

Friday Times

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JAMADA ALAWWAL 5, 1440 AH | FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2019

4 Martial arts helps young women in Kuwait counter violence



6 Mangaf: Still in need of a clean up



47 Jordan tame Syria to reach Asian Cup knockouts



Kuwait, US resume direct flights today



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait and the United States of America will resume direct air flights as of today, said Chairman of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah yesterday. Reoperation of the direct and unstoppable flights between the US and Kuwait caps fruitful cooperation between the DGCA and the US Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Sheikh Salman said in a statement.

Relentless efforts by the two sides over the past three years resulted in

resuming the direct and full air navigation, which will boost passengers' movement, elevate operation capacity and services for passengers of Kuwait Airways, he added. He lauded efforts in this regard by the government, namely His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, state apparatuses including the ministries of foreign and internal affairs, the DGCA and the national carrier. He also praised noticeable efforts by the TSA and the American ambassador to Kuwait, in this regard.



Kuwait Airways announced meanwhile that it received approval from the concerned authorities within the US to open up operations of the direct route to New York airport without the need for a transit at Shannon airport in Ireland, which has been used as the transit route over the past three years.

Meanwhile, the US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman condoled coordination and cooperation between the Kuwaiti and US air navigation authorities. Silverman expressed the appreciation of the

existing mutual cooperation at this level, when Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received him yesterday. Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah attended the meeting.

During the meeting, Ambassador Silverman hailed the level of cooperation and coordination between the DGCA, along with other local sectors, and their counterpart American departments. Such coordination is part of the close and broader cooperation between the two friendly countries in various spheres and at diverse levels,

Ambassador Silverman affirmed.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah, the assistant foreign minister for the foreign minister bureau affairs Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, the assistant foreign minister for the deputy foreign minister bureau affairs ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, the assistant foreign ministers for the two Americas plenipotentiary ambassador Reem Mohammad Al-Khaled and other officials at the department. — KUNA



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Local

High touristic prices



Local Spotlight

By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Tourism is an important source of income for any country to support the local economy, but it comes with inconvenience for the local population. Although a tourist might not mind spending some money for a certain period of time until he returns to his country, the high prices remain throughout the year, which make the people of the city suffer. This issue has become a matter of concern in places like Italy and Spain. These two countries are known for being preferred destinations for people around the globe, including the Arab world.

Some countries are trying to attract more tourists to benefit their economy, which is acceptable, but several European cities have recently been looking for a suitable way to control the number of visitors while making good profits. According to the French *Le Pen* newspaper, Venice in Italy is preparing a draft law to impose a levy on every tourist entering the city during the peak tourist season. The idea was introduced into the Italian finance law in December at the request of the city's mayor Ligi Brugnaro.

This proposal came after claims of residents that their lives are "no longer bearable" due to tourists' noise, property rentals, commodity prices and neighborhood hygiene, while they used to enjoy a quiet life in the past. Of course, imposing a fee on visitors in Venice will play an important economic role and generate between 40 and 50 million euros a year, according to Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, which said this money will contribute to cleaning the city that is visited by one million people every year.

The residents of the Italian city are not the only ones being harassed. In Spain too, there have been some angry voices in Barcelona amid calls for restrictions on the construction of new tourist facilities due to high rent values. Angry Spaniards say that the influx of tourists has inflated prices in the city center, so many people are moving to the suburbs to rent houses at affordable prices.

Park Guell in Barcelona has imposed a fee on visitors, and the current system allows only a certain number of visitors to enter the famous touristic site. I think they are right, because in 1984, Park Guell was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's really worth visiting.

I like to go to Dubai several times a year, but I find the prices are too high. I wonder how people can afford to live with the high prices there, but I know from some that despite what they spend, they enjoy a good lifestyle and various entertainments. They don't object to spending large amounts of money for a good meal and a fun time.

I think that people today have many pressures in life, so paying some money for entertainment is not difficult, especially for Arabs, because they are paying for their own amusement. But I think it is necessary to define policies to deal with the high prices that affect people living there throughout the year.

We in Kuwait do not rely on tourism, and most visitors are from the region. Prices at hotels and restaurants are still high however for the average income. I believe that the United Nations organizations concerned with tourism should take this issue seriously and ensure that the high touristic prices benefit the population and not only the country's economy, through policies and decisions that take into account the conditions of residents.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Camel racing is a popular winter sport in Kuwait and the rest of the khaleej. Visitors from near and far regularly attend the weekend races. Kuwait's Camel Racing Club in Kabd holds races every weekend during the season from November through April. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Driver provocateurs: New scam for big payouts



IN MY VIEW

By Nawara Fattahova

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Drivers of luxury vehicles and residents in general should be careful of strangers who try to provoke you or get your attention, as a new method of swindling people has been observed. Some criminals only want to make money and don't care if their victims get injured or even killed. On the other hand, this phenomenon can be a lesson for people, especially those who are nervy, to always keep calm.

Various celebrities and other ordinary folks have experienced this kind of behavior. A popular social media influencer spoke about his experience while he was driving, where some guys were chasing him. "They kept calling my name in a very annoying way and were continuously shouting. I guess they were trying to provoke me to insult them so they could spoil my reputation. When I stopped looking at them and didn't respond, they made an offensive gesture with their hands and drove away slowly, hoping I would follow them to fight. But I was really tired, so I just ignored them and changed my course," he posted on his account.

Another man experienced a similar situation. While he was driving his expensive vehicle, a man he doesn't know drove so closely to him that he almost hit him. When he looked at the reckless driver in shock, the reckless driver made vulgar gestures. This did enrage the motorist, who forced the provocateur to stop, then got out of his car with

his cousin and hit the guy, who didn't even defend himself.

After a few hours, the motorist received a call from the police station asking him to come to the station, as someone had filed a complaint against him. When he arrived, the injured reckless driver was waiting for him with a medical report of the injuries he had suffered. The police officer advised the defendant to resolve the case amicably instead of filing a case in court, which could even result in imprisonment. The complainant demanded KD 3,000 to drop the case, so the defendant chose to pay up instead of being sentenced to jail.

It seems that the reckless driver might have had the payoff in mind all along. He may have been deliberately provoking the man so he could get beaten and then extort an out of court settlement. Drivers should be aware of this trick and not let strangers provoke them for any reason.

Another older man also recalled facing such a situation when he was driving with his family recently. He said a stranger was harassing him with his vehicle, trying to provoke him by making lewd gestures with his hands to make him angry. But this driver didn't want to fight in the middle of the road, especially since his family was with him. He also realized the case would reach the police, so he kept ignoring the provoker until he lost hope and drove away.

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Kuwaiti women practice hybrid martial art kajukenbo.

MARTIAL ARTS HELPS YOUNG WOMEN IN KUWAIT COUNTER VIOLENCE

Asma Hasnawi and her daughter Riham spend more than 12 hours a week learning kajukenbo, a mixed martial art the mother says boosts her child's confidence and thwarts bullying. In a small hall in Kuwait City, women and girls in black uniforms gather to learn the basics of self-defense.



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Faisal Al-Gharib (left), a Kajukenbo hybrid martial art master, practices with his assistant Fai Al-Fahad, in a club in Kuwait City. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

On their left sleeves are the flags of Kuwait and the US state of Hawaii, where the hybrid martial art of kajukenbo was developed in the 1940s. The sport's name was derived from the various forms of martial arts it includes: karate (KA), judo and jujitsu (JU), kenpo (KEN) and boxing (BO).

Each form teaches techniques that can be used to fend off an attack, says Hasnawi, 33, who stands in class alongside her 12-year-old daughter and other girls. "I initially wanted to explore this sport, but I continued to practice it to be able to defend myself," she said.

Hasnawi still remembers being bullied as a child—something her daughter has struggled with at school too. But she says Riham has 'changed a lot' since they started practicing kajukenbo, gaining patience and strength through the sport. "She has transformed. At school, she used to get really angry and quickly agitated if someone would say something to her," Hasnawi says. "Now, it's something normal that she can (healthily) deal with."

There is no recent data in Kuwait on cases of violence against women, who enjoy more freedoms than those in neighboring countries. A 2010 study found that a woman is assaulted a day in Kuwait, according to Ghada al-Ghanem, of

the Women's Cultural and Social Society (WCSS). The WCSS, whose goal is to help and encourage women's participation in the Kuwaiti community, has dealt with a number of assault cases and Ghanem believes the actual figure may be higher.



Kuwaiti Asma Hasnawi (left) and Fai Al-Fahad, kajukenbo hybrid martial art assistant-master, practice in the club.



‘Strength and honor’

Hung on the red and black walls of the Street Warrior Academy is a poster of two men practicing the sport. “Kajukenbo teaches your child the methods and arts of self-defense,” it reads, complimenting the mottos of “strength and honor” and “street warrior” on the backs of the girls’ uniforms.

The students closely watch their instructor, Faisal Al-Gharib, as he explains how to counter an attack with the help of his son. The girls then pair up to take what they have learnt and put it into practice. In another instance, the instructor’s son mimics an attack with a wooden knife on one of the more experienced pupils, who wears a black belt. Already familiar with the exercise, the student explains: “I pretend that I have surrendered... and then I grab his hand on my neck, push it down and move it away.”

More than 120 girls and women between the ages of four and 50 participate in the academy’s different kajukenbo classes, which are held in a room with training weapons lining its walls. Some 40 men and boys also currently take part in kajukenbo classes at the club on different days from the women. For Um Saleh, the sport has helped her twin 13-year-old daughters become more independent and decisive. “It gave them something to focus on other than social media,” she says.

‘Boosting self-confidence’

Gharib, the instructor, established the academy in 2014 after learning kajukenbo in the United States. He says he wanted to teach the sport to women back home as a way to stay fit and to defend themselves against any attack.

As part of the training, he presents his students with dif-

ferent scenarios, including assaults and knife attacks. “We focus on self-defense skills and place the girls in conditions similar to those on the street so we can build their self-confidence and teach them exactly when and where to expect the hit,” Gharib says.

The academy, which has a strict confidentiality policy, has become a safe haven for many girls and women that have been victims of assault or bullying. It is one of dozens of similar clubs and academies that have opened in Kuwait as kajukenbo gains popularity. Although in the rest of the Gulf, the sport remains relatively unknown.

“Being a (victim) of assault, whether in school or on the street, is what pushed some of these girls and women to pursue the sport,” says Fai Al-Fahed, one of the instructors. “Ultimately, girls are embracing this kind of martial art and we see it boosting their self-confidence.”

Khalida Bashir says she was drawn to kajukenbo after watching clips of the sport online. “I used to be afraid of everything, but this sport changed me,” she tells AFP. “I have become more confident and more patient. Some say this is a man’s sport, but that is, in fact, not true.” — AFP



Mangaf

Still in need of a clean up



Streets flooded by the heavy rains in mid November remained caked with mud and debris while potholes and flying gravel and garbage piles can be found everywhere in Mangaf in the weeks afterwards. — Photos by Joseph Shagra and Faten Omar

By Faten Omar

One of the residential areas of Kuwait most affected by the rains last November was Mangaf. Home to tens of thousands of people as well as shops, offices and businesses, Mangaf suffered the brunt of the flooding with entire streets submerged and the main bridge/tunnel closed for several days.

As part of our occasional series exploring various areas of Kuwait, Kuwait Times regularly visits areas to learn their features and understand the challenges they face. In Mangaf, in the week after the rains, the challenge was clear: mud and

mess everywhere. Streets were potholed and flying gravel meant cars faced numerous hazards just driving through the area. Debris and rubble from the flood streets stood in abandoned piles on corners and near garbage bins.

Two months later and Kuwait Times visited again, hopeful that the place had been cleaned up. Unfortunately, when you walk Mangaf streets, you still can see the potholes caused by the structural failure of the roads due to the accumulation of water. Most of the area's streets were ruined while several holes in main roads caused a collection of new water.

Abdulaziz Al-Mulaifi, a resident of Mangaf, told Kuwait Times most residents lived through a terrifying night, worry-





More than two months after heavy rains flooded Mangaf, the area remains in need of a clean up and infrastructure development. Cracked and broken asphalt pothole on the surface of a crumbling road remains two months after massive rainfall flooded Mangaf.



ing about their homes, cars, and children.

"Although Kuwait has a lot of potentials, we still suffer from the same problems every year. Pumps drained the water from the Mangaf tunnel, which was also damaged two years ago. But they never fixed the main problems. One day, the drainage systems may not be able to absorb a large amount of rainwater, and God forbid, nearby homes may be deluged," he said.

Mulaifi expressed his happiness to see young volunteers who rushed to help others, along with public officials and firefighters, who were the first at the scene. "Although Mangaf was most affected by the rain that disrupted traffic and threatened the lives of motorists, I was happy to see the youth who offered a helping hand to anyone in need."

For Meshaal Al-Houti, submerged roads are not something new for Mangaf. He said his grandfather told him the area had witnessed similar flooding when heavy rain fell in 1975. "My grandfather said Mangaf's roads filled with rainwater, and this was filmed by a photographer named Fawaz Jamaan Al-

Otaibi. Winter in Kuwait in those days was colder, according to my grandfather," he said.

Mangaf has a large concentration of shops in an area locally known as Al Azeeziya selling mobile phones, computers, etc. There are also many fast food restaurants. But as residents then and now point out, Mangaf's infrastructure is creaking because of the large number of cafes, gyms and health clubs, along with a large number of expatriate residents who call the area home. Mangaf is a mixed development area with private, investment and commercial housing.

"Unfortunately, there is no interest in providing public utilities in the area, which has become neglected. The streets are broken. There are many public and private schools spread between buildings, causing traffic that is difficult to deal with," said Amer Harbi, another resident.

He said Mangaf has mainly become a commercial area now, adding the roads should be re-planned and expanded. He added that many yards are full of trash and there are no public facilities to serve the people of the area.



‘First of its kind’ Nuwaiseeb customs port inaugurated



KUWAIT: Customs General Department's Director General Jamal Al-Jalawi (left) guides Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf (right) in a tour at the Nuwaiseeb customs port. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



A demonstration made during the inauguration ceremony.

KUWAIT: Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf yesterday inaugurated Nuwaiseeb customs port as the first of its kind in 2019, said Customs General Department's Director General Jamal Al-Jalawi. Customs excelled in development and improved on the movement of goods in and outside Kuwait, he said during a launching ceremony. He said his agency is eager to put in place a strategy aiming at overhauling the customs system by means of re-vamping the business environment and streamlining customs procedures. The total cost of the project amounted to about KD 2.3 million (approximately \$ 10 million), said Vice Chairman and CEO of Agility Tarek Sultan. — KUNA

Deputy FM meets Chinese Ambassador

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang. Ambassador Li handed Jarallah a letter from Chinese President Xi Jinping to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Jarallah and Ambassador Li discussed during their meeting bilateral ties and means of developing them as well as the latest developments within the region and the world. Assistant Foreign Minister for the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Affairs Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar attended the meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Li Minggang. — KUNA

Foreign Minister calls UN envoy to Yemen

KUWAIT: Deputy prime minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah phoned yesterday the UN Secretary General's special envoy to Yemen. Martin Griffith. During the call, they discussed Stockholm agreement and recent peace consultations held in Sweden aiming at bringing security and stability back to Yemen. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled renewed Kuwait's support to all the efforts exerted by the UN envoy and his aides to restore security, stability and peace in Yemen and alleviate the humanitarian suffering of the Yemeni people.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled received a phone call from Secretary General of the Arab League Ahmad Abul-Gheit. During the call, they discussed ways to enhance joint Arab action to address challenges in the region to maintain peace and stability for Arab nations and their people. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also contacted his Somali counterpart Ahmed Awad. During the phone conversation, both ministers discussed close relations between Kuwait and Somalia in all fields, the latest regional and international developments and several issues of mutual interest. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Indian Embassy in Kuwait hosted an event on Wednesday night to celebrate the 'Indian Diaspora Day.' Indian Ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar and other officials attended the gathering. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Oil sector's expatriate technical staff irreplaceable: Sources

618,365 people from suspended nationalities have valid visas

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Lawmakers' threats to grill Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Dr Khaled Al-Fadhel if he fails to replace expatriate employees in the oil sector with national manpower cannot be implemented, according to official sources.

Parliamentary demands call for appointing Kuwaitis to replace expats in technical jobs, which cannot be implemented completely, because job vacancy advertisements are made according to needs, while contraction through private companies contributed to making the job easier, the sources said.

Furthermore, the sources argued that MPs are interfering in 'purely technical matters' and want to impose employment at the expense of competency and need. They said oil companies make annual ads to employ Kuwaitis, and choices are made according to test results.

"There is no way to let go of expats if there were no experienced Kuwaitis to replace them," the sources said.



Imported fish must be marked

Imported fish

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued a circular stating that companies that import fish to Kuwait should be informed to clearly mark imported 'Zubaidi', 'Balool', 'Nagroor',

'Subaiti' and 'Sheem' fish before putting it on sale. Imported fish should have part of their tails cut as a distinguished mark starting Jan, 20, 2019, the circular explained.

Mubarak Hospital

Deputy Rector of Kuwait University for Medical Sciences Dr Adel Al-Hunayan said it is necessary to designate an educational hospital for the university due to its importance in training and qualifying students, as well as conducting research. He said a committee between the university and health ministry plans to start working again on moving Mubarak Hospital back under the university.

Hunayan said the importance of an educational hospital that belongs to Kuwait University's medical sciences center lies in the necessity of students receiving training under the supervision of academics, adding that most medical students are receiving training in public

hospitals where health ministry doctors work, which causes difference in training agendas, while academic doctors will be absent from supervising them.

Suspended nationalities

Statistics issued by the Residency Affairs General Directorate showed that the number of people from suspended nationalities, ie Syria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh is 618,365 and have valid residency permits. There are 152,759 Syrians, 278,865 Bangladeshis, 107,084 Pakistanis, 38,034 Iranians, 14,999 Iraqis, 12,972 Yemenis and 13,652 Afghanis in Kuwait, Al-Anbaa daily reported yesterday. Statistics showed the number of workers from those nationalities in the public sector is 19,920 while 331,144 are in the private sector. The number of domestic helpers from these nationalities is 95,215 and those on family residence are 153,903.

Farwaniya residency affairs building closed pending relocation

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Operations at the residency affairs building in Farwaniya governorate has stopped pending its relocation to a new site in Riggae next to the Public Authority for Manpower's building, the Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department announced yesterday. People are requested to process their transactions at other nearby residency affairs building, it said. An announcement will be made later for the new building's opening date, it added.

Worker freed

Firemen rescued a worker who fell in an air conditioning duct in a Rumaithiya house. Fire operations received a call about an Arab worker who got trapped inside a duct he fell in. A team from Bidaa fire station responded, led by Lt Col Abdullah Al-Khabbaz. A hole



KUWAIT: Firefighters work on freeing a worker who fell in an air conditioning duct in a Rumaithiya house.

was made in the concrete wall, and the man was freed unharmed.

Exercise

Five fire teams carried out the 'Jahra Star' exercise which deal with chemical and radiation leakage at the new Jahra hospital, in the presence of Deputy Director General for Fighting Sector Maj Gen Jamal Al-Bulaihees. The exercise aims at preparing for dealing with hospital accidents to boost the role of employees during emergencies.

their protection from her 'abusive husband,' Al-Rai reported yesterday. Investigations are underway.

Clinic staff assaulted

A citizen beat and insulted a Syrian woman who works for a private clinic. The woman then lodged a complaint against him. The citizen is being sought by police for questioning. The woman said that while at work, a man wanted to enter to the doctor while another patient was inside. When she stopped him, the man became angry and beat her, only stopping when others intervened.

Thieves caught

Ahmadi police arrested two citizens for attempting to steal a motorcycle from its owner by force. The suspects reportedly made the robbery attempt while they were in abnormal condition and had psychoactive drugs on them. They were sent to Drugs Control General Department following their arrest. A police source said that patrolmen noticed the two beating a man, and when they approached them, they escaped before being caught after a chase. The victim said the two were trying to steal his bike and beat him when he resisted. — *Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Rai*

Man accuses estranged wife of uploading 'intimate moments' online

KUWAIT: A citizen accused his runaway Asian wife of spreading her privacies online and selling her videos to pornography websites. He gave police evidence to support his claims. The citizen said that few months after marrying his Asian wife, he discovered that she uploaded videos of their 'intimate moments' online. Furthermore, he said that he found out that his wife sold the video clips which she recorded without his knowledge to Asian men, who uploaded them online. When he confronted her, the woman denied her actions and screamed hysterically, then went to her country's embassy to seek

Kuwait Zoo denies health scare rumors

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Kuwait Zoo commented on 'inaccurate' social media reports which claimed that an infection has spread amongst animals there. Posts had recently went viral on social media claiming that several animals were diagnosed with Brucellosis infection, and urged the public to avoid going to the zoo, saying that the 'dangerous virus' can be transmitted to humans.

In the aftermath of the rumors' spread, the zoo's administration posted a clarification on their Instagram account, saying that Brucellosis (Brucella disease) is a bacterial disease, not viral, and only affects certain animals such as cows, sheep, goats, and camels.

This disease often spreads to humans via direct contact with infected animals or contaminated animal products, it explained. The disease also spreads through consuming unpasteurized milk, cheese, and other dairy products.

Those conditions are not found at Kuwait Zoo, the administration explained, and reassured visitors that they had no reason to worry, especially that it took all necessary health precautions to deal with the disease in the same way as they did with any other disease that affected animals in the past.

A Kuwait Zoo employee told Kuwait Times yesterday that only three or four animals suffered from this disease, adding that the animals were already quarantined. "Our veterinary took samples from those animals which are now receiving treatment," he told Kuwait Times. "We followed the same procedures as we usually do with any other disease."

"There are about 120 employees working at the zoo including the administration, veterinary, laborers, and other staff. If there was a real danger on humans, then we would not be coming to work, and the zoo would have been shut down," the employee further said. "Simply put, there is no reason for fear."

International

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2019



China: The not-so invisible hand in US-N Korea talks

DRC opposition chief claims win in tense election

Page 12

Page 18



BANGKOK: Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne speaks to the press regarding the case of detained Bahraini footballer Hakeem Al-Araibi and runaway Saudi teenager Rahaf Mohammed Al-Qunun at the Australian embassy. — AFP

Teen asylum case being judged quickly

If accepted she would have a gateway to Australian citizenship

SYDNEY: Australian authorities are weighing a young Saudi woman's asylum claim at unusual speed, several lawyers and legal experts have told AFP, contrasting her high-profile plight with a normally excruciatingly slow system. Canberra has insisted it will treat the case of 18-year-old Rahaf Mohammed Al-Qunun "in the usual way, as it does with all" refugee cases referred by the United Nations.

But just days after fleeing a powerful and allegedly abusive family in Saudi Arabia, Qunun has already been judged a legitimate refugee by the UN and been in contact with Australian officials in Bangkok about resettlement. Hers is not the plight of refugees who languish for years in sprawling city camps like Dadaab, Kenya or Zaatar, Jordan. "Usually it's really very slow," said Mary Anne Kenny, a veteran legal practitioner and expert in Australian migration at Perth's Murdoch University.

But Qunun's savvy use of Twitter throughout her ordeal at Bangkok airport, including tweeting

videos of her barricading herself in a hotel room, galvanized a global campaign and calls for her to be granted asylum. Two days — and some 80,000 followers — later she was cheered out of the airport by a legion of online followers.

Media focus

Experts agree the media focus on Qunun's case has put pressure on officials in Thailand — which usually have little sympathy for asylum seekers — to act quickly. But it may also have increased the risk to Qunun's safety — making her resettlement more urgent and strengthening her case for asylum. If she had made it to Australia, she would have been just one of the thousands of would-be refugees who turn up at Australian ports, airports and borders who face lengthy waits, albeit in relative safety.

Sarah Dale, principal solicitor for the Sydney-based Refugee Advice and Casework Service, which in the last year helped 3,300 refugees, said many of her clients have waited months and years

while the wheels of justice ground slowly. Because Qunun turned up in Thailand — which is not a signatory to the UN convention on refugees — settlement there was not an option, prompting the UN and other countries to step in. Her possession of an Australian tourist visa and very public expression of interest in going to Australia, put pressure on Canberra to take the lead.

Australia is one of the few countries in the world that will resettle refugees who are already outside their home country, but this is extremely rare. Of 20 million people the UN was concerned with in 2017, less than one percent were resettled that year. That, says Mary Anne Kenny, is why talk of Qunun "jumping the queue" are misplaced. With no queue to speak of, it is more like she will have won the lottery if resettled.

Still Tamara Wood, a lecturer in forced migration at the University of New South Wales, said the speed with which her case is being treated appears quick, but "not unprecedented" The process

is not "ad-hoc" she added, citing provisions for emergency and urgent refugee visas. While Australia took around 63 weeks to process refugee visas in 2014-15, in some rare cases it is done virtually overnight. "I spend a lot of time critiquing the refugee process," she said "but this is one case where it seems to be working."

The process could yet slow as Australia conducts medical, security and background checks. Acceptance is not automatic. The authorities will first have to decide whether Qunun's life, liberty, safety, health or other human rights are at risk in Thailand. The Thai authorities' earlier willingness to return Qunun to Kuwait or Saudi Arabia could help her meet that standard. As a Saudi woman who has publicly scorned her family and renounced Islam, experts say she ticks many boxes. Depending on the specifics of her case, she could be eligible for a standard refugee visa, emergency rescue, or perhaps most likely a "Woman at Risk" visa, which normally requires a UN referral. — AFP

International

Friday, January 11, 2019

Rebel drone kills 6 loyalists at biggest Yemen airbase

Attack threatens to hamper UN-led peace efforts

AL-ANAD AIR BASE: A rebel drone hit Yemen's largest air base yesterday, killing six loyalist soldiers during a military parade in an attack which threatens to hamper UN-led peace efforts. At talks in Sweden last month, the UN brokered several agreements between Houthi rebels and the Saudi-backed government seen as the best chance of ending nearly four years of devastating conflict.

The Shiite Houthi rebels said they carried out the strike on Al-Anad air base, in government-held Lahij province some 60 kilometers north of Yemen's second city Aden. At least 12 people were wounded, including top commanders, according to medics at Ibn Khaldoun hospital in the provincial capital Huta. Footage of the attack showed a drone exploding over a podium around which dozens of military personnel were standing.

Soldiers scrambled to carry wounded comrades to military vehicles, while a man holding a camera bled on the ground. An AFP correspondent at the scene said journalists were among the wounded. Originally built by the then Soviet Union during the Cold War, Al-Anad served as the headquarters for US troops overseeing a long-running drone war against Al-Qaeda until March 2014, when it was overrun by the Houthis. Government forces recaptured it in August 2015 as they recovered territory from the rebels with support from a Saudi-led military coalition.

Top brass wounded

Yemen's deputy chief of staff Saleh Al-Zan-dani, intelligence Brigadier General Saleh Tamah and senior army commander Fadel Hasan were

among the wounded, along with Lahij governor Ahmad Abdullah Al-Turki, doctors at Ibn Khaldoun hospital told AFP on condition of anonymity. Chief of staff General Abdullah Al-Nakhi was also at the base at the time of the attack, a pro-government official said. He was not named among the casualties.

The attack came one day after UN envoy Martin Griffiths warned "substantial progress" was needed on the ground before full-blown negotiations could be launched on ending the civil war. The strike on loyalist top brass is likely to create a new obstacle to the launch of formal peace talks. Yemeni Information Minister Moammer Al-Eryani said the attack was "a strong blow" to the UN's peace efforts. "The Houthi militia does not believe in the language of peace and knows nothing but killing and terror," he tweeted.

The Houthis said the attack was "in response to the enemies' continuous air raids", in a statement carried by the rebels' Al-Masirah TV. In last month's talks, the warring sides agreed truce deals for the key rebel-held aid port of Hodeida and battleground third city Ta'ez.

'We see nothing reassuring'

Griffiths told the UN Security Council on Wednesday that both parties in the Yemen war had "largely adhered to the ceasefire and there has been a significant decrease in hostilities". Residents in Hodeida yesterday remained on edge amid the relative calm. "We are afraid that the agreement between the Houthis and the resistance (Yemeni government alliance) will collapse," Mohammed Ali told AFP.



An image grab taken from a video obtained by AFP TV shows a wounded Yemeni soldier being carried by comrades after a drone exploded above Yemen's al-Anad airbase in the government-held southern province of Lahj. — AFP

"We are watching the situation with great concern. We see nothing reassuring." The latest negotiations sparked hopes of ending a conflict which has left nearly 10 million people just one step from famine in what the UN describes as the world's worst humanitarian crisis. But Griffiths has warned repeatedly that even small steps towards peace remain fragile. "It is my

view and it is shared by the leadership of both parties, but also others, that substantial progress, particularly on Hodeida of course, is something that we would like to see before we reconvene the next consultations," he said. A new meeting is to be held in Jordan next week to follow up on a major prisoner swap agreed by the warring parties last month. — AFP

Ceasefire sees jihadists take over Syria's Idlib

BEIRUT: A jihadist group dominated by Syria's former Al-Qaeda affiliate yesterday sealed its grip on northern Idlib, the last major rebel bastion, in a deal ending days of fighting with rival factions. Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) signed a ceasefire with what was left of a rival alliance that sees it confirm its supremacy and unites the region under a jihadist-led administration.

Under an accord reached by rebel backer Turkey and regime ally Russia in September, Ankara was expected to rein in Idlib factions to stave off a threatened government offensive with potentially disastrous humanitarian repercussions. The jihadists' deal, a copy of which was circulated on local media outlets, brings an immediate end to the fighting between HTS and the rival National Liberation Front, which was directly backed by Turkey.

"This morning, HTS and NLF signed an agreement to put an end to ongoing fighting... and establish the control of the salvation government in all areas," the group's propaganda channel Ebaa said. The self-proclaimed Salvation Government is an HTS-dominated body which had been administering large parts of the Idlib area, including its eponymous capital. Its reach now extends to most of the Idlib province and parts of the neighbor-

ing provinces of Aleppo and Hama. The deal sees Ankara-backed Islamist factions Ahrar al-Sham and Suqur al-Sham stand down, as areas they once held come under HTS administrative control. These include the two major towns of Ariha and Maarat al-Noman.

'Indispensable interlocutor'

Last week, HTS seized dozens of villages from another key NLF component, Nouredine Al-Zinki, in the northeast of the enclave. Other jihadists — such as the Al-Qaeda-linked Hurras al-Deen group and Turkestan Islamic Party (TIP) — maintain a presence in the Idlib region but are allied with HTS. The clashes between HTS and its NLF rivals in Idlib had killed 137 people on both sides since the start of the year, most of them fighters, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group.

The deal announced yesterday provides for an immediate cessation of hostilities, an exchange of detainees, the lifting of all checkpoints inside the region, and its unification under the authority of the Salvation Government. Analyst Sam Heller said the latest development put HTS squarely in control of the Idlib region.

"Now it can present itself to Turkey and others as an indispensable interlocutor in any non-military solution to Idlib," said the analyst with the International Crisis Group. It was however unclear if it would make it harder for Turkey to implement the September deal for a buffer zone around Idlib, reached in the Russian resort town of Sochi. "It's not clear whether the Sochi deal's success and the continuation of the Idlib de-escalation actually depends on the memorandum's literal implementation,



IDLIB: In this file photo taken on August 14, 2018 Syrian fighters attend a mock battle in anticipation of an attack by the regime on Idlib province and the surrounding countryside, during a graduation of new Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) members at a camp in the countryside of the northern Idlib province. — AFP

or more political atmospherics such as the health of the Turkish-Russian bilateral relationship," he said.

Simultaneously, Ankara has been threatening to launch a cross-border offensive against the Kurdish militia controlling large parts of northeastern Syria. The recent announcement by US President Donald Trump that he was ordering a full troop pullout from Syria has left Washington's Kurdish allies more exposed than ever. — AFP

DRC opposition chief claims win in tense election, rival cries foul

Vast central African country increasingly on edge

KINSHASA: Opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi was yesterday declared the victor of DR Congo's controversial presidential election in a surprise result swiftly denounced by his rival as a "coup". In a pre-dawn announcement, the election commission named Tshisekedi, son of the country's late veteran opposition leader, as provisional winner of the bitterly-contested December 30 vote.

At stake is political stewardship of the notoriously unstable central African nation which has never known a peaceful transition of power since independence from Belgium in 1960. Tshisekedi's apparent victory was greeted by celebrations at the headquarters of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), the country's oldest and largest opposition party which was founded by his father Etienne. The 55-year-old immediately pledged to work closely with current incumbent Joseph Kabila. "Today we should no longer see him as an adversary, but rather as a partner for democratic change in our country," he told supporters.

'Electoral coup'

But the result was immediately denounced by his opposition rival Martin Fayulu, the runner up, who slammed the announcement as "an electoral coup". French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said the declared outcome was "not consistent" with the results, saying that Fayulu appeared to have won.

With the vast central African country increasingly on edge over the long-delayed vote to replace Kabila, who has ruled the country with an iron fist since 2001, the United Nations

warned against any resort to violence. "The Secretary-General calls on all stakeholders to refrain from violence and to channel any eventual electoral disputes through the established institutional mechanisms," spokesman Stephane Dujarric said late Wednesday.

Kabila had been due to step down two years ago, but managed to cling on to power, sparking an escalating political crisis marked by widespread protests that were brutally repressed, leaving dozens of people dead. The vote finally took place at the end of December, pitting Kabila's handpicked successor Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary against Tshisekedi and Fayulu, a fiery orator who emerged from relative obscurity to take a front seat in the race.

'Ugly scam'

Election chief Corneille Nangaa declared Tshisekedi the winner with 38.57 percent of the vote, just ahead of Fayulu with 34.8 percent. Shadary came third with 23.8 percent. The announcement of an opposition win was a shock as many had expected the results to be stacked in Shadary's favour, prompting heavy international pressure on Kinshasa to respect the wishes of the electorate while the mammoth ballot count was under way. But yesterday's outcome was swiftly denounced by Fayulu as a sham.

"These results have nothing to do with the truth at the ballot box," he told Radio France International. "It's a real electoral coup, it's unbelievable," he said. "It's an ugly scam by Nangaa and his political cronies. 'They have stolen the Congolese people's victory and the people will never accept that.' France's Le Drian also said



KINSHASA: A supporter of the newly elected president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Felix Tshisekedi, celebrates in the streets of Kinshasa. — AFP

Fayulu had apparently won, pointing to a parallel count by DR Congo's powerful Catholic Church which deployed more than 40,000 people to observe the vote.

Last week, CENCO, the body that represents the country's Catholic bishops, said it knew the outcome of the vote and urged the electoral commission to publish the results "in keeping with truth and justice". Although it did not name the winner, its announcement drew a sharp rebuke from the ruling coalition.

Calculated risk

Analysts described Tshisekedi's win as "highly surprising" but said it made sense in the context of DRC's political dynamics. "Kabila did

not want to risk announcing Shadary as the winner, which would have triggered violent protests and international condemnation. "Instead, he chose to split the opposition by creating a power-sharing deal with Tshisekedi," said Robert Besseling, executive director of risk consultancy EXX Africa.

"Kabila will be able to influence Tshisekedi, who now owes his ascendancy to power to Kabila's control of the electoral commission." He said the result was "starkly at odds" with CENCO's parallel vote tabulation. And in a country of 80 million where half the population are Catholic, CENCO's assessment that the outcome was rigged was likely to be widely accepted, he added. — AFP

Turkey will launch Syria offensive if US delays pullout

ISTANBUL: Turkey will launch an offensive against Syrian Kurdish forces if the United States delays the withdrawal of its troops from the war-torn country, the foreign minister said yesterday. "If the (pull-out) is put off with ridiculous excuses like Turks are massacring Kurds, which do not reflect the reality, we will implement this decision," Mevlut Cavusoglu told NTV television.

Turkey and the United States are at loggerheads over the future of Syrian Kurdish forces after US President Donald Trump made a surprise announcement last month to pull out 2,000 troops from Syria. Ahead of Trump's move, Turkish

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to launch another operation in Syria targeting the US-backed Syrian Kurdish militia, which Turkey regards as a terrorist group.

Turkish officials had a tense meeting this week with Trump's national security adviser John Bolton in Ankara aimed at coordinating the pullout process. Erdogan — who has welcomed the pullout plan — accused Bolton of a "grave mistake" by demanding that Ankara provide assurances on the safety of the Kurdish fighters before Washington withdraws its troops.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who is on a regional tour, also said Wednesday that Turkey had committed to protecting Washington's Kurdish allies fighting the Islamic State in Syria. American forces have worked closely with the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) militia, seen by Ankara as a "terrorist offshoot" of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has waged an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984. Cavusoglu said Turkey would go ahead with its incursion plan. — AFP

House arrest for minors held over Palestinian killing

JERUSALEM: Israeli authorities yesterday released to house arrest four of five Jewish minors held on suspicion of involvement in a fatal stone-throwing attack on a Palestinian woman, lawyers and officials said. The arrests on December 30 were in connection with the killing of Aisha Rabi, who died after stones were thrown at the car she was travelling in with her family in the occupied West Bank on October 12.

Authorities did not confirm their detention until Sunday due to a gag order on details of the case while the investigation continued. The remand of the fifth suspect has been extended by another six days, Israel's domestic security agency Shin Bet said. The lawyers representing the minors argued that their release proved they were innocent.

"These youths, who had absolutely nothing to do with the event, should not have been arrested," said attorney Adi Kedar of Honenu, a right-wing legal aid organisation, vowing to work to have the fifth suspect released. The Shin Bet, which on Sunday announced an unspecified number of arrests

for "serious terrorist offences, including murder," rejected claims the youths were mistreated during their investigation.

The five, students at the Pri Haaretz religious seminary in the Rechelim settlement in the West Bank, were arrested "after intelligence efforts connecting them to the death of Rabi," a mother of nine, the Shin Bet said yesterday. The Shin Bet noted the four were released after it was decided "the investigation could continue while they were under house arrest and other limiting conditions."

It also warned of "ongoing efforts" to obstruct the course of the investigation, "including by disseminating information about the probe while slandering the Shin Bet". The fatal stoning took place near Rechelim, close to Rabi's village of Bidiya in the Israeli-occupied northern West Bank. Rabi was struck on the head in the attack and died later at a hospital in the city of Nablus. Her husband, who was driving the car at the time, escaped with minor injuries.

Palestinian witnesses and security sources cited by official Palestinian news agency Wafa said the stones were thrown by Israeli settlers. Israeli investigations into "Jewish terrorism" — as such cases are often referred to by Israeli media — are highly sensitive. Israeli authorities have been accused by rights activists of dragging their feet in such cases in comparison to investigations into Palestinian attacks, while far-right Israelis say suspects have undergone coercion and torture. — AFP

Sudan says political protests death toll rises, reaches 22

Bread price hike takes its toll on people and president

KHARTOUM: Anti-government protests that have rocked Sudan have left 22 people dead, authorities said yesterday, after three demonstrators died hours after thousands cheered for President Omar Al-Bashir at a rival rally in Khartoum. Wednesday's competing rallies in the capital followed weeks of angry street protests over a government decision to triple the price of bread at a time when the country faces an acute shortage of foreign currency and soaring inflation.

Hundreds of protesters who have repeatedly called on Bashir to step down marched in the capital's twin city of Omdurman chanting "Freedom, Peace, Justice" and "Revolution is the people's choice". But they were quickly confronted with tear gas fired by riot police. Videos posted on social media that could not be independently verified showed some demonstrators pelting police officers with rocks.

Yesterday, police confirmed that three protesters had died in the Omdurman demonstration but did not specify the cause of death. "An illegal gathering was held in Omdurman and police dispersed it with tear gas," police spokesman Hashim Abdelrahim said in a statement. "Police later received reports that three protesters had died and several (were) injured. We are now investigating."

That raised the total death toll in protests so

far to 22 including two security personnel, according to official figures. New York-based Human Rights Watch said on Monday that at least 40 people had been killed including children, citing Sudanese activists and medical workers. A doctor had told AFP late on Wednesday that six protesters were being treated at Omdurman's main hospital for gunshot wounds. A group of doctors at the hospital said that police fired tear gas at the facility. "There was also shooting inside the hospital," the group said in a statement, without specifying who had opened fire.

Defiant Bashir

Bashir and others have blamed violence at the nearly month-long protests on "thugs" and "conspirators" without naming them. Wednesday's demonstration came soon after thousands of people danced and cheered Bashir at a separate rally held in the capital's Green Yard as police officers, soldiers and security agents secured the site. "This gathering sends a message to those who think that Sudan will become like other countries that have been destroyed," Bashir told the crowd. "We will stop anyone who destroys our properties."

Crowds chanted "Allahu akbar" (God is greatest) and "Yes, yes, Bashir, we will follow you" at the rally, where the president was accompanied



KHARTOUM: Sudan's President Omar Al-Bashir appears during a rally with his supporters in the Green Square in the capital. — AFP

by his wife and a group of ministers. "Those who tried to destroy Sudan... put conditions on us to solve our problems, I tell them that our dignity is

more than the price of dollars," Bashir said in an apparent dig at Washington, which had imposed a trade embargo on Khartoum in 1997. — AFP



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International

UK minister breaks the ranks with no-deal Brexit warning

'It is my strong view that we need to come together now'

LONDON: Britain's business minister yesterday warned that the prospect of crashing out of the European Union without an agreement would be "disastrous" for the country, as fractious MPs prepare to vote on a contentious Brexit deal. Greg Clark's comments contradicted official government policy of not ruling out a no-deal Brexit and exposed further divisions after embattled Prime Minister Theresa May suffered a series of setbacks in parliament.

A no-deal Brexit would be "a disastrous situation in which we move to the most rudimentary terms of trade with our closest partners," Greg Clark told BBC radio. In such a scenario, Britain would be forced to trade with the EU on World Trade Organization terms, which could mean much higher tariffs for some products such as cars. As things stand, Britain will leave the EU with no official deal on March 29 if parliament fails to approve an agreement the government has struck with the bloc. MPs are set to vote on the agreement on Tuesday.

"It is my strong view that we need to come together now, we need to act to avoid no-deal because I don't think there is anything remotely like a majority in parliament that will tolerate it," he said. Brexit supporting MPs are opposed to the deal, and May has already pulled the vote once with defeat looming. Most MPs supported staying in the EU in the 2016 referendum, and many have vowed to do everything within their power to prevent a no-deal scenario.

As Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visits Britain on Thursday, Clark said of Japanese businesses: "We need to resolve this concern, this very real concern that they have of us crashing out on March 29". Japanese firms have invested billions of pounds in Britain, and are especially crucial in the car industry, using the country as a business-friendly home from which to trade across the continent. The car sector was rocked on Thursday by reports that Jaguar Land Rover is set to announce up to 5,000 job cuts, with Brexit uncertainty cited as a factor.

Parliamentary fireworks

May is making a desperate last push to win MPs over to her Brexit deal, ahead of Tuesday's vote. She faces daunting odds in getting the deal passed, and suffered a stinging defeat on Wednesday when MPs voted for an amendment demanding she produce new plans within three days if the agreement is voted down.

Aiming to capitalize on her weakness, opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was to make a Brexit speech in Wakefield, northern England, in which he was expected to call for a general election to resolve the deadlock. "Let there be no doubt: Theresa May's deal is a bad deal and Labour will vote against it next week in parliament," he was to say, according to extracts released by his office.

"If the government cannot pass its most important legislation, then there must be a general



LONDON: Britain's Minister of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Claire Perry (L) and Britain's Business Secretary Greg Clark (R) leave after attending the weekly meeting of the cabinet at 10 Downing Street. —AFP

election at the earliest opportunity." Many in his party hope that he will call for a second referendum, but the veteran leftist, a long-time critic of the European Union, has so far resisted. MPs were also set to hold the second of five days of debate ahead of the historic vote, after explo-

sive scenes in the House on Wednesday. Brexiters accused speaker of the house John Bercow of anti-Brexit bias when he apparently ignored the advice of Commons officials and selected the amendment demanding May bring forward new plans in the event of defeat. —AFP

Italy minister furious after migrant deal

ROME: Italy's populist coalition has reached agreement on the fate of 10 migrants the country agreed to take from Malta despite the fury of far-right anti-immigrant Interior Minister Matteo Salvini. Disagreement over the migrants, who arrived in Malta on Wednesday after being rescued in the Mediterranean and spending weeks stranded aboard an NGO vessel, has shaken Italy's coalition.

Salvini, fellow deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio of the anti-establishment Five Star Movement (M5S) and Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, held talks late into the night on Wednesday. "There is convergence within the government on a hard line: ports closed, fight against smugglers and NGOs," Salvini said yesterday. "And I add that any new arrival must not cost Italian citizens a cent," Salvini said, insisting that "it's the interior ministry that handles immigration."

While Salvini has for months repeated that Italian ports are closed to migrants, Di Maio last week said that Italy should take in several women and children rescued before Christmas but stranded at sea after no port would allow them to dock. Conte, who was named premier by Salvini and Di Maio, agreed with the latter, whose M5S does not have the same hard-line anti-immigrant position as Salvini's League.

Italy became one of eight EU nations that on Wednesday agreed to take in some migrants from Malta. Salvini was infuriated by that decision and a compromise was agreed by which Italy's Waldensian Evangelical Church would take in the 10 migrants. The church has been involved with so-called "humanitarian corridors" that help asylum seekers come to Italy, assisting them with housing, Italian language learning and skills training. But Salvini also demanded that other European nations fulfil their promises to take migrants from Italy.

In July 2018, Germany, France, Portugal, Spain and Malta agreed each to take in 50 of around 450 migrants disembarked in Sicily by the Italian coastguard vessel Diciotti after being rescued at sea. According to Salvini, France has taken its 50, but Germany only 23, Spain 21, Portugal 19 and Malta none. Ireland, which said it would take in 20, has received 16 migrants, he said.

The Maltese government yesterday voiced "disdain and surprise at the inaccurate allegations by Minister Salvini", pointing out that Italy had promised to take 50 migrants from Malta and that the two countries had agreed the two deals cancel each other out. Salvini remained adamant. "We're not going to take any lessons from Malta, which closed its eyes for years so that boats could head for Italy," said Salvini. "The music has changed, you can only come to Italy if you have a permit. We've already taken in too many, it's time for others to wake up." —AFP

Four men on trial in Berlin deny giant gold coin heist

BERLIN: Four Berlin men who went on trial yesterday denied involvement in the spectacular museum theft of a giant commemorative gold coin called the "Big Maple Leaf" and valued at 3.75 million euros (\$4.3 million). Police had "presented not a single shred of firm evidence", argued Toralf Noeding, defense lawyer for the three alleged thieves, brothers Ahmed, 20, and Wayci Remmo, 23, and their cousin Wissam Remmo, 21.

Noeding also charged that his clients had suffered prejudice from broad media coverage on their extended family with roots in Lebanon, several of whose members have been jailed for involvement in violent or organized crime. Police have found no trace of the 100-kilogram Canadian coin since the late-night heist in March 2017 from the German capital's Bode Museum, located close to Chancellor Angela Merkel's apartment.

Police assume the nearly pure-gold treasure, which has a face value of one million Canadian dollars, was either cut up, molten down or taken abroad. Police staged raids in July 2017 involving 300 officers on premises in and around Berlin linked to the Remmo clan to gather evidence. They confiscated guns, luxury cars and more than 100,000 euros in cash. If found guilty of theft in

the juvenile court case, the three suspects, all registered as unemployed, would face jail terms of up to 10 years. Also in the dock and claiming innocence was 20-year-old former museum security guard Denis Umut W, the alleged inside man, accused of giving the others crucial information for the break-in. His lawyer Marcel Kelz denied media reports that his client had made major purchases, including an 11,000 euro gold chain, and shown interest in buying a Mercedes Benz car and property months after the heist.

Fear of crime clans

The "Big Maple Leaf", one of five minted in 2007 with a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, is considered the world's second-largest gold coin after the one-ton Australian Kangaroo issued in 2012. The coin, which has a diameter of 53 centimeters, was on loan from an unidentified collector to the Bode Museum, which bills its exhibition of coins and medals as a "chronicle of human history forged in metal". Security camera footage from the night shows three young men wearing dark hoodies, scarves and baseball caps make their way to the museum.

They broke in through a window, smashed a glass case with an axe and used a rope, wooden beam and a wheelbarrow to lift the coin onto adjacent elevated urban railway tracks. The coin was probably damaged when the thieves dropped it twice — once on the tracks that pass the museum and cross the Spree river, and again in Monbijou park on the opposite river bank, from where they took it away in a car. —AFP

International

Friday, January 11, 2019

Jewish museum terror attack court case opens in Brussels

First Syria jihad veteran to stage a terror attack in Europe

BRUSSELS: The trial opened yesterday of a “very polite” Frenchman accused of shooting four people dead at a Jewish museum in Brussels, allegedly the first Syria jihad veteran to stage a terror attack in Europe. Mehdi Nemmouche, 33, who was in court, faces a life sentence if convicted of the killings in the Belgian capital on May 24, 2014, following his return from Syria’s battlefields.

Both Nemmouche and Nacer Bendrer, a fellow Frenchman aged 30 who allegedly supplied the weapons, were due to hear the 200-page charge sheet against them in the first two days of the trial being held in a Brussels criminal court under heavy security. Accompanied by two police officers in balaclavas, Nemmouche sat down in the dock wearing an orange sweater. He gave his name at the judge’s request.

Bendrer, who could also be jailed for life if convicted, sat about two meters from him dressed in a black sweater, accompanied by a female police officer whose face was visible. Both have previously denied charges of “terrorist murder” for the anti-Semitic 82-second shooting spree. More than 100 witnesses were due to testify at the trial which is being attended by the victims’ families and Jewish community leaders.

Firing a pistol and then an assault rifle, the gunman killed two Israeli tourists, a French volunteer and a Belgian receptionist at the Jewish Museum. Six days after the attack Nemmouche — born to a family of Algerian origin in the northern French town of Roubaix — was arrested in the southern French port city of Mar-

seille, where he arrived on a bus from Brussels. Investigators say he was carrying a handgun and an assault rifle used in the shooting. They say he fought with a jihadist faction in Syria from 2013 to 2014, where he met Najim Laachraoui, a member of the gang which went on to carry out suicide bombings in Brussels that killed 32 people in March 2016.

Nemmouche ‘relaxed, calm’

Justice minister Koen Geens told RTL broadcaster that the Nemmouche trial is a good test case for the Brussels bombing trial where jurors will have to weigh evidence with the risk “of being intimidated.” The same Brussels cell is also alleged to have coordinated and sent jihadists to carry out the Paris gun attacks and bombings on November 13, 2015, in which 130 people were killed and hundreds more wounded.

Both attacks were claimed by the Islamic State (IS) group, whose activities in Syria and Iraq lured thousands of jihadists from Europe. Nemmouche and Bendrer, investigators say, met nearly a decade ago while in prison in southern France, where they were both described as “radicalized” inmates who tried to win others over. Bendrer was arrested in Marseille seven months after the Jewish Museum attack and charged as Nemmouche’s accomplice.

Although he was jailed for five years in September by a French court for attempted extortion, he was transferred to Belgium for the trial. Nemmouche is expected to face a separate trial in France for holding French journalists hostage in Syria. The former hostages are expected to



BRUSSELS: Weapons are displayed as pieces of evidences ahead of the opening session of the trial regarding the terrorist attack at the Jewish Museum. — AFP

testify about Nemmouche’s character during the Brussels trial, despite the defense arguing that theirs is a separate case. “When I hear his lawyers say he is someone who can be very polite, very urbane, sure. He is a clever one,” former hostage Didier Francois told Europe 1 radio. “But, as for me, I will never forget his capacity for violence,” the journalist said.

Nemmouche lawyer Henri Laquay told journalists yesterday that his client was “relaxed, calm,” adding: “He will choose the moment when to speak.” More than 300 Belgian and foreign journalists have registered to cover the museum attack trial which could last until the end of February. — AFP

C Africa army head came to Russia for training: Minister

MOSCOW: The defense minister of the Central African Republic said in an interview published yesterday that the chief-of-staff of the conflict-riven nation’s army had been in Russia for training. Russia’s influence in CAR has been growing since 2017, when the UN-backed government there called for help to fight militias rampaging through the country.

Moscow has already supplied weapons, military officers, at least 170 military “trainers” and a security adviser to work with President Faustin-Archange Touadera. “As of this month, 1,300 of our army’s soldiers have been instructed and trained” at a Russian facility in CAR, minister Marie Noelle Koyara told Russia’s RIA Novosti news agency. “Our head of the general staff has himself been for training in Russia,” she added, without providing further details.

Since Russia-trained soldiers have been deployed in the country, “the situation has not only stabilized, but visibly improved,” she said. The defense minister said that at the Russian centre at the

former presidential palace in Berengo west of Bangui which opened last year, soldiers were instructed in how “to become a real military force”.

“If necessary, this centre in Berengo can be expanded because it has already proven its effectiveness as a training platform,” she said in remarks translated into Russian. The African nation is historically linked to France and already has EU and UN aid, but Koyara insisted Moscow and Paris were acting as partners rather than rivals in the region. Rival militias have been battling each other since the 2013 overthrow of longtime leader Francois Bozize, a Christian, by majority-Muslim militias in a coalition called the Seleka. A UN arms embargo imposed that year was in 2017 lifted exclusively for Moscow. Most of the country’s territory remains in the hands of armed groups despite Touadera’s election in 2016.

Violence has claimed thousands of lives, and hundreds of thousands of people have been internally displaced or fled abroad. The military trainers sent by Russia are mercenaries with close ties to Russian mining companies and the numbers deployed could be significantly higher than officially reported, according to reports in Russian and Western media. Last year three Russian journalists who were investigating the shadowy Russian “Wagner” mercenary group were ambushed and murdered in CAR. — AFP

Nepali woman, two kids, die in ‘menstruation hut’

KATHMANDU: A Nepali mother and her two children have died of suspected smoke inhalation after a night in a windowless hut where women are banished during their period, police said Wednesday. Many communities in Nepal consider menstruating women as impure and force mothers and daughters to stay in sheds away from the family home once a month, despite the practice being outlawed.

Police said Amba Bohara, 35, fell asleep in a hut in western Bajura district on Tuesday evening with her two sons aged 12 and nine. The trio had huddled around a fire to stay warm in Nepal’s freezing winter conditions. Local police chief Uddhab Singh Bhat told AFP the woman’s mother-in-law opened the hut the next day to find all three dead. “We are waiting for the results of a postmortem to confirm the cause of death, but believe they died of

suffocation,” Bhat told AFP. “We are investigating.”

Parts of the blankets sheltering the trio were burned, and Bohara had suffered burns to her legs. The ancient shunning practice known as “chhaupadi” was outlawed in 2005 but is still enforced in parts of Nepal, particularly its remote and conservative western regions. Last year, Kathmandu introduced three-months jail and a 3,000 rupee (\$30) fine for anyone caught imposing chhaupadi.

The practice is linked to Hinduism and considers women untouchable during menstruation and after childbirth. Under Chhaupadi, women are barred from touching food, religious icons, cattle and men during their period and must sleep away from others. The death of Bohara and her children are not the first linked to the practice. Last year, a 21-year-old woman succumbed to smoke inhalation while banished to a hut, and other women have died from snake bites in the past. The country’s National Human Rights Commission said police needed to do more to enforce the law. “Women will continue to die unless there are consequences for enforcing this tradition,” said the commission’s Mohana Ansari. — AFP

International

Central Americans flee crime, poverty for better life in US

Stories of struggle and success from the controversial border

MESILLA: Ovidio Lopez Tum sold tortillas in his hometown of Chicaman in Guatemala to support his wife and eight children. But after being wounded in machete and grenade attacks by extortionists, the 53-year-old Lopez said he decided to flee to the United States. To bolster his request for asylum, he brought along documentation of his injuries — cuts to his head and fingers from the 2014 machete attack and shrapnel wounds from the 2017 grenade blast.

He also brought along his 12-year-old daughter, Ingrid Maribel, hoping to provide her with an education she could not receive at home. Lopez and his daughter are among the thousands of migrants from Central America turning up at the US southern border with Mexico. President Donald Trump has described the situation there as a humanitarian and security crisis and is engaged in a standoff with Congress over his demand for \$5 billion to build a border wall.

AFP spoke with a few families who have arrived in the United States — where they await an uncertain future. Lopez and his daughter said they left Chicaman, where they lived in a crude home with dirt floors, on December 20. They arrived at the US border 10 days later, after walking and taking buses through Mexico. They were released after two nights in detention during which they said they were well treated by the US immigration authorities.

Upon their release, they were housed in the Basilica of San Albino, a church in the New Mexico town of Mesilla, before leaving by bus the next day for Alabama, where Lopez has family. Lopez said he hopes to eventually bring his wife

and other children to the United States — or at least to provide them with enough money to move to somewhere safer in Guatemala.

Phone number to call help

Ricardo Chub-Bo, a 40-year-old corn farmer, also made the perilous voyage from Guatemala to the United States with his 14-year-old daughter, Rosa Maria. He said he decided to come to the United States because he could no longer support his wife and three children growing corn.

They were released into the care of the Basilica of San Albino after eight days in detention and will head to Philadelphia by Greyhound bus. Since neither one speaks English, the church provided them with written instructions to help them on their three-day bus trip along with a phone number to call if they need help. Most of the refugees arriving at the US-Mexico border are from three violence- and poverty-racked nations in Central America — El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

'You will get robbed'

Gerbin Asmar Hernandez, 26, is from Santa Barbara, a town in Honduras near the border with Guatemala. Fed up with high crime back home, Hernandez made the journey to the United States through Mexico with his 10-year-old daughter, Annarut, leaving his wife and a son behind. Hernandez said that a few years ago, about a week before Christmas, he was robbed of the \$300 he had made while working for a month on a coffee plantation. "I was just one hour away from my town and I got robbed," he said. "You can't carry

seems to have a consistent effect on sharing fake news," the authors reported.

"It is possible that an entire cohort of Americans, now in their 60s and beyond, lacks the level of digital media literacy necessary to reliably determine the trustworthiness of news encountered online," they suggested. The authors also suggested the impact of aging on memory could have an effect. "Under this account, memory deteriorates with age in a way that particularly undermines resistance to 'illusions of truth,'" they wrote.

Although the study found that Republicans shared more fake news than Democrats, and ideologically, conservatives shared the most fake news stories — this could be due to the fact that most fake news articles produced during the 2016 presidential campaign favored US President Donald Trump. "Had the slant of fake news been pro-Clinton instead of pro-Trump, it is possible that more liberals than conservatives would have shared this content," the authors wrote in a Washington Post op-ed.

Facebook has been hammered for failing to stop information manipulation and misinformation, including from Russian organizations during the 2016 US election. Its leaders have promised more transparency in hearings in the US Congress and elsewhere, and the network has stepped up efforts to find and root out fake accounts and foreign influence campaigns. — AFP



MESILLA: Ovidio, 53, poses for a portrait with his daughter, Ingrid Maribel, 12, inside the church hall of the Basilica of San Albino. — AFP

around money because you will get robbed." Hernandez and his daughter flew to Washington state, where they will await a court date — and for a judge to decide whether they can remain in the United States. In the meantime, he is wearing an ankle bracelet to track his movements.

Also from Honduras is Fanny Mencia, 26, who made the voyage from her hometown of Siguate-

peque to the border with her son Anderson Rodriguez, age seven. "We suffered along the way, sleeping in the street," Mencia said of the trip through Mexico. Mencia, who is six months pregnant, said she left behind the father of her unborn child, whose meager wages did not cover the food bill for everyone. She and her son are heading for Tennessee, where her sister lives. — AFP

Old people more likely to share fake news: Study

WASHINGTON: Facebook users aged 65 plus and conservatives are more likely to share fake news on the platform than younger or more liberal counterparts, according to a new study published Wednesday. Researchers from Princeton University and New York University analyzed the Facebook posts of nearly 1,200 people who agreed to share their data in the aftermath of the 2016 US presidential election.

They then compared links the respondents had shared on Facebook with several lists — including one compiled by BuzzFeed — of websites known to share false information. The study, published in *Science Advances*, found less than only 8.5 percent of respondents shared a link from one of these websites. However, those that did tended to be older and self-identified as being on the conservative end of the political spectrum.

In fact, users over 65 — regardless of political affiliations — shared "nearly seven times as many articles from fake news domains" as 18 to 29-year-olds, the youngest age group studied. "No other demographic characteristic

Anger at arrests in Malaysia for alleged royal insults

KUALA LUMPUR: Three people have been arrested in Malaysia for allegedly insulting the former king on social media after his shock resignation, sparking anger yesterday from activists at the use of "draconian" laws. Sultan Muhammad V stepped aside at the weekend after just two years on the throne. No official reason was given, but it came after he reportedly married a Russian ex-beauty queen while on medical leave.

It was the first time a Malaysian monarch had given up the throne before the end of his term. Under a unique arrangement, the throne changes hands every five years between the rulers of the nine states headed by Islamic royalty. National police chief Mohamad Fuzi Harun said two men aged 46 and 27, and a 26-year-old woman, were arrested under tough sedition laws Tuesday for allegedly posting insulting remarks about the resignation on Facebook and Twitter. The trio face up to three years in jail

if found guilty. While their role is ceremonial, Muslim-majority Malaysia's royalty command great respect, and criticizing them is seen as deeply offensive. People are regularly arrested under the colonial-era sedition act for insulting royals. But Lath-eefa Koya, executive director of rights group Lawyers for Liberty, criticized the arrests, telling AFP: "The police should not give in to mob rule amid the push by some people for the authorities to act."

A statement from the group, which pushes for legal reforms, added that the sedition act was a "draconian piece of legislation" and it was shocking Malaysia's new administration was using it. The government, which came to power last year after ousting an authoritarian regime, had pledged in its election manifesto to abolish the act and several other laws seen as repressive, but is yet to do so.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad also suggested authorities should not overzealously target people accused of posting insults. "With regards to freedom of speech, if someone speaks factually, you cannot criminalize the person," he said. "If we shut everyone's mouth ... even when a crime has happened, then there will be injustice in the country." — AFP

International

Hong Kong filings show Thailand's Yingluck has Cambodian passport

A dramatic escape from her homeland

HONG KONG: Fugitive former Thai premier Yingluck Shinawatra used a Cambodian passport to register a company in Hong Kong, records show, lending weight to reports she used the neighboring kingdom to make her dramatic escape from her homeland. The former prime minister was also recently named chair of a Chinese port operator in Guangdong province, mainland corporate filings seen by AFP reveal, as her family's political dynasty grow their business presence in southern China.

Yingluck and her billionaire brother Thaksin Shinawatra were both elected prime minister but were toppled in coups — Thaksin in 2006 and Yingluck in 2014. Although they live in self-exile, the duo retain significant support in rural and poorer parts of Thailand, a politically troubled kingdom which is due to go to the polls later this year after five years of military rule.

Yingluck went on the run in August 2017 during a graft case where she was convicted of running a rice subsidy scheme that cost Thailand billions of dollars. She and her supporters say the case was politically motivated. Senior junta officials said Yingluck skipped bail and fled the country via Cambodia, an allegation the government in Phnom Penh has always denied. But publicly searchable corporate filings in Hong Kong show Yingluck holds a Cambodian pass-

port, using it to register as director of a company called "PT Corporation Company Limited" on August 24, 2018. Cambodian authorities did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Separate mainland records show Yingluck was appointed chairwoman of Shantou International Container Terminals Ltd, in Guangdong, on December 12. The company was listed as 70 percent owned by a subsidiary of the family of Li Ka-shing, Hong Kong's richest man. But a spokesperson for parent company CK Hutchison told AFP the subsidiary had recently divested "to a Singaporean investor who has subsequently brought in (an) other investor".

Hong Kong's land registry shows the residential address given for Yingluck's PT Corporation — a mansion in Hong Kong's exclusive Peak district — is owned by Chen Huaidan, a wealthy Chinese-Singaporean businesswoman. Chen is also listed as a director of Shantou International Container Terminals. Like many of Thailand's ultra-wealthy, the Shinawatra family trace their lineage to Guangdong and regularly make trips to their ancestral village there, as well as the neighboring international financial hub Hong Kong.

The South China Morning Post reported that Thaksin and Yingluck visited their village of



HONG KONG: A general view shows the K11 Atelier building (C), the corporate address listed for a company registered by fugitive former Thai premier Yingluck Shinawatra using a Cambodian passport. — AFP

Taxia over the weekend, an event that drew crowds of locals but was largely scrubbed by Chinese censors. Thaksin, who is wanted in Thailand for a separate graft conviction he says

was politically motivated, has a company registered in Hong Kong with a Montenegro passport. He divides most of his time between Dubai and London. — AFP

Delhi cows and elderly to moo-ve in together

NEW DELHI: Delhi plans to create a special home for both elderly people and some of the Indian megacity's thousands of cows, in a new animal welfare blitz also aimed at reducing numbers of monkeys and stray dogs. The local development minister Gopal Rai said as he unveiled the program on Wednesday that "cows and senior citizens will co-exist, taking care of each other" in the planned pilot facility in southwest Delhi.

"When a cow dries up, people leave her and she ends up in a gaushala (cow shelter). Similarly, humans too are abandoned and sent to old age homes, even by rich families," local media quoted Rai as saying. Other steps include "birth control" measures for the Indian capital's ubiquitous, mischievous and occasionally dangerous monkeys, the sterilization of stray dogs and electronic chips for cows and pets.

In addition, people unable to look after their cows — a common sight on Delhi's roads, impeding traffic and eating rubbish — will be able to house the animals in special hostels for a small fee. Ever since Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi's right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party stormed to power in 2014, cows — sacred for Hindus — have won a near-VIP status. Rumors of cows being taken for slaughter have sparked murderous reprisals and religious riots. Every month, some 600 cattle are rounded up in Delhi and relocated to five shelters. A 2012 livestock census found there were more than five million stray cows across India and more than 12,000 in Delhi. — AFP

Founder of S Korean 'spycam' site jailed

SEOUL: The female co-founder of South Korea's largest porn site has been jailed following months of mounting public fury over the spread of secretly filmed spycam pornography. Tens of thousands of women have rallied in recent months against the growing phenomenon of spycam videos, known in Korean as "molka", which mostly involve men filming women without their consent in toilets, changing rooms and in public.

Soranet — which had more than a million users until it was shut down in 2016 amid widespread outrage — carried thousands of such clips among reams of other X-rated content. Producing and circulating all forms of pornography is illegal in South Korea. The site's female owner, surnamed Song, was sentenced to four years in prison and fined 1.4 billion won (US\$1.25 million) on Wednesday for aiding and abetting the distribution of obscene material, including sex videos featuring minors.

The 45-year-old, who founded Soranet in 1999 with her husband and two others, "seriously damaged and distorted people's universal dignity and value", said a court statement. It added that she had "enjoyed huge profit" from the site. Song had lived as a fugitive in New Zealand for years but was arrested in June when she returned to Seoul after authorities annulled her passport. Her husband and another couple known to be co-owners of the site — all of whom have Australian citizenship or permanent residency — remain overseas.

Spycam crimes reported to South Korean police surged from around 1,100 in 2010 to more than 6,500 in 2017, with many of the videos shared or sold online. According to official statistics, about 98 percent of offenders are men — from teachers and professors to pastors and police officers — while more than 80 percent of victims are women. Despite South Korea's ban on pornography, many videos are widely consumed on servers based in foreign countries, or secretly downloaded on file-sharing sites. — AFP

Bangladesh man jailed for altered pix of PM

DHAKA: A Bangladeshi man who distorted and posted photos of the prime minister has been sentenced to seven years in jail under tough internet laws that critics say are used to muzzle dissent. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, re-elected in December in polls tainted by violence, mass arrests and claims of rigging, has been accused of increasing authoritarianism. Mohammad Monir, 35, was found guilty late Wednesday by a Dhaka cyber tribunal for doctoring and publishing on social media images of Hasina and ex-president Zillur Rahman.

"He posted those distorted images in his Facebook status and made derogatory remarks in the photo captions," prosecutor Nazrul Islam Shamim told AFP. He was convicted under section 57 of the South Asian country's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) laws. Shamim said that since the cyber court began functioning in 2013, at least seven people have been sentenced to jail for similar offences involving Hasina and others. At least 200 more such cases are pending and in various stage of trial, he said.

Rights groups have documented how the ICT laws have been used to silence criticism in the country of 165 million people. In recent months the ICT laws has been replaced by Digital Security Act, which critics say gives the authorities even wider powers to curb freedom of expression — a charge rejected by the government. — AFP

International

China: The not-so invisible hand in US-N Korea talks

China has regularly played diplomatic wingman to North Korea

BEIJING: By hosting North Korean leader Kim Jong Un for a fourth time, China has signaled again that it will not be sidelined in the diplomatic dance between its Cold War-era ally and Washington. With another nuclear summit looming between Kim and US President Donald Trump, a meeting between President Xi Jinping and the North Korean leader was inevitable, according to analysts. It has become something of a ritual: Last year, Kim briefed Xi before and after his historic summits with Trump and South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

China, which wouldn't want to be left out in the cold in any settlement, has worked to improve relations with its neighbor, which deteriorated after Beijing backed UN sanctions against North Korea. While Beijing has been angered by Kim's nuclear tests, it would not be happy to see its decades-old ally move closer to the United States at China's expense.

"(China) does not think their interests would be threatened by better inter-Korean relations, whereas the possibility of a North Korean alignment with the US, even potentially, against China, I think it's Beijing's nightmare," Bonnie Glaser, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), told AFP. "I don't think they believe it's impossible under President Trump... and this is one of drivers for Xi Jinping to keep Kim Jong Un close," Glaser said, noting that Xi reached out "very quickly" after Kim started engaging with Moon.

China has played diplomatic wingman to North Korea, even loaning Kim an Air China jet to travel to his meeting with Trump in Singapore last year. Beijing

is intent on keeping Pyongyang within its sphere of influence — the North acts as a buffer state, keeping the 28,500 US troops in South Korea far from China's borders. Following their meeting in Singapore where Kim and Trump signed a vaguely-worded document pledging work towards the "denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula", progress has stalled, with Pyongyang and Washington unable to agree on what that means.

Security guarantee

North Korea also needs to stay close to its Korea War ally if diplomacy fails. Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi's ouster after giving up his own weapons program are not distant memories. China could provide economic, political and security guarantees to North Korea in denuclearisation talks, said Hua Po, a Beijing-based independent political commentator.

"If the Korean Peninsula declares itself to be a nuclear-free zone, China can make a nuclear security commitment to North Korea," he said. As Pyongyang's only major ally, Kim is hoping Xi can push for relief from the multiple sets of sanctions imposed on it over its weapons programs. The US wants them to remain in place until gives up its arms, something Pyongyang has made no public promise to do.

"North Korea is looking for something where... they would be rewarded for meeting certain goals, rather than sanctions being lifted only after CVID (complete, verifiable and irreversible destruction) of their nuclear facilities, which is what the US is



BEIJING: This January 8, 2019 picture released by North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on January 10 shows North Korea's leader Kim Jong-Un (C) receiving a bouquet of flowers from a Chinese girl upon his arrival at the Beijing station. —AFP

adamant on," said Graham Ong-Webb, a research fellow at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. According to the official Xinhua news agency, Xi said he hopes North Korea and the United States will "meet each other halfway".

China is "much more pragmatic concerning North Korea's denuclearisation path providing they do not provoke or upturn regional stability," Beijing-based analyst Tom Fowdy told AFP. "If Washington will not give him (Kim) economic concessions, China in a subtle way almost certainly will... albeit with the ex-

pectation he does make progress and does not return to belligerence."

Kim's grandfather Kim Il Sung was also adept at playing off Communist rivals Beijing and Moscow against each other during the Cold War to extract concessions from both. Yet it appears the overtures so far have been one-way: after four visits to China, Xi has yet to visit Pyongyang. North Korean state media reported Thursday that Xi accepted Kim's invite to visit, but this was conspicuously absent from Chinese media reports. —AFP

China ambassador accuses Canada of 'white supremacy'

OTTAWA: A Chinese envoy on Wednesday accused Canada and its allies of "Western egotism and white supremacy" for demanding the immediate release of two Canadians held for alleged spying. In a letter published by The Hill Times newspaper, China's ambassador to Canada Lu Shaye also criticized the "groundless" detention of a top Chinese tech executive at the request of the United States.

China detained former diplomat Michael Kovrig and businessman Michael Spavor last month, accusing them both of activities that "endanger China's security" — a phrase often used by Beijing when alleging espionage. The arrests are thought to be in retaliation against Canada's December 1 arrest of Huawei vice president Meng Wanzhou, who is accused of violating Iran sanctions.

"It's understandable that these Canadians are concerned about their own citizens. But have they shown any concern or sympathy

for Meng after she was illegally detained and deprived of freedom?" Lu wrote in the Ottawa newspaper. "It seems that, to some people, only Canadian citizens shall be treated in a humanitarian manner and their freedom deemed valuable, while Chinese people do not deserve that," he said. "The reason why some people are used to arrogantly adopting double standards is due to Western egotism and white supremacy."

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and US President Donald Trump in a telephone call on Monday denounced the "arbitrary" detentions of Kovrig and Spavor. Australia, Britain, France, Japan, Germany and the European Union have also made statements in support of Canada. Meng is currently living in a luxury home in Vancouver after being released on bail pending the outcome of an extradition hearing. She is required to wear an electronic anklet to monitor her movements and has an 11:00 pm to 7:00 am curfew. Meanwhile, a group of Canadian parliamentarians visiting China this week complained to officials that Kovrig and Spavor have been granted few consular visits, denied access to lawyers, and remain in "completely unacceptable" detention conditions. —AFP

Four civil defense volunteers gunned down in Thailand

PATTANI: Four Thai civil defense volunteers were gunned down yesterday at a school in the kingdom's south with students just meters away, as bloodshed greets the 15th year of an insurgency in the Malay-Muslim border zone. The culturally distinct region that borders Malaysia has seen rebels fight against the rule of Buddhist-majority Thailand, which annexed the area over a hundred years ago.

Since 2004, armed insurgents have clashed with Thailand's powerful military, killing nearly 7,000 people — mostly civilians — both Muslims and Buddhists. The death toll dropped to a record low last year as Thailand's junta tightened its security web in the south. But recent weeks have seen an uptick in violence, as rebels show they remain able to carry out operations after 15 years of conflict.

The men killed yesterday were all Muslim and were guarding a school in Yarang district of Pattani province when the gunmen struck. An AFP photographer at the scene saw uni-

formed bodies on a blood-splattered floor in the school compound. "They were shot dead at the scene," Lieutenant Wicha Nupannoi, of Yarang police station told AFP, adding the killers were suspected insurgents.

"The assailants seized their four rifles," he said, adding there were no eyewitnesses to the attack, which took place before lunch. Civil defense "volunteers" are poorly paid local civilians — both Muslim and Buddhist — who are lightly-trained, armed and paid by the Thai state to supplement security forces who have blanketed the southernmost provinces throughout the rebellion. The 15-year insurgency has seen scores of teachers killed, slain for their perceived collaboration with the Thai state, and led to the deployment of armed guards at schools.

In a rare public statement dated January 4 the main rebel group — the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) — which has command and control over most of the rebel foot soldiers, swore to "keep fighting". "Siam (Thailand) can't hold out," the BRN wrote, signing off with a warning: "Do not help and support Siam." Prolonged peace talks between the Thai government and an umbrella group which claims to represent the rebels have failed to yield peace. But Thai authorities as well as the Malaysian facilitator of the talks have recently expressed confidence they will reach a detente soon. —AFP

Lifestyle

Friday Times

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Japanese hairdresser Megumi Takeichi cuts patterns into the hair of a camel ahead of the Bikaner Camel Festival in Bikaner in the western Indian state of Rajasthan yesterday. — AFP

Blistering barnacles! Tintin rides again... aged 90

See Page 21

Indonesia airline brings live music to the skies

Indonesian national flag carrier Garuda is bringing music to the skies with a series of live acoustic concerts on domestic flights, the airline said. Passengers will be serenaded at 35,000 feet in a scheme aimed at wooing millennials “who want a different flight experience”, airline spokesman M. Ikhsan Rosan told AFP. The carrier held its first in-flight concert on Wednesday, when two musicians performed for a captive audience aboard a flight between the capital, Jakarta, and the holiday island of Bali.

Garuda said sets would last 10 to 15 minutes on select flights, and there would be a focus on promoting upcoming talent. While it may prove an unforgettable flying experience for some, it may

not be everyone’s idea of a good time. In 2017, US airline Southwest introduced live shows on some flights to a mixed reaction from passengers. Some travellers said they preferred minimum human interaction while flying and said music would distract them from sleeping or reading.

Indonesia is one of the world’s fastest-growing aviation markets, but it has come under fresh scrutiny since a fatal Lion Air crash in October last year that killed all 189 people on board. Garuda said it had embarked on extensive consultation to ensure the concerts posed no threat to safety or security. “If there is the potential of turbulence, the singer will be directed back to sit in his chair,” Rosan said. — AFP



This handout from Garuda Indonesia shows musicians performing on a flight from Jakarta to Bali. — AFP photos

Colombia-themed bar in Paris accused of glamourizing drug trade

A new Colombia-themed bar in Paris that features waiters in bullet-proof vests, cocktails named after famous cocaine traffickers and a portrait of drug lord Pablo Escobar has been accused by activists of glamorizing the trade. “Medellin” opened last November near the Champs-Élysées, hiding itself behind a fake shopfront for a tacos restaurant with a red neon sign—“Chez Pablo”—indicating what was inside. The bar-nightclub has since become a hit with its young and wealthy clientele, not all of whom appear to understand all the references found on the menus and walls.

“Medellin” is Escobar’s home town in Colombia, as well as the name of his cartel, while a vegetarian tacos dish called “Pacho Herrera” refers to the one of the heads of the deadly Cali cartel. The “Maria Victoria” cocktail is named after Escobar’s widow. “Whether you want it or not, when you think about Medellin, you think of Pablo, but it’s not the main theme of the bar,” owner Andren Dimitris told AFP, denying that he was “idolizing” him.

The Franco-Greek businessman, 37, admits that he removed a fake tomb for Escobar where clients could light a candle for him “because it offended the Colombian population.” The entrance hall to the bar, which features full-length mirrors, features the song “Tuyo” by Rodrigo Amarante, the music from the Netflix series “Narcos” which recounts the life of the late drug lord. —AFP



A ‘Medellin’ sign is seen for the bar that opened in November 2018 near the Champs-Élysées. —AFP

Arctic art house: Russian region nurtures local film boom



Yakutian filmmaker Lyubov Borisova works on her film in Sakhafilm production studio office in Yakutsk. — AFP photos

In Russia’s remote Yakutia region the film industry is booming, despite shooting schedules being restricted by some of the coldest winters on Earth and directors blaming “spirits” for disturbing the production crew. Six time zones away from the country’s film schools and without central state funding for its filmmakers, the region nonetheless produces half of all Russian movies made outside Moscow and Saint Petersburg. “Everybody wants to make movies,” said Alexei Romanov, who turned his back on a promising career as a filmmaker in Saint Petersburg three decades ago to return to his native Siberia.

“We have films with minuscule budgets and hilariously small fees but they make more in the cinemas here than Hollywood blockbusters,” he said. When the director came back to Yakutia, a vast territory that is home to fewer than a million people, the local industry consisted of just two cameramen. Now, thanks in part to his efforts, people are “fighting for cameras” to finish their projects before equipment starts failing in winter temperatures that regularly drop to minus 50 degrees Celsius (minus 58 degrees Fahrenheit).

Romanov estimated an average local movie budget to be between \$40,000 and \$80,000 (35,000 and 70,000 euros). Most actors basically work for free on skeleton budgets, hoping to eventually get paid from box office revenues. But domestic and foreign audiences are starting to notice the region’s output. Last year, a Yakutian film “The Lord Eagle” about an elderly couple living with an eagle in the forest, received the top prize at the Moscow Film Festival. South Korea’s Busan Film Festival, one of the most important in Asia, in 2017 showed a dozen Yakutia productions in a special retrospective, praising their unique cinematic style.



The office of Sakhafilm, Yakutia’s main film production company in Yakutsk.

Permafrost Zombies

Locals jokingly call Yakutia’s movie industry “Sakhawood”, derived from the region’s other name, the Republic of Sakha. Yakutia’s unexplored wildernesses steeped in folk legends and shamanic traditions have piqued festival interest, but Sakhawood’s genres are surprisingly varied. Recent premieres have included “Republic Z”, a zombie apocalypse sparked by a virus buried in permafrost. Another new release was “Cheeke,” a crime comedy about disco dance-offs, with a green-moustached hero.

Romanov—one of the founders of Sakhafilm, Yakutia’s main production company—said global art-house interest could be explained by Yakutia’s mixed culture. “We’re Asians on the one hand, and Northerners on the other,” combining themes of survival with Turkic heritage, he said.

“Sakha cinema combines regional legends and folk religions with contemporary values,” Jin Park, a programmer for the Busan festival’s selection committee, wrote to AFP. Productions show “authentic charm that is rarely found in other regional films,” he said.

Hungry flames

The region’s remoteness not only adds to its allure, it has helped keep its independent cinemas alive. “We are lucky that we are so far away from everything and big distributors never took over our theatres,” said filmmaker Lyubov Borisova, as she worked on sound editing of her directorial debut, filmed last summer. “Our isolation makes us unattractive” to large chains, which favour Hollywood blockbusters and shut out locally made films across other Russian regions, she said. —AFP

Blistering barnacles! Tintin rides again... aged 90

Jumping jellyfish! Tintin may be 90 years old yesterday, but the boy hero is about to get himself into a whole new snake pit of scrapes. Casterman, which publishes his comic book adventures, said a new film featuring the cub reporter by “Lord of the Rings” director Peter Jackson is in the pipeline, with Steven Spielberg—who made Tintin’s first Hollywood outing in 2011 — producing this time. A new Tintin book is also in the offing, the Belgian publishing house said.

Speculation is mounting that the new movie is likely to be a mix of “King Ottokar’s Sceptre”, a swashbuckling jape from 1938 that was a thinly disguised satire on Nazi Germany’s annexation of Austria the same year, and the later story, “The Calculus Affair”. Casterman’s editorial director Benoit

Mouchart said that it is part of a planned trilogy of live-action Tintin films. “There are several leads that could be taken,” he told French radio. The new film “might be a mix of ‘King Ottokar’s Sceptre’ and ‘The Calculus Affair,’” a ripping yarn of Tintin and his sidekick Captain Haddock rushing to the rescue of a kidnapped scientist.

“When there is a trilogy in Hollywood, the second movie is usually a little darker, so the theory of an episode set in Syldavia (the fictional Balkan country that features in both stories) seems quite likely,” Mouchart added. Jackson though has been tight-lipped on what adventure or adventures he would draw on for the film. “I’ve had certain times where I thought it was going to be this or that... For a while, we were going to do ‘Prisoners of the



Sun,” he told Vox late last year.

Unfinished work

“There’s so many good stories, and I just want to see what I feel like making. There’s so many choices, and I couldn’t tell you today which way I’m going,” he added. The

first Tintin cartoons appeared in the conservative Belgian Catholic journal “Le Petit Vingtième” on January 10, 1929. A book featuring the daring young journalist and his dog Snowy, “Tintin in the Land of the Soviets”, appeared the following year, making its creator Herge a star. — AFP

Judge dismisses Judd harassment claim against Weinstein

Los Angeles court on Wednesday dismissed actress Ashley Judd’s sexual harassment lawsuit against disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein—but said she can move forward with allegations he defamed her and damaged her career. US District Judge Philip Gutierrez said the law covering sexual harassment within a professional relationship did not apply to sexual advances Weinstein, 66, allegedly made toward Judd in 1997 during a meeting about potential film roles.

However, he did rule that Judd, 50, can proceed with her defamation claim against the producer, who has been accused of sexual abuse by hundreds of women and is facing criminal charges in New York. Once of the first women to accuse him, Judd claims that in 1998, Weinstein defamed her and damaged her career by telling “Lord of the Rings” director Peter Jackson that she was a “nightmare” to work with.

Gutierrez previously said in September that the law upon which Judd’s claim was based “has never before been applied to an employer’s sexual harassment of a prospective employee, and the court is not convinced that the statute was intended to cover such harassment.” —AFP



This combination of file pictures shows US actress Ashley Judd (left) and US film producer Harvey Weinstein.—AFP



In this file photo Director John Lasseter poses for a photo in front of characters from his movie “Cars” at his Hollywood Walk of Fame star presentation ceremony, in Hollywood, California. — AFP

Ex-Disney animation chief, accused of misconduct, hired by new studio

Former Disney animation chief John Lasseter, who resigned last year after acknowledging he made staff feel uncomfortable with unwanted hugs, has landed a new job at Skydance Media, the company said Wednesday. Lasseter, famous for transforming Pixar from a small graphics department at Lucasfilm into the most successful animation studio in the world, is set to take charge of Skydance’s animation unit, founded in 2017. “John is a singular creative and executive talent whose impact on the animation industry cannot be overstated,” said the studio’s Chief Executive David Ellison.

“He was responsible for leading animation into the digital age, while telling incomparable stories that continue to inspire and entertain audiences around the globe.” Lasseter, who turns 62 this week, announced his resignation as creative director of Disney in June 2018, after he took a long leave of absence apologizing to staff who felt “disrespected and uncomfortable” because he gave “unwanted hugs.” The issues were first unearthed in an investigation by entertainment trade paper The Hollywood Reporter, which described a “pattern of alleged misconduct detailed by Disney/Pixar insiders.” —AFP

Lady Gaga says won’t work again with singer R Kelly

Lady Gaga has vowed to remove a duet she recorded with R&B singer R.Kelly from streaming services and never collaborate with him again. Her comments, in a lengthy Instagram post late on Wednesday, followed a new television documentary in which multiple women accuse Kelly of sexual misconduct, sometimes with minors.

Kelly, 52, the Chicago singer and record producer best known for hit song “I Believe I Can Fly,” has repeatedly denied accusations in recent years of abuse, including those made in the new documentary. The Grammy-winning singer was tried and acquitted on child pornography charges in Chicago in 2008.

His attorney has not responded to Reuters requests for comment about the six-hour documentary “Surviving R.Kelly,” broadcast last week on the Lifetime channel. It features interviews with several women making on camera allegations of sexual, mental and physical abuse by Kelly, as well as interviews with some of his former managers and producers. Reuters is unable to independently verify the accusations. Gaga said she believed the women and found the documentary “absolutely horrifying.”

“I stand behind these women 1000 percent, believe them, and know they are suffering and in pain, and feel strongly that their voices should be heard and taken seriously,” she said in her Instagram posting. Gaga in 2013 released a duet with Kelly called “Do What U Want (With My Body).” “I intend to remove the song off of iTunes and other streaming platforms and will not be working with him again,” she wrote on Wednesday. —Reuters



Actress/singer Lady Gaga attends the 2019 National Board Of Review Gala at Cipriani 42nd Street. —AFP



Elzat Kazakbaeva (left) and Aida Sooronbaeva (right), bride kidnapping survivors, wait in the backstage for a fashion show organized by fashion designer Zamira Moldosheva, part of a public movement against bride kidnapping and domestic violence, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.



Kyrgyz brides and bridegrooms pray in the central mosque during a mass wedding ceremony in the capital Bishkek. — Reuters photos

Kyrgyzstan's kidnapped brides use fashion and flags to end marriage taboo

Walking proudly down a catwalk, the lights and glamour seemed like a lifetime away from Elzat Kazakbaeva's nightmare ordeal five years ago when she was grabbed off a Kyrgyzstan street by a group of men wanting to marry her to an uninvited suitor. Kazakbaeva is one of thousands of woman abducted and forced to marry each year in the former Soviet republic in Central Asia where bride kidnappings continue, particularly in rural areas. Bride kidnapping - which also occurs in nations like Armenia, Ethiopia and Kazakhstan - was outlawed in 2013 in Kyrgyzstan where authorities recognized it could lead to marital rape, domestic violence, and psychological trauma.

But some communities still see it as a pre-Soviet tradition dating back to tribal prestige, said Russell Kleinbach, professor emeritus of sociology at Philadelphia University and co-founder of women's advocacy group Kyz Korgon Institute. Now a new generation of women are eschewing acceptance of this abuse, with their campaign escalating in 2018 when one kidnapped bride, Buralai Turdaaly Kyzy, 20, was put in the same police cell as the man who abducted her - and stabbed to death. Her killer was jailed for 20 years but her murder sparked national outrage and protests against bride kidnappings in a country where campaigners said tougher sentences were handed down for kidnapping livestock than women until recently.

Fashion designer Zamira Moldosheva is part a rising public movement against bride kidnapping which has ranged from charity bike rides to flag installations with campaigners saying more events would be planned this year. She organized a fashion show featuring only women who had been abused or kidnapped, dressed as historical Kyrgyz women. "Can't we women do something against the violence taking place in our country?" Moldosheva said in an interview in Bishkek, the capital of the majority Muslim nation of six million people. "Bride kidnapping is not our tradition - it should be stopped," she said, adding that bride kidnapping was a form of forced marriage and not a traditional practice.

Myth not tradition

Kazakbaeva, one of 12 models in the fashion show, said she was glad to participate in the event last October to highlight her ordeal and encourage other women to flee forced marriages. Kazakbaeva, then a student aged 19, was ambushed in broad daylight on a Saturday afternoon outside her college dormitory in Bishkek and forced into a waiting car by a group of men. "I felt as if I was an animal," Kazakbaeva told the Thomson Reuters Foundation, her faced streaked with tears. "I couldn't move or do anything at all."

Kazakbaeva was taken to the groom's home in rural Issyk Kul region, about 200 km (125 miles) east of Bishkek, where she was dressed in white and taken into a decorated room for an impending ceremony. She spent hours pleading with the groom's family - and her own - to stop the forced marriage. "My grandmother is very traditional, she thought it would be a shame and she started convincing me to stay," said Kazakbaeva. When her mother threatened

to call the police, the groom's family finally let her go. She was lucky to escape unwed, she said, and hoped the fashion show, depicting historical female figures, would help to bring the taboo subject to the fore. "Women nowadays can also be the characters of new fairy tales for others," said Kazakbaeva, dressed as a female freedom fighter from ancient Kyrgyzstan, which gained independence from Moscow in 1991. "I'm fighting for women's rights."

Women suppressing women

Kyrgyzstan toughened laws against bride kidnapping in 2013, making it punishable by up to 10 years in prison, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which said it was a "myth" that the practice was ever part of the culture. In a handful of cases the kidnappings are consensual, said Kleinbach, especially in poorer communities where the practice was akin to eloping to save costs of a ceremony or hefty dowry.

A UNDP spokeswoman said data was scant on the number of women abducted each year as many women did not report the crime through fear but they estimate about 14 percent of women aged under 24 are still married through some form of coercion. "They don't want to report, this is the issue," Umutai Dauletova, gender coordinator at the UNDP in Kyrgyzstan, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Dauletova said most cases did not make it to court as women retracted their statements, often under pressure from female family members, fearing public shaming for disobedience or no longer being a virgin. "This is the phenomenon of women suppressing other women," she said.

Breaking taboos

Aida Sooronbaeva, 35, was not as fortunate as Kazakbaeva. Back from school, aged 17, she found her grandfather tied up and her home smashed up so she hid until her brother tricked her to seek refuge with a friend whose family kidnapped her. Initially she refused to marry their son and tried to escape but she said she was eventually worn down by social pressure in her village and was married for 16 years despite domestic abuse. "He kept me at home, never letting me out, just in the yard," said Sooronbaeva, exposing scars on her neck and stomach. "I lived with him only for the sake of my children."

But a few years ago, the violence got so bad that she ran into the street where she was rescued by a passer-by and she finally plucked up the courage to leave her husband. She said she hoped speaking out, and taking part in campaigns like the fashion show, would break the taboos surrounding forced marriage. "Now I perceive any man as an enemy. I never even think of getting remarried," said Sooronbaeva, adorned in heavy jewellery and colourful make-up. But she added, with a note of optimism: "Women are strong, we can survive." — Reuters

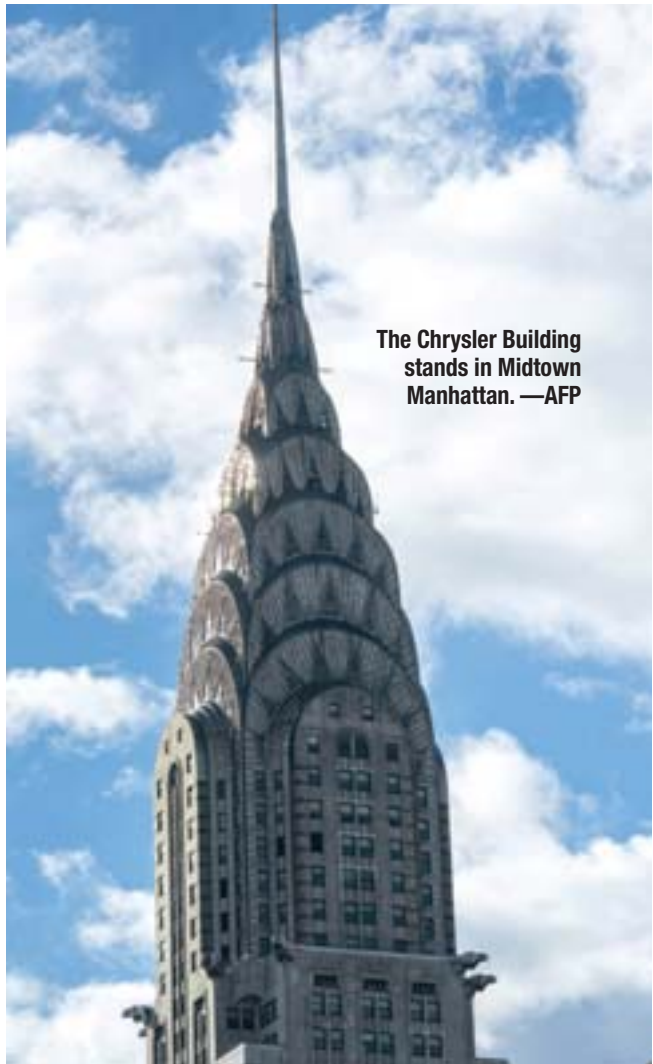
New York's iconic Chrysler Building up for sale

The Chrysler Building, one of the most iconic structures in New York, has been put up for sale by its owners, Emirati investment firm Mubadala and real estate group Tishman Speyer. The owners did not set a selling price, a source close to the sale told AFP on condition of anonymity, confirming a report that was first published in The Wall Street Journal. The building in midtown Manhattan, considered an Art Deco masterpiece, was acquired in 2008 by Mubadala, which paid \$800 million for a 90 percent stake.

Tishman Speyer, which had bought the building outright for a reported \$210-250 million in 1997, retained a 10 percent stake. Neither firm would offer a comment when contacted by AFP. Tishman Speyer has hired real estate group CBRE to manage the sale of the building at the intersection of 42nd Street and Lexington Avenue. The announcement comes at a difficult time for the New York real estate market, especially in Manhattan. Development of the Hudson Yards neighborhood, on Manhattan's West Side, will soon be complete, with more than 1.6 million square meters of new office and residential space.

That has driven prices down even further for older buildings. Another factor for potential buyers to consider: the land on which the Chrysler Building stands is one-third owned by Cooper Union, a private university. In 1997, Tishman Speyer negotiated a long-term lease with the university that ran through 2147. That deal called for the annual rent to rise from \$7.8 million in 2017 to \$32.5 million from 2019-2027, according to documents seen by AFP. The value of the land alone was estimated at \$679 million in late 2017.

The Chrysler Building, which opened in 1930, stands 1,046 feet (319 meters) tall. It was the world's tallest building, but only for 11 months, when it was dethroned by the Empire State Building, also in Manhattan. The building was a personal project for Walter Chrysler, the founder of the car manufacturer that bears his name, but remained separate from the auto business. — AFP



The Chrysler Building stands in Midtown Manhattan. —AFP



An Elvis fan uses the train window as a mirror at Central station before boarding a train to The Parkes Elvis Festival, in Sydney yesterday. — AFP photos



Elvis fans dance to Elvis songs at Central station before boarding a train to to The Parkes Elvis Festival.



Elvis fans arrive at Central station before boarding a train to The Parkes Elvis Festival.



Elvis fans arrive at Central station before boarding a train to The Parkes Elvis Festival.



An Elvis fan waits at Central station before boarding a train to The Parkes Elvis Festival.

Elvis Express: Fans rock n' roll their way to outback festival

Elvis Presley may have “left the building” four decades ago, but his spirit was alive and well at Sydney’s main station yesterday, as hundreds of fans boarded trains to an outback festival celebrating their idol. Dressed in colorful sequined jumpsuits, blue suede shoes and having used copious amounts of hair-spray, lookalikes sang and danced to hits belted out by tribute artists. The party atmosphere was a fitting tribute to the cultural and musical legacy of “The King”, whose appeal has spanned decades and generations, and reached far beyond his American roots. The revelers at Central station were boarding the “Elvis Express” and “Blue Suede Express”, two trains put on to take them to the small outback town of Parkes, 300 kilometers (190 miles) west of Sydney.

“He was just a gorgeous guy and I just loved all the music and his love songs,” said Lynette Mar, who was set to board the 1950s-era diesel “Blue Suede Express” to celebrate her 60th birthday with friends in Parkes. “It’s just great dance music.” Each year, Parkes-whose radio telescope played a pivotal role in bringing Neil Armstrong’s 1969 moon landing to the world-transforms into a haven for Elvis enthusiasts when it hosts a five-day tribute festival.

First held in 1993 to coincide with the singer’s January 8 birthday, the Elvis Festival has placed the mining town on the tourist map and earned it the moniker “Elvis Capital of Australia”. Regular attendee Jenny Dollin—who wore a plastic cap shaped like Elvis’ pompadour hairstyle, a white tunic top and bell-bottoms—said she loved the energy and excitement of the festival. “I go to

Parkes because it’s so much fun. We have a lovely time, I love the Elvises,” Dollin told AFP. Over 25,000 visitors are expected to descend on Parkes to take part in the festivities, more than twice the population of the town. “The people at Parkes are so friendly,” Dollin said. “Everyone on the train is very friendly and it’s just a really good time.”— AFP



Elvis fans arrive at Central station before boarding a train to The Parkes Elvis Festival.



An Elvis fan sits on a train after leaving Central station to head to The Parkes Elvis Festival.



Elvis fans travel on a train after leaving Central station to head to The Parkes Elvis Festival.

Egypt says stolen pharaonic tablet repatriated from UK

An ancient Egyptian pharaonic stone tablet that was stolen from Karnak temple was repatriated this week from Britain where it had been touted for sale, Egypt's antiquities ministry said. "The piece was last seen in the open museum in Luxor temple in the early 1990s," Shaaban Abdel Gawad, who is in charge of archaeological collections at the ministry, told AFP on Wednesday. "The necessary legal measures" were taken to recover the object, he added. The artefact was stolen from the Karnak temple's open museum and was spotted on online auction sites, the ministry said. The sale was

cancelled, the statement said.

The artefact is part of a cartouche—an ornamental tablet—of Pharaoh Amenhotep I, of the 17th dynasty, who ruled in the 16th century BC. The antiquities ministry said that the piece had been retrieved by Egypt's London embassy in September 2018 in coordination with British authorities. Egypt regularly retrieves stolen archaeological treasures from abroad. Cairo is still campaigning for the repatriation of key items, including some on display in European museums, such as the celebrated bust of Queen Nefertiti in Berlin. —AFP



A handout picture released by the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities shows an ancient Egyptian relief which was previously on display in the Temple of Karnak in Luxor. —AFP

Singapore eco-tourism plan sparks squawks of protest



This photograph shows animal crossing traffic signboard installed to warn motorists during nearby infrastructure roadworks in the city-state's remaining green area in Mandai district leading to Singapore Zoo. —AFP photos



Michael Barclay, group CEO of Mandai Park Holdings, feeding white rhinos at Singapore Zoo.

Singapore is creating a vast eco-tourism zone in a bid to bring in more visitors, but environmentalists fear the development will damage natural habitats and are already blaming it for a series of animal deaths. While it may be best known as a financial hub with scores of high-rise buildings, tropical Singapore is still home to patches of rainforest and an array of wildlife, from monkeys to pangolins—also known as scaly anteaters. In one green corner of the city sits a zoo and two sister attractions—a night safari and river safari—that have long been big draws for foreign and local visitors. Now jungle is being cleared in the same area to make way for a bird park, a rainforest park and a 400-room resort, to create a green tourism hub it is hoped will eventually attract millions of visitors a year.

But the project in the Mandai district has ruffled the feathers of environmentalists. They believe that rather than promote biodiversity, it is too imposing for the area, will destroy forest habitats and they say insufficient safeguards were put in place before work began—leading to animals being killed on roads. The row has highlighted concerns about rapid development in space-starved Singapore, and worries that some of the country's more wild and green corners are being lost only to be replaced with something more artificial. "I think you are getting your priorities wrong if you are replacing natural heritage with captive breeding," Subaraj Rajathurai, a veteran wildlife consultant, told AFP. With the new development, it appears that "making money was more of a priority than finding the balance and preserving biodiversity", he added.

Roadkill worries

But Mandai Park Holdings, which is overseeing the project through its development arm, insists work is being carried out sensitively and will bring improvements. The district, which sits next to a protected nature reserve and has been earmarked for development for years, is mostly abandoned villages and farmland that have been swallowed by the surrounding jungle. Work is already well under way in an area that is home to animals including flying lemurs and deer, with construction cranes looming over hillsides stripped bare of jungle. A major focus of concern has been the animal deaths on the main road leading up to the zoo as forest is cleared.

Several deer, a critically endangered pangolin and a leopard cat are among animals to have perished after straying in front of vehicles, according to environmentalists. Subaraj blamed the deaths on a lack of protective measures, pointing in particular to a failure to put up temporary barriers around the road quickly enough. "It's crazy—it would have been so easy to avoid that happening," he said. But Mandai Park Holdings insists it is doing everything it can to prevent animal deaths on the roads.

Barriers have now been put up along much of the road, as well as a rope bridge for monkeys to cross above the traffic and road signs warning motorists about animals in the area. A permanent bridge covered in shrubs and trees to allow animals to cross the road, which divides two major parts of the development, will be ready later this year. "We have been working with the nature community, really from the word go, to work out what we should do to actually

protect animals and keep them off the roads," Mike Barclay, Mandai Park Holdings CEO, a former senior airline executive, told AFP. "Is it perfect? No. But we are doing everything that we can to mitigate."

Rapid development

The new bird park—which will replace an existing one elsewhere in Singapore—will feature nine aviaries, while the rainforest park will have walkways among treetop canopies. The hotel is being developed by Singapore-based resort chain Banyan Tree. Work started in 2017 and the 126-hectare (311-acre) development is due to be completed by 2023. Green groups have raised concerns that besides the roadkill deaths, noise and light pollution from the large resort could affect the surrounding area, although the developer insists it will be designed carefully to limit any impact.

Mandai Park Holdings, a subsidiary of Singapore's state investor Temasek, did not disclose the cost of the project. It is being funded by Temasek and the government. Defenders of the development insist it is better than throwing up more high-rises in a city that has developed at breakneck speed in recent decades. But for green activists such as Ho Hua Chew, vice president of the Nature Society (Singapore), a project on such a vast scale is another setback for the country's natural environment. "We don't say don't develop it—just leave some more space for the wildlife," he told AFP.

"Over the past decade, development has increased very fast. We have fought hard but a lot of areas have been lost." —AFP

Director M Night Shyamalan merges past storylines in new movie 'Glass'



M Night Shyamalan

M Night Shyamalan, the director known for his film-ending twists, brought his latest offering "Glass" — a tale merging two of his previous movies. Starring Bruce Willis, Samuel L. Jackson and James McAvoy, "Glass" blends storylines from Shyamalan's "Unbreakable", which came out in 2000 and 2016's "Split". "There's a sense of reflecting a lot ... that these characters ... are in one movie," Shyamalan, also known for "The Sixth Sense" and "Signs", said at the film's London premiere.

"It was almost like I didn't want to make it for 15 years and then started to open my mind up to 'hey, you know, let's go back to those characters and finish telling those stories,'" Willis and Jackson, who both starred in "Unbreakable" — about a train crash survivor who discovers he has a new superpower — were joined at the screening by McAvoy, who played Kevin Wendell Crumb, a man with multiple identities, in "Split". In the new film, Willis reprises his role as security guard David Dunn as he chases one of Crumb's frightful personalities. Jackson returns as the fragile Elijah Price, also known as Mr Glass.

"I always thought Elijah was unfinished business," Jackson said. "Night promised that it was part of a trilogy ... so, this is closure." McAvoy revisits his role as well as his character's multiple personalities. "I love acting so getting to do more of it is not a bad thing," the Scottish actor said.

"Playing one character in a movie can be tricky. You've got to do a lot of preparation, doing that 20 times ... it was like cramming for an exam that you forgot was coming." "Glass" also stars Anya Taylor-Joy, whose character Casey was kidnapped along with two classmates by Crumb in "Split", as well as "American Horror Story" actress Sarah Paulson, who plays a psychiatrist treating the three main characters. —Reuters

Queen of Nice's famed Negresco hotel dies at 95



In this file photo taken on January 13, 2011 Jeanne Augier, owner of famous hotel The Negresco poses with her dogs Lily (left) and Lilou (right) in the Versailles lounge of the palace in Nice, south-eastern France. — AFP photos



In this file photo taken on January 13, 2011 Jeanne Augier poses with her dogs Lily (left) and Lilou (right) in front of the palace in Nice, southeastern France.

Gates 'not rich enough'

Among the Negresco's rejected suitors, according to Nice Matin, were the Sultan of Brunei and Microsoft founder Bill Gates, who gave her a blank cheque which she returned with the message "You are not rich enough!". But she failed to prevent the hotel becoming the subject of several legal battles, including one involving a young art historian whom she tasked with creating an inventory of her collection who was charged with trying to take advantage of her. Suffering from memory loss, Augier was appointed a guardian in 2013 to protect her and she spent her final years confined to a wheelchair.

The Negresco has borne witness to some of the defining moments in Nice's history, including the July 2016 Bastille Day attack, when a jihadist used a truck to mow down revelers on the seafront promenade in front of the hotel. The building's main hall was turned into a field hospital in the wake of the attack, which deeply scarred the city. Augier, who lived in an apartment on the sixth floor of the Negresco, built up a huge collection of 6,000 artworks, which are dotted throughout the hotel. Among her prize acquisitions were a famous portrait of "Sun King" Louis XIV and a huge canary yellow female figure by sculptor Niki de Saint Phalle. — AFP



In this file photo taken on February 14, 2002 Jeanne Augier poses in front of her hotel in Nice.

Jetset favorite

Named after its Romanian-born founder Henri Negresco, the hotel opened in 1913 and immediately became an instant favorite with European royalty and glitterati. Each of its 124 rooms has unique furnishings, including items from Augier's vast personal art collection, some of which date back to the 16th century. An elegant figure, who dyed her carefully coiffed hair auburn and wore ruby red lipstick, the widow from Brittany devoted her life to preserving the hotel's heritage. Apart from her employees, who called her "Madame", she also lavished attention on her cats and dogs.

Her 97-percent stake in the hotel, which is profitable, was valued at between 300 and 400 million euros (\$340 to \$460 million) in 2016, excluding the art and furniture. Augier, who had no children, nieces or nephews, sought to protect her staff and legacy by bequeathing the hotel to a special fund in 2009 to try to ward off foreign buyers after her death. "I must have a hundred offers a year to buy the Negresco. It's out of the question," she told Liberation newspaper in 2009. An animal lover who campaigned against bullfighting and a defender of refugees, she also tasked the fund with the vague mission of "easing animal and human suffering".

Four men go on trial for theft of giant gold coin from Berlin museum

Four men went on trial yesterday for stealing a gold coin the size of a manhole cover from one of Germany's flagship museums in a daring night-time heist using a ladder and a wheelbarrow. German authorities believe the 100 kg (220 pound) Canadian "Big Maple Leaf" - once recognized as the biggest gold coin in the world - has been melted down since its theft from Berlin's Bode Museum in March 2017.

Prosecutors say three of the suspects broke into the museum through an upstairs window and used a ladder, wheelbarrow and rope to extract the coin from a bullet-proof glass. The fourth suspect was a museum guard accused of helping them. The coin, more than half a meter (yard) in diameter, three cm (1.2 inches) thick and made from ultra-pure gold, is one of just six produced by the Royal Canadian Mint in 2007 and was loaned to the museum by a private owner. It has a face value of \$1 million but is thought to be worth four times as much. It was recognized by the Guinness

Book of World Records as the largest gold coin in the world at the time it was made, although Australia has since minted one even bigger. Like other Canadian coins it bears the image of Canada's head of state, Britain's Queen Elizabeth.

The suspects were not identified under German legal rules. Three of them are related and three were under the age of 21 at the time of the crime, which means the trial took place in a youth court. The men hid their faces behind magazines as they entered the court and during the proceedings. All are charged with serious theft, said the court. German media say the men could face up to three years and 10 months jail. The Bode Museum has one of the world's largest coin collections with more than 540,000 items. — Reuters





Kolkata in festivals:

A calendar of celebrations

There's a saying in Bengali that goes, *baro mashe tero parbon*, literally '13 festivals in 12 months', neatly summing up the importance - and yearlong abundance - of festivals in Kolkata's everyday life. From cultural extravaganzas to some of India's biggest Hindu festivals, there's always something going on in the city. Rarely will more than a few weeks pass without some kind of festival filling the streets with celebrations, decorations and fanfare. The following are some of the biggest public festivals in Kolkata, offering rich opportunities to experience Bengali culture, creativity and cuisine.

Durga Puja (September or October)

This flamboyant four-day carnival sees Kolkata grind to a complete standstill, as towering idols depicting the Hindu goddess Durga triumphing over a deadly asura (demon) are created from straw and clay, painted in vivid colors, and worshipped in ornate pavilions called pandals on virtually every road in town.

Apart from the ritualistic splendor associated with the invocation of the goddess, public enthusiasm reaches fever pitch as pandals compete tooth-and-nail with each other to claim prizes awarded by corporate sponsors for outstanding artistic or thematic approaches to the dioramas and idols. Pavilions might be innovatively designed to resemble anything from Jurassic caves and alien spaceships to Egyptian pyramids, while the lighting arrays that surround most of the displays usually highlight events of global importance that happen to be in the news in any given year. City folk (as well as hundreds of thousands visiting from outside city limits) take to the streets to visit pandals across Kolkata through the night, aided by copious amounts of food and drink sold at innumerable food stalls along thoroughfares. All in all, it's 96 hours of non-stop fun, frolic and merriment that ends with the grand immersion ritual, when the idols are paraded through Kolkata's roads on trucks before being submerged in the waters of the Hooghly River.



A woman gives offerings to the goddess Durga during Durga Puja



Bengali New Year (14 or 15 April)

This festival - also called Nabo Barsho or Poila Boishakh - kick-starts the annual Bengali calendar. Although superseded by the Gregorian calendar that governs most aspects of public life in the region, the Bengali calendar has a steadfast grip on Bengal's cultural affairs, and is still used to determine auspicious dates for occasions such as pujas (prayer rituals) and weddings. It's no surprise then that Kolkata marks the beginning of this cultural almanac with a flood of celebrations scattered across the city, including colourful public processions at dawn, musical concerts, fetes, theatre performances, dance competitions and poetry sessions. It's also easily the best occasion to enjoy authentic local food, as specialty restaurants in town such as Kewpies, 6 Ballygunge Place, Bhojohari Manna and Aaheli all plate up the best of traditional Bengali cuisine for hordes of diners.

Kali Puja (October to November)

Observed about three weeks after Durga Puja, this overnight festival dedicated to Kali - another demon-slaying incarnation of the Hindu mother goddess - coincides with Diwali, the pan-Indian festival of lights. Across Kolkata, pandals (more modest than their Durga Puja variants) are constructed to house and worship idols of the goddess, to the accompaniment of incantations, mantra recitals and other rites. As the invocations continue long into the night, families light up their homes with the moody glow of candles (and in these modern times, LED-powered fairy lights), as the sky is set aflame with the stellar spider-trails of exploding fireworks.

Kolkata Film Festival (November)

The extremely popular Kolkata Film Festival marks the city's annual date with the best of Indian and international films, which are curated from more than 60 countries and screened over a week. Most screenings happen at the government-run, state-of-the-art theatres within the Nandan Complex, although a few other cinemas across the city are also pulled in for a select number of shows. Apart from showcasing the best commercial, art-house and documentary films, the festival also organises special programs featuring works of eminent directors, as well as interactions and discussions with people from the film industries in India and around the world.

Kolkata Book Fair (January to February)

Reputedly one of the world's largest book fairs, and often grouped with the legendary London and Frankfurt Book Fairs in terms of book volume and number of attendees, the Kolkata Book Fair is a gargantuan annual jamboree that draws close to 2.5 million people over its two-week duration. More than 350 publishers assemble at the fair and open up their catalogues to academics, scholars, book collectors, schoolchildren and bibliophiles in general. Every year, a wide selection of books from a featured foreign country is also presented, with the aim of in-

roducing local readers to diverse literary traditions from around the world. If that's not enough, the fair also provides an impromptu late-winter picnic within the fairgrounds, with delicious snacks sold at food stalls (the crumb-fried fish is a timeless favourite) and intellectual discussions led by leading lights from literature and art, world politics and sports. These luminaries are joined by an army of street artists, poets and musicians, giving visitors a sampling of their artistic offerings, from hand-drawn sketches to independently produced CDs and self-published poem booklets. — www.lonelyplanet.com

The popular Kolkata Film Festival takes place each year at the Nandan Complex



ASIAN CHICKEN LETTUCE WRAPS



Lettuce wraps are the perfect low-carb vehicle for chicken

Lettuce wraps are the perfect low-carb vehicle for delicious fillings. We wanted a light but flavor-packed filling and knew an Asian-inspired flavor profile was the way to go. Chicken lettuce wraps are most often made with ground or chopped chicken thighs. To lighten up our wraps, we turned to a combo of nutty, fiber-rich brown rice and store-bought lean ground chicken. Easy to make, we seasoned the chicken filling with minced jalapeno, fish sauce, and lime zest and juice. The bold flavors and simple ingredient list made this dish an easy weeknight dinner. Be sure to use ground chicken, not ground chicken breast (also labeled 99 percent fat free) in this recipe. To make this dish spicier, add the seeds from the chile.

ASIAN CHICKEN LETTUCE WRAPS

Ingredients

Servings: 4

Start to finish: 1 hour, 20 minutes

1 cup short-grain brown rice, rinsed
1 1/2 cups water
1 pound ground chicken
1 tablespoon canola oil
1 Thai or jalapeno chile, stemmed, seeded, and minced
2 teaspoons grated lime zest plus 1 table-spoon juice
2 tablespoons fish sauce
1 teaspoon cornstarch
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil

3 scallions, sliced thin
1/4 cup unsalted dry roasted peanuts, chopped
12 Bibb or Boston lettuce leaves

Preparation :

Bring rice and water to simmer in medium saucepan. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook until rice is tender and water is absorbed, 45 to 50 minutes. Off heat, lay clean dish towel underneath lid and let rice sit for 10 minutes.

Mash chicken in bowl with back of wooden spoon until smooth and no strand-like pieces of meat remain. Heat oil in 12 inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add ground chicken, chile and lime zest and cook, breaking

up meat with spoon, until no longer pink, about 5 minutes.

Whisk lime juice, fish sauce, and cornstarch together, then add to skillet and cook, stirring constantly, until sauce has thickened, about 45 seconds. Off heat, stir in basil, scallions, and peanuts. Gently fluff rice with fork. Divide chicken filling and rice evenly among lettuce leaves and serve.

Nutrition information per serving:

318 calories; 159 calories from fat; 18 g fat (4 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 98 mg cholesterol; 782 mg sodium; 17 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 2 g sugar; 25 g protein.

Considering shrimp for dinner? Check out this Greek recipe

In the traditional Greek dish called shrimp saganaki, sweet, briny shrimp are covered with a garlic- and herb-accented tomato sauce and topped with crumbles of creamy, salty feta cheese. Restaurant versions, however, can be a gamble. The shrimp can be tough and rubbery, the tomato sauce can turn out dull or overwhelming, and the feta is often lackluster. We set out to develop a foolproof recipe for home cooks.

Canned diced tomatoes along with sauteed onion and garlic provided the base for the sauce. While the shrimp are typically layered with the tomato sauce and feta and baked, we were after a quick and easy dish. We opted to cook the shrimp right in the sauce; adding the shrimp raw to the sauce helped infuse them with the sauce's bright flavor.

And for even more flavor, we first marinated the shrimp with olive oil, garlic, and lemon zest while we made the sauce. A generous sprinkling of feta and chopped fresh dill over the sauced shrimp finished our recipe. The cooking time is for extra-large shrimp (about 21 to 25 per pound). If using smaller or larger shrimp, be sure to adjust the cooking time as needed. If you don't have ouzo, you can substitute an equal amount of Pernod or 1 tablespoon vodka plus 1/8 teaspoon anise seeds.

GREEK-STYLE SHRIMP WITH TOMATOES AND FETA

Ingredients

Servings: 4-6

Start to finish: 45 minutes

- 1 1/2 pounds extra-large shrimp (21 to 25 per pound), peeled and deveined
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons ouzo
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- Salt and pepper
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 red or green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained with 1/3 cup juice reserved
- 2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh parsley
- 6 ounces feta cheese, crumbled (1 1/2 cups)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill

Preparation:

Toss shrimp in bowl with 1 tablespoon oil, 1 teaspoon garlic, lemon zest, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/8 teaspoon pepper; set aside. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in 12-inch skillet over



medium heat until shimmering. Add onion, bell pepper, and 1/4 teaspoon salt, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables release their liquid, 3 to 5 minutes. Uncover and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid evaporates and vegetables are softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in remaining garlic and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.

Stir in tomatoes and reserved juice. Bring

to simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until flavors meld and sauce is slightly thickened (sauce should not be completely dry), 5 to 8 minutes. Stir in parsley and season with salt and pepper to taste. Reduce heat to medium-low and add shrimp along with any accumulated juices; stir to coat and distribute evenly. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until shrimp are opaque throughout, 6 to 9 minutes, adjusting heat as

needed to maintain bare simmer. Off heat, sprinkle with feta and dill and drizzle with remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Serve.

Nutrition information per serving:

330 calories; 150 calories from fat; 17 g fat (6 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 168 mg cholesterol; 1298 mg sodium; 16 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 11 g sugar; 21 g protein.

This apple crisp gets an unlikely boost from cranberries

Although it's hard to imagine that apple crisp needs much improvement, we liked the tartness and texture that cranberries added to one of our favorite standard dessert recipes. The challenges were balancing the fruit flavors and making sure that the filling baked evenly while the topping stayed crisp.

We achieved the perfect fruit mix by combining fresh and dried cranberries, and we precooked all the fruit and added tapioca to thicken the juices. This step shortened the oven time and ensured that the classic butter, flour, sugar, cinnamon, and oat topping lived up to the name "crisp." If you can't find Braeburn apples, Golden Delicious will work. While old-fashioned rolled oats are preferable in this recipe, quick oats can be substituted; do not use instant oats. Serve with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

CRANBERRY-APPLE CRISP

Ingredients

Servings: 8

Start to finish: 1 hour 30 minutes

Topping:

3/4 cup (3 3/4 ounces) all-purpose flour

1/2 cup packed (3 1/2 ounces) light brown sugar

1/2 cup (3 1/2 ounces) granulated sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

12 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces and chilled

3/4 cup (2 1/4 ounces) old-fashioned rolled oats

Filling:

1 pound (4 cups) fresh or frozen cranberries

1 1/4 cups (8 3/4 ounces) granulated sugar

1/4 cup water

2 1/2 pounds Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces

2 1/2 pounds Braeburn apples, peeled, cored, and cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1 cup sweetened dried cranberries

3 tablespoons Minute Tapioca

Preparation:

For the topping: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 F. Pulse flour, sugars, cinnamon, and butter in food processor until mixture has texture of coarse crumbs (some pea-size pieces of butter will remain), about 12 pulses. Transfer to medium bowl, stir in oats, and use fingers to pinch topping into peanut-sized clumps. Refrigerate while preparing filling.

For the filling: Bring cranberries, 3/4 cup sugar, and water to simmer in Dutch oven over medium-high heat and cook until cranberries are completely softened and mixture is jam-like, about 10 minutes; transfer to bowl. Cook apples, remaining 1/2 cup sugar, and dried cranberries in now-empty Dutch oven over medium-high heat until apples begin to release their juices, about 5 minutes. Off heat, stir in cranberry mixture and tapioca.

Transfer filling to 13-by 9-inch baking dish set on rimmed baking sheet. Smooth surface evenly with spatula and scatter topping evenly over filling. Bake until juices are bubbling and topping is deep golden brown, about 30 minutes. (If topping is browning too quickly, loosely cover with piece of aluminum foil.) Let cool slightly. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Nutrition information per serving:

639 calories; 165 calories from fat; 19 g fat (11 g saturated; 1 g trans fats); 46 mg cholesterol; 11 mg sodium; 120 g carbohydrate; 12 g fiber; 86 g sugar; 4 g protein.



CRANBERRY-APPLE CRISP

Comic

Word Search

Real Estate 1

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 22 letters spell a common Real Estate phrase.

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

AGENT AMORTIZATION APPRAISAL ASSESSMENT ASSET BUILDING BUNGALOW BUYING CLOSER COLLATERAL CONDEMNED CONDO CONTRACT CREDITOR DEED DEPOSIT DEPRECIATION DUPLEX EXTERIOR FLIPPING FOR SALE HOUSE INSURANCE INSPECTOR INTERIOR LAND LAWYER LENDER LIEN LOAN LOFT MARKET VALUE OFFER PAYMENT PLOT PROPERTY REALTOR SELL SKYSCRAPER SOLD SQUARE FOOTAGE TAXES TIMESHARE TOUR TRIPLEX VACANCY VALUATION ZONE

Yesterday's Solution

Radiohead Songs

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

AIRBAG ALL I NEED BLACK STAR BLOW OUT BODYSNATCHERS BONES CREEP ELECTIONEERING FAUST ARP FETTER HAPPIER HIGH AND DRY HUNTING BEARS IN LIMBO JUST KARMA POLICE KID A KNIVES OUT LET DOWN LUCKY LURGEY MORNING BELL MY IRON LUNG NICE DREAM NO SURPRISES NUDE OPTIMISTIC PARANOID ANDROID PLANET TEXEL PROVE YOURSELF PYRAMID SONG RECKONER RIPCORN SULK THE BENDS THE TOURIST TREEFINGERS VEGETABLE VIDEOTAPE

The hidden song is: SUBTERRANEAN HOMESICK ALIEN

Crossword 2107



ACROSS

- 1. A woolen cap of Scottish origin.
- 4. Be about.
- 12. A guided missile fired from shipboard against an airborne target.
- 15. Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- 16. Any of various widely distributed beetles.
- 17. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- 18. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- 19. A person who has received a degree from a school (high school or college or university).
- 20. An electronic device that generates a series of beeps when the person carrying it is being paged.
- 22. Causing fear or dread or terror.
- 24. A soft gray ductile metallic element used in alloys.
- 26. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- 27. Be obedient to.
- 30. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
- 31. One million periods per second.
- 33. The compass point that is midway between north and northwest.
- 34. A genus of tropical American plants have sword-shaped leaves and a fleshy compound fruits composed of the fruits of several flowers (such as pineapples).
- 36. A tiny or scarcely detectable amount.
- 38. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
- 39. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
- 43. English paleontologist (son of Louis Leakey and Mary Leakey) who continued the work of his parents.

- 45. A cruel and brutal fellow.
- 46. A means of serving.
- 52. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
- 53. Showing or feeling mirth or pleasure or happiness.
- 54. Mentally or physically infirm with age.
- 55. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
- 58. A toilet in England.
- 59. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- 60. A person's brother or sister.
- 62. (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
- 65. A partially opened flower.
- 66. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- 70. A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
- 72. A plant of the genus Erica.
- 75. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- 76. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- 77. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- 79. An accountant certified by the state.
- 80. A member of a North American Indian people speaking one of the Hokan language.
- 81. A pause or interruption (as in a conversation).
- 82. God of the earth.

DOWN

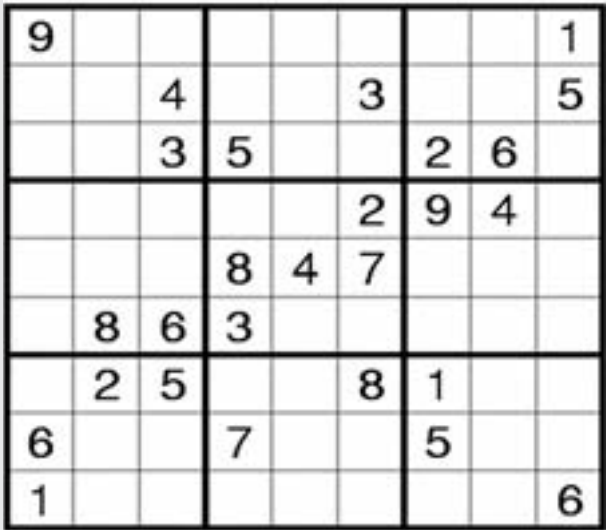
- 1. Scottish chemist noted for his research into the structure of nucleic acids (born in 1907).
- 2. (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
- 3. Celebes megapode that lays eggs in holes in sandy beaches.
- 4. Darkened with overcast.
- 5. A narrow street with walls on both sides.
- 6. Praise, glorify, or honor.
- 7. Your general store of remembered information.
- 8. A yearning for something or to do something.
- 9. The father of your father or mother.
- 10. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
- 11. Measure of the US economy adopted in 1991.
- 12. A white crystalline carbohydrate used as a sweetener and preservative.
- 13. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
- 14. Mediterranean germander having small hairy leaves and reddish purple flowers.
- 21. Squash bugs.
- 23. A member of the Algonquian people of Maine and southern Quebec.
- 25. (in Scotland or Ireland) A mountain or tall hill.
- 28. A Japanese cheer of enthusiasm or triumph.
- 29. Used of a single unit or thing.
- 32. Of the same period.
- 35. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.

- 37. An official language of the Republic of South Africa.
- 40. Any tropical gymnosperm of the order Cycadales.
- 41. Music composed for dancing the conga.
- 42. At right angles to the length of a ship or airplane.
- 44. Resembling or characteristic of or appropriate to an elegy.
- 47. A son who has the same first name as his father.
- 48. A genus of Scolopacidae.
- 49. A tight cluster of people or things.
- 50. Boxcar with latticed sides.
- 51. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- 56. The capital of Eritrea.
- 57. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- 61. Leather with a napped surface.
- 63. An international organization created in 1949 by the North Atlantic Treaty for purposes of collective security.
- 64. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
- 67. The state of needing something that is absent or unavailable.
- 68. A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
- 69. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- 71. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
- 73. A hospital unit staffed and equipped to provide intensive care.
- 74. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 78. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



TV Listings

Friday, January 11, 2019



00:10 Sniper: Ultimate Kill
01:50 Deepwater Horizon
03:50 The Fate Of The Furious
06:15 Resident Evil: Vendetta
08:00 Enter The Warrior's Gate
09:55 Deepwater Horizon
11:50 The Fate Of The Furious
14:15 Acts Of Vengeance
15:50 Biker Boyz
17:45 Female Fight Squad
19:20 Extortion
21:10 Transformers: The Last Knight
23:45 Thursday



00:50 Wolves And Warriors
01:45 North Woods Law
02:40 Catching Monsters
03:35 Saba And The Rhino's Secret
04:25 Wolves And Warriors
05:15 North Woods Law
06:02 Wildest Europe
06:49 Pit Bulls & Parolees
07:36 Orangutan Island
08:00 Orangutan Island
08:25 Keeping Up With The Kruger
09:15 Animal Cops Houston
10:10 Wolves And Warriors
11:05 North Woods Law
12:00 Wildest Europe
12:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees
13:50 Saba And The Rhino's Secret
14:45 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
15:40 Scaled
16:35 Catching Monsters
17:30 Keeping Up With The Kruger
18:25 Animal Cops Houston
19:20 Growing Up... Orangutan
20:15 The Vet Life
21:10 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
22:05 Wildest Europe
23:00 Catching Monsters
23:55 Pit Bulls & Parolees



00:25 Our Girl
01:20 Holby City
02:15 Hold The Sunset
02:45 Death In Paradise
03:40 Father Brown
04:30 Dickensian
05:15 Dickensian
06:00 Doctors
06:30 EastEnders
07:00 Stella
07:50 Doctor Who
08:35 Doctor Who
09:25 Death In Paradise
10:20 Father Brown
11:10 Doctors
11:40 EastEnders
12:10 Holby City
13:05 Casualty
14:00 Hold The Sunset
14:30 Agatha Raisin
15:15 Death In Paradise
16:10 Father Brown
17:00 Doctors
17:30 Doctors
18:00 Doctors
18:30 EastEnders
19:00 The Coroner
19:50 The Coroner
20:40 Our Girl
21:35 Line Of Duty
22:30 Press
23:30 Father Brown



00:00 Who Killed Tupac?
01:00 Secrets Of The Morgue
01:55 Homicide: Hours To Kill
02:55 Homicide: Hours To Kill
03:50 Homicide: Hours To Kill
04:45 Homicide: Hours To Kill
05:30 Live PD: Police Patrol
05:55 Live PD: Police Patrol
06:15 Robbie Coltrane's Critical

Evidence
07:00 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
08:00 It Takes A Killer
08:20 Live PD: Police Patrol
09:05 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
09:50 Homicide Hunter
10:35 Homicide: Hours To Kill
12:25 Live PD: Police Patrol
13:20 Robbie Coltrane's Critical Evidence
14:15 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
15:10 Leah Remini: Scientology And The Aftermath
16:05 Homicide Hunter
17:00 Secrets Of The Morgue
18:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
19:00 The First 48
21:00 Homicide Hunter
22:00 Live PD: Police Patrol
23:00 It Takes A Killer



00:05 Chappelle's Show
00:30 Broad City
00:55 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
01:25 Impractical Jokers
01:50 Chappelle's Show
02:15 Inside Amy Schumer
02:40 Broad City
03:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
03:30 Broad City
03:55 Broad City
04:20 Lip Sync Battle
04:45 Lip Sync Battle
05:10 Catch A Contractor
05:35 Catch A Contractor
06:00 Friendszone
06:25 Friendszone
06:50 Snack Off
07:15 Snack Off
07:40 Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders: Making The Team
08:30 Lip Sync Battle
08:55 Lip Sync Battle
09:20 I Used To Be Fat
10:10 Kroll Show
10:35 Kroll Show
11:00 Kroll Show
11:25 Key And Peele
13:30 Friends
20:05 Friends
20:35 Corporate
21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
21:30 Todd Barry: Super Crazy
22:25 Roast Battle UK
22:50 Tosh.0
23:15 Tosh.0
23:40 Tracy Morgan: Bona Fide



00:30 Xploration Outer Space
01:20 Animal Airport
02:10 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
03:00 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
03:50 How It's Made
04:40 Weather Gone Viral
05:30 Xploration Outer Space
06:20 Cliptastic
07:00 Mysteries At The Museum
07:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
08:40 How It's Made
09:30 Cliptastic
10:20 Animal Airport
11:10 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
12:00 Mysteries At The Museum
12:50 Weather Gone Viral
13:40 Xploration Outer Space
14:05 Xploration Outer Space
14:30 How It's Made
15:20 Cliptastic
16:10 Xtreme Waterparks
17:00 Animal Airport
17:50 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
18:40 Breaking Magic
19:30 The Next Great Magician
20:20 The Carbonaro Effect
20:45 The Carbonaro Effect
21:10 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
22:00 How It's Made
22:25 How It's Made

22:50 Xtreme Waterparks
23:15 Xtreme Waterparks
23:40 The Next Great Magician



00:50 What Lies Beneath
01:45 Blood Runs Cold
02:40 American Monster
03:35 Murder By Numbers
04:30 Reasonable Doubt
05:25 Swamp Murders
06:20 Forbidden: Dying For Love
07:10 I Almost Got Away With It
08:00 I Was Murdered
08:25 Blood Relatives
09:15 Nightmare Next Door
10:10 Diabolical: Deadly Love
11:05 A Crime To Remember
12:00 Who Killed Jane Doe?
12:55 Blood Relatives
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:45 Swamp Murders
15:40 Forbidden: Dying For Love
16:35 Reasonable Doubt
17:30 Blood Relatives
18:25 Nightmare Next Door
19:20 I Almost Got Away With It
20:15 Swamp Murders
21:10 Forbidden: Dying For Love
22:05 Swamp Murders
23:00 Murder By Numbers
23:55 American Monster



00:10 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Alex & Co.
01:25 Alex & Co.
01:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
01:50 Evermoor Chronicles
02:15 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
02:40 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:05 Binny And The Ghost
03:30 Binny And The Ghost
03:55 Hank Zipzer
04:15 Disney Mickey Mouse
04:20 Hank Zipzer
04:45 Alex & Co.
05:10 Alex & Co.
05:35 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:00 Sabrina: Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
06:25 Binny And The Ghost
06:45 Disney Mickey Mouse
06:50 Rolling With The Ronks
07:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
07:25 Jessie
07:50 Jessie
08:15 Bunk'd
08:40 Stuck In The Middle
09:05 Raven's Home
09:30 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
09:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
10:20 Bunk'd
10:45 K.C. Undercover
11:10 K.C. Undercover
11:35 A.N.T. Farm
12:00 That's So Raven
12:25 That's So Raven
12:50 Raven's Home
15:45 K.C. Undercover
16:10 K.C. Undercover
16:35 K.C. Undercover
17:00 That's So Raven
17:25 That's So Raven
17:50 Tangled: The Series
18:15 Tangled: The Series
18:40 Tangled: The Series
19:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
19:30 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
19:55 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
20:20 Descendants Wicked World
20:25 Hotel Transylvania: The Series
20:50 Liv And Maddie
21:15 Liv And Maddie
21:40 Liv And Maddie

22:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
22:10 A.N.T. Farm
22:35 A.N.T. Farm
23:00 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
23:25 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
23:50 Lolirock



00:00 Puppy Dog Pals
00:30 The Lion Guard
01:00 Sofia The First
01:25 Minnie's Bow-Toons
01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
02:00 PJ Masks
02:25 PJ Masks
02:50 The Hive
03:00 Zou
03:15 Zou
03:30 Henry Hugglemonster
03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
04:20 The Hive
04:30 The Hive
04:40 Zou
04:55 Zou
05:10 Zou
05:25 The Hive
05:35 The Hive
05:45 Zou
06:00 Henry Hugglemonster
06:15 Henry Hugglemonster
06:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
06:35 The Hive
06:45 PJ Masks
07:00 PJ Masks
07:15 PJ Masks
07:30 PJ Masks
08:00 Disney Muppet Babies
08:20 Paprika
08:30 Paprika
08:40 PJ Masks
09:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
09:15 Puppy Dog Pals
09:30 Vampirina
09:45 Fancy Nancy
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Elena Of Avalor
11:00 Puppy Dog Pals
11:20 Puppy Dog Pals
11:40 Puppy Dog Pals
12:00 Disney Muppet Babies
12:20 Paprika
12:30 Paprika
12:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
13:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
13:40 PJ Masks
14:00 PJ Masks
14:20 PJ Masks
14:40 Paprika
14:50 Paprika
15:00 Claude
15:20 Claude
15:40 Vampirina
16:00 Vampirina
16:30 Paprika
16:40 Paprika
16:50 Paprika
17:00 Disney Muppet Babies
17:15 Disney Muppet Babies
17:30 PJ Masks
18:00 Puppy Dog Pals
18:25 PJ Masks Shorts
18:30 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
19:00 Fancy Nancy
19:15 Fancy Nancy
19:30 Vampirina
20:00 PJ Masks
20:30 The Lion Guard
21:00 Sofia The First
21:25 Claude
21:30 Elena Of Avalor
22:00 Mickey And The Roadster Racers
22:30 Fancy Nancy
22:45 Fancy Nancy
23:00 Vampirina
23:30 PJ Masks
00:15 Ultimate Survival
01:05 Abandoned Engineering
01:50 How Do They Do It?
02:15 How Do They Do It?
02:35 What On Earth?
03:20 Fast N' Loud
04:05 Fast N' Loud

04:50 How Do They Do It?
05:15 How Do They Do It?
05:35 Property Wars
06:00 Storage Hunters UK
06:20 Property Wars
06:45 Ultimate Survival
07:35 Deadliest Catch
08:20 Gold Rush
09:10 Alaska: The Last Frontier
09:55 Alaskan Bush People
10:45 How Do They Do It?
11:10 How Do They Do It?
11:30 Fast N' Loud
12:20 Fast N' Loud
13:05 Storage Hunters UK
13:30 Property Wars
13:55 Alaskan Bush People
14:40 Alaska: The Last Frontier
15:30 Master Of Arms
16:15 Wheeler Dealers
17:05 Alaska: The Last Frontier
17:50 Gold Rush
18:40 How Do They Do It?
19:05 How Do They Do It?
19:25 Fast N' Loud
20:15 Fast N' Loud
21:00 Sticker Shock
21:50 Wheeler Dealers
22:40 Race Night At Bowman Gray
23:30 Deadliest Catch



00:15 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
00:35 Boyster
01:00 Boyster
01:25 Counterfeit Cat
01:45 Counterfeit Cat
02:10 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
02:35 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
03:00 Boyster
03:20 Boyster
03:45 Dude That's My Ghost
04:10 Dude That's My Ghost
04:35 Counterfeit Cat
05:00 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
05:29 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja
06:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
06:29 Big Hero 6 The Series
07:00 Phineas And Ferb
08:00 Gravity Falls
09:00 Supa Strikas
09:29 Milo Murphy's Law
10:00 Milo Murphy's Law
10:29 Lab Rats Elite Force
11:00 Phineas And Ferb
11:29 Phineas And Ferb
12:00 Supa Strikas
12:29 Gravity Falls
13:29 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
14:00 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
14:29 Milo Murphy's Law
15:00 Marvel's Spider-Man
15:31 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
16:00 Big City Greens
16:29 Lab Rats
17:00 Milo Murphy's Law
17:29 Supa Strikas
18:00 Disney 11
19:00 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
20:00 Big City Greens
20:29 Gravity Falls
21:00 Gravity Falls
21:29 Star Wars Resistance
22:00 Milo Murphy's Law
22:29 Furiki Wheels
23:00 Dude That's My Ghost
23:25 Dude That's My Ghost
23:50 Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja



00:00 Botched
01:00 Botched
02:00 E! News
03:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
04:00 WAGs
08:00 E! News: Daily Pop
08:55 Botched
09:50 Botched
10:45 Botched

11:40 Botched
12:35 Model Squad
15:20 E! News: Daily Pop
16:15 Botched
19:00 E! News
20:00 Botched
22:00 Ashlee+evan
23:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry



00:10 The Chase
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Chase
03:25 What Would Your Kid Do?
04:20 Martin Clunes: Islands Of Australia
05:15 Don't Tell The Bride
06:15 Cash Trapped
07:10 The Chase
08:05 What Would Your Kid Do?
09:00 Martin Clunes: Islands Of Australia
09:55 Don't Tell The Bride
10:55 Cash Trapped
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Emmerdale
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 Cash Trapped
15:10 The Chase
16:00 Change Your Tune
16:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
17:50 Don't Tell The Bride
18:50 Emmerdale
19:15 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase
21:00 Change Your Tune
21:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Emmerdale
23:40 Coronation Street



00:00 Clash Of Warriors
01:00 Weapons At War
02:00 Modern Marvels
03:00 Cities Of The Underworld
03:50 UFO Hunters
04:40 Ancient Aliens
05:30 The Universe
06:20 Clash Of Warriors
07:10 Weapons At War
08:00 Modern Marvels
09:00 Cities Of The Underworld
10:00 UFO Hunters
11:00 Ancient Aliens
12:00 The Universe
13:00 Clash Of Warriors
14:00 Modern Marvels
15:00 Cities Of The Underworld
16:00 UFO Hunters
17:00 Ancient Aliens
18:00 The Universe
19:00 Rome's Lost Legion
20:00 America's Book Of Secrets
21:00 UFO Hunters
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Clash Of The Gods



00:20 Alone: Lost And Found
01:05 The Lost Evidence
01:50 The Lost Evidence
02:35 Hunting Hitler
03:25 Swamp People
04:15 The Lost Evidence
07:30 Swamp People
11:15 Alone
12:00 Alone: Lost And Found
15:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
15:45 The Curse Of Oak Island
16:30 The Curse Of Oak Island
17:15 Hunting Hitler
18:00 Hunting Hitler
18:45 The Lost Evidence
19:30 The Lost Evidence
20:15 Detroit Steel
21:00 Ice Road Truckers
21:50 Swamp People
22:40 Swamp People
23:30 Swamp People

Stars



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Plan a special outing with someone near and dear to your heart. Special time with someone you love will be very emotionally satisfying to you today. You are in a loving mood. You are focused on building a stronger relationship and you will find this very satisfying. This is the ideal time to tap into your creative energy. Look around for a need that is not being met. The answer could be a simple invention with a huge impact. Your mindset is perfect for this. You will be able to not only use your talent to benefit your needs, but also help others. This could be a win-win situation for you.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Prepare for a major event. This may put an end to your old way of life. You may find independence is a necessity now rather than a choice. You are on your own and this may mark a time of increased responsibility and accountability. Some soul searching may be in order to face this new life. Take your time and spend sometime meditating or relaxing to access your new situation. Do not ask yourself, Why me? You know why. Because you can handle any obstacle that is put in your path.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Things may seem too good to be true. In an almost magical sense it seems that all of your dreams are coming true. Goals seem attainable now. Everything seems to be falling in your lap. You are being smiled upon and you have a new love for life. This is the result of your hard work and dedication. You may find that karma has a way of repaying your good deeds and there seems to be no other explanation for this vast array of good fortune. This is a great time to get all of your affairs in order and continue to dream big.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your words have more power than you could ever imagine. Use them wisely. This is a time others will find you very persuasive. You are a natural born leader and may find yourself asked to lead the pack today. You are starting to discover may career opportunities will begin to present themselves to you. Choose your friends wisely and be sure to keep only those who have your best interest at heart in your circle. You may find not everyone is supportive. Jealousy and envy may rear its head in your world today. Keep your chin up and keep going full steam ahead!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your peers are appreciative of your ability to be able to make constructive suggestions or to help them with practical decisions, which relate to group issues. Knowing exactly what the public wants at this time is yet another feather in your hat. Your name and reputation are spreading quickly. Expect an upgrade soon in your job identity and pay. The idea of value or a greater appreciation for things of value is fun to comprehend this afternoon. It is most assuredly a time when tangible things have a great deal of importance. Your emotions or the feelings of those around you should be quite clear, making it a great time to reflect and truly understand individual family members and your connection in the family.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today may find you feeling as you encounter a road block at every turn. Perhaps, today is not the day for big decisions. You may find yourself a bit frustrated and preferring a bit of isolation. You are simply not in the mood for people. You may feel as if you are not able to get your point across to anyone and may feel greatly misunderstood. You could find yourself at odds with those close to you and should remember to try and remain calm as conflict and confrontation seem to be seeking your company today. Today would be a great day for re-organizing and reflection to get yourself back where you want to be.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You have a special place in your heart for those close to you. You seem to be the one the younger generation in your life look up to and admire. Your advice and guidance maybe sought from someone who looks to you as a mentor. You may feel as if your greatest growth comes when you are helping others. Today may be one of those days you are spinning your wheels getting physical tasks accomplished. Before frustration takes hold, stop and realize your shoulder to lean on and your listening ear and wonderful advice may be a much greater accomplishment that a completing a simple chore. Libra, be proud of who you are and what you mean to others.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Things may seem too good to be true. In an almost magical sense it seems that all of your dreams are coming true. Goals seem attainable now. Everything seems to be falling in your lap. You are being smiled upon and you have a new love for life. This is the result of your hard work and dedication. You may find that karma has a way of repaying your good deeds and there seems to be no other explanation for this vast array of good fortune. This is a great time to get all of your affairs in order and continue to dream big.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

A need for power and control is a driving force in your life now. You long to be in control of everyone and every aspect of your world. You may find that others see you as being more assertive than usual and are caught off guard by the change in you. You find you are curious and seeking answers to subjects and mysteries you find intriguing. Today could find you doing a bit of soul-searching trying to find answers to all that fascinate you about who you are, who you have become, and where life finds you today. This is a day solutions to old problems seem to fall into your lap. You may find much support from someone close to you that truly admires your more eccentric qualities.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Your relationships seem to take on a new importance for you now. You have come to realize you gather strength from the support of those closest to you. You may experience a bit of a wake up call today. A refreshing reminder that helps you remember it is ok to put yourself first. You are not responsible for anyone's happiness but your own. Always putting others ahead of yourself after time can cause you to be unhappy. Take some time today to spoil yourself. This will be rewarding and satisfying to you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Lady Luck is smiling down on you. Today is one of those days that it seems you can do no wrong. Everything is going your way and you are full of happiness and energy. This is a great time to seek advice from an elder. You are well aware that with age comes knowledge. You may find the advice you receive from this person is good and just the bit of encouragement you needed to make a leap forward. Live without fear, Aquarius. Take a chance and enjoy everything this day has to bring. Make plans today for future events as you will find everything seems to fall into place. What a great day.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

There is a reason they make chocolate AND vanilla. What appeals to one may not always appeal to the other. People are different. They have different options and different outlooks on life. You may find yourself running across someone who could not be any more opposite of you. This person will not be someone whose company you enjoy. You can always turn a negative situation into something positive. Sit and have a talk and really listen to what this person has to say. Sometimes listening to understand rather than listening to respond can shed great light and understanding on a situation.


Country Codes

Afghanistan	0093	Jordan	00962
Albania	00355	Kazakhstan	007
Algeria	00213	Kenya	00254
Andorra	00376	Kiribati	00686
Angola	00244	Kuwait	00965
Anguilla	001264	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Antiga	001268	Laos	00856
Argentina	0054	Latvia	00371
Armenia	00374	Lebanon	00961
Australia	0061	Liberia	00231
Austria	0043	Libya	00218
Bahamas	001242	Lithuania	00370
Bahrain	00973	Luxembourg	00352
Bangladesh	00880	Macau	00853
Barbados	001246	Macedonia	00389
Belarus	00375	Madagascar	00261
Belgium	0032	Majorca	0034
Belize	00501	Malawi	00265
Benin	00229	Malaysia	0060
Bermuda	001441	Maldives	00960
Bhutan	00975	Mali	00223
Bolivia	00591	Malta	00356
Bosnia	00387	Marshall Islands	00692
Botswana	00267	Martinique	00596
Brazil	0055	Mauritania	00222
Brunei	00673	Mauritius	00230
Bulgaria	00359	Mayotte	00269
Burkina	00226	Mexico	0052
Burundi	00257	Micronesia	00691
Cambodia	00855	Moldova	00373
Cameroon	00237	Monaco	00377
Canada	001	Mongolia	00976
Cape Verde	00238	Montserrat	001664
Cayman Islands	001345	Morocco	00212
Central African Republic	00236	Mozambique	00258
Chad	00235	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Chile	0056	Namibia	00264
China	0086	Nepal	00977
Colombia	0057	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Comoros	00269	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Congo	00242	New Caledonia	00687
Cook Islands	00682	New Zealand	0064
Costa Rica	00506	Nicaragua	00505
Croatia	00385	Nigar	00227
Cuba	0053	Nigeria	00234
Cyprus	00357	Niue	00683
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Norfolk Island	00672
Czech Republic	00420	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Denmark	0045	North Korea	00850
Diego Garcia	00246	Norway	0047
Djibouti	00253	Oman	00968
Dominica	001767	Pakistan	0092
Dominican Republic	001809	Palau	00680
Ecuador	00593	Panama	00507
Egypt	0020	Papua New Guinea	00675
El Salvador	00503	Paraguay	00595
England (UK)	0044	Peru	0051
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Philippines	0063
Eritrea	00291	Poland	0048
Estonia	00372	Portugal	00351
Ethiopia	00251	Puerto Rico	001787
Falkland Islands	00500	Qatar	00974
Faroe Islands	00298	Romania	0040
Fiji	00679	Russian Federation	007
Finland	00358	Rwanda	00250
France	0033	Saint Helena	00290
French Guiana	00594	Saint Kitts	001869
French Polynesia	00689	Saint Lucia	001758
Gabon	00241	Saint Pierre	00508
Gambia	00220	Saint Vincent	001784
Georgia	00995	Samoa US	00684
Germany	0049	Samoa West	00685
Ghana	00233	San Marino	00378
Gibraltar	00350	Sao Tome	00239
Greece	0030	Saudi Arabia	00966
Greenland	00299	Scotland (UK)	0044
Grenada	001473	Senegal	00221
Guadeloupe	00590	Seychelles	00284
Guam	001671	Sierra Leone	00232
Guatemala	00502	Singapore	0065
Guinea	00224	Slovakia	00421
Guyana	00592	Slovenia	00386
Haiti	00509	Solomon Islands	00677
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Somalia	00252
Honduras	00504	South Africa	0027
Hong Kong	00852	South Korea	0082
Hungary	0036	Spain	0034
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sri Lanka	0094
Iceland	00354	Sudan	00249
India	0091	Suriname	00597
Indian Ocean	00873	Swaziland	00268
Indonesia	0062	Sweden	0046
Iran	0098	Switzerland	0041
Iraq	00964	Syria	00963
Ireland	00353	Taiwan	00886
Italy	0039	Tanzania	00255
Ivory Coast	00225	Thailand	0066
Jamaica	001876	Toga	00228
Japan	0081	Tonga	00676

CLINIC PAGE




Kuwait Times
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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



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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.
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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:

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- ◆ Thyroid surgery.
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- ◆ Endoscopic sinus surgery.
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Scope of Clinical Practice:

- ◆ General & Laparoscopic Surgery
- ◆ Single Port Surgery
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- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
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- ◆ Treatment of Intractable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastrosocopy
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- ◆ 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

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Telephone: 1802 555

Email: aalhaddad@daralshifa.com



مستشفى دار الشفاء
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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).


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Health

'Repeating' radio waves from deep space baffle scientists

PARIS: Astronomers in Canada have detected a mysterious volley of radio waves from far outside our galaxy, according to two studies published Wednesday in Nature. What corner of the universe these powerful waves come from and the forces that produced them remain unknown. The so-called repeating fast radio bursts were identified during the trial run last summer of a built-for-purpose telescope running at only a fraction of its capacity.

Known by its acronym CHIME, the world's most powerful radio telescope—spread across an area as big as a football pitch—is poised to detect many more of the enigmatic pulses now that it is fully operational. "At the end of the year, we may have found 1,000 bursts," said Deborah Good, a PhD student at the University of British Columbia and one of 50 scientists from five institutions

involved in the research. Fast radio bursts (FRBs) flash only for a micro-instant, but can emit as much energy as the Sun does in 10,000 years.

Exactly what causes these high-energy surges of long waves at the far end of the electromagnetic spectrum remains the subject of intense debate. More than 60 bursts have been catalogued since 2007, but only one other—observed in 2012 at the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico—was a repeater. "FRBs, it seems, are likely generated in dense, turbulent regions of host galaxies," Shriharsh Tendulkar, a corresponding author for both studies and an astronomer at McGill University, told AFP. Cosmic convulsions created by the turbulent gas clouds that give rise to stars, or stellar explosions such as supernovae, are both possible incubators. But consecutive radio bursts are a special case.

No little green men

"The fact that the bursts are repeated rules out any cataclysmic models in which the source is destroyed while generating the burst," Tendulkar added. "An FRB emitted from a merger of two neutron stars, or a neutron star and a black hole, for example, cannot repeat." It is not yet clear whether the breeding grounds of repeating bursts are different from those that produce only a single radio pulse.

Significantly, the 2012 and 2018 "repeaters" have strikingly similar properties. CHIME-Canadian Hydrogen Intensity Mapping Experiment—also spotted a dozen single burst radio waves, but with an unusual profile. Most FRBs spotted so far have wavelengths of a few centimeters, but these had intervals of nearly a meter, opening up a whole new line of inquiry for astronomers.

Could these enigmatic radio pulses point to intelligence elsewhere in the Universe? Might they be messages in a bottle? "It is extremely, extremely unlikely," said Tendulkar. "As a scientist I can't rule it out 100 percent. But intelligent life is not on the minds of any astronomer as a source of these FRBs."

Constructed in British Columbia, CHIME is composed of four, 100-metre long half-pipe cylinders of metal mesh which reconstruct images of the sky by processing the radio signals recorded by more than a thousand antennas. "This signal processing system is the largest of any telescope on Earth," the researchers said in a communique. The other institutions with leading roles are the University of Toronto, the National Research Council of Canada, and the Perimeter Institute.—AFP

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Dr Tammam Abou Ali
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DR. WALEED S BUHAIMED
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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.
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- ◆ Abdominal wall and hernia surgeries.
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Friday, January 11, 2019

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Established 1961



Airlines

Kuwait Airways	171	FlyDubai	22414400
Jazeera Airways	177	Qatar Airways	22423888
Wataniya Airways	22 066 536	KLM	22425747
American Airlines	22087425	Royal Jordanian	22418064/5/6
	22087426	British Airways	22425635
Jet Airways	22924455	Air France	22430224

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Cool and Partly cloudy to cloudy with moderate to fresh at times north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 45 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Cold and Cloudy with light to moderate freshening over costal areas north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 45 km/h.

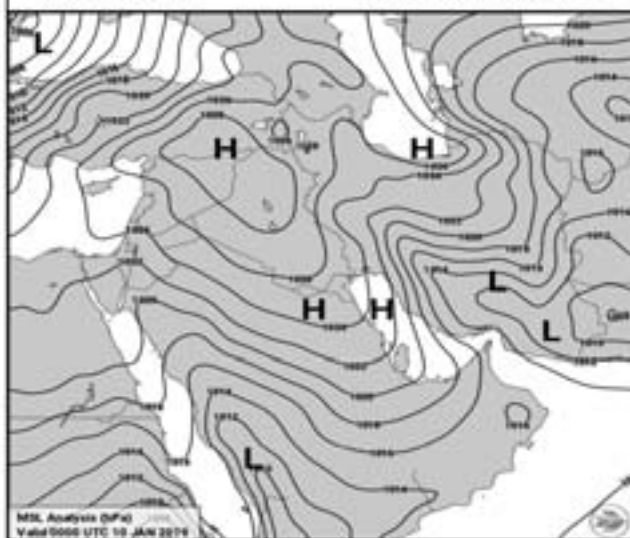
WEATHER WARNING

No Current Warnings

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	18 °C	11 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	17 °C	11 °C
ABDALY	17 °C	06 °C
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C
JAHERA	19 °C	10 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	17 °C	11 °C
SALMIYAH	17 °C	12 °C
AHMADI	18 °C	12 °C
NUWAISIB	21 °C	12 °C
WAFRA	19 °C	09 °C
SALMY	16 °C	06 °C

SFC. CHART

10/01/2019 0000 UTC



4 DAYS FORECAST

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Friday	01/11	Cool and Mostly Sunny	17 °C	09 °C	NW	20 - 40 km/h
Saturday	01/12	Cool and Partly cloudy to cloudy	17 °C	08 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 30 km/h
Sunday	01/13	Cloudy	23 °C	12 °C	SE	20 - 45 km/h
Monday	01/14	Cloudy with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times	22 °C	14 °C	SE-NW	20 - 50 km/h

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr	05:20
Sunrise	06:44
Zuhr	11:55
Asr	14:48
Sunset	17:07
Isha	18:29

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT

MAX. Temp.	21 °C
MIN. Temp.	13 °C
MAX. RH	88 %
MIN. RH	38 %
MAX. Wind	N 50 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

LOST

I Zakir Mansoori lost my Indian Passport no. S 9921621, issued on 31/10/2018, Kuwait. If anyone finds please call on 94947880, 97421645. 10-1-2019

EMERGENCY

112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is

1889988

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

Business

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2019

39 China says US trade talks 'laid foundation' to resolve concerns**40** Jaguar Land Rover to cut thousands of UK jobs**41** US oil export boom sparks a battle to build Texas ports

MOSUL: Umm Mustafa, a 27-year-old widow, rests with her sons in her grocery shop in Iraq's northern city of Mosul.—AFP

Iraqi women launch Mosul firms

‘Umm Mustafa’s self-reliance should be an example’

MOSUL: Under the thumb of jihadist rule they were deemed minors—unable to do anything without permission from a father or husband—but today women are establishing businesses in Iraq’s Mosul. In red letters “Umm Mustafa and sons” looms large over a modest grocery, standing out in a sea of shop facades daubed with male proprietors’ names. “At first some gave me evil looks, but I have no pension and I had no choice but to open my shop”, Umm Mustafa, dressed in black, told AFP.

At just 27 she is already a widow—her husband was executed by the Islamic State group during its brutal three-year occupation of the city. The jihadists seized control of Mosul in 2014, and the ruined metropolis was only wrested back by Iraq’s internationally-backed military a year and a half ago—after months of some of the most brutal urban combat seen anywhere since World War II. Located in the working class district of Al-Faruq, Umm Mustafa needs the shop’s income to feed her sons, who are six and four.

And despite locals’ initial astonishment—borne

out of a conservative culture that long predated the jihadist interlude—Umm Mustafa’s entrepreneurship has won over a loyal clientele. IS’ self-proclaimed caliphate had relegated Umm Mustafa and her female peers to the shadows—bidden from even leaving home in the Nineveh province capital, never mind speaking in public places. Storefront signage such as Umm Mustafa’s could never have been erected as they have today.

Head of the family

Nearly two thirds of young people in Iraq say they support the right of women to work, compared to only 42 percent of older people, according to a UN survey. The same survey found only 14 percent of women work or actively seek employment, compared to 73 percent of men, while in the private sector, only two percent of employees are female. And unemployment, while officially at 10.8 percent nationally, is higher in Nineveh and other provinces that were until recently plagued by fighting or under the control of IS.

The bloody conflicts that have ravaged the country for nearly four decades—beginning with the 1980–88 Iran–Iraq war—have killed and disabled hundreds of thousands of people, and also triggered numerous divorces. As a result, one in ten Iraqi households is headed by a woman nowadays, according to the UN. “Umm Mustafa’s self-reliance should be an example,” said Adel Zaki, a neighbour who comes to her shop regularly to buy chocolates or a bottle of fruit juice.

Fellow Mosul native Dania Salem did not have a pressing need to earn money. But after fleeing home with her family to escape the advancing jihadists, she discovered her passion in Arbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan. The 23-year-old economics graduate worked at a florist there, where she learned to arrange fresh bouquets and create wreaths of synthetic flowers. After returning home to Mosul, in August 2018 she opened a flower stall that is now in full bloom. “For me, it was something of a challenge—a way to improve women’s place in society, which has been changing a lot,” she said.

A first step

Since the jihadists were defeated in Mosul—long a Middle East trade hub—the city has undergone a cultural boom. More and more women are feeling their way into the public sphere, whether by finding work alongside male counterparts or by setting up their own firms. “This shop is a first step and I have other plans for later,” Salem said, before returning to arranging her flowers. For women’s rights activist Rim Mohammed, it is crucial that the state supports other women setting up their own businesses.

“Their social rights must be assured, employment created and their place in cultural and political life guaranteed,” she said. Khalaf al-Hadidi, who runs Nineveh province’s planning department, said he takes this message on board. He said micro credits of between five and 10 million dinars will be granted to women, boys and girls as a priority. He promised this would happen as soon as the province receives the \$1 billion dollars allocated by Iraq’s federal budget, without specifying when that might occur. —AFP

Business

New year stocks rally stalls as trade talks and data disappoint

Dollar index near three-month low, oil down 1.5% after rally

LONDON: The early-year rally in world stocks ran out of steam in Europe yesterday and the dollar touched a near-three-month low, as mixed signals from US-China trade talks and caution at the Federal Reserve applied the brakes. China said the three days of talks in Beijing had established a "foundation" to resolve differences, but gave virtually no details on key issues at stake. A slew of weak data also dampened the mood.

Again in China, factory-gate inflation was the slowest in more than two years, while worse-than-expected industrial figures in France provided more evidence that Europe is spluttering again. The pan-European STOXX 600 index lost 0.4 percent as Paris dropped 0.8 percent, Germany's trade-sensitive DAX dipped and Britain's FTSE also fell as Brexit confusion continued to reign. Wall Street futures were in the red, putting the S&P 500, Dow Jones Industrial and Nasdaq on course for their first drop in five days.

"I am beginning to get a little concerned about the path of the European industrial data," said State Street Global Markets' head of strategy, Michael Metcalfe. "It is raising the possibility of a technical recession in Europe. One of the big challenges is that, if this is replicated in Italy's data tomorrow, that potentially brings the budget questions back into the market's thoughts." The soured sentiment saw the standard move into safe-haven government bonds that give a guaranteed return.

Yields on German and French and government bonds - which move inversely to price - dropped towards recent two-year lows. The European Cen-

tral Bank will publish the minutes from its December meeting later, where it formally shut the mass bond buying program it has been using in recent years. US Treasury yields last stood at 2.697 percent, down from 2.710 percent on Wednesday, when Fed minutes showed policymakers were becoming more cautious about future rate hikes. The dollar remained flat after hitting its lowest level since mid-October.

It was barely changed at \$1.1556 to the euro, which had gained 0.9 percent against the dollar during the previous session, its biggest one-day gain since late June. China's yuan also muscled higher, breaching the 6.8 per dollar level for the first time since August in both onshore and offshore trade in Asia. "This drop in the dollar is an overdue correction following a surprisingly robust few weeks, despite the massive collapse in US rate expectations," said Ulrich Leuchtmann, currency strategist at Commerzbank.

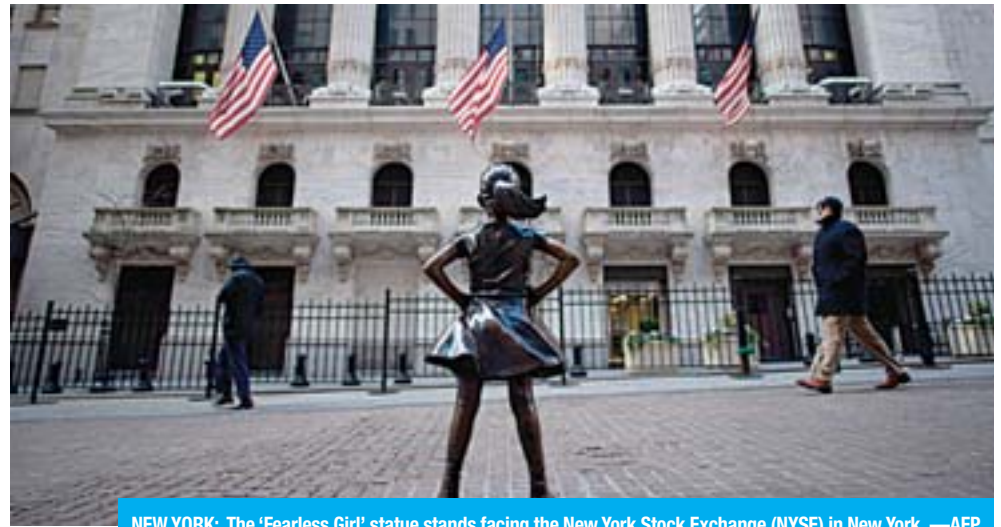
Oil slips

Asian shares had performed fractionally better overnight on the weaker dollar and hopes of more economic stimulus in China. But many stocks saw a saw-tooth pattern, and Tokyo and Shanghai both closed lower as markets parsed the trade talks and hoped that they will ultimately avert another ramping-up of US tariffs in March. Emerging market bond investors then got a major jolt as Lebanon's finance minister Ali Hassan Khalil told a local newspaper that it was weighing up a debt restructuring. Goldman Sachs had warned this week that such a move, if extreme

cost, the prime minister said. "We are yet to quantify the losses, but it was a death blow to an economy that was struggling to recover," Wickremesinghe told parliament.

Three global ratings agencies downgraded Sri Lanka during the crisis, making it more expensive for the Indian Ocean nation to access foreign loans. Sri Lanka hopes to raise \$1 billion from the international debt market, another \$500 million from China and Japan and a further \$400 million from the Reserve Bank of India. Wickremesinghe has dispatched his finance minister to Washington to try to revive a loan arrangement with the International Monetary Fund that was suspended during the chaos.

Sri Lanka narrowly averted defaulting on its sovereign debt after Wickremesinghe's reformed administration introduced a plan late last month to meet urgent spending obligations for the first four months of 2019. Sirisena came to power in 2015 with the help of Wickremesinghe's United National Party but personal and political clashes came to a head before the October sacking.—AFP



NEW YORK: The 'Fearless Girl' statue stands facing the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in New York. —AFP

enough, could potentially wipe out Lebanon's banks.

"The exposure of Lebanese banks to the sovereign (local debt and Eurobonds), amounts to some 55 trillion Lebanese pounds, almost double the 30 trillion LBP capital base of the banking system," the bank's analysts wrote. Lebanon has the third largest public debt-to-GDP ratio in the world at around 150 percent. Oil also caught investors' attention as Brent and US crude fell back \$1, having jumped overnight on signs of OPEC-led crude output cuts.

Brent crude was last trading 1.4 percent lower at

\$60.58 a barrel and US WTI was down 1.5 percent at \$51.57 cents. Industrial metals such as copper dipped a touch too. Chris Weston, Melbourne-based head of research at the foreign exchange brokerage Pepperstone, said he viewed more gains in oil prices as a key driver for any further rise in risk appetite. If US crude futures can break through the \$55 level, "you're going to see real yields probably lower. That's really good for the cost of money and taking some further headwinds out of the US dollar," he said.—Reuters

Sri Lanka struggles to repay record foreign debt

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's prime minister said yesterday the country was struggling to pay back its ballooning foreign debt, blaming a recent political crisis for dealing a "death blow" to the economy. Ranil Wickremesinghe said his government was scrambling to raise \$1.9 billion to help service a first debt payment of \$2.6 billion, that is due on Monday. Sri Lanka faces \$5.9 billion in foreign debt repayments in 2019, a record for the cash-strapped island.

The country lost \$1 billion in foreign reserves during a power struggle between Wickremesinghe and President Maithripala Sirisena in late 2018. Sirisena sacked Wickremesinghe in October and later dissolved parliament to quell any opposition, but Sri Lanka's courts deemed the move unconstitutional. Wickremesinghe was re-installed 51 days later but not without a

CBK publishes BoP for 3Q 2018

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) published yesterday the preliminary data of the State of Kuwait's Balance of Payments (BoP) for 3Q 2018, and the revised data of the preceding quarter. The data revealed a surplus of KD 2,155 million in the Current Account (that sums up receipts and payments between domestic economy and other economies in terms of goods, services and income) compared to a surplus of KD 2,648 million during the previous quarter, i.e. a downturn of KD 492.5 million (18.6 percent).

This downturn is attributable to the decline in the surpluses of both Balance on Goods and Primary Income and in the deficit of Secondary Income on one hand, and the increasing deficit of Services Account on the other. In more detail, the decline in the Current Account surplus reflects a commensurate decline in the surplus of the Balance on Goods (merchandise exports minus merchandise imports) to KD 3,471 million during 3Q 2018, compared to KD 3,789 million during the preceding quarter.

On the other side, the deficit in the Services Account (net value of services transactions between residents and nonresidents, the most important of which are transportation, travel, communications and construction) increased

Item	2Q 2018	3Q 2018
Current Account, of which:	2,648	2,155
- Balance on Goods	3,789	3,471
Capital Account	-7	-5
Financial Account	-3,393	-2,644
Overall Balance	961	-448

Source: Central Bank of Kuwait.

by KD 45.6 million or 2.3 percent, to KD 2,037 million during 3Q 2018, compared to a deficit of KD 1,991 million during the previous quarter. Within the same context, the net value of residents' external assets under the Financial Account (recording transfers of financial assets and liabilities between residents and non-residents) increased by KD 2,644 million during 3Q 2018 against KD 3,393 million during the previous quarter, i.e. a slowdown of KD 749.6 million.

As a result, the overall position of Kuwait's BoP recorded a deficit of KD 448 million during the 3Q 2018 against a surplus of KD 961 million during the previous quarter. From a broader perspective, and taking into consideration the change in the net value of external assets of some institutions listed under "General Government", BoP's overall position, in a broad definition, indicates a surplus of KD 2,214 million during 3Q 2018 against a surplus of KD 2,368 million during the previous quarter.

Business

China says US trade talks 'laid foundation' to resolve concerns

Talks focus on ways to achieve balance in trade relations

BEIJING: China said yesterday that trade talks in Beijing with a US negotiating team had "laid the foundation" to resolve concerns held by both sides in a bruising trade war. US officials visited Beijing from Monday to Wednesday for the first sit-down talks since President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping agreed on December 1 to a three-month truce in the escalating spat.

World markets rose Wednesday on increasing optimism that the two sides would be able to hammer out a deal ahead of a March deadline and avert further import tariff hikes—though Asian stocks were mostly down yesterday. China and the US "conducted extensive, in-depth and meticulous exchanges... which enhanced mutual understanding and laid the foundation for resolving issues of mutual concern," the Chinese commerce ministry said in a statement.

"Both parties agreed to continue to maintain close contact." Washington has been clamoring for an end to the forced transfer and even theft of American technology and intellectual property, as well as steep government subsidies for Chinese companies. When asked about progress in those areas yesterday, China's commerce ministry spokesman Gao Feng said that structural issues were a focus of the talks. "Negotiations between the two sides

in this area made progress," he said.

The US Trade Representative office said Wednesday that the talks focused on "ways to achieve fairness, reciprocity, and balance in trade relations", as well as the need for "ongoing verification and effective enforcement" of any agreement. For Washington, ensuring China makes good on its pledges is key—and Gao acknowledged that was important to China as well yesterday.

"The Chinese side also believes that the implementation mechanism of any agreement is very important and both parties have an obligation to carry it out," Gao told reporters during a regular press conference. "For the next step, both sides will continue to work hard together, and advance the negotiation work according to the original plan."

The Trump administration also wants Beijing to buy more American goods to narrow a yawning trade gap—a sticking point for US president—and allow foreign players better access to the Chinese market. "The talks also focused on China's pledge to purchase a substantial amount of agricultural, energy, manufactured goods, and other products and services from the United States," USTR said in a statement. Gao declined to provide details when asked about purchases yesterday. —AFP



BEIJING: US Ambassador to China Terry Branstad, left, applauds as Chinese Vice President Wang Qishan is introduced at an event commemorating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and China at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. —AFP

ECB charts uncertain course through shifting risks

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: European Central Bank chiefs went ahead and halted a key element of their economic stimulus program despite a complex, shifting array of risks to growth, an account of their December meeting showed yesterday. Looking ahead, "it was underlined that the situation remained fragile and fluid, as risks could quickly regain prominence or new uncertainties could emerge," the central bank chiefs and ECB board members judged.

That was true even if for now "certain downside risks—regarding trade tensions, emerging markets, US monetary policy and developments in sovereign bond markets in the euro area—had receded," they added. Policymakers agreed in December to halt net purchases of government and corporate bonds at the end of 2018 after three years and 2.6 trillion euros.

Designed to pump cheap money through the financial system, boosting growth and in turn inflation, the "quantitative easing" (QE) scheme was judged a success by ECB chief Mario Draghi in his press conference following the meeting. "In some parts of this period of

time, QE has been the only driver of this recovery," he said. ECB staff forecasts issued last month now see inflation on track towards the central bank target of just below 2.0 percent by 2021, although the Frankfurt institution trimmed its expectations for GDP growth.

But the December account shows major concerns weighing on central bankers' minds, including "the frequently changing state of discussion on trade issues." Little progress has so far been made on attempts to transform a temporary US-EU tariff truce into a more permanent deal while the economy continues to suffer the fallout from Washington's trade confrontation with Beijing.

Meanwhile deadlock in the British political system is swelling the risk of a chaotic withdrawal from the EU as Brexit day on March 29 draws nearer. Although Turkey and Argentina had stabilised after major wobbles earlier in 2018, "vulnerability related to others was already looming," the bankers noted. "The current environment could be described as one of 'risk rotation' in a state of generally heightened uncertainty," they summed up.

Looking ahead, the ECB governing council backed the board's plan to reinvest the proceeds of its massive bond pile for the foreseeable future and to keep interest rates low "at least through the summer" of this year. With those two tools at their limits, there is little further room for the ECB to juice the economy if a harsher slowdown than expected kicks in. Against that background, "the suggestion was made to re-visit the contribution of targeted longer-term refinancing operations," cheap loans to banks conditional on onward lending to firms and households, the account noted. —AFP

Iran to not comply with illegal US sanctions

BAGHDAD: Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said yesterday US sanctions against his country were "fully illegal" and Tehran would not comply with them. "We believe that we should not comply with the illegal sanctions against Iran," Zanganeh told a joint news conference in Baghdad with his Iraqi counterpart, Thamer al-Ghadhban. Zanganeh also said Iran would not discuss the volume or destination of its oil exports while it remained under US sanctions.

"We have discussed today how to improve cooperation with Iraq on different aspects, especially on oil issues," Zanganeh said. Ghadhban, who also said the discussions had touched on energy issues, added that Iraq had not yet reached an agreement with Iran to develop joint oilfields. He said a decline in global oil prices had stopped and that he expected them to rise gradually.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, of which Iran and Iraq are members, and its Russia-led allies agreed on Dec 7 to cut output by more than expected, despite pressure from US President Donald Trump to reduce oil prices. The OPEC deal had hung in the balance on concerns that Iran, whose crude exports have been depleted by US sanctions, would receive no exemption and block the agreement. Ghadhban said any decision relating to future OPEC cuts would depend on monitoring price developments. —Reuters

Business

Jaguar Land Rover to cut thousands of UK jobs after China, diesel slump

No-deal Brexit to hurt company; increase costs, disruption

LONDON: Britain's biggest carmaker Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) is set to cut thousands of jobs as the company faces lower demand in China and a slump in sales of diesel cars in Europe. The central English firm builds a higher proportion of its cars in Britain than any other major or medium-sized carmaker and has also spent millions of pounds preparing for Brexit, in case there are tariffs or customs checks. Britain's business minister Greg Clark said yesterday it is clear why a no-deal Brexit would add to the problems with further costs and disruption.

JLR lost 354 million pounds (\$450 million) between April and September 2018 and had already cut around 1,000 roles in Britain, shut its Solihull plant for two weeks and announced a three-day week at its Castle Bromwich site. Its Chief Executive Ralf Speth warned in September that the wrong Brexit deal could cost tens of thousands of car jobs and posed a threat to production at the automaker.

The Tata Motors-owned company, which employs around 40,000 people in Britain and has boosted its workforce at new plants in China and Slovakia in recent years, unveiled plans to cut costs and improve cash flows by 2.5 billion pounds last year including "reducing employment costs and employment levels." Those cuts will be "substantial" and run into the thousands, the source told Reuters.

"The announcement on job losses will be substantial, affecting managerial, research, sales, design," said the source, who spoke on condition

of anonymity, not affecting production-line staff "at this stage." The company declined to comment when contacted by Reuters on Thursday. Ford also said yesterday it will cut thousands of jobs in Europe, exit unprofitable markets and discontinue loss-making vehicle lines as part of a turnaround effort aimed at improving profit margins in the region.

Brexit warnings

JLR, which became Britain's biggest carmaker in 2016, had been on course to build around 1 million vehicles by the turn of the decade, reported yesterday a 4.6 percent drop in full-year sales to just under 600,000 vehicles. Demand in China, which had once been one of its strongest countries but has since been hit by a slowdown, fell by 21.6 percent, the biggest drop of any of its markets. "The economic slowdown in China along with ongoing trade tensions is continuing to influence consumer confidence," said Jaguar Land Rover Chief Commercial Officer Felix Brautigam.

Diesel accounts for 90 percent of the firm's British sales and 45 percent of global demand, the company said last year, as demand in the segment tumbles following new levies in the wake of the 2015 Volkswagen emissions cheating scandal. The firm's chief financial officer said in October that the firm's Changshu plant in China "has basically been closed for most of October in order to allow the inventory of both our vehicles and dealer inventory to start to reduce."

Like fellow automakers, the company could



ENGLAND: The Jaguar logo is seen on a car in Wakefield, northern England. —AFP

see its three British car factories grind to a halt in fewer than 80 days if lawmakers next week reject a deal by Prime Minister Theresa May, leading to tariffs and customs checks after a no-deal outcome. "Given the difficulties that they're going through... to add further costs and further disruption from a no-deal Brexit, it's clear why they've been so clear that this would

be against their interests," said business minister Greg Clark.

BMW-owned car brand Rolls-Royce is also taking steps to prepare for a no-deal Brexit but called on the government to prevent that outcome. "We urge the government to avoid any hard Brexit," said Chief Executive Torsten Mueller-Oetvoes. —Reuters

Amazon to invest in French firm's technology for self-driving forklifts

CALIFORNIA: Amazon could build a stake of almost a third in warehouse robotics firm Balyo in the next seven years, as part of a deal that could boost sales of the French company's technology for self-driving forklift trucks. Warehouse automation is a key element in efforts by Amazon to cut costs and speed up deliveries.

The world's biggest online retailer currently uses robots developed by Kiva Systems, a company it bought for \$775 million in 2012. "This agreement ... represents an unprecedented opportunity for Balyo to grow its business and supports the soundness of our investments over the years to perfect our robotic solutions," Balyo Chief Executive Fabien Bardinet said yesterday.

Under the terms of the deal, Amazon will receive free stock warrants representing up to 29 percent of Balyo's capital which it can exercise depending on orders of the company's products. The full 29 percent would be exercised if Amazon orders up to 300 million euros of Balyo's enabled products. Balyo, whose navigation system turns forklifts into self-driving vehicles, said it expected 2018 revenue to come in at 23.3 million euros, up 40 percent on the previous year. —Reuters

VW, China spearhead \$300 bn global drive to electrify cars

FRANKFURT: Global automakers are planning a \$300 billion surge in spending on electric vehicle technology over the next five to 10 years, with nearly half of the money targeted at China, accelerating the industry's transition from fossil fuels and shifting power to Asian battery and electric vehicle technology suppliers. The unprecedented level of spending - much of it by Germany's Volkswagen AG - is driven in large measure by government policies adopted to cut carbon dioxide emissions, and will extend technological advances that have improved battery cost, range and charging time to make electric vehicles more appealing to consumers, according to an exclusive Reuters analysis of public data released by those companies.

China for decades played catch-up to German, Japanese and American automakers, which dominated internal combustion vehicle technology. Now, China is positioned to lead electric vehicle development, industry executives say. "The future of Volkswagen will be decided in the Chinese market," said Herbert

Diess, chief executive of VW, which has decades-old joint ventures with two of China's largest automakers, SAIC Motor and FAW Car.

Speaking earlier this week to a small group of reporters in Beijing, Diess said China "will become one of the automotive powerhouses in the world." "What we find (in China) is really the right environment to develop the next generation of cars and we find the right skills, which we only partially have in Europe or other places," he said. Diess added, "We have very clear policies established here in China. Policymakers and regulators are requiring" a shift to electric vehicles.

As China and other countries place more restrictions on conventional gasoline and diesel engines, auto companies have accelerated the shift to electrification. A year ago global automakers said they planned to spend \$90 billion on electric vehicle development. The \$300 billion that automakers have earmarked to put electric vehicles into mass production in China, Europe and North America is greater than the economies of Egypt or Chile.

Almost one-third of the industry's EV spending total, about \$91 billion, is being committed by the Volkswagen Group, which is aggressively trying to distance itself from the Dieselgate scandal, which has cost it billions in penalties and legal settlements. VW's sweeping electrification plan envisions ca-

capacity on three continents to build up to 15 million electric vehicles by 2025, including 50 pure electric and 30 hybrid electric models. Eventually, VW plans to offer electrified versions of all 300 models in its 12-brand global portfolio, which includes Audi and Porsche.

VW's staggering EV budget dwarfs that of its closest competitor, Germany's Daimler AG, which has committed \$42 billion. In comparison, General Motors Co, the No 1 U.S. automaker, has said it plans to spend a combined \$8 billion on electric and self-driving vehicles. Roughly 45 percent of the global industry's planned EV investment and procurement spending, more than \$135 billion, will occur in China, which is heavily promoting the production and sale of electric vehicles through a system of government-mandated quotas, credits and incentives.

As a result, EV spending by major Chinese automakers from SAIC to Great Wall Motor could be matched or even exceeded by multinational joint-venture partners such as VW, Daimler and GM, as they dramatically expand their electric vehicle portfolios in China and ramp up battery purchases from Chinese suppliers. Reuters analyzed investment and procurement budgets made public over the past two years by 29 of the world's top automakers, based primarily in the United States, China, Japan, Korea, India, Germany and France. The figures do not reflect planned investments and purchases that have not yet been made public. —Reuters

Business

US oil export boom sparks a battle to build Texas ports

Trafigura counter environmental concerns about offshore operation

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas: Booming US oil exports have set off a scramble to build Gulf Coast ports to handle more than 3 million barrels per day in new supplies expected over the next five years. Of seven proposed oil-export projects, nowhere is the opportunity greater or the competition fiercer than in Corpus Christi, Texas, where three firms are vying to open the state's first deepwater port.

Commodities trader Trafigura has taken an early lead with a planned offshore facility that has an easier path to regulatory approval and faces fewer objections from environmentalists. Its chief competitor - a partnership of investor Carlyle Group and the Port of Corpus Christi to build an onshore port - has responded by petitioning regulators to kill Trafigura's project. Port lobbyists have cited past criminal allegations involving the firm in other countries and potentially "catastrophic" environmental impacts.

"We've got a wave of oil headed toward the coast," said Jeremiah Ashcroft III, chief executive of Lone Star Ports LLC, the Carlyle-backed company formed to develop its Corpus Christi project. Only one US facility, the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port, can fully load supertankers capable of carrying 2 million barrels. The Corpus Christi port - the closest to the most prolific shale fields in Texas - exports less than 1 million bpd, and its harbor is too shallow to fully load supertankers.

The market ultimately may support more than one new deepwater port, but the first firm to build near Corpus Christi will have the best shot at cutting long-term deals with producers expected to

ship an estimated 2.1 million bpd to the region through new pipelines set to open this year. "Right now, there's only enough room for one project," Ashcroft said. Carlyle plans a \$1 billion port to handle 1.4 million bpd.

Brazil charges

Carlyle said last October that it could open its facility by late 2020. But that assumes its plan for dredging to accommodate supertankers will not require a full environmental review, which is sought by opponents and could take two years. As Carlyle and the Port have tried to navigate those obstacles, port lobbyists have petitioned regulators to halt Trafigura's project. In an August letter, the port's law firm called on the US Coast Guard and the Maritime Administration to reject Trafigura's application, citing a "criminal history."

The letter from Baker Wotring LLP pointed to the trader's 2006 guilty plea for selling a US company oil from Iraq that Trafigura falsely claimed had been authorized under a United Nations humanitarian aid program. US companies at the time were barred by government sanctions from buying Iraqi oil except through the program. After the regulators declined the port's request, its law firm in December raised bribery allegations brought earlier that month by Brazilian prosecutors against two former Trafigura executives.

The firm asked regulators to halt Trafigura's work until the allegations were "fully investigated." Trafigura said in a statement that its management had no knowledge of any improper



CORPUS CHRISTI: The Harbor Island in Corpus Christi Bay is seen in Texas, US. —Reuters

payments made to employees of Brazil's state-run oil firm Petrobras. Trafigura did not comment on the port law firm citing its guilty plea involving Iraq oil sales. Lone Star's Ashcroft said onshore terminals are safer than offshore projects because oil spills are more easily cleaned up in harbors than in open water.

Environmental disaster

"Sea turtles are always an issue with dredging" because it brings in salt water, said Jayson

Hudson, a regulatory supervisor at the US Army Corp of Engineers, which oversees permitting for Carlyle's project. He called Trafigura's horizontal drilling plan a "good option for avoiding permanent impacts." Dredging the harbor, by contrast, would have wide-ranging impacts, said John Donovan, president of the Port Aransas Conservancy. "We're very much against what we consider to be an environmental disaster that the Port's plans for Harbor Island would entail," he said. —Reuters

British retailers count cost of brutal Christmas trading

LONDON: British retailers suffered their worst Christmas since the depths of the financial crisis a decade ago as cautious customers forced high street stores such as John Lewis and Debenhams to slash prices to shift stock. With Britain heading for a potentially messy exit from the European Union at the end of March, consumer spending is drying up, exposing the weakness of many major retailers which are having to sacrifice profits in the quest for sales.

The brutal conditions come as the industry struggles to keep pace with consumers moving online, meaning many are weighed down with excess and costly store space as they invest in distribution centers and logistics. "There's no doubt that there was significantly more promotional activity in the market, a combination of consumer confidence and the travails in the marketplace as a whole," said Paula Nickolds, managing director of John Lewis stores.

Trading updates on Thursday showed those groups doing best such as Tesco had improved their basic ranges. Investors were also relieved that Marks & Spencer, the country's most famous retailer, had held its nerve and not cut prices, even though sales fell. The general message was that the going was tough. Debenhams Chief Executive Sergio Bucher said the country's second biggest department store group would have to find 80 million pounds of cost cuts to protect its profits after slashing prices. It is closing 50 stores.

Once selling fabrics, bonnets and gloves during the Victorian era, the 241-year-old group is now fighting for its survival to avoid the fate of collapsed rival BHS and House of Fraser, which was rescued by

Sports Direct-owner Mike Ashley. "The market in general has been very, very competitive," Bucher told reporters. The group, which has lost more than 80 percent of its value in the last year, is seeking fresh funds to bolster its balance sheet.

Halfords, which sells bicycle and car accessories, was one of the worst hit after its customers refused to spend on expensive items, forcing it to lower prices and cut its profit target. Its shares were down 25 percent. And John Lewis, the employee-owned biggest department store, said on average promotional activity was around 20 to 30 percent higher than last year. Its staff may not receive their cherished annual bonus for the first time since 1953.

Troubled times

Britain's economy slowed after the 2016 Brexit referendum and looks to have lost more momentum in late 2018 as Prime Minister Theresa May struggles to get parliament's support for her plan for a smooth exit from the European Union. The British Retail Consortium (BRC) said its members reported zero year-on-year total sales growth in December, the worst performance for the month since 2008. The flat figure compared with 1.4 percent growth in December 2017.

On the stock market general retail had its worst year since 2008 in 2018, dropping 27 percent compared with 12 percent for the FTSE 100. Tesco, Britain's biggest retailer, showed its resilience after its own-brand basic ranges combined with premium offerings to fend off rivals at the top and bottom of the market, and keep its tills ringing.

"There is no shortage of gloomy news within the UK retail sector, but there are winners and we believe Tesco is one of them," said Alasdair McKinnon, the lead fund manager of the Scottish Investment Trust, a Tesco investor. Tesco's performance stood in contrast to rivals Sainsbury's and Morrisons which both missed Christmas sales forecasts this week, hit by competition from German discounters Aldi and Lidl. "The shopper is behaving as he or she always has," Tesco CEO Dave Lewis said. —Reuters

Fiat Chrysler to pay \$650 mn over software misuse

NEW YORK: Fiat Chrysler has agreed to pay nearly \$650 million to resolve litigation over its use of illegal engine-control software on diesel vehicles that produced false results in emissions tests, The New York Times reported Wednesday. The automaker will pay \$305 million in penalties to the federal government and California, which also brought suit, the NYT said, citing two unidentified sources who were briefed on the issue. It said the agreement is expected to be announced on Thursday.

Fiat Chrysler will also pay an average of \$2,500 to owners of 104,000 diesel-powered Ram 1500 trucks and Jeep Grand Cherokee sport utility vehicles from the 2014, 2015 and 2016 model years. The NYT said these payments could total more than \$260 million. Fiat Chrysler will also pay about \$72 million in civil penalties to settle litigation brought by various states, and \$6 million to settle other claims, the newspaper said. US authorities including the Environmental Protection Agency sued the Italian-US automaker in 2017 alleging it had used illegal software that turned off pollution controls under certain driving conditions. The EPA said the software enabled the vehicles to pass emissions tests while allowing them to release higher levels of pollutants in normal driving. The accord does not call for Fiat Chrysler to admit any wrongdoing, the newspaper said. The Fiat Chrysler probe comes in the wake of the diesel emissions-cheating scandal that rocked Volkswagen and then spread to nearly all the major auto companies. —AFP

Petra Kvitova blasts past Kerber into Sydney International semis

Veteran Seppi derailed top seed Tsitsipas' title hopes

SYDNEY: Petra Kvitova sent defending champion Angelique Kerber packing from the rain-affected Sydney International yesterday to book a semi-final spot and get an edge over her rival heading into the Australian Open next week.

It was always going to be a tight match with the pair tied 6-6 in 12 previous meetings. Play was suspended early in the first set due to rain. They returned several hours later but the drizzle soon began falling again and it was back to the locker room for the two tournament drawcards.

They eventually resumed at 10:30pm and Czech fifth seed Kvitova, who won the title in 2015, took charge, quickly racing through the first set to put the German world number two on the back foot.

Kvitova kept the pressure on and got a crucial break in game four of the second set and there was no way back for Kerber who meekly surrendered 6-4, 6-1. "The weather has not been great and it's not easy to wait in the locker room, but I was glad I could come back out and play so well," Kvitova said after reaching the semi-finals in Sydney for a fourth time.

Her reward is a clash with Belarusian qualifier Aliaksandra Sasnovich, who beat Switzerland's Timea Bacsinszky-on the comeback trail after a 14-month winless spell — 6-3, 6-3. Australia's Ashleigh Barty followed up her giant-killing wins over world number one Simona Halep and former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko by

easily accounting for 10th seeded Belgian Elise Mertens 6-3, 6-3.

The 22-year-old is now on a six-match win streak, dating back to her career's biggest title at the WTA Elite Trophy in Zhuhai. "Nice and solid today, I was pretty happy at the way I was able to come out and play," said Barty, ranked 15 in the world.

She will play seventh seed Kiki Bertens who blasted past Yulia Putintseva 6-2, 6-2 for a place in the final.

SEPPI DERAILS TSITSIPAS

In the men's draw, veteran Andreas Seppi derailed top seed Stefanos Tsitsipas' title hopes. Seppi, 14 years older than his 20-year-old Greek opponent, has only won three ATP titles in his career, but called on all his experience as he battled back for a gutsy 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 win.

"For some reason I always play my best tennis in Australia, so I really enjoy being here," said Seppi, who broke immediately in the second set after losing the first. "It was very important to start well in the second set. Good to have an early break so I could play a bit more aggressive and it worked out in the end."

Australia has been a home away from home for the Italian in recent years. In a trio of round-of-16 appearances at the Australian Open, he pulled off upsets against Marin Cilic in 2013, Roger Federer in 2015 and Nick Kyrgios in 2017.



SYDNEY: Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic hits a return to Angelique Kerber of Germany during their women's singles quarter-final match at the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

Defeat was a blow for world No.15 Tsitsipas' preparations for the opening Grand Slam of the year in Melbourne next week. He was one of the sport's most improved players last year, climbing from 91 after reaching finals in Barcelona and Toronto, losing both to Rafael Nadal, and was angling for the perfect start ahead of the Australian Open.

Seppi will now play third seeded Argentine Diego Schwartzman, who needed to fight hard to beat Japanese qualifier Yoshihito Nishioka 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (7/1). In other quarter-final action, fifth seeded teenager Alex De Minaur continued his strong start to the season with a 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 victory over fellow Australian Jordan Thompson. — AFP

Djokovic, Halep top seeds at Australian Open

MELBOURNE: World number ones Novak Djokovic and Simona Halep were named top seeds yesterday for next week's Australian Open, with 23-time major winner Serena Williams lurking at 16 on the women's side.

Djokovic heads long-time rival Rafael Nadal and defending champion Roger Federer, with young-gun Alexander Zverev seeded four as he targets a maiden Grand Slam title. The Serbian world number one is aiming to make history by claiming a record seventh Australian Open crown when the tournament starts at Melbourne Park on Monday, as is Swiss legend Federer.

The pair face a stern challenge from Zverev, the torch-bearer for the next generation who has so far failed to get beyond the quarter-finals at any major. With world number five Juan Martin del Potro missing through injury, South Africa's Kevin Anderson is elevated to fifth seed with last year's beaten finalist Marin Cilic at six. Halep takes the top seeding among the women courtesy of her world number one ranking, but she enters the tournament with only one match in four months under her belt after an injury lay off.

The Romanian, the beaten finalist last year, is returning from a herniated disc and was bundled out of the Sydney International on

Wednesday at the first hurdle. Denmark's defending champion Caroline Wozniacki, who is battling health problems and poor form, is seeded three, one behind Germany's Angelique Kerber.

US Open champion Naomi Osaka is at four while Sloane Stephens, who also slumped out of Sydney early, is at five. Overshadowing them all is the mighty Williams, who last played the tournament in 2017 when she won while eight weeks pregnant. The 37-year-old enters the tournament seeded 16, but has proved in the past that such numbers mean little to her. She is the hot favourite to claim a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam.

MEN'S SINGLES

1. Novak Djokovic (SRB), 2. Rafael Nadal (ESP), 3. Roger Federer (SUI), 4. Alexander Zverev (GER), 5. Kevin Anderson (RSA), 6. Marin Cilic (CRO), 7. Dominic Thiem (AUT), 8. Kei Nishikori (JPN), 9. John Isner (USA), 10. Karen Khachanov (RUS), 11. Borna Coric (CRO), 12. Fabio Fognini (ITA), 13. Kyle Edmund (GBR), 14. Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE), 15. Daniil Medvedev (RUS), 16. Milos Raonic (CAN), 17. Marco Cecchinato (ITA), 18. Diego Schwartzman (ARG), 19. Nikoloz Basilashvili (GEO), 20. Grigor Dimitrov (BUL), 21. David Goffin (BEL), 22. Roberto Agut Bautista (ESP), 23. Pablo Carreno Busta (ESP), 24. Chung Hyeon (KOR), 25. Denis Shapovalov (CAN), 26. Fernando Verdasco (ESP), 27. Alex de Minaur (AUS), 28. Lucas Pouille (FRA), 29. Gilles Simon (FRA), 30. Gael Monfils (FRA), 31. Steve Johnson (USA), 32. Philipp Kohlschreiber (GER).

WOMEN'S SINGLES

1. Simona Halep (ROU), 2. Angelique Kerber (GER), 3. Caroline Wozniacki (DEN), 4. Naomi Osaka (JPN), 5. Sloane Stephens (USA), 6. Elina Svitolina (UKR), 7. Karolina Pliskova (CZE), 8. Petra Kvitova (CZE), 9. Kiki Bertens (NED), 10. Daria Kasatkina (RUS), 11. Aryna Sabalenka (BLR), 12. Elise Mertens (BEL), 13. Anastasija Sevastova (LAT), 14. Julia Goerges (GER), 15. Ashleigh Barty (AUS), 16. Serena Williams (USA), 17. Madison Keys (USA), 18. Garbine Muguruza (ESP), 19. Caroline Garcia (FRA), 20. Anett Kontaveit (EST), 21. Qiang Wang (CHN), 22. Jelena Ostapenko (LAT), 23. Carla Suarez Navarro (ESP), 24. Lesia Tsurenko (UKR), 25. Mihaela Buzarnescu (ROU), 26. Dominika Cibulkova (SVK), 27. Camila Giorgi (ITA), 28. Hsieh Suwei (TPE), 29. Donna Vekic (CRO), 30. Maria Sharapova (RUS), 31. Petra Martic (CRO), 32. Barbora Strýcová (CZE). — AFP



Simona Halep

Kohlschreiber flogs feeble Fognini in Auckland quarters

WELLINGTON: Evergreen Philipp Kohlschreiber rolled back the years to storm into the Auckland Classic semi-finals yesterday with a straight-sets demolition of second seed Fabio Fognini.

The 35-year-old German tore apart the lacklustre Italian 6-3, 6-1 to remain in the reckoning at a tournament where he claimed the title way in back in 2008. Currently ranked 34th in the world, Kohlschreiber has not dropped a set on his way to a final four showdown with American Tennys Sandgren, who beat Argentina's Leonardo Mayer 6-3, 7-6 (7/5).

The other semi-final pits Briton Cameron Norrie-a victor over American Tyler Fritz-against Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany. Kohlschreiber, unseeded this year, was a class above world number 13 Fognini, who appeared unfocused and more interested in boarding a plane to next week's Australian Open in Melbourne.

Despite his advancing years, the veteran is shaping as a strong contender in a field weakened by withdrawals and upset results that have sent all the seeds heading for the exits. Kohlschreiber comfortably beat Sandgren in straight sets in their only previous meeting in Monte Carlo last year.

"I'm still improving my game even at 35-years old ... I have to be ready for the young ones and I'll try to continue to play for a few years yet," he said. Kohlschreiber raced to an early break in the first set then held on as Fognini stretched the German's next service game out for 10 minutes trying to respond. — AFP

Sports

Friday, January 11, 2019

This is 40: Manny Pacquiao taking it one fight at a time

Focuses on his title defense against Adrien Broner in Las Vegas

LOS ANGELES: Manny Pacquiao, the Filipino multiple world champion who turned 40 last month, said on Wednesday that while he is focused on his title defense against Adrien Broner, he has considered life beyond the ring.

The WBA welterweight champion knows he will have his hands full when he battles the hard-hitting Broner in Las Vegas on Jan. 19 and is not lining up fighters down the road. "At the age of 40, it's hard to think about future fights," he told Reuters ahead of a workout at Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood.

"Just one at a time." He dismissed concerns that he has lost the knockout power that made the "PacMan" the sport's only eight-division world champion and among the best pound-for-pound fighters of all time.

After a knockout drought, Pacquiao had a return to form in July when he stunned defending champion Lucas Matthysse with a seventh-round knockout in Kuala Lumpur to claim the title. "I still have it," said the soft-spoken Pacquiao, who is 60-7-2 with 39 knockouts in his career.

"God is good," he said with a smile. Pacquiao knows, though, that Father Time is undefeated and hanging up his gloves would give him a chance to fully embrace his other pas-

sion-politics. Already a senator in the southeast Asian country, some believe the popular Pacquiao could take over from President Rodrigo Duterte when the election to replace him is held in 2022.

"Well if God wants me to be, then why not?" he said when asked whether he would like the position. "But I'm not thinking about that now." Pacquiao said he supported the conservative Duterte, who has come under fire for his hard line stance against drug dealers and users.

"He did a lot of good things in the Philippines. Big, big accomplishments," he said. One place you won't find Pacquiao is in exhibition matches like the one his former rival Floyd Mayweather fought last month against Japanese kickboxer Tenshin Nasukawa—a one-sided win for the American that was widely panned.

"I won't do that. If I'm Floyd I wouldn't do that," he said. "Exhibition match where you just knock him out. That's not good for the fans." Asked about his legacy, he said he had already proven himself in the ring and was more interested in connecting with the people.

"My legacy is already there," he said. "I want to be an inspiration to the fans and the people not only inside the ring but also outside the ring." —Reuters



HOLLYWOOD: Manny Pacquiao laughs with the press during Manny Pacquiao versus Adrien Broner Media Day at Wild Card Boxing Club yesterday in Hollywood, California. —AFP

India's Mary Kom becomes world's top woman boxer

NEW DELHI: India's Mary Kom rose to the top of the boxing world rankings yesterday, two months after becoming the first female boxer to win six world championships. The 36-year-old mother-of-three was ranked number one by the International Boxing Association (AIBA) in the Light Fly 45-48 kilogramme category, scoring 1700 points.

Kom capped her 2018 campaign with her sixth world championship title after defeating Ukraine's Hanna Okhota by 5-0 in Delhi. Okhota is ranked number two in the world, with 1100 points.

That victory took her past Ireland's Katie Taylor, and level with the men's record held by Cuban legend Felix Savon as the most successful pugilist ever at the world championships. She also won gold medals at the 2018 Commonwealth Games and the Silesian Open Boxing Tournament in Poland. She bagged a silver at the Strandja Memorial in Bulgaria. Kom won a silver at the inaugural women's world championships in 2001, kick-starting her international career. She went on to win gold in each of the next five world championships.

Kom, who was the subject of a Bollywood film in 2014, won bronze at the London 2012 Olympic Games. She is likely to miss the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as her 48-kg category is not included in the Games roster. —AFP



Mary Kom

Cilic cruises at Kooyong ahead of Grand Slam

MELBOURNE: Last year's Australian Open finalist Marin Cilic rounded off his preparations for this year's edition in style yesterday, winning his second match in as many days at the Kooyong Classic. With the first Grand Slam of the season starting on Monday, every opportunity is important for the Croatian, who went down in a battle to Roger Federer in the Mel-

bourne Park decider in 2018.

The world number seven beat Spain's Fernando Verdasco 6-4, 6-4, backing up his three-set victory a day before over world No. 6 Kevin Anderson. Earlier, American Jack Sock lost to fast-rising Canadian teenager Denis Shapovalov 6-2, 3-6, 10-7 after a final set played as a 10-point tiebreak—the format which will be used at the Australian Open from Monday.

Under the rules, the first player to win at least 10 points by a two-point margin takes the match. Ahead of the Australian Open last year, Sock was at a career-high eighth in the world rankings, but after a horror season he has plunged outside the top 100 and is desperate to turn it around.

His form slump has been dramatic. He played 31 singles matches in 2018, winning a mere nine. "I had some pretty low moments last year, it was horrendous," said Sock. "I did a lot of regrouping in the off-season, talking to family, team members, coaches.

"I'm trying to take a positive outlook. I know the level that I can play the game, where my game should be." With the Australian Open just days away, he is grateful to be out of the spotlight to focus on himself.

"It's nice to be able to fly under the radar and do my own thing," Shapovalov, 19, made up for lost time after losing in the first round at Auckland this week and then crossing the Tasman to squeeze into the Kooyong draw as a late entry. —AFP

India sack hockey coach after WCup exit

NEW DELHI: Hockey India has sacked men's national team coach Harendra Singh after a dismal showing at the Asian Games and their quarter-final exit as hosts in last month's World Cup. The much-fancied Indian senior team had to settle for a bronze at the Asiad in Jakarta last year and were dumped out by the Netherlands in the World Cup in December. Singh blamed poor umpiring in the last-eight 2-1 loss and vented his anger in a post-match news conference but his actions reportedly did not go down well with Indian officials. Hockey India said on Wednesday that the veteran player would now coach the junior team.

It said that the decision was aimed at building a "strong base" ahead of the 2021 Junior World Cup and the 2020 and 2024 Olympics. Singh, earlier the women's team coach, became the men's coach in May to replace Dutchman Sjoerd Marjine after India failed to win a medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. —AFP

Sports

Bucks end Rockets' home win streak, McCollum, Blazers blitz Bulls

Doncic drops 30 to lead Mavericks past Suns

HOUSTON: Giannis Antetokounmpo's tip-in with 39.1 seconds remaining allowed the visiting Milwaukee Bucks to fend off a furious Houston Rockets rally and squeeze out a 116-109 victory on Wednesday. The Bucks, winners of 11 of 13, coughed up most of their 15-point, fourth-quarter lead before Antetokounmpo parlayed his 20th rebound into a six-point lead. Antetokounmpo finished with team highs in points (27) and rebounds (21), including four rebounds on the offensive end. James Harden paced the Houston rally with 42 points, 11 rebounds and six assists. The Rockets had their 10-game home winning streak snapped despite shooting 18 of 48 (37.5 percent) on 3-point attempts. The Bucks dominated the interior, limiting Rockets center Clint Capela to 4-of-16 shooting. Capela totaled 18 points and 13 boards. Gerald Green scored 16 off the Houston bench. Bucks guard Malcolm Brogdon added 24 points on 9-of-12 shooting.

LAKERS 113, PISTONS 100

Second-year forward Kyle Kuzma poured in a career-high 41 points in just 29 minutes as host Los Angeles defeated Detroit to improve to 3-5 without LeBron James (groin). Kuzma posted his previous career high of 38 points against the Houston Rockets last season when he was a rookie. He made 16 of 24 field-goal attempts Wednesday, including 5 of 10 from 3-point range. Michael Beasley had 19 points and four assists off the Los Angeles bench. Blake Griffin had 16 points and six assists for the Pistons, who have lost 15 of their past 19 games.

CELTICS 135, PACERS 108

Marcus Morris and Jaylen Brown scored 22 points apiece as host Boston gradually pulled away from road-weary Indiana. Jayson Tatum was among five other Celtics scoring in double figures with 20 points as Boston completed a four-game sweep at home and extended its home winning streak to six. Playing on the second night in a row and in the fourth game of a five-game trip, the Pacers got a team-high 20 points from Domantas Sabonis, who also grabbed seven rebounds and handed out five assists.

MAVERICKS 104, SUNS 94

Rookie of the Year favorite Luka Doncic scored a game-high 30 points and got the best of No. 1 overall pick Deandre Ayton in leading host Dallas past Phoenix. Doncic, who on Tuesday was listed as probable with a back issue, didn't show any signs of injury. It was the fourth time he has hit the 30-point mark, and he added six rebounds, five assists, three steals and made 10 free throws, just five fewer than the Suns made as a team. Ayton didn't get his lone field goal to fall until he slammed through an alley-oop pass to start the fourth quarter. He finished with six points, five rebounds and five fouls. The Suns were led by T.J. Warren's 20 points and seven rebounds.

WIZARDS 123, 76ERS 106

Bradley Beal scored 34 points and Otto Porter Jr. added 23 off the bench as host Washington earned a split of a home-and-home set after Philadelphia won in a rout on its home court a day earlier. Washington has won four of six. Beal, who shot 13 of 21 from the field, scored 14 straight Wizards points in the fourth quarter. Joel Embiid had 35 points and 14 rebounds for the 76ers, who had won four straight. Philadelphia has dropped nine straight games at Washington. Ben Simmons added 15 points and 10 rebounds while Jimmy Butler scored 23 points.

PELICANS 140, CAVALIERS 124

Anthony Davis scored 38 points and grabbed 13 rebounds as host New Orleans won its third game in a row, beating Cleveland for the second time in five days and sending the Cavaliers to their 11th straight loss overall. Frank Jackson added 19 points for the Pelicans. Jrue Holiday scored 18 and Julius Randle had 17 as did Nikola Mirotic, who was returning from a 12-game absence caused by an ankle injury. Jordan Clarkson came off the bench to lead the Cavaliers with 21 points. Matthew Dellavedova added 17 and Cameron Payne had 16 off the bench as the Cleveland reserves totaled 75 points.

JAZZ 106, MAGIC 93

Donovan Mitchell finished with 33 points and seven assists and Utah rallied from a 21-point, first-half deficit en route to putting away Orlando in Salt Lake City. Joe Ingles had 16 points and seven assists for Utah, which dominated the final 20-plus minutes. Rudy Gobert had 12 points and 14 rebounds, Kyle Korver scored 11 points and Raul Neto had 10. D.J. Augustin scored 23 points for Orlando, which lost the last four games to close a 1-5 road trip. Nikola Vucevic added 20 points and eight rebounds, Aaron Gordon registered 18 points and 10 rebounds, and Terrence Ross had 13 points.

TRAIL BLAZERS 124, BULLS 112

CJ McCollum scored 24 points as host Portland shot 56.6 percent from the field, including 11 of 26 from 3-point range, in sending Chicago to its fifth straight loss. Jusuf Nurkic collected 18 points and eight rebounds, Seth Curry chipped in 17 points, and Damian Lillard contributed 16 points and 10 assists for the Trail Blazers, who won their third straight game. Portland's Zach Collins also had 16 points. Wendell Carter Jr. scored 22 points for the Bulls. Zach LaVine added 18 points, and Kris Dunn and Bobby Portis had 15 apiece for Chicago on the first stop of a five-game road trip.

GRIZZLIES 96, SPURS 86

Marc Gasol scored 26 points and pulled down 14 rebounds as host Memphis took charge in a dreary first half and then held on late to beat San Antonio and snap a six-game losing streak. JaMychal Green added 12 points



HOUSTON: Giannis Antetokounmpo #34 of the Milwaukee Bucks shoots the ball against the Houston Rockets on Wednesday at the Toyota Center in Houston, Texas. — AFP

and 11 rebounds for the Spurs, who entered the game on a season-high, five-game winning streak but never found their stride, losing for just the fourth time in their past 17 contests. Marco Belinelli and Bryn Forbes led the Spurs with 14 points each. The Spurs' 30 field goals and 14 assists were both season lows.

NETS 116, HAWKS 100

D'Angelo Russell scored 23 points as host Brooklyn staged its largest comeback of the season and defeated Atlanta for its 13th win in its last 17 games. Russell

recorded his 19th 20-point game of the season by shooting 11 of 20 from the floor. DeMarre Carroll added 17 points while Spencer Dinwiddie and Joe Harris contributed 16 apiece for the Nets. John Collins posted his 16th double-double by matching a career high with 30 points and grabbing 14 rebounds, but the Hawks shot 36.4 percent overall and 31.8 percent to lose despite taking a 19-point lead. Rookie Trae Young added 17 points, and former Net Jeremy Lin finished with 16 as Atlanta lost for the fifth time in six games. — Reuters

NBA results/standings

Dallas 104, Phoenix 94; Brooklyn 116, Atlanta 100; Portland 124, Chicago 112; Utah 106, Orlando 93; Houston 109, Milwaukee 116; Memphis 96, San Antonio 86; New Orleans 140, Cleveland 124; Boston 135, Indiana 108; Washington 123, Philadelphia 106; Los Angeles Lakers 113, Detroit 100.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Milwaukee	29	11	0.725	—	Denver	27	12	0.692	—
Toronto	31	12	0.721	—	Golden State	27	14	0.659	1
Indiana	27	14	0.659	2.5	Oklahoma City	25	15	0.625	2.5
Philadelphia	27	15	0.643	3	LA Clippers	24	16	0.600	3.5
Boston	25	15	0.625	4	Portland	25	17	0.595	3.5
Brooklyn	21	22	0.488	9.5	Houston	23	17	0.575	4.5
Miami	19	20	0.487	9.5	San Antonio	24	18	0.571	4.5
Charlotte	19	21	0.475	10	LA Lakers	23	19	0.548	5.5
Detroit	17	22	0.436	12	Utah	21	21	0.500	7.5
Orlando	17	24	0.415	12.5	Sacramento	20	21	0.488	8
Washington	17	25	0.405	13	Minnesota	20	21	0.488	8
Atlanta	12	29	0.293	17.5	New Orleans	20	22	0.476	8.5
Chicago	10	31	0.244	19.5	Memphis	19	22	0.463	9
New York	10	31	0.244	19.5	Dallas	19	22	0.463	9
Cleveland	8	34	0.190	22	Phoenix	10	33	0.233	19

Sports

Friday, January 11, 2019

Senators snap skid with overtime win over Ducks

Avalanche can't douse hot Flames

ANAHEIM: In a battle of teams looking to get back on track, Colin White scored 1:34 into overtime as the visiting Ottawa Senators ended their eight-game losing streak Wednesday with a 2-1 victory over the Anaheim Ducks. Senators right winger Mark Stone attacked the Ducks goal and slipped a pass back to White for the game-winner. It was the 11th goal of the season for White. Down 1-0 less than nine minutes into the game, the Senators had few scoring chances until they started to make an offensive push in the third period.

Ottawa finally tied the score 1-1 at 9:23 of the third period. Bobby Ryan cleaned up a loose puck out in front of the Ducks' goal and slid a shot past goaltender John Gibson. It was the eighth of the season for Ryan. Former Senator Jakob Silfverberg scored the lone goal for the Ducks, who saw their losing streak extend to a franchise-worst nine games (0-6-3). The Ducks have not won since Dec. 17, when they picked up a 4-2 victory at Pittsburgh. Their past five consecutive defeats have all come at home.

Despite the loss, Gibson continued to do the heavy lifting for his team, making 28 saves. He entered as one of the top goalies in the NHL with a .923 save percentage. Silfverberg's 11th goal of the season came just 8:52 into the first period. Defenseman Brandon Montour carried the puck into the Senators' zone and broke down the defense before he passed back to Silfverberg at the top of the right circle. Silfverberg's blast beat Senators goaltender Anders

Nilsson to the glove side. Ducks center Ryan Getzlaf saw his career-worst streak without a point reach eight games. He has nine goals and 20 assists this season.

Nilsson was playing in his third game for the Senators and making his second start. The 28-year-old Swede, who was acquired from the Vancouver Canucks on Jan. 2, made 32 saves in his first victory with his new team. The Senators were without center Matt Duchene, who remained in Ottawa for the birth of his first child and is not expected to play in any of the team's three games in California this week. Duchene ranks second on the Senators with 18 goals and 42 points.

PREDATORS 4, BLACKHAWKS 3 (OT)

Filip Forsberg scored twice, including the game-winner one minute into overtime, leading Nashville to a victory at Chicago. Pekka Rinne stopped 28 shots, Viktor Arvidsson scored his fifth goal in six games, and Colton Sissons also had a goal for the Predators, who improved to 3-0-1 on their season-high, six-game road trip. Artem Anisimov forced overtime for the Blackhawks with 2:21 left in regulation, scoring from the slot on a pass from Patrick Kane. Alex DeBrincat and Jonathan Toews had Chicago's other goals.

FLAMES 5, AVALANCHE 3

David Rittich provided a sensational 32-save performance, five different Calgary players



ANAHEIM: Ryan Getzlaf #15, Brandon Montour #26 and John Gibson #36 of the Anaheim Ducks are unable to stop a goal scored by Colin White #36 as Mark Stone #61 of the Ottawa Senators reacts during the overtime period of a game at Honda Center on Wednesday in Anaheim, California. — AFP

found the net, and Mark Giordano netted three assists as the host Flames defeated Colorado. Johnny Gaudreau collected two assists to give him 15 points in a six-game point streak for the

Flames, who are atop the Western Conference thanks to a three-game winning streak and a 6-1-1 roll. Colorado has just one victory in its last nine games (1-6-2). — Reuters

South Africa name new cap van der Dussen in ODI squad

JOHANNESBURG: Batsman Rassie van der Dussen is a new cap in South Africa's 14-man squad named yesterday for the first two one-day internationals against Pakistan, starting on January 19. Van der Dussen, 29, has featured for the South African Twenty20 international team and was the leading scorer in the recent Mzansi Super League T20 tournament.

Five one-day internationals against Pakistan and five more against Sri Lanka are South Africa's final one-day engagements before the Cricket World Cup in England and Wales that starts on May 30.

Coach Ottis Gibson indicated earlier in the season that he would like the Pakistan and Sri Lanka matches to be effectively a warm-up for the World Cup squad but selection convener Linda Zondi said on Thursday there was still a degree of experimentation. "We need to look at all the options available to us as we get closer to selecting our final squad for the World Cup," said Zondi. He said Van der



Rassie van der Dussen

Dussen and fast bowler Dane Paterson, recalled to the one-day squad for the first time since 2017, were two players who have been "knocking strongly on the door in all formats".

Zondi said other players could get opportunities in the last three matches against Pakistan. Batsman JP Duminy and fast bowler Lungi Ngidi were not considered because of injury.

South African squad: Faf du Plessis (captain), Hashim Amla, Quinton de Kock (wkt), Reeza Hendricks, Imran Tahir, Heinrich Klaasen (wkt), David Miller, Dane Paterson, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Dale Steyn, Rassie van der Dussen. — AFP

Sick Mitch Marsh out of India ODI

SYDNEY: Australia yesterday drafted Perth Scorchers batsman Ashton Turner as cover for Mitchell Marsh who was ruled out of the first one-day international against India in Sydney with a gastro bug.

All-rounder Marsh has spent two days in hospital with his availability for the other two games in the series-in Adelaide and Melbourne-under a cloud. "We'll see how

he goes, but he certainly won't (play) this first game and we will wait and see how he recovers," said coach Justin Langer ahead of the opening clash on Saturday.

It is another blow for Marsh who on Wednesday was axed from the Test squad to play Sri Lanka, along with his brother Shaun. Turner, who plays state cricket with Western Australia and for the Scorchers in Twenty20, has scored 43 not out, 47 and 60 not out in his past three Big Bash League matches.

Revised squad: Aaron Finch (capt), Usman Khawaja, Shaun Marsh, Peter Handscomb, Glenn Maxwell, Ashton Turner, Marcus Stoinis, Mitch Marsh, Alex Carey, Jhye Richardson, Billy Stanlake, Jason Behrendorff, Peter Siddle, Nathan Lyon, Adam Zampa. — AFP



Mitchell Marsh

Sports

PSG stunned in League Cup quarters by struggling Guingamp

Monaco goalkeeper scores winning penalty in marathon shootout

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain saw their 43-match winning run in domestic cup competitions come to an end as Thomas Tuchel's men suffered a shock 2-1 home defeat by Ligue 1 bottom club Guingamp in the French League Cup quarter-finals on Wednesday. The visitors were awarded three penalties at the Parc des Princes in a dramatic second half, as PSG failed in their bid for a sixth straight League Cup title. It was only a second defeat in all competitions this season for the capital club, after a 3-2 loss to Liverpool at Anfield in the Champions League last September.

Guingamp, who have won just two league games all season, join Monaco, Strasbourg and Bordeaux in the semi-finals. "We came here to win and we know it's very difficult here," said Marcus Thuram, the son of 1998 World Cup winner Lilian Thuram, who scored the winner.

"We know that in the Cup anything can happen... We knew how to hinder PSG," Neymar broke the deadlock in the 63rd minute after Thuram missed from the spot, but Guingamp rallied, with Thuram's successful injury-time penalty snatching victory with a shootout looming.

"We played with too much confidence, we were not hungry enough to finish the match," admitted PSG coach Thomas Tuchel. "It's very hard to lose with three penalties. I was angry with the second one, I can see the VAR 100 times, it's not a penalty." Tuchel named a strong starting XI including Kylian Mbappe, Neymar and Angel Di Maria, but a drab first half in the capital failed to produce a single shot on target from either side. The reigning French champions had extended their cup winning streak at the weekend against fifth-tier Pontivy, but Guingamp were awarded a

penalty on the hour mark when Ludovic Blas was tripped by PSG full-back Thomas Meunier.

Forward Thuram blazed his effort from 12 yards well over the top of the crossbar, and it appeared as though the opportunity of an upset had passed Guingamp by when Neymar headed home a Meunier cross less than two minutes later. But the away side managed to stay in the game and were handed another penalty nine minutes from time when Marcus Coco was bundled over by Juan Bernat, and Congolese international Yeni Ngbakoto made no mistake after a lengthy VAR delay. With the game set for penalties after 90 minutes, Guingamp landed a decisive blow on the counter-attack, as Thilo Kehrer fouled Thuram, and this time the 21-year-old squeezed the ball under the diving Alphonse Areola in the PSG net.

Earlier on Wednesday, Monaco goalkeeper Loic Badiashile scored the winning penalty in a marathon shootout against Rennes. Monaco, runners-up in the past two seasons, salvaged a 1-1 draw after normal time thanks to Rony Lopes' second-half equaliser, before Badiashile's heroics as he also saved three spot-kicks.

Thierry Henry's young team are floundering in Ligue 1, sitting second-bottom and five points from safety, but managed to keep their coach's hopes of a first trophy alive at the Stade Louis II. "That's exactly how we want to play," said the former Arsenal and France striker. "Sometimes we heard the crowd were unhappy, but we got the ball back on the ground and we played. 'Finally we reacted after conceding a goal. Before we didn't know how to do it. This time, we did.'"

Monaco were the better side for the majority of an uneventful first half, with Moussa Sylla twice



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Italian midfielder Marco Verratti (L) falls next to Guingamp's French defender Christophe Kerbrat (R) during the French League Cup quarter-final football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Guingamp (EAG) on Wednesday, at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. — AFP

going close, but went into the break a goal down after Benjamin Bourigeaud swept Rennes ahead on the half-hour mark after a clever pass from Hatem Ben Arfa. Henry was grateful to have Lopes back in the starting line-up for the first time since September 2 after a thigh injury, and the Portuguese forward

tapped in Julien Serrano's low cross to level in the 54th minute. Kamil Glik and new signing Naldo both missed chances to win the tie for Monaco on penalties, but 20-year-old Badiashile slotted home the 22nd spot-kick to send them through after Rennes' keeper Tomas Koubek had blazed over. — AFP

Sven's 'street dogs' put Philippines on Asian Cup map

ABU DHABI: They may not be able to bend it quite like David Beckham, but Sven-Goran Eriksson's Philippines have made an instant impact in their first appearance at the Asian Cup. Ranked a lowly 116th in the world, the Azkals (street dogs) bared their teeth against South Korea in Abu Dhabi this week, giving the favourites a real fright before eventually losing 1-0 — a far cry from the hammering many had predicted.

"It's a different challenge," Eriksson told AFP in an interview yesterday. "The Philippines is unfortunately not a football country-basketball is more popular. But if this generation of players can do well at the Asian Cup, they can change that." Eriksson took charge of the Philippines last November on a short-term contract until the end of the Asian Cup. And the Swede is relishing the slower pace after a glittering coaching career that included spells at Lazio, Manchester City and, most famously, five years in the England hot seat from 2001 to 2006.

"Here it's much more quiet," smiled the 70-year-old. "If you travel around the world with David Beckham it's total chaos everywhere you go."

"I was amazed how he could focus on the football," added Eriksson, who was hounded by media and had his private life splashed across the tabloids during his time as England boss.

"None of my players have even played at an Asian Cup, but they're professional, they fight-like England or Lazio or whoever it is." A team mostly cherry-picked from overseas, the players who started against South Korea all had at least one non-Filipino parent, sparking renewed debate in the country over ethnicity after Filipino-Australian model Catriona Gray was crowned Miss Universe last month.

"I'm very proud of them," insisted Eriksson, who steered the Philippines to the knockout stages of the southeast Asian championships in his first assignment. "They stood up to a very good Korean team. I'm very curious to see if we can do it again tomorrow." Bustling forward Javier Patino could prove a thorn in China's side today in a match which sees Eriksson lock horns with his old foe Marcello Lippi. But there will be more on the line than three points.

"I think I've met Lippi in Italy and China 20 times maybe," said Eriksson, who spent four years in Chinese club football from 2013 to 2017. "When I was at Sampdoria and Lazio, he had Inter (Milan), Juventus and Napoli-Italian Cup finals, so many games-and we are friends still."

"I will take my usual best with him," added the Swede. "Whoever loses has to buy dinner and a very good red wine." Eriksson turned down jobs with Cameroon and Iraq to coach the Philippines but whatever the result against China and fellow Asian Cup first-timers Kyrgyzstan next week, he has no regrets.

"I like the people, I like the players," he said. "We are more like a team today than we were a month ago." Asked about his future, Eriksson suggested whimsically he could end his career where it began as a player-at amateur side Torsby.

"I'll always have my local team in Sweden-it's a village team," he said. "But I don't have any plans-and at my age in football, it's better not to have plans." —AFP

Real return United pay compensation to Mourinho

LONDON: Jose Mourinho is available for a dramatic return to Real Madrid after Manchester United paid him a reported £15 million (\$19 million) in compensation following his sacking last month, according to British media yesterday.

The Daily Mail reports that a source close to Mourinho-whose contract was due to run till the end of the 2019/20 campaign with the option of an extra season-has revealed that compensation has been paid.

"There are no issues over Jose's contract with Manchester United. Everything has been sorted," the newspaper reports the source as saying. "Jose is able to take on another job right now, but is in no rush."

"He is very relaxed about it and would be happy to wait until the end of the season if he needs to." The Sun reports that United agreed to the payment after his disappointing two-and-a-half-year stint at Old Trafford following a meeting between Mourinho's agent Jorge Mendes and United executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward. The pay-out leaves the 55-year-old Portuguese free to be considered for Madrid if the club decide to dismiss under-pressure coach Santiago Solari. — AFP

Jordan tame Syria to reach Asian Cup knockouts

‘Messi Jay’ stunner puts Thailand back on track

AL-AIN: Jordan won a bruising derby with Syria 2-0 to become the first team to reach the Asian Cup knockouts yesterday, while talisman Chanathip “Messi Jay” Songkrasin hauled crisis-hit Thailand back on track.

In a rowdy atmosphere at a packed Khalifa Bin Zayed Stadium, first-half goals from Mousa Mohammad Suleiman and Tareq Khattab gave Jordan a maximum six points in Group B with one game to go against Palestine.

Vital Borkelmans’ team, who stunned defending champions Australia in their first game, could soon be joined in the last 16 by surprise package India, who face hosts UAE later in Group A.

In a febrile atmosphere at Al Ain’s Khalifa Bin Zayed Stadium, Jordan slowly asserted dominance and could have scored when Suleiman’s mazy run prised open Syria’s defence, but Yousef Rawshdeh’s shot sailed over.

But on 26 minutes, after a break down the left, the two combined again when Suleiman stabbed home Rawshdeh’s shot from close range, triggering deafening celebrations.

Tareq Khattab doubled Jordan’s lead two minutes from half-time, when he bundled past Syrian captain Omar Al-Soma to nod in a corner in at the near post.

Syria’s Omar Khrbin came close twice after the break, once when his free header cleared the

bar and again when he unleashed a shot which went just wide.

Temper flared when Jehad Al-Baour pulled back Suleiman during play and a shoving match developed on the touchline, egged on by the crowd.

Saeed Al-Murjan’s lunge to get on the end of a free kick was somehow kept out by Syrian ‘keeper Ibrahim Alma but the job was already done for Jordan, who celebrated joyously with their fans at the final whistle.

Earlier, bleach-blond Chanathip fired Thailand to only a second Asian Cup win in their history as they beat Bahrain 1-0 to reignite their campaign.

The Consadole Sapporo midfielder’s second-half strike was enough for the Thais, who sacked their coach Milovan Rajevac after opening with a shock 4-1 loss to India.

Thailand had no shots on target as Bahrain controlled the first half, with Mohamed Jasim Marhoon and Sayed Dhiya Saeed coming closest as they forced goalkeeper Chatchai Bootprom into a sharp double save.

But Chanathip, whose fans compare him to Lionel Messi, seized victory for the War Elephants near the hour-mark with a superbly struck first-time shot that rocketed past Sayed Shubbar Alawi in the Bahrain goal. — AFP



AL AIN: Syria’s midfielder Youssef Kalfa (L) attempts a shot as he is marked by Jordan’s defender Feras Shilbaya (R) during the 2019 AFC Asian Cup group B football match between Jordan and Syria at the Khalifa bin Zayed stadium in al-Ain yesterday. — AFP

FA reach settlement with ex-England women’s manager

LONDON: The English Football Association (FA) has reached a settlement with former women’s national soccer team manager Mark Sampson. The FA sacked Sampson in September 2017 as a consequence of “inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour” in a previous position, and the 36-year-old brought a case of unfair dismissal against the governing body that was due to be heard this week.

“We can confirm that a confidential settlement has been entered into between the FA and Mark Sampson to bring the dispute around the termination of his employment to an agreed close,” the FA said in a statement. “We will not be commenting further on the matter.” Sampson, who took the England job in December 2013, was sacked one day after the team beat Russia 6-0 in a World Cup qualifier. At the time of his dismissal, the FA said it had been made aware of a full report of an investigation into allegations of safeguarding made against Sampson in 2014, relating to his time at top-flight side Bristol Academy.

The safeguarding assessment was that Sampson did not pose a risk working in the game, but the FA judged the full report of the investigation to have revealed “clear evidence of inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour by a coach”.

Before his contract was terminated, Sampson was investigated and subsequently cleared after being accused of discrimination and bullying by two England players, Eniola Aluko and Drew Spence. Former Manchester United defender Phil Neville replaced Sampson as England women’s head coach in January last year. — Reuters

Jesus hits four as City crush Burton 9-0 in League Cup semi-final

MANCHESTER: Gabriel Jesus scored four as defending champions Manchester City destroyed third tier Burton Albion 9-0 in their League Cup semi-final first leg, a record margin of victory in the competition’s last four.

League One Burton, managed by Nigel Clough, the son of former Nottingham Forest boss Brian, must endure another 90 minutes at their own ground on Jan. 23 before City formally book their place in the final. Hundreds of Burton fans arrived late after their buses were stuck in motorway delays and after this mauling, they might well wish they had turned around and gone home.

City, who beat Championship (second tier) side Rotherham United 7-0 on Sunday, are set to face the winners of the other semi-final between Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur, which Spurs lead 1-0 from the first-leg.

Manager Pep Guardiola fielded a strong starting line-up and City quickly established their dominance with Kevin De Bruyne steering in a header from an excellent lofted ball from David Silva to open the scoring in the fifth minute. Burton should have drawn level in the 12th minute but Marcus Myers-Harness wasted a glorious chance, shooting wastefully wide when left unmarked at the back post. From then on it was a painful night of damage limitation for the team from the Midlands.

Jesus opened his account on the half hour, heading in from close range after Leroy Sane’s shot had been blocked by keeper Bradley Collins, with the ball popping up invitingly for the Brazilian. Four minutes later, Jesus made it 3-0 with a low drive that



MANCHESTER: Manchester City’s English midfielder Phil Foden (R) prepares to score from a rebound during the League Cup first leg semi-final football match between Manchester City and Burton Albion at the Etihad stadium in Manchester, northwest England on Wednesday. — AFP

went in off the post and then Ukrainian Oleksandr Zinchenko added the fourth, lobbing Collins with a lofted shot from nearly 30 metres out. Jesus completed his hat-trick in the 57th minute with a header from a Riyad Mahrez cross before substitute Phil Foden made it 6-0 in the 62nd-slotting home after Collins had blocked a Jesus shot. The seventh-and Jesus’s fourth – was a clever flick from close-range after Sane had once again burst into the area on the left flank.

Burton were completely unable to defend that part of the field and even with Sane subbed off, Mahrez broke into that area and his low cross was turned in by Kyle Walker to make it 8-0. Mahrez poked in the ninth after good work from substitute Bernardo Silva and that was all for City despite the crowd urging them to push for a 10th goal. City’s record victory was a 12-0 FA Cup win over Liverpool Stanley in 1890. The Blues beat Huddersfield Town 10-1 in the old Division Two in 1987. — Reuters

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SYDNEY: Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic hits a return to Angelique Kerber of Germany during their women's singles quarter-final match at the Sydney International tennis tournament in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

Petra Kvitova blasts past Kerber into Sydney International semis

See Page 42