tolerance and cultural diversity. It has eight Catholic churches, compared to four each in Oman, Kuwait and Yemen. Qatar and Bahrain have one each, while ultraconservative Sunni powerhouse Saudi Arabia bans all non-Muslim places of worship. The pontiff's trip is widely seen as encouraging inter-religious dialogue in the region.

Pope Francis will take part in an interfaith conference tomorrow and will meet Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the imam of Al-Azhar, Egypt's highest seat of Islamic learning. Early on Tuesday morning, more than 2,000 free buses will transport worshippers from across the Emirates to Abu Dhabi, way ahead of the mass scheduled for 10:30 AM (0630 GMT). Local media say it will be the largest ever public gathering in the UAE.

Filipina Ruthcel Fermana, a nanny who has been living in Dubai for over five years, said she started jumping on the bed when she found out she would be on one of the buses. "Early in the morning when I woke up and opened my phone and then saw the message and my name was on the list. I said: 'Thank you, Lord, thank you, Lord, thank you Lord!'" she told AFP. "Everything happens for a reason." — AFP

Cup, the Copa America is the biggest competition in the world," Ali said. "The weakest teams are in Asia - Asia is the weakest continent for football, so in the Copa America we will learn more. We'll benefit a lot as a Gulf team - this will help us have a better performance in 2022."

After spending many millions of petrodollars on their world-class Aspire Academy, and scouring the world for top coaches, Qatar are beginning to recoup their investment. Head coach Felix Sanchez led Qatar to their first Asian under-19 title in 2014, and they reached the semifinals at last year's Asian under-23s - where Ali was also the top-scorer. Alif clocked up a tournament-record 10 assists and formed a devastating partnership with Ali, underlining Qatar's cohesion in both defense and attack after years spent playing together.

"We've been together seven years so I know exactly where Akram will be, where he will pass and he always knows what to expect from me," Ali said. "That's normal after all the time we've spent playing together. We get along very well together too." Qatar's win sparked jubilant scenes back home in Doha but for the team, bigger goals now lie ahead. "This is one step more to continue developing the team, to play another tournament in the summer and to be ready in 2022 to represent Qatar in the World Cup," Sanchez said. — Agencies

Man smuggles leopard cub...

Continued from Page 1

"He was evasive in his replies so his baggage was opened for further examination," an official at the airport said. "The animal was in a state of shock and was making trill sounds and appeared to be weak," he said. The nationality of the 45-year-old passenger remained unclear, and the case was handed over to state's wildlife crime bureau.

Iran 'successfully tests' cruise...

Continued from Page 1

Iran has voluntarily limited the range of its missiles to 2,000 km, sufficient to reach Israel and Western bases in the Middle East. But Washington and its allies have accused Tehran of pursuing enhanced missile capabilities that also threaten Europe. Iran has "no intention of increasing the range" of its missiles, the country's Supreme National Security Council secretary, Admiral Ali Shamkhani, said Tuesday.

Iran reined in most of its nuclear program under a landmark 2015 deal with major powers but has kept up development of its ballistic missile technology. US President Donald Trump's administration pulled out of the accord in May and reimposed sanctions against Iran, citing the missile program among its reasons. European governments have stuck by the accord, although some have demanded an addition to address Iran's ballistic missile program and its intervention in regional conflicts.

Sports

Gatland hails winning Wales after gripping French victory

Victory was Wales' tenth in the row

PARIS: Warren Gatland hailed his Wales team as one that has "forgotten to lose" as they turned around an unprecedented 16-point deficit to bag a thrilling 24-19 victory over France in the Six Nations opener on Friday. The victory was Wales' 10th in the row, a series that equals their winning streak back in 1999 under ex-All Blacks coach Graham Henry. "It was strange," Gatland said of the rain-hit match which saw France race out to a 16-0 half-time lead before Wales came back in the second period.

"In fairness to France I thought they were very good in the first half, we made too many errors, turned the ball over and probably in the weather conditions tried to play to much rugby. "We were much better in the second half, we created some chances and converted them." After Tomos Williams crossed for a try early in the second-half, France, for whom half-backs Morgan Parra and Camille Lopez botched 13 points with the kicking tee, gifted George North two tries.

First Yoann Huget made a hash of covering a Hadleigh Parkes grubber, the ball popping up for North to just dot down in the simplest of five-pointers. And then lock Sebastien Vahaamahina threw out an unlikely floated pass that was easily picked off by the experienced Welsh winger.

"A 16-point swing doesn't usually happen in international rugby, but we were able to get that snowball effect early in the second-half to chase down that deficit," Wales skipper Alun Wyn Jones said.

Gatland added: "The big difference between the two teams is we've become a side for the moment that's forgotten how to lose and can dig deep by that. "On the

other foot, they're a team searching for some confidence, not having had a great run in the last seven or eight matches."

Gatland, in his last Six Nations as Wales coach as he steps down after the Rugby World Cup in Japan, warned: "We know we get better the more time we have together and we showed that in November.

"There were lots of things today from us getting out of that game and winning, we'll improve. "It's tough in the Six Nations when you come up one of the big games. France in Paris is a big challenge first up."

Gatland will take a 31-man squad to Nice for the week leading up to their next game, against Italy in Rome. The Kiwi coach hinted there would be wholesale changes for the match against the Azzurri in a bid to replicate World Cup conditions.

France coach Jacques Brunel was left "disappointed" by his team's lack of control. "We were fully committed, did lots of interesting things, notably in the first half," Brunel said. "Even if we didn't master everything, we managed to put Wales under pressure.

"We know they have a formidable defence, and unfortunately we didn't start the second-half well, and they did. "I don't think it's a mental state of mind, we showed until the end we had the fighting spirit. There was a lack of game management." Brunel's French side face England away next week, and the former Italy coach said: "We'll try to keep the same spirit despite the disappointment and focus on the positives. "We have to improve the control we lacked in this match. But facing England will be as difficult a challenge as facing Wales and it'll also be a mental test for us." — AFP



SAINT DENIS: Wales' head coach Warren Gatland (R) looks on prior to the Six Nations rugby union tournament match between France and Wales at the stade de France, in Saint Denis, on the outskirts of Paris. — AFP

Shiffrin sends daunting world championships message

MARIBOR: Mikaela Shiffrin powered to her 13th World Cup victory of the season in yesterday's slalom at Maribor, the final women's race ahead of the world championships in Sweden next week.

On a clear and bright day with good skiing conditions she finished 0.77 seconds in front of Sweden's Anna Swenn-Larsson, with Wendy Holdener of Switzerland third.

Petra Vlhova has come closest to rivalling Shiffrin on

the circuit so far this year but the Slovak came fifth, a full 1.7sec adrift over the two runs.

The American looks unstoppable this season, especially in good weather, and won her 56th career World Cup race largely thanks to a pulsating first run that no other skier in the field came remotely close to equalling.

The victory means the 23-year-old Shiffrin is just one World Cup win short of Vreni Schneider's all-time record of 14 victories in a World Cup campaign.

"It's always a big fight but it's something I'm really proud of," said Shiffrin. "This whole season my team has done a great job."

Another record in the two-time defending Crystal Globe holder's sights is the most points accumulated in a single season. Tina Maze holds the record with 2,414 points but Shiffrin is closing in with 1,694 and a possible 11 races remaining.

Her strongest discipline, the slalom, has earned her six wins since the November 17 opening weekend, but there have also been three Super-G and three giant slalom triumphs and one parallel slalom win. — AFP



MARIBOR: Mikaela Shiffrin of the US smiles on podium after winning the FIS World Cup Slalom in Maribor, Slovenia, yesterday. — AFP

Kovalev out to 'fix mistake' with Alvarez

LOS ANGELES: Sergey Kovalev says he's learned from his mistakes and will avenge his knockout loss to Eleider Alvarez when he takes on the Colombian in Frisco, Texas, for the WBO light heavyweight world title.

Alvarez seized the World Boxing Organization belt from Kovalev on August 4. He was trailing on every scorecard, but knocked the Russian down three times in the seventh round to win his first world title.

Kovalev said he ran out of steam because of over-training for the fight, an error he hasn't made under new trainer Buddy McGirt.

"Yes, I made a mistake, but this time I will fix it," Kovalev said. "I didn't have enough gas, enough power. It was like something was wrong with my body. "I always push myself more than needed and that was my biggest mistake in my boxing career," he said. "Buddy has taught me a lot-saving energy for the fight and I listen to him 100% on his recommendations and I follow his instructions."

Kovalev, who fell to 32-3 with one drawn and 28 knockouts with the loss to Alvarez, said McGirt and strength coach Teddy Cruz have given him a well-rounded build-up to the bout.

"I had coaches, but they didn't help me with my boxing or my conditioning or anything," he said. "Everything I did myself. I am happy that I started working with Buddy and he has reminded me of my amateur style and using a lot of boxing - not the goal to knock somebody out, but boxing.

"We have been working on defense, too, and with the shape I am in and it will be very interesting. "The last fight, he got lucky." Alvarez, 24-0 with 12 wins inside the distance, is out to prove that isn't true.

"I believe that's excuses he's making," Alvarez said. "When you lose, you have a lot of excuses. I had a great game plan with my team and he said it was an accident. "Well, he's going to have another accident." — AFP

Ooredoo ambassador Al-Hasawi wins in Atyab Al Marshoud Championship

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait's brand ambassador, Rakan Al-Hasawi, won first place in Atyab Al Marshoud show jumping competition which took place at the Kuwait Riding Center. A large number of equestrians from local riding clubs participated in the competition. Al-Hasawi was awarded with a trophy and a car by the competition's organizer, Waleed Al-Marshoud who was proud of this great achievement.

Al-Hasawi won a number of awards locally and regionally, such as the Al Diriyah Junior Jumping Championship, the Kuwait Police Show Jumping Tournament and the Kuwait Riding Center Tournament, in addition to the Hala Febrayer 2017 which was sponsored by Ooredoo Kuwait, among other competitions.

Ooredoo takes great pride in the achievement of the young and promising Kuwaiti showjumper Rakan Al-Hasawi. The company's commitment to supporting youth is deep-rooted within the core values in Ooredoo Kuwait. Ooredoo is especially proud of the young athletes that it sponsors, such as Kuwaiti champion Abdulaziz Al-Rashed, and Kuwaiti athlete Najlaa Al-Jeraiwi who represented Kuwait in the Asian Games last year.

Empowering youth is among Ooredoo's top priorities through its CSR strategy. The company has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, to support youth projects and initiatives. Ooredoo is continuously working with the Ministry to enrich youth experience in a variety of fields, with a focus on volunteerism.



Rakan Al-Hasawi

Al-Osaimi opens pistol and rifle referees course, Morocco grand prix gets underway

By Abdellatif Sharaa and KUNA

KUWAIT: Secretary General of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi, the ISSF pistol/ rifle judges (B) course was opened, as international lecturer, president of African and Egypt Shooting Federations Hazem Hosny, was opened with more than 20 participants including two from Oman in attendance.

Al-Osaimi welcomed those present, and thanked Hazem Hosny for coming to Kuwait to lecture. He said Kuwait Shooting Sport Club is keen on the development of the technical dept including officials, and we are also keen on increasing the number of licensed judges.

Al-Osaimi hoped those in attendance be able to officiate future tournaments as they pass this course and gain experience.

On his part, Lecturer Hazem Hosni, thanked the President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations and Obaid Al-Osaimi for their support and major role the Kuwait Federation is playing at the Arab and Asian levels to serve the

sport of shooting.

He said these courses polish referees experiences and qualify them to officiate major tournaments, adding that he is happy to be in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, in Rabat, Morocco's shooting Grand Prix competitions began in Rabat on Friday featuring 220 shooters from 23 countries, including Kuwait. The week-long championship will see male and female shooters competing in trap and skeet competitions. Abduladheem Al-Hafi, head of the royal Moroccan shooting federation and vice-president of the Arab Shooting Federation, told KUNA following the opening ceremony. He said Kuwait team would boost level of competition because it consists of elite international shooters. Adnan Al-Ibrahim, head of Kuwait team, said participation was out of keenness to improve efficiency and experience. Kuwait will be represented by Khaled Al-Mudhaf, Abdulrahman Al-Faihan, Nasser AlMeqled, Sarah Al-Hwal, Shahad Al-Hwal, Abdullah Al-Terqi, Saud Al-Habib, Mansour AlTerqi, Eman Al-Shamma and Fatma Al-Zaabi.



Khalid Juraid, Obaid Osaimi and Hazem Hosny

Sports

Irving shines as Celtics top Knicks, snubbed Gobert leads Jazz past Hawks

Pelicans uninspired by Lakers’ offers for Davis

NEW YORK: Kyrie Irving capped an eventful day by totaling 23 points, 10 rebounds and six assists Friday night as the Boston Celtics recorded a 113-99 victory over the New York Knicks, whose home losing streak reached 13 games. After addressing his impending free agency during the morning shootaround by saying “ask me July 1,” Irving returned from missing the previous two games with a strained left hip and helped the Celtics win for the eighth time in nine games. Irving heard cheers in pregame introductions, and some fans chanted “We Want Kyrie” as the New Jersey native shot 9 of 20, recorded his 13th double-double and reached double digits in rebounds for the second time. The Knicks broke the team record for the longest home losing streak set during their 17-65 2014-15 campaign under coach Derek Fisher and former president Phil Jackson. New York also dropped its season-high 12th straight game since beating the Lakers on Jan. 4 and dropped to 2-25 in its last 27 games.

Nuggets 136, Rockets 122

Malik Beasley scored a career-high 35 points, Nikola Jokic had 31 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists, and Denver nearly held James Harden below 30 points in a blowout of visiting Houston. Harden finished with exactly 30 points and now has scored at least that many in 25 straight games. Nine came in the fourth quarter, the final on a 3-pointer with just over a minute left to reach 30. Torrey Craig scored a career-high 22 points off the bench for Denver, which ended a nine-game losing streak against the Rockets. The Nuggets last beat Houston on Dec. 14, 2015.

Thunder 118, Heat 102

Paul George scored a game-high 43 points, Russell Westbrook posted his 18th triple-double, and visiting Oklahoma City continued its offensive surge in a rout of Miami. George connected on a career-high 10 3-pointers, and Schroder scored 28 in 29 minutes off the bench for the Thunder, who won their seventh consecutive overall and sixth straight against Miami. Westbrook notched 14 points, 14 assists and 12 rebounds in his fifth triple-double in a row. Miami’s Kelly Olynyk tallied 21 points, and Josh Richardson had 18. Hassan Whiteside had 12 points and 16 rebounds for the Heat, who lost their second straight overall and have dropped four of the last six.

Jazz 128, Hawks 112

Rudy Gobert responded to his All-Star snub with 25 points and 13 rebounds as Utah cruised over Atlanta in Salt Lake City. Gobert made all seven field-goal attempts while posting his 42nd double-double of the campaign one night after being passed over on the list of Western Conference reserves for the All-Star Game

on Feb. 17. Ricky Rubio registered 22 points and 11 assists, and Joe Ingles scored 19 points as the Jazz won for the 10th time in the past 12 games. Trae Young had 28 points and nine assists for the Hawks, who dropped to 2-3 on a seven-game road trip.

Hornets 100, Grizzlies 92

Marvin Williams hit two 3-pointers in an 11-0 run, and Charlotte rallied in the final five minutes for a win over visiting Memphis. The Hornets wound up outscoring the Grizzlies 15-2 in the final five minutes, after trailing 90-85 with 4:38 remaining. Memphis has now lost 11 of its last 12 and 17 of its last 19. Kemba Walker led the Hornets with 23 points, and Malik Monk scored 20, including 10 straight Hornets points at one stretch in the fourth quarter. The Grizzlies were without two starters, Mike Conley (knee) and Jaren Jackson Jr.

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles Lakers’ initial trade offers for New Orleans Pelicans All-Star big man Anthony Davis have been underwhelming, according to an ESPN report early Saturday morning. Per ESPN, the Lakers have offered a package including Lonzo Ball, Kyle Kuzma, Rajon Rondo, Michael Beasley and a first-round pick. None of their offers has included multiple first-round picks, nor has any included more than two of the Lakers’ core young pieces.

The report adds the Pelicans haven’t found any of the offers worthy of a response or a counter offer. Davis publicly requested a trade through his agent, Rich Paul, on Monday, and various reports have indicated the Lakers are his preferred destination. Davis told reporters Friday that he hasn’t told the Pelicans they must trade him to a particular team.

“That’s on the Pelicans organization,” Davis said. “I never gave them a timetable, never gave them a destination.” ESPN reported earlier this week that New Orleans had declined to return Los Angeles’ phone calls until Thursday.

Many around the league believe Davis and Paul, who also represents the Lakers’ LeBron James, are trying to facilitate his path to the Lakers. Whether or not that will happen before Thursday’s trade deadline remains to be seen, but if Davis is set on joining the Lakers, he will be able to do so as a free agent in the summer of 2020. L.A.’s underwhelming trade offers for Davis are similar to those the team reportedly sent to the Indiana Pacers for Paul George and to the San Antonio Spurs for Kawhi Leonard, both of whom requested trades from their teams amid widespread belief they were interested in joining the Lakers upon hitting free agency. Paul was dealt to the Oklahoma City Thunder, where he re-signed last offseason on a max contract, and Leonard was traded to the Toronto Raptors this past offseason. He is set to be a free agent this summer. Davis, a seven-year veteran who was named an All-



NEW YORK: Terry Rozier #12 of the Boston Celtics shoots the ball against the New York Knicks on Friday at Madison Square Garden in New York City. — AFP

NBA results/standings

Denver 136, Houston 122; Miami 102, Oklahoma City 118; New York 99, Boston 113; Utah 128, Atlanta 112; Charlotte 100, Memphis 92.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference					
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Milwaukee	37	13	0.740	-	Golden State	36	15	0.706	-
Toronto	37	16	0.698	1.5	Denver	36	15	0.706	0
Philadelphia	34	18	0.654	4	Oklahoma City	33	18	0.647	3
Boston	33	19	0.635	5	Portland	32	20	0.615	4.5
Indiana	32	19	0.627	5.5	San Antonio	31	22	0.585	6
Brooklyn	28	25	0.528	10.5	Houston	29	22	0.569	7
Charlotte	25	26	0.490	12.5	Utah	30	23	0.566	7
Miami	24	26	0.480	13	LA Clippers	28	24	0.538	8.5
Detroit	22	28	0.440	15	LA Lakers	27	25	0.519	9.5
Washington	22	29	0.431	15.5	Sacramento	26	25	0.510	10
Orlando	21	31	0.404	17	Minnesota	25	26	0.490	11
Atlanta	16	35	0.314	21.5	Dallas	23	28	0.451	13
Chicago	12	40	0.231	26	New Orleans	23	29	0.442	13.5
Cleveland	11	41	0.212	27	Memphis	20	33	0.377	17
New York	10	41	0.196	27.5	Phoenix	11	42	0.208	26

Star for the sixth time Thursday, is sidelined by a sprained left index finger that will cause him to miss a seventh consecutive game Saturday at San Antonio. He

is averaging 29.3 points (third in the NBA), 13.3 rebounds (fifth) and 2.6 blocks (second) per game this season. — Reuters

Karunaratne stretched off as Sri Lanka chase big Australia total

CANBERRA: Opener Dimuth Karunaratne was rushed to hospital after a frightening blow by a bouncer yesterday as Sri Lanka chased a massive Australian first innings total built on the back of three centuries.

In overcast conditions, the home team resumed day two of the second Test in Canberra on 384 for four and extended their lead to a massive 534 for five when skipper Tim Paine declared. At stumps, Sri Lanka were 123 for three in reply with Kusal Perera on 11 and Dhananjaya de Silva not out one.

Paine’s declaration looked premature given the ease with which Sri Lanka’s openers weathered the new-ball attack led by under-pressure Mitchell Starc. On a flat Manuka Oval track Karunaratne and Lahiru Thirimanne saw off some lightning quick deliveries and a bouncer barrage and had built an 82-run stand before disaster struck. Playing in his 58th Test, Karunaratne was 46 not out when a rising Pat Cummins ball glanced off his shoulder and onto his helmet, close to the neck area. He slumped to the ground, dropping his bat as Australian players ran to assist.

A doctor and physio sprinted onto the ground and called for more medics and after some 10 minutes, he was put on a stretcher and taken off the field on a golf buggy. Cricket Australia said he complained of pain in the neck and tingling to the hands and was ferried to hospital.

Coach Chandika Hathurusingha said later he was in “good spirits” and “in no danger”. “It hit on the back of the neck so he is being assessed,” he added. It clearly unsettled Thirimanne who fell to spinner Nathan Lyon for 41 in the next over, caught by Usman Khawaja at slip. Cummins then clean-bowled Kusal Mendis for six and when captain Dinesh Chandimal gloved a Starc ball to Paine behind the stumps for 15, the tourists were in trouble. “We lost a couple of wickets afterwards so it was definitely a distraction,” admitted Hathurusingha.

The impressive Kurtis Patterson was not out 114 and Paine on 45 at the declaration with Vishwa Fernando the pick of the Sri Lankan bowlers with 3-126. After being dropped on his first ball, Patterson, who earned a debut in the first Test at Brisbane after hitting 157 and 102 for a Cricket Australia XI in a warm-up against Sri Lanka, never looked back.

The New South Welshman shored up his credentials ahead of an Ashes tour to England later this year by bringing up his maiden hundred with a drive to mid-off for three after starting the day on 25.

“It’s another nice milestone. I’ve played that innings in my mind ever since I was a little boy,” said Patterson. “More importantly, it just put the team in a position to



CANBERRA: Sri Lanka’s Dimuth Karunaratne avoids a bouncer ball by Australia’s Pat Cummins during day two of the second Test cricket match between Australia and Sri Lanka at the Manuka Oval Cricket Ground in Canberra yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at stumps on day two of the second Test between Australia and Sri Lanka in Canberra yesterday:

Sri Lanka 1st innings	
D. Karunaratne retired hurt	46
L. Thirimanne c Khawaja b Lyon	41
D. Chandimal c Paine b Starc	15
K. Mendis b Cummins	6
K. Perera not out	11
D. de Silva not out	1
Extras (lb2, b1)	3
Total (three wickets: 43 overs)	123
To bat: Niroshan Dickwella, Dilruwan Perera, Chamika Karunaratne, Vishwa Fernando, Kasun Rajitha	
Fall of wickets: 1-90 (Thirimanne), 2-101 (Mendis), 3-120 (Chandimal)	
Bowling: Starc 8-2-32-1, Richardson 9-4-23-0, Cummins 10-2-	

25-1, Lyon 16-5-40-1.	
Australia 1st innings (overnight 384-4; T:Head 161)	
J. Burns b Rajitha	180
K. Patterson not out	114
T. Paine not out	45
Extras (lb3 nb10, w4)	17
Total (five wickets declared: 132 overs)	534
Did not bat: Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, Jhye Richardson, Nathan Lyon	
Fall of wickets: 1-11 (Harris), 2-15 (Khawaja), 2-28 (Labuschagne), 4-336 (Head), 5-404 (Burns)	
Bowling: Rajitha 28-5-103-1, Fernando 30-3-126-3, C. Karunaratne 22-0-130-1, Perera 32-4-112-0, De Silva 20-2-60-0.	

win another Test match.”

Following a century drought stretching back to October when Khawaja scored 141 against Pakistan in Dubai, it turned into a flood in Canberra with three players bringing up the magical mark.

Opener Joe Burns punished the inexperienced Sri Lankan attack on Friday in a 308-run stand with Travis Head (161), carrying his bat through the day. But he only lasted five overs Saturday after resuming on 172, adding eight runs before chopping a delivery from quick Kasun Rajitha onto his stumps.

He trudged off dejected after missing a glorious chance to notch a first Test double century against a

team missing its three first-choice pace bowlers- Suranga Lakmal, Lahiru Kumara and Dushmantha Chameera-through injury.

Burns’ departure brought the consistent Paine to the crease, who kept the pressure on the visitors, still reeling after being beaten at the first Test in Brisbane by an innings and 40 runs. At the other end Patterson grabbed his chance with both hands, smashing 14 fours and a six in his breakthrough knock.

Patterson was preferred for Brisbane and Canberra to young batting prospect Will Pucovski, who was released from the squad late Friday to deal with mental health issues that have plagued him in the past. — AFP

Al-Jurarei nabs first and second place at Equestrian Championship

KUWAIT: Member of the KIB team and the Hunting and Equestrian Club, Ghazi Al-Jurarei, had a stand-out performance at the 1st Hunting and Equestrian Club Championship 2018, which took place at the Hunting and Equestrian Club. The event was attended by the President of the Hunting and Equestrian Club, Sheikh Hessa Fahad Al Sabah, Deputy Director-General of the Public Authority for Sports (PAS), Dr. Saqr Al-Mulla, along with the Director General of the PAS, Dr Humoud Flaiteh Al-Shammari.

During the first half of the championship’s first day, Al-Jurarei won first place at 130 cm and second place at the Grand Prix on the second day. On this occasion, KIB congratulated Al-Jurarei on his outstanding performance during the championship. In line with its ongoing commitment towards supporting sports activities, the Bank annually renews its sponsorship of Kuwaiti jockey, Ghazi Al-Jurarei, thereby enabling him to garner an impressive slew of accolades that raise Kuwait’s name high on both the local and international championship scene.

KIB actively seeks to support and sponsor talented young athletes, as part of its leading social responsibility program. The Bank aims at empowering these youth by providing them with the necessary support. Additionally, KIB is committed to positively impacting the local community by promoting sports activities across diverse segments. This championship is the first official local tournament to be organized by the Hunting and Equestrian Club. With a total nine games, the championship held four games on the first day at 100 cm, 110 cm, 130 cm and 120 cm, respectively. On the second day, the first game started at 70-90 cm, the second and third games were at 110 cm and 120 cm, and the Grand Prix at 140 cm. Finally, the championship concluded with a smaller-level prize game at a lower height of 130 cm.



Ghazi Al Jurarei

Sports

Qatar Asian Cup win offers hope of 2022 respectability

Almoez Ali sets Asian Cup scoring record with his ninth strike

ABU DHABI: Qatar running rampant to secure a maiden Asian Cup title in Abu Dhabi might have been the worst-case scenario for the hosts but it also offered hope for Gulf football that the 2022 World Cup might not now be a humiliating experience for the region.

That was always a possibility when Qatar, whose team have never qualified for the World Cup, was named host country of the 22nd edition of world soccer's showpiece — the smallest nation to receive that honour and the first from the Arab world.

Qatar coach Felix Sanchez said throughout the Asian Cup that his mission was to show that his young squad could match the best teams in Asia and they delivered, beating former champions Saudi Arabia, Iraq and South Korea on their way to the final.

On Friday, they conceded their first goal of the tournament but still stunned four-times champions and World Cup regulars Japan 3-1, with striker Almoez Ali setting an Asian Cup scoring record with his ninth strike. It was a beauty, too, an overhead kick taken with such composure that you would never have guessed that Sudan-born Ali and his Iraqi-born team mate Bassam Al-Rawi were under the cloud of an eligibility row until only a few hours before kickoff.

Politics are never far from the surface in Asian football and the political and economic boycott of Qatar launched by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt 18 months ago hung heavily over the later stages of the tournament.

There were almost no Qataris in the stadium to witness their triumph, with thousands of Omanis making the journey from the neighbouring sultanate to step in as proxy supporters.

Ali and his team mates had been pelted with sandals and drinks bottles for the temerity of celebrating their goals when the locals finally turned out to support the UAE in the semi-finals, only to witness a humiliating 4-0 rout. In farcical scenes after Friday's final, Saudi journalists berated Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu for not

having delivered the thumping they felt Qatar deserved, rants that the bemused Moriyasu answered with a polite "thank you".

The timing of the UAE FA protest against the eligibility of Ali and Al Rawi, which was dismissed, also left a sour taste in the mouth, looking at best like bad sportsmanship and at worst a politically-motivated attempt to derail the Qataris.

Japan and Qatar will next play competitively as guest nations at the Copa America, a tacit admission that other Asian countries do not offer strong enough opposition to truly test a team with ambitions to compete at the highest level.

Ali made that charge explicit, declaring Asia was the weakest of football's regions and saying he needed to go to Europe to improve his game before 2022.

It was hard to argue with his analysis given the standard of some of the football at the first Asian Cup featuring an expanded 24-team field.

AUSTRALIA FLOP

A format that left some teams still in with a chance of advancing despite losing their first two matches did not help, and neither did a lack of marketing which resulted in many UAE residents being completely unaware the Asian Cup was going on.

Champions Australia flopped in the quarter-finals mainly because of their inability to turn dominant performances into goals, while Saudi hopes that they could end their long wait since their third title lasted only until the round of 16. Carlos Queiroz's Iran looked like they might end their 43-year drought until they were undone in the semi-finals by the only Japan performance that came anywhere near the dominant style that won the Samurai Blue four titles.

With some emotion, Portuguese Queiroz drew a close to his eight years in charge of Team Melli, as did China's Italian World Cup-winning coach Marcello Lippi following his error-prone side's defeat to Iran in



ABU DHABI: FIFA President Gianni Infantino (L) and AFC President Salman Al-Khalifa (2nd-L) present the cup to Qatar's forward Hasan Al Haydos (2nd-R) during the 2019 AFC Asian Cup final football match between Japan and Qatar at the Zayed Sports City Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Friday. — AFP

the last eight. There were some bright notes from nations with less footballing pedigree — India were denied a first run to the knockout stages only by a stoppage-time penalty and Vietnam's effervescent style took them to the last eight. South Korea were joined by the one Asian player of world stature for their third match but a fatigued Son Heung-min failed to revive

their lacklustre campaign and returned to Tottenham Hotspur after the quarter-final loss to Qatar.

Ali was named Player of the Tournament but the award could easily have gone to his skilful forward partner Akram Afif, who sealed the title for Qatar when he coolly despatched a spot kick for the final goal of the 17th Asian Cup. — Reuters

Bayern crash at Leverkusen as Dortmund go seven-points clear

BERLIN: Defending champions Bayern Munich crashed to a shock 3-1 defeat at Bayer Leverkusen yesterday, allowing Borussia Dortmund to extend their lead at the top of the Bundesliga table to seven points.

Superb second-half goals by Leverkusen's Leon Bailey, Kevin Volland and Lucas Alario inflicted only a fourth league defeat this season on second-placed Bayern as Dortmund added a point to their lead despite drawing 1-1 at Eintracht Frankfurt.

Bayern had their seven-match winning streak in the league ended abruptly and lived dangerously early on at Leverkusen, whose forward Kevin Volland fired a shot off Mats Hummels arm, but the referee waved away furious penalty appeals. Bayern's in-form midfielder Leon Goretzka showed why head coach Niko Kovac has to start him in his star-studded line-up with a superb opening goal.

When Leverkusen winger Julian Brandt broke clear, it was Goretzka who sprinted back to win the ball. Bayern countered quickly and, with Leverkusen failing to get back, Goretzka sprinted between two defenders to head home his fourth goal in three games on 41 minutes for a superb box-to-box goal.

It should have been 2-0 at the break to Bayern as Robert Lewandowski put the ball in Leverkusen's net,



LEVERKUSEN: Bayern Munich's Polish forward Robert Lewandowski and Leverkusen's German defender Jonathan Tah vie for the ball during the German first division Bundesliga football match Bayer Leverkusen vs Bayern Munich in Leverkusen, western Germany, yesterday. — AFP

but the video assistant referee ruled the effort marginally offside. However, Leverkusen's fleet-footed attack hit top gear in the second-half, sparked eight minutes after the break when Jamaican winger Leon Bailey curled a free-kick past Bayern's reserve goalkeeper Sven Ulreich, in for thumb-injury victim Manuel Neuer.

The equaliser galvanised Leverkusen, who shredded the Bayern defence to leave Volland with a simple tap in on 63 minutes, then Argentinian striker Alario replaced Bailey and tapped home a Brandt cross on 89 minutes as Bayern failed to defend a counter attack.

Dortmund deserved a point at Frankfurt and went ahead after a fantastic run by Raphael Guerreiro, who dribbled past two defenders and drew a third to leave

Man City look to revive title bid against Arsenal

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola needs a quick response from his side against Arsenal today to show that Manchester City's challenge for the Premier League title remains intact. Guardiola can be thankful City will go into the match at the Etihad Stadium only five points behind leaders Liverpool.

It could have been worse after a lethargic display brought a surprising 2-1 defeat at relegation-threatened Newcastle on Tuesday, but Jurgen Klopp's side struggled to take advantage as they were held to a 1-1 draw at home by Leicester the following night.

City could argue Tuesday's defeat was a blip, given they had won their previous eight matches, but three of those victories were in cup games against lower-division opposition. A more worrying statistic for City manager Guardiola is that his team have lost four of their past nine league fixtures, and that three of those defeats have been against teams who started this weekend in the bottom half of the table. At St James' Park, City allowed their concentration to slip after Sergio Agüero had given them a first-minute lead, and there was a strong sense they missed the leadership skills of club captain Vincent Kompany, who has made just six league starts this season because of a series of fitness problems.

Without Kompany's authority, City are vulnerable to switching off, and that cost them heavily at Newcastle. They were not helped either by the tactics of their opponents, with Rafa Benitez settling up a 3-4-2-1 system that crowded the middle of the pitch and gave Fernandinho little space to operate in.

The Brazilian midfielder, who has been one of City's outstanding performers this season, did not have a good night in England's northeast, clumsily conceding the penal-



Pep Guardiola

ty from which Matt Ritchie scored the home side's winner.

City, though, need others around Fernandinho to be more consistent too. Kevin de Bruyne is one player still seeking that consistency, having so far failed to rediscover the form that made him the club's player of the year last season. De Bruyne, undoubtedly struggling as a result of a long World Cup campaign with Belgium and a series of injury problems since, made only his third league start of the season at Newcastle, and was subdued. Guardiola needs the Belgium midfielder back to his best if City are to stand any chance of catching Liverpool.

But the optimistic City boss said: "If we didn't have the motivation, we would not be where we are, which is still in all competitions. "We are in the Carabao (League) Cup final, still in the Champions League, and we are there in the league. "People were saying not so long ago that we were the perfect team. My answer is the same now as it was then: Every game is a challenge. "There are ups and downs during a season. Players cannot sustain the same level for 11 months of a season."

While Guardiola did not make any major signings during January, Arsenal could give a debut to former City youth midfielder Denis Suarez, who joined on Thursday from Barcelona for the rest of the season. — AFP

FIVE ASIAN CUP MOMENTS

Flying footwear and that bicycle kick

ABU DHABI: Defining moments from the Asian Cup, which ended with Qatar's 3-1 victory over Japan late on Friday:

PUTTING THE BOOT IN

Qatar were busy trampling the United Arab Emirates 4-0 when shoes came flying from the crowd, an Arab insult, as well as a hail of plastic bottles. The Asian Football Confederation launched an investigation after the ugly scenes marred that the semi-final, also including ear-splitting booing of the Qatari national anthem. It didn't help that the sell-out home crowd was nearly 100 per cent behind the hosts thanks to a ticket giveaway for which only Emiratis were eligible.

SOUND OF SILENCE

The torrid events of Qatar's semi-final were in stark contrast to their Group E game against North Korea, which unfolded in near-silence in front of a tiny crowd. With Qataris mostly barred from UAE due to the Gulf blockade, and North Korean fans not allowed to travel, there were never going to be many supporters. In the event, an official attendance of 452 watched Qatar's 6-0 demolition in Al Ain. Almoez Ali scored four, equalling the record for an Asian Cup game, with each goal greeted by scattered clapping.

SAVE HAKEEM

It wasn't the only deafening silence as the Asian Football Confederation came under fire for its muted response to calls to help Hakeem al-Araibi, the Australia-based Bahraini refugee footballer fighting extradition from Thailand. With Australia, FIFA and the International Olympic Committee all weighing in, the AFC-whose president is a member of Bahrain's ruling family—finally issued an appeal for his release, two months after his detention in Bangkok.

HE DID IT HIS WAY

Iran's flamboyant coach Carlos Queiroz bowed out Frank Sinatra-style as he faced the final curtain after their 3-0 semi-final defeat to Japan. "Now the end is here... I'm very happy and very proud—because I did it my way," rified the 65-year-old Portuguese, who may now make a Sinatra-style comeback with Colombia. He wasn't alone in moving on to pastures new: Marcello Lippi, Sven-Goran Eriksson, Alberto Zaccheroni, Bernd Stange, Miroslav Soukup, Stephen Constantine and Milovan Rajevac all bade adieu to their respective teams, not all of them on their own terms.

THAT BICYCLE KICK

Every tournament needs its spectacular moments and Almoez Ali saved the best for last with his bicycle kick in the final that triggered Qatar's 3-1 win over Japan. Even better, it was Ali's ninth goal of the tournament, breaking Iranian legend Ali Daei's 1996 record for strikes at a single Asian Cup. Given that the 22-year-old had a protest over his eligibility dismissed just hours earlier, it summed up a victory against the odds for the 2022 World Cup hosts. —AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)		
ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE		
Leicester City v Manchester United		17:05
beIN SPORTS HD 2		
Manchester City v Arsenal FC		19:30
beIN SPORTS HD 2		
SPANISH LEAGUE		
Villarreal CF v RCD Espanyol		14:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Real Betis v Atletico de Madrid		18:15
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
SD Eibar v Girona		20:30
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Real Madrid CF v Deportivo Alaves		22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE		
Spal v Torino FC		14:30
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
Udinese Calcio v ACF Fiorentina		17:00
beIN SPORTS		
Genoa CFC v US Sassuolo Calcio		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
Internazionale Milano v Bologna FC		20:00
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
AS Roma v AC Milan		22:30
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
FC Augsburg v FSV Mainz 05		17:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5		
VfB Stuttgart v SC Freiburg		20:00
beIN SPORTS HD 5		
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Nîmes Olympique v Montpellier HSC		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 6		
Saint Etienne v RC Strasbourg		19:00
beIN SPORTS HD 12 EN		
Olympique Lyonnais v Paris Saint-Germain		23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 6		

25 Shiffrin sends daunting world championships message



26 Karunaratne stretchered off as Sri Lanka chase big Australia total



27 Qatar Asian Cup win offers hope of 2022 respectability



Spurs strike late to climb above City

Wolves match club record with 3-1 win at Everton



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's South Korean striker Son Heung-Min (R) shoots but doesn't score during the English Premier League football match between Tottenham Hotspur and Newcastle United at Wembley Stadium in London, yesterday. — AFP

LONDON: Tottenham left it late again, but Son Heung-min's strike seven minutes from time earned a hard-fought 1-0 win over Newcastle yesterday to leapfrog Manchester City into second place in the Premier League.

Spurs also struck at the death to beat Fulham and Watford in recent weeks to ensure they have kept pace in the league since Harry Kane and Dele Alli were injured.

Mauricio Pochettino's men close to within four points of leaders Liverpool, who are in action at West Ham on Monday, but just as significantly open up a 10-point lead on Arsenal and Chelsea in the race for a top-four finish and Champions League football next season.

In keeping with a season of struggle, Tottenham were forced all the way by a dogged Newcastle, buoyed by a stunning 2-1 win over Manchester City in midweek that carried the Magpies five points clear of the relegation zone. Club record £20 million signing Miguel Almiron did not have international clearance to make his debut so Rafael Benitez named the same side that started against

City with the same gameplan to defend deep and frustrate their opponents.

Tottenham had the chances to make an early breakthrough and ensure a much more comfortable afternoon. Fernando Llorente was left on the bench after the 33-year-old played the full 90 minutes in Spurs' previous three games leaving Lucas Moura to lead the line.

The Brazilian had Spurs' best chance of the first 45 minutes when he headed wide with the goal gaping from point-blank range.

Erik Lamela then saw another headed effort come back off the crossbar as Tottenham camped in the Newcastle half. For all the hosts dominance of possession, Martin Dubravka was only forced into one serious save before the break when former Newcastle midfielder Moussa Sissoko turned a well-worked corner towards goal.

A similar pattern followed in the second-half, but Newcastle nearly caught Spurs cold with a flowing counter-attack when Salomon Rondon's powerful header from

DeAndre Yedlin's cross came back off the post with Hugo Lloris stranded. Lloris also had to make a flying save to turn a curling effort from Perez behind. But the vast majority of the play was up the other end as Spurs laid siege to Newcastle's wall of 10 men behind the ball.

Only an incredible clearance off the line from Fabian Schar denied what seemed a certain goal for Christian Eriksen when the Dane flicked a corner goalwards. Llorente then looped a golden headed chance high and wide moments after replacing Moura.

Instead it was Son who again stepped up to the mark, just as he did with an equaliser against Watford in midweek, to compensate for Kane's absence with his 14th goal of the season. The South Korean had a helping hand from Dubravka, though, as the Newcastle keeper let Son's powerful effort slip beneath his grasp to undo all his side's good work in holding out for 83 minutes.

Meanwhile, Wolverhampton Wanderers equalled their highest tally of 11 victories in a Premier League season,

dating back to their 2010-2011 campaign, with an impressive 3-1 win at Everton yesterday.

Goals by Ruben Neves, Raul Jimenez and Leander Dendoncker sank Everton in an entertaining clash, with Andre Gomes scoring the home team's solitary goal-his first for the club since he joined them from Barcelona on loan in August 2018.

Neves fired the visitors ahead with a seventh-minute penalty, after Leighton Baines had tripped Matt Doherty, before Gomes rifled in the equaliser in the 27th with a thunderbolt from the edge of the penalty area.

Jimenez restored Wolves' lead on the stroke of halftime with a fine header at the near post after Joao Moutinho had floated in an inch-perfect free kick, as the visitors threatened every time they came forward.

Belgium defender Dendoncker put the icing on the cake for Wolves in the 66th minute when he volleyed home from close range after Diogo Jota's shot had been blocked, capping another lightning break by the visitors. — Agencies

Higuain eases pressure on Sarri as Chelsea cruise

LONDON: Gonzalo Higuain eased the pressure on Maurizio Sarri as the Chelsea striker's first goals for his new club inspired a 5-0 demolition of Huddersfield yesterday. Blues boss Sarri had been under fire after Chelsea suffered their heaviest Premier League defeat for 23 years in a humiliating 4-0 loss at Bournemouth on Wednesday.

Amid reports the Italian is already in danger of the sack less than a year after taking charge, he was indebted to his old friend Higuain for lifting the gloom around Stamford Bridge. Higuain, signed on loan from Juventus at Sarri's behest after their successful spell together at Napoli, opened his account early in the first half of Chelsea's biggest win of the season.

It was the start of an influential display from the Argentine and, with Eden Hazard free to return to his preferred role on the flanks after a spell up front, Chelsea looked far more vibrant. Hazard's controversial penalty

doubled Chelsea's lead before half-time after referee Paul Tierney ruled Cesar Azpilicueta was fouled inside the area, when the offence actually took place just outside.

That welcome piece of good fortune for Sarri was followed by further goals for Hazard, Higuain and David Luiz after the interval as Chelsea ended a run of two successive league defeats in emphatic fashion.

After winning for only the second time in their last five league matches, Chelsea climb back into fourth place above Arsenal, who trail by three points and face Manchester City on Sunday, as they battle to qualify for the Champions League.

While Chelsea's winter of discontent won't seem so bleak for Sarri now, the Blues remain at a crossroads. Much sterner tests await than Huddersfield, who are rooted to the bottom of the table and look destined for relegation after an 11th defeat in their last 12 league games.

Chelsea face a season-defining period that includes the League Cup final against Manchester City and meetings with Manchester United in the FA Cup and City and Tottenham in the league. Sarri hasn't helped his cause with rigid tactics and dubious man-management-conducting a long inquest with his players after the Bournemouth mauling and claiming they don't understand even the basics of his system. The 60-year-old is adamant his philosophy will work if he is given time. But for 'Sarri-ball' to succeed, he needs Higuain to hit the ground running. —AFP



LONDON: Chelsea's Belgian midfielder Eden Hazard (L) scores their third goal during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Huddersfield Town at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. — AFP