



2 Amir congratulates Crown Prince on 13th 'versary of post assumption



5 Eating locusts in Kuwait: Tradition makes comeback



19 Haute-couture designer, fashion icon Karl Lagerfeld dies at 85

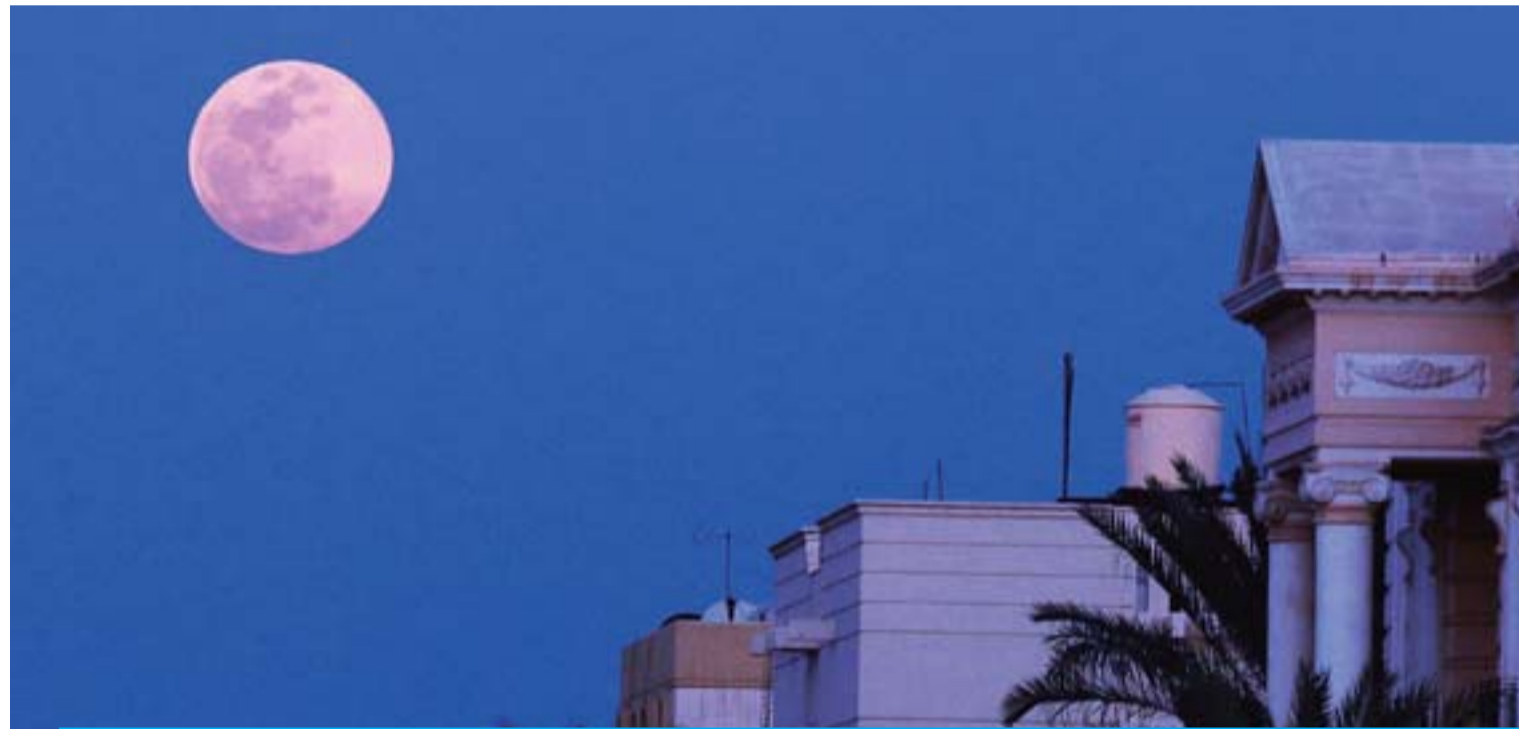


28 Djokovic, Biles win Laureus sportspeople of year awards



58,000 new expats entered the workforce in Kuwait in 2018

Ban on non-degree holders over 60 mulled • Iqama sticker to be scrapped



KUWAIT: A full moon rises over Kuwait City yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Recent statistics issued by government bodies showed the total workforce in Kuwait till the end of last year increased by 66,000, including 8,562 citizens, 11,394 new domestic helpers and 47,000 expats working for the private sector. Statistics showed an upsurge in the number of expats working for private sector companies during the period of June to Dec 2018, and a drop of 987 in their number in government bodies.

Statistics also showed that the total number of expats working in Kuwait is 2.38 million, with 68 percent of them working in the private sector, 648,000 as domestic helpers and 123,000 in the public sector. In addition, statistics showed a rise in the number of citizens working for government bodies - an increase of 7,867 versus an increase of 695 Kuwaitis in the private sector.

Meanwhile, the manpower authority is working on issuing a resolution banning the renewal of residency visas for expats holding pre-university or no degrees after the age of 60. In this regard,

informed sources said some of the authority's board members are for the proposal and believe that there is no use in keeping such expats in the country, while others are against it for humanitarian reasons, taking into account the decades they have spent in the country and their need to work.

The sources said that a new package of resolutions will be issued after the national holidays regulating work in the private labor market and government projects. The sources added that the new resolutions will help fight visa traffickers and fake companies that bring expat laborers into the country and abandon them to seek jobs in the local labor market.

Also, as part of ongoing efforts to develop and modernize various interior ministry departments, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah issued a ministerial resolution cancelling the use of residency stickers on expats' passports and including all the needed data on their civil IDs instead, said assistant

Continued on Page 24

Cairo bombing kills 3 policemen; Amir sends condolences

CAIRO: A suicide bomber detonated an explosive device in the heart of ancient Islamic Cairo, killing three policemen who were chasing him through its narrow alleyways, medical and security sources said yesterday. Monday evening's bombing, in the Darb al-Ahmar neighborhood near the historic Al-Azhar mosque, also wounded two other policemen, the interior ministry said in a statement. "As security forces surrounded the man and were about to stop him and bring him under control, an explosive device in his possession detonated," the ministry said.

Video posted on social media yesterday morning showed police catching up with a male cyclist before being enveloped by an explosion. The ministry said the bomber was being chased as part of a manhunt for

those responsible for a foiled bomb attack near a mosque in Cairo's twin city of Giza on Friday. Police sappers successfully defused that device.

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable yesterday to Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi, expressing his deepest condolences over the attack. The Amir affirmed that Kuwait strongly condemned the heinous terror attack, indicating that Kuwait stands in solidarity with Egypt and its people in this regard. HH the Amir conveyed his feelings of sympathy towards the families of the victims and prayed for the swift recovery of those injured. 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.

A source at Kuwait's foreign ministry said in a statement that such terrorist acts aim at jeopardizing the country's security and stability and terrorizing citizens. Kuwait affirms necessity of doubling international efforts to annihilate this "phenomenon of violence and terrorism", the source said, emphasizing Kuwait's principled and unwavering stance against terrorism.

Continued on Page 24



CAIRO: Mourners carry the coffin of Egyptian policeman Mahmud Abu El-Yzied during his funeral in the Embaba district of the capital yesterday. — AFP



NEW DELHI: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman shakes hands with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi upon arriving at the airport yesterday. — AFP

Saudi crown prince lands in Delhi amid Indo-Pak tensions

NEW DELHI: Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman arrived in New Delhi yesterday, with his business mission under threat of being overshadowed by soaring tensions between India and Pakistan. The crown prince, who wants to persuade the world's fastest growing major economy to consume more Saudi oil, was greeted at the airport by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who gave his traditional bear hug for honored guests.

The prince arrived from a two-day stay in Pakistan as it clashed with its giant neighbor over responsibility for a suicide attack in Kashmir last Thursday

which left at least 40 members of Indian security forces dead. The attack was claimed by Pakistan-based Islamist group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and has sparked calls in India for a firm response. The latest showdown between the nuclear-armed neighbors, which is causing mounting international concern, is expected to figure prominently in Prince Mohammed's talks with Modi today.

"Our objective is to try to de-escalate tensions between the two countries, neighboring countries, and to see if there is a path forward to resolving those differences peacefully," Saudi minister of

Continued on Page 24

Khan warns against attack, urges talks; Delhi rebuffs offer



ISLAMABAD: People watch as Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan speaks to the nation yesterday about the suicide bombing in Indian-administered Kashmir. — AFP

NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD: India yesterday demanded that rival Pakistan take "credible and visible action" over a major suicide attack in Kashmir as it sternly rebuffed Prime Minister Imran Khan's offer to investigate the bombing. Amid a new spike in tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors, Khan earlier demanded that India give "actionable evidence" to back its claim of Pakistan's backing for the suicide bomber. While offering an investigation, Khan also said Pakistan would retaliate if attacked over the bombing, claimed by a Pakistan-based group, which killed at least 41 Indian paramilitaries.

"The prime minister of Pakistan has offered to investigate the matter if India provides proof.

Continued on Page 24



This handout released yesterday shows an optical image of the M106 galaxy stacked on an image of the galaxy's emissions of material (in orange) taken with the LOFAR radio telescope. — AFP

New universe map unearths 300K galaxies

PARIS: The known Universe just got a lot bigger. A new map of the night sky published yesterday charts hundreds of thousands of previously unknown galaxies discovered using a telescope that can detect light sources optical instruments cannot see. The international team behind the unprecedented space survey said their discovery literally shed new light on

some of the Universe's deepest secrets, including the physics of black holes and how clusters of galaxies evolve.

"This is a new window on the universe," Cyril Tasse, an astronomer at the Paris Observatory who was involved in the project, told AFP. "When we saw the first images we were like: 'What is this?!' It didn't look anything at all like what we are used to seeing." More than 200 astronomers from 18 countries were involved in the study, which used radio astronomy to look at a segment of sky over the northern hemisphere, and found 300,000 previously unseen light sources thought to be distant galaxies.

Continued on Page 24

Local

Amir, state officials congratulate Crown Prince on 13th anniversary of post assumption

Sheikh Nawaf hailed as one of modern Kuwait's founders



KUWAIT: This file photo shows His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah during a visit to Al-Subiya natural reserve. — KUNA



His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah takes oath as the Crown Prince of Kuwait.



His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah performs his constitutional oath at the National Assembly on February 20, 2006.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a congratulatory letter to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday, on the 13th anniversary of His Highness' assumption of his post. In the letter, His Highness Sheikh Sabah congratulated His Highness Sheikh Nawaf on the occasion, wishing him a long healthy life. His Highness also noted the efforts of His Highness the Crown Prince in serving Kuwait and its people. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received a letter from His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, thanking him for his kind words and feelings. His Highness the Crown Prince hailed the wise leadership of His Highness Sheikh Sabah that led Kuwait to see more development on all levels, wishing him a long healthy life. His Highness the Crown Prince also received similar letters of congratulations from National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Exceptional case

His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is an exceptional case when it comes to loving the homeland and its people. Deputy Chief of Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said. Expressing great pride and appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Nawaf's sincere efforts and achievements throughout the years, Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad said that His Highness 'invested' in Kuwait's love. An example of devotion and giving, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf has the qualities of a distinguished leader who combines firmness and tolerance, and

an ability to face challenges with wisdom, Sheikh Meshaal noted, adding that His Highness Sheikh Nawaf showed leadership skills in all his posts, including as the governor of Hawally, defense minister, social affairs minister, and at the National Guard, stressing that in each of these posts, he left a clear mark and achievement, especially in fighting terrorism during his tenure as interior minister.

In the meantime, Minister of Information Mohammad Al-Jabri said that the Kuwaiti people will always remember actions taken by His Highness towards maintaining peace, security, development, law and sovereignty of Kuwait in every position he held during five decades of serving the country, during which he was one of the most prominent and contemporary figures in building modern Kuwait. He recalled February 20, 2006, when the nation's MPs gathered and approved Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad as the new Crown Prince of the State of Kuwait in a vote that reflected, if nothing, a 'thorough vision' due to the insurmountable level of confidence in His Highness Sheikh Nawaf's leadership qualities. Kuwaitis appreciate the experience of His Highness: a living example of a patriotic leader who spares no effort in supporting the aspirations of his people towards a prosperous future, Jabri noted. He concluded reaffirming His Highness the Crown Prince's humbleness and generosity, wishing him great health and longevity in serving His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people.

A founding father

Celebrating his 13th anniversary as Crown Prince today, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, along with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, are both viewed by the people as members of the founding fathers of the modern country. In line with an Amiri decree on February 7, 2006, His

Highness the Crown Prince became the closest aide of His Highness the Amir in his efforts to continue building the modern state and the march towards development and prosperity. After the MPs unanimously approved the nomination, His Highness the Crown Prince was sworn in at the National Assembly and took up his duties on February 20, 2006. His Highness the Crown Prince offered, over the last decades, outstanding contributions to Kuwait's drive to become a modern, advanced and prosperous country.

He was nominated by the late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah as governor of Hawally on February 21, 1961, and maintained the post until March 19, 1978; during this period, Kuwait gained independence from Britain in June 1961. He served as minister of interior between March 19, 1978, and February 26, 1988, when he took up the portfolio of defense during the reign of late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

After Kuwait's liberation from the Iraqi invasion, he served as minister of social affairs and labor between April 20, 1991, and October 19, 1992. His Highness Sheikh Nawaf was nominated as deputy chief of the National Guard on October 16, 1994, until July 13, 2003, when he was designated to the portfolio of the interior. On October 16, 2003, he was nominated as first deputy prime minister and minister of interior and maintained the post until February 7, 2006, when he was designated as Crown Prince.

During his tenure as governor of Hawally, he was able to turn the governorate from a primitive village into a lively business center featured by modern urban planning and economic activities. As minister of interior, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf managed to preserve the security and stability of the country and address all concerns of the public through introducing the latest security systems and equipment, and building the capacity of the police per-

sonnel. He optimized use of the information technologies in the combat against all forms of crimes and tightening the control over the borders. He laid down a comprehensive strategy for preserving the security along the land and maritime borders, thus denying access to hostile infiltrators who might tamper with the security and stability of the country.

Remarkable achievements

During his tenure as minister of defense, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf upgraded the army through modern training and provision of the latest weapons. As minister of social affairs and labor following the Iraqi invasion of 1990, he made remarkable humanitarian achievements in caring for the widows and orphans and bereaved elderly people. He also rehabilitated the labor market through helping the workers resume their jobs after the liberation war. During the catastrophe of invasion, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf contributed to security the safe travel of the legitimate authorities to neighboring Saudi Arabia and mobilizing, later on, the military and civilian resources for resistance against the Iraqi occupation forces.

When the country was hit by terrorist attacks in January 2005, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf led the war against terrorism until he made sure that all terrorist cells were thoroughly broken. On the regional front, His Highness Sheikh Nawaf attached great importance to the security of the Arabian Gulf states. He played an active role in the meetings of interior ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states with a view to joining forces against common threats, notably those relating to terrorism. In 2018, His Highness the Crown Prince was honored by visiting Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas with a medal for his supportive stance towards the people of Palestine. — KUNA

Amiri Diwan official visits exhibition about late King Fahad

KUWAIT: Amiri Diwan Undersecretary for the Ruling Family Affairs Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah yesterday expressed admiration of the exhibition 'Al-Fahad .. Spirit of Leadership.' Sheikh Sabah Nasser said in a statement during a

visit to the exhibition venue that "Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are a single state, people of joint destiny and promising future," appreciating all those who had a hand in organizing the exhibition and keeping belongings of the late King Fahad bin Abdulaziz, recalling the late king for his support for Kuwait (during the Iraqi aggression). Holding the exhibition in Kuwait reflects the kingdom sentiments of affection toward Kuwait, he said, offering gratitude to the head of the steering committee, Prince Mohammad bin Fahad, and head of the executive committee, Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad. The exhibition sheds light on life of the late Saudi king and his personal belongings. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Amiri Diwan Undersecretary for the Ruling Family Affairs Sheikh Sabah Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah visits the 'Al-Fahad .. Spirit of Leadership' exhibition. — KUNA

Colors of Kuwait's flag seen nationwide



KUWAIT: Annually, the State of Kuwait celebrates in the month of February the advent of the national day and the anniversary of liberation. During the celebrations, the colors of the Kuwaiti flag could be seen almost everywhere, adorning the country's buildings and monuments with shades of red, black, white, and green. — KUNA



Local



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shahab Al-Deen and members of the board. — Amiri Diwan photos

Amir heads Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences' board meeting

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah headed the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences' (KFAS) 133rd board meeting at Bayan Palace yesterday, with presence of KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shahab Al-Deen and members of the board. The meeting reviewed a report done by Director General and financial statements of 2018. His Highness the Amir wished them prosperity and success.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Dr Khaled Ali Mohammad Al-Fadhel and the visiting Saudi Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih. The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri

Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a condolence cable to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz over the death of Prince Abdullah bin Faisal bin Turki. In the cable, His Highness the Amir offered sincere condolences, prayed Allah the Almighty to grant the deceased mercy and Paradise, and bestow patience on the royal family. Two more cables of heartfelt condolences were sent to the Saudi Monarch by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the visiting Saudi Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih.

50% of Boursa Kuwait to be placed for public by year's end

Amir to participate in Arab-Europe summit: Cabinet

KUWAIT: Fifty percent of shares of Boursa Kuwait would be placed for public subscription between the end of this year and early 2020, Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said. Roudhan, also Minister of State for Services, briefed the Cabinet that the public subscription would take place between fourth quarter of 2019 and first quarter of 2020, a statement by the Cabinet said. Roudhan talked about privatization of Boursa Kuwait and how an alliance led by Kuwait Investment Company (KIC) has won 44 percent of shares, while Kuwait's Public Institution for Social Security (KPISS) owns the remaining six percent. He said the privatization of Boursa Kuwait aimed at promoting role of private sector in national economy. The Cabinet commended the transactions and hoped it would encourage local and foreign investors to boost national economy. On the other hand, the Cabinet approved bills over auditors profession and installations of surveillance cameras by the Ministry of Interior with the aim of restoring order, prevention of crimes and speedy arrest of criminals. The government approved allocation of KD 53 million (around \$175 million) to address deficit in Ministry of Higher Education's scholarships appropriations.

Federica Mogherini had expressed optimism that the EU-Arab League summit will be a success. "The EU Arab summit is a personal achievement. It always looked strange to me that the EU has held summits with Latin America, with Africa, with Asia and not with the Arab world that is our first neighbor," she said.

National days

The Cabinet congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on the occasion of the country's 58th National Day and the 28th anniversary of liberation. The Cabinet congratulated the Kuwaiti people and prayed that the nation enjoyed stability and security under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, Anas Al-Saleh said after the meeting. His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, who chaired the Cabinet meeting, meanwhile talked about results of his recent fruitful visit to Jordan, and the talks he held with King Abdullah II and Prime Minister Dr Omar Al-Razzaz on ways to enhance the distinguished relations and cooperation between the two countries. During the visit, both sides discussed the recent regional developments and cases of common interests. His Highness the Prime Minister inaugurated the new Kuwait Embassy building in Amman and met with his Kuwaiti students in the Kingdom.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the Cabinet about the results of his participation in the fourth session of the Kuwaiti-Jordanian Higher Joint Committee, which consisted of officials from government and the private sector. The Deputy Prime Minister noted the signing of 13 cooperation agreements, protocols, and memorandums of understanding and executive programs. He hailed the positive results of this visit, which will enhance the existing cooperation between the two countries for the common interest of their peoples.



Kuwait, China discuss Silk City development mechanism



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the cabinet's meeting on Monday. — KUNA

Silk City

Meanwhile, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah talked about the results of the visit of Vice-President of the Development and Reform Council of the People's Republic of China to the country. He noted that the visit aimed to enhance cooperation between the two countries in all fields and to develop a bilateral strategic partnership in order to activate the memorandum of understanding recently signed between both sides concerning the establishment of a cooperative development mechanism for the Silk City and the five Kuwaiti islands.

In the meantime, the Cabinet condemned an attack on an Egyptian army position in North Sinai that killed and injured several security forces. The Cabinet expressed condolences for families of the victims, and wished speedy recovery for the wounded. The Cabinet also expressed its condemnation to the terrorist bombing that targeted a military convoy in the Indian side of Kashmir recently, which killed and wounded many people. It stressed utmost condemnation for the ever-unjustified terrorism in all its forms and wished all wounded a quick recovery. — KUNA

Jordan bailout mechanism discussed

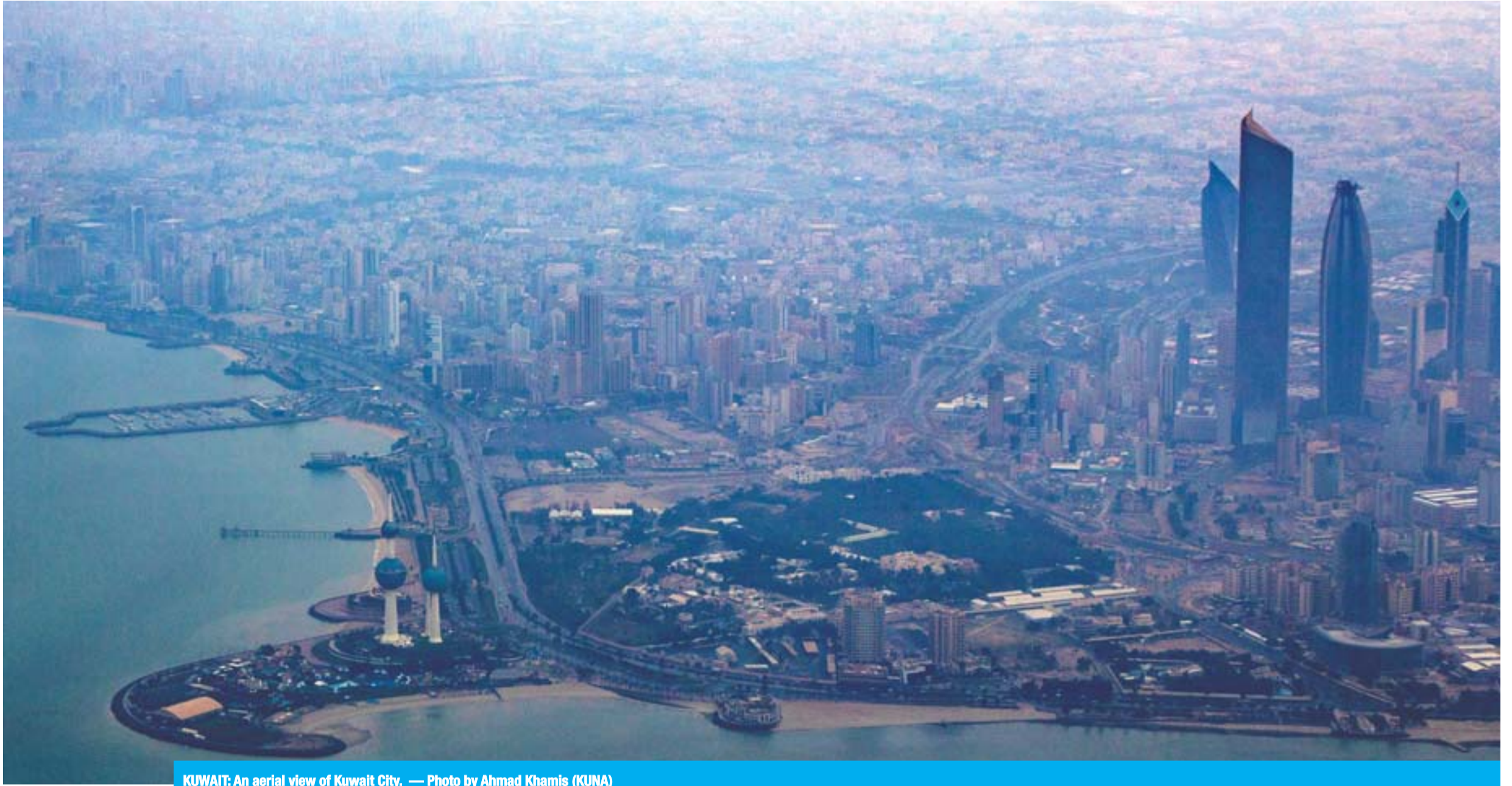
KUWAIT: Finance ministers of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Jordan have met in Kuwait to set mechanisms for implementing last June Makkah Summit resolutions to bail out the Jordanian economy by a multibillion US Dollar package. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance stated in a press statement on Monday. It added that the ministers were briefed about the Hashemite Kingdom's preparation for a planned international conference for supporting Jordanian economy in London 28 February.

The ministers concurred on the need to back the Jordanian economy through the execution of the Makkah Summit resolutions. They urged the private sector companies in the three countries to partake in London conference to get acquainted with the available investment opportunities which would be key for financial and economic stability in Jordan, the statement pointed out.

On June 10, 2018, His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Jordanian King Abdullah II, and UAE Vice-President, Premier and Dubai Ruler Sheikh Mohammad Al-Maktoum met in the holy city of Makkah to discuss offering urgent economic aid to Jordan following the eruption of massive protests due to the worsening economic hardships. The conferees agreed on a package of measures to support Jordan at a total of \$2.5 billion. The package included a deposit in Jordan's central bank, guarantees to the World Bank, annual budget support for five years, and development projects financing. — KUNA

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: An aerial view of Kuwait City. — Photo by Ahmad Khamis (KUNA)

Kuwait Airways says 2018 flight schedule compliance hits 90-95%

Carrier saw a major quantum leap in the improvement of its performance

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways, Kuwait's national carrier, said yesterday that its flight schedule compliance unprecedentedly ranged from 90 to 95 percent in 2018. "Over recent years, mainly 2018, Kuwait Airways has seen a major quantum leap in the improvement of its performance," the carrier said in a press statement. The airline is seeking fervently to notch up a high level of flourishing, development and expansion in view of its services, CEO Kamel Al-Awadhi was quoted in the statement as saying during a ceremony to award travel agents over their part in the company's surging air ticket sales in 2018. Furthermore, the national carrier is expected to provide more services, launch fresh routes and take delivery of more planes during 2019, Awadhi boasted.

The newly opened Terminal 4, which is dedicated for the country's only national carrier, is scheduled to be in full operation by June, he affirmed. Travel agents and offices made air ticket sales worth KD 120 million (\$396 million) in 2018, up 35 percent over 2017's figure, for the interest of Kuwait Airways, the airline's assistant sales manager Naser Khorsheed said. The surge in sales last year is undoubtedly the emblematic of travel agents' confidence in Kuwait Airways, he added. Established in 1953, Kuwait Airways is a fully state-owned airline that has 40 destinations around the world. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways CEO Kamel Al-Awadhi speaks during the event.



Kuwait Airways CEO Kamel Al-Awadhi awards representative of a travel agency during a ceremony held yesterday.



A group photo featuring Dr Jay Mctighe taken on the sidelines of the workshop.

Dasman Bilingual School hosts Dr Jay Mctighe

KUWAIT: Dasman Bilingual School organized a workshop conducted by the International Education advisor Dr Jay Mctighe. The workshop took place at Safir Marina Hotel from Feb 16th to Feb 18th, and it was sponsored by The Commercial Bank of Kuwait, The Kuwaiti Man power as Main sponsors and Al-Jiri Holding Group - Al-Bayan Bilingual School - Al-Nibras International Bilingual School and The American International School as Golden Sponsors. Samar Dizmen, the Superintendent of Dasman Bilingual School said that: "Dr Jay Mctighe is an Educational Author and Consultant. He brings a wealth of experience developed from a rich and varied career in education. Dr Jay has an extensive background in Professional Development and is a regular speaker at United states, district conferences and workshops."

"Over the past few years, Dasman Bilingual School has

been implementing the latest trend in education by transitioning to student centered learning when the teachers are facilitators giving students a choice of activities," Dizmen continued. "Teachers are learners in this process and therefore, Dasman Bilingual School has been offering a wide range of professional developments trainings and workshops with internal and external facilitators. Dr Jay Mctighe is an added value to the education sector."

On February 18th 2019 a press conference was held at DBS School represented by Adel Al-Sane - CEO of Dasman Bilingual School and Dr Jay Mctighe. Sane commenced: "I would like to welcome Dr Mctighe to Kuwait and to Dasman Bilingual School in particular. We are happy to have him with us and to learn and add new ideas to our educational Knowledge."

Sane said that "in collaboration with the Commercial bank of Kuwait, Dasman Bilingual School has taken the initiative in developing School's curriculum by coming up with new ideas because we care about our students who are our priority. We have students with special needs and mainstream. Therefore, we communicate with well-known advisors from Kuwait and outside Kuwait like Dr Mctighe." Dr Mctighe presented new developed ideas for educators and learners. "Teachers were very interested with the workshop. They have gained their knowledge and experience in education," concluded Sane.

Zain participates in Kuwait University's annual admission fair

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its participation in Kuwait University's seventh annual admission fair organized by the Deanship of Admission and Registration at the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Theater in Shuwaikh. The event was held under the patronage of Kuwait University President Dr Hussein Al-Ansari and the attendance of the Dean of Admission and Registration Dr Ali Al-Mutairi.

Zain is keen on continuously taking part in the various student events held in public and private universities all year long, including admission and registration fairs. The company is committed to offer job and training opportunities to young national talents to experience working in the telecommunications industry, which is considered one of the most vital fields operating in the Kuwaiti private sector. Through its dedicated booth, Zain showcased the avail-

able vacancies for college undergraduates to work in part-time jobs as part of Zain's Future University Network (FUN) program. The company also demonstrated Zain's working environment, the nature of work at the various departments and divisions, and more.

During the event, Zain showcased its leading experience in the telecommunications industry, as well as the company's strategy for developing its own human resources. Zain offers career incentives that assure the highest levels of quality and productivity, in addition to having a focused human resources development strategy for national talents.

Zain firmly believes in the importance of educational development, as it is essential for individuals to then go-on to be successful and contributing members of society. Career and admission fairs play a big role in exposing bright and optimistic youth who are looking for job and training opportunities in the various industries within the local private sector.

Zain is committed to playing an active role in the investment of the Kuwaiti human capital. The company seeks to provide young and eager Kuwaitis with suitable job and training opportunities that allow them to apply their practical skills, achieve their potential, and fully develop their capabilities.



KUWAIT: Dean of Admission and Registration Dr Ali Al-Mutairi with Zain officials at the company's booth.

Man admits to stabbing friend to death after fight

Ministry comments on laborer's arrest statements

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Al-Rai

KUWAIT: Criminal detectives arrested the suspect in the murder of a Kuwaiti man who was found killed outside his Mubarak Al-Kabeer house recently. Investigations revealed that the man was killed by a friend after the two engaged in a fight that escalated into the stab-murder. The victim was reportedly found dead with several stab wounds on his face and head at the backyard of his house. Detectives traced the victim's phone calls made right before his murder, identified those who called him, and found out that one of them was present with the victim in his house when the crime happened. The man was arrested and confessed during questioning of committing the crime. He was sent to the public prosecution for further legal action.



Brothers fight over girl

laborer and not under his sponsor's control. The suspect resisted fiercely before being arrested and taken to the station. The sponsor changed his statements several times with regards to his worker. Meanwhile, the interior ministry, commenting on a video clip showing three people driving recklessly, said the trio was arrested and issued several traffic citations, then detained for endangering their own and others' lives. The cars were impounded.

Vehicles on fire

Fire broke out in three vehicles at dawn yesterday in Mubarak Al-Kabeer. Al-Qurain fire station responded and prevented it from spreading. An investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.

Brotherly hate

Two brothers exchanged blows and fought with sticks in Jahra over a girl, and were taken to the police station for questioning. Police responded to a call about the fight, so they went and found the two were brothers who fought over a girl that used to call them both. When they discovered they are 'partners' in relations with her, they became angry and started a fight.



KUWAIT: A vehicle heavily damaged after a fire reported yesterday in Mubarak Al-Kabeer.

Murder threat

An angry man stormed into his friend's diwaniya with a knife and threatened to kill him, so he lodged a complaint. He said he was surprised by his friend wielding a knife, so he fled to the inside of the house. Investigations are underway.

Harassment

A Kuwaiti woman sought police help when a flirting man volunteered to pay her bill at a co-op society in Jahra. The woman admonished him, but he followed her to a gas station and attempted to do the same, but was admonished once again by her. He still wanted to give her his phone number, so she took it and went to the police.



A sports car is impounded for reckless driving.

Detectives are investigating.

Dog bite

A citizen was rushed to Sabah Hospital after a dog bit him on the Kaifan walking track. The dog's owner was arrested. The victim received bites in his thigh and arm, and was given injections. Investigations are underway.

Theft

Criminal detectives are investigating thefts from four departments of an intermediate school in Ahmadi governorate. Teachers were surprised to find computers, three screens and a laser printer were stolen.

Eating locusts in Kuwait making a significant comeback



KUWAIT: Locusts are among the most exotic foods in the Kuwaiti cuisine that was especially popular in the old days. While the habit of eating locusts declined significantly in recent years, the tradition seems to be making some sort of a comeback nowadays. The 'locusts market,' located near the truffle market in Al-Rai's famous Friday Market, has been seeing increased activity lately, with shoppers flocking to purchase huge sacks containing the ground-dwelling insects. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



Minister inspects labor departments

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel yesterday paid a sudden visit to three labor departments in the Capital governorate and checked on employees' commitment to doing their jobs. Aqeel also visited the labor relation department and met some of the public processing transactions there, and listened to their remarks about the service. Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Manpower yesterday held a workshop on launching the second priority of the national program for decent work three-year agreement signed between Kuwait and the International Labor Organization (ILO). The authority's international relations manager Jaber Al-Ali said the workshop was held in the presence of representatives from the manpower authority, the supreme council for planning, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Kuwait labor union.

Social partnership essential for New Kuwait 2035: Minister

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Economic Affairs Mariam Al-Aqeel stressed Monday the importance of boosting social partnership and moving on from individual work to organized teamwork. Aqeel made her remarks in a speech at Kuwait Trade Union Federation's conference. It is important to strengthen partnership with civil society organizations for the sake of building a 'New Kuwait' and attaining His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's 'New Kuwait 2035' vision of transforming the country into a global financial and commercial hub, she affirmed. Securing labor union's freedom and protection, as well as implementing signed international agreements are some of the factors that contribute to boosting Kuwait's status among world countries, said the minister. An effective state administration is one of the development plan's main pillars, which aims to reform administrative actions and enhance general administration by adopting information technology, she noted. Technologies such as e-government and institutional government programs are essential for state administration development, in addition to boosting transparency and developing a comprehensive national strategy for integrity, transparency, and anti-corruption, said Aqeel. —KUNA

National anti-graft workshop held

KUWAIT: The success of the national anti-corruption strategy will be key for further recognition of Kuwait in international anti-corruption and transparency indices, said Chairman of Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Counsellor Abdulrahman Al-Nemash yesterday. In a speech delivered at the workshop launching the national strategy to boost transparency and fight corruption, Nemash stressed that the plan will contribute to balanced political, economic, and social atmospheres in the country as part of the Kuwait Vision 2035 for development. The public and private sectors play an integral part in the actual implementation of anti-corruption measures, which will eliminate bureaucracy and enhance overall development, said the top Nazaha official who indicated that he will be in contact with the cabinet to find means to implement the strategy. On January 15-16, Nazaha held an international anti-corruption conference under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the participation of the UN. During the conference, Nazaha announced the launch of the national strategy against corruption. —KUNA



Police 'complicit' in killings by cow vigilante groups

Victims of Church sex abuse go global with fight for justice

Page 8

Page 9



BAGHOZ: A fighter of the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) stands guard in the frontline Syrian village of Baghouz. SDF forces have been fighting against the last shred of the Islamic State group's (IS) 'caliphate' in eastern Syria. —AFP

IS fighters face surrender or death

US-backed SDF trying to evacuate trapped civilians

BAGHOZ: Jihadists defending their last dreg of territory in Syria will be "killed in battle" if they don't surrender, a Kurdish-led force said yesterday ahead of a final showdown. The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said they are trying to evacuate civilians trapped in the last half a square kilometer (0.2 square miles) of the Islamic State group's once-sprawling "caliphate" before storming the jihadist holdout. "We are working on secluding and evacuating civilians and then we will attack. This could happen soon," spokesman Mustafa Bali said, declining to provide more details on the operation.

IS fighters "have only two options, either they surrender or they will be killed in battle," he said. IS declared a "caliphate" across large swathes of Syria and neighboring Iraq in 2014. A small hamlet of build-

ings in the village of Baghouz is all that is left of the proto-state, which at its height spanned an area the size of the United Kingdom. The United Nations yesterday expressed concern over "the situation of some 200 families, including many women and children, who are reportedly trapped" in the IS holdout. "Many of them are apparently being actively prevented from leaving by ISIL," the UN said in a statement, using another acronym for IS.

'Nightmare is over'

The frontline in Baghouz was quiet Monday afternoon. Tattered buildings and the twisted skeletons of cars dotted the side of the road. At the entrance of the village, the SDF had turned an embattled building into a temporary base. Dino, a 26-year old fighter

who has battled jihadists for years, said "the nightmare is over. We have saved the people" from the IS group. "The first battles were difficult. We did not know our enemy very well but today we know them intimately."

Thousands of people have streamed out of IS turf in recent weeks, but no civilians have made it out in the past three days. Those that managed to escape have been ferried on trucks to Kurdish-held camps for the displaced to the north. The International Rescue Committee said Monday that 62 people, mostly children, had died on the way to the Al-Hol camp or shortly after arriving in past weeks. Beyond Baghouz, IS still has thousands of fighters and sleeper cells scattered across several countries. In Syria, it retains a presence in the vast Badia desert,

and the jihadists have claimed deadly attacks in SDF-held territory.

US President Donald Trump said the fall of the IS proto-state would be announced last Saturday, but the SDF says it is holding up a victory declaration until it can secure the evacuation of civilians trapped in the last redoubt. An SDF official on Monday said that an announcement will be made this week. "In a few days we will announce a great victory over the largest terrorist organization that waged war on the world and wreaked chaos and death everywhere," Zeidan al-Assi said in a statement. Trump stunned allies in December when he announced all 2,000 US troops would withdraw from Syria as IS had already been defeated. The withdrawal plan is expected to be accelerated once IS is defeated. —AFP

Pakistan, India troops' strength and weapons

NEW DELHI: Tensions between India and Pakistan have escalated sharply after a suicide bombing in the disputed region of Kashmir killed 40 Indian paramilitary police, an attack claimed by Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has vowed a strong response to the attack and said he had given the military a free hand. Pakistan would retaliate if attacked, his counterpart, Imran Khan, has warned. The neighbors have twice gone to war over Kashmir since independence in 1947. Here is how their militaries stack up.

Military budget

In 2018, India allocated four trillion rupees (\$58 billion), or 2.1 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP), to support its 1.4 million active troops, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). Last year, Pakistan spent 1.26 trillion Pakistani rupees (\$11 billion), about 3.6 percent of its GDP, on its 653,800 troops. It also received \$100 million in foreign military assistance in 2018. Between 1993 and 2006, more than 20 percent of Pakistan's annual government expenditure was spent on the military, according to estimates from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The military accounted for 16.7 percent of government spending in 2017, it said. By comparison, India's military spending as a percentage of its government expenditure remained under 12 percent during the same period, according to SIPRI. It was 9.1 percent in 2017.

Missiles and nukes

Both nations have ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons. India has nine types of operational missiles, including the Agni-3 with a range of 3,000 km (1,864 miles) to 5,000 km (3,106 miles), according to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington. Pakistan's missile program, built with Chinese assistance, includes mobile short- and medium-range weapons that can reach any part of India, CSIS said. The Shaheen 2 has the longest range, of up to 2,000 km (1,242 miles). Pakistan has 140 to 150 nuclear warheads, compared with India's 130-140 warheads, according to SIPRI.

Army

India has a 1.2 million-strong army, supported by more than 3,565 battle tanks, 3,100 infantry fighting vehicles,



KASHMIR: Indian security forces personnel are on maneuvers as a gunfight with militants killed 4 soldiers, in South Kashmir's Pulwama district. —AFP

336 armored personnel carriers and 9,719 pieces of artillery, according to IISS. Pakistan's army is smaller, with 560,000 troops backed by 2,496 tanks, 1,605 armored personnel carriers, and 4,472 artillery guns, including 375 self-propelled howitzers. Despite its larger army, the capability of India's "conventional forces is limited by inadequate logistics, maintenance and shortages of ammunition and spare parts", IISS said in a report this month. AIR FORCE With 127,200 personnel and 814 combat aircraft, India's air force is substantially larger but there are concerns about its fighter jet fleet.

India's defense plans require 42 squadrons of jets, about 750 aircraft, to defend against a two-pronged attack from China and Pakistan. With older Russian jets like the MiG-21, first used in the 1960s, retiring soon, India could have 22 squadrons by 2032, officials say. Pakistan has 425 combat aircraft, including the Chinese-origin F-7PG and American F-16 Fighting Falcon jets. It also has seven airborne early warning and control aircraft, three more than India, IISS said. "The (Pakistan) air force is modernizing its inventory while improving its precision-strike and ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) capabilities," IISS said in its 2019 assessment.

Navy

India's navy consists of one aircraft carrier, 16 submarines, 14 destroyers, 13 frigates, 106 patrol and coastal combatant vessels, and 75 combat capable aircraft. It has 67,700 personnel, including marines and naval aviation staff. Pakistan, which has a significantly smaller coastline, has 9 frigates, 8 submarines, 17 patrol and coastal vessels, and 8 combat capable aircraft. —Reuters

Europeans who joined Islamic State

LONDON: The fate of foreigners who joined Islamic State has become an increasingly urgent issue as US-backed fighters prepare to capture the militant group's last stronghold in eastern Syria. The Kurdish-led, US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces say they are holding 800 foreign fighters, with 700 of their wives and 1,500 of their children living separately in camps. Dozens more militants and family members have been arriving daily. US President Donald Trump said on Sunday European countries must do more to take back their citizens or they will be released. The SDF says it has no intention of freeing them, but they could escape in future if the area is attacked. European countries say they are working on how to deal with their citizens who want to come home, including investigating and prosecuting those guilty of crimes.

But they say this is made more complicated because diplomats cannot operate in territory held by the SDF, which is not internationally recognized, and they worry that the Trump administration's decision to withdraw its 2,000-strong force from Syria means there will not be enough time to respond. According to European police agency Europol, some 5,000 Europeans—most from Britain, France, Germany and Belgium—went to fight in Syria and Iraq, of whom some 1,500 have returned. Following is a breakdown by country of Europeans believed to have travelled to Syria or Iraq.

Britain

British officials estimate around 900 people from the United Kingdom went to the Syria region. Around a fifth have died and about half have returned, so around 360 remain in the region. Officials noted that not all of those who went to the Syria region were extremists: some went with genuine charitable intentions. Of those who went to fight, not all joined Islamic State, though most of those left in the region are thought to represent militant elements. The issue has gained greater attention in recent days as news organizations have run interviews with Shamima Begum, a pregnant 19-year-old who left London to become an Islamic State bride as a schoolgirl.

Belgium

The Belgian threat assessment centre OCAD/OCAM says 442 Belgians left for Syria or Iraq, of whom 130

have returned and 142 have been killed. Six Belgian men, 17 women and 32 children are being held in Syria, and two men are jailed in Iraq.

Denmark

The latest data available from Denmark's security and intelligence service dates to January 2018. The authorities believe at least 150 people have left Denmark for Syria or Iraq since the summer of 2012 to join militant Islamist groups. More than a third have returned to Denmark and at least a quarter are presumed dead. Roughly one fifth are still in the conflict zone, with the rest located in third countries.

France

French officials and the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence estimate that 800-1,500 people have travelled from France to join Islamic State. French officials estimate that around 300 have been killed and a similar number have returned to France. Of those that remain in Syria and Iraq, diplomats and military officials said two weeks ago that Kurdish-led forces were holding about 150 French citizens in northeastern Syria. An estimated 100 French citizens are believed to be left in the last pocket of Islamic State fighters, although it is not clear if that includes families and children. A further 150 French fighters and children are in Idlib, French officials have said.

Germany

According to the German authorities, around 1050 people from Germany have travelled to Syria and Iraq since 2013, around one third of whom have returned. Around 270 women and children from Germany are now in Syria and Iraq. Around 75 percent of the children are under the age of three years old and believed to have been born in the conflict zone. The Interior Ministry estimates the number of Germans in the custody of the Kurdish-led forces in northern Syria as in the high double digits.

Netherlands

The Dutch intelligence agency AIVD says about 315 people left the Netherlands for Syria or Iraq with the intention of joining the militants, about two thirds of them men and one third women. About 55 are believed to have returned, 85 are believed to have died, 135 are still in the conflict area and 40 are either in third countries or in detention in the region. —Reuters



HAPPY NATIONAL DAYS



PURCHASE A LEXUS AND RECEIVE

GOLD

2019/75 ج - ٥

litmus

FEBRUARY OFFERS NOW AT LEXUS

This February, buy any new Lexus and receive a complementary 1 or 2 gold coins. Plus a selection of great benefits.

Lexus - ensuring you get to make your mark on the world.

For more details, visit our showrooms today.

Terms & Conditions apply

BENEFITS PACKAGE:

- 1 or 2 gold coins (price related)
- Free Car Registration
- Free 2nd year Comprehensive Insurance when purchasing the 1st year
- 3rd Party Insurance
- 5 Years Warranty - Open Mileage
- Generous Trade-In offer
- 50,000 km / 5 Years Service (whichever comes first)



MOHAMED NASER ALSAYER & SONS EST. CO. W.L.L.
A SUBSIDIARY OF ALSAYER HOLDING

ALSHUWAIKH | AHMADI | ASWAO AL QURAIN



Tel. 1830030

www.lexus.com.kw
LexusKW

International

Trump tells Venezuela military to back Guaido or 'lose everything'

Venezuelan crisis deepens amid humanitarian aid standoff

MIAMI: US President Donald Trump has urged Venezuela's military to accept opposition leader Juan Guaido's amnesty offer, or stand to "lose everything," as a crisis deepened over President Nicolas Maduro's refusal to let in desperately needed humanitarian aid. Bringing in humanitarian aid is crucial to the viability of Guaido, who has denounced Maduro's re-election last year as fraudulent and in January declared himself interim president, a move recognized by some 50 countries. He has given the Maduro government until Saturday to let shipments of mainly US aid into the country, which is in the grip of a humanitarian crisis due to shortages of food and medicine exacerbated by hyperinflation.

Addressing supporters and Venezuelan expatriates in Miami, Trump said he had a message for officials helping keep Maduro in place.

"The eyes of the entire world are upon you today, every day and every day in the future. You cannot hide from the choice that now confronts you. You can choose to accept president Guaido's generous offer of amnesty to live your life in peace with your families and your countrymen. Or you can choose the second path: continuing to support Maduro. If you choose this path, you will find no safe harbor, no easy exit and no way out. You will lose everything."

Guaido has set a target of signing up to a million volunteers to help bring in the aid, with 600,000 already registered. "On February 23, we have the opportunity to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans," he said. Maduro countered with his own announcement of 300 tons of aid from Russia, which he said would reach Venezuela by Wednesday—three days ahead of a potential showdown brought about by his February 23 deadline. Speaking at an offi-

cial event broadcast on TV, Maduro said the shipment contained "high-value medicine." Maduro has previously announced the arrival of aid from China, Cuba and Russia, his main international allies.

Committed to change

Earlier, opposition officials hit out at state internet provider CANTV for blocking the website where volunteers are signing up to help bring in the US aid stockpiled in Colombia just over the border from Venezuela. A second aid collection center is due to begin operations in Brazil's northeastern state of Roraima, which borders Venezuela. But there is much uncertainty over the aid in Brazil, with officials there saying they have no information at this point. Military officials in Roraima said they had yet to receive orders, although a collection center could be set up quickly, with some businesses having already provided warehouses to that effect. A third center is due to open this week on the Dutch island of Curacao, off Venezuela's north coast.

The humanitarian aid standoff is due to come to a head this weekend, when caravans of buses are set to carry volunteers to border entry points to meet and transport arriving cargo. It is unclear how Guaido will overcome the border barriers put up by the Venezuelan military, on Maduro's orders. Volunteer groups have begun meeting in "humanitarian camps" in several Venezuelan states to organize and prepare for the arrival of the aid to alleviate hardship from an imploding economy has driven an estimated 2.3 million Venezuelans to migrate from the oil-rich country. Maduro, who denies the existence of a humanitarian crisis, dismisses the opposition moves as a "political show" and a cover for a US invasion.

Volunteers meet in humanitarian camps



CUCUTA: The word 'Peace' is seen written on one of the containers placed by loyalists of Venezuelan President Maduro to prevent access to the country through the Tienditas International Bridge in Cucuta, Colombia, on the border with Venezuela. —AFP

An 'international crime'

"Whoever prevents the entry of humanitarian aid is condemned to spend the rest of their lives fleeing international justice, because that is an international crime," US Senator Marco Rubio said as he toured the Colombian collection center in Cucuta on Sunday. Three US military cargo planes delivered several dozen tons of food assistance to Cucuta on Saturday. Another US aircraft is due in Curacao from Miami on Tuesday. Guaido has ordered the armed forces to let the aid pass, but they remain loyal

to Maduro, who has instructed his army to prepare a "special deployment plan" for the 2,200-kilometer (1,370-mile) border with Colombia. Maduro has dismissed the humanitarian assistance as "crumbs" and "rotten and contaminated food," while blaming shortages of food and medicine on US sanctions. The government also said Monday it will stage a concert on the Colombian border the same day Richard Branson has said he will hold one just over the frontier to push for aid to be allowed in. This will unfold on February 22-23. —AFP

Nigeria vote delay throws wedding plans into chaos

LAGOS: Jude Ezeanyagu woke up last Saturday morning and texted guests the final reminders about his wedding the following week in Delta state, southern Nigeria. Then he got a reply. "My friend texted me back. 'Have you not seen the news? They've shifted the elections,'" he told AFP. "I had no idea." Nigeria's election commission announced a one-week delay to polling as most people were sleeping and just over five hours before voting was about to start.

That has heightened political tensions—and tempers—but it has also thrown ordinary Nigerians' plans for this weekend into disarray. Ezeanyagu and his fiancée, Jessy, had been planning their wedding for two years. They even deliberately chose the date after the release of the official election timetable. Weddings, as in most places, don't come cheap. The couple have already spent more than 1.0 million naira (\$2,775, 2,440 euros) for their special day. The cost of having to cancel was "unquantifiable," said Ezeanyagu, an IT consultant. Not only will couples set to marry on Saturday take a financial hit from cancellation but some guests may not be able to attend on the rescheduled date. "It is just a very big loss," he said.

'At the mercy of the nation'

At the Federal Marriage Registry in the upmarket Ikoyi area of Lagos, happy couples pose for pictures with family and friends after their wedding ceremonies. Inside, registry staff argue in raised voices between stacks of paperwork, as engaged couples wait patiently for their turn. Officials said several couples who had booked marriage ceremonies for Saturday February 23 had already called in to reschedule, creating significant administrative issues.

"We're at the mercy of the nation!" said one member of staff. About 50 weddings have been booked for Saturday and it's not clear how many will go ahead as planned. "It has not been easy for many of them, even for us who are managing it," the staff member said, declining to give his name. Many Nigerians travel to their home towns and villages to vote, taking time off to complete often lengthy and uncomfortable journeys on poor roads.

How many will want or can afford to return on Saturday is unclear. There are already predictions of a low voter turnout. But holding any event on polling day is problematic. Roadblocks are put up and no vehicles are allowed when polls are open. Land borders and airports are also shut. All of which scuppers the significant planning that goes into weddings—particularly Nigerian ones, which are often grand affairs, with hundreds of guests. Businesses, too, will likely take a hit: one hotel in the southeastern city of Calabar said it had to refund 250,000 naira to a couple planning to wed on Saturday.

The state of the economy is an election issue. Low global crude prices and militant attacks on Nigeria's oil and gas infrastructure contributed to a recession in 2016. Growth rates are slow, unemployment is high and the cost of living tough for a majority of the country's 190 million people. Kemi Akinlotu, chief executive of a wedding planning company, Eventories, said marriages by the richest Nigerians are largely unaffected but poorer couples have had to downsize. "Many people spend less now," she said. "The economy has really affected business and the weddings people can afford." For Ezeanyagu, picking a new date was difficult. In Nigeria, uncertainty, particularly around election time, is the only certainty. "No one trusts (the electoral commission) because just days until the election, they were saying they are ready but now at the dying minutes they changed", he said. "Many people are badly affected." —AFP

80 graves vandalized at French cemetery

PARIS: Around 80 graves were daubed with swastikas at a Jewish cemetery in eastern France, authorities said yesterday, hours ahead of nationwide marches called to denounce a surge in anti-Semitic vandalism and hate speech. The damage was discovered at a cemetery in the village of Quatzenheim, close to the border with Germany in the Alsace region, a statement from the regional security office said. Photos show the Nazi symbols in blue paint on the damaged graves, one of which bears the words "Elsassisches Schwarzen Wolfe" ("Black Alsacian Wolves), a separatist group with links to neo-Nazis in the 1970s.

The top security official for the region, Jean-Luc Marx, condemned "in the strongest possible terms this awful anti-Semitic act and sends his complete support to the Jewish community which has been targeted again". "It just doesn't stop, it's shock after shock," Maurice Dahan, the regional head of France's main Jewish institution, the Israelite Central Consistory of France said. In December nearly 40 graves as well as a monument to Holocaust victims were desecrated at another Jewish cemetery near Strasbourg in Herrlisheim, about a half-hour drive from Quatzenheim.

President Emmanuel Macron will travel to the cemetery to inspect the damage, before visiting the Paris Holocaust memorial, Interior

Victims of Church sex abuse go global with fight for justice

PARIS: After years of struggling alone or finding support in national groups, survivors of sex abuse by priests have formed a new international alliance to pressure the Catholic Church to face up to its crimes. The group, called Ending Clerical Abuse (ECA), brings together activists from dozens of countries on several continents, and will be mobilized in Rome this week when Pope Francis hosts a hotly awaited summit on tackling the wave of child sex abuse scandals shaking the Catholic Church.

"It's a momentous and a historic movement... to bring a global and unified voice," one of its co-founders, Peter Saunders, told AFP. "This is the first truly global initiative." Saunders' personal story is among countless others suffered by people who grouped together to form ECA last June, including survivors from Chile, Poland, Switzerland, France, Italy, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other countries. "I was abused at seven years old by a family member. I was also sexually abused by two Jesuit priests at my secondary school at about 12 years of age," he said.

The same priest targeted his brother Michael at the same school six years before him, and died aged 55 after a life-

long battle with drug and alcohol abuse. "I think the Church has been resisting change for many, many years and I think at long last the Church is beginning to bow to the pressure put on by survivors, by our media colleagues around the world, and by public opinion," he added. The group's objectives include forcing the Church to take a "zero tolerance" approach to paedophilia, working to overturn the statute of limitations on abuse cases, and supporting victims in areas where speaking out remains difficult, such as in various African and Asian countries.

'Deep roots'

Police have recorded a 74-percent surge in anti-Jewish acts last year in France, home to Europe's biggest Jewish population. Germany has also seen a sharp rise in anti-Semitic crimes, with more than 1,600 cases recorded last year. And tensions flared again this week between Israel and Poland after Warsaw pulled out of a summit over comments by Jerusalem officials referring to alleged collaboration by "many Poles" with Germany during the Holocaust. The Polish government has long bristled at any suggestion of collaboration with the Nazi occupiers during World War II—a claim Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu was accused of making last week, though his office said he had not intended to implicate all Poles in the Holocaust.

In France, several officials have accused the grass-roots yellow vest movement of unleashing a wave of extremist violence that has fostered anti-Semitic outbursts among some participants. "It would be false and absurd to call the yellow vest movement anti-Semitic," Prime Minister Edouard Philippe told L'Express magazine in an interview published yesterday. "But certain guardrails or dikes have fallen during the yellow vest crisis," he said. "Anti-Semitism has very deep roots in French society." —We

'Counter-summit'

From Wednesday to Sunday, ECA will bring together victims in Rome to put new pressure on Pope Francis, who has spoken out strongly over the last two years about abuse in the Church after a string of scandals worldwide. But on the ground, survivors say the fight against the culture of secrecy within the Catholic hierarchy and an instinct to cover up abuse cases remains entrenched. "Either I committed suicide or I spoke out," said a 70-year-old Swiss co-founder of ECA, who gives his name only as Jacques. "It was a long and painful fight."

He said a priest raped him continually when he was aged 14 to 20. After years of therapy, in 2009 he contacted the priest who abused him and attempted to reach closure. Only after a five-year struggle did senior Church figures "understand the



QUATZENHEIM: Photo shows swastikas painted on graves at a Jewish cemetery, on the day of a nationwide marches against a rise in anti-Semitic attacks. —AFP

would like to think differently, but it's a fact," he said. Philippe, who has promised a tough new law targeting online hate speech by this summer, will be among several ministers at a Paris march starting at 7:00 pm (1800 GMT).

'Republic is targeted'

"Each time a French citizen is insulted, threatened or even worse, injured or killed, because he is a Jew, it's the Republic which is targeted," Macron said at a press conference yesterday. He added that he would lay out his plans to combat anti-Semitism during a speech at the annual dinner of the CRIF umbrella association of French Jewish groups on Wednesday. But he has resisted calls by some lawmakers to explicitly penalize so-called anti-

Zionist statements calling into question Israel's right to exist as a nation.

Macron himself has been targeted in some of the anti-Semitic graffiti found in the wake of recent protests, though many prominent yellow vest demonstrators have said they plan to participate in the anti-racism marches. But a recent Ilop poll of "yellow vest" backers found that nearly half those questioned believed in a worldwide "Zionist plot" and other conspiracy theories. "The yellow vests aren't an anti-Semitic movement," said Jean-Yves Camus of the Political Radicalization Observatory in Paris. "But it's a leaderless, horizontal movement... and extremist elements have been able to draw out the voices of its high-profile figures in the media," he said. —AFP



ROME: (From left) Victims of sexual abuse Manluse Milelosky, Benjamin Kitobo, Peter Saunders, Jacques, Marek Lisinski and Denise Buchanan pose in front of Saint Peter's square in Rome. —AFP

gravity of the acts of their colleague and accept moral responsibility on behalf of the institution," he said. As he battled for justice, he also learned that the priest had been identified as a possible paedophile even before he was ordained and had been sent to France several times for "treatment". In 2010, Jacques founded SAPEC, a victims group in French-speaking Switzerland, which led to the creation of a commission to investigate abuse and oversee compensation.

In Poland, ECA co-founder Marek Lisinski, 50, said he had long dreamed of a new international organization "to show Polish victims that they are not on their own." He said he was "assaulted for 10 months by a vicar" at age 13 and his search for justice led to a prosecution. "I was forced to become an adult at age 13," he said angrily. Over several years he fought dependencies on alcohol and anti-depressants, made three suicide attempts and went through a divorce. —AFP

International

Police 'complicit' in killings by India's cow vigilante groups

Human Rights Watch urges authorities to halt lynchings

NEW DELHI: Indian police are often complicit in killings carried out by cow vigilante groups, Human Rights Watch said yesterday, calling on authorities to take tougher action to halt lynchings. The slaughter of cows - revered by Hindus - is a powder-keg issue in secular India. Men accused of killing or trading in cattle have increasingly been targeted since the Hindu nationalist government came to power in 2014. Critics have accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi's governing party of pandering to fringe groups to win votes. "Calls for cow protection may have started out as a way to attract Hindu votes, but it has transformed into a free pass for mobs to violently attack and kill minority group members," said Meenakshi Ganguly, South Asia director at Human Rights Watch (HRW).

"Indian authorities should stop egging on or justifying these attacks, blaming victims, or protecting the culprits," Ganguly said. At least 44 people were killed in such attacks between May 2015 and December last year, the report said. Thirty-six of the dead were Muslims and in almost all cases, police initially stalled investigations, ignored procedures, or were complicit

in the killings and cover-ups, HRW alleged. Police even filed complaints against victims' family members under laws banning cow slaughter, making them afraid to pursue justice.

The damning report said some members of the governing Bharatiya Janata Party had justified attacks on minority Muslims and low-caste Dalits who eat beef. In one case in 2016, a vigilante group beat to death a Muslim cattle trader and a 12-year-old boy travelling to an animal fair in the eastern state of Jharkhand. Their badly bruised bodies were found hanging from a tree with their hands tied behind them. "If I stepped out, they would have killed me, too. My son was screaming for help, but I was so scared that I hid," the report quoted the boy's father as saying.

In another case, the murder of a Muslim man by a mob in June 2018 was described in police records as a "motorbike accident". The report includes testimonies from relatives of victims, describing police threats and intimidation. "They (police) also threatened us with arrest under cattle protection laws, saying they will put our whole family in jail," the report quoted the brother of one victim as saying. The slaughter of cows



CHINGRAVATI, India: In this file photo, smoldering vehicles are seen following mob violence at Chingravati village in Bulandhahr, India's northern Uttar Pradesh state. Police in India are often complicit in killings carried out by cow vigilante groups, the Human Rights Watch said yesterday. — AFP

and the possession or consumption of beef is banned in most Indian states, and in some are punishable by life sentences. Modi, who will seek a second term in

office in elections due by May, has condemned cow vigilantism and urged a crackdown on groups using religion as a cover for violence.— AFP



Slaughter of cows a powder-keg issue in secular India

Kim-dergarten: N Korea nursery pines for visit by Supreme Leader

HANOI: Wearing traditional dress, the children in Hanoi's only North Korean-founded kindergarten belt out Korean songs and recite their Korean vocabulary-skills they hope to show off to Kim Jong Un when he visits Vietnam next week. The reclusive North Korean leader is making his first trip to Vietnam to meet with US President Donald Trump between February 27 and 28.

It is their second summit, during which Washington hopes to see progress on dismantling Pyongyang's nuclear program. The serious summit agenda was far from the minds of toddlers at the Vietnam-DPRK Friendship Kindergarten yesterday. Instead the three-to-five-year-olds sang and danced in the 'Kim Il Sung' classroom named after Kim Jong Un's grandfather, one of Hanoi's closest allies during the Vietnam War.

"Jal gaseyo!" the kids chanted-goodbye in Korean-at the school where portraits of communist leaders past-Kim Il Sung, his son Kim Jong Il and Vietnam's revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh-hang on the wall. Established in 1978 at a time when conflict-battered Hanoi still received aid from Pyongyang, the school was built almost entirely with North Korean donations, from the blankets and mattresses for naptime to the bowls and utensils used at mealtimes. Today some of the school's 450 pupils learn about North Korean culture, from kimchi and kimbap to traditional dress, and occasionally receive visits from North Korean officials and embassy personnel. — AFP

Indian on death row is 'terrorist,' Pakistan insists

THE HAGUE: An Indian man on death row in Pakistan for alleged spying committed "terrorist acts" including targeted killings and kidnappings on New Delhi's orders "to create anarchy", Islamabad's lawyers told UN's top court yesterday. Islamabad's lawyers opened their case on the second day of hearings at the International Court of Justice, where they are involved in a tense legal stand-off with bitter rival India in the case of Kulbhushan Sudhir Jadhav.

The hearings before The Hague-based ICJ coincide with a sharp spike in tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbors after a suicide bombing in restive Kashmir last week and renewed fighting there on Monday. Jadhav, 48, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court in 2017, with New Delhi dragging Islamabad to the ICJ-set up in 1946 to rule in disputes between countries-over the case. A former navy commander, Jadhav was arrested in the restive southwestern province of Baluchistan in 2016 and in 2017 the ICJ issued an urgent order telling Pakistan to stay his execution.

'Creating anarchy'

Yesterday, Pakistan's Attorney General Anwar Mansoor Khan told ICJ judges that Jadhav ran a network "to carry out despicable terrorism and suicide bombing, targeted killing, kidnapping for ransom and targeted operations to create unrest and instability in the country". "His unlawful activities were directed at creating anarchy in Pakistan and particularly

targeted the China-Pakistan corridor," Khan told a 15-judge bench. But Jadhav did not act on his own, Khan added. "Rather they were committed at the behest of the Indian state and the government." A confession by Jadhav obtained by Pakistani officials "speaks of India's state policy of sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan," he said. Since independence from Britain in 1947 "India has persistently pursued the policy of trying to destroy Pakistan," Khan said.

'Political theatre'

India renewed its arguments Monday around the sensitive issue of Jadhav's arrest and death sentence, insisting he was not a spy and that he was kidnapped in Pakistan. New Delhi on Monday told judges that Jadhav's rights were violated during his trial and that India had no consular access to its citizen. New Delhi's lawyers asked judges at the ICJ, also called the World Court, to order Pakistan to free Jadhav immediately. But yesterday, another Pakistani lawyer Khawar Qureshi told the court: "India's proceedings... are purely for political theatre... and they should be dismissed." New Delhi's move in the controversial case comes as fresh bloodshed in Kashmir sent tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors soaring. The rare foray into the international courts by India and Pakistan could be another flashpoint after Thursday's suicide bombing in Indian-administered Kashmir that killed 41 troops.

Indian troops suffered new losses Monday in a fierce battle with Kashmir militants that left at least nine more dead, including four soldiers. The latest confrontation piled more pressure on the Indian government to act, which has blamed Pakistan for the suicide attack that sparked widespread calls for action against its neighbor. Pakistan has rejected the allegations. Jadhav was accused of working for the Indian intelligence services in the province bordering Afghanistan, where Islamabad has long accused India of backing separatist rebels. — AFP

'Monster' husband jailed for sex abuse

SINGAPORE: A Singaporean man described as a "monster" by prosecutors was sentenced to 25-and-a-half years in jail yesterday for forcing his wife into prostitution and sexually abusing their six-year-old daughter and a niece. The sentence was more than the 22 years sought by state prosecutors because of the gravity of the offences, including punching his wife to coerce her into prostitution so they could provide for their infant son.

A High Court judge also sentenced the unemployed man, who cannot be named due to a court-issued gag order, to 24 strokes of the cane and a fine of S\$12,000 (\$8,845). "The 27-year-old accused is a monster," Deputy Public Prosecutor Eunice Lau said in court. "The sordid sexual depravity of his transgressions is unprecedented and involves him sexually exploiting the three most vulnerable women in his life - whom he had every responsibility to protect," Lau said, naming the wife, their daughter and his wife's 13-year-old niece.

The man forced his wife to advertise her sexual services online using physical and emotional violence "to ensure that she fulfilled a daily quota of customers," Lau added. He also coerced her into secretly filming herself having sex with customers, the prosecutor said. The court heard that the man sexually abused his six-year-old daughter and molested his wife's teenage niece. Over a period of three months in 2016, the man's wife provided sexual services to more than a hundred male clients, earning close to S\$11,000 which she gave to him. — AFP

Kuwait Times Premier Brands

To see your ad here, call: +965 248 35 616 / 617
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
ads@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

best OFFERS 50% SAVE UP TO

MST1MB1-30CRI 30000 BTU/hr 2.5 طر 70% SAVE 179 249

MST1AB6-36CRN11 36000 BTU/hr 3 طر 80% SAVE 279 359

MWTF-12CM 12000 BTU/hr 1 طر 27% SAVE 69 96

best 1 809 809 www.best.com.kw

Kuwait City (New St.) | Kuwait City (Panasonic Tower) | Sharq (Souq Sharq)
Hawalli (Tunis St.) | Hawalli (Bin Khaldoon St.) | Al-Salmiya (Salem Al-Mubarak St.)
Al-Salmiya (Boulevard Mall) | Al-Farwaniya (Behind the Police Station)
Al-Shuwaikh (Al-Ghazali Bridge) | Al-Fahaheel (Opposite Public Parking)
Al-Rai (4th Ring Rd) | Al-Jahra (Opposite Main Co-op) | Airport (Departures)
Al-Eqaila (B9 Mall)

Analysis

Kuwait Times
Established 1961
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

US mobile homes' affordability slips as corporates move in

When Russ Watson decided to move to a mobile home community in Florida in 2011, it was to be near his father and in a space that was affordable. "He said it was a great place to live - and you can live here cheap," Watson said of the community, called Park Place. But over the next few years, ownership of Park Place - which has about 475 homes - changed hands, Watson said: first to an investment group and next to one of the country's largest owners of mobile home parks, Sun Communities.

Mobile homes - what the industry calls manufactured housing - provide the largest unsubsidised form of affordable housing in the United States, said Esther Sullivan, a University of Colorado sociologist. In 2018 they housed about 22 million people, according to the Manufactured Housing Institute (MHI), a trade group. The rise in corporate interest, Sullivan said, has been years in the making. "The only other commercial real estate that is as lucrative as mobile home parks is self-storage," she said.

'Hottest arena'

Park Place is located in Sebastian, on Florida's Atlantic coast, about 230 km north of Miami. It was one of nearly 60 such developments that Sun Communities bought in 2014 and 2015. After that, Watson told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, things changed. The company made improvements, but it also negotiated new five-year leases with residents that included a 4 percent annual rent hike, he said. And, he added, managers became less responsive. Watson eventually moved out - as did others, he said. He found an opening at a family-owned park a half-hour away, where rents were two-thirds of what he had been paying. Neither MHI nor Sun Communities responded to requests for comment.

Watson's experience echoes a pattern seen across Florida and the country: Because of their unique legal and financial structure - in which residents own or rent their home but not the land it sits on - mobile home parks have drawn major interest in recent years from corporate investors. That includes a rapid recent rise in attention from global private equity firms, which are now "piling into the sector", according to a report released last week by the Private Equity Stakeholder Project, a watchdog group, and others.

One program aimed at potential investors, Mobile Home University, lists "buying mobile home parks" as the way investors can "harness the affordable housing trend", which it calls the "hottest arena in commercial real estate right now". In its video, it notes that demand for mobile home parks far outstrips supply, and that moving a mobile home is expensive - "So nobody ever leaves. Occupancy is always high!"

For potential investors, the video cites "very high" returns of 15 percent to 40 percent. The draw, said Sullivan, is that "you don't have a tenant - your tenant is a homeowner," she said. "The property owner simply needs to own the land and make investments in maintenance, and everything else is passed on to the homeowner." But for a resident, having what is often an expensive home sitting on land owned by someone else makes for a tenuous situation, Sullivan said - and creates a lucrative opportunity for what she calls "captive income" for investors. "That divided land tenure is why this is interesting. At the root of these residents' housing insecurity is the divided legal right," she said.

Safety net

The rise of corporate interest is a big change for a sector that was for decades dominated by family-run establishments that, Watson emphasized, provided a key safety net. That safety net factor has become more important in the past decade, as cities and rural areas continue to deal with a major shortage of affordable housing, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition - with Florida among the states with the lowest available proportion.

But many corporate owners, keen to make a profit, now aim at a more middle-class clientele looking for vacation or retirement homes, said Watson, who advocates on behalf of the Federation of Manufactured Home Owners of Florida, a consumer advocacy group. "Investors take what was a relatively affordable community, throw a few million dollars into restoration and bump the rents up to resort-like levels - forcing out those who can no longer afford to live there," he said.

In Florida, Watson estimated, three-quarters of mobile home parks are now owned by investors or investment companies. Dave Anderson, executive director of the National Manufactured Home Owners Association (NMHOA), pointed to MHI's annual data noting a "huge jump" of about 26 percent in the number of sites now controlled by the 50 largest operators in the three years to 2018. Sun Communities' website, for instance, shows the number of sites it owns climbed from 6,000 in 1993 "to over 117,000 sites today".

Anderson, like others interviewed for this story, noted that there are upsides to corporate ownership of mobile home communities. For one, he said, many appeared keen to keep communities running, thus offering some stability for residents. But he also expressed concern that a significant portion of these communities were being "clearly viewed as properties to wring as much value out of as possible, and then dispose of for redevelopment". — Reuters



A grandmother pushes a stroller with a child in the Varosmajor public garden in Budapest on Feb 15, 2019. — AFP

Orban bets on baby boom to boost population

Faced with a plummeting population, Hungary's fiercely anti-immigration Prime Minister Viktor Orban has come up with an answer sparking yet another controversy: "We need Hungarian children". Earlier this month Orban unveiled a seven-point "family protection action plan" stacked with incentives for young couples to have children. Opinion is divided however as to whether it will have the desired effect - and some critics have seen disturbing historical echoes in his plan.

The policies announced by Orban include lifelong tax exemption for women who bear four or more children, and more kindergartens. It also offers lump-sum, 10-million forint (\$36,000) loans for newly-wed women under 40, cancelled once they have three children. "This - not immigration - is the response of the Hungarian people," said Orban, a 55-year-old father of five, during a state-of-the-nation speech that was greeted with rapturous applause.

"With 10 million forints my partner and I can finally think of buying an apartment around here and moving out from my parents' at last," said Nora Koszeghy, a 24-year-old teacher outside a supermarket in a Budapest suburb, as her toddler dozed in a pushchair. "We were planning for a brother or sister for Juli. Maybe she can have two or even three now, who knows," she told AFP.

A 'visionary' plan

Supporters of Orban's seven-point plan - including Hungary's ambassador to the Vatican - have hailed his family policies as "visionary". Pro-government pundits argue that only such direct action can prop up a population that has been falling since 1981, and which could

shrink from its current 9.7 to six million by 2070, according to a recent report by Hungary's Central Statistical Office (KSH).

Orban's national-conservative government, in power since 2010, says no EU member has been spending more on family support. And it insists its approach has already borne fruit. Incentivized by tax breaks and a subsidised housing scheme for young married couples, marriage rates have been rising since 2010, with abortion and divorce declining. Hungary's fertility rate, the lowest in the EU at around 1.25 children per woman in 2010, has risen to near the bloc's average of 1.6, according to figures published by Eurostat, the EU's statistical body. Orban's government has set a 2030 target of 2.1, the rate needed to halt population decline.

Some statisticians however remain skeptical that in the long run the government's measures will shift a stubbornly low birth rate. "The uptick in fertility was also due to the end of the economic crisis," said one expert at the KSH who asked not to be named. "Bigger problems are high emigration - over a half million since 2010 - and, crucially, the falling number of women of childbearing age," he said.

'Handmaid's Tale'?

With men not explicitly mentioned among the seven points, some women also fear that the measures will simply add to pressure on them from a deeply conservative society to have children. The 10-million forint loan will have to be paid back with interest if no babies arrive, said an official when pressed on the plan's small-print. Meme-creators on Hungarian social media have even caught a whiff of the hit TV series "The Handmaid's Tale", based on

Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel of an America ruled by a misogynistic theocracy. "I don't want to give birth for Viktor Orban," 35-year-old financial journalist Sarolta Szekely told AFP. "A child is not just a question of money," said Szekely, who is currently single but would like to have children one day. "Good education and healthcare, and earning enough to raise a child are more important factors than keeping a lump-sum if I meet a quota. That's not family protection - that's a production program."

Social scientists are concerned that poor people - including those belonging to the impoverished Roma ethnic-minority who make up around seven to 10 percent of the population - do not have the stable jobs or spare cash needed to apply for the credit. The measures mostly benefit middle- and higher-income earners, according to Dorottya Szikra, a sociologist at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. "Increasing child support payments - unchanged for 10 years - or providing more social housing would benefit more families," she told AFP.

But the government has come out fighting against criticism of the plan. When Sweden's Social Affairs Minister Annika Strandhäll said the action plan was "alarming" and "reeked of the 1930s", Hungary's Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto was quick to respond. "Hungary is spending its money on families rather than migrants," he retorted. While the results of the new "baby boom" plan will only be visible over the long term, polls suggest at least a short-term bounce for Orban. That is welcome news for his Fidesz party that has seen a recent dip in support over controversial labor reforms that triggered a wave of street protests. — AFP

Many Indians rally behind Modi after Kashmir attack

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has suffered a series of political reverses in recent months but widespread anger after 40 troopers were killed in an Islamist militant attack last week could lead to a surge in support for his Hindu nationalist party. As emotions run high following the deadliest attack on security forces in decades, Modi, who faces a general election by May, said he had given a free hand to security forces to avenge the killings in Kashmir, the region disputed with arch-foe Pakistan.

Tensions between the nuclear-armed rivals have ratcheted up and shouts of "down with Pakistan" and "blood for blood" have reverberated at funerals of the victims. Many Indians have held candle-lit marches across the country demanding the government "not forget, not forgive". The attack has been claimed by the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad militant group but the Pakistan government has denied any responsibility.

Rakesh Kumar, a 32-year-old part-time teacher in Kasba Bonli town in the western state of Rajasthan, said he was now inclined to vote for Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the national election after backing the main opposition Congress in a state vote late last year. "If he teaches Pakistan a lesson, support for him will rise," Kumar said in a telephone interview. "It's a matter of the country's security, and we need to see what he can do for us."

The BJP was ousted from power in three major states, including Rajasthan, in December, and Modi has been blamed for weak rural incomes and an inability to provide employment to the millions of young Indians entering the job market each year. Although still tipped to win, pollsters had said before the attack that the ruling party could fall short of a majority in the general election. No polls have been published since the attack, but political analysts say the anti-Pakistan wave has become a rallying point for the BJP.

Yogendra Yadav, a former pollster and now a political activist, said the Kashmir attack would be a distraction from economic challenges facing the government. "Ever since those issues have emerged, there have been systematic attempts to divert attention, some by design, some by accident," he said. "The consequence (of the attack) would be to bring the spotlight on issues of national security, which is exactly what the ruling party may have wanted."

No compromise

The BJP has not lost time in underlining its nationalist credentials. Addressing a political rally on Sunday, party



A saleswoman tries on a sari bearing the image of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to show it to a customer at a shop in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP

president Amit Shah ended a brief period of bipartisan politics by saying that Modi was better at responding to militant attacks than the previous government headed by Congress. "This time it's not a Congress government that is in power. The BJP government of Narendra Modi does not do any compromise in matters of national security," Shah said to loud cheers. "The BJP government will completely uproot terrorism. Narendra Modi's political will to finish terrorism is the highest among global leaders."

Mamata Banerjee, chief minister of West Bengal state and an outspoken critic of Modi, has lashed out at the BJP comments. "We didn't raise any questions (about the attack) because we thought we will be united in the fight (against terror)," she told reporters. "But now we see that we are silent and they are giving such speeches that it seems only they are patriots and the rest are outsiders."

Modi has often spoken about adopting a more muscular approach to Pakistan, after a surprise visit to the neighbor in 2015 failed to improve ties. BJP spokesman Nalin Kohli declined to say if the response to the attack would be an election issue for the party. But he defended party chief Shah's comments as a reflection of the "national mood of grief and anger".

In 2016, Indian forces carried out what they called a "surgical strike" on militant targets across the border in Pakistan in retaliation to an attack on an army camp in Kashmir. Earlier this month, before last week's attack, Modi said the strike had "shown to the world what will be the new policy and culture in India". On Monday, he said any hesitation to take action against militancy and those who support it was akin to encouraging the menace. "Terrorism is a very serious threat to global peace and stability," Modi said. "The brutal terrorist attack shows that the time for talks is over." — Reuters

Simmering stock cube battle shows evolving tastes

Mamy Gueye conjures up her version of thiebou diola - a marinated fish and rice dish, served with green sorrel leaves - at a roadside eatery in Senegal's capital Dakar. Her way of cooking, using traditional methods with a mix of shop-bought flavorings, is a demonstration of how cooking and shopping habits are evolving in West Africa. She douses filets of sea bream with lemon juice and garlic, and then crumbles a few Maggi stock cubes, each costing 25 CFA francs (\$0.04), into a bowl of chopped onions to make sauce.

As the mixture cooks down, she chucks in a cube made by rival Senegalese brand Doli. "It adds a good garlic flavor and a touch of sugar," Gueye, 41, said. Since they were introduced by Nestle in the 1950s, Maggi cubes have transformed cooking across the region - providing a boost to flavours that need a careful and often time-consuming juggling of herbs and spices. They have become an essential ingredient in many everyday dishes, including Ivory Coast's "poulet braise" and spicy "jollof rice" in Nigeria.

Maggi still dominates West Africa's stock cube market - valued at \$375 million by market research firm Fact.MR. But local upstarts also are getting a taste of the market, fuelled by the continent's demographic boom and a budding middle class who have more cash to spend on food and higher expectations when it comes to taste. Across Dakar, six wholesalers and retailers said they were buying more local brands in response to rising customer demand for different flavor varieties of stock cubes and powder to complement the Maggi classics. Senegal's Patisen, which makes Doli, also has branches in Ivory Coast and Nigeria. It aims to double bouillon production by 2020, its president, Youssef Omais, said.

But, like in many countries, a focus on food provenance and authenticity is growing, partly due to concerns over health, and advocates are pushing a return to traditional cooking. In Abidjan's five-star Pullman hotel, chef Loic Dable prepares pepe soupe, a spicy fish and vegetable stew. He flavors it with chilli paste and sumbala, a fermented locust bean patty. Before stock cubes, he said, "you cooked fish in sea water to make it salty, and served it with cassava and plantains, which you either braised or baked in the earth". — Reuters

Business

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2019

12 Kuwait's credit growth rebounds as CBK leaves policy unchanged**13** Burgan Bank reports record profits of KD 82.6m in FY 2018, growth of 26.6%**14** Japan's Honda to shut UK car plant as Brexit looms

SWINDON: A car transporter loaded with new Honda vehicles is driven out of the Honda manufacturing plant in Swindon, southwest England yesterday. Honda announced yesterday it would shut a major plant in Britain, putting 3,500 jobs at risk as the auto manufacturer became the latest Japanese firm to downsize operations as Brexit looms. — AFP (See Page 14)

AUB reports 12.7% surge in 2018 net profit

Net profit attributable to owners of the bank reached \$697.5 million

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank B.S.C. (AUB) reported a net profit attributable to its equity shareholders of \$697.5 million for the year 2018, representing a rise of 12.7 percent as compared to the net profit of \$618.7 million in 2017. The net profit in Q4/2018 was \$169.3 million as compared to \$150.0 million in Q4/2017.

Operating income increased from \$1,119.4 million to \$1,210.6 million in 2018 (+ 8.1 percent). The growth in operating income, mainly driven by an increase in net interest income (NII) by \$64.1 million (+7.3 percent) to \$940.5 million (2017: \$876.5 million), was attributable to an increase in average interest earning assets and to the repricing and repositioning of the loan portfolio, complemented by an effective interest rate risk manage-



Meshal Al-Othman

ment strategy. Net operating income increased from \$1,030.4 million to \$1,124.3 million in 2018 (+ 9.1 percent).

Operating income in Q4/2018 was \$303.5 million as compared to \$294.2 million in Q4/2017 (+3.1 percent). Net operating income for Q4/2018

was US\$ 279.1 million, higher by 6.7 percent compared to \$261.6 million in Q4/2017.

The continued disciplined implementation of the intelligent spend approach and the benefits of growing operational efficiencies within the AUB Group resulted in a cost income ratio of 27.1 percent (2017: 28.8 percent). Solid asset quality levels were sustained with a gross non-performing loans ratio of 1.9 percent (31 December 2017: 1.9 percent) while the specific provision coverage ratio increased to 85.5 percent (31 December 2017: 85.1 percent). The total provision coverage ratio, inclusive of credit loss provisioning under IFRS 9 but excluding very substantial non-cash collaterals available, improved to 214.7 percent as at 31 December 2018 (31 December

2017: 154.3 percent).

Overall Return on Average Equity (ROAE) increased to 18.1 percent (2017: 16.5 percent) while the Return on Average Assets (ROAA) increased to 2.2 percent (2017: 2.1 percent).

The Group's total assets grew by \$2.3 billion (+6.8 percent) to reach \$35.5 billion at 31 December 2018 driven by a growth in the non-trading investments portfolio to \$7.6 billion (31 December 2017: \$6.0 billion) as part of an overall strategy to further balance-sheet diversification and to enhance in-built liquidity sources.

Asset growth was funded from an increase in customer deposits (+\$1.7 billion) and through repo borrowings (+\$0.6 billion). Equity attributable to the owners of the bank increased by

2.4 percent to \$3.9 billion in 2018 (2017: \$3.8 billion).

The resultant basic earnings per share increased by 12.2 percent to US cents 8.3 for the year ended 31 December 2018 (2017: US cents 7.4). The Board of Directors has recommended a distribution comprising of a cash dividend of US cents 5.0 per share (2017: US cents 4.5 per share) together with a bonus ordinary share issue of 10 percent (2017: 5 percent).

Meshal Al-Othman, AUB Chairman, commented: "AUB continued its solid performance in 2018 against the backdrop of a continuing general difficult operating environment. Achieving a very robust growth of 12.7 percent in net profit over 2017 demonstrates its strong underlying fundamentals and the resilience of its diversified business and geographic model."

US-China trade talks to resume in Washington

WASHINGTON: US-China trade talks aimed at ending a damaging tariff war will resume in Washington, the White House said. The last set of talks ended Friday in Beijing with no deal, though US President Donald Trump said discussions were going "extremely well" and suggested he could extend a March 1 truce deadline for an agreement to be reached.

The next round of negotiations will commence with deputy-level meetings before moving on to principal-level talks tomorrow, said a White House statement issued Monday. For the US, the talks will be led by Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and include Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, economic policy advisor Larry Kudlow, and trade advisor Peter Navarro. China's commerce ministry meanwhile announced it would be represented by Vice Premier Liu He, Beijing's top trade negotiator and key aide to President Xi Jinping, who agreed to a trade war truce with Trump at a meeting in Buenos Aires in December.

"We hope China and the US will both work hard together to implement the important consensus reached by our two heads of state in Argentina, get down to work, and walk together in the same direction towards a mutually acceptable and mutually beneficial agreement," foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters yesterday. On Friday, Trump reiterated he might be willing to hold off on increasing tariffs to 25 percent from the current 10 percent on March 1 on \$200 billion in Chinese goods if Washington and Beijing are close to finalizing an agreement to deal with US complaints about unfair trade and theft of American technology.

American officials accuse Beijing of seeking global industrial predominance through an array of unfair trade practices, including the alleged theft of American intellectual property and massive state intervention in commodities markets. — AFP

Slowing US economy can ill-afford any more shocks

LONDON: The US economy lost a lot of momentum during the fourth quarter and suffered a serious wobble in December, which should give policymakers pause before doing anything that could unsettle fragile sentiment further.

Freight movements by road, rail, air, barge and pipeline fell more than 3 percent in December compared with November, according to the US Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS). Freight shrank by the most in any one month since March 2009 and was just 1.4 percent higher than in the same month a year earlier, the weakest performance for more than two years.

Road freight slumped more than 4 percent in the final month of 2018, according to data sourced from the

American Trucking Associations ("December 2018 freight transportation services index", BTS, Feb. 13). Truck freight has been losing momentum since the middle of last year but the drop in December was the worst for nearly seven years. Separately, loaded container movements through the major gateways of Los Angeles and Long Beach slowed sharply, according to container counts from the port operators.

Faltering freight volumes are consistent with other data showing the manufacturing sector hit a soft patch towards the end of last year. Manufacturing output hit a cycle high in October but fell in each of the three following months and was down more than 3 percent by January. Purchasing managers also reported an abrupt deceleration in the rate of expansion, with the Institute for Supply Management's composite business activity index registering its worst decline in December since the financial crisis.

In recent months, some observers have commented on the apparent disconnect between plunging financial markets, wobbling business surveys, and solid economic data. In retrospect, however, the data is all coherent.

The drop in US equity valuations and flattening of the yield curve in the fourth quarter are consistent with hard

economic data showing a rapid cooling in the economy late in 2018.

The critical question is whether the slide in freight and manufacturing activity near the end of last year turns out to be a brief soft patch or heralds a more sustained period of weakness - even a recession. Equity prices rallied strongly in January and the Institute for Supply Management's composite activity indicator reversed some of the losses the month before, both of which suggest the economy will continue to expand.

But both remain well below their pre-October highs and the yield curve has not steepened significantly, which point to a more sustained loss of momentum and an elevated risk of recession.

Taken together, the available financial and real economic data suggests an economy poised between continued growth at a slower rate or the onset of a recession. Like expansions, recessions are driven by positive-feedback mechanisms which amplify the effect of an initial disturbance, often quite a small one, so the next few months will be critical. In the circumstances, the US economy can ill afford any more negative shocks, and that includes an escalation of the trade battle with China. — Reuters

Business

NBK Economic Update

Kuwait's credit growth rebounds as CBK leaves policy unchanged

Lending to businesses rose 5.3% y/y in 2018

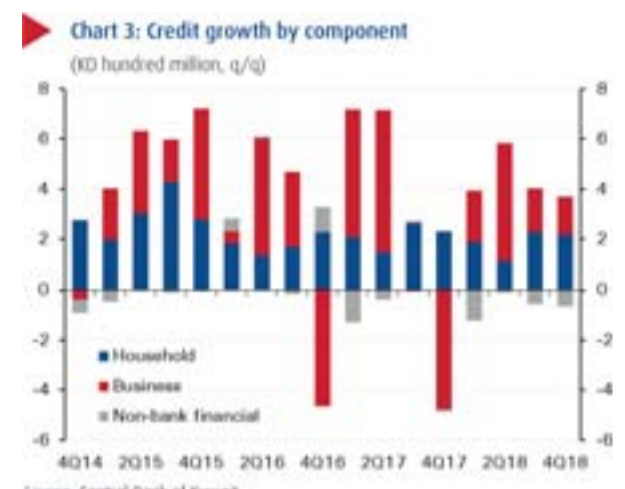
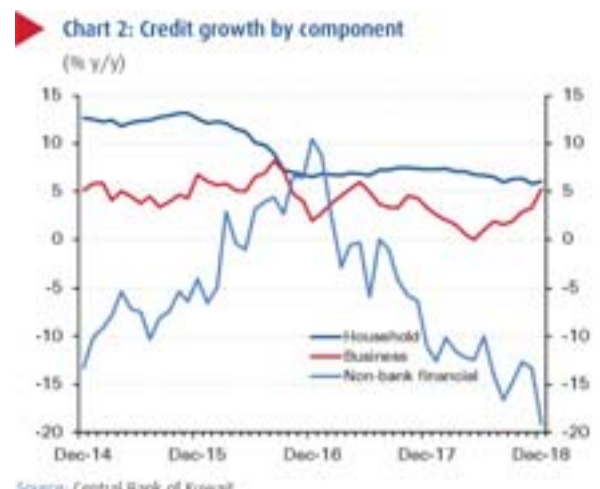
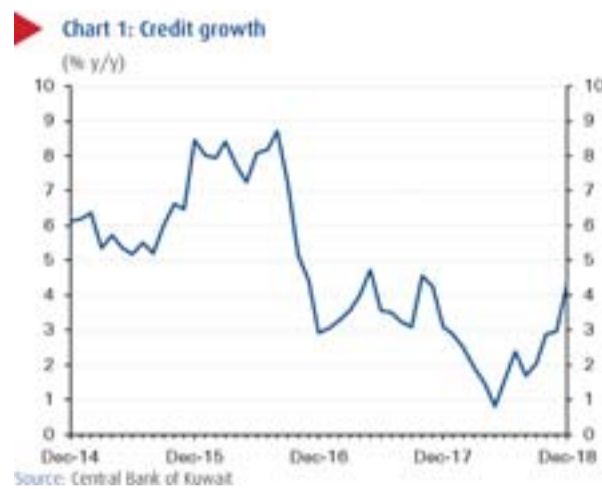
KUWAIT: Kuwait's credit growth rebounded to a 13-month high of 4.3 percent in December 2018 from 3.1 percent in 2017. This was supported by stronger lending to both businesses and households, as well as the usual end-of-year jump in lending for the purchase of securities. Growth in deposits edged up to 3.2 percent y/y in December, due mainly to an increase in private deposits by 4.1 percent y/y. As for interest rates, the CBK left its policy rate unchanged after the Fed's December rate hike, but increased the repo rate by 25 bps.

Despite a slowdown during the 1H18, lending to businesses rose 5.3 percent y/y in 2018, up from 3.3 percent y/y in the previous year. This was driven mainly by a significant improvement in real estate borrowing (4 percent y/y), which more than offset a decline in lending to the trade sector (-1.7 percent y/y). Business confidence was supported by an environment of higher average oil prices in the 2H18, which may have helped restore the appetite for credit, after a large corporate repayment a year earlier.

Household borrowing rose 6.0 percent in December, driven mainly by a robust growth in housing loans (6.8 percent y/y). Meanwhile, growth in consumer loans remained in decline, reaching -2.6 percent y/y, the slowest pace of contraction in more than two years, which could suggest an improvement in this segment's lending in the coming months. This may be the initial positive impact of the new CBK's recent loosening of lending restrictions (November 2018), which increase the maximum limits of non-housing loans to 25 times the salary or a maximum of KD 25,000 (up from 15 times or maximum of KD 15,000).

Regarding non-bank financial firms, the pace of deleveraging continued its decline in 2018 to -19.1 percent y/y from -11.1 percent in 2017.

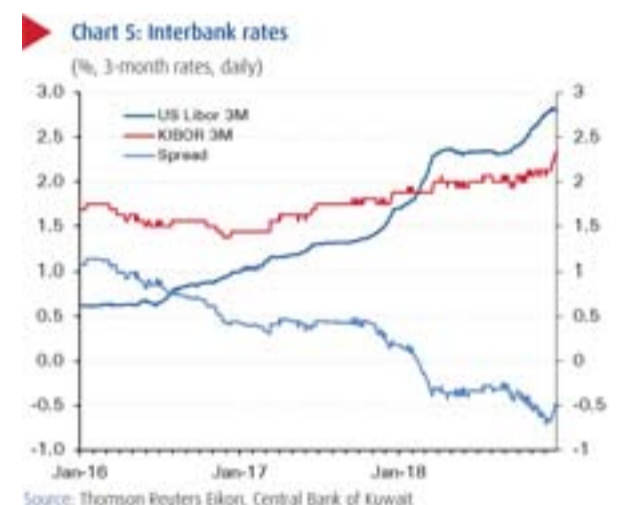
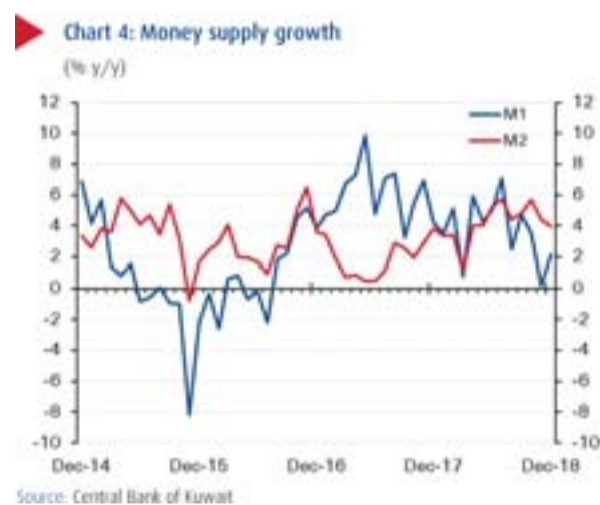
Private deposits grew by 4.1 percent y/y in 2018



(up from 3.7 percent in 2017) due to the rise in both sight (2.5 percent y/y) and time deposits (6.4 percent y/y). Meanwhile, government deposits dropped by 1.8 percent y/y, despite a robust rise of 5.3 percent m/m in December after five consecutive months of decline. As such, the money supply (M2) increased by 4 percent y/y.

Commercial lending rates were unchanged compared to last quarter, while deposit and interbank rates increased alongside hikes in the domestic repo rate. The Central Bank of Kuwait forewent an increase in its main policy rate - the discount rate used to price loans - after the US Fed hiked its target rate by 25 bps in December for the fourth time in 2018.

The CBK has skipped three out of the last four US Fed hikes, in order to support non-oil economic activity. In the meantime, the CBK increased by 25 bps its repo-rate in December, and so did commercial banks on their saving deposits, to maintain the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti dinar and stem potential outflows.



HSBC profit rises in 2018 despite late jitters

HONG KONG: HSBC profits climbed in 2018 despite a bruising final quarter as worries over the global economy and the US-China trade war began to bite, the banking giant said yesterday. The London-headquartered behemoth told investors it was still aiming to meet targets despite the looming twin storms of Brexit and the long-running trade impasse between Washington and Beijing.

But analysts warned it remained vulnerable to any fallout from either issue becoming a full-blown crisis in 2019. Overall, last year saw strong growth for HSBC with net profit ballooning 30 percent to \$12.6 billion.

Profit before tax climbed 16 percent to \$19.9 billion. The results capped the first full year at the helm for chief executive officer John Flint, who has vowed growth while keeping a lid on costs.

But the yearly growth figures were dampened by a tough final quarter when the markets-especially those in Hong Kong and China-went into meltdown over global trade fears.

Adjusted pretax profit fell one percent to \$3.4 billion in October-December, missing the \$4.4 billion forecast by analysts. Analyst Dickie Wong from Kingston Securities said the bank missed estimates towards the end of the year partly because China and Hong Kong are its "most relied (on) market".

"The slowing down of the economy, the trade war between China and the US also remain an uncertainty. That's why it missed estimates," he said. —AFP

Mobile World Congress 2019

Ooredoo Group to showcase 5G leadership and innovations

BARCELONA, Spain: Ooredoo, one of the world's leading ICT providers, will showcase the transformative power of 5G at Mobile World Congress 2019 (MWC19) in Barcelona on 25-28 February, with live demonstrations of how the technology can enable innovative services including child location monitoring and intelligent connected apps to assist visitors at mega events such as the upcoming football tournament in Qatar in 2022.

MWC19 is being held under the theme of "Intelligent Connectivity" and is expected to attract some 107,000 professionals from over 200 countries and territories.

Ooredoo will showcase its 5G technological prowess and an array of futuristic services and solutions that leverage the superior capacity and speeds of 5G. Over the past year, Ooredoo launched the world's first commercial 5G network in Qatar, and trialed the first international 5G call in the Arab World. Now, Ooredoo has more than 100 live 5G sites in Qatar, has done 5G tests and trials in Indonesia and Kuwait, and has set up a 5G Technology Centre Myanmar.

Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani, Group Chief Executive Officer, Ooredoo, said: "After launching our 5G network in Qatar in 2018 we're thrilled to showcase some of the transformative services that will run on the network, making use of the transformative speeds and capacity that 5G provides. From transport to childcare and shopping, 5G will bring a world of benefits and convenience to our customers, all of which fits perfectly with Mobile World Congress 2019's theme of 'Intelligent Connectivity.'"



Ooredoo will also demonstrate a range of end-to-end Smart Fan Experience services designed to give visitors to Qatar's upcoming soccer tournament a seamless experience during their stay in the country, from the time they land to the time they leave. A dedicated Smart Fan Experience zone at Ooredoo's pavilion will offer a preview of these services, which will help visitors navigate Qatar, make bookings and pay for goods and services with location-based, interactive and personalized apps on their smartphone.

Pioneering security technology will also be on show at the pavilion, including drone-based HD monitoring systems and Artificial Intelligence-based analytical tools, which will be used to deliver maximum safety and

security for football fans in 2022. Sheikh Saud added: "We look forward to meeting with customers, partners and end users to demonstrate our leadership in 5G and demonstrate the kind of services and solutions it will enable, which is especially at global sporting events." Ooredoo will use three interactive touch screens to provide visitors to its booth with fascinating insights into the pioneering work it has undertaken including building the world's first 5G network. Visitors can experience innovative use cases demos including virtual reality football, connected yachts, child monitoring, and how Ooredoo's understanding of the potential of 5G has grown after deploying and testing the network.

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	304.650
Euro	345.610
Sterling Pound	394.330
Canadian dollar	230.770
Turkish lira	58.330
Swiss Franc	304.650
US Dollar Buying	297.350
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.753
Indian Rupees	4.271
Pakistani Rupees	2.222
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.701
Nepali Rupees	2.664
Singapore Dollar	225.140
Hongkong Dollar	38.800
Bangladesh Taka	3.558
Philippine Peso	5.827
Thai Baht	9.770
Malaysian ringgit	77.877
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.254
Qatari Riyal	83.688
Omani Riyal	791.423
Bahraini Dinar	809.090
UAE Dirham	82.959
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.500
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.323

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.223
Tunisian Dinar	103.570
Jordanian Dinar	429.780
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.428
Rate for Transfer	
US Dollar	304.140
Canadian Dollar	230.090
Sterling Pound	394.795
Euro	346.100
Swiss Frank	308.365
Bahrain Dinar	808.820
UAE Dirhams	83.210
Qatari Riyals	84.445
Saudi Riyals	82.000
Jordanian Dinar	430.255
Egyptian Pound	17.298
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.697
Indian Rupees	4.265
Pakistani Rupees	2.189
Bangladesh Taka	3.625
Philippines Peso	5.815
Cyprus pound	18.095
Japanese Yen	3.750
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.675
Malaysian Ringgit	75.265
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.370
Thai Bhat	10.720

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.385402	0.399302
Czech Korune	0.005344	0.014644
Danish Krone	0.041994	0.046991
Euro	0.336628	0.350328
Georgian Lari	0.132087	0.132087
Hungarian O.000990	0.001180	0.031222
Norwegian Krone	0.031222	0.036422
Romanian Leu	0.055654	0.072504
Russian ruble	0.004586	0.004586
Slovakia	0.009104	0.019104
Swedish Krona	0.028824	0.033824
Swiss Franc	0.296665	0.0307665
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.208093	0.220093
New Zealand Dollar	0.201571	0.211071
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.224560	0.233560
US Dollars	0.300400	0.305700
US Dollars Mint	0.300900	0.305700
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003054	0.003855

Chinese Yuan	0.043408	0.046908
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036709	0.039459
Indian Rupee	0.003707	0.004479
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002666	0.002846
Korean Won	0.000260	0.000275
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070828	0.076828
Nepalese Rupee	0.002611	0.002961
Pakistan Rupee	0.001569	0.002339
Philippine Peso	0.005808	0.006108
Singapore Dollar	0.219107	0.229107
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001341	0.001921
Taiwan	0.009759	0.009939
Thai Baht	0.009398	0.009948
Vietnamese Dong	0.000013	0.000013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.793122	0.809622
Egyptian Pound	0.017124	0.019724
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000088
Iraqi Dinar	0.000211	0.000271
Jordanian Dinar	0.425181	0.434181
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022135	0.046135
Omani Riyal	0.784591	0.790271
Qatar Riyal	0.079349	0.084289
audi Riyal	0.080113	0.081413
Syrian Pound	0.001291	0.001511
Tunisian Dinar	0.095016	0.103016
Turkish Lira	0.050977	0.062477
UAE Dirhams	0.081479	0.083178
Yemeni Riyal	0.000990	0.001070

Business

Burgan Bank reports record profits of KD 82.6m in FY 2018, growth of 26.6%

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank Group (Burgan) reported its financial results for fiscal year 2018 with a strong growth of 10.8 percent in its revenue to KD 265.3 million (\$878.1 million). Burgan's net income grew strongly by 26.6 percent from KD 65.2 million (\$214.9 million) in FY'17 to KD 82.6 million (\$273.5 million) in FY'18.

These strong results reaffirm Burgan's focus on generating shareholders' returns through optimal use of its resources. FY'18 Earnings per Share (EPS) grew by 28.1 percent to 31 fils with Return on Shareholders' Equity (RoE) growing from 8.3 percent (FY'17) to 10.7 percent (FY'18).

Burgan's Board of Directors has proposed a cash dividend of 12 fils per share and 5 percent bonus shares, subject to shareholders' approval at Burgan's Annual General Meeting.

Burgan's strong FY'18 performance is also reflected in the continued improvement of its core business metrics: Net Interest Margin (NIM) increased from 2.6 percent (FY'17) to 2.9 percent (FY'18) and Cost-to-Income Ratio (CIR) improved from 45.6 percent (FY'17) to 42.1 percent (FY'18).

Prudent risk management continues to be a key focus area for the Bank. In spite of the challenging environment in certain geographies, Burgan's asset quality continues to be stable with FY'18 Non-Performing Loans Ratio at 2.7 percent, while the Coverage Ratio further strengthened from 155 percent (FY'17) to 168 percent (FY'18).

Burgan's regulatory capital ratios are stronger in FY'18 with the Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) ratio rising from 10.9 percent



Majed Essa Al-Ajeel

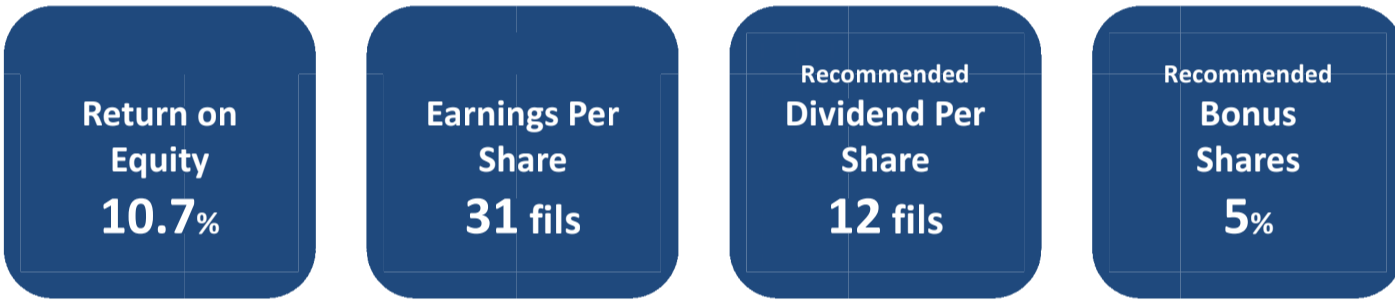
(FY'17) to 11.9 percent (FY'18) and Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) improving from 16.2 percent (FY'17) to 17.4 percent (FY'18), well above the minimum required CAR of 14 percent.

Majed Essa Al-Ajeel, Chairman of Burgan Bank Group said: "Burgan's record profits in 2018 were achieved through leveraging its operating capabilities and through tactical optimization of resources. Our prudent approach allowed the Group to maneuver through the changing operating environments, while maintaining its progress on key initiatives related to improving capitalization, risk profile and

operating efficiencies. All our subsidiaries are on trajectory with international operations contributing 43.5 percent of the Group's operating income."

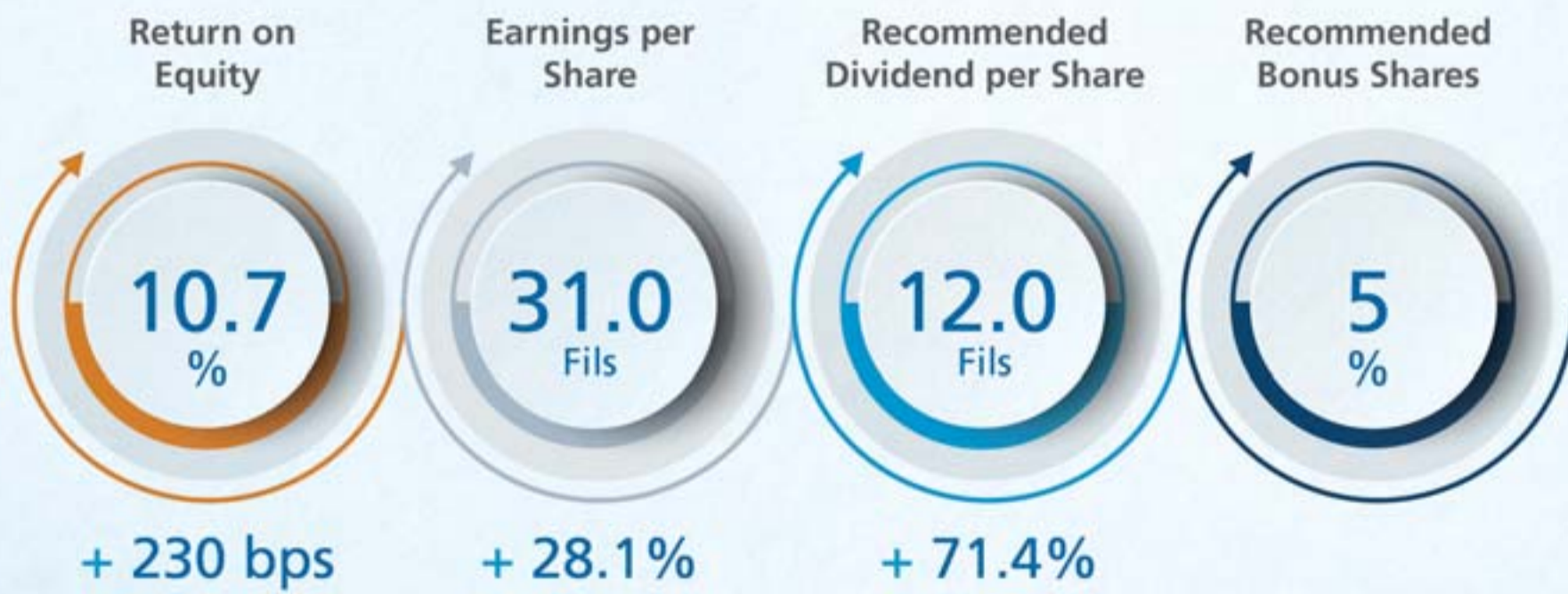
"During 2018 Burgan achieved two key milestones, first by successfully completing its capital ceiling increase process, whereby Burgan raised KD 62.55 million of equity by issuing 240.58 million shares. Second, the issuance of the KD 100 million bond in local market which is in line with Burgan's ongoing strategy to diversify its source of funding and its commitment to lead the continued development of the local Debt Capital Market. This transaction, which represents the first of its type to be undertaken by a Kuwaiti bank in the local market, was well-received by both institutional investors and individuals alike," added Al-Ajeel.

"On behalf of the board, I take this opportunity to thank our customers and shareholders for the trust they have in our capabilities and our regulators; the Central Bank of Kuwait, for their support. I would also like to thank our executive management team for their leadership and the excellent execution of the corporate strategy, and our staff for their continued support and commitment," concluded Al-Ajeel. The consolidated financials encompass the results of the Group's operations in Kuwait, and its share from its regional subsidiaries, namely Burgan Bank - Turkey, Gulf Bank Algeria, Bank of Baghdad, Tunis International Bank. Burgan Bank Group has one of the largest regional branch networks with 167 branches across Kuwait, Turkey, Algeria, Iraq, Tunisia, Lebanon and representative office in Dubai-United Arab Emirates.



KD 82.6 Million

Net Profit at Record Levels; Growth of 26.6%



For fiscal year ended on 31st December, 2018
Burgan Bank Group:
 Kuwait - Turkey - Algeria - Iraq - Tunisia - UAE - Lebanon



Business

Japan's Honda to shut UK car plant as Brexit looms

Swindon plant closure 'devastating': Minister

LONDON: Honda will shut its UK plant with the loss of 3,500 jobs, the Japanese car maker announced yesterday as the global auto industry faces "unprecedented changes" and the UK economy hits the skids on Brexit uncertainty. The factory in Swindon, southwest England, which is Honda's only EU plant, will shut in 2021 "at the end of the current model's production life-cycle", the company said as carmakers worldwide increasingly invest in greener electric vehicles over diesel cars.

Business Secretary Greg Clark described Honda's decision as "devastating" and "a particularly bitter blow to the thousands of skilled and dedicated staff who work at the factory, their families and all of those employed in the supply chain".

Katsushi Inoue, Honda's chief officer for European regional operations, said the decision had "not been taken lightly". The firm blamed "unprecedented changes in the global automotive industry" for the decision but it comes amid investment uncertainty in Britain ahead of the country's departure from the European Union next month.

Analysts said an EU-Japan trade agreement signed recently had likely also played a part in Honda's decision. Clark said that while Honda's decision was made for "commercial" reasons, it was nonetheless "devastating... for Swindon and the UK".

He added in a statement: "The automotive industry is undergoing a rapid transition to new technology. The UK is one of the leaders in the development of these technologies and so it is deeply disappointing that this decision has been taken now."

Brexit clouds

Speaking earlier in Tokyo, Honda president Takahiro Hachigo told reporters: "I'd like you to understand this

is not related to Brexit." Nevertheless, it comes after Japanese peer Nissan earlier this month axed plans to make its X-Trail SUV in the Brexit-backing UK city of Sunderland, citing "business reasons" but also uncertainty over Britain's EU departure.

Toyota, another Japanese car giant making vehicles in Britain, has meanwhile warned there would be no way to avoid a negative impact should the UK crash out of the EU without a deal.

The Bank of England earlier this month slashed its forecast for 2019 UK growth to 1.2 percent from 1.7 percent, blaming the downgrade on a global economic slowdown and "the fog of Brexit".

Honda's fellow Japanese firms Sony, Panasonic and Hitachi are also scaling back their UK operations.

Regarding Honda's decision, the company "seems to have been preparing for this for a long time", Seiji Sugiura, analyst at Tokai Tokyo Research Institute, said. "Then Brexit happened, which might have pushed the company to make the decision now." The carmaker's Swindon plant has been producing Honda's Civic model for more than 24 years, with 150,000 units rolling off the line annually.

The firm yesterday announced also that it would stop manufacturing the Civic model in Turkey in 2021.

'No stone unturned'

In Swindon, local finance worker Sue Davis, 49, said the town is "finished without Honda". She said: "My ex-husband works there, has done for 20 years. He's going to be without a job, so I just think it's really, really bad news." Local MP Justin Tomlinson tweeted that the decision had been made "based on global trends and not Brexit as all European market production will consolidate in Japan in 2021". Britain's biggest union Unite said it would campaign to keep the plant open.



SWINDON: A Honda sign is pictured at the Honda manufacturing plant in Swindon, southwest England yesterday. — AFP

"We will leave no stone unturned to keep this plant going and its workforce in employment," said Des Quinn, Unite's national officer for the automotive sector. "While Brexit is not mentioned by the company as a reason for the announcement, we believe that the uncertainty that the Tory government has created by its inept and rigid handling of the Brexit negotiations lurks in the background."

Devastating

Honda's decision to shut its UK plant in Swindon with the loss of 3,500 jobs is "devastating", Britain's Business Secretary Greg Clark said yesterday. "As

Honda have said, this is a commercial decision based on unprecedented changes in the global market. Regardless, this is a devastating decision for Swindon and the UK," Clark said in a statement.

"This news is a particularly bitter blow to the thousands of skilled and dedicated staff who work at the factory, their families and all of those employed in the supply chain. I will convene a taskforce in Swindon with local MPs, civic and business leaders as well as trade union representatives to ensure that the skills and expertise of the workforce is retained, and these highly valued employees move into new skilled employment." — AFP

Mexico pushes mobile payments to help unbanked people ditch cash

MEXICO CITY/NEW YORK: Mexico's new leftist government is betting on financial technology to help lift people out of poverty. The administration of President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador recently announced measures aimed at making financial services more affordable in a nation where more than half the population is unbanked.

It is planning a digital payments system run and built by the central bank that will allow Mexicans to make and receive payments through their smartphones free of charge. A pilot roll-out for the platform, known as CoDi, is expected by March.

"In the future, it will no longer be necessary to have a bank in the sense of a traditional, established bank," said Arturo Herrera, Mexico's deputy finance minister. "Mobile phones will become banks."

Phone-based banking has proven a hit among the poor in other emerging markets such as China, India and Kenya. Those efforts have been driven by private sector companies that offer user-friendly, affordable apps. Whether Mexico's state system will prove as nimble and easy to use remains to be seen. And it will initially require help from the very same banks that for decades have shut out low-income Mexicans with pricey fees.

Other hurdles include Mexico's spotty telecoms. While cell phone and internet coverage have improved in recent years, basic infrastructure is still missing in many remote areas.

"Mexico has a lot of the key ingredients to succeed, but it's not plug and play," said Monica Brand Engel, a partner at Quona Capital, a global venture capital firm that invests in fintechs focused on the unbanked in emerging markets.

An estimated 42 million Mexicans lack bank accounts. Steep fees and past scandals have put many off the country's mainstream banks. Many shun accounts to stay off the radar of tax collectors. That hobbles Mexico's growth. Coffee farmer Martin Romero is a prime example of why. His small town in the state of Oaxaca, one of Mexico's poorest, has no bank branch. Romero is paid in cash. He travels hours to pay bills and is unable to save or borrow for larger expenses.

"Of course I would like a bank account," Romero said. "That way we could save at least a little of what we earn."

While many Mexicans applaud Lopez Obrador's push, some fintech executives are grumbling about getting shut out of the loop. To use CoDi, consumers must have an account with an institution participating in Mexico's existing interbank payments system, which will power the new platform.

Jaime Cortina, director of operations and payments at the central bank, said the goal was to develop a payment method that Mexicans could use to make payments between each other, in shops and online. Current members of the system include established institutions such as BBVA's Bancomer, Banco Santander and Citigroup Inc's Citibanamex. Fintechs that want to join need an electronic payment institution license, a process that new players fear could take up to a year. — Reuters

Germany, with bumper CA surplus, frets about car tariffs

BERLIN: Germany recorded the world's largest current account surplus for the third year running in 2018 due to strong exports that are vexing US President Donald Trump and raising the risk of US tariffs on German cars. Germany's current account surplus, which measures the flow of goods, services and investments, shrank but was the world's largest last year at \$294 billion, followed by Japan with \$173 billion, data, from Germany's Ifo institute showed yesterday.

The data is likely to inflame passions in the White House, where Trump has frequently criticized Germany's large trade surplus with the United States. A confidential US Commerce Department report sent to Trump over the weekend is widely expected to clear the way for him to threaten tariffs of up to 25 percent on imported autos and auto parts by designating the imports a national security threat.

"For some weeks and months now, we're observing with concern that the US is tightening its trade policies, that tensions are increasing," German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier told Deutschlandfunk radio. "The impact can already be seen in the world economy, global growth has slowed," Altmaier said, adding that "the most difficult part" in trade talks with Washington was still ahead.

Asked about the risk of higher US car tariffs, Altmaier said he did not buy the argument that imported cars would threaten US national security - echoing impassioned comments from Merkel at the weekend. "We are proud of our cars and so we should be," Merkel said on Saturday, adding, however, that many

were built in the United States and exported to China.

"If that is viewed as a security threat to the United States, then we are shocked," she told the Munich Security Conference to applause from the audience. Jean-Claude Juncker, the head of the European Commission, said he had a deal with Trump that there would be no higher tariffs on imports of European cars for now.

"Trump has given me his word that there will be no car tariffs for the time being. I believe him," he told the Stuttgart Zeitung in comments published on Monday.

Merkel said yesterday she had suggested that EU leaders discuss the subject of Europe as an industrial center at the next European Council meeting in March, expressing concern that EU regulations may impede European economic advancement. "We cannot leave it off the agenda if we see that big companies are all outside Europe," she told business leaders.

Since 2011, Germany's current account balance has been consistently above the European Commission's indicative threshold of 6 percent of gross domestic product and the surplus reached a record high of 8.9 percent in 2015. It narrowed to 7.4 percent in 2018.

The International Monetary Fund and the European Commission have urged Germany for years to do more to lift domestic demand as a way to boost imports, stimulate growth elsewhere and reduce global economic imbalances. The European Commission has recommended that Germany make use of its budget surplus to boost public investment and create favorable conditions for stronger real wage growth. The IMF has made similar recommendations. German government officials say the trade surplus is a result of market-based supply and demand decisions by companies and consumers around the world and that it is also shaped by other factors such as oil prices and exchange rates that are hard to influence. Nonetheless, government plans to



BERLIN: German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier (right) and his French counterpart Bruno Le Maire give a press conference yesterday in Berlin, following talks on EU industrial policy. — AFP

spend a large part of its budget surplus in the coming three years to increase childcare benefits, lower taxes and

reduce contributions to the public health system are expected to support household spending. — Reuters

Germany, France push to create industrial 'European champions'

BERLIN: Germany and France agreed yesterday on a strategy to create European industrial "champions" and to seek changes in EU competition rules that now prevent blockbuster mergers of homegrown groups. The push for a common industrial initiative came after the EU's veto of an Alstom-Siemens rail merger that has revived debate over competition regulations that critics say are obsolete in the face of growing rivalry from Chinese giants.

"It's an important day because after months of work, we have agreed on the definition of an industrial strategy for Europe which will be proposed to our European partners," said French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire in Berlin after talks with his German counterpart Peter Altmaier.

Under the strategy, the two EU

giants will push for greater investments in innovations, seek reforms in EU competition rules, and set up mechanisms to better protect home-grown technology.

As a first concrete project, both sides will cooperate in the production of electric batteries—an essential component in the race to electrify automobiles. In the strategy outline published yesterday, France and Germany said that "competition rules are essential but existing rules need to be revised to be able to adequately take into account industrial policy considerations" that can help European companies compete successfully on the world stage. "The choice is simple when it comes to industrial policy: unite our forces or allow our industrial base and capacity to gradually disappear," they said. — AFP

BoE would pump in emergency money after no-deal Brexit: Minister

LONDON: The Bank of England would have to step in to pump emergency money into the economy if Britain left the European Union without a deal, a junior business minister said yesterday.

The Bank of England has said that the policy reaction to a potential no-deal Brexit would not be automatic, although last week Governor Mark Carney warned of the potential shock to the economy if Britain leaves without a deal. Junior business minister Richard Harrington said that Britain would have to employ significant measures to support the economy.

"If we do leave with no deal, I do feel in the short term it is government's role - government, the Bank of England, all the other tools that we have - to take what will be emergency action to deal with a drastic situation. In traditional terms that would mean pumping money into the economy in different ways," he said at a manufacturing conference in London.

"Now I'm not talking about financial tools, but the banks will have to step forward with additional liquidity because of the shock that it will have on the economy," Harrington said that he did not believe there would ultimately be a no-deal Brexit as he expected that parliament would take control of the process and prevent it. — Reuters

Walmart reports jump in 4Q profits on higher US sales

NEW YORK: Walmart reported a jump in fourth-quarter profits yesterday behind higher sales at US stores and an increased e-commerce business. The world's biggest retailer, which has been adapting its US stores to the digital era by adding more in-store pickup of smartphone orders, reported profits of \$3.7 billion in the quarter ending January 31, up nearly 70 percent from the year-ago period.

The jump was accentuated because the company's profits in the year-ago period were weighed down with \$1 billion in costs associated with paying off debt early.

Revenues were up 1.9 percent at \$138.8 billion.

Comparable sales at US stores increased 4.2 percent during the quarter. Walmart's American namesake stores account for around two-thirds of overall sales. The strength of this division helped offset lower sales in Walmart International and Sam's Club, a wholesale chain.

The company, often seen as a rival to Amazon in the retail big leagues, now offers grocery pickup at more than 2,100 of its 4,755 US stores and delivery at nearly 800 locations. E-commerce sales increased 43 percent.

"We had a good year," said Walmart Chief Executive Doug McMillon. "Progress on initiatives to accelerate growth, along with a favorable economic development, helped us deliver strong comp sales and gain market share." Walmart's results translated to earnings per share of \$1.41, above the \$1.33 expected by analysts. Revenues also topped estimates. Shares jumped 4.8 percent to \$104.75 in pre-market trading. — AFP

Business

KFH first Kuwaiti bank to launch Skiplino for queuing and management system

Mandani: Qualitative shift in direct interaction between customers and platforms

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched the Queuing System: Skiplino service, the first of its kind in the Kuwaiti banking sector for online appointments booking in the branches via smart phones. This confirms its achievements -rich record in adopting the latest financial technology applications and reflects its efforts in moving forward with its digital transformation strategy with high professionalism and international standards.

Available at KFHLcom, and soon via KFHOnline, this service makes the banking services more accessible for customers at their own convenient time in addition to finding the least busy branches at the time. Skiplino is a queuing and management system that allows KFH to deal intelligently and quickly with customers waiting.

Through its cooperation with Skiplino, KFH boosts its efforts to develop the cutting-edge systems and technical program and provide new solutions to enhance work efficiency and customer service. This can be achieved by introducing new quality services, all in keeping with its strategy of employing technology in all aspects and activities.

It is worth noting that Skiplino is an investment of KISP ventures, a subsidiary of KFH-Capital.

Group Chief Retail and Private Banking Officer at KFH, Waleed Khaled Mandani said: "The new service is part of the bank's policy of adopting the latest financial technology (FinTech) and modern technical methods of artificial intelligence(AI) to support banking services, meet customers' aspirations and maintain the leading position of KFH. Accordingly, it has become one of the leading banks worldwide in offering modern and innovative services of their highest standards of quality, speed, precision and security".

He added that the Skiplino is an intelligent system capable of managing customer waiting via mobile phones while monitoring waiting data in real time, collecting customers' views and perceptions and finding their satisfaction level. Also, it analyzes these data to improve work performance and customer service.

Mandani pointed out that the service is currently available in Al-Nuzha branch and would soon spread to other KFH branches. He added that the efforts of adopting Fintech and AI are in line with KFH strategy

and its mission of achieving maximum innovation and distinction. AI has a decisive impact and effective role in KFH's future activities which is making big strides in adopting the latest banking technology.

Mandani stressed the importance of quality, security, ease and distinction in offering services as well as making a qualitative shift in online banking which is focused on direct interaction between the customer and the advanced devices and platforms.

KFH has made great strides which affirmed its leadership in adopting digital services, pioneering the offering of a diverse package of innovative e-services in several sectors and in the Group, in addition to increasing its investment in technology. KFH succeeded in providing a plethora of high-tech banking services, most of which are unique in Kuwait, and has established a competitive position in the banking sector. KFH culminated its efforts to operate in Ishbiliya its first fully-automated 24/7 e-branch with an advanced and wide range of technical devices and self-service tools under the title "KFH-Go". Also, KFH launched its Chatbot service in cooperation with Microsoft, to

improve interaction with customers who can use this service through different KFH channels such as KFHLcom and the mobile app KFHonline. KFH upgraded a centralized SWIFT network system for global payments at the group level. Along with developing the other ATMs, it also upgraded its XTMs adding seven new services, some of which are the first to be offered locally, including QR cardless withdrawals with the possibility of updating the information, activating the new and renewed debit cards and changing the PIN. The Bank introduced a fast cross-border transfer service (KFH Xpress) and an instant remittance service using RippleNet. KFH also launched the first banking robot in Kuwait.



Waleed Khaled Mandani

HIE-RO seeks to boost business cooperation with Arab world

KUWAIT: Hanseatic Institute for Entrepreneurship and Regional Germany is moving up to unlock the potential of business cooperation with the Arab world. "There are many good reasons why we should continue to develop good relations between the Arab countries and ourselves," said Economy Minister Brigitte Zypries in Mai 2017. However, she called for appropriate framework conditions for German exporters. North Africa and the Near and Middle East (MENA) are a very important export destination for German companies. Yet, in the last few years exports have considerably dropped in some of these countries.

Measures supporting business cooperation are one of the focal points necessary for unlocking the economic potential for local companies. Although the German cooperation with the Arab countries has a long tradition, companies from some regions, for example Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania still lack relevant links to the potential business partners in many Arab regions.

One activity of the Hanseatic Institute for Entrepreneurship and Regional Development at the University of Rostock (HIE-RO) is to implement actions towards strengthening an internationalization process of German small- and middle-sized enterprises (SMEs). The institute has been assigned to establish a cooperation structure of intermediary organizations as a framework for bridging companies from the state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania with potential business partners in the Arab countries.

First steps have been successfully undertaken and joint actions are under preparation; however, HIE-RO expresses its interest to start collaboration with further relevant partners to merge capacity and therefore create a strong platform for business-to-business cooperation. The main interest of the companies represented by the HIE-RO covers fields of innovation in the renewable energy sector, building construction, engineering, regional development, agriculture and biotechnology. Nevertheless other economic sectors are not excluded. Finding new cooperation partners is defined as a crucial step for better and more sustainable growth. Therefore, the HIE-RO is calling for institutions interested in future cooperation. The HIE-RO is a non-profit organization affiliated to the University of Rostock. It works as an intermediary institution between business, science and decision-makers.

KIB awarded 'Best Islamic Bank GCC' for 3rd year in a row

KUWAIT: For a third consecutive year, KIB garnered the 'Best Islamic Bank GCC' award for the year 2018 from World Finance; a leading, global financial magazine specializing in finance and banking, whose GCC Awards have continued to recognize leading financial and investment institutions in the GCC. KIB received this award based on the result of a set of key criteria set forth by the World Finance Editorial Panel, featuring a group of professional editors. According to World Finance, KIB's strong financial performance has demonstrated the successful implementation of its new customer centric busi-

ness strategy and its strength in providing a wide range of sharia-compliant banking solutions to both retail and corporate customers.

KIB has also established itself as the Islamic Banking of choice, not only in Kuwait, but in the GCC region as well, with constant innovation, outstanding customer service and meeting all key criteria including: Sharia-compliant financial products and services, progressive forward looking approach to Islamic finance, competitive strategy, use of technologies, leadership, corporate governance, in addition to its dedicated corporate social responsibility.

On this occasion, Chairman of KIB, Sheikh Mohammad Jarrah Al-Sabah said: "We are honored to have received this prestigious award once more. This achievement has fully manifested our continuous commitment to strive for excellence in delivering premium banking products and services and our newly implemented strategic direction. Not only is this a strong recognition reaf-

firming KIB's standing in the banking industry, but it is also a great motivator - driving us to achieve more and perform better."

Al-Jarrah added that, this year has truly been a turning point for KIB. The Bank embarked on a new phase through a brand new strategy. KIB's new approach had it focusing mainly on becoming customer-centric; thereby strengthening its financial standing in the Islamic banking sector. Accordingly, the Bank has carved a distinctive place for itself amongst other major financial institutions in the region, forging ahead with its strategic plans to further enhance its standing within the market by offering innovative sharia compliant banking solutions.

World Finance magazine specializes in the financial and banking industry and is one of the most prominent and independent global financial evaluation bodies. The Magazine recognizes leaders in the industry through international awards and enjoys extensive experience



Sheikh Mohammad Jarrah Al-Sabah

managing a number of internationally recognized award programs across the globe. Known across the industry as a leading source of information for private and global investors, World Finance is recognized as a global market benchmark for many sectors and industries.

Visa grants Boubyan the 'Fastest Growing Visa Portfolio' award in Kuwait in 2018

KUWAIT: Boubyan Bank has made a new achievement this year by receiving the "Fastest Growing Visa Portfolio" Award in 2018 from Visa International as the bank continues to receive international and regional recognition for its growth and development over the past years.

Marcello Baricordi, Visa GM - MENA, handed over the award to Abdulla Al-Tuwaijri, Boubyan Bank's Deputy CEO, who commented: "We have a strategic relationship with Visa which dates back to many years as we were the first to launch the famous 5 percent Cashback program for purchases made using Visa cards."

"Our strategic relationship with Visa has positively influenced the services and products provided to our customers across various sectors, and this relationship will improve a lot in the future," he added.

Al-Tuwaijri stressed that Boubyan Bank would continue providing more e-payment and NFC-based services and products as Boubyan Bank was the first to launch such services in Kuwait alongside mobile banking services and "Tokenization" services.

Meanwhile, Baricordi stated: "We highly value our outstanding strategic partnership with Boubyan Bank, and we are pleased to name Boubyan Bank as the "Fastest Growing Visa Portfolio" in Kuwait. We are also glad to witness the several initiatives made by the bank to enable its customers to enjoy rewarding payment experiences in a smooth and comfortable manner. The leading payment solutions provided by Visa have pivotally contributed to cementing the status of products and services extended by the bank to its affluent customers.

We will certainly continue to work closely with Boubyan Bank to support the transformation of payments in Kuwait, allowing customers and businesses to make use of the benefits provided by digital payments."

A qualitative leap

Al-Tuwaijri added: "The bank's concept to make life easier for its customers is applied on an ongoing basis through our outstanding services and products provided to our customers, the last of which was the qualitative leap we made through the quick approach for requesting and issuing credit cards in a quick and smooth manner."

"For the first time in Kuwait, the bank allows its customers to apply for a credit card at any time through the mobile banking service by using their PACI-approved digital signature," he added.



This new service from Boubyan Bank means that it is no longer necessary to visit the branch to apply for a credit card, thus, saving more time for customers since this service makes it possible for customers to apply for credit cards digitally using the digital signature, then, the card could be delivered through the special courier of the bank.

Furthermore, Boubyan Bank concluded

an agreement with Visa International during the past year, which entitles Boubyan's SMEs customers to many benefits upon using their corporate Visa card.

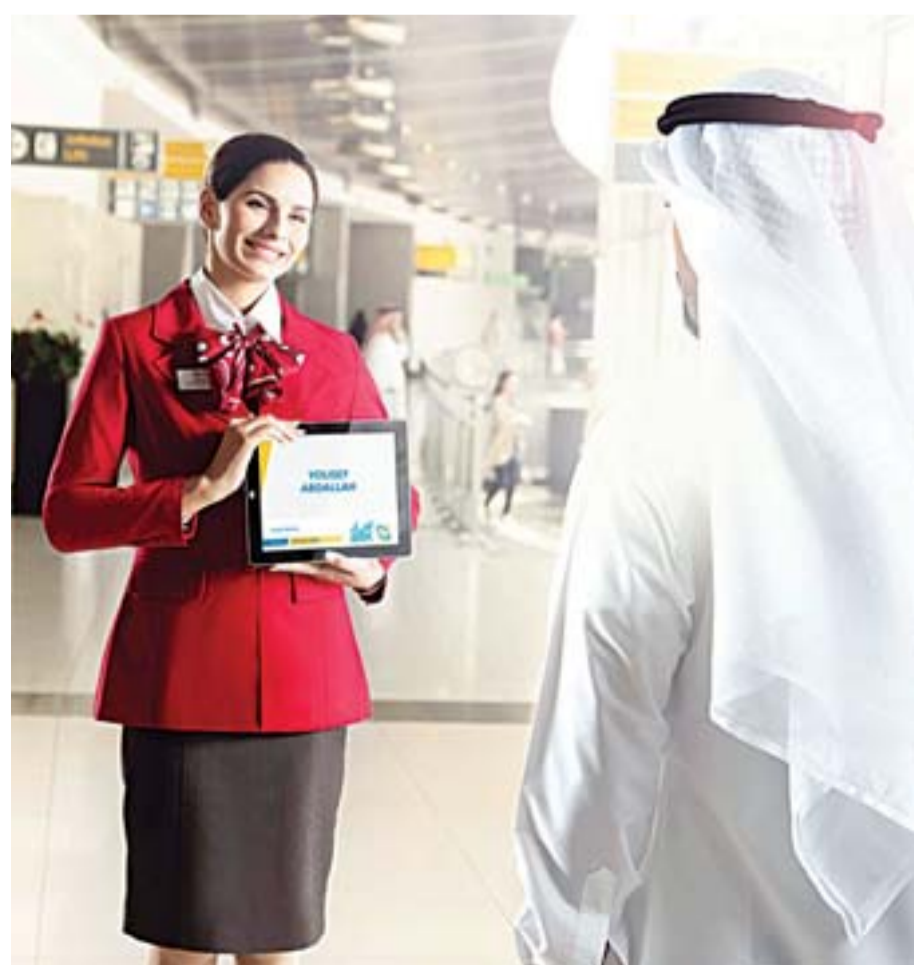
This step comes as a part of the bank's keenness on supporting SMEs of young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs, which included the establishment of a special Business Banking Unit to cater for the various SMEs' dedicated services and products.

ABK increases benefits for Visa Infinite cardholders

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) yesterday announced enhanced benefits for its Visa Infinite cardholders alongside its 'Refer a Friend' program, which is a one-of-a-kind program that offers exclusive benefits to current Visa Infinite cardholders that refer new Visa Infinite customers. ABK has partnered with Pearl Assist to offer its Visa Infinite cardholders a number of benefits including unlimited meet and assist services in Kuwait airports at no cost. Clients can fast-track through security and immigration escorted by a dedicated Pearl Assist agent in both departures and arrivals, ensuring a simpler and much easier travel experience.

Existing ABK Visa Infinite cardholders will be able to avail the meet and assist service for a year upon referring a new eligible Visa Infinite cardholder, who will enjoy the same benefit. The new member will also get an extra benefit of 10,000 skyward miles if a minimum spend of KD 2,000 is reached within the first three months.

ABK is the only bank in Kuwait offering the above service for free. Furthermore, the Visa Infinite card is pre-equipped with Complimentary Lounge access for two to over 1000+ Airport Lounges, Free travel insurance when purchasing airline tickets using the card, earn 7 miles per KD 1 spend, Tap-n-Go and ABK SecurePay for faster & safer payments, making ABK Visa Infinite an excellent travel companion!



Ahli United Bank congratulates winners of Al-Hassad draw

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced on the 13th of February 2019 the winners of its weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic account which is the very first draw account in Islamic banking in Kuwait that has reshaped the lives of thousands of lucky winners. Al-Hassad has over 850 prizes, over a 12 month period. The weekly draw announced the grand prize winner of KD 10,000 as Yousef Qamber Mohammad.

20 other winners won prizes of KD 1,000 and are as follows: Mariam Hasan Al-Qattan, Huda Shamikh Al-Reshedi, Khalil Ali Abdulla, Venka Traman Rajaraman, Mohd Hamad Alohtani, Kareemah Abdullah Al-Suaiteen, Faleh Seheb Al-Shammari, Kholoud Abd

Alhasan Hajji, FaisalL. Zaid Al-Zaid, Nasr Abdulmola Al-Abdullah, Abdullatif Eisa Ben Nakhi, Maher Al-Suhaim, Ahmad Mustafa Al-Fatall, Ghaim Saqer Al-Shaheen, Osama Abbas Al-Qattan, Khaleel Ibrahim Mohammad, Fatima Hasan Salman, Eftekhar Sayed Mohamed, Kayan Ghulam Ali and Akbar Mohamed Jaism.

Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents 21 weekly prizes consists of a grand prize of KD 10,000, 20 prizes of KD 1,000 each in addition to a monthly draw to win a prize of KD 100,000

Al-Hassad Islamic Account presents also four quarterly mega prizes of KD 250,000 that will help the lucky winners achieve their dreams and aspirations. One powerful new aspect of the Al-Hassad Islamic Account is the prize draws on the holy occasion of both Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, when the winning customers will receive the Eid prizes of KD 100,000 each. May the Eid always bring prosperity and blessings to the Islamic nation.

Health & Science

Lab-grown steak could be worse for climate than flatulent cattle

BARCELONA: Scientists and companies working to grow meat from animal cells will need to minimise energy use and avoid fossil fuels if claims that cultured meat is better for the climate than real meat are to hold true, researchers said. Cultured meat production with high energy inputs could spur global warming more in the long-term than some types of beef cattle farming if the world shunned a low-carbon path, said a study published on Tuesday by the UK-based Oxford Martin School.

Lead author John Lynch, a researcher at the University of Oxford, said reducing beef consumption would help curb climate change, as methane emitted by cattle is a potent heat-trapping gas. But how best to replace conventional meat remained unclear. "We have to dig into the details a bit more to know if the substitutes would be as beneficial as claimed," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "It just comes down to how much energy demand would be to produce a kilogram of meat."

Lynch said companies promising to bring lab-grown "clean" meat to the mass market, many of them based in the United States and Israel, had yet to release information on their planned large-scale production processes. The website of one high-profile firm, Memphis Meats, which produced the world's first cell-based meatball in 2016 followed by poultry in 2017, says its meat, cultivated "at

scale", would use significantly less land, water, energy and food inputs.

"Our process will produce less waste and dramatically fewer greenhouse gas emissions. We believe that the planet will be the ultimate beneficiary of our product," it adds, without giving details of how that would be achieved. Memphis Meats has received investment from business tycoons Bill Gates and Richard Branson, as well as multinational corporations Cargill and Tyson Foods. David Welch, director of science and technology at The Good Food Institute, a nonprofit that supports early-stage companies producing "clean" meat, said it would likely be another five to 10 years before cultured meat products were commercially available to consumers.

Methane versus CO2

Development work was still being carried out in labs, with production facilities yet to be set up, he added. The Oxford Martin School study said research on greener ways of producing cultured meat was a priority at this nascent stage. Its study used four hypothetical cultured meat production methods, concluding the most energy-efficient would not warm the planet more than farming beef in the long term, even without decarbonisation of the global energy system. "If the real (clean meat) production processes are like that one, then there is no problem," said

Lynch. Livestock are responsible for about 14.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization. The Good Food Institute plans this year to carry out an in-depth study of the environmental effects of cultured meat production with companies, to deepen understanding of the risks and benefits, including for land, water and the climate.

The Oxford research highlighted a huge difference in the amount of time for which different greenhouse gases influence the climate. Methane, released from cattle manure and flatulence, is more dangerous in the short-term but fades fast. "Per tonne emitted, methane has a much larger warming impact than carbon dioxide - however, it only remains in the atmosphere for about 12 years whereas carbon dioxide persists and accumulates for millennia," said study co-author Raymond Pierrehumbert, a physics professor at the University of Oxford.

As a result, the researchers found over a 1,000-year period, production of cultured meat could hike global warming more if the process depended heavily on high-carbon energy. Another important factor was land use, they said. For example, clearing forest land for cattle-grazing could greatly increase the carbon footprint of beef production, while growing meat in urban laboratories could free up land for storing carbon in vegetation or other ways. — Reuters

'Killer' cells raise hope of universal flu vaccine

PARIS: Scientists said Monday they had discovered immune cells that can fight all known flu viruses in what was hailed as an "extraordinary breakthrough" that could lead to a universal, one-shot vaccine against the killer disease. Influenza epidemics, largely seasonal, kill hundreds of thousands of people each year, according to the World Health Organization.

Due to its mutating strains, vaccine formulas must be regularly updated and offer only limited protection currently. Researchers in Australia said that "killer T cells" — found in over half the world's population — had shown in testing to be effective in fighting all common flu varieties. This means the cells could potentially be used to develop an all-encompassing flu shot that did not need to be changed annually, and even be effective in people who don't naturally possess them.

"Influenza viruses continuously mutate to evade recognition by our immune system, and they are vastly diverse, making it nearly impossible to predict and vaccinate against the strain that will cause the next influenza pandemic," said Marios Koutsakos, a researcher at the University of Melbourne's Doherty Institute. T cells are a type of white blood cell that roams the body scanning for abnormalities and infections. They are essential for human immunity against a host of invading bacteria and viruses. So-called "killer" T cells are unique in that they can directly target and kill other infected cells. Koutsakos and his colleagues used mass spectrometry — a scanning technique that helps separate molecules based on their mass — to identify parts of the virus that are shared across all flu strains, and realized that killer T cells could effectively fight variations of influenza A, B and C. Flu is especially dangerous for elderly people, children and those with compromised immune systems, as well as certain ethnic groups who never developed immune responses to the disease. The team behind the research has patented their discovery, and researchers said they hoped it would enable them to develop a universal influenza vaccine "to reduce the impact of pandemic and seasonal influenza around the world". — AFP

CLINIC
PAGE






248 33 199

Dr Sahar Ghannam

Dermatology consultant, skin treatment and laser



Timing: Saturdays and Wednesdays from 10 am to 5 pm
Sunday, Monday and Tuesday from 9:30 am until 5 pm
Thursday from 9:30 am until 1 pm.

Friday is a holiday.

Address: Fourth Ring Road - Abdallah Fadalah Street, Meidan Hawally, opposite fire station - block 35, building 31.

Clinic Phones: 25610407/ 409/ 314 Fax: 25610465
Mobile: 90974754/ 99166746

[saharpolyclinic](#) [Dr.saharghannamclinic](#) [Email: drsgderma@gmail.com](#)

To advertise on this Page, Call: 24833199 ext:101,102

Dr. Ala' Groof

Consultant Surgeon
Canadian board certified.

General Surgery, Vascular Surgery, Endoscopic/laparoscopic Surgery, Obesity/Metabolic Surgery, Tumor Surgery

- Treat patients with problems in the arteries and veins- varicose veins, narrowing/occlusion or ballooning of vessels.
- Treat patients with diabetic foot wounds and leg swelling.
- Treat patients in need of hemodialysis access and associated problems.
- Treat patients with gall bladder stones, abdominal swellings/tumors/hernias.
- Treat patients with problems of overweight- Sleeve Gastrectomy and gastric bypass.

We cover GIG insured patients- KPC/AFYA

Meidan Hawally - End of Fourth Ring Road - behind the Gas Station - Sabaek building, seventh floor
Tel: 25626000 - 65966000



WELCOME

Dr Tammam Abou Ali
Consultant ENT, Head & Neck, Facial Plastic Surgeon.

*Fellowship of the royal college of surgeons in UK and Ireland.
10 years work experience in King Fahad Hospital Kuwait.
In Head of ENT department in Herwadia Hospital Jeddah Kuwait
10 years work experience in UK and Ireland.*

- Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
- Septoplasty and turbinate reduction surgery by laser or RF
- Snoring and OSAP Surgery
- Rhinoplasty with open and closed techniques
- Microscopic Middle Ear Surgery and Tympanoplasty
- Salivary gland and parotid surgery
- Thyroid and parathyroid surgery
- Micro laryngeal surgery



1 888 883
www.qmc-kuwait.com

[qmckuwait](#)




To advertise on this Page

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102 or
Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617
or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

Dr. Husain Alenezi

-Board Certified Urologist.
-Endourology Society-Approved Fellowship in Endourology And Robotic Surgery At Western University, Ontario, Canada.



Expert in diagnosing and treating:

- 1- Urinary Stones (Kidney, Ureter & Bladder) By Endoscopy & Laser
- 2- Prostate Cancer And Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia
- 3- Lower Urinary Tract Symptoms In Males And Females
- 4- Tumors And Malignancies Of The Urinary Tract (Kidney, Adrenals, Ureter, Bladder And Testes)
- 5- Male Factor Infertility And Varicoceles (Microscopic Surgery)
- 6- Erectile Dysfunction

Contact Taiba Hospital: 1808088 94449452 Twitter: @DrHusain_UroI

Our Doctors Provide care For the entire Family

Book your appointments today!



Dr. Kiran Turak
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Zareena Zahir
Ophthalmologist



Dr. Hassan Khan
Senior Cardiologist



Dr. P. Seshendra Nath
Orthopedic Consultant (AUSTRALIA)
Specialized in Neck, Shoulder, Hip and Knee

EXIR MEDICAL SUBSPECIALITIES CENTER
Block No.4 Jahra - Kuwait

50721507 / 24551555
www.exircenterku.com

Tel : 24560057 / 24560059 info@exircenterku.com www.exircenterku.com

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times
248 33 199

DR. MOHAMMAD AL HAJRY
Canadian Board of Otolaryngology
Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastics.
Fellow of Royal College of Surgeons-Canada
A rare Subspecialty in Microscopic Ear Surgery, Cochlear implant & Ear diseases

- ◆ Diagnosis/ Treatment of General Ears, Nose, and Throat conditions in adults & pediatrics
- ◆ Minimally invasive Endoscopic sinus surgery including Balloon sinuplasty
- ◆ Minimally invasive Microscopic & Endoscopic Ear surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of Otolaryngology and Audiology (Hearing loss, Tinnitus & balance disorders)
- ◆ Facial Plastic and reconstructive surgeries (Rhinoplasty, Otoplasty, Fillers & Botox injections)
- ◆ Diagnosis & treatment of snoring & obstructive sleep apnea in clinic without surgery
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of voice and swallowing disorders
- ◆ Diagnosis & Treatment of Head and Neck benign & malignant tumors.

@Malhajry Salmiya, Belajat Street, Tel: 1881122

DR. FAHAD S BUHAIMED
Consultant Cosmetic Dermatologist & Hair Transplant, NY

ACADAMIC CERTIFICATES:

- o Dermatology board certified.
- o Fellowship training program in cosmetic dermatology and hair transplant, New York, USA.
- o Member of American cosmetic dermatology society.
- o Referee reviewer of International Journal of Dermatology.

SPECIALIZED IN:

- o Dermatology & Cosmetic Treatments.
- o Laser Treatments.
- o Hair Transplant & Restoration.
- o Body & Face Contouring.
- o Injectable Fillers & Botox.

SHARQ, Ahmad Alsheer st., Building 14, Floor 13.
Tel: (+965) 22060777
@DrFahamed, @Fahmedb, @fardonabb
Email: drfahamed@beautybeyond.com.kw

To advertise on this Page

Call: 24833199 ext:101,102
or Direct line: 24835616 / 24835617
or email: ads@kuwaittimes.com

Dr. Ahmad Alaeddine
Head of Cardiology departmenta at Dar Al Shifa hospital

- ◆ Consultant Interventional and conventional cardiologist.
- ◆ Specialised in the Diagnosis and treatment of all adult cardiac diseases, including those cases that need urgent intervention in Cath lab (primary angioplasty).

مستشفى دار الشفا
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
Tel:1802 555

daralshifa

DR KHALED ALMERRI
Consultant Interventional Cardiology
Department: Heart & Vascular Center

Specialized in:

- 1-Diagnostic and therapeutic cardiac catheterization (Angiography and Angioplasty). Aortic valve implantation.
- 2- Diagnosis and treatment of coronary artery diseases
- 3- Diagnosis and treatment of heart failure, cardiomyopathies and valvular diseases.
- 4-Diagnosis and treatment of high blood pressure and high cholesterol.
- 5- Diagnosis and treatment of syncope, palpitations and cardiac arrhythmias.
- 6- Non-invasive diagnostic procedures echocardiography, exercise stress test, and 24 hour blood pressure and Holter monitoring

alsalam.int.hospital

Know your Doctor
Otorhinolaryngology (E.N.T)
Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

- ◆ Laryngology Fellowship - Canada
- ◆ Fellow of the European Board Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the British Laryngological Association
- ◆ Member of the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery
- ◆ Member of the European Laryngological Society

Specialized in:

- ◆ Management of benign and malignant vocal cord lesions.
- ◆ Vocal cord augmentation.
- ◆ Treatment of spasmodic dysphonia.
- ◆ Adenotonsillectomy using latest techniques.
- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
- ◆ Surgery for the deviated nasal septum.
- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
- ◆ Treatment of allergic rhinitis.
- ◆ Treatment of snoring.
- ◆ Treatment of vertigo.

alsalam.int.hospital

IC INTERNATIONAL CLINIC
American Board Certified in General Surgery
Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
Higher specialization in Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary surgery & Organ Transplantation
Member of many prestigious surgical societies.

- ◆ Day case surgeries
- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Diagnosis, treatment and follow up of all surgical emergencies
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for morbid obesity (sleeve, gastric bypass)
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Hernia repair
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Surgery for reflux disease
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

Dr. Hani Haider General Surgery Consultant
http://www.international-clinic.com **Tel: 1886677** ic_kwt

Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
- ◆ Treatment of Colo-Rectal Diseases, Including Colorectal Cancer
- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFT Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally Invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

- ◆ American Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of American College of Surgery
- ◆ Canadian Board of General Surgery
- ◆ Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons of Canada
- ◆ American Board of Colo - Rectal Surgery
- ◆ American Board of Surgical Critical Care

Dr. Abdullah Al Haddad
Surgery Department
Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic & Colo - Rectal Surgeon

daralshifa
Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com

DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

Consultant Pediatrician-Canadian & American Board in Pediatrics-Canadian Board in Pediatric Emergency

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368 Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
Consultant of General Surgery
Laposcopic and Bariatric Surgery

Academic Certificates - Training

- ◆ Kuwait Board of General Surgery.
- ◆ (IFSO) member .
- ◆ Faculty member of (BEST).
- ◆ Member of Kuwait Surgical Association.

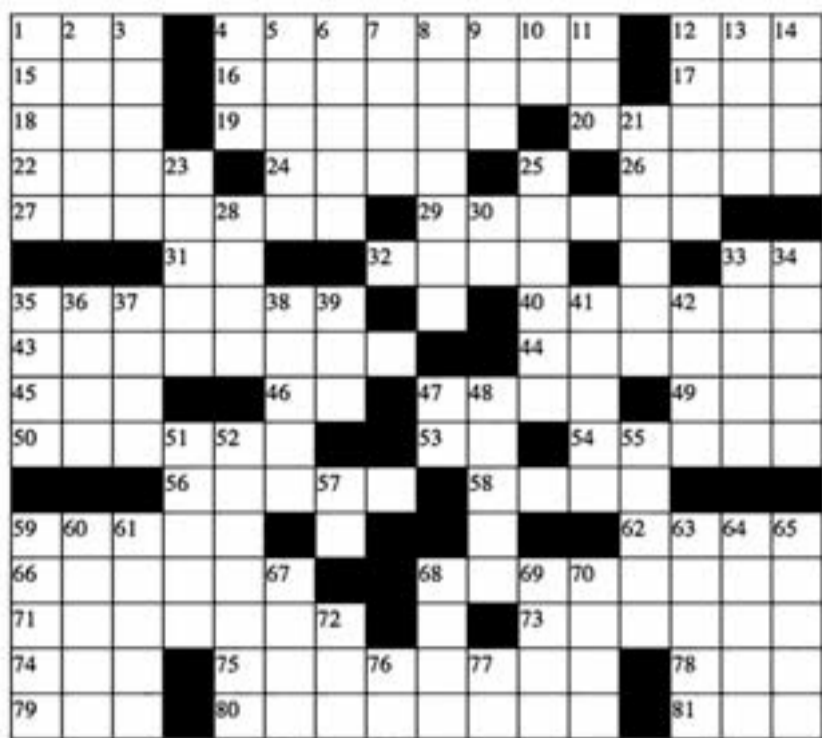
Scope of clinical Practice.

- ◆ Bariatric surgeries.
- ◆ Gallbladder stones surgeries.
- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
- ◆ G.I. surgeries.
- ◆ Thyroid and para - thyroid surgeries.
- ◆ Anal surgeries.

email: wbuhaimed@gmail.com **Tel.: 965 22269411/ Mob.: 965 99212228** Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

Stars

CROSSWORD 2141



ACROSS

1. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series.
4. Fodder harvested while green and kept succulent by partial fermentation as in a silo.
12. A diagrammatic representation of the earth's surface (or part of it).
15. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
16. Someone who prefers negotiations to armed conflict in the conduct of foreign relations.
17. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
18. (used of animals especially a horse) Of a moderate reddish-brown color n l.
19. (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
20. English comedienne and mistress of Charles II (1650-1687).
22. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
24. A body of poetry that conveys the traditions of a society by treating some epic theme.
26. Very dark black.
27. Rich Middle Eastern cake made of thin layers of flaky pastry filled with nuts and honey.
29. Resident of a college town not affiliated with the college.
31. An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
32. Having nine hinged bands of bony plates.
35. A piece of furniture with open shelves for displaying small ornaments.
40. A cloth used as a head covering (and veil and shawl) by Muslim and Hindu women.
43. (legend) Chalice used by Christ at the last supper.
44. (formal) By means of this.
45. A member of the Siouan people inhabiting the valleys of the Platte and Missouri rivers in Nebraska.
46. A son who has the same first name as his father.
49. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
50. Plaything consisting of a container filled with toys and candy.
53. A nonmetallic largely pentavalent heavy volatile corrosive dark brown liquid element belonging to the halogens.
54. A city in northeastern Ohio.
56. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
58. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
59. An ancient city on the Nile in Egypt.
62. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
66. African tree having an exceedingly thick trunk and fruit that resembles a gourd and has an edible pulp called monkey bread.
71. Capable of being added or added to.
73. A state in northwestern North America.
74. The federal agency that insures residential mortgages.
75. A skirt consisting of a rectangle of calico or printed cotton.
78. The longest division of geological time.
79. Being one more than nine.
80. Trees or shrubs of the families Ebenaceae or Sapotaceae or Stryacaceae or Symplocaceae.
81. A beverage made by steeping tea leaves in water.

DOWN

1. A wealthy man (who made his fortune in the Orient).
2. Small genus of Eurasian aquatic perennial herbs.
3. English economist (born in Austria) noted for work on the optimum allocation of resources (1899-1992).
4. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
5. A desert in southern Israel.
6. Minute floating marine tunicate having a transparent body with an opening at each end.
7. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
8. A spear with three or more prongs.
9. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
10. Of or relating to the stomach and intestines.
11. A graphical recording of the cardiac cycle produced by an electrocardiograph.
12. By chance.
13. A river in central Italy rising in the Apennines and flowing through Florence and Pisa to the Ligurian Sea.
14. English Quaker who founded the colony of Pennsylvania (1644-1718).
21. A German city near Leipzig.
23. Large swift fly the female of which sucks blood of various animals.
25. The basic unit of money in Zambia.
28. Type genus of the Aceraceae.
30. A Russian river.
33. A cruel and brutal fellow.
34. United States lawyer and politician who advocated free silver and prosecuted John Scopes (1925) for teaching evolution in a Tennessee high school (1860-1925).
36. French filmmaker (1908-1982).
37. Sweet pulpy tropical fruit with thick scaly rind and shiny black seeds.
38. The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
39. The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
41. The cardinal number that is the sum of five and one.
42. Dearly loved.
47. A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
48. Goddess of love and fecundity.
51. Jordan's port.
52. Based on sound reasoning or evidence.
55. A member of the Siouan people of the Kansas river valley in Kansas.
57. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
60. The 18th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
61. Chief god.
63. A useful or valuable quality.
64. A superior grade of black tea.
65. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
67. Divulge information or secrets.
68. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
69. An extravagantly enthusiastic review.
70. By bad luck.
72. (Old Testament) Adam's wife in Judeo-Christian mythology.
76. An associate degree in nursing.
77. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Aries, business is part of your mindset today and you dive in wholeheartedly. No job is too small to catch your eye. The practical has new meaning while you straighten out your life and your surroundings. Everything in its place is your motto now. Aries. You're checking out your health and taking on a new manner of eating. Perhaps a little exercise too for the new, reformed you. Family is more important to you in the scheme of things although they've always been. It's just that you're more thankful for your family now.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Taurus, health is in your thoughts today, what to eat, how much exercise, how to keep well and to stand up to the demands of your work life. This is only one portion of what you're looking at straightening out now. You want everything in order, a place for all is a must. Filing at work is something you may look forward to today because it gives you a better look at your overall work life. Taking care of business is strong now. Taurus. You're looking good.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Gemini, a friend or acquaintance might need your time today. You don't mind supplying your input to a problem plaguing them. This person knows they can get a genuine answer from you because you're more practical today and don't mind being truthful but not hurtful. Lately, you've gotten that kind of reputation. No wonder others seek you out. Health takes on more prominence in your life. You might be considering a more healthful diet or a new exercise routine. Gemini. Start tonight by walking and enjoying the scenery with a loved one.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Cancer, today may find you in an unconventional mood and in a clash of wills because of it. Play this sense of untraditional thinking down because if you display your true thoughts at work today, you could cause issues with your job. That is not where you want to be tomorrow. Taking care of business is. You're feeling alone but you're not. Your family and friends love you and even those at work think a great deal of you. Cancer. They love your love of thought and your speaking your mind. Just keep things a little quieter today. That healthful new diet might have you feeling better if you implement it.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Leo, sympathy and understanding are very important to you right now, especially when it's aimed your way. You consider all the help you get with that understanding from those at work and at home along with any other endeavor you might have. Leo, you want everything cleaned up from filing to getting your tools in order, to getting your lawn ready. And others are there to help. You feel good about straightening up your life and compartmentalizing it. Your independence is showing and with your witty behavior you have people listening and looking at you with admiration.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Virgo, at work you try to take care of business and wish everyone else would too. Don't your coworkers know that if they'd do their job it would carry over well into everyone else's work too? Watch what you say and do as you go about trying to straighten out others' faux pas. On a personal note, you're more concerned about health and diet now. Not that you need to lose weight but that you need to eat to be healthier. Virgo. That's a priority today. Take a walk tonight and let your mind wander.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Libra, the only control you have is over your own life. Remember those words because when you fly off the handle at work today, you'll realize that you're not in control. This too shall pass. Taking care of business is uppermost in your mind so don't allow others to dissuade you from that. Stand strong as you are and you know exactly how to do that. Libra. Someone close to you will notice your dilemma and be of assistance. Smile. The world will wonder what you're up to now.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Scorpio, you need order at work, home and anywhere you participate in life. Disorder just doesn't cut it and creates a very real sense of disharmony in your life. Getting things organized at work is your first order of business. You excel at getting others to participate. Coworkers will feel more attuned with their career too once the haphazardness of being lazy is amended. Dream while you organize. Give yourself time to think about tomorrow and what can happen in all directions in your life. Scorpio. Take care of your health. You may even be thinking of exercise and diet. Go for it.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Sagittarius, taking care of business is a high priority now as it's been for a little while now. But good news, you want another kind of business as well and will probably take care of that on your lunch break or tonight with a willing lover. People want to please you right now. That gives you the liberty and control to request anything you desire, be it work or otherwise. People see you as passionate and sympathetic to their needs too. That makes for a good leader which you are now. Sagittarius. Remember to be sweet and perhaps take someone to dinner for a job well done today.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

At work and for your life's relationship issues you'll find information is the style of currency you need for helping yourself now and later. It's all about associations. Neighbors bring you news you need and may even keep a disaster from occurring. You seek the calming of family you've grown up with. This may be on a sibling side because they're closer to your age and can relate to your issues. One of your siblings might not be someone you listen to though. Capricorn. There just might be a little sibling jealousy on his or her part. Try to rest your mind tonight.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Go to work and enhance your chances for making money even though job isn't where you want to be this Monday. Shopping isn't for you today at all. Making any sort of change isn't your best source of engagement. Getting through the day and having a nice time at home or out tonight is. Aquarius. You want to socialize with friends and your love but you don't have to have both. Being able to talk on a myriad of subjects is what you crave now. You want to hit topics such as politics and religion without fear of being ostracized. You can do this with those you love.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are a practical person with an abundance of common sense. You are able to use both of these qualities as assets to make your way to the top in the career world. You may be feeling a need to change your focus and tighten your circle a bit. You feel as if you need to spend more of your time and attention on you and yours. At this point you may have accomplished your goal in the workplace but feel you need to continue to work on your goal at home. This will be a balancing act to continue to make sure you thrive in every area of your life. Your communication skills are at all time high and you are able to relate and interact with ease to all who surround you.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Volleyball

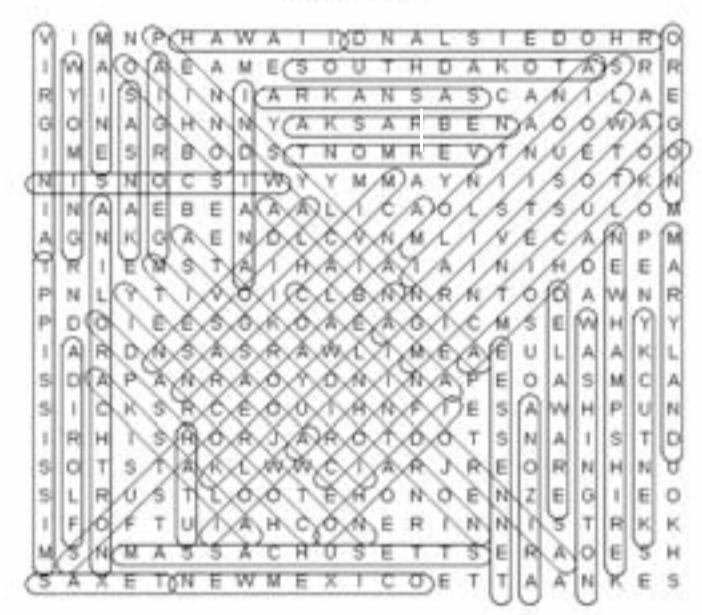
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 39 letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|------------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| APPROACH | FOOTWORK | QUICK HIT | SKY BALL |
| ASSIST | FORMATIONS | RALLY | SLIDE |
| ATTACK | FOWL | REFEREE | SPIKING |
| BLOCKING | GAME | ROTATION | SPORT |
| BUMP | HITTER | SAVE | SUBSTITUTION |
| CAPTAIN | KILL | SCORE | TANDEM |
| COACH | KNEE PADS | SERVE | TEAMS |
| DEFENCE | LIBERO | SETS | TOPSPIN |
| OFFENCE | MATCH | SETTER | TRAJECTORY |
| DOUBLE HIT | OFFENCE | SHANK | VERTICAL JUMP |
| DUMP | PASS | SHOT | WEAK SIDE |
| FAULT | PLAYERS | SIDELINES | WIPE |
| FLOATER | POINTS | SIDE OUT | |

Yesterday's Solution

USA States



- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| ALABAMA | INDIANA | NEBRASKA | SOUTH CAROLINA |
| ALASKA | IOWA | NEVADA | SOUTH DAKOTA |
| ARIZONA | KANSAS | NEW HAMPSHIRE | TENNESSEE |
| ARKANSAS | KENTUCKY | NEW JERSEY | TEXAS |
| CALIFORNIA | LOUISIANA | NEW MEXICO | UTAH |
| COLORADO | MAINE | NEW YORK | VERMONT |
| CONNECTICUT | MARYLAND | NORTH CAROLINA | VIRGINIA |
| DELAWARE | MASSACHUSETTS | NORTH DAKOTA | WASHINGTON |
| FLORIDA | MICHIGAN | OHIO | WEST VIRGINIA |
| GEORGIA | MINNESOTA | OKLAHOMA | WISCONSIN |
| HAWAII | MISSISSIPPI | OREGON | WYOMING |
| IDAHO | MISSOURI | PENNSYLVANIA | |
| ILLINOIS | MONTANA | RHODE ISLAND | |

The hidden sentence is: IN AMERICA ANY BOY MAY BECOME PRESIDENT AND I SUPPOSE IT'S JUST ONE OF THE RISKS HE TAKES

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2019



In this file photo German designer Karl Lagerfeld acknowledges the audience at the end of the Chanel spring/summer 2009 ready-to-wear collection show in Paris.

FASHION MOURNS DEATH OF THE KAISER KARL LAGERFELD



In this file photo German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld acknowledges the audience at the end of the Chanel 2017 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris.



In this file photo taken in March 1987 German designer Karl Lagerfeld poses with scissors in his fashion studio.

Superstar designer Karl Lagerfeld died at the age of 85 yesterday, his fashion label Chanel confirmed. The announcement came just a month after the man known as the "Kaiser" for his dominance of the industry did not appear at his Paris haute couture week show for Chanel, which he led since 1983. The prolific German had left many younger creators in the dust well into his 80s, turning out collections season after season for Fendi and his own label, as well as Chanel—the world's richest brand.

But in recent years Lagerfeld had visibly weakened, even if his extraordinary creative stamina showed little sign of flagging on the catwalk. Friends had always said that the prolific creator would die with a pencil in his hand, and just last week his own fashion line Karl Lagerfeld was still announcing new design collaborations.

But speculation about his health spiraled last month after he missed the first show of his life, with Chanel executives saying that he "was tired this morning". Italian designer Donatella Versace led the tributes as news of the Kaiser's death broke. "Karl your genius touched the lives of so many, especially Gianni and I," she wrote on Instagram, referring to her murdered brother who founded her brand.

Incredible talent

"We will never forget your incredible talent and endless inspiration. We were always learning from you," Bernard Arnault, the most powerful man in fashion and owner of the luxury giant LVMH, said he was "infinitely saddened" by the loss of a "very dear friend" and a "creative genius". "Fashion and culture have lost a major inspiration. He contributed to making Paris the fashion capital of the world and Fendi one of the most innovative of Italian brands," the billionaire said.



Picture taken on November 29, 1973 shows German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld posing with models after receiving an award in Krefeld, western Germany. — AFP photos

The singer and former French first lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy, who worked as a model for Lagerfeld, wrote a touching tribute to her former mentor on Instagram. "Thank you for all the sparkles ... thank you for bringing beauty and lightness in our world, so much color in the darkness, so much wit in our dull days. I think you wouldn't have wished for too many tears or too many flowers but you will be missed. The whole world and I will miss you."

With his powdered white pony tail, black sunglasses and starched high-collared white shirts, Lagerfeld was as instantly recognizable as his celebrity clients. Pop star turned fashion designer Victoria Beckham said that "Karl was a genius". He was "always so kind and generous to me both personally and professionally. RIP," the former Spice Girl added.

"It's a privilege to be able to say that you've worked with him, that you've listened to him speak, that you've talked with him, that you've been dressed by him," said the French actress and singer Vanessa Paradis on Instagram. "Karl Lagerfeld is an immense personality, someone out of the ordinary." French Interior Minister Christophe Castaner told RTL radio. — AFP



In this file photo effigies of German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld holding his cat Choupette are on display in Berlin.

"Fashion, culture have lost a major inspiration"



This photo shows Chinese blacksmiths melting steel.



This photo shows Chinese blacksmith carrying a bucket of molten steel as a shower of sparks descends behind them, on the eve of the Lantern Festival, which marks the end of Lunar New Year celebrations, in Nuanquan, in China's northern Hebei province. — AFP photos

BLACKSMITHS KEEP ALIVE THE FLAME OF CHINA'S MOLTEN STEEL 'FIREWORKS'

Blacksmith Wang De flings a ladle of molten steel against a cold brick wall, sparking a spectacle of white-hot light in the night sky and keeping alive the flame of a centuries-old Lunar New Year tradition. Fireworks were invented in China and have been a mainstay of Lunar New Year celebrations, but the remote village of Nuanquan in northern Hebei province has perfected an alternative kind of light show for the past 500 years.

For the performance, known as the Da Shuhua (Beating the Flower Tree), scraps of metal are melted at scorching temperatures and poured into a bucket, where performers like Wang create mesmerizing spectacles of light by tossing ladles of the liquid against the wall. The molten metal-heated to temperatures of up to 1,600 Celsius — creates spectacular

DA SHUHUA WILL BE PASSED ON

effects that fill Wang De with pride.

"When you see it, it'll affect you profoundly," the 55-year-old blacksmith, wearing a sheepskin jacket and protective glasses, told AFP. The three-day show is only put on around the Lunar New Year, but is a fast-growing attraction that now draws over a thousand people to each performance. Its future is not certain, however, as only four blacksmiths remain—and the youngest is 50-years-old. Few

people are interested in learning the skills—scars and burns are inevitable—and the younger generation is anyway tending to leave rural China for a better life in the cities.

"It's extremely dangerous and it doesn't make much money," said Wang, who also farms corn to supplement his blacksmith's income. He has passed on the craft to his son, but he has moved to Shanghai to seek a different career. Still, Wang De is hopeful he will return to keep the flame alive. "When we no longer can pull this off, people can learn from him. I have this confidence that (Da Shuhua) will be passed on." —AFP



This photo shows a piece of molten steel landing on the hat of a blacksmith.



In this file photo Pricewaterhouse Coopers partner Bradley Oltmanns supervises the counting of the ballots at the 83rd Academy Awards Final Oscar Ballot Mailing at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

Who votes for the Oscars, and how does it work?

The ballots are almost all in! Millions of television viewers around the globe will tune in Sunday to watch the Oscars, the glitziest night in showbiz, but most don't know how the winners are chosen. Less than 8,000 people in the entertainment industry select the honorees—and Tuesday marks the final day of voting. The following is a look at the complex, sometimes confounding process that leads to the winners of the 24 Academy Awards:

Who votes? -

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Los Angeles currently has 7,902 voting members. Academy membership is divided into 17 branches—actors, directors, producers, costume designers, etc.—and candidates must be active or otherwise have "achieved distinction" in the industry. Applicants must be sponsored by two Academy members representing their branch. Oscar winners and nominees are automatically considered for membership and don't need sponsors.

Applications are reviewed once a year by the Academy's Board of Governors, which has the final say on who joins the elite group. Members used to enjoy voting rights for life but since 2016, "voting status" has been limited to 10 years, and is renewable, to avoid having voters who are no longer active in the business. Lifetime voting rights only come after three 10-year terms. Those not active become "emeritus" members who cannot vote.

Who are the Academy members?

On principle, the Academy does not reveal its voting roll, though nothing prevents a member from saying he or she can cast a ballot. Following the #OscarsSoWhite uproar in 2015 and 2016, about the lack of black nominees, the Academy has endeavored to be more inclusive, vowing to double the number of women and minority members by

2020. In June 2018, the Academy took the unusual step of revealing the names of all 928 people invited to join. If they all agreed, 31 percent of Academy members are now women and 16 percent are people of color, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

How are the nominees chosen?

Members of each of the 17 branches pick the nominees in their area of expertise. The actors' branch—the largest voting group—submits nominations for the acting categories, directors submit nominations for best director and so on. Nominations for certain awards, like for best foreign language film and best animated feature, are chosen by special committees. The entire membership votes to choose the nominees for best picture.

How are the winners chosen?

All voting members choose the winners. In 23 of 24 categories, the person with the most votes is the winner. But when it comes to the coveted best picture award, the Oscar voters have since 2009 used a complicated preferential ballot system in which they rank the films from most favorite to least favorite. Anywhere from five to 10 nominees can be chosen: this year, eight films are in contention. If one film garners more than 50 percent of the vote outright, it automatically wins.

Otherwise, accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers uses an instant-runoff voting system that ensures that the film that enjoys the widest consensus among Academy voters wins. That means the count begins by eliminating the film that received the lowest number of first-place votes and redistributing those ballots to those voters' second choice. The process of elimination continues until there is one film left with more than 50 percent of the vote.

"The idea of the preferential ballot is to reflect the wishes of the greatest number of voters," explained Ric Robertson, who was the Academy's chief operating officer in 2009 when the process changed. "Otherwise you might end up with a movie that, say, 25 percent of the people love and the rest can't stand," he told the Los Angeles Times. "This way, hopefully, you have a winner that most people can live with." —AFP

The longest eight seconds: Riding a bull in Texas

Anyone who doubts that some seconds last a lot longer than others should try riding a bull at the Tuff Hedeman Bull Riding Tour in El Paso. As in all great rodeo classics, the rider has to hang on with just one hand as the bull bucks and kicks. Some 25 contestants tried their luck and skill Saturday night in El Paso: the challenge was to ride a bull for at least eight seconds without getting thrown and without touching it with their free hand.

The Tuff Hedeman Bull Riding Tour is named after a four time world bull riding champion, who today is retired. The competition carries a \$30,000 prize and cowboys come from far and wide to participate. For instance, Ben Jones, who injured his face during the event, is originally from Australia.



Roscoe Jarboe of New Plymouth Idaho stands atop railing during the opening ceremony.



A bull gets roped after bucking off its rider.

Inseparable from the American West

Juan Alonzo, a Texan, can also testify to the dangers of rodeo. He served in the US army for five years, and while on a tour of duty in Iraq, he trained on a wooden barrel. The rider grips a leather handle attached to a flat braided rope cinched around the bull. The bulls can weigh a ton. Inseparable from the American West and the myth of the cowboy, but in reality owing much to Spanish and Mexican vaqueros, rodeo celebrates balance and resistance to pain. —AFP



Australian rider Ben Jones gets tossed off his bull, 'Party Rock,' during the Tuff Hedeman Bull Riding Tour at the El Paso County Colosseum. — AFP photos



Kids participating in 'Stick Bull Riding' are pictured before the event at the El Paso County Colosseum.



Brady Portenier of Caldwell Indiana competes in the El Paso County Colosseum.

Lifestyle | Features

Young Russians seek health, highs in ice swimming

Diving into a long hole cut in the ice, Viktoria Tsuranova swims a few strokes and flashes a smile at the photographer capturing the moment for her Instagram account. She is one of a new generation of Russian "Walrus"-hardy swimmers who plunge into frozen rivers and lakes all through the winter. They swear it wards off not just colds but also cellulite, as well as giving them a rush of euphoria. Ice swimming in Russia has long been associated with older, usually Speedo-clad men.

But Tsuranova and other members of Moscow's "Walrus of the Capital" club are giving it a fashionable new image. "A sporty way of life is right on trend now," says Nikolai, drinking rosehip tea with honey in a grey onesie. He has just taken a dip in the L-shaped strip of water cut by the bank of the Moskva River, in the relatively balmy air temperature of minus two degrees C (28 degrees F).



Natalya Seraya, the founder and chief of Moscow's ice swimming club "Walrus of the Capital," dives into a strip of water cut in the ice by the bank of the Moscow River. — AFP photos



Osman Delibash, 26, a member of Moscow's ice swimming club "Walrus of the Capital," swims into a strip of water cut in the ice by the bank of the Moscow River.

A sporty way of life

"There's a kind of new wave of young people coming up now, following the generation that set the standard for walrus swimming—the older generation," Tsuranova, a fitness blogger, later posts a video and photo of her swim on her Instagram, which has 103,000 followers. Shivering a little in a fur coat after her swim, she says: "I'm just interested in the extreme, in testing myself. I'm scared every time." She says she hasn't been ill once over the winter. "It's a great way to prevent excess fat deposits and cellulite," Tsuranova adds.

Potential dangers

Others are more equivocal on the health effects of ice swimming, defined as taking a dip in water temperatures of zero to four degrees C. Russia's winter swimming federation, based in the Siberian city of Tyumen, lists joint health and good skin among the benefits. But it also warns that those with weak hearts or breathing problems should not attempt it.

A separate study by Tyumen scientists in 2015 found that the cold temperature caused stress on the body for people who swam in ice over a period longer than 10 years. Ice swimming is also practiced in Scandinavia and China, though it is particularly popular in Russia, where cold water is seen as a way to toughen people up. Millions of Orthodox believers in the country plunge into icy pools every Epiphany as part of a religious tradition.

My element

The facilities at the "Walrus of the Capital" club are minimal—a green-painted hut with tiny changing rooms heated by stoves. Depending on their experience, ice swimmers tend to stay in the water for anything from one to around five minutes. But the club is not just an amateur organization—it also trains swimmers to take part in international competitions held outdoors in winter. The club's star swimmer Osman Delibash, 26, trains regularly and recently made a video showing her sitting for an hour in the frozen-over pond in her garden.

This set a record recognized by a Russian association for the longest stint in cold water by a woman. She has also won a string of medals for swimming distances of up to a kilometer in sub-zero air temperatures. Delibash, who also teaches soldiers serving in extra-cold environments and performs as a stunt woman, walks around in the snow bare-legged in a bathrobe. "Water is my element—specifically icy water," she says.

Euphoria

The club's founder and Delibash's trainer, Natalya Seraya, gives out certificates to a group of new "walrus" as they crowd inside the steaming hut. Seraya, who has set Russian records for marathon ice swims, tells them:

"Nothing will boost your immunity more strongly than icy water." "This is the path to health and long years of active life." However, as part of her postgraduate studies, she is also researching, with the help of some of the club's ice swimmers, where the limits in its benefits lie.

"What's good for you, what's dangerous, where is the dividing line?" Seraya says, describing the outlines of her research into the effects of ice swimming. Swimmers also talk about experiencing psychological benefits from dips. "There's some kind of cleansing, as if you reset yourself back to zero," said first-time swimmer Tatiana Batalova, while blogger Tsuranova says she feels a "high" on emerging. "When you come out of the water you feel warm and joyful like you're on wings. You could even call it euphoria," says Seraya.—AFP



This photo shows film director Guo Fan, left, and American actor Michael Stephen Kai Sui attending a promotional event for Chinese sci-fi film "The Wandering Earth" in Qingdao in China's eastern Shandong province. — AFP

China sci-fi blockbuster blasts off at the box office

China's first space-age blockbuster is on a trajectory to become the country's highest-grossing movie ever and is being held up as evidence that big-budget home-grown films can now hold their own with Hollywood on pure spectacle. "The Wandering Earth" has made more than 3.9 billion yuan (\$576 million) in domestic box office as of Tuesday morning, putting it on course to eclipse the 5.7 billion yuan earned in 2017 by current champion, "Wolf Warrior 2".

Based on a novel by Chinese science fiction writer Liu Cixin, the film tells the story—through the eyes of Chinese protagonists—of a project to move the earth away from a dying sun using giant fusion-powered engines. Reportedly made with a \$50 million budget, the movie draws on pride in China's growing space program and is packed with advanced special effects. Director Guo Fan said that three-quarters of the more than 2,000 special-effects shots were created by Chinese staff.

Noted film commentator Wang Hailin told a recent movie seminar that "The Wandering Earth" showed that "the historic moment to rival Hollywood has arrived." "The Wandering Earth" has also made \$3.8 million in North America in the 11 days since its release, the highest for a Chinese film in nearly five years, the film's official social media account said on Sunday. With Chinese President Xi Jinping asserting tight control over arts and entertainment and pushing patriotic themes, any Chinese film depicting a future world is bound to draw political scrutiny.

But the movie largely ignores politics, with no mention of China's ruling Communist Party. Chinese heroes figure most prominently in the action, but the film's overall message is to encourage international collaboration. In a pivotal scene, a Chinese astronaut played by martial artist and actor Wu Jing—the star of the "Wolf Warrior" franchise—works closely with a Russian counterpart in a bid to save the world.

Co-produced by state-owned China Film Group Co. and Beijing Jingxi Culture and Tourism Co., "Wandering Earth" also shows frames—rare for a Chinese movie—of a destroyed Beijing and collapsing landmarks in Shanghai as apocalypse hits. Liu, the Hugo Award-winning author of the story, said in an interview with state television that China lacks good original science fiction, but that the strong "sense of future" in the rapidly modernizing country bodes well for the genre.

Director Guo conceded that Chinese sci-fi films still have a long way to go to keep pace with Hollywood's high standards, but he was hopeful. "Science fiction is the barometer of a nation.... If this nation wants to embrace the world and dream of the future, then the journey of Chinese sci-fi will be an ocean of stars and (have) a broad future," he told state television.—AFP

Tiny S Africa beach restaurant crowned best in world

A tiny beach restaurant in an isolated South African fishing village was named the best in the world on Monday. Chef Kobus van der Merwe, who did not begin to cook seriously until he was 30, forages every day for ingredients on the wild Atlantic shore of the Western Cape near his Wolfgat restaurant, where he also makes his own bread and butter. The Wolfgat—whose six mostly female staff have no formal training—opened just two years ago in a 130-year-old cottage and cave on the beach at Paternoster.

Its seven-course tasting menu costs the equivalent of 53 euros, a fraction of what you would pay at a top Paris table. But its humble setting, and Van der Merwe's belief in sustainable, back-to-basics cooking won over the judges of the inaugural World Restaurant Awards in the French capital. The 38-year-old, who can feed only 20 people at a sitting, told AFP, "I don't feel worthy. It's a big title. My staff who go out every day gathering herbs, succulents and dune spinach, should be here... It's their baby."



Chef Kobus van der Merwe, left, receives the best Restaurant of the year award for his restaurant "Wolfgat" in South Africa during the inaugural World Restaurant Awards at the Palais Brongniart in Paris. — AFP

"I can't wait to celebrate with them with a big glass of South African sparkling wine." With dishes such as twice-cooked laver (seaweed), angelfish with bokkum sambal and wild garlic masala, limpets, mussels and sea vegetables harvested within sight of its "stoep" (porch), Wolfgat also won the prize for best "Off-Map Destination".

The bearded Van der Merwe—a former journalist—said that apart from the influence of the subtle spices of local Cape Malay cooking, his philosophy was to "interfere as little as possible with the products, and to

keep them pure, raw and untreated. "It's hyper local cuisine but we try to come up with new flavors, like dune celery spice."

Cacio e pepe pasta

With "no kitchen hierarchy", he said, "we all do everything." "If you pick something you prepare it yourself and maybe then take it to the table and explain it to the customers." The chef, who said he would not be hiking up prices, said his win was a victory for the African "continent and my beautiful, diverse country". No-nonsense restaurants known for their affordable food featured prominently in the awards, set up by one of the 50 Best Restaurants list's own founders, Joe Warwick, to challenge its primacy.

While the 50 Best has been hit by allegations of lobbying and bias against French cuisine, the new awards claim to pride themselves on their "diversity and integrity", with 50 men and 50 women on the judging panels. Nor were they afraid to send up industry clichés with a range of tongue-in-cheek prizes for the "Tattoo-free chef of the year" (won by French culinary legend Alain Ducasse) and the "Tweezer-free kitchen of the year" (Bangkok's Bo.lan).

Sao Paulo's lively Mocoto, named for the Brazilian cow's hoof stew it serves, won the "No Reservations Required" category, while the house special went to Italy's rather ritzy Lido 84 — overlooking Lake Garda—which boils its "cacio e pepe" pasta.

French hat-trick

Andoni Luis Aduriz, regarded as Spain's most pioneering chef since El Bulli's Ferran Adria hung up his apron, won the "Forward Drinking" prize for the "stellar" good value wine list at his San Sebastian eatery, Mugaritz. London's Noble Rot took a subsidiary "small plate" prize for its red wine. The "Event of the Year" continued the down-to-earth theme, going to the Refugee Food Festival, which began in France and has now spread to 18 cities worldwide.

It completed a French hat-trick of top prizes with the legendary La Mere Brazier in the country's culinary capital of Lyon taking the "Enduring Classic" crown, while the top-end Paris table Le Clarence won for "Original Thinking". Italian superchef Massimo Bottura, whose Osteria Francescana tops the 50 Best list, took the "Ethical Thinking" honor for the Food for the Soul community kitchens he helped set up to fight food waste.

Ireland scored a surprise double, with two Cork restaurants bringing home prizes. Ballymaloe House won for best dessert trolley and the vegetarian mecca Paradiso for its hook-up with Gortnanain Farm. Judges including Rene Redzepi of Denmark's Noma restaurant, cookbook king Yotam Ottolenghi and Northern Irish chef Clare Smyth, the first woman to win three Michelin stars in Britain, also had to cogitate over which restaurant had the best Instagram account—that of Paris vegetable guru Alain Passard.—AFP

'Pregnant' cat burglar smuggled kittens through Taiwan airport

An alleged cat burglar from Hong Kong reportedly smuggled two stolen Persian kittens through Taiwan's biggest airport by hiding them under her clothes and pretending to be pregnant, local media said yesterday. The brazen theft prompted authorities at Taoyuan airport to launch an investigation into how the woman was able to breeze through security without her feline contraband being spotted. Apple Daily reported.

The Taiwanese tabloid said police obtained footage from the airport showing the woman, carrying a white bag, leaving a public washroom more plump than when she entered before passing through security. Cat breeder Chang Chin-yi said she noticed two kittens—Anngi and Da Lili—had been stolen on February 5.

"It was during feeding time, I went in... with bowls of meat and that's when I saw that the cats were missing," she

said inside her apartment in an upmarket suburb of New Taipei City where she has some 40 Persian cats that sell for as much as \$3,300 each. Chang immediately suspected a Hong Kong woman who planned to buy Anngi and had stayed at her house the month before.

Chang changed her mind on the purchase fearing the woman already had too many cats. "(She) went crazy, she was crying and screaming at me over the phone when she heard the news," she recalled. Surveillance footage outside Chang's apartment showed the woman leaving through a side door with a cat under each arm, before bundling them into a white bag. She confronted the woman on Facebook messenger who eventually admitted the theft, according to images of private messages Chang posted publicly on Facebook. AFP contacted the Hong Kong woman by phone on Tuesday and a man who identified himself as her hus-

band answered. He said he had no knowledge of his wife's plan and that a friend of Chang's who lives in Hong Kong is now looking after the two cats. "We are sorry that this incident happened," he told AFP. New Taipei City Police Department confirmed it was treating the incident as a burglary—although they have limited recourse given Hong Kong and Taiwan have no extradition agreement.

Taoyuan airport did not respond to requests for comment. Chang said she planned to travel to Hong Kong in the coming days to pursue legal options. It is not clear what Anngi and Da Lili's fate will now be. Cats arriving without documentation in Hong Kong must spend at least four months in quarantine or face being put down. Taiwan only accepts cats from Hong Kong that have certificate showing they are free of rabies. — AFP



Taiwanese cat breeder Chang Chin-yi plays with one of the many Persian cats she owns, during an interview at her home in New Taipei City. — AFP

Homegrown heavyweights shine at **London Fashion Week**



Serbian designer Roksanda Ilincic acknowledges the crowd after presenting her 2019 Autumn / Winter collection catwalk show at London Fashion Week in London. — AFP photos

The dreamlike elegance of Roksanda, earthy shades of JW Anderson and a rubber-inspired collection from Christopher Kane were among the highlights of the fourth day of London Fashion Week on Monday. Serbian designer Roksanda Ilincic, a growing force in the British fashion world since her 2005 debut, took over a large warehouse-like space in the West End Selfridges department store, a temple of fashion and luxury consumption for her much-anticipated show.

The designer, who regularly dresses A-List stars from the Duchess of Cambridge to Melania Trump and Emma Stone, dusted the catwalk with a fine coat of white sand, illuminated by artificial rainbows, to conjure a dreamy landscape. Her wardrobe echoed the laid-back, contemplative mood, with long, fluid dresses nonchalantly tied at the waist or shoulder, in the style of Roman togas.

Roksanda, who now operates in 40 countries, made sparing use of gabardine, silk and satin, which she fashioned into geometric compositions inspired by her architectural background. Renowned for her ability to create subtle and harmonious color combinations, the designer said backstage that her choice of a palette dominated by brown, gold and fuchsia was guided by "a lot of intuition".

"Obviously after that I have my very precious box with lots of color swatches, everything, some are fabrics, some are little swatches from books or postcards," she explained. Northern Irish designer JW Anderson also presented his fashion house's Autumn/Winter 2019 collection, calling it an "exploration of volume and proportions" and an "aristocratic continuation of the juxtapositions that imbue" his brand.

"JW Anderson is about going from one thing to the thing to the next, about polar opposites," he said backstage after the show. "The dresses with the thread going through, they just happened. We were improvising colors, it's kind of like we were taking a huge needle through the fabric. And it just stuck." His models strode down the catwalk wearing leather baseball caps high on their heads, with an earthy palette and a mixture of leathers and studding defining the collection.

Fashion's darker underbelly

Christopher Kane, recognized as a driving force behind the "British New Wave" of designers, injected a more experimental atmosphere into Fashion Week with his show at a deserted office building in the heart of London, evok-

ing fashion's darker underbelly. Small, ultra-short bustier dresses, enhanced with a touch of lace, were decorated with intriguing transparent pockets containing colored liquids while "human obsessions" were explored with fetish-inspired rubber balloons and latex gloves printed on T-shirts and dresses.

The Scottish designer is also a celebrity favorite, dressing Lady Gaga, actress Kate Bosworth and singer Dua Lipa. The increasing importance of Fashion Week reflects Britain's booming fashion industry, with revenues for women's ready-to-wear rising by 5.5 percent to £30.9 billion (\$39.6 billion) in 2018, according to the market analyst group Mintel. — AFP



Models present creations from Serbian fashion house Roksanda during her 2019 Autumn / Winter collection catwalk show at London Fashion Week in London.



LVMH vows new standards for crocodile farms

World leader in luxury goods LVMH announced Monday it would boost measures to ensure a "responsible supply" of crocodile skins. The giant French retailer said in a statement it would follow new standards for crocodile leather based on criteria "developed and validated by a committee of technical experts". This would include "the preservation of the species and the respect of local communities" as well as animal well-being, working conditions on the farms and the protection of the environment.

Three farms which supply an LVMH tannery in Singapore have already been certified as meeting the new standards. This "guarantees respect for animal well-being," including on-site treatment by veterinarians and quality of living space and food, the statement added. LVMH said it had already set up full traceability of skins. Some 20 farms, which supply the tannery, located in Australia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, the Philippines and the United States "will be certified by the end of 2020".

The move is "part of a global approach to breeding and proper treatment of the animals". Animal defense group PETA last April criticized LVMH over conditions for crocodiles and ostriches bred for the fashion industry. LVMH deplored any "association with practices it condemns". —AFP

Classifieds

Wednesday, February 20, 2019

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

STATE OF KUWAIT
 DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
 METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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



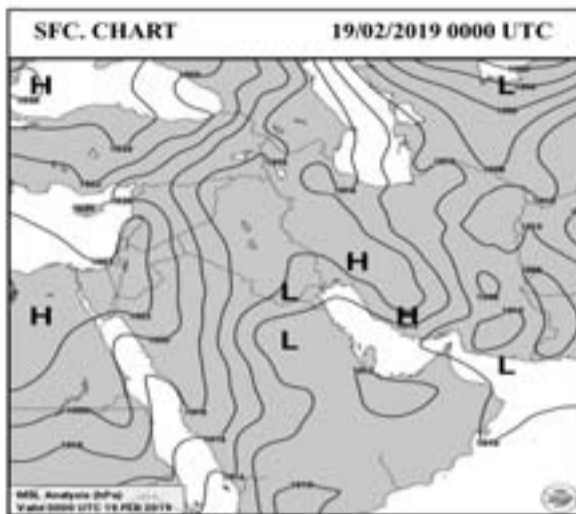
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Cool and Cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening at times especially over coastal areas variable wind to north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 40 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 38 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	19 °C	15 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	17 °C	11 °C
ABDALY	19 °C	09 °C
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C
JAHRA	19 °C	14 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	18 °C	13 °C
SALMIYAH	17 °C	15 °C
AHMADI	17 °C	15 °C
NUWAISIB	18 °C	14 °C
WAFRA	19 °C	12 °C
SALMY	17 °C	11 °C



DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	02/20	Fair	20 °C	07 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Thursday	02/21	Fair	21 °C	08 °C	VRB	06 - 22 km/h
Friday	02/22	Fair and some high clouds will appear later on	21 °C	08 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Saturday	02/23	Fair	21 °C	11 °C	NE-SE	12 - 32 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:05
Sunrise	06:24
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:15
Sunset	17:40
Isha	18:57

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	21 °C
MIN. Temp.	07 °C
MAX. RH	92 %
MIN. RH	26 %
MAX. Wind	NW 36 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Poshan Singh Thapar holder of Indian Passport No. L1458575 & Civil ID No. 272051502843 has changed my name from Poshan Singh Thapa to Poshan Singh Thapar hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Poshan Singh Thapar. (C 5446) 20-2-2019

I, Jackson Krishnankutty Raju holding Indian Passport No: R5455973 issued at Kuwait on 20/04/2017, residing at Ashok Nivas, Thottappally P.O, Alappuzha, Kerala - 688563, hereby changed my name as Jackson Krishnankunju Raju. (C 5445) 19-2-2019

FOR RENT

APARTMENT IN SALAM AREA
 Main road- Easy entrance and Exit Master room with bath + two bedrooms, bathroom + maid's room + kitchen + lift + parking
 Contact: Bu Mohammad 99024422

Kuwait Airways	171
Jazeera Airways	177
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536
Turkish Airlines	1884918
American Airlines	22087425
Jet Airways	22924455
FlyDubai	22414400
Qatar Airways	22423888
KLM	22425747
Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
British Airways	22425635
Air France	22430224
Emirates	22921555
Air India	22438184
Sri Lanka Airlines	22424444
Egypt Air	22421578
Swiss Air	22421516
Saudia	22426306
Middle East Airlines	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044

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

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 20/2/2019				Departure Flights on Wednesday 20/2/2019			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
FEG	341	Sohag	00:05	KAC	521	Al Najaf	13:35
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	JZR	123	Dubai	13:40
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	MSR	611	Cairo	14:10
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
KAC	102	London	00:50	RBG	218	Asyut	14:25
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:00	RQR	554	Alexandria	14:45
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	QTR	1079	Doha	15:00
MSC	403	Sohag	01:30	KNE	382	Taif	15:00
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:05
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KAC	673	Dubai	15:40
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	CLX	792	Hanoi	15:40
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	775	Riyadh	15:50
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC	743	Dammam	15:55
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	KNE	530	Jeddah	16:00
JZR	1736	Cairo	03:00	KAC	619	Doha	16:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	563	Amman	16:10
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
JZR	502	Lahore	03:35	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	785	Jeddah	16:40
KAC	796	Madinah	04:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:45
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	JZR	105	Bahrain	16:55
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	SAW	706	Dammam	17:00
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	SVA	505	Madinah	17:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	KAC	503	Beirut	17:15
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	KAC	361	Colombo	17:35
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	FDB	052	Dubai	17:40
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	KAC	283	Dhaka	17:45
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	JZR	405	Kochi	17:45
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	QTR	1073	Doha	17:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	343	Chennai	18:00
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	KA	C331	Trivandrum	18:00
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	KAC	615	Bahrain	18:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	JZR	733	Cairo	18:10
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:25	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
BAW	157	London	07:05	JZR	127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:35	JZR	403	Hyderabad	18:40
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	JZR	253	Amman	18:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	381	Delhi	18:55
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	JZR	721	Alexandria	19:20
KAC	358	Kochi	08:05	FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
KAC	304	Mumbai	08:20	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	08:45	QTR	1081	Doha	19:55
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	RJA	641	Amman	20:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
JZR	410	Delhi	10:00	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:50
IRA	665	Shiraz	10:10	KAC	301	Mumbai	20:55
SAW	703	Dammam	10:30	KAC	353	Bengaluru	20:55
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	JZR	401	Mumbai	20:55
SYR	341	Latakia	11:00	KAC	357	Kochi	21:00
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	JZR	723	Alexandria	21:05
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
JZR	122	Dubai	11:10	DLH	624	Dammam	21:30
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	RBG	214	Sohag	21:30
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
AHY	119	Baku	12:05	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:15
MSC	415	Sohag	12:10	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:15
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	JAV	622	Amman	22:15
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:25
MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	KAC	303	Mumbai	22:30
RBG	213	Sohag	13:45	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
KAC	774	Riyadh	14:00	KAC	383	Delhi	22:30
RBG	553	Alexandria	14:05	KLM	445	Bahrain	22:50
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10	KAC	411	Bangkok	23:00
CLX	792	Luxembourg	14:10	UAE	860	Dubai	23:00
				JAI	573	Mumbai	23:00
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:25
				SVA	515	Riyadh	23:30
				SVA	503	Jeddah	23:45

Sanders launches second run for US presidency

WASHINGTON: Senator Bernie Sanders launched his second bid for the White House yesterday, taking direct aim at Donald Trump in his announcement video. Sanders, 77, joins an already crowded field of candidates vying for the Democratic nomination to run against Trump in 2020. A self-described democratic socialist, Sanders made an unsuccessful run for the presidency in 2016 whose progressive themes inspired a younger generation of voters.

"We are living in a pivotal and dangerous moment in American history. We are running against a president who is a pathological liar, a fraud, a racist, a sexist, a xenophobe and someone who is undermining American democracy as he leads us in an authoritarian direction," Sanders said in a video. "Now more than ever, we need leadership that brings us together, not divides us up," he said.

Sanders, an independent who caucuses with Democrats, highlighted policies he will advocate on the campaign trail: Healthcare for all, raising the minimum wage to a "living wage," and combatting climate change. "Our campaign is about transforming our country and

creating a government based on the principles of economic, social, racial and environmental justice," Sanders said. He vowed to take on "powerful special interests that dominate our economic and political life," listing Wall Street, health insurance companies and the military-industrial complex.

Trump's campaign quickly hit back, saying that while Democrats may have embraced ideas Sanders advocates, the American people have not. "Bernie Sanders has already won the debate in the Democrat primary, because every candidate is embracing his brand of socialism," the Trump campaign said in a statement. "But the American people will reject an agenda of sky-high tax rates, government-run healthcare and coddling dictators like those in Venezuela."

Sanders gave an outline yesterday of how he will campaign. "What I promise to do is, as I go around the country, is to take the values that all of us in Vermont are proud of - a belief in justice, in community, in grassroots politics, in town meetings - that's what I'm going to carry all over this country," he said in an interview with Vermont Public Radio. In his video,

Sanders said he aims to run "an unprecedented grassroots campaign of one million active volunteers in every state in our country".

Sanders benefitted from just such a groundswell in 2016 but lost the Democratic nomination to establishment favorite Hillary Clinton. She in turn was defeated by Trump, a billionaire who campaigned as a populist outsider. Sanders garnered passionate support among young liberals with his calls for universal healthcare, a \$15 minimum wage and free public university education.

In his announcement video, Sanders said the policies he advocated in 2016 campaign have made their way into the political mainstream and it is now time to "complete that revolution". "We were told that our ideas were 'radical' and they were 'extreme,'" he said.

"We were told that Medicare for all, a \$15-an-hour minimum wage, free tuition at public colleges and universities, aggressively combatting climate change, demanding that the wealthy start paying their fair share of taxes - we were told that all of these concepts were ideas that the American people would never accept," Sanders said. "All of these policies and more are now



Bernie Sanders

supported by a majority of Americans. Together, you and I and our 2016 campaign, began the political revolution. Now it is time to complete that revolution and implement the vision that we fought for." — AFP



KHARTOUM: A Sudanese protester flashes the victory sign during an anti-government demonstration on Feb 15, 2019. — AFP

Sudan protesters remain resilient, Bashir unbowed

KHARTOUM: Sudanese protester Osman Sulaiman has taken to the streets of Khartoum chanting "overthrow, overthrow" almost daily since demonstrations erupted against President Omar Al-Bashir's iron-fisted rule in December. And he insists he has no intention of stopping now. "We have to fight our battle if we have to secure our future and the future of our country," Sulaiman, an engineering graduate who has been unemployed for years, told AFP. As the protest campaign against Bashir's regime entered its third month yesterday, demonstrators are pressing on with rallies despite a show of defiance from the veteran leader and a sweeping crackdown by the authorities. Officials say 31 people have died in protest-related violence so far, while Human Rights Watch says at least 51 have been killed including medics and children. Hundreds of protesters, opposition leaders, activists and journalists have been jailed by agents of the feared National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS).

"The protesters' resilience has been very impressive," says Murithi Mutiga of International Crisis Group (ICG). "Two months have passed, but the movement's momentum has remained and participation has grown geographically and across socio-economic classes." On Sunday, scores of protesters rallied in Khartoum chanting their catch-cry "freedom, peace, justice" as police fired tear gas.

Demonstrations first erupted on Dec 19 in the farming town of Atbara against a government decision to triple the price of bread. But the rallies swiftly mushroomed into a major challenge to Bashir's three-decade rule, with those taking part demanding his resignation. From the provinces to the streets of the capital and its twin city Omdurman the demonstrations have spread through villages, towns and cities across the east African nation.

They have drawn in a cross section of society including middle-class professionals, agricultural labourers, youths and Bashir's political opponents - with thousands of women and men rallying across the country on some days. Only the three conflict zones of Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan have remained largely devoid of mass demonstrations.

"Despite the violence unleashed by the regime, the movement has extended even to the rural areas," said Mohamed Yusuf, a spokesman for the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), an umbrella group of

unions that has spearheaded the campaign. "We believe the movement will not stop as new groups have joined it." Sudan's main opposition National Umma Party led by former premier Sadiq al-Mahdi has backed the campaign and called for Bashir to step down.

Bashir swept to power in an Islamist-backed coup in 1989 that overthrew the elected government of Mahdi. The SPA has called on political groups to join their movement by signing a "Document for Freedom and Change". The text outlines a post-Bashir plan including rebuilding Sudan's justice system and halting the country's dire economic decline, the key reason for the nationwide demonstrations. Sudan's financial woes were long a cause of popular frustration before the anger spilled onto the streets after the bread price hike. Soaring inflation along with acute foreign currency shortages have battered the economy, especially after the independence of South Sudan in 2011 took away the bulk of oil earnings. Protest campaigners have kept their supporters motivated by announcing rallies on behalf of detained comrades or to honor "martyrs" killed in the protests.

If security forces have prevented protesters from reaching downtown Khartoum, then they have rallied in outlying neighborhoods, sometimes at night. On occasion, the calls to protest have failed to mobilize people, but there have also been demonstrations that have seen crowds of professors, doctors, engineers and teachers chanting anti-Bashir slogans.

The president's ruling National Congress Party (NCP) insists that after two months the campaign has begun petering out. "The protests continued for a long time but the reality is that demonstrations have now slowed," said NCP spokesman Ibrahim Al-Siddiq. "This is because protesters lack popular support." Analysts say continuing support from the security forces for the regime and Bashir's own defiance have created a deadlock. "The president remains very stubborn and the protesters remain very determined," said Mutiga of ICG. "What we now have is a clear stalemate."

Bashir has countered the demonstrations with his own rallies, promising economic development in the country and promoting peace in its war zones. Dismissing calls for his resignation, he has insisted that the ballot box is the only way to change the government. The 75-year-old leader is considering a run for a third term in an election scheduled in 2020. For now, those taking to the streets say they will keep up the pressure. Aya Omer, a resident of Khartoum's eastern district of Burri, shows no sign of giving up. "We will continue with our struggle because we deserve a better life," the 28-year-old woman said. "I'll continue to protest until our mission to overthrow this regime is achieved." — AFP

New universe map unearths...

Continued from Page 1

Radio astronomy allows scientists to detect radiation produced when massive celestial objects interact. The team used the Low Frequency Array (LOFAR) telescope in the Netherlands to pick up traces - or "jets" - of ancient radiation produced when galaxies merge. These jets, previously undetected, can extend over millions of light years. "With radio observations we can detect radiation from the tenuous medium that exists between galaxies," said Amanda Wilber, of the University of Hamburg. "LOFAR allows us to detect many more of these sources and understand what is powering them."

The discovery of the new light sources may also help scientists better understand the behavior of one of space's most enigmatic phenomena. Black holes - which have a gravitational pull so strong that no matter can escape them - emit radiation when they engulf other high-mass objects such as stars and gas clouds. Tasse

said the new observation technique would allow astronomers to compare black holes over time to see how they form and develop. "If you look at an active black hole, the jets (of radiation) disappear after millions of years, and you won't see them at a higher frequency (of light)," he said. "But at a lower frequency they continue to emit these jets for hundreds of millions of years, so we can see far older electrons."

The Hubble telescope has produced images that lead scientists to believe there are more than 100 billion galaxies in the Universe, although many are too old and distant to be observed using traditional detection techniques. The map created by the LOFAR observations, part of which was published in the journal *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, contains data equivalent to ten million DVDs yet charts just two percent of the sky.

The LOFAR telescope is made up of a Europe-wide network of radio antenna across seven countries, forming the equivalent of a 1,300-km diameter satellite dish. The team plans to create high-resolution images of the entire northern sky, which they say will reveal as many as 15 million as-yet undetected radio sources. "The oldest objects in the Universe are around 11-12 billion light years old," said Tasse. "So we are going to see lots more of these objects." — AFP

Saudi crown prince lands in Delhi amid...

Continued from Page 1

state Adel Al-Jubeir said in Islamabad on Monday. Before Thursday's attack, the agenda for the crown prince's visit had been dominated by oil and other key investment decisions. Saudi Arabia currently supplies about 20 percent of India's crude oil and it would like to definitively push aside archrival Iran as a source. Iran at one stage last year overtook Saudi Arabia among India's suppliers but US sanctions since have severely hit the Islamic Republic's oil business.

Modi has also wooed Saudi investment in recent

years for flagship infrastructure programs. "I think even in the backdrop of this attack, the economic ties - which are beneficial to both the countries - will remain the focus of the meetings," Kabir Taneja, associate fellow with Observer Research Foundation, a New Delhi-based think-tank, told AFP. "India and Saudi Arabia know what they want from each other: India will be looking for a leverage on oil pricing while Saudi Arabia, which is trying to diversify its economy, is looking at access to rising India's market," he added. Taneja said India would aim for Saudi Arabia's "unconditional support to Pakistan".

The crown prince is on a three-country Asian tour. Prince Mohammed is to leave India late today and is expected to spend two days in China. Analysts have said the tour is part of a pivot to rising Asia as a growing oil market and a message to the West. — AFP

Cairo bombing kills 3 policemen...

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait stands on the side of brotherly Egypt and affirms its support for whatever measures it may take for safeguarding its security and stability, he added. The source expressed condolences to families of the victims and wished the injured quick recovery.

Monday evening's blast damaged several shops in the alleyway which lies in an area frequented by foreign tourists. "My shop's front and windows were destroyed," said Kareem Sayed Awad, a barbershop owner. "The problem is not only that but also that people died. This is a tourist area and such incidents affect it," he said.

Egypt's tourism industry, which had already been hit by the turmoil that followed the Arab Spring revolution of 2011, has been further damaged by a series of deadly attacks against foreign tourists by suspected Islamist militants. In December, three Vietnamese holidaymakers and their Egyptian guide were killed when a homemade bomb exploded on their bus near the famed pyramids in Giza.

Authorities have made major efforts to lure tourists back, touting a series of archaeological finds and a new

museum next to the pyramids, as well as enhanced security at airports and around ancient sites. Tourism has slowly picked up, with tourist arrivals reaching 8.3 million in 2017, compared with 5.3 million the previous year, official statistics showed. But that figure was still far short of the record influx of 2010 when more than 14 million visitors flocked to see the country's sites.

Since the 2013 ouster by the army of elected Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, Egypt has been battling a persistent insurgency, centered in the Sinai Peninsula. In Feb 2018, security forces launched a major operation against the local affiliate of the Islamic State group, which has been mainly focused on volatile North Sinai province but has also targeted militant cells elsewhere in the country.

Egypt has often announced the killing of militants during Operation Sinai 2018, but statements on significant losses by the security forces have been rare. On Saturday, the army reported that an attack on a checkpoint in North Sinai left 15 soldiers dead or wounded and seven of the suspected assailants killed. Yesterday, the interior ministry announced that 16 suspected militants had been killed during raids in the provincial capital El-Arish. It did not say when. The raids, on a deserted building in the city's Al-Obaydat neighborhood and a house under construction in the Abu Eita district, targeted suspected "terrorist cells" in the city and triggered firefights in which the 16 were killed, the ministry said. — Agencies

58,000 new expats entered the...

Continued from Page 1

undersecretary for residency affairs Maj Gen Tala Maarafi. Speaking on the sidelines of the graduation

ceremony of police cadets, Maarafi told Al-Qabas daily said the change will take effect soon after special arrangements with various foreign embassies and airlines in Kuwait. Maarafi added that the new measure, which will include residency visas and departure notifications, will help stop sponsors from holding expats' passports and put an end to this problem for good. He said the measure will also consume fewer passport pages.

Khan warns against attack, urges talks...

Continued from Page 1

This is a lame excuse," said an Indian foreign ministry statement. "We demand Pakistan to stop misleading the international community and take credible and visible action against the perpetrators of Pulwama terrorist attack."

Since last Thursday's attack on the military convoy in the Pulwama district of Kashmir, Indian forces have launched widespread operations against Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), which claimed responsibility for the bombing. Three JeM leaders, four Indian soldiers and a civilian were killed in a gun battle Monday, according to Indian officials. The Indian military has said the bombing was "masterminded" by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence branch.

Pakistan has denied any role in the attack and in a nationally televised address, Khan said that if his country was attacked, "Pakistan won't just think to retaliate. Pakistan will retaliate. And after that where will it head?" Thousands have marched in Indian cities in recent days to pay homage to the dead and demanding a firm government response. The Indian government has already withdrawn trade privileges for Pakistan, ended police protection for four Kashmiri separatist leaders, and halted some cross-border services.

Khan said his Indian counterpart, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, would get a boost in a looming national election if New Delhi staged an attack on Pakistan. It was "easy to start a war", Khan said, while expressing hope that "better sense will prevail". Khan said that if any militant group was using Pakistani soil to launch attacks, "its enmity is with us. This is against our interest".

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since independence from Britain in 1947 and has been a constant source of trouble since. Both countries claim the former Himalayan kingdom in full and have fought two wars over it. Tens of thousands of people, mainly civilians, have died since an armed uprising erupted in 1989. India has long accused Pakistan of harboring militants who launch attacks on its soil, including banned groups such as JeM and Lashkar-e-Taiba, blamed for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attacks which left scores dead.

Pakistan was also accused by Iran last week of sheltering the perpetrators of an attack which killed 27 Revolutionary Guards, while Kabul and Washington have long claimed that Islamabad offers safe haven to the Afghan Taleban. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi pleaded yesterday with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to intervene in the escalating row. "The United Nations must step in to defuse tensions," wrote Qureshi in a message shared with journalists.

Pakistan's ambassador to Afghanistan warned that any Indian action against its neighbor could disrupt peace talks with the Taleban. Pakistan is "playing a very important role" in the months-long push led by the US for talks between the Taleban and the Afghan government, said Zahid Nasrullah. — Agencies

Sports

DeBrincat's hat trick helps Blackhawks outscore Senators

Bruins blow lead, then edge Sharks in OT

CHICAGO: Alex DeBrincat scored a hat trick as part of a five-point night to lead the Chicago Blackhawks to a wild 8-7 win over the visiting Ottawa Senators on Monday. The offensive barrage started early, as the teams combined for nine goals in the first period. It was the highest-scoring frame in the NHL this season, and the 12th-highest scoring period in league history. Starting goalies Collin Delia of Chicago (three goals on 10 shots) and Anders Nilsson of Ottawa (four goals on 12 shots) were both pulled before the first period was complete. Chicago's Patrick Kane recorded a goal and two assists to extend his points streak to 18 games, the longest streak by an NHL player this season. It was also Kane's 17th straight game with at least one assist, tying him with Wayne Gretzky and Paul Coffey for the third-longest assists streak in NHL history. Dylan Strome had a goal and two assists for Chicago. Brandon Saad and Jonathan Toews each had a goal and an assist, and Gustav Forsling also scored for the Blackhawks. Colin White and Thomas Chabot each scored twice for the Senators, with White also recording an assist. Mark Stone had a goal and an assist, and Bobby Ryan and Rudolf Balcers produced a goal apiece.

LIGHTNING 5, BLUE JACKETS 1

Nikita Kucherov amassed his second five-point game this season as Tampa Bay won its sixth straight, beating host Columbus. The NHL's scoring leader with 99 points, Kucherov scored two goals and added assists on all three goals by his teammates. He has collected 18 points (seven goals, 11 assists) in his past five games. Brayden Point scored twice in the first 46 seconds of the third period-once on the power play-and had an assist for the Lightning, and Steven Stamkos chipped in with a power-play goal. Tampa Bay's Andrei Vasilevskiy made 39 saves, losing his shutout bid when Lukas Sedlak scored 1:45 remaining.

Squash queen Nicol David to retire

KUALA LUMPUR: Eight-time world champion Nicol David has announced she will retire at the end of the 2018-19 squash season, bringing down the curtain on the Malaysian's illustrious career. The 35-year-old is the most successful woman squash player of all time and spent an unprecedented nine years as world number one between 2006-2015.

David said she had thought long and hard about calling it a day. "This decision has been thought through for quite some time and I do know that this is my last season," David said in a statement posted late

CAPITALS 3, KINGS 2

Alex Ovechkin scored his league-leading 41st and 42nd goals of the season as Washington won at Los Angeles. Phoenix Copley made 26 saves for his second victory in seven days against the Kings. Brett Connolly also scored, and John Carlson had two assists for the Capitals. Alex Iafallo ended Copley's bid for his second shutout of the season when he scored with 11:40 left in the third period to cut Los Angeles' deficit to 3-1. Ilya Kovalchuk scored with 28 seconds left, but the Capitals hung on.

BRUINS 6, SHARKS 5 (OT)

Charlie McAvoy scored the overtime winner as Boston recovered after blowing a three-goal, first-period lead, tying the game late in regulation and then claiming a victory at San Jose. Tuukka Rask made 33 saves for the Bruins, who have won six consecutive games. Jake DeBrusk had a goal and two assists for Boston, and David Krejci tallied three assists. Joe Thornton had a hat trick for San Jose. Joe Pavelski added a goal and two assists, and Logan Couture compiled a goal and an assist.

AVALANCHE 3, GOLDEN KNIGHTS 0

Semyon Varlamov made 40 saves, Andrew Agozzino scored his first NHL goal and added an assist, and Colorado beat Vegas in Denver. Tyson Jost and Matt Calvert also scored to help Colorado end a six-game home losing streak. The shutout was the second of the season for Varlamov and the 25th of his career. Malcom Subban stopped 35 shots for the Golden Knights, who have lost eight of their past 11 games.

FLAMES 5, COYOTES 2

Mark Giordano scored a goal and added an assist to reach a career high for points in a season as host

Monday on the website of the Professional Squash Association, the sport's governing body.

"My mind and body have battled it out to stay at the very top of my game for such a long time that I feel that I only have this last big push left for the final season to give it all I have before I enter the next phase of my life."

David, the darling of Malaysian sports fans, has also won five British Open titles, two Commonwealth Games gold medals, five Asian Games gold medals and three World Games gold medals in a glittering career spanning two decades.

David's reign atop the PSA world rankings came to an end in September 2015, but she continued to break records, achieving the longest unbroken run inside the world's top five at 143 months. David's final tournament will either be the British Open in Hull in May or the following month's World Tour Finals if she qualifies.

Iguodala replaces LeBron James as NBPA first VP

LOS ANGELES: With LeBron James' term over, Golden State Warriors forward Andre Iguodala was elected first vice president of the National Basketball Players Association on Monday. Iguodala has been a vice president on the NBPA executive committee since 2013.

"I am honored to be chosen by my peers to step into this position and take on a larger responsibility within the NBPA," Iguodala said in a statement released by the union. "I look forward to continuing my work with (NBPA executive director) Michele (Roberts), Chris Paul and the Executive Committee to accomplish the best possible outcomes for the union and our future members."

Paul, a Houston Rockets star, is currently serving a four-year term as the NBPA's president. Also on Monday, Milwaukee Bucks guard Malcolm Brogdon, Boston Celtics guard Jaylen Brown and Charlotte Hornets center Bismack Biyombo were elected VPs on the executive committee, replacing free agent Carmelo Anthony, Warriors guard Steph Curry and Iguodala. All three's terms expired. All newly elected officials begin serving immediately.

"Malcolm, Jaylen and Bismack have all shown a great commitment to the union since they arrived in the league," Paul said in a statement. "I have no doubt they will bring a fresh perspective and passion to the Executive Committee and I am excited to start working with them."

The rest of the NBPA executive committee leadership consists of San Antonio Spurs big man Pau Gasol, Portland Trail Blazers guard CJ McCollum and Los Angeles Clippers guard Garrett Temple (all VPs), as well as Minnesota Timberwolves forward Anthony Tolliver, who is the committee secretary-treasurer.

This is not the first time James and Iguodala have made headlines together. In the 2016 NBA Finals, James made one of the greatest defensive plays in recent NBA history, chasing down Iguodala to block a layup attempt late in Game 7 to help preserve the Cavaliers' championship-the first major professional sports championship won by a Cleveland team in 52 years. — Reuters



COLUMBUS: Nikita Kucherov #86 of the Tampa Bay Lightning beats Joonas Korpi #70 of the Columbus Blue Jackets for a goal during the first period on Monday at Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio. Tampa Bay defeated Columbus 5-1.—AFP

Calgary beat Arizona. Mike Smith made 27 saves for the Flames, who have won two straight games to maintain their hold on top spot in the Western Conference. Giordano, the club's 35-year-old captain and Norris Trophy contender, now has 57 points on the season,

one more than he produced in 2015-16. The Flames also got goals from Derek Ryan, Austin Czarnik, Michael Frolik and Mikael Backlund, and rookie Rasmus Andersson collected a pair of assists. Conor Garland and Jordan Weal scored for the Coyotes. — Reuters

Hunt gamble paying off already: Waratahs

SYDNEY: The New South Wales Waratahs' decision to take a chance on Karmichael Hunt looks to be paying off already after the back delivered a solid performance in their Super Rugby opener, assistant coach Simon Cron has said.

The Waratahs handed the 32-year-old a one-year contract last month, giving him the chance to revive his career after he was frozen out at the Queensland Reds for an off-field indiscretion at the tail-end of 2017.

Hunt had picked up a four-match ban and A\$10,000 (\$7,171) fine from Rugby Australia last year after he escaped conviction for possession of a prescription anxiety disorder medication.

Despite being out of Super Rugby for a year and having the briefest of pre-seasons, Hunt did not look out of place against the Wellington Hurricanes on Saturday, impressing in a 20-19 loss at Brookvale Oval.

"He's pretty solid, both defensively and in attack," Cron told reporters at Waratahs training on Tuesday. "He's really good in contact, he makes that first hit and then keeps going, which is great for us."

"If anyone gets on the ball in that midfield he cleans out really hard. All his contact zone stuff is brilliant, and that's important for us, both in attack and defence."

'He's been a great addition'

Hunt was teamed up with returning Wallabies veteran Adam Ashley-Cooper in the midfield for the game against the Hurricanes but will link up with Kurtley Beale against the Sunwolves in Tokyo on Saturday.

Ashley-Cooper suffered a head injury against the Hurricanes and was undergoing Rugby Australia's return-to-play protocols, Cron said.

"He will probably come over (with) us, but I think he is going through medical to make sure he is still ok," Cron added. "I would suggest he may just be a travelling extra."

Hunt would move to centre—he started at inside centre last week—to accommodate Beale, who appears more comfortable in the number 12 jersey.

Cron had no doubts that Hunt, who also played international rugby league and top-class Australian Rules, would be able to slot in to a variety of roles for the Sydney-based side.

"As you saw from Karmichael's game at the weekend, he'll add a lot, wherever he plays for us," Cron said.

Wallabies prop Sekope Kepu, who suffered a throat injury in the opening match and had to be replaced, is likely to be available for the Sunwolves game.

Cron said the Waratahs would look to be more clinical than they were against the Hurricanes.

"The boys are pretty gutted," Cron added. "We had a few opportunities where we should have capitalised and won that. But we didn't, so now it is about what we need to fix and get better at." — Reuters



Gulf Bank brings exclusive experience to customers at Porsche World Roadshow

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank hosted priority customers at the 2019 Porsche World Roadshow, in Kuwait Motor Town. The once-in-a-decade event is the first roadshow to be conducted by Porsche in 2019 and provided Gulf Bank customers with the exclusive opportunity to enjoy the full Porsche Experience.

Following a welcome and briefing on the day ahead, guests of the bank enjoyed a day of test-driving Porsche models in a professional atmosphere. Accompanied by world-class PAG instructors, guests participated in four driving sessions, from sports car handling and slalom braking to off-roading. The day ended with an award ceremony presenting them with certification of their participation in the prestigious Porsche World Roadshow.

Ahmad Al Amir, Assistant General Manager for External Communications, Gulf Bank, commented on the occasion: "Gulf Bank's customers are at the heart of our operations, through the 2019 Porsche World Roadshow, we were able to demonstrate our appreciation for our priority customers, with a thrilling, exclusive experience. We would like to thank Porsche for treating our customers to the full



Ahmad Al Amir

Porsche Experience, and we hope that everyone who attended enjoyed the event."

For more information on Gulf Bank, visit the bank's website at www.e-gulfbank.com or visit one of Gulf Bank's 58 branches.

Sports

Who will be hot or not at the showpiece event

Smith and Warner are being seen as Australia's saviours

LONDON: With today marking 100 days to go before the start of the 2019 Cricket World Cup in England and Wales on May 30, AFP Sport looks at who will be hot-or-not-at the showpiece event:

PART 1 AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan have made rapid strides since featuring in the 2015 World Cup for the first time but had to endure a nail-biting qualifying competition in Zimbabwe to make the 2019 edition. But they are not to be under-rated. At the 2018 Asia Cup, they beat Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and tied against eventual champions India.

GAMECHANGER: Leg-spinner Rashid Khan will be the trump card for Afghanistan. The 20-year-old from war-torn Nangarhar is a wicket-taking bowler—he became the fastest to reach 100 ODI wickets in 44 matches. Rashid can bowl in the power-play as well as in the death overs.



2019 Cricket World Cup

AUSTRALIA

The defending champions and five-time winners are the most successful country in the tournament's history, beating New Zealand by seven wickets in the final on home turf in 2015. But they have struggled for form since the team was embroiled in a ball-tampering scandal that rocked the game last year.

They were hammered by England 9-1 across two series in 2018, and followed it up with series defeats over the home summer against South Africa (2-1) and India (2-1).

GAMECHANGER: Steve Smith and David Warner are being seen as their saviours. They are both eligible again in late March after their one-year bans over the ball-tampering affair expire and are widely expected to slot straight back into the side. The expectations are high for the two star batsmen who between them have

played 214 ODIs and scored 7,774 runs.

BANGLADESH

Perennial underachievers Bangladesh will be looking to improve on their 2015 quarter-final finish after some heartening performances in the United Kingdom. They qualified for the semi-finals of the 2017 Champions Trophy from a group that also featured hosts England, Australia and New Zealand.

In 2018, Bangladesh won 13 of their 20 ODI matches, behind only England and India in terms of the number of wins. The Tigers will rely on the experience of key players like Mashrafe Mortaza, Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim who are all expected to play their fourth 50-over World Cup.

GAMECHANGER: At 35, Mashrafe is still the leader of Bangladesh's pace attack, but left-arm quick Mustafizur Rahman can make a strong impact in what will be his maiden World Cup.

Mustafizur, the only Bangladeshi to feature in ICC's 2018 ODI team of the year, with his lively pace and incisive swing can be handy in seaming English conditions. The country's board is trying to protect the 23-year-old for the World Cup by denying him permission to join the lucrative Indian Premier League in March-April.

ENGLAND

Have featured in every World Cup since the tournament was established in 1975 but have still to win it, with the last of their three losing appearances in the final back in 1992. An embarrassing exit at the 2015 edition, culminating in a defeat by Bangladesh, saw England go out in the group stage for the third time in five World Cups. Captained by former Ireland batsman Eoin Morgan, England have risen to the top of the 50-over rankings. Home advantage, however, may not be

is powerful enough to win the World Cup without playing Pakistan," Singh told the Aaj Tak Hindi news channel late Monday.

International Cricket Council chief executive David Richardson expressed sympathy over the attack in Kashmir last Thursday, which saw a suicide bomber ram an explosives-laden car into a military convoy.

He added he was confident the game-one of the showpiece fixtures of this year's World Cup in England and Wales would still go ahead.

"There's no indication that any of the matches will not be played," Richardson told AFP at a 100 Days to the World Cup event in London yesterday.

"Obviously, our thoughts are with the people that were impacted by the incident." The former South Africa wicketkeeper added that cricket "has a wonderful ability to bring people together, unify communities, and hopefully it can play a huge role along those lines in this case as well."

India's top-tier football league has, however, been thrown into turmoil by the attack, with defending champions Minerva Punjab FC refusing to travel to Srinagar for the game against Real Kashmir on Monday.

East Bengal have also expressed concerns about their February 28 game against the team.

"They are using a very unfortunate incident as an excuse for not playing the games. Instigating communal hatred against our team is unpardonable," said Sandeep Chattoo, a co-owner of Real Kashmir. "All that we want is to play for the sake of peace and for the people of Kashmir," he told AFP in Delhi. — AFP



LONDON: 100 Days to go launch of the Cricket World Cup at Lord's Cricket Ground, London, England. Pictured left to right: Guy Lavender (CEO of Lord's), David Richardson, CEO of the ICC, Ricardo Guadalupe (CEO, HUBLOT) and New Friend of the brand Michael Vaughan. — AFP

that much help. This will be the fifth time that England have staged the World Cup, their best performance on home turf coming when they were overpowered by the West Indies in the 1979 final.

GAMECHANGER: England have several proven match-winners in their side but in wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler they have an outrageously gifted shot-maker capable of 'scooping' good length balls from fast bowlers over his head for boundaries. The 28-year-old has scored six ODI hundreds and boasts a superb strike rate of just under 117.

INDIA

Under Virat Kohli's leadership, heavyweights India will enter the World Cup as favourites alongside England. The second-ranked one-day side in the world

have been in fine form with recent series victories in Australia and New Zealand.

India had a superb 2018 with ODI wins in South Africa (5-1), and West Indies (3-1) and the Asia Cup title in the UAE. England also brings back happy memories for the two-time World Cup champions who first lifted the trophy at Lord's in 1983.

GAMECHANGER: If Kohli will be key to India's chances in the 10-team tournament then new spin ace Kuldeep Yadav could lead the charge in the bowling department.

The 24-year-old Yadav claimed 45 wickets in 19 ODI matches last year with his left-arm wrist spin proving to be handful for opposition batsmen. Kohli meanwhile kept the runs going, averaging an astounding 133.55 in 14 ODIs in 2018. — AFP

India cricket star calls for Pakistan World Cup boycott

NEW DELHI: Spin star Harbhajan Singh has called for India to boycott their World Cup game against Pakistan in June in protest at a Kashmir attack which left more than 40 paramilitaries dead.

India has accused its arch-rival neighbour of supporting the attack, and amid nationwide calls for reprisals, Singh said: "There is no need for any relations with Pakistan, let alone cricket."

"Don't play the World Cup match with Pakistan on June 16 — country comes first for all of us and we are all standing with our forces," added the 38-year-old, who played his last Test in 2015 but is still an Indian Premier League regular.

"Pakistan has been promoting cross-border terrorism and this attack was unbelievably shocking," said Singh, whose 417 Test wickets are the second highest for an off-spinner. Pakistan has denied any role in the attack. India, one of the World Cup favourites, would at the very least forfeit the match points if they boycott the group game to be played in Manchester. But Singh said this would not matter.

"I don't care about losing points as the Indian team



Harbhajan Singh

Leclerc keeps Ferrari on top in testing

BARCELONA: New recruit Charles Leclerc kept Ferrari on top of the timesheets with a full race distance before lunchtime on the second day of Formula One's pre-season testing in Spain yesterday. After team mate Sebastian Vettel led the way on Monday with the fastest time and most laps, Kimi Raikkonen's 21-year-old replacement slotted in seamlessly with a time not far off the German's best.

The Monegasque produced a best time of one minute 18.247 seconds and did 73 laps, compared with Vettel's Monday 1:18.161 and 72 laps, in partially cloudy conditions and an ambient temperature of 14 degrees Celsius.

Five times world champion Lewis Hamilton, working through the Mercedes testing programme, did one more lap than Leclerc however. Ferrari's times have been quicker than anything from last year's weather-affected first four-day test at the Circuit de Catalunya.

Rule changes, with new aerodynamic regulations, were expected to make the cars around 1.5 seconds a lap slower. But the evidence so far has been that much of the lost time has been regained. By the time the season starts in Australia on March 17 cars can be expected to be going even faster, but Pirelli's F1 tyre boss Mario Isola cautioned that the picture might be distorted.

He said the asphalt had been new for testing last year, with a very smooth surface that had evolved further. "I believe the influence of the Tarmac is higher, and the (warmer) temperature is playing a big effect. We know that," he told reporters.

Ferrari-powered Haas were second fastest, with Denmark's Kevin Magnussen taking his turn and producing a best lap of 1:19.234. Alfa Romeo were third with Italian newcomer Antonio Giovinazzi taking over from Raikkonen who tested on Monday and using harder tyres than others.

In terms of mileage, Red Bull did the third most with Frenchman Pierre Gasly putting in 69 laps in another strong showing for the new partnership with Honda. Australian Daniel Ricciardo, who has joined Renault from Red Bull, did the least laps of the morning (28) but that was due to his rear wing flying off at speed.

He returned to the pits with the Renault engineers setting to work. "On-track fun for Daniel. We're testing his reaction skills. They're good," the team said jokingly on Twitter. "Car and driver are back in the garage. Rear-wing assessing is in full flow."

Williams were again absent, with the team hoping to get their car to Barcelona for Wednesday's third day amid speculation that senior heads could roll as a result of the delay. — Reuters

S Lanka chase history in second test vs S Africa

PORT ELIZABETH: Sri Lanka will be chasing history and a shock series victory when they play hosts South Africa in the second and final test at St George's Park tomorrow. The tourists claimed a one-wicket win in the first game in Durban on Saturday thanks to a staggering test innings from middle-order batsman Kusal Perera, who bludgeoned his way to 153 not out and put on a record 78 runs for the last wicket with Vishwa Fernando.

It was a piece of individual brilliance and leaves Sri Lanka with the opportunity to claim a first ever test series victory in South Africa, something their sub-continent rivals India and Pakistan have yet to achieve.

It was Sri Lanka's first victory in any format since October after tough tours to New Zealand and Australia, and whether they can back it up with a second heroic performance in Port Elizabeth will be the key question.

Perera won them the game but was not the only outstanding player, with debutant left-arm spinner Lasith Embuldeniya claiming 5-66 in South Africa's second innings and seamer Fernando posting match figures of 8-133. Perera played a lone hand with the bat, his match aggregate of 204 runs providing 41 percent of the tourists' total in both innings, with no other player passing 50. South Africa will be without experienced seamer Vernon Philander and could give a debut to all-rounder Wiaan Mulder, 21, who would strengthen the batting. "We will look at the conditions on the pitch and



DURBAN: File photo shows Sri Lanka's Vishwa Fernando celebrates the wicket of Faf du Plessis during the third day of the first Cricket Test between South Africa and Sri Lanka at the Kingsmead Stadium in Durban. — AFP

will make the best decision for the team," South Africa coach Ottis Gibson said, with the other option to recall batsman Theunis de Bruyn. "We want to bat better in our first innings, we need to improve on that if we want to win this game."

Gibson says there are no thoughts of revenge for the home side. Rather his team will try to work out a plan for Perera, now the obvious dangerman among the visitors. "There is only focus on playing a bit better. When you look at what happened in Durban you have to give them (Sri Lanka) credit," Gibson said.

"When I left home on the morning of the game I didn't see that happening. But credit must go to the way

they played, especially Perera, who rode his luck a bit in the beginning but then settled down.

"We threw everything at him and he withstood all of that. We bowled spin, went round the wicket, over the wicket, bounced him, tried the yorker. But that is the nature of sport."

South Africa's streak of seven consecutive home test series wins has been ended, no matter what happens in Port Elizabeth. The only other test meeting at St George's Park between the two sides was in 2016 when South Africa won by 206 runs. Perera scored seven and six in his two innings batting at number three. — Reuters

Sports

United dump holders Chelsea out of Cup to pile pressure on Sarri

It was a measure of revenge for Man United

LONDON: Manchester United's Ander Herrera and Paul Pogba headed first-half goals to claim a 2-0 win that dumped FA Cup holders Chelsea out of the competition and secured a place in the quarter-finals in an intense tie at Stamford Bridge on Monday.

Spaniard Herrera finished off a fine move with a precise header from Pogba's cross just past the half-hour and United's French midfielder scored himself when he nodded powerfully home from a Marcus Rashford delivery before the break.

It was a measure of revenge for United, resurgent under interim coach Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, who lost to Chelsea in last May's Wembley final under their former

boss Jose Mourinho. "It is a beautiful win," France midfielder Pogba, who had been sidelined under Mourinho, told the BBC.

"Today was a great performance from the team, all of them... The team helped me get to my best. I give everything for them. They help me score goals and get assists. We are enjoying playing together."

After the game United were drawn to face Wolverhampton Wanderers at Molineux in the quarter-finals. "An away tie again after Arsenal and Chelsea... We'll have to do it the hard way. Wolves are a tough team to play against," Solskjaer said.

"The performance tonight was fantastic, our tactics worked. We asked our midfielders to press higher and get into the box and it worked. The defending in the second half was fantastic." The fifth round defeat piled more pressure on Chelsea coach Maurizio Sarri, whose

side were hammered 6-0 last week in the Premier League by United's neighbours Manchester City. Chants of "sacked in the morning" broke out in the second half.

DOUBLE SAVE

United's Sergio Romero had pulled off a fine double save in the 11th minute from a spinning David Luiz free kick headed for the top corner followed by a stinging shot from Pedro. Three minutes later Arrizabalaga had to fly to his left to keep out a Herrera strike. The lively Rashford also kept the Chelsea keeper under constant pressure.

Chelsea's fragile defence was split with crosses from either flank. Pogba supplied the first in the 31st minute after a fast move down the left and Herrera ghosted into the box to nod the ball down past stranded goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga.

Until that moment a lively game had been evenly poised, with a host of chances at either end.

Chelsea's hopes were crushed just before halftime in a speedy United counter down the right, with Marcus Rashford crossing for Pogba to head powerfully home between defenders Cesar Azpilicueta and Antonio Rudiger.

United were able to drop back and defend after the break, making occasional forays up the pitch but always confident of keeping an increasingly toothless Chelsea attack at bay. The home side's best chance of the half came in the 63rd minute when Eden Hazard, reportedly



LONDON: Manchester United's French midfielder Paul Pogba (C) runs with the ball during the English FA Cup fifth round football match between Chelsea and Manchester United at Stamford Bridge in London on Monday. — AFP

a target for Real Madrid, jinked his way through, only for the Belgian's shot to be expertly diverted by United defender Victor Lindelof.

The home fans jeered Sarri's like-for-like substitutions. The Italian has been criticised for stubbornly sticking to his tactics and failing to change games. United, on the other hand, looked like a team on a mission, playing for their coach and each other and brim-

ming with the confidence that comes from turning an ailing season around.

Their only reverse since Norwegian Solskjaer took over was last week's Champions League home defeat by Paris St Germain. The contrast was reflected in the boos from some Chelsea supporters at the final whistle, while a jubilant Solskjaer celebrated with his players in front of the travelling fans. — Reuters

Live		Matches on TV
		(Local Timings)
UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE		
Schalke 04 v Manchester City	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 2
Atletico de Madrid v Juventus FC	23:00	beIN SPORTS HD 1
UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE		
Sevilla FC v SS Lazio	20:00	beIN SPORTS
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Paris Saint v Montpellier HSC	23:00	beIN SPORTS

Gundogan relishing coming home with Man City after Schalke snub

GELSENKIRCHEN: Having been rejected as an eight-year-old by Schalke 04, Ilkay Gundogan is relishing returning to Gelsenkirchen with Manchester City in what could potentially be a one-sided Champions League clash.

While Pep Guardiola's high-flying City are top the Premier League table, Schalke, today's opponents in the last 16, first-leg clash, are just above the Bundesliga's relegation places and struggling to score goals down in 14th place.

Like City's Germany winger Leroy Sane, Gundogan, 28, began his career at Schalke's academy, but despite having been rejected as a child after only one season, there will be no element of revenge come kick-off at the Veltins Arena.

"I have (forgiven them), but it wasn't always so,"

Gundogan told German magazine Kicker with a grin. "At the time, due to growth spurts, I had physical problems and couldn't play any sports for half a year, so I dropped out.

"Three or four years later, Schalke attempted to contact me, but I was a bit resentful. 'I just wanted to play football with my closest friends rather than be back in an academy.'"

Gundogan ended up playing for local club Hessler, joining Bochum as a junior before playing Bundesliga football for Nuremberg, he then spent five years at Borussia Dortmund from where he joined City in 2016.

On paper, City could run riot in Germany, but Gundogan insists the Mancunians will take nothing for granted. "There is a danger as everyone thinks Schalke don't have a chance and even though it's an away game, we're expected to dominate," said Gundogan.

"Schalke have nothing to lose - we have a lot - which raises the pressure on us." Schalke last reached the Champions League quarter-finals in 2011 when ex-Real Madrid legend Raul inspired their run before losing in the last four to Manchester United.

Head coach Domenico Tedesco insisted they can still shock City despite Saturday's drab goalless draw at home to Freiburg left them winless in their last three league games. Gundogan is looking forward to playing in his home city.

"My family and friends are still there, I have had to

organise a few tickets," he said. "I am looking forward to the game, because I grew up there and a lot of people were Schalke fans."

However, there is a chance Gundogan could be booed in Gelsenkirchen. A rare appearance back in Germany will be a test in the wake of last May's scandal when he and Arsenal midfielder Mesut Ozil sparked controversy by meeting Turkey president Recep Tayyip Erdogan in London.

On the eve of the World Cup, Gundogan's loyalty to Germany was thrown into question after giving Erdogan a City shirt signed "To my president". At the time, Gundogan defended the meeting as a "gesture of politeness", but the scandal accompanied Germany to the World Cup in Russia, where the Germans suffered an embarrassing exit finishing bottom of their group.

Understandably, Gundogan is eager to talk up his childhood in Germany. "I feel privileged to have grown up in the Ruhr and have been able to have had this experience," he said. "My grandfather was a 'guest worker' (from Turkey) and I was the first in my family who came into the world in Germany."

"Football plays such a big role in the Ruhr that there is no way around being confronted by football, even from a young age. 'You start as a three year old and since then football has played a big role in my life. 'It shows how football crazy the whole area is and what doors football opened, especially for me.' — AFP

Atletico meet Juve in a clash of high stakes

MADRID: Massimiliano Allegri told Juventus not to be afraid of Atletico Madrid but for one of these teams their worst fears in this season's Champions League are about to become a reality.

Crashing out in the last 16 would be unthinkable for two clubs that were among the favourites when the draw for the knock-out stages was made in December.

"Those that have ambition are not afraid," Allegri said, after his side were drawn to play Atletico, with the first leg on Wednesday at the Wanda Metropolitano.

"It's like a final, we cannot put a foot wrong," Atletico boss Diego Simeone said.

Juventus and Atletico Madrid have reached 12 European Cup finals between them, with last season's game in Kiev the first in five years in which neither had featured.

Atletico went on to win the Europa League instead, proving themselves too strong for Europe's second-tier competition, while Juventus were dumped out by eventual winners Real Madrid, undone by a controversial Cristiano Ronaldo penalty in the 98th minute.

It was Ronaldo's 10th goal in seven games against Juventus, having scored twice in the first leg and twice in the final in 2017 too. Juve beat Real in the semi-finals two years earlier but even then, Ronaldo managed a goal in each leg.

There was understandable relief, as well as joy, when the Portuguese switched sides last summer and now, there is belief. Ronaldo has not finished in single figures for goals in the Champions league since 2011.

As Lionel Messi said: "They already had a good team and now they have Cristiano Ronaldo."

JUVE'S TWO DECADE WAIT

But with anticipation comes pressure. Juventus are on course to win an eighth consecutive Scudetto but this is the one trophy they crave.

Miss out again and it will be 23 years since they last lifted Europe's premier prize, this time with its most prolific player ever among their ranks.

"We have to be wary of Atletico," Allegri said.

"And we have to find the right moment to score. It's crucial that we get a goal there, otherwise qualification



TURIN: Juventus' Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (C) dribbles as Juventus' Brazilian defender Alex Sandro (R) and Juventus' Argentine forward Paulo Dybala (L) look on during a training session at the Continassa training ground in Turin yesterday, on the eve of their UEFA Champions League round of 16 first leg football match against Atletico Madrid. — AFP

will be very difficult," he added.

Atletico's own record signing last summer, Thomas Lemar, was not even born when Gianluca Vialli hoisted the trophy in 1996 for the Italians but expectation weighs heavy on them too.

Atleti have the chance to play a final at home this year, at the Wanda Metropolitano, and not only snatch the cup away from rivals Real but do it in the city they both call their own.

"Of course we are inspired by playing a final in our own stadium, in our own city, in front of our own fans," Simeone said. "But it is pointless only to imagine it. The reality will be what we deserve," he added.

Simeone extended his contract as Atleti coach until 2022 last week and while few can question the remark-

able progress made during his tenure, there are some that believe a ceiling has been reached.

They are out of the Copa del Rey and seven points behind Barcelona in La Liga, where back-to-back defeats earlier this month failed to capitalise on a rare Catalan dip. Summer signings are yet to fully fire and there is scepticism about the January arrival of Alvaro Morata, not just because of his links to Real. When results waver, questions about Simeone's style also invariably follow. "It is a style I like, it makes us win," Antoine Griezmann told UEFA on Monday.

Winning a trophy on their own patch would be even better. "It's an extra motivation for us and for the fans. The road to get there will be tough but we'll give it our all," World Cup winner Griezmann added. — Agency

Spanish Super Cup set to move abroad in new final four format

MADRID: The Spanish Super Cup will be expanded to four teams, with two semi-finals and a final all to be played outside the country under a transformation proposed by Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) President Luis Rubiales yesterday.

The revamped Super Cup is set to start in August of this year, with the winners and runners up of both La Liga and the Copa del Rey qualifying under the new format, Rubiales, who became RFEF president in May 2018, said.

In the event that a team qualifies both through the league and the Copa del Rey, the vacant place would be taken by the team with the best historical record in the Copa del Rey that had not already qualified for the Super Cup. "We see an opportunity to promote the brand of Spain without attacking sporting principles," Rubiales told a news conference, without giving details of where the games in the "final four" format event would take place.

The plans must first be approved by the federation's assembly at a meeting in April, he said, adding that the RFEF plans to open a global centre of excellence for referees in Madrid and create a committee to fight homophobia in football.

Rubiales broke with tradition last year by turning the traditional season clash between the La Liga champions and the Copa del Rey winners from a two-legged tie into a single game played in Tangier, Morocco, where Barcelona beat Sevilla 2-1.

MIAMI BLUES

Rubiales opposes La Liga's plans to play Spanish top flight games abroad and his organisation blocked a proposal to move a game between Girona and Barcelona last month to Miami.

Barcelona withdrew from the proposed Miami game, citing a lack of consensus, although their president Josep Maria Bartomeu said he would like to see three La Liga games a season abroad.

Rubiales said he saw no contradiction between moving the Super Cup abroad and "the basic principle that a home team should always play at their ground".

"FIFA was very clear about opposing the Miami game. If they change their criteria we will have to do what they say but we still believe you break with the essence of sport if you prevent a team playing at home for financial motives."

Although Atletico Madrid, Barcelona and Real Madrid take part in the International Champions Cup, pre-season friendlies against Europe's top sides played in the United States and Asia, Rubiales said having a trophy at stake was important for fans. "Neutral tournaments played in summer do not produce the same excitement among supporters," he added. — Reuters

25 DeBrincat's hat trick helps Blackhawks outscore Senators

26 Who will be hot or not at the showpiece event

27 United dump holders Chelsea out of Cup to pile pressure on Sarri



Novak, Biles win sports people awards

Djokovic voted on by 68 members of the Laureus Academy



MONACO: Laureus World Sportsman of the Year 2019 winner Serbia's tennis player Novak Djokovic poses with his award at the 2019 Laureus World Sports Awards ceremony at the Sporting Monte-Carlo complex in Monaco on Monday. — AFP

MONACO: Novak Djokovic's stupendous comeback from injury last year which saw him win two Grand Slam titles earned him the Laureus Sportsman of the Year Award on Monday at a lavish ceremony.

The 31-year-old Serbian-who added the Australian Open in January to the Wimbledon and US Open crowns he won in 2018 after coming back from elbow surgery-won the award for a fourth time beating the likes of France's World Cup winner Kylian Mbappe and NBA superstar LeBron James.

Iconic American gymnast Simone Biles won Sportswoman of the Year for a second time on the back of the 21-year-old's historic achievement last year in adding a fourth all-around world championship to her full to bursting medals cabinet.

Djokovic was delighted with his award-voted on by the 68 members of the Laureus Academy which includes sporting legends such as nine-time singles Grand Slam champion Monica Seles and Britain's six-time Olympic track cycling gold medalist Chris Hoy.

"Last year was an incredible season for me, returning from injury to win Wimbledon and the US Open is something I'll remember forever," said Djokovic. Seles, also born in Serbia although now a naturalised American citizen, presented the award to Djokovic, who admitted it had been a long hard road back mentally as well as physically.

"Reflecting on it standing here now it seems like a fairytale story but it tells me one thing," he said. "In those moments of when you are facing adversity and challenged you should always look inside."

"I did not understand that fully before but now I know where I can always find strength and belief and to keep on going."

Tennis had a golden night as women's world number one Naomi Osaka-who like Djokovic added the Australian Open to her breakthrough Grand Slam success the US Open-became the first Japanese winner of a Laureus award, the 21-year-old taking the World Breakthrough of the Year gong.

American golf great Tiger Woods was rewarded

for his return from years in the wilderness due to injury and personal problems to winning the Tour Championship and going close to adding to his 14 major titles in the British Open and the PGA Championship with the Comeback of the Year award.

"There was a long list of people who wrote him off but I was not one of them," said former NFL star Marcus Allen. "When you are anointed with such talent as he is there is always a way back."

'TO HAVE UNITED THEM'

Mbappe may have missed out on the main individual award but he along with his World Cup winning team-mates collected the team of the year prize. Manager Didier Deschamps-who also captained France to the 1998 World Cup triumph-accepted the award with some members of his backroom staff.

"Being part of the French football team offers one the rare privilege of bringing happiness to the French people," said Deschamps, who won the same award with his Euro 2000 winning team-mates in 2001.

"We are extremely proud to have brought them such joy last summer and to have united them." Deschamps compatriot Arsene Wenger, credited with revolutionising English football certainly in the early part of his over two decades in charge of Arsenal, received the Lifetime Achievement Award.

The studious 69-year-old Frenchman received his award from one of his former Arsenal stars Cesc Fabregas, who said he had been a father figure to him. "I would like to thank the wonderful people I met through my career and some less wonderful too," said Wenger.

"Sport is tremendous I had a long career but my passion for sport and for human beings is intact." China's Xia Boyu's extraordinary achievement in climbing Everest last May, four decades after losing both legs to frostbite in a previous attempt to conquer it, won the Sporting Moment of the Year which is voted on by the public. Laureus is a global movement that aims to use the power of sport to tackle social challenges in the world. — AFP

Semenya: Gender rules 'do not empower anyone'

LAUSANNE: Double Olympic 800 metres champion Caster Semenya said yesterday that proposed rules that would oblige her to lower her testosterone levels "do not empower anyone".

The South African appeared Monday at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne at the start of a landmark hearing to challenge the rules proposed by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

The controversial measures would force so-called "hyperandrogenic" athletes or those with "differences of sexual develop-

ment" (DSD) to seek treatment to lower their testosterone levels below a prescribed amount if they wish to continue competing as women. A statement issued by Semenya's legal team said she believes "she and other women affected by the regulations should be permitted to compete in the female category without discrimination" and that they should be "celebrated for their natural talents as are all other athletes with genetic variations".

The statement continued: "The IAAF's regulations do not empower anyone. Rather, they represent yet another flawed and hurtful attempt to police the sex of female athletes." The IAAF says it is introducing the rules to create a "level playing field" for other female runners.

The track and field body says: "If a DSD athlete has testes and male levels of testosterone, they get the same increases in bone and muscle size and strength and increases in haemoglobin that a male gets when they

go through puberty, which is what gives men such a performance advantage over women."

On Monday, Semenya accused the IAAF of breaching confidentiality rules after it published the names of five expert witnesses who will appear to testify on its behalf. Semenya published her own list of expert witnesses who will speak in support of her this week, including Professor Veronica Gomez-Lobo, professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Georgetown University in the United States.

The South African government says the rules specifically target Semenya and has called them a "gross violation" of her human rights. Semenya is not the only athlete potentially affected by the new rules-the two athletes who finished behind her in the Rio Olympics 800m, Francine Niyonsaba of Burundi and Kenya's Margaret Wambui, have also faced questions about their testosterone levels. A judgement in the case is expected by the end of March. — AFP



LAUSANNE: South Africa's 800 meters Olympic champion Caster Semenya (C) and her lawyer Gregory Nott (R) leave after a landmark hearing at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), in Lausanne, on Monday. — AFP