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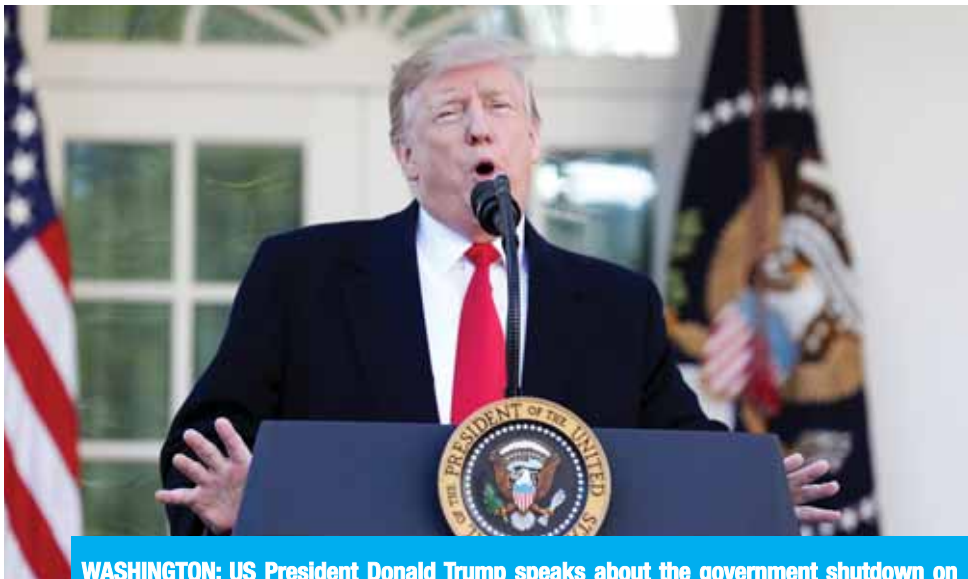
Guterres, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled discuss challenges facing the region

Trump retreats in wall showdown, ends shutdown

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Friday brought a temporary end to the longest government shutdown in US history, while dropping his previous insistence on immediate funding for wall construction along the Mexican border. The announcement in the White House Rose Garden on the bipartisan deal marked a retreat by Trump, suspending a row that paralyzed Washington, disrupted air travel, and left more than 800,000 federal employees without pay for five weeks.

The top Democratic senator, Chuck Schumer, said he hoped Trump had "learned his lesson". The Senate and House of Representatives both passed the deal by unanimous consent Friday. The White House later confirmed Trump had signed it into law. Trump's reversal came as the full weight of the shutdown, including the financial cost on struggling employees and the national economy, became clear, and as the president appeared outfoxed by his political nemesis Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic speaker of the House of Representatives.

But while Trump climbed down in agreeing to reopen government without first getting \$5.7 billion in border wall funds, he still threatened to renew hostilities with a new shutdown, or a state of emergency, if there is no breakthrough on his pet project in the next three weeks. "Over the next 21 days, I expect that both Democrats and Republicans will operate in good faith," he said as he announced he would reopen the government. "If we don't get a fair deal from Congress, the government either shuts down on



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump speaks about the government shutdown on Friday from the Rose Garden of the White House. — AFP

February 15th again, or I will use the powers afforded to me under the laws and Constitution of the United States to address this emergency," he warned. "We really have no choice but to build a powerful wall or steel barrier." S&P Global Ratings said late Friday that the shutdown cost "is likely worse than what we had previously expected." Based on their analysis, "the US economy lost at least \$6 billion ... larger than the \$5.7 billion that the White House requested for the border wall," it said in a statement.

Trump triggered the shutdown in December to pressure congressional

Democrats to give him funding for the border wall. But the House Democrats calculated that voters would blame Trump for the ensuing chaos - and polls showed they were correct. Federal workers as varied as museum employees and US Coast Guard sailors were left without salaries. Even Secret Service agents guarding the White House have been working without pay.

By Friday the shutdown impact was focused on airports, where enough federally employed security staff had called in sick to slow down overall operations.

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NEW YORK: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. — KUNA

NEW YORK: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres praised Friday Kuwait's leading role at the international level, including its regional and global efforts to promote security and peace around the world. Guterres made the remarks during a meeting with Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah in New York on sidelines of the UN Security Council's meetings.

He commended the close relationship and cooperation between Kuwait and the UN agencies, which represented a "model of constructive and effective collaboration in different domains". The

two senior officials discussed cooperation between Kuwait and UN agencies as Kuwait is entering its second year as a non-permanent member in the UNSC.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Guterres also discussed challenges facing the region, in addition to regional and international issues of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Minister's Office Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah, Kuwait Representative to the UN Mansour Al-Otaibi and Assistant Foreign Minister for International Organizations Affairs Nasser Al-Hayyen. — KUNA

News in brief

Tunisia, Russia call to readmit Syria

TUNIS: Syria's "natural place" is within the Arab League, Tunisia's foreign minister said yesterday, ahead of the organization's annual summit in Tunis in March. "Syria is an Arab state, and its natural place is within the Arab League," Khemaies Jhinaoui said during a news conference with his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. Lavrov backed overtures to readmit Syria. "As we have discussed in Algeria and Morocco over the past few days, we would like Tunis to also support Syria's return to the Arab family, the Arab League," he said. — AFP

Foreign troops to quit Afghanistan

KABUL/PESHAWAR: Taliban officials said US negotiators yesterday agreed a draft peace deal stipulating the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan within 18 months of the agreement being signed. The details were given to Reuters by Taliban sources at the end of six days of talks with US special peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad in Qatar aimed at ending the United States' longest war. "Meetings here were more productive than they have been in the past. We made significant progress on vital issues," Khalilzad wrote on Twitter yesterday. — Agencies

Malaysia scraps China-backed project

KUALA LUMPUR: A multibillion dollar China-backed rail project in Malaysia has been scrapped, government officials said yesterday, adding that the cost of building it was too high. Malaysia has in recent months suspended several major projects signed under the country's previous scandal-plagued regime, in a bid to cut the country's massive one trillion ringgit (\$251 billion) debt. Economics minister Azmin Ali said Malaysia made the decision two days ago on the 81 billion ringgit (\$19.6 billion) east coast rail link (ECRL) that would have connected the eastern and western coasts of the peninsula. He said that if the project was not terminated, Malaysia would have to pay an annual 500 million ringgit interest payment. — AFP

300 missing, many feared dead in Brazil dam collapse

BRUMADINHO, Brazil: Nearly 300 people were missing, many feared dead, yesterday after a dam collapsed at a mine in southeastern Brazil, according to officials and the mine owner, corporate giant Vale. Emergency services said they had recovered nine bodies from the massive muddy mess left by the disaster, which struck Friday at the Vale mine in Brumadinho, near the city of Belo

Horizonte in Minas Gerais state.

Dozens of helicopters were being used in the operation because the massive gush of mud released by the dam had engulfed buildings, vehicles and roads with thick, treacherous sludge. The state fire service leading the efforts said the latest count was 299 people missing, all of them mine workers listed by Vale.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro flew over the devastated zone, but said nothing to reporters in Belo Horizonte when he returned from the flight. He instead took to Twitter to say it was "difficult to not be emotional before this scene." All was being done to care for survivors and "determine the facts, to demand justice and prevent new tragedies," he added.

The military said it was mobilizing 1,000 troops, including sniffer dogs, to

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BRUMADINHO, Brazil: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro overflies the mud-hit area in Corrego do Feijao yesterday, a day after the collapse of a dam at an iron-ore mine. — AFP

US calls to 'stand with freedom' in Venezuela as EU gives ultimatum

UNITED NATIONS: The United States pressed all nations yesterday to "stand with the forces of freedom" in Venezuela, encouraged by a tougher European line as Russia stood in the minority in backing embattled leader Nicolas Maduro. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made a forceful case at a special session of the United Nations Security Council, where he described Maduro as part of an "illegitimate mafia state" responsible for Venezuela's economic collapse.

With mounting protests over Venezuela's crisis in which more than two million have fled shortages of basic food and medicine, Pompeo asked all nations to follow the US in recognizing opposition leader Juan Guaido as the interim president. "Now it is time for every other nation to pick a side. No more delays, no more games. Either you stand with the forces of freedom, or you're in league with Maduro and his mayhem," Pompeo said.

Pompeo denounced Russia and China, which have stood by Maduro, saying that they were motivated not



NEW YORK: Venezuelans demonstrate in front of the United Nations yesterday. — AFP

by principle but raw financial interest. "China and Russia are propping up a failed regime in the hopes of recovering billions of dollars in ill-considered investments and assistance made over the years," Pompeo said. Russia has denounced the United States for interference and attempted to block the Security Council meeting, but it was voted down with nine of the 15 members agreeing to go forward.

"Venezuela does not pose any threat to peace and security. The intention of the United States is to orchestrate a coup d'etat," said the Russian ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia.

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Pak eases visa rules to 'heaven for tourists'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has loosened travel restrictions in the hope of reviving tourism by offering visas on arrival to visitors from 50 countries and electronic visas to 175 nationalities, the government said on Friday. The reforms, approved by the cabinet, would open up a new era for the tourism industry, which was devastated by Islamist violence after the Sept 11, 2001, attacks in the United States, Minister of Information Fawad Chaudhry said.

"We have mountain tourism, we have beach tourism," Chaudhry told reporters in Islamabad, referring to Himalayan peaks and Arabian Sea beaches seldom visited by foreigners. "Pakistan is a heaven for tourists," Chaudhry did not identify the countries that would benefit from the new rules but in December, he told Reuters that citizens of most European countries would be granted a visa on arrival.

Tourists would also be allowed to visit the politically sensitive Himalayan region of Kashmir and other northern areas, which now require special permission. The new rules would also ease travel restrictions on foreign journalists, Chaudhry said.

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Local

World shares common obligations to address climate change: Kuwait

Supporting Mideast women's role requires regional, int'l collaboration: FM

NEW YORK: Kuwait said Friday that the world shares common but variable obligations to address climate change, which required a political will and an international solidarity to tackle impacts of this change. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah called for protecting earth from further deterioration of climate change. Speaking in a UN Security Council's session on addressing impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said studies showed deterioration was faster than 'our steps to protect and preserve environment.' "We can see negative impacts of climate change by our own eyes, from which millions of people suffer ... like lack of food security, scarcity of water and other risks on health of humans and other living creatures," he said.

Floods, hurricanes, desertification, rising temperature, and rising levels of seas and oceans were threatening Island Countries in the Pacific, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said. He added that international efforts contributed to the 2015 agreement in Paris on climate change, but the world needed to do more in order to maintain this accord in order to keep temperature of earth before two or 1.5 degrees Celsius by 2020.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, who voiced concern over World Meteorological Organization's reports that years 2015-17 witnessed unprecedented high temperatures, expressed hope world climate summit, due next September, would follow up outcome of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's (UNFCCC) meeting held in Poland late last year. The UNFCCC member countries agreed to boost transparency in information sharing over plans regarding reduction of emissions, increasing support for developing countries to help them overcome climate change's impacts as well as implementing the Paris agreement, which would enter force in 2020. The natural disasters, stemming from climate change, continued to grow in intensity and accounted for 77 percent of the overall natural disasters in the last two decades, the minister said, citing UN estimates.

"The international community faces formidable challenges in responding to the emergencies caused by

these disasters, which claim more than three million lives a year in addition to countless wounded and displaced people," he said. "Africa, particularly the Lake Chad Basin region and the Sahel region, took the brunt of the phenomenon of climate change which exacerbated the economic and social problems in the continent and fueled armed conflicts and struggle for the limited natural resources," he explained.

The State of Kuwait shares the global concern over this phenomenon and joins the efforts of the international community to curb this problem. "Since the launch of the climate change talks, we have spared no effort to contribute to mitigating the impacts of climate change on the local, regional or international scales. We

or man-made disasters. In doing so, Kuwait continues to shoulder its international humanitarian responsibility for alleviating the impacts of climate changes on social peace, food security, biodiversity, sustainable development, he went on.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled highlighted the need to leverage modern technologies of environment protection and change the human behavior in order to realize the 13th Sustainable Development Goal that is 'take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.' Concluding, the minister renewed Kuwait's resolve to prioritize contributing to the international collective efforts in this regard, through backing the UN agencies concerned with conflict prevention, crisis management, peace building, climate change curbing, and realizing the SDGs.



NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah speaks at a United Nations Security Council meeting, addressing the impacts of climate-related disasters on international peace and security, on Friday at the United Nations in New York. —AFP

Women's role

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said that support for the role of women in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region requires international collaboration. Speaking at a UN Security Council session on the potential of national action plans for advancing Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda in the MENA region in New York late Thursday, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said that the session is vital and underlines UNSC's - in addition to GCC, Arab League and IOC - keenness and awareness of women's 'pivotal' role, especially in relation to resolution 1325.

The resolution acknowledges the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It calls for the adoption of a gender perspective to consider the special needs of women and girls during conflict, repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration, and post-conflict reconstruction. Shedding light on the matter, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled branded as 'genuine' women partnership in achieving stability, safety and advancement on political, economic and social scales. In this vein, he pointed to Kuwait's commitment to fulfill international requirements to provide women with the equal and decent living standards enjoyed by men.



Strategies adopted to reduce emissions

attached great importance to the negotiating process, which led to the historic Paris Agreement. The State of Kuwait prioritized the initiatives to tap into the resources of renewable energy, including the solar and wind energies, which are expected to cover 15 percent of the country's needs by 2020," Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled revealed.

Similarly, the oil sector has adopted strategies to reduce carbon dioxide gas emissions with a view to attaining green economy and maximizing use of environment-friendly energy, he went on. The State of Kuwait works for deeper cooperation and collective action with other countries of the world on the government and popular levels to ensure effective and timely response to emergencies and help people hit by natural

Kuwaiti charity sends winter aid for 100,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey

ANKARA: Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society on Friday dispatched 33 trucks carrying humanitarian aid intended to help 100,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey cope with the harsh winter conditions. The Kuwaiti-based charity, this time around, has decided to double its aid intended for



ANKARA: A caravan carrying Kuwaiti charity sent for 100,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey. —KUNA

the refugees, worth a total \$500,000, its head Jamal Al-Nouri told reporters. It includes food baskets, clothing, medicine, heaters, blankets, fuel and coal. Nouri regards the initiative an extension of Kuwait's noble stances in supporting global humanitarian efforts and easing the suffering of desolate people, who lack the most basic needs for survival. He praised the generosity of people in Kuwait over the years, whose donations made it possible for the charity to continue assuming its role. "While we have been blessed with the warmth of our homes and the security of our nations we should never forget those who have lost their shelter after being forcefully banished from their homes," he said. "They are in urgent need of somebody to stand by them and partly ease their suffering." —KUNA

FM attends working luncheon on Syria



NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attends working luncheon on Syria. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah accepted an invitation from his Belgian counterpart Didier Reynders for a working luncheon in New York on Friday. During the event, which gathered also German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and George Khoury - director of the OCHA Regional

Office for Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA), the participants debated the latest developments of the situation in Syria. They reviewed the international efforts to address the humanitarian disaster and alleviate the suffering of the brotherly people of Syria, according to a press release from the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry. —KUNA

Kuwaiti, Yemeni FM's mull latest developments

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met Yemeni Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Yamani on Friday on the sidelines of the UN Security Council meetings in New York. During the meeting, the two ministers discussed the latest developments in Yemen as well as the international efforts to find a political solution to the crisis there and alleviating the suffering of Yemeni people. They also reviewed the latest regional and international developments of common interest. Kuwait's top diplomat Sheikh Sabah Khaled reiterated Kuwait's firm and principled supportive stance to Yemen and its people. He vowed that Kuwait, through its non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council, would spare no efforts to put an end to the suffering of Yemeni people. Meanwhile, the Yemeni minister expressed his country's gratitude to Kuwait for its support at all levels, particularly to tackle the humanitarian situation there. He added that Yemen was also appreciative of Kuwait's role and efforts within the framework of the UN Security Council to help restore its security and stability.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also met with his Belgian counterpart Didier Reynders on the sidelines of the UN Security Council meetings in New York. During their meeting, the two ministers deliberated buttressing bilateral relations and latest regional and international developments of common concern.



NEW YORK: Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Yemeni Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Yamani. —KUNA

They also mulled coordinating stances and efforts at the UN Security Council during their non-permanent membership at the UN body in 2019. In the meantime, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met with Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Peter Szijjarto on the sidelines of the UN Security Council meetings in New York. During their meeting, the two ministers mulled upgrading bilateral relations at all levels. They also tackled latest regional and international developments of common concern.



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with his Belgian counterpart Didier Reynders.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled had met on Thursday with Foreign Minister of Indonesia Retno Marsudi to discuss the friendly relations in various areas. The meeting focused on the similarities of the views of both countries on agenda topics of the current session of Council, particularly those relating to the Muslim world. Both sides explored ways to maximize collaboration on a range of regional and international issues during the two countries' current non-permanent membership in the Council. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled and Marsudi



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Peter Szijjarto.

exchanged views on the latest developments of the situations in the Middle East and the world at large. Also on Thursday, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met with Maldives' Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid, and they discussed ways to boost and enhance bilateral relationship in various fields. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled reviewed with his Maldivian counterpart recent situation developments on regional and international levels. The two top officials also discussed a number of issues of joint interest. —KUNA

Local

Zain platinum sponsor of Mirzaam Expo, Kuwait's biggest interior design event

Company showcased Zain Smart Home featuring latest innovative solutions

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading digital service provider in Kuwait, announced its platinum sponsorship of Mirzaam Expo, Kuwait's biggest interior design event held from 24 - 26 January at Kuwait International Fair in Mishref. The expo, considered the biggest and most prominent of its kind in Kuwait, specializes in the areas of interior design, decoration, and home essentials.

The expo's opening ceremony witnessed the attendance of Zain Group's Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi, interior designer and expo organizer Farah Al-Humaidhi, as well as Zain's team and the event's organizing committee.

Zain's platinum sponsorship of the expo came as part of its commitment towards supporting and encouraging initiatives and projects that contribute to developing creativity and enriching innovation in all areas, including the fields of interior design and decoration. The company, being a leading digital service provider in Kuwait and the region, is also keen on showcasing the latest advancements of the smart homes sector, which witnesses great technological developments worldwide.

Zain participated in Mirzaam Expo through its own dedicated booth titled 'Zain Smart Home.' The booth, designed as a miniature house, featured the latest innovative solutions Zain offers through its Zain LIFE smart home portfolio, which includes a number of the latest and most advanced smart home and security devices. The devices, designed to provide a unique home security experience, include several surveillance solutions that monitor the home and notify the user as soon as any unusual activity inside the home is identified, as well as other devices for detecting smoke, measuring temperature, controlling electrical appliances and lights, and more.



Supporting initiatives that develop creativity

Mirzaam Expo is considered the biggest and most prominent event of its kind in Kuwait, specializing in the areas of interior design, decoration, and home essentials. The event gathered decoration experts, designers, suppliers, professional contractors, and other specialists that meet the highest international standards with the aim of offering all services and needs related to designing and decorating homes, offices, commercial projects, and more. The event also features many panel discussions, seminars, and other programs that reveal the secrets of the art of interior design and discuss the latest decoration trends.

Zain's showcasing of Zain LIFE's portfolio of innovative solutions at Mirzaam Expo came in line with its strategy to continue its transformation into an integrated digital lifestyle provider, which is centered around digital transformation leadership and empowering the community to enjoy a smarter portable lifestyle, as well as using advanced technology solutions to enable an easier and more flexible life.

The smart homes sector is one of the main elements of the digital transformation journey undertaken by telecoms around the world, particularly with respect to securing homes and protecting them against theft with the use of modern technology. Zain is working on designing new plans to match these transformation processes to be included in Zain LIFE in addition to its existing portfolio of smart solutions.

Zain always aspires to new levels of excellence in all the services it offers to its customers. Through the showcasing of these innovative solutions, Zain affirms its continuous efforts in meeting its customers' needs and aspirations, and deliver its promise to offering the best services and latest technologies.



KUWAIT: Zain Group's Vice Chairman and Group CEO Bader Al-Kharafi, interior designer and expo organizer Farah Al-Humaidhi and Zain's team at the company's booth.

Indian Embassy celebrates 70th Republic Day



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador to Kuwait K Jeeva Sagar delivers a speech during the embassy's celebration of India's 70th Republic Day yesterday. —Photos by Sajeev K Peter

By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: Indian Embassy in Kuwait yesterday celebrated India's 70th Republic Day at the embassy premises. At a colorful open-air ceremony, Indian Ambassador K Jeeva Sagar hoisted the national flag in the presence of embassy officials and a large crowd of Indian nationals who gathered at the embassy to celebrate the remarkable day in India's history.

A cross section of the Indian expat community representing various associations, business community, doctors, engineers and labor class attended the flag-hoisting ceremony that was held in an atmosphere of joy and patriotic zest. The ambassador also garlanded the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation on the occasion. Jeeva Sagar read out India's President Ram Nath Kovind's address to the nation. Students from different Indian schools performed patriotic songs on the occasion.

While extending greetings to the members of the community in Kuwait, he praised the gathering for joining the embassy in celebrating the spirit of Republic Day. Sharing his happiness with the community members, the ambassador informed that Indian expat from Kuwait Rajpal Thaygi received the prestigious Pravasi Bharathiya Award last week from Indian president. He expressed his gratitude to the Indian community members in Kuwait for extending a helping hand to the victims of the devastating flood that struck Kerala last year.

Republic Day is an important day in India's national calendar as India's constitution came into force on January 26, 1950, completing the country's transition toward becoming an independent republic.



The Ambassador reaches out to the crowd.



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador Jeeva Sagar with embassy officials prior to the flag-hoisting yesterday.



NBK celebrates Moody's program graduates

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) celebrated the graduation of 5 Cohorts of the 'Moody's Credit Curriculum Program,' which was designed and organized in partnership with the international credit rating agency, Moody's Analytics.

The ceremony was attended by Salah Y Al-Fulaij, Chief Executive Officer - Kuwait, Sulaiman Al-Marzouq, Deputy CEO - Kuwait, Emad Al-Ablani General Manager of Group Human Resources and senior representatives from the Bank.

The Moody's Credit Curriculum program extended over a year and a half, and introduced an array of topics including banking services, financial analysis, risk management, structure risk, credit challenges, financing, and problem credits.



Congratulating the newly certified employees, Ablani said: "NBK has adopted a strategy that aims to invest in its employees' skillset and capitalize on their potential in order to reach the highest levels of professionalism in the industry. Our ultimate goal is to

provide them with the best employee value proposition and corporate experience. Indeed, the Bank aims to maintain its position as a leader in the market and our human capital is the main pillar and driver of our success."

Moody's is one of the best and oldest financial corporations specializing in economic research, financial analysis and evaluation of private and government institutions in terms of strength, financial position and creditworthiness.

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: A falconer takes a break with her falcon in Al-Salmi desert. — Photo by Hassan Mahmoud (KUNA)

TEC welcomes New Year with special media gathering



KUWAIT: The Touristic Enterprises Company recently held a special gathering for local media partners to welcome the New Year and express gratitude for their continuous support. The luncheon with representatives from national newspapers, magazines and TV stations took place at one of Kuwait Towers' newest culinary destinations, Amimoto, serving up the exotic taste of Japanese cuisine.

Senior management from the Touristic Enterprises Company entertained the media representatives with a grand tour of the iconic towers, wherein they were also able to appreciate the breathtaking skyline of Kuwait's landmarks and city landscapes from the viewing sphere. Soaring more than 120 meters above sea level, the sphere features a revolving platform, which completes a 360 degree rotation every 30 minutes, and is equipped with telescopes.

This was followed by an authentic Japanese culinary experience at Amimoto restaurant located 82 meters high, which offered a true reflection of Japanese culture and hospitality. With all elements hailing from its origin, ranging from the ambience, cutlery set and ingredients, the Amimoto concept serves innovative Japanese cuisine delivered by the skilled hands of Japanese Master Chef Onuki Fumikazu.



Cooperation with World Bank in line with Kuwait's Vision

KUWAIT: The Competition Protection Authority's (CPA) cooperation with the World Bank is in line with Kuwait Vision 2035, Deputy Chairman of the authority Abdullah Al-Afasi said yesterday. In a press release, Afasi said that the CPA's consultative program with the World Bank was planned in two phases with the first occurring between 2013-16 and the second beginning in 2017 and concluding in 2020. The CPA is looking forward to continue the program, said Afasi who indicated that it was currently in the phase of implementation. The official expressed gratitude towards the strong support from the World Bank, which provided assistance to improve the CPA's performance. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Chairman of the Competition Protection Authority Abdullah Al-Afasi honors World Bank experts Yulia Kogukaru and Graciela Mirales, on the end of their tenures as part of the WB advisory program with the CPA.

Kuwait Airways comments on name misprint

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways released the following statement yesterday, commenting on a recent incident caused by a misprint of its name and that of the State of Kuwait on a smartphone app:

"Kuwait Airways would like to

draw to your attention that there is a web app name 'Almosafer' which falls under a travel agency that Kuwait Airways cooperates with. This cooperation occurs through the global reservation distribution system which shows Kuwait Airways' prices and schedule. This web app has wrongfully named both the State of Kuwait and its national carrier, Kuwait Airways. This is something that we as a company refuse outright and stand against, especially as it disrespects the State of Kuwait. We have been in contact with the travel agency to ensure that this wrong is corrected and that is to be followed by an apology, while Kuwait Airways stands by its right to pursue legal action."

Local

Public Works Ministry disqualifies 19 out of 20 companies for road projects

National Assembly refutes 'media figure probe' rumors

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The technical ministerial committee formed by the Ministry of Public Works (MPW) excluded 19 out of 20 companies qualified to take part in road projects, said informed sources, noting that the excluded companies had been qualified despite violating the conditions Central Agency for Public Tenders published in the official gazette. The sources denied excluding national elements from the qualification committee and replacing them with expats, explaining that a number of Kuwaitis who had been nominated for the committee withdrew because it involved working in outdoor sites and the short tenure of the committee (two weeks), so well-experienced specialized expats were selected for the committee. The sources added that the recommendations made by the committee - comprising of 13 members, mostly Kuwaitis - confirmed the report made by the previous committee formed by former minister Hossam Al-Roumi.

Fake news

The National Assembly's secretariat general stressed that a parliamentary request circulating on social media



Thunderstorm forecast through Tuesday

about investigating an incident related to a female Kuwaiti media figure is completely untrue. The secre-

tariat general strongly denied reports claiming that a number of lawmakers filed a request to form an investigation committee in this regard, stressing that the circulated request is fake.

20 professions

The Public Authority for Manpower's public relations manager Aseel Al-Mezayad said the authority is currently working on setting tests for 20 different professions. Mezayad said her small team of only 11 employees had bagged many achievements in 2018, including launching various awareness campaigns, publishing a brochure in seven different languages for expats working in Kuwait, e-connection with various government bodies and responding to over 2,412 inquiries and complaints. She added that many diplomats designated in Kuwait have hailed the services provided by the expat labor shelter.

Nominees

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) is currently preparing to declare a new batch of nominees to work in government bodies, as Kuwaitis seeking job opportunities can follow up their applications online on the commission's website. Meanwhile, official sources at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said the CSC had approved paying shift allowances to 182 navigators working at Kuwait airport air control tower and radar center, noting that the allowances will vary between KD 120 and KD 260.

Thunderstorms

Meteorologist Essa Ramadan yesterday forecast thunderstorms from noon tomorrow through Tuesday night following the current rise in temperature that he expects to end by tomorrow. Ramadan also tweeted that rain will also fall in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq.

local spotlight

Speak no English!



By Muna Al-Fuzai

Muna@kuwaittimes.net

I often meet people who tell me that although they understand English and can read it, they are unable to speak the language fluently or at least clearly and comprehensively, because they consider conversing in English as a problem. With the repetition of such situations, I felt I had to write about the subject.

First of all, I believe English is a universal language, along with many other languages. Many children can nowadays read and speak Asian languages such as Japanese and Korean, thanks to television series that they follow heavily on the Internet. Children are becoming multilingual since an early age because they can speak English, in addition to their mother tongue - whether Arabic or others - and are ready to learn new languages. English is not a problem for many youth, but those over 50 face a problem.

The question is why they are unable to speak English fluently. The answer for me is education. The educational process is a troika between the teacher, the student and the curriculum. If the teacher was weak in conversation and was able to climb the ladder of education because exams depend primarily on structural answers and not on conversation, their students will be weak in conversation as well. The teacher is the main pillar in the educational process. The teacher will either have a positive or negative role on the learning process.

Some teachers make success in tests the goal for students, regardless of the skills they acquire or how much they benefit from the language as an instrument they need in their lives forever. I believe that teaching aids such as language labs have a role in enhancing and upgrading the level of conversation among students, and if we don't utilize this important tool, then we are missing out on a great opportunity.

I think weakness in English conversation is cumulative, where the student moves from one class to another and suffers from weakness, which is difficult to deal with in the advanced stages by conventional methods. Thus the student moves to the secondary and university levels with a big shift in quantity and quality of textbooks and materials.

Another issue here is spelling, which can be a serious problem for many students. This is the inability of the student to read the words properly and to learn the correct pronunciation of many words, because there is a close correlation between spelling and good pronunciation and the ability to speak fluent English. But language ends with the end of the lesson without a desire or goal by the students to use the language outside the classroom.

Also, many students consider English like other subjects and tend to forget what they studied in the previous year. Any language requires continuous and daily practice. I believe parents and family are important elements that contribute effectively to the educational process. This weakness may be the result of the ignorance of the parents and their weakness too.

Sadly, the form of tests has become familiar to students, and they are fully aware of the material that the test can cover and the distribution of questions and grades, which leads them to make no effort to memorize and review. I think there are psychological factors too that add some pressure - believing that English is a language that is difficult to understand. Here comes the role of the teacher to correct this misconception and help the students break the barrier of difficulty by facilitating the material through available educational methods.

I remember during my high school years that many teachers used to speak Arabic frequently in the classroom during English class. I believe this is wrong, because it contributed greatly to lowering the standard of students. I hope that the ministry of education will conduct training courses for students on conversation and I know that it is now forbidden for the teacher to speak Arabic in English class. But weaknesses indicate that there is a problem that was and still exists. English is the top language in the world. Maybe in the coming years, it will be replaced by new foreign languages, but this current weakness cannot be permitted.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality carried out a number of inspection campaigns in Farwaniya governorate recently, during which 30 encroachments against state property were removed, two stores were closed, and six citations for violating construction codes were issued. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Drug store receipts must be printed in Arabic

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basel Al-Sabah issued a ministerial decree asking establishments under the pharmaceuticals and nutrition supervision department (pharmacies and food supplement stores) to use the Arabic language as an important condition for all their transactions, with the possibility of adding any other language besides Arabic.

The decision also stipulated that the invoice should include the issuing area, date, type of product and its specifications with validity, amount, sold units, batch number, local price, name and signature of the official as well as the pharmacy's stamp with the dispensing date also mentioned. The health ministry issued this decision out of its keenness for citizens' safety and health and to implement the customer protection law, which says it is necessary to have transparency in deals between pharmacies and food supplement stores, every establishment that is under the supervision of the drugs and nutrition control sector and customers of these stores.

In other news, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry issued a decision which added five activities to the unified guide to classify economic activities in GCC countries. The ministry said in a statement that decision 41/2019 added activities of kitchens for airline catering, production of plastic, wood and metal decorations, among others.

Preparation for 16th Arab Media Forum underway

KUWAIT: Preparations are proceeding for the 16th edition of the Arab Media Forum scheduled on April 20-22, the forum's Secretary General Madhi Al-Khamis said in a statement yesterday. Patronized by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the forthcoming session will group foreign, information ministers, owners of Arab media organizations, senior officials, eminent journalists, writers, broadcasters, celebrities, media professors and students from Arab universities.

Registration for participation in the planned event has already begun, says Khamis, adding that there has been also coordination with relevant local and external authorities to draft the agenda. The main sessions, along with sideline workshops and seminars will tackle a host of crucial issues for sake of re-affirming the major role played by the media for the making of the public opinion, censorship, accountability and dissemination of the truth to the masses objectively, he said.

Khamis expressed deep gratitude to the Kuwaiti State and Government, namely His Highness the Prime Minister, for special concern and care for the activities, organized by the forum management. He also thanked Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri for his ongoing backing for the forum activities. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Information is a strategic partner for the forum due to its efforts at the local and Arab levels, he continues. An exhibition for modern information and communication outlets and organizations will be held on margins of the session. — KUNA

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Driver and Mandoub (LE 2) Closing date for applications is 7 February 2019

The Australian Embassy Kuwait is looking for an experienced Driver and Mandoub.

The position provides official transport for the Ambassador, Embassy staff and official visitors as well as performs a full range of Mandoub duties including liaison with government ministries and local authorities on protocol matters.

The applicant must hold a valid driver's licence with a proven safety record, and have extensive knowledge of road systems in Kuwait. You must have good communication and organisational skills, and a willingness to work flexible hours and undertake overtime as required. The applicant should be an experienced Mandoub and be proficient in written and spoken Arabic and English.

For the full position description, including salary and application requirements please visit the Australian Embassy website at www.kuwait.embassy.gov.au

Australian Embassy Kuwait – Job Vacancy

Ambassador's Executive Assistant and Political Research Officer (LE 4) Closing date for applications is 7 February 2019

The Australian Embassy Kuwait is looking for an Ambassador's Executive Assistant and Political Officer. The position provides high level executive and administrative support for the Ambassador at the Australian Embassy in Kuwait.

In addition to having excellent organisational skills, the applicant should have experience in a similar environment with proficiency in Microsoft Office software applications and sound communication skills, with fluency in Arabic and English. The applicant should have a strong capacity to exercise discretion and judgement and an ability to meet tight deadlines.

For the full position description, including salary and application requirements please visit the Australian Embassy website at www.kuwait.embassy.gov.au

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Camels, stunts and military might as India marks Republic Day

Philippine referendum returns big ‘yes’ vote on Bangsamoro self-rule

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FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida: Roger Stone, a longtime adviser to US President Donald Trump, speaks to the media outside a court on Friday. — AFP

Trump ally arrested for lying to Congress

Roger Stone declares himself innocent, slams ‘inquisition’

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida: A longtime ally of US President Donald Trump was arrested on Friday for lying to Congress about the 2016 campaign's efforts to use stolen emails to undercut his Democratic rival in the latest arrest of the Special Counsel probe into possible election manipulation. Roger Stone, a 66-year-old self-proclaimed Republican “dirty trickster,” declared himself innocent hours after a large team of FBI agents raided his home in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

He is one of the closest Trump associates to be charged in Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into whether Trump's campaign colluded with Russia to help win the election. Mueller said in court papers that Stone shared with multiple members of the Trump campaign team advance knowledge he had of a plan by WikiLeaks to release senior Democrats' emails.

Some political analysts say the emails, which highlighted disputes among Democrats, contributed to Trump's stunning defeat of election rival Hillary Clinton. The charges mark the first time the Trump campaign has been publicly tied to WikiLeaks by Mueller's team and add to pressure on the president as the newly installed Democratic majority in the House of Representatives plans to step up investigations of him.

“Greatest Witch Hunt in the History of our Country!”

“NO COLLUSION!” Trump wrote on Twitter following Stone's arrest, using his most common denunciation of the Mueller probe. Stone was charged with seven criminal counts including obstruction of an official proceeding, witness tampering and making false statements. He is due to be arraigned in federal court in Washington on Tuesday.

The charging documents included new details about Trump aides' alleged activities, including an incident in which a senior campaign official “was directed to contact Stone about any additional releases and what other damaging information” WikiLeaks had about the Clinton campaign. The construction of that sentence does not make clear who gave that order to a senior campaign official, but raises the possibility the order came from Trump himself.

Mueller spokesman Peter Carr declined to comment on who gave that order. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment. If Trump did give the direction, he would have engaged in a conspiracy to violate federal hacking statutes, said Paul Rosenzweig, a lawyer who worked on the Whitewater investigation into former President Bill Clinton. “You are directing Stone to take possession of what he knows to be stolen materials,” said

Rosenzweig, now a fellow at the R Street Institute think tank.

Former federal prosecutor Barbara McQuade said that if Trump gave the direction, it could be evidence the president participated in a conspiracy to defraud the United States by interfering with the fair administration of elections. Harry Sandick, another former federal prosecutor, said: “We would need to know more facts to determine if a crime were committed, such as what the president knew, when he knew it and what his intent was if he gave the instruction.” Legal scholars are divided about whether a sitting president can be indicted. Many believe the remedy for criminal activity would be impeachment.

Stone blasts ‘inquisition’

In a rowdy scene outside a courthouse in Fort Lauderdale, Stone denounced his arrest as politically motivated and told reporters he had done no wrong. “After a two-year inquisition, the charges today related in no way to Russian collusion, WikiLeaks coordination or any other illegal act in connection with the 2016 campaign,” he said, flashing the twin “V for Victory” signs that the disgraced President Richard Nixon was famous for. “I will not testify against the

president because I would have to bear false witness against him.”

A crowd chanted “Lock Him Up”, riffing on the “Lock Her Up” chant that Trump and his surrogates led against Clinton at rallies in 2016. Someone played the Beatles song “Back in the USSR”. Others cheered in support of Stone. A magistrate judge released Stone on a \$250,000 bond and ordered him to limit his travel to South Florida, New York City and Washington.

Stone's reputation as an aggressive political operative dates back to the Watergate scandal of the 1970s when he was working for Nixon. He has a back tattoo of the late president's face. The indictment showed him using language evoking mob bosses - and even citing a “Godfather” movie - as he called an unnamed associate facing FBI inquiries “a rat. A stoolie”.

WikiLeaks, referred to in the indictment as “Organization I”, did not respond to a request for comment. More than 30 people have pleaded guilty, been indicted or otherwise swept up in the Russia inquiry, which has clouded Trump's two-year-old presidency. They include former close associates of Trump such as his one-time lawyer Michael Cohen and former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, as well as 12 Russian intelligence officers. — Reuters

Spain grieves after boy who fell down well found dead

TOTALAN, Spain: Spain grieved yesterday after a toddler who fell down a well was found dead in a tragic end to an intense 13-day rescue operation fraught with danger and setbacks. Hundreds of engineers, police and miners had been working round-the-clock under the media glare to try to reach two-year-old Julen Rosello, who plunged down a narrow, illegal well on January 13 while his parents prepared lunch nearby in Totalan, a southern town near Malaga.

“Unfortunately at 1:25 am (0225 GMT) the rescue team reached the spot where they were looking for Julen and found the lifeless body of the little one,” the central government's representative in the southern region of Andalusia, Alfonso Rodriguez Gomez de Celis, wrote on Twitter. “Not another time, no,” shouted his father Jose when he is believed to have heard the news, an AFP photographer witnessed. Julen's parents lost another child, Oliver, aged three, in 2017. The child had cardiac problems.



TOTALAN, Spain: A funeral service van drives to a drilled well after rescuers found the body of two-year-old Julen Rosello yesterday. —AFP

‘It wasn't possible’

Julen made a “free fall” down to a depth of 71 m when he hit a layer of earth, Gomez de Celis later told reporters, adding that an investigation was underway to determine any “potential liabilities” in the two-year-old's death. A hearse arrived at the mountain site shortly after the news broke to take his body to a funeral home, with psychologists at the side of Julen's parents. “All of Spain feels the infinite sadness of Julen's family. We have followed closely every step to reach him,” Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez wrote on Twitter, where the news was a trending topic.

In a tweet, Spain's King Felipe VI extended his “deepest condolences to Julen's whole family”. The Civil Guard police force, whose explo-

sives experts had helped elite miners in digging a tunnel to reach Julen, tweeted a photo of an eye with tears pouring out. “Unfortunately, despite so much effort by so many people, it wasn't possible...” it wrote on its official account.

‘Colossal mission’

Spain had been riveted by the complex search-and-rescue operation, which was fraught with complications that caused delay upon delay as Julen's distraught parents and relatives stood by. It was “a colossal mission”, Gomez de Celis told reporters yesterday morning, that involved “moving 85,000 tonnes of earth in a brief space of time... with the obstacle course that the mountain was throwing at us”. — AFP

Families flee bombardment and hunger

OMAR OILFIELD, Syria: As US-backed forces advanced, 22-year-old Dima Qatran buried one of her twin babies, then picked up the other and fled the Islamic State group's crumbling pocket in eastern Syria. Clutching her remaining 11-month-old daughter, she joined hundreds escaping the last shreds of the extremist group's “caliphate” near the Iraqi border. She fled through the cold desert on foot towards territory held by US-backed fighters, where she boarded a truck to take her to a camp for displaced IS families further north.

“I had twins,” Qatran told AFP on Friday, tears streaming down her face, at a pit stop along the way. “I buried one, and the second is dying. She has diarrhoea and keeps vomiting. I can't bear it. My daughter died of cold and hunger.” The US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces are fighting to expel the last IS fighters from a few hamlets in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor. “We slept in the street for 11 days after my home was bombed” in Baghouz, a village on the front line, she said.

Qatran said she arrived in



Women and children with luggage are seen in the back of a truck near the Omar oilfield in the countryside of the eastern Syrian Deir Ezzor province on Friday. — AFP

Baghouz with her husband's family a year ago after fleeing the town of Albukamal to the west, which was retaken from IS by Russia-backed regime forces in late 2017. The young mother said all she wanted was to be reunited with her husband who works as a cook in Turkey, and claimed to have no affiliation with IS. “I'm scared of them,” she said.

‘Just hunger’

Near the Omar oilfield, women and children - some of whom had faces ravaged by rashes - descended from the back of a dozen small trucks, caked in dust and visibly exhausted as the SDF allowed a quick break. A mother dashed down

from a vehicle, rushing her two children out of sight to relieve their bladders, while others pleaded for food and drink, saying that with the bombardment and siege, they had not eaten for days. Infants screamed while their mothers did their best to soothe them.

For days, hundreds have been fleeing what remains of the so-called “Hajin pocket” east of the Euphrates River, SDF officials said. According to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor more than 8,000 people have fled since Monday, including around 1,000 militants. Since early December, some 29,000 people have escaped the fighting, the Observatory said. — AFP



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International

Philippine referendum returns big 'yes' vote on Bangsamoro self-rule

85% of voters behind new autonomous region

MANILA: A predominantly Muslim area of the southern Philippines has returned a resounding "Yes" in this week's referendum on greater autonomy, boosting hopes for peace in one of Asia's most conflict-torn regions. The plan to create a self-administered area for the Muslim-dominated parts of Mindanao was backed by 85 percent of voters, the election commission said late on Friday, paving the way for a three-year transition towards elections for a legislature that will choose an executive.

Monday's referendum was the culmination of a tumultuous peace process between separatists and successive governments that aimed to settle decades of conflict, which have hampered development and kept these parts of Mindanao among Asia's poorest regions.

The instability and high rates of unemployed, unschooled youth made the areas fertile recruitment ground for bandits and Islamist extremists, who exploited grievances about neglect and stoked narratives of government duplicity in the peace process.

The endorsement by some 1.74 million voters comes as no surprise, and the new region to be called Bangsamoro (nation of Moros) will have greater powers to generate and invest more money in infrastructure, schools, health-care and social welfare for its estimated 5 million inhabitants. A ballot will now be held on Feb. 6 to ask several other areas if they want to join.

The central government will oversee defense, security, and foreign and monetary policy, and soon appoint a tran-

sition authority nominated by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). Vice President Leni Robredo said it was vital the central government helps Bangsamoro to build "a progressive economy and responsible local government".

"Let us guard and support the progress of this process because this is not yet the end of the fight for peace," Robredo said. The vote came at a critical time for the Philippines, which saw disillusioned MILF factions break away and follow other armed groups in pledging allegiance to Islamic State.

That has stoked fears that fighters fleeing Iraq and Syria would join radicals from Malaysia and Indonesia in gravitating to Mindanao to capitalize on porous borders, jungles and mountains, and an abundance of arms. Martial law has been in place in Mindanao since an extremist alliance overran Marawi City in 2017 and occupied it for five months, in what was the Philippines' fiercest and longest conflict since World War Two.

The army said three remnants of that alliance were killed on Thursday when troops discovered a makeshift jungle camp. It released images of trenches and what it said was Islamic State paraphernalia.

Mohagher Iqbal, the MILF's top peace negotiator, said on TV on Thursday that he hoped radical splinters of the separatist group, like those of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), would recognize the will of the people for peace. "One of the BIFF leaders has already reached out," he said, without elaborating. — Reuters



MANILA: Security forces check identification at a checkpoint in Cotabato on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, a day before a vote on giving the nation's Muslim minority greater control over the region. — AFP

Lack of jobs in India drove migrants on to boat for NZ

NEW DELHI: In a dark alleyway no wider than arms' length, a single ladies' shoe is all that remains on the boarded-up doorstep of Prabhu Dhandapani, his wife and their eight-year-old daughter.

Prabhu, 30, was one of around 50 residents of a refugee community in New Delhi who left the capital to attempt an 7,000-mile boat journey through some of the roughest waters in the world with the aim of landing illegally in New Zealand, relatives and police said. He is now in custody in southern India, while his wife and daughter are missing, along with everyone else who boarded the fishing boat that police say left Munambam harbour in Kerala on Jan. 12 carrying more than 100 people.

The most likely and shortest route, though the straits between Indonesia and Australia, passes through seas where storms and typhoons are common.

More than a dozen relatives of passengers on board the boat, that include pregnant women and young children, told Reuters they left to escape chronic unemployment in the Madangir area on the south side of New Delhi. "They had to leave to find jobs, to eat," said Prabhu's mother, Sugana. "They have been promised work in New Zealand."

When asked if she knew where the country was, she shook her head. It the first known attempt by migrants to reach New Zealand by boat from India, and their story is a reminder of the vast challenge the country faces to create jobs for the 1 million young people who enter its workforce

every month. Boats have been setting out from South and Southeast Asia for Australia for a number of years but Indians making the trip have been relatively rare, based on Australian government statistics that show the largest numbers detained there to be asylum seekers from Iran and Afghanistan.

Long journey

Passengers from Delhi left the capital in stages in December and early January. They checked into guesthouses near Munambam, a busy fishing port. They appear to have boarded the boat willingly, said a senior police official in Delhi briefed on the investigation. Their local police station in the capital had not received any missing persons' reports. Precise numbers on the boat - and who organized it - are unknown. One officer from Kerala investigating the case said around 100 people were on board. A second said it could be more than 200, with the remaining passengers coming from the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Police recovered more than 70 bags left behind by the migrants, said one of the officers, VG Ravindran.

"The bags are full of dry goods and clothes, suggesting they were preparing for a long journey," MJ Sojan, the officer leading the investigation told Reuters. "The people and boat are missing somewhere in the sea." Some passengers, including Prabhu, did not board the boat, and police traced several back to Madangir after finding identification documents in the bags left behind. He was detained by Kerala police less than 10 minutes after arriving back in Delhi, his mother said, and taken back to the state for questioning. Sugana said she did not know why Prabhu did not board the boat with his wife, Anandi, and eight-year-old daughter Trisha. She said he was not involved in people smuggling.

Hard life

Many of the older residents of the Tamil community in Madangir fled Sri Lanka in

1983, when a civil war erupted between the majority Sinhalese Buddhist population and the minority Tamils, an ethnic group predominantly living in south India and north and east Sri Lanka.

They settled in the area, a few miles from India's parliament building and some of the country's most expensive real estate, but which has suffered from rampant unemployment, residents said.

"If we get the chance we will also go: this is a rotten place," said Kanaga Lingam, a Sri Lankan refugee whose son, K. Raghu, boarded the boat with his wife and two sons. There is anger too at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who came to power in 2014 promising to create millions of new jobs for India's young and rapidly expanding workforce. In fact, the country lost as many as 11 million jobs last year, according to a report by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) think-tank, putting Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under pressure before a general election due by May. While the official jobless rate

is only 3.5 percent, the last comprehensive labor bureau survey was in 2015-16, and many unofficial estimates say it is much higher, especially if the underemployed, who only work for a few months a year or a few days a week, are counted. Many of those in the Tamil enclave who do work do so as daily manual laborers, a poorly-paid and unstable living. "If I am able I will go to Modi's house and beg at his feet to be allowed to go to another country," said a woman called Bumi, who like many southern Indians goes by only one name.

"There are a hundred problems here. We have no jobs," said a 32-year-old man, who like many in the area declined to be named, fearing involvement in the police investigation into the boat. Crime is also an issue in the area, primarily theft, the Delhi police official said. The BJP disputes the CMIE figures on unemployment. On Thursday several cabinet minister pointed to alternative figures from Naukri, an online jobs portal, showing a pick-up in employment over the last year. — Reuters



NEW DELHI: A man looks on from a building at a residential area from where several people travelled illegally on a boat to New Zealand, in New Delhi. — Reuters

Zimbabwe pledges to probe abuse, rape claims against security forces

HARARE: Zimbabwe's government has pledged to "thoroughly" investigate allegations of abuse and rape levelled against its security forces during a brutal crackdown to crush last week's anti-government protests. Nationwide demonstrations erupted last week after President Emmerson Mnangagwa announced on January 12 that fuel prices were being more than doubled in a country suffering from spiralling inflation and regular shortages of necessities.

Angry demonstrators took to the streets in several cities and towns with widespread rioting and looting before soldiers and police brutally put down the protests at the cost of at least 12 lives, according to NGOs.

Hundreds of people were injured, including dozens from bullet wounds. "The government wishes to assure the public that all allegations of misconduct against any of our security services will be thoroughly investigated and that the law will be allowed to take its course," Justice Minister Ziyambi Ziyambi said in a statement on Friday.

He said complaints should be lodged with the police and also assured that they would be treated with "impartiality and sensitivity", but many Zimbabweans fear retribution and find reporting such cases daunting.

In a separate statement, Home Affairs Minister Cain Mathema acknowledged reports of "alleged rape, sexual abuse and assaults that have been perpetrated by security forces during the recent operation".

But he said only one report had been received so far. He also referred to media footage of women who claimed they were raped by security forces during the widespread clampdown. — AFP

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International

Camels, stunts and military might as India marks R-Day

Ramaphosa attends event as guest of honor



NEW DELHI: This handout photograph released and taken by the Indian Presidential Palace yesterday, shows Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (third right), President Ram Nath Kovind (second right) and President of South Africa Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa (right) arrive ahead of the 70th Republic Day parade in New Delhi. — AFP

NEW DELHI: Thousands watched as tanks, camel-mounted forces and motorbike stunt riders paraded in New Delhi yesterday, as India marked its seventieth Republic Day in an annual display of culture and military might.

Security was tight, especially in the capital where large sections were sealed off for the parade and visiting dignitaries including South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who was the guest of honor.

Around 25,000 police and paramilitary forces were deployed across the city for the event. The day marks the date in 1950 when India's new constitution came into effect. India gained independence from Britain in 1947, but went through a transitional phase when it was still classed as a dominion. The parade at the heart of the Indian capital had the customary colorful array of security forces, including camel-mounted border forces in vivid turbans, tanks, mis-



NEW DELHI: An Indian Delhi Police contingent marches during the 70th Republic Day parade in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

siles and groups from across the country in regional dress.

On the eve of the national day, Indian President Ram Nath Kovind urged people to vote in national elections due by May. "An election is not just a political exercise. An election is a collective call to wisdom and a collective call to action," Kovind said in his speech.

"This makes the very act of voting a sacred act," he added. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who analysts

say is locked in a hard-fought electoral battle, hopes to be re-elected in the upcoming elections. Ramaphosa, who is leading a delegation to India, held a meeting with Modi and said he hoped for closer bilateral cooperation between the two countries. "(We) concluded this morning a three year strategic program of cooperation," Ramaphosa told journalists after the Friday meeting. — AFP

Prosecute Myanmar army chief for Rohingya genocide: UN rights envoy

BANGKOK: Myanmar's army chief should be prosecuted for genocide against the Rohingya Muslim minority, a UN human rights investigator said, adding that holding perpetrators to account for crimes was necessary before refugees who fled the country could return.

Yanghee Lee, the United Nations' Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Myanmar, was speaking during a trip to Thailand and Bangladesh, where she met officials and Rohingya driven out of western Rakhine state after an army crackdown in 2017.

"Min Aung Hlaing and others should be held accountable for genocide in Rakhine and for crimes against humanity and war crimes in other parts of Myanmar," said Lee, who is barred from the country, referring to the military's commander-in-chief.

Her interview marked the first time Lee has publicly called for the army chief to be prosecuted for genocide. A UN fact-finding mission on Myanmar last year said that the military campaign, which refugees say included mass killings and rape, was orchestrated with "genocidal intent" and recommended charging Min Aung Hlaing and five other generals with the "gravest crimes under international law".

Since August 2017 some 730,000 Rohingya have fled Rakhine to Bangladesh, where they now live overcrowded camps. "For any repatriation to happen ... the perpetrators must be held to account, because sending the refugees back with no accountability is going to really exacerbate or prolong the horrific situation in Myanmar," Lee told Reuters in an interview in Thailand on Jan. 18. "And then we'll see another cycle of expulsion again."

Spokesmen for Myanmar's military and government could not be reached for comment. The country has previously denied almost all allegations made by refugees against its troops, who it says were engaged in legitimate counterterrorism operations.

US-Taleban talks make progress on draft deal

KABUL/PESHAWAR: Taleban negotiators and United States officials meeting in Qatar yesterday finalized clauses to be included in a draft agreement to end the 17-year-old Afghan war, according to Taleban sources.

Details provided by the sources to Reuters include apparent concessions from both sides, with foreign forces to be withdrawn from the country in 18 months from the future signing of the deal. US special peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad is heading to Afghan capital Kabul to brief President Ashraf Ghani after the end of the six-day



DHAKA: University professor Yanghee Lee, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar speaks during a press conference in Dhaka on Friday. — AFP

Legal routes

The UN Security Council in September voted to approve the establishment of an "ongoing independent mechanism" for Myanmar that would collect, consolidate, and preserve evidence of crimes that could be used in an eventual court case.

Lee said the independent mechanism would provide funds for "victim support", including money for criminal cases. Myanmar has said it "absolutely rejects" that the International Criminal Court (ICC) has jurisdiction to rule on its actions. The country is not a party to the Rome Statute that established the Hague-based court.

Non-parties can be referred to the ICC by the UN Security Council, though diplomats have said permanent members China and Russia would likely veto any such move. Britain has been drafting a Security Council resolution on Myanmar, but diplomats told Reuters in December it did not include a referral to the ICC.

Legal experts say other options for an international prosecution include referral by individual U.N. member states - five Latin American states recently successfully referred Venezuela - or an ad hoc tribunal.

Lee has been blocked from visiting Myanmar since 2017 over her vocal criticism of its treatment of the Rohingya. She said Myanmar authorities had turned down her latest request to visit the country. "They responded and reminded me that they had asked the Human Rights Council to replace me so they cannot engage with me," she said. — Reuters

talks, the sources and a diplomat said. It is unclear whether a joint statement will be issued, or whether the provisions have been fully accepted by the US side. US embassy officials in Kabul were not available to comment. According to the Taleban sources, the hardline Islamic group offered assurances that Afghanistan will not be allowed to be used by al-Qaeda and Islamic State militants to attack the United States and its allies - a key early demand of Washington.

The Taleban says that they will finalize a timeline for a ceasefire in Afghanistan but will only open talks with Afghan representatives once the ceasefire is implemented.

Other clauses include a deal over the exchange and release of prisoners from the warring sides, the removal of an international travel ban on several Taleban leaders by the United States and the prospect of an interim Afghan government after the ceasefire is struck, the Taleban sources said. — Reuters

A decade after war ends, Sri Lankan Tamils to 'occupy' land held by army

BANGKOK: More than 100 Sri Lankan Tamil families demanding the return of their land nearly 10 years after the end of a civil war, plan to occupy their former homes if the government does not hand over the properties as agreed.

Residents of Keppapulavu village in northern Mullaitivu have campaigned for nearly two years for the return of their land, in what activists said is the country's longest roadside protest.

About 30,000 acres of land is still held by security forces in Mullaitivu, which saw some of the heaviest fighting during nearly three decades of civil war, according to advocacy group Adayaalam Centre for Policy Research (ACPR) in Jaffna.

"These people have waited for so long to get their land and homes back, and resume their lives," said Kumaravadivel Guruparan, ACPR's executive director. "They feel they have no other option but to occupy their homes," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by phone on Friday.

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena said in October that all land held by the state in the northern and eastern provinces would be returned by Dec. 31.

When that deadline passed, Keppapulavu residents were promised by authorities that their land would be released by Jan. 25, said Guruparan. The villagers will occupy their properties on Jan. 26 if the deadline was not met, he added.

"We have returned all the land that we could return. We have retained some land for national security purposes," said Brigadier Sumith Atapattu, a spokesman for the Sri Lankan army.

"Most villagers had agreed to sell that land to us. We need to negotiate again to arrive at a solution," he said. Thousands of people were killed and tens of thousands uprooted from their homes in the war, which ended in 2009. Most victims were Tamils, an ethnic and religious Hindu minority. — Reuters

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Modi's popularity at all-time low; rival Gandhi closing in: Poll

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ratings have dropped to their lowest-ever level, but he still leads in popularity before a national election expected in the next few months, an India Today poll showed on Friday. Modi is facing discontent over lack of jobs for young people and a weak farm economy, and polls have forecast his ruling alliance will fall short of a majority in the election due by May.

The India Today poll, which was conducted from Dec. 20 to Jan. 8, showed his popularity rating at 46 percent. That's down from 65 percent in January 2017, a little over a month after he announced a nationwide ban of 500- and 1,000-rupee notes. Nearly 900 million people will be eligible to vote in the election and surveys to predict how they will vote have often gone wrong.

Rahul Gandhi, the main challenger to

Modi and leader of the opposition Congress party, has seen his ratings rise from a low of 10 percent two years ago to his all-time high of 34 percent, 12 percentage points shy of Modi. The poll interviewed 12,166 voters across 97 parliamentary constituencies out of the total 543 constituencies in India.

In an earlier poll by India Today, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party-led alliance was forecast to win 237 seats, down from 336. The Congress alliance was expected to take 166 seats, up from 59 won in the 2014 elections. Modi's popularity began to wane after his sudden move to ban large rupee notes, then imposed tax reforms that hurt small traders and led to several factories closing.

The aftershocks of the two moves were exacerbated by falling commodity prices, which affected the incomes of a largely agrarian society. — Reuters

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- Ability to pass an English language proficiency assessment

- Government Relations Representative / Mandoob

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- High School degree, previous experience preferred

Interested candidates should send their resume to:
Email: kuwaitschoolcareers@gmail.com

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12 Kuwait's higher oil production boosts GDP growth in Q3 2018



13 Toyota premieres all-new Supra at Detroit Auto Show



14 Nissan tech expert: Our path is headed towards infinite worlds



DAVOS: (L-R) World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva, Rwandan President Paul Kagame and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa attend a session during the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting in Davos. —AFP

Procedures for KFH’s acquisition of AUB moving forward: Al-Marzouq

Board of Directors reach agreement on preliminary exchange price of shares

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Chairman, Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq, said that the procedures for KFH's acquisition of Ahli United Bank B.S.C. are moving forward as all relevant studies conducted by Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan, Bank of America Merrill Lynch and Alshall Consulting Co. have confirmed the positive financial viability of KFH for this acquisition as follows:

1. A positive increase in KFH's EPS (Earning per Share) in the next three years taking into account the shares to be issued for the acquisition. Also, the studies prepared by the relevant advisors showed that the expected increase in future EPS due to this acquisition (EPS Accretion) will be the highest compared to other acquisition deals in the Middle East.
2. The expected increase in the Group's consolidated profit by more than 90% compared to 2018 profits
3. Strengthening the financial position of KFH to be one of the largest Islamic banks globally and regionally with assets of more than \$94 billion and equities exceeding of \$10 billion.
4. Increasing the Bank's lending capacity by 61 percent after acquisition, which will enhance its ability to finance infrastructure and large projects locally and regionally
5. Reducing the cost of money, especially in terms of international borrowing because of the increase in consolidated profits and the size of assets, which will enhance KFH profitability and competitiveness
6. Enhancing the Group's geographical distribution after the acquisition, allowing it to tap new markets such as Egypt and the United Kingdom

In light of the financial feasibility mentioned in the above

studies, both KFH and AUB agreed to appoint international investment banking advisors (HSBC and Credit Suisse) to conduct a fair valuation study for their share swap and to adopt the valuation provided by the relevant advisors. Based on the findings of the study, they approved the exchange ratio of 2.325581 AUB shares for one KFH share.

He added that the Board of Directors of KFH and based on the statement sent to the Capital Markets Authority and Boursa Kuwait, has adopted the mentioned exchange ratio, which is subject to due diligence of both banks.

Al-Marzouq explained that once the studies of the due diligence and the regulatory approvals are received, the takeover will go through the issuance of shares equivalent to about 53.96 percent of KFH's current shares.

He said that according to the latest published data, the bank's profits will increase by 94 percent against the increase mentioned in the shares of KFH. This step certainly is in the interest of shareholders of KFH as EPS will increase, in addition to the other financial advantages of the merging of two banks' operations in terms of reducing operating expenses or maximizing revenues.

Al-Marzouq pointed out that the next step after the agreement on the fair share exchange ratio would be to submit the formal request to the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Central Bank of Bahrain and the other regulatory bodies, to obtain the other necessary approvals to conduct the due diligence.

Al-Marzouq said that the integration of the new entity will enhance profitability by reducing costs and increasing pricing power and liquidity. Also, KFH will benefit from access to new markets, establishing its leadership position in Kuwait and exchanging banking expertise between the two banks.

He added that upon completion of this process, it will result in the largest banking entity in Kuwait with a value of about \$94 billion and the sixth largest bank in the GCC, and it will be equal in size with the largest Islamic bank in the GCC, and it will be a major source of added value at both the operational and the strategic levels both for the banking sector and for KFH. In addition, it will improve the quality of assets and the distribution risks, in particular the geographical distribution.

"In terms of employment, the "new entity" will be able to create additional large employment opportunities for citizens, especially the young graduates, with the number who enter the market reaching thousands every year. Thus, the "merged bank" will be able to play a more vital role in this range," he explained. Al-Marzouq stressed that KFH attaches great importance to investment in technology and digital transformation, adding that the merger will enhance the digital potential of the new entity, its ability to use the latest technology in the banking industry, and develop its financial, administrative and supervisory systems, as well as the development of scientific research.

Al-Marzouq explained that the recent economic conditions, fierce competition and factors such as declining profitability and liquidity constraints necessitated an immediate response and accurate reading of the reality of the banking industry in the region. He pointed out that the current conditions in the GCC markets are driving companies towards creating larger entities through M&A. The reasons of mergers and acquisitions activity are clear in light of the bottleneck faced by the GCC banking industry.

He added that merger activities have recently emerged in



Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq

the GCC markets, which underline the importance of consolidation at this time. Large entities will soon appear in the banking arena, which will force other competitors to rethink their business model.

In conclusion, Al-Marzouq stated that the current KFH Board of Directors already developed an effective strategy for the bank over the last four years, which resulted in a significant increase in profit by 94 percent. Based on that, and during these years, the Board was convinced that in order to maintain the growth momentum it achieved during the past years, it must take extra steps by the acquisition decision and this will consolidate the financial position of KFH and its status as a leading bank, locally, regionally and internationally.

Delays at New York airport due to shutdown staff shortages

NEW YORK: New York's La Guardia airport faced major delays Friday as air traffic control struggled with staff shortages in the final hours of a partial government shutdown that President Donald Trump later announced he was suspending.

An FAA spokesperson said the disruption caused by a "slight increase in sick leave" during the record five-week halt, which has also hit nearby Newark and Philadelphia airports.

"We've mitigated the impact by augmenting staffing, rerouting traffic and increasing spacing between aircraft when needed," the spokesperson added.

"The results have been minimal impacts to efficiency while maintaining consistent levels of safety in the national airspace system." The New York region's third-largest airport, LaGuardia primarily serves domestic flights. By early afternoon the FlightAware flight tracking site reported that some 267 departing flights and 272

arrivals had experienced delays, accounting for 44 percent of all traffic.

Most federal workers in American airports were on their 35th day of working without pay due to a feud between Democratic lawmakers and Trump, who is demanding cash for a US-Mexico border wall.

Trump announced in the afternoon he would temporarily end the shutdown after reaching a deal with Democrats to fund the government for the next three weeks, while dropping previous insistence on immediate funding.

Passenger Chris O'Connor said she faced an about an hour delay to her flight after boarding, exiting and then being

boarded again. "I feel bad for them, not getting paychecks," she said of the various unpaid federal employees including screening agents and air traffic controllers, who are now set to receive back pay. The impact of the deadlock on aviation security had caused experts and Democratic lawmakers to raise alarm.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi warned on Twitter that the shutdown was "pushing our airspace to the breaking point."

Democratic National Committee chairman Tom Perez warned that "when our air traffic shuts down, the damage to our economy is enormous, millions of Americans are affected and our national security is endangered."

Without commenting on possible causes for the delays or how to resolve them, White House spokeswoman Sarah Sanders said the president had been briefed and the White House was monitoring the situation.

Aviation leaders' warnings

Earlier this week, leaders of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, Air Line Pilots Association and Association of Flight Attendants warned that if the deadlock did not end soon, flights could be cut back around the country. Control tower staffing is at a 30-year low due to no-shows and the national flight grid was only holding up due to overtime work by controllers, some of whom are working 10-hour days and six-day working weeks. —AFP

NBK Economic Report

Kuwait’s higher oil production boosts GDP growth in Q3 2018

Crude oil output reached 2.8 million bpd in December

KUWAIT: December was a turbulent month for financial markets, with global equities seeing sharp falls on concerns over slowing economic growth and the fallout from the US-China trade war. The Kuwaiti stock market fared reasonably well, edging down just 0.6 percent despite a further plunge in the price of oil. Tightening monetary policy was also a headwind, with the US Federal Reserve raising interest rates by 25 bps for the fourth time in 2018 against a background of a tight labor market and inflation close to target, though expectations for rate hikes through 2019 have been sharply scaled back. The Central Bank of Kuwait opted to keep its main lending rate on hold at 3.0 percent to support economic growth, though did increase its repo rates.

GDP growth picked up in Q3

After plunging 22 percent in November, the price of Kuwait Export Crude (KEC) fell by a further 10 percent in December, ending the year at \$52/bbl. Its decline was 18 percent for 2018 overall. December's weakness was linked to broader financial market volatility driven by concerns over global economic growth. However, prices rallied strongly early in 2019, with KEC reaching \$60 by mid-month as global sentiment improved and amid confidence that OPEC+ was making progress on reducing the crude supply glut, having agreed to cut output by 1.2 million b/d from January. According to OPEC data, Kuwait's crude output rose to 2.8 million b/d in December. But under the new quota targets, output is due to fall to 2.72 million b/d, a cut of 85,000 b/d (3 percent) from the September reference levels.

Meanwhile in the latest official GDP figures, rising oil production helped support economic growth. Overall GDP growth rose to 1.8 percent y/y in 3Q18 from 0.6 percent in Q2, benefitting from an acceleration in oil GDP growth to 1.5 percent from -2.1 percent in Q2. The latter reflected the peaking of oil production at a time when oil prices were stronger and concerns were primarily about a tightening global market, fears that have since been reversed. Non-oil growth slowed to 2.3 percent from 4.5 percent in Q2, but based upon a different methodological approach (used in the official annual data) would be a weaker 1.5 percent. This leaves the risks to our estimate for non-oil growth for the year as a whole of 2.8 percent somewhat to the downside.

Real estate sales

Real estate sales in November were steady at KD 224 million, down 26 percent m/m, but still well above the 2017 monthly sales average of KD180 million. Weaker aggregate sales came from a drop in residential and commercial transactions, which offset a 14 percent m/m rise in investment sector (i.e. apartment) sales. Driving the latter was a sharp rise in the average transaction size, which could reflect sales of different type of buildings (i.e. build, quality or location) compared to the previous month. Year-on-year, real estate sales were up by a robust 82 percent following a particularly weak 2017.

Meanwhile real estate prices trends are broadly positive.

Residential prices in November posted their largest month-on-month rise in over a year, with the land and home indices up 2 and 3 percent respectively, though remain slightly negative year-on-year. Prices in the apartment sector fell for the second consecutive month, but after several months of gains and were still up a very solid 7 percent y/y.

CA surplus narrows in Q3

Kuwait's huge current account surplus narrowed somewhat in 3Q18 to KD2.2 billion (just under 20 percent of GDP) from KD2.7 billion (25 percent of GDP) in 2Q18. This was still the second largest surplus for nearly four years. The decline came despite a further rise in the price of Kuwait Export Crude, which averaged \$73/bbl in Q3 compared to \$71/bbl in Q2. Oil revenues rose 11 percent q/q, and represented 92 percent of all export receipts. But the impact on the current account position was more than offset by a sharp drop in non-oil exports (which include re-exports) to KD0.5 billion in Q3 from KD 1.3 billion in Q2. Non-oil exports in this balance of payments release had spiked to unusually high levels in Q1 and Q2 - at odds with the more stable figures reported in the quarterly trade data - and may be subject to revision in future releases. Elsewhere, the investment income surplus (mostly returns on the government's overseas assets) declined 12 percent q/q, but remained historically high at KD 1.8 billion. Workers' remittance outflows dropped 11 percent q/q to KD 1.1 billion.

On the financial account side (which captures changes in the international ownership of assets), there was a large increase in government deposits overseas of KD1.5 billion, possibly reflecting the rise in oil prices. But there was also a notable rise in overseas borrowing by domestic corporates, of KD1.1 billion. The overall balance of payments stood at KD-0.5 billion (-4 percent of GDP), reflected in an equivalent drop in the central bank's foreign reserves which had reached a record high of KD10.9 billion in Q2.

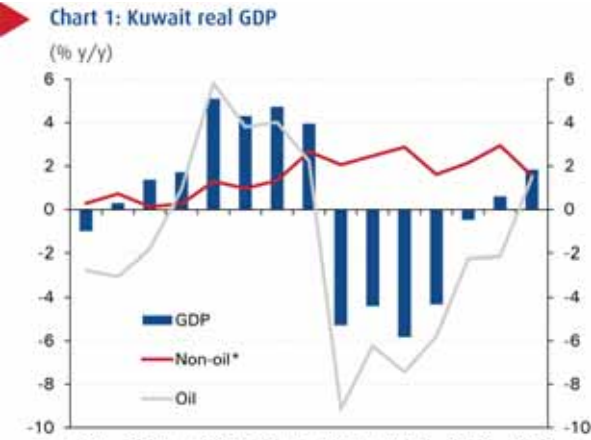
Consumer spending growth

Consumer spending in December was 0.9 percent higher month-on-month, led by increased purchases of services. However, the yearly rate declined for the second consecutive month, this time by a larger 1.9 percent y/y. This was the worst reading for 18 months and a long way from June's expansion of 8.5 percent.

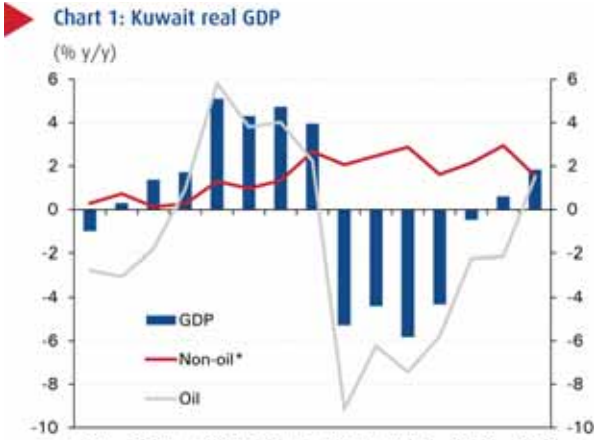
Growth has been slowing throughout the second half of 2018 after a robust first half - a trend in line with developments in consumer confidence, which nevertheless remains at a high level. On average, however, the NBK consumer spending index was up 4.9 percent in 2018 versus the previous year.

Inflation at 15-year low

Headline inflation in November fell to 0.1 percent y/y from 0.2 percent in October and its lowest level since 2003. Our measure of core inflation, which excludes food and housing, was unchanged in November at 1.3 percent. These two categories



Source: Central Statistical Bureau / NBK *Adjusted basis



Source: Central Statistical Bureau / NBK *Adjusted basis

continue to be the main drag on inflation. Food inflation dropped into negative territory in November, registering -0.4 percent, while housing inflation in November was unchanged from the previous month, at -1.4 percent and rents have been fairly stable over the past eight months. Meat, poultry, and seafood prices eased in November and weighed down on food inflation. Meanwhile, inflation in services was flat month-on-month, but remained weak at -1.4 percent on a yearly basis. Inflation is expected to pick up around February or March as the base effect from a pickup in inflation in 4Q17 subsides.

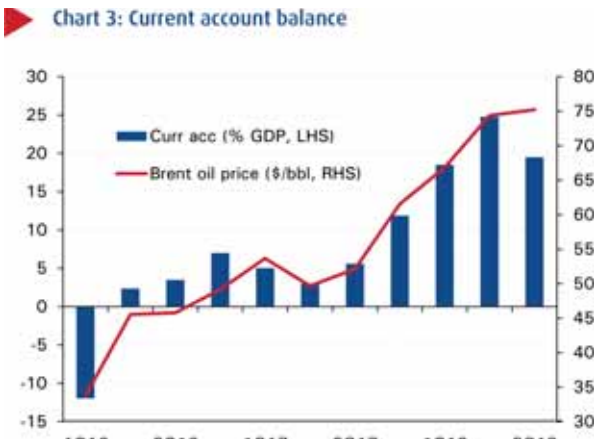
Emergency shutdowns

Despite a month-on-month decline, credit growth picked up to 3.0 percent y/y in November from 2.9 percent y/y in October, as the impact of a large corporate repayment a year earlier faded. Credit saw a KD 108 million monthly drop in November, due to weaker business lending (possibly impacted by weather-related emergency shutdowns during the month), a drop in borrowing for the purchase of securities, and the resumption of deleveraging by non-bank financials. Household borrowing dropped to a recent low of 5.8 percent y/y.

Meanwhile, private deposits decreased by KD 75 million m/m due to withdrawals of KD sight deposits (KD-174 million), but rose by 4.6 percent y/y. Government deposits, on the other hand, fell for a fifth consecutive month (KD-100 million), with growth contracting 6 percent y/y. As such, the broad money supply (M2) increased 4.4 percent y/y versus 5.6 percent in October.

Equity market edges down

The Boursa Kuwait All-share index edged down in December by 0.6 percent, underperforming the MSCI GCC index which gained 0.8 percent. The market was weighed down by declines in the consumer goods, financial services, and telecom sectors. Nevertheless, other market indicators remain strong, with market



Source: Central Bank of Kuwait / Thomson Reuters Datastream / NBK

capitalization at a solid KD 29.6 billion and average daily turnover in December of 112 million shares, well above the average of 88 million across 2018 overall.

Further, December trading was supported by record net foreign inflows of KD 101 million due to the second tranche of FTSE inclusion which took place on December 24, bringing the total net foreign inflows for the year up to KD 277 million (according to Boursa Kuwait's monthly 'Trading by Nationality' data release), the largest in the history of the Kuwaiti market. The FTSE inclusion, along with higher oil prices for most of the year helped the market end 2018 up 5.2 percent, outperforming global and emerging markets. With a reasonable fiscal outlook, good earnings, and a further boost to foreign investor interest from a potential inclusion in the MSCI emerging market index, sentiment going into 2019 looks fare.

4 days remain to enter Al-Danah’s first quarterly draw of 2019

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank has announced that 31 January 2019, is the last date for customers to open an Al-Danah account or increase their deposits for entry into Al-Danah's first quarterly draw of the year.

The first of Al-Danah's coveted quarterly draws will be held on 27 March 2019, and for a chance to win the exciting prize of KD 150,000, customers are encouraged to open an Al-Danah account before 31 January 2019.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah second quarterly draw 2019 will be held on 26 June 2019, for the prize of KD 250,000, and the third quarterly draw for the prize of KD 500,000 on 25 September 2019. The final Al Danah draw for KD 1,000,000, will be held on 16 January 2020, where the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced at a live event.

Gulf Bank encourages customers to increase their chances of winning with Al-Danah by depositing more into their Gulf Bank accounts using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf



Bank's online and mobile banking services.

Al Danah offers a number of unique services to customers, including the Al- Danah Deposit Only ATM card, which allows account holders to deposit money into their accounts at their convenience. Account holders can also calculate their chances of winning the draws through the 'Al-Danah Chances' calculator available on the Gulf Bank website and app.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount should be maintained for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al-Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD2 fee will be charged to their account monthly until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the weekly draw within two days.

‘Great for Canada’ if US drops extradition request for Huawei CFO

OTTAWA: Ottawa's ambassador to China told a Canadian newspaper Friday that it would be “great for Canada” if the US dropped its extradition request for Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou. The remarks to The Vancouver Star come one day after he walked back comments that the detained Chinese executive has a “strong case” against extradition to the United States.

“From Canada's point of view, if (the US) drops the extradition request, that would be great for Canada,” ambassador John McCallum told the Star. Meng was arrested on December 1 while changing planes in Vancouver at the request of the United States, which says she committed fraud by lying to bankers about allegedly violating American sanctions on Iran.

She has been released on bail, but her arrest has sparked an escalating diplomatic crisis between Ottawa and Beijing. McCallum on Tuesday briefed

lawmakers on the plight of two Canadians detained in China and a third placed on death row in what are widely seen as retaliatory moves by Beijing.

After the briefing he told Chinese-language media in Markham, Ontario that he believed the US extradition request is seriously flawed.

He cited political comments on the case by US President Donald Trump, the “extraterritorial aspect” of Meng's case, and the fact that Canada did not sign on to the Iran sanctions that Washington wants her extradited for. McCallum's remarks were immediately panned by opposition parties and others for seeming to undercut the strict hands-off approach to judicial matters touted by the Canadian government.

The following day he issued a statement saying that he “misspoke,” and “regrets” that his comments “have created confusion.”

On Friday, speaking at a charity lunch in downtown Vancouver, McCallum told the Star that if the United States strikes a trade deal with China it should also benefit Canada.

“We have to make sure that if the US does such a deal, it also includes the release of our two people. And the US is highly aware of that,” he said. Canadian officials did not have any immediate reaction to the comments when contacted by AFP. Meng's extradition hearing is expected to start in February. The process could take months or years. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

Al-Muzaini Exchange Co.	
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	302.600
Euro	304.150
Sterling Pound	395.550
Canadian dollar	229.290
Turkish lira	57.930
Swiss Franc	306.450
US Dollar Buying	302.950
ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.775
Indian Rupees	4.275
Pakistani Rupees	2.211
Srilankan Rupees	1.669
Nepali Rupees	2.668
Singapore Dollar	224.463
Hongkong Dollar	38.770
Bangladesh Taka	3.545
Philippine Peso	5.770
Thai Baht	9.619
Malaysian ringgit	77.788
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.161
Qatari Riyal	83.592
ani Riyal	790.513
Bahraini Dinar	808.160
UAE Dirham	82.863
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.850
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.936

Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.222
Tunisian Dinar	103.810
Jordanian Dinar	428.830
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.028
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.356

Dollarco Exchange Co. Ltd	
Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.640
Canadian Dollar	230.450
Sterling Pound	403.195
Euro	347.960
Swiss Frank	303.905
Bahrain Dinar	807.490
UAE Dirhams	83.070
Qatari Riyals	84.310
Saudi Riyals	81.865
Jordanian Dinar	429.550
Egyptian Pound	16.924
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.671
Indian Rupees	4.266
Pakistani Rupees	2.184
Bangladesh Taka	3.621
Philippines Peso	5.760
Cyprus pound	18.065
Japanese Yen	3.770
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.676
Malaysian Ringgit	74.605
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.425
Thai Bhat	10.620

Turkish Lira	58.045
Singapore dollars	222.970

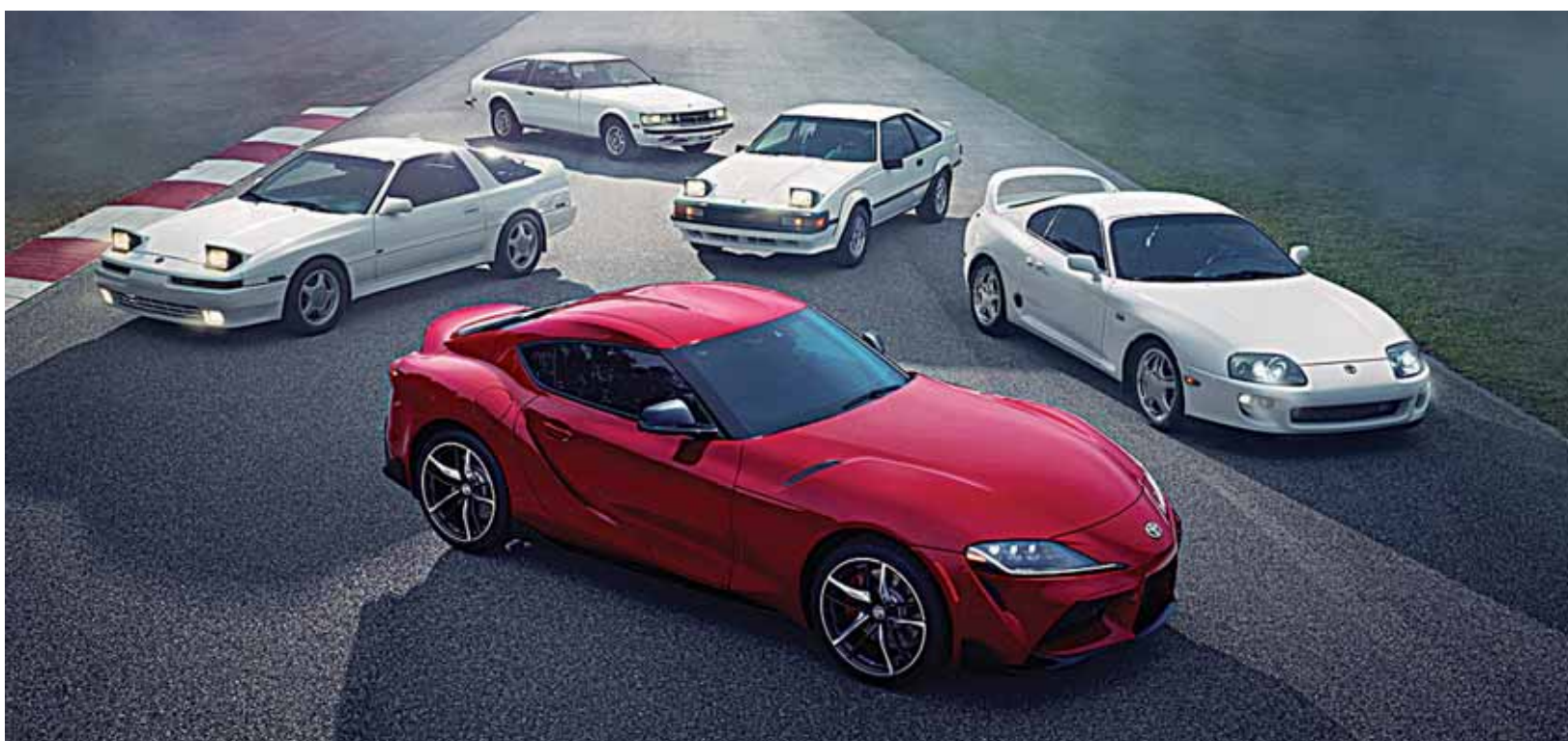
BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL		
CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.394918	0.408818
Czech Korune	0.005497	0.014797
Danish Krone	0.042378	0.047378
Euro	0.340188	0.353888
Georgian Lari	0.131870	0.131870
Hungarian 0.001146	0.001336	
Norwegian Krone	0.031668	0.036668
Romanian Leu	0.065123	0.081973
Russian ruble	0.004631	0.004631
Slovakia	0.009081	0.019081
Swedish Krona	0.029671	0.034571
Swiss Franc	0.300054	0.0311054
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.210679	0.222679
New Zealand Dollar	0.202064	0.211564
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.225034	0.234034
US Dollars	0.299900	0.305200
US Dollars Mint	0.300400	0.305200
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003011	0.003812
Chinese Yuan	0.043533	0.047033

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036985	0.039735
Indian Rupee	0.003715	0.004487
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002690	0.002870
Korean Won	0.000262	0.000277
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070293	0.076293
Nepalese Rupee	0.002608	0.002946
Pakistan Rupee	0.001565	0.002335
Philippine Peso	0.005790	0.006090
Singapore Dollar	0.219235	0.229235
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001327	0.001907
Taiwan	0.010147	0.010327
Thai Baht	0.009260	0.009810
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.791796	0.808296
Egyptian Pound	0.017093	0.019693
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000208	0.000268
Jordanian Dinar	0.424473	0.433473
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000156	0.000256
Moroccan Dirhams	0.021700	0.045700
Omani Riyal	0.783292	0.788972
Qatar Riyal	0.079211	0.084151
Saudi Riyal	0.079980	0.081280
Syrian Pound	0.001289	0.001509
Tunisian Dinar	0.095764	0.103764
Turkish Lira	0.051103	0.062603
UAE Dirhams	0.081343	0.083043
Yemeni Riyal	0.000988	0.001068

Business

Toyota premieres all-new Supra at Detroit Auto Show

First global model of GR series unveiled at 2019 North American International Auto Show



KUWAIT: Toyota premiered its much-anticipated all-new Supra recently at the 2019 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in Detroit. The Supra name evokes power, performance and handling that defined a succession of world-class cars for a quarter of a century. As a thoroughbred sports car, the Toyota Supra built a reputation both as a formidable performer on the road and as an all-conquering machine on the racetrack, earning legions of fans around the world.

The all-new Supra is the first global model of GAZOO Racing's (GR) sports car series. Ever since first competing in Germany's 24 Hours of Nurburgring endurance race in 2007, GR has been developing its cars and people through its motor-

sports activities with the goal of making "ever-better cars." The knowledge and expertise it has built up over the years have been funneled into bringing the Supra back to life in the form of the GR Supra as a car that people the world over will find fun to drive.

Toyota President Akio Toyoda, who is also a master driver, commented: "Back in the day, I spent countless hours driving an old Supra at the Nurburgring to become a master driver. Supra is like an old friend that holds a special place in my heart. While other manufacturers were putting the beautiful new prototypes they were going to introduce through their paces, I was driving an old Supra that was no longer in production. So even though Toyota had no plans to make a new Supra, just like a lot of

other die-hard Supra fans around the world I secretly wanted to make it happen. The new GR Supra was born through testing at Nurburgring, and I can honestly say that it is better than ever."

The all-new fifth-generation Supra marks the end of the 17-year hiatus since production of the previous generation concluded in 2002. Ever since the Supra's inception in 1978, all generations have been front-engine, rear-wheel-drive vehicles powered by an inline six-cylinder engine. The latest rendition is no exception. This time around, extensive attention has also been paid to the three fundamental elements of wheelbase, tread, and center of gravity, thus achieving handling performance befitting a pure sports car.

Chief Engineer Tetsuya Tada, who headed the vehicle's development, said: "We set out to create a pure sports car that would deliver the ultimate in exciting driving experiences. Rather than only working toward improving specs such as horsepower and circuit lap times, we emphasized sensitivity in performance, such as the degree to which driving could be felt to be enjoyable, with car and driver becoming one."

It is worth mentioning that the first production 2020 Toyota GR Supra to roll off the assembly line, 'Global #1,' was auctioned for charity recently for \$2.1 million (~ AED 7.7 million) at the 48th Annual Barrett-Jackson Auction at WestWorld of Scottsdale, with proceeds going to the American Heart Association (AHA) and the Bob Woodruff Foundation (BWF).

Maryam Al-Qasem becomes a millionaire with Ooredoo

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait announced the winner of the Nojoom Millionaire, a campaign which is part of its award winning Nojoom Rewards Program. The winner of the one million Nojoom points worth KD1,500, Maryam Al-Qasem, was announced in a draw held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry at the company's headquarters in Kuwait City. A record 47,000 customers joined the competition on the company's website.

Ooredoo is committed to providing customers with a comprehensive experience that enriches their lives and meets their expectations, this is portrayed through the Nojoom Rewards Program which has been tailor made to

offer members free upgrades, vouchers and discounts from a large variety of partners to meet their lifestyle needs. In addition, customers can earn more Nojoom points from our most recent partners which include Kuwait Finance House, Booking.com, Cafe Supreme, Breezyn, Mashawi, Set el Kel, Chocolateness and many more to come in 2019.

Ooredoo has carefully selected partners for our Nojoom program to cover the main industries in Kuwait, which include Booking.com, Chocolateness, Breezyn, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Xcite, Jarir Bookstore, Alshaya, Al-Oula Petrol Station, IKEA, The Sultan Center, and Jazeera Airways to ensure that all customers get a rewarding experience.

The Nojoom Rewards Program has many benefits which include transferring Nojoom points to friends and family, donating Nojoom points for charitable causes, and redemption for partners' voucher which are readily accessible through www.ooredoo.com.kw or the My Ooredoo app.

Established in 2012, the Nojoom Rewards Program has been continuously revamped to match the Kuwaiti lifestyle, which is modern and youthful and meets local and international trends. Nojoom has been awarded the best loyalty program in the Middle East and Africa for three consecutive years in 2012, 2013, and 2014.



Maryam Al-Qasem receives one million points from Mijbil Aliyoub

IBS recognizes 13 AUB employees

KUWAIT: In the presence of a large number of Banks' executives and training and Human Resources experts, Institute of Banking Studies (IBS) honored the employees of Ahli United Bank who have completed a whole set of training programs provided by IBS Program for 2017-2018, which is accredited by the London Banking and Financial Institute.

AUB's 13 employees obtained a variety of certificates of Certified Bank Branch Manager (CBBM), Certified Assistant Bank Branch Manager (CABBMM), Strategic Management Performance System Certificate (SMPS), Learning Needs Assessments Certificate, Certified Manager (CM), Certified Islamic Bank Manager (CIBM), Certified Credit Manager and Advanced Certificate in Credit Management (ACCM).

The AUB employees were honored at the graduation ceremony held by IBS at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, under the patronage of Dr Mohammad Y. Al-Hashel, the Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait. The event was attended by Dr Yaqoub



AUB's recognized employees at the graduation ceremony

Al-Rifaie, General Manager of the IBS and a group of Ahli United Bank Management, included Hisham Zaghloul deputy chief executive officer, Corporate Banking, Naqeeb Amin, General Manager Human Resources, Mishari Al-Jassim, Deputy General Manager, Retail Banking Services, and the Bank's training and development team. They were keen to join the bank's graduates at this significant occasion, they express the pride of AUB management and their

appreciation for the employee whom considered the mile stone for the continued success of the Ahli united bank's work.

On this occasion, Naqeeb Amin congratulated the bank employee graduates, expressing happiness with their newly acquired certificates which is a significant step in their professional and educational progress. He thanked IBS for its vital efforts in promoting the skills of banking employees and develop their knowledge

and skills, particularly the ambitious youth Kuwaitis.

Likewise, Mishari Al-Jassim congratulated the AUB branch employees who obtained the professional certificates, emphasizing that their new qualification would certainly contribute to improving their performance and polishing their skills in the service of the bank's employees and providing them with a better banking experience that will certainly help them gain and keep their full satisfaction.

Business

Nissan tech expert: Our path is headed towards infinite worlds

Nissan unveils a vision for the invisible at CES 2019 show

KUWAIT: Tetsuro Ueda is a technology expert at the Nissan Research Center, a place where Nissan explores cutting-edge technologies and develops the next step in automotive excitement. Working with a small, but dedicated team, Ueda's research focuses on connecting technology and humans in an enriching, seamless way. His latest development is set to create new insights in what we see through connected platforms and sensing technologies.

At the CES 2019 trade show, Nissan announced Invisible-to-Visible, a revolutionary technology that helps drivers "See the Invisible" by merging the real and virtual worlds to create the ultimate connected-car technology. In a recent interview, Ueda expanded on his vision of how he sees society interacting with Invisible-to-Visible technology.

Q: Can you tell us briefly about Invisible-to-Visible technology?

Ueda: Invisible-to-Visible, or I2V, is our way of increasing awareness and enhancing the driving experience. By merging our world with the virtual world, called the Metaverse, we can create the ultimate connected-car experience. Sensing data, gathered from the space around us as we drive, and interactions with virtual information are brought to life by three-dimensional, augmented visuals in front of us. In essence, we can interact with and see information that would otherwise be invisible to us.

Q: How is this different from similar technologies being developed by others?

Ueda: In terms of interacting with digital devices thus far, technology has fundamentally just added voice to the display of information on a flat screen. I2V technology uses a method that goes beyond this type of conventional provision of information. It is true, some companies are researching three-dimensional displays of information in vehicles similar to our technology. The differentiator is our new approach of presenting data or avatars as MR (mixed reality). This increases the level of interaction and gives virtual elements weight in our reality. Another factor is our goal of presenting information and data in a human-like way.

Q: Can you expand on that? How's this different from the virtual personal assistants (VPAs) on the market today?

Ueda: While those VPAs focus on improving the efficiency of user assistance functions through AI, the agent-type avatars offering services through the Metaverse - we call them Traverse-Agents - differ entirely as they emphasize interaction between people, rather than efficiency. VPAs serve as functional assistants. Traverse-Agents, meanwhile, don't stop at functionality and are instead a partner in the mobile vehicle space. This concept fully utilizes a multitude of I2V sensing technology, such as Omni-Sensing, which gathers data from traffic infrastructure and sensors around the vehicle and the Metaverse to meet a variety of



Tetsuro Ueda

needs. These can range from a casual conversation partner to driving guidance, language study, business and personal consulting and counseling, all done in the same shared space as the user.

Q: Some information received through Omni-Sensing includes traffic data. How is this different from devices and apps that provide similar information?

Ueda: It isn't necessary to access the Metaverse to get traffic information. This can be handled by accessing a traffic information Cloud and visualizing the data - which doesn't go beyond the scope of existing connected cars that link to the Cloud. I2V takes that data and adds a higher level of detail from data collected by Omni-Sensing technology. For example, not only can we get information about traffic congestion ahead; we can know why it's congested, what's the best lane to take, and what are the possible alternative routes to avoid the area altogether. Having this knowledge, the knowledge of the unknown ahead, can ease driving stress.

Q: The CES demonstration will show how people from the Metaverse can join as an avatar inside the car. Can they take control of the vehicle?

Ueda: In autonomous driving conditions, we envision a special operator having the ability to give instructions to automated-driving vehicles, along the lines of the SAM concept announced by us at CES 2017. But we're not thinking about transferring control of driving (accelerator, brake and steering) operations. It might be possible to share functions other than those involved in driving, such as operating the air conditioner or information system, in order to enhance the presence and quality of the shared travel experience.

Q: With the appeal of having a driving experience through virtual worlds, do you think that actually driving a car still has an appeal? Will car ownership decrease?

Ueda: Cars satisfy people's desire for mobility. A core feature of I2V technology is sharing the experience of mobility, but it also acts as a catalyst for a heightened level of interaction. This technology encourages new interactions obtained through movement



beyond just the real world, into the fast-growing Metaverse and its end users. It implies a dramatic rise in users who can engage in interaction in more situations. We hope that this technology will generate motivation to use cars in order to obtain the I2V user experience.

Furthermore, the experience of riding together in a virtual space could never match the experience of reality. Thus, we're not concerned about a decrease in the driving public. A driving experience merged with virtual experiences should instead encourage movement in the real world.

Q: Are there any concerns about people in the car joining the Metaverse while driving?

Ueda: It isn't possible to fully dive into the Metaverse while driving. This technology utilizes ele-

ments of the Metaverse for users to engage in conversations with avatars as a bit-out presence - that is, a person from the Metaverse projecting their virtual self into the real world inside the car. It differs technologically from a full-on VR experience. While a full VR experience is possible, we think this type of usage doesn't work as a viable driving experience.

Q: Can this technology work anywhere? Or just in cities with connected infrastructure?

Ueda: It can be used anywhere with access to an internet environment. That said, it will have to wait for the introduction of 5G or later wireless technology to be used in moving vehicles. Once we have the technology and connection speed to manage it during driving, Invisible-to-Visible will enhance the mobility experience and open the door to infinite worlds.

Germany should phase out coal use by 2038: Commission

BERLIN: Germany should stop using coal for electricity production by 2038, a government-appointed commission said yesterday, laying out an 80-billion euro roadmap to phase out the polluting fuel.

The commission agreed to the deadline after months of bitter wrangling as pressure mounts on Europe's top economy to step up its commitment to battling climate change. The panel, consisting of politicians, climate experts, unions and industry figures from coal regions, announced the deal after a final marathon session ended yesterday morning. "This is a historic day," the commission's head Ronald Pofalla said. Under the plan, half of the up to 80 billion euros (\$91 billion) will go to the regions shuttering plants in the west and east of the country, while the other half will be spent on preventing electricity prices from rising.

The commission's findings will now be passed on to the government, which is expected - barring a surprise - to follow the recommendations of the panel it set up. —AFP

The Business Year interviews KFH CEO Al-Nahedh

KUWAIT: The Business Year had the pleasure to meet with Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh, Group CEO of Kuwait Finance House (KFH), as part of the upcoming edition of The Business Year: Kuwait 2019 in partnership with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA).

As the largest Islamic bank in the country, KFH's insight and analysis are highly relevant for the 2019 edition of TBY's yearly publication on Kuwait. "TBY is among the most comprehensive annual economic publications available internationally; our goal is to reflect Kuwait's business trends," said Ioana Popa, Country Director for TBY Kuwait. "We are pleased to include Al-Nahedh's expertise in the financial sector in our publication. It will be essential for Kuwait's national development and long-term sustainable growth," added Kevin Delaplace Haro, TBY Country Editor for Kuwait.

KFH had an outstanding 2018, recording a 31.4 percent net profit increase in 3Q and experiencing a 22.7 percent nine-month profit increase. Al-Nahedh explained that

thebusinessyear

they "focused on the large corporate sector that has not been banked by KFH in the past. We take market share from other banking participants, which helps the general growth of KFH on the corporate and SME sides. On the retail side, KFH enjoys the largest customer base in terms of numbers."

In addition, Al-Nahedh announced KFH's strong digitalization strategy, aiming to create a unified and relationship-based system that will allow KFH to "better manage its customers' wealth and facilitate their transactions." KFH's CEO also had very exciting news regarding its new concept called KFH Go, a "new vision for what future branches should look like on a self-service basis." By progressively implementing its new retail branches that are expected to realize 90 percent of what regular branches do, KFH hopes to reduce its current rental costs and overheads. By 2019, the bank is expected to reach 10 electronic branches and in 2020 KFH will be able to offer 24/7 banking services.

Al-Nahedh finally talked about Vision 2035 and the numerous projects in the pipeline. "We are looking to finance the solar farm project built by KPC. There is also the solid waste plant that we are working on and



hoping to close," said KFH's CEO. He added: "In the oil sector, there are hundreds of billions dollars' worth of projects over the next five years that involve LNG and the improvement of upstream and downstream processes through the fourth refinery, which is one of the key projects that will be introduced." However, Al-Nahedh regretted the overwhelming government bureaucracy that

delays projects. "Reforms are necessary," Al-Nahedh said, but "as long as oil prices remain high, everyone will forget about the reforms and the public sector will ask for more benefits, which might be dangerous in the long term for the economy and for the delivery of the national plan." The Business Year: Kuwait 2019 will be launched on June 13 in London.

Huawei launches world's first 5G base station core chip for simplified 5G

KUWAIT: Huawei yesterday launched world's first core chip specifically designed for 5G base stations, Huawei TIANGANG. At a 5G launch event in Beijing that doubled up as a pre-briefing for the MWC Barcelona 2019, Huawei announced the innovative chip that will support simplified 5G networks and large-scale 5G network deployment all over the world. To date, the company has won 30 commercial 5G contracts and shipped over 25,000 5G base stations globally.

Huawei is committed to taking complexity itself and creating simplicity for its customers. To this end, the company has invested heavily and continues to innovate. Its end-to-end 5G chips support networks of all standards and all bands (C band, 3.5G, and 2.6G), helping customers access the best wireless and microwave services. "Huawei has long been committed to investing in basic science and technology. We were the first to make breakthroughs in key technologies for large-scale 5G commercial use," said Ryan Ding, Huawei Executive Director of the Board and

Carrier BG CEO. "Huawei now has industry-leading capabilities to deliver end-to-end 5G, with simplified 5G networks and simplified operations & maintenance (O&M). We are leading the commercial rollout of 5G, and building a mature industry ecosystem."

Ryan Ding, Huawei Executive Director of the Board and Carrier BG CEO, delivering a keynote speech

World's first 5G base station core chip

At today's event, Huawei launched the industry's first 5G core chip, Huawei TIANGANG, with breakthroughs in integration, computing power, and spectral bandwidth. This chip is highly integrated, which means it can support large-scale integration of active power amplifiers (PAs) and passive antenna arrays into very small antennas. It also boasts super high computing capacity, with a 2.5-fold increase over previous chips. Using the latest algorithms and beam forming technology, a single chip can control up to 64 channels, which is the industry's highest standard. This chip also supports the 200 MHz high spectral bandwidth, getting ready for future network deployment.

This chip also brings revolutionary improvements in active antenna units (AAUs), with 50 percent smaller, 23 percent lighter, and 21 percent less power consuming base stations. 5G base stations can be deployed in just half the time it took to install a 4G base station. These

features will help address issues such as site acquisition and network deployment costs.

Simplified 5G solutions

Huawei began rolling out commercial 5G networks in 2018. It took the lead in the launch of a full range of commercial 5G products, 5G field testing and verification, and large-scale 5G commercial use. As of the end of 2018, Huawei has completed all pre-commercial testing and verification for its 5G products in China, green lighting 5G for commercial use.

On January 9, 2019, Huawei's 5G blade base station was awarded a First Class Progress in Science and Technology Prize, in recognition of its major technological breakthroughs and a unified modular design. All base station units use the blade form factor, and different modules can be combined as needed, making 5G base station installation as simple and easy as building blocks. "Huawei's full-series, all-scenario simplified 5G products enable ultimate 5G performance and experiences," said Yang Chaobin, President of Huawei 5G Network Product Line. "These products help significantly boost network deployment and O&M efficiency, and make 5G deployment easier than 4G."

AI for autonomous driving networks

Today, Huawei also launched the world's first data center switch with an AI brain. Boasting industry-leading performance, this switch



Ryan Ding, Huawei Executive Director of the Board and Carrier BG CEO.

enables zero Ethernet packet loss and end-to-end latency of less than 10 milliseconds. It consumes less than 8W of power while delivering more computing capacity than 25 mainstream two-way CPU servers combined.

Huawei has also introduced its full-stack, all-scenario AI technologies to enable an autonomous driving network, and developed the

SoftCOM AI solution to help operators maximize energy efficiency, network performance, O&M efficiency, and user experiences.

During the event, Richard Yu, Huawei Executive Director of the Board and Consumer BG CEO, also announced the world's fastest 5G multi-mode device chip and commercial devices.

Health & Technology

CX disconnect in an 'experience economy' is a risk for businesses

Customer experience absent at board level, say 70% of Dimension Data's CX report respondents

DUBAI: Dimension Data, the USD 8 billion global technology integrator and managed services provider for hybrid IT, yesterday revealed the findings of its annual CX Benchmarking Report. It urges organizations to address a "customer experience disconnect" that could lose them business or even jeopardize their chances of survival in competitive markets where consumer loyalty can no longer be taken for granted.

Research from Dimension Data shows that 68% of Middle East and Africa (MEA) respondents said customer experience is not represented at board level, with lower-level management or multiple managers often assuming responsibility. Furthermore, only 20% said their organization takes a fully integrated, centralized approach to customer experience. However, the research found that most MEA business respondents recognize customer experience as an important competitive differentiator (90%) that's also vital for driving loyalty (85%), revenue growth (73%), and cost reduction (55%).

Despite this, the research revealed that nearly a quarter of respondents (24%) are dissatisfied with the customer experience they deliver, and only 10% believe they're delivering experiences that would lead customers to recommend them to others. This is resulting in an 'artificial reality', where companies are talking about CX, but not delivering on it, creating a gap between their CX ambitions and actual CX capabilities. Businesses are looking at several CX technologies, such as customer analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and digital integration, but aren't currently able to implement them properly.

Nemo Verbist, Group Executive for Customer Experience at Dimension Data said, "Customer experience must be higher on the agenda for every business and the whole organization should get behind it. Brands acknowledge how crucial customer experience is, yet so few are making it a board level responsibility, leaving it siloed or delegating it to individual managers. There's an artificial reality between organizations' CX ambitions and making real change that benefits the customer. This disconnect must be resolved. Brands must make customer experience the priority they say it is."



Paul Potgieter

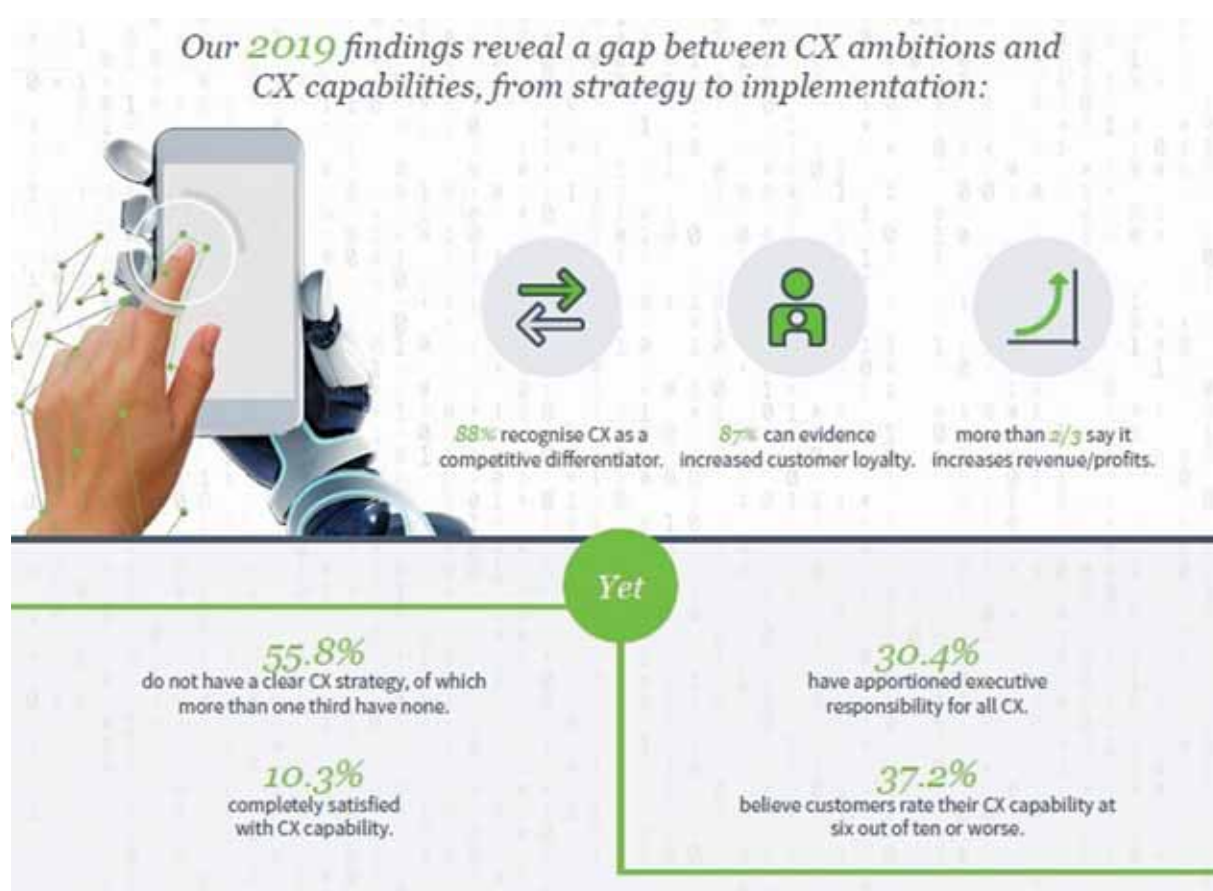
'Failure of planning'

The research also revealed that many brands are turning to technology to improve customer experience, but often without a clear strategy. Some 24% of businesses said the digital solutions they've rolled out (such as chatbots and AI) don't provide the functionality their customers need, while around half of respondents (61%) said customer awareness of such technologies is the biggest barrier to adoption.

Verbist added, "Rolling out a technology only to claim it doesn't provide the functionality required, or that customers are unaware of it, isn't a failure of the technology, but a failure of the planning. Technology can give businesses many powerful tools to improve and support great customer experience, but it's not simply a case of flicking a switch and it will work. Brands need to back their investments in technology with investments in their people, processes, and planning."

Nancy Jamison, Principal Analyst for Customer Care at Frost & Sullivan, advised that brands should look to address these areas of disconnect within their business and measure, benchmark and report effectively to ensure such disconnects don't creep back in. "Customer experience benchmarking is more important than ever. Brands need to invest in customer experience but they also need to know that those investments are paying off. And if they're not, they need to know what to change. Right now, it looks like brands aren't putting the right kind of focus on customer experience and, as a result, they're not seeing the outcomes they want. That's bad for them, and their customers," she said.

Speaking from a regional perspective, Paul Potgieter, Managing Director- UAE, Dimension Data added, "Over the last decade, we have seen how organizations leverage



various strategies to optimize and synergize the end customer experience. When designed and implemented successfully, organizations achieve a higher degree of actualizing true value across the customer value chain. In addition, some of the challenges solved by the digitization of the customer experience domain is unique. Today, how

organizations understand and serve their customers has been underpinned by how technology can create and sustain an integrated experience for the end client. For the UAE, there is only acceleration of value on the customer experience front as technology becomes ubiquitous across our region."

Life after leprosy in Vietnam

THAI BINH PROVINCE: Tran Huu Hoa was scared, desperate and on the verge of suicide after his leprosy diagnosis in 1958, fearing he'd never work or marry in an age when lepers were completely shunned from Vietnamese society. He could not imagine he would find new life at the leprosy hospice where he has been living for 61 years, a walled off compound in northern Thai Binh province where he met his wife, worked as a union boss and took in needy children.

"There were about 2,000 people here then, mostly young people. It was fun because we started a teen union," the 80-year-old told AFP, sitting on his bed with his wife Teo of 54 years. Today there are only 190 patients at the hospital, all cured but living with disabilities caused by leprosy. Many walk with prosthetic legs. Others like Hoa have lost fingers. Some are so severely disabled they spend the day bent over in bed, covered with thick blankets to keep the cold at bay. Founded in 1900, Van Mon is the oldest leprosy hospital in northern Vietnam.

At its peak it treated 4,000 patients a year — a number that has dwindled as leprosy cases have dropped across Vietnam thanks to improved healthcare, hygiene and greater awareness of the disease. World Leprosy Day

is January 27. There were 248 people being treated for leprosy in 2017 in Vietnam, down by more than half from a decade earlier, according to data from the World Health Organization. But as numbers have decreased so have the live-in patients at the Van Mon centre. Meandering days are punctuated with a morning and midday meal. Some pass the time worshipping at the on-site chapel or pagoda, while most watch TV or listen to the radio during the day when they are not sleeping. "I have no one to count on, I'm so lonely, so I just follow God. When I die I will follow God then too," said Pham Van Bac, 83, who has been at the centre since 1960. His daughter no longer visits and his grandchildren come only once a year, so he has little to look forward to most days, he says. — AFP



THAI BINH PROVINCE: This picture taken on January 20, 2019 shows leprosy patient Nguyen Quang Chieu, 85, wearing his wool cap at the Van Mon Leprosy hospice compound, northern Vietnam's oldest leprosy hospital. — AFP

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Dr Hamoud Abdullah Alarouj
ENT Specialist

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

Specialized in:

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

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Member of the Society of American Gastrointestinal & Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES)
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- ◆ Hernia repair
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- ◆ Minor surgeries (lipoma, sebaceous cyst, ingrowing nail)
- ◆ Hemorrhoids, fistula & anal fissure surgeries
- ◆ Breast surgeries
- ◆ Thyroid & adrenal surgeries
- ◆ Cholecystectomy & laparoscopic appendectomy
- ◆ Liver, pancreas & bile ducts surgeries

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Scope of Clinical Practice:

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- ◆ Surgical Treatment of Inflammatory Bowel Abscess
- ◆ Treatment of Perianal Fistula & Complex Perianal Fistula (complications)
- ◆ VAAFI Procedure (Treatment of Fistula through Fistuloscope)
- ◆ Treatment of Irritable Bowel Symptoms
- ◆ Colonoscopy & Gastroscopy
- ◆ Stomach Balloon Insertion & removal
- ◆ Bariatric Surgery - Lap Sleeve Gastrectomy
- ◆ Gallstones & Abdominal Hernias Surgery
- ◆ Colonic Hydrotherapy & Fecal Incontinence Treatment
- ◆ Laparoscopic mini bypass
- ◆ Transanal minimally invasive surgery

Academic Certificates, Trainings & Fellowships:

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

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

مستشفى دار الشفاء
Dar Al Shifa Hospital
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DR. FAHAD AL-MUKHAIZEEM
Consultant Pediatrician

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

Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St.1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B

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

Academic Certificates - Training

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

Scope of clinical Practice.

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

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Jabriya, 4th Ring Road, Block 1A Floor 9 - Clover Center Mazaya Building

What's On

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah sponsors ceremony of Kuwaiti students graduated from Australia

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah received in the White Palace Jonathan Gilbert, Australian Ambassador to Kuwait, and Ian Halliday, Australian Trade Commissioner for Middle East and Africa and the accompanied delegation on the occasion of visiting Kuwait.

The visit comes to discuss means of strengthening the economic relations between Kuwait and Australia. Sheikh Mubarak stressed that the private sector in Kuwait is keen on increasing the investment and commercial relations between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the Australian trade commissioner indicated that he is delighted on this visit, stressing the importance and long historical relationship between the two countries, adding that Australia is an attractive market for foreign investment as it offers incentives in various sectors, such as tourism and hotels, agriculture and food, and oil and gas.

Furthermore, the Australian ambassador thanked Sheikh Mubarak for agreeing to sponsor the first graduation ceremony honoring Kuwaiti students graduated from Australian universities. The ceremony will be held on the 12th of February at the Regency Hotel. The ceremony, which will take place on an annual basis, is to honor Kuwaiti students studying in various Australian universities in different fields, as currently there are more than 1,000 Kuwaiti students studying in Australia. At the end of the visit, Sheikh Mubarak stressed on the continuation of cooperation at various commercial and investment levels between the two countries.



Sheraton Kuwait Awarded 1st rank at Horeca Kuwait 2019



The Sheraton Kuwait, a Luxury Collection Hotels' Culinary Team dominated this year's Salon Culinaire competition, clearly showcasing the hotel's leading position during the Horeca exhibition which is Kuwait's largest cooking competition program. The contest among Kuwait's leading hotel and restaurant chefs lasted for three days which included a variety of activities such as live cook-

ing competitions that ranged from appetizers, desserts, hot and cold beverage and display categories. The competition was held under the supervision of world class chefs and an international panel of culinary experts.

All the attending judges unanimously agreed that the culinary team's performance was excellent and presented their winning creation with luxury touches not to forget the

top quality materials used by the team to prepare their dishes. Sheraton Kuwait has been awarded a trophy for winning the overall battle with six gold, eight silver, 13 bronze and three merit and appreciation certificates.

Fahed Abushaar - Complex General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait and Mounir Amer- General Manager of Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait and all the Department Heads com-

mended the Culinary Team that participated in the Horeca Exhibition and praised their efforts for the exceptional performance and outstanding skills. Abushaar recognized the efforts of Chef Frank Noack - Cluster Director of Culinary for his successful team management and guidance which have strengthened the presence of Sheraton Kuwait and maintained the high level of performance.



ACK student internship at Habitat Museum

Australian College of Kuwait - ACK's student, Ibrahim Al-Kandari was given an internship opportunity at the Habitat Museum in Al-Shaheed Park. The Habitat Museum is a museum located in Al-Shaheed Park which was established in 2015. Its gallery showcases different aspects of Kuwait's ecosystem such as the flora, fauna and landscapes.

Kandari was assigned to work within the Museum. His training included giving

tours to the Museum visitors; he personally guided school students, other college students and the general public around the Museum.

Kandari described the experience to be a very positive one, saying the practical experience helped him immensely and added to his skillset. "The ACK family and I would like to thank the Habitat Museum for their support in the internship program. It would be a pleasure to work with them again in future," said Kandari.

ACK strives to increase opportunities for students to take part in vocational training in order to better develop their professional skills, it offers many opportunities for students in different majors to get hands-on practice in their field before they graduate.



Czech Philharmonic Orchestra's performance mesmerizes audience

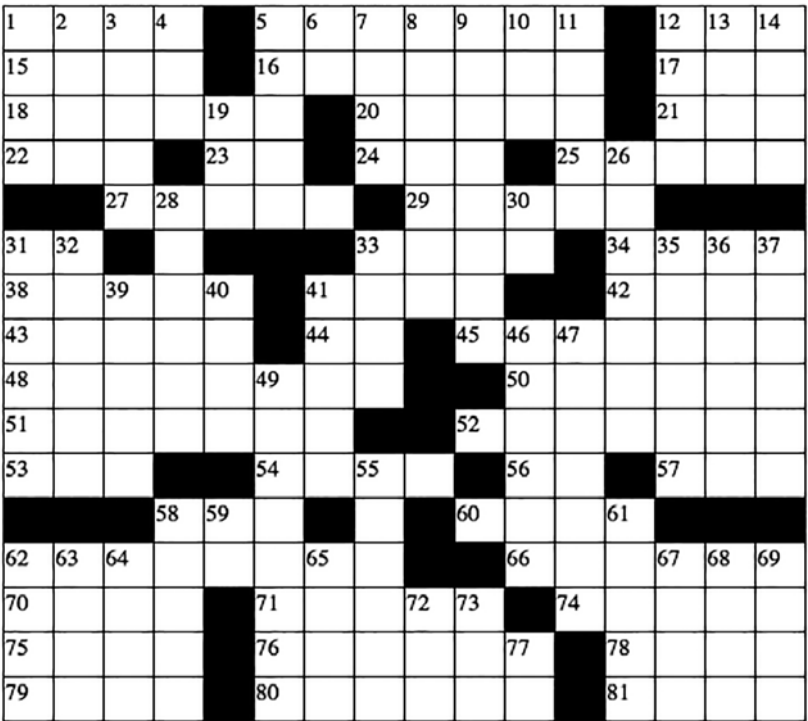
The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra's performance in Kuwait mesmerized the audience who were fully attentive to musicians throughout the evening Friday. The Orchestra, performing at Abdulhussein Abdulredh Theater, played six classical pieces indeed taking the audience to worlds of art, literature, history and theaters. The musical marked the end of the 25th Al-Qurain Cultural Festival, with activities also held at Al-Yarmouk Cultural Festival, National Museum and Kuwait National Library. One of the main events was a tribute to the late Redha Al-Feeli and Abdulhussein Abdulredha. Another event dealt with role of the late Abdulaziz Hussein in promotion of culture and education in Kuwait. Exhibitions for photos, paintings and artifacts were held, in addition to a seminar about the responsibility of

the translator in Kuwait's 2035 vision. Al-Qurain Cultural Festival celebrated this year the 120th anniversary of an agreement between Kuwait and Britain according to which the UK would be providing protection for the Gulf state. — KUNA



Head of the joint operations group at the National Bank of Egypt (NBE) Mohammed Al-Qamash and head of the bank's transfers sector Amir Matta recently honored the bank's ACH manager Alaa Ajmaan for his efforts in promoting work performance and banking services.

CROSSWORD 2120



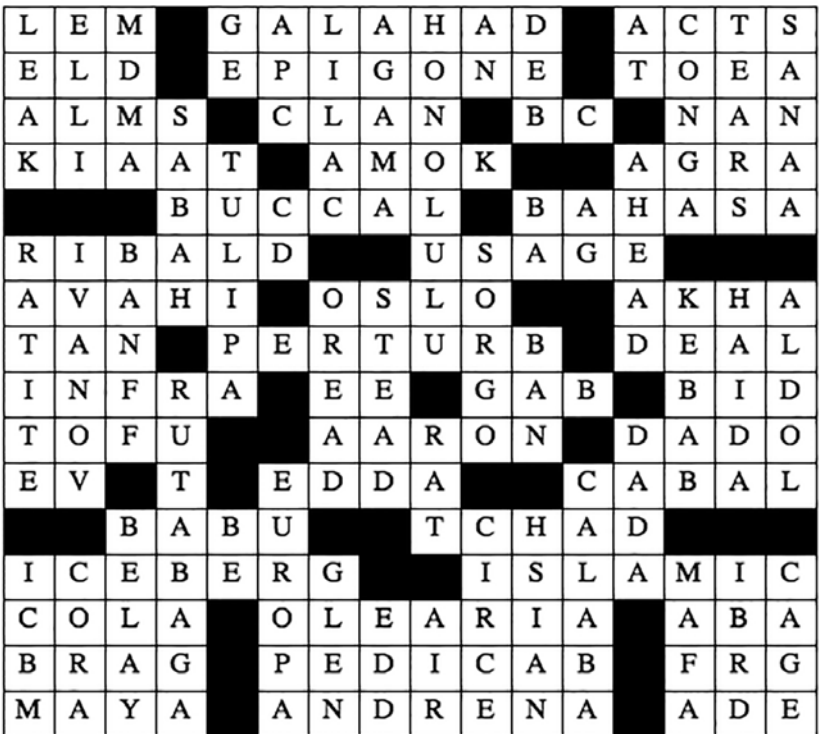
ACROSS

1. Largest known toad species.
5. A member of a North American Indian people of southwestern Oregon.
12. A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
15. An ancient Egyptian city on the west bank of the Nile opposite Cairo.
16. A stone pillar having a rectangular cross section tapering towards a pyramidal top.
17. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
18. In an early stage of development.
20. Syncopated music in duple time for dancing the rumba.
21. Electrical conduction through a gas in an applied electric field.
22. A federal agency established to coordinate programs aimed at reducing pollution and protecting the environment.
23. In operation or operational.
24. A rapid bustling commotion.
25. A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
27. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
29. (dentistry) A filling consisting of a solid substance (as gold or porcelain) fitted to a cavity in a tooth and cemented into place.
31. Being or moving higher in position or greater in some value.
34. (Greek mythology) Greek god of war.
38. A fine strong sheer silky fabric made of silk or rayon or nylon.
42. Liver or meat or fowl finely minced or ground and variously seasoned.
43. A member of the working class (not necessarily employed).
44. A hemoprotein composed of globin and heme that gives red blood cells their characteristic color.
45. An ache localized in the middle or inner ear.
48. The mints.
50. Indian grammarian whose grammatical rules for Sanskrit are the first known example of descriptive linguistics (circa 400 BC).
51. Not eaten or used up.
52. Insoluble pigments that account for the color of e.g. skin and scales and feathers.
53. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
54. Advanced in years.
56. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
57. A graphical recording of the cardiac cycle produced by an electrocardiograph.
60. A person who is entitled by law or by the terms of a will to inherit the estate of another.
62. A plant of the genus *Aquilegia* having irregular showy spurred flowers.
66. (of reproduction) Not involving the fusion of male and female gametes reproduction".
70. Knowledge gained through tradition or anecdote.
71. A bar or bars of rolled steel making a track along which vehicles can roll.
74. Doglike nocturnal mammal of Africa and southern Asia that feeds chiefly on carrion.
75. Someone who copies the words or behavior of another.
76. Sell (something) again after having bought it.
78. A city in the Asian part of Russia.
79. A carriage consisting of two wheels and calash top.
80. A name for the Old Testament God as transliterated from the Hebrew YHWH.
81. A short personal letter.

DOWN

1. American novelist (1909-1955).
2. Disability of walking due to crippling of the legs or feet.
3. A member of a Turkic people of Uzbekistan and neighboring areas.
4. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
5. Formerly included in genus *Cedrela*.
6. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
7. A Chadic language spoken in Chad.
8. The act of avoiding capture (especially by cunning).
9. A liquid terpene with a lemon odor.
10. A state-chartered savings bank owned by its depositors and managed by a board of trustees.
11. Jordan's port.
12. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
13. A large area of land preserved in its natural state as public property.
14. Type genus of the family Arcidae.
19. A cruel and brutal fellow.
26. Low spreading tropical American shrub with long slender leaves used to make a mildly stimulating drink resembling tea.
28. A genus of Scolopacidae.
30. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
32. Small voraciously carnivorous freshwater fishes of South America that attack and destroy living animals.
33. Ulcerated chilblain on the heel.
35. French tragedian who based his works on Greek and Roman themes (1639-1699).
36. Relating to or being a member of an ethnic group.
37. Having vision, not blind n 1.
39. Swedish chemist remembered for his invention of dynamite and for the bequest that created the Nobel prizes (1833-1896).
40. Clean or orderly.
41. The imperial dynasty ruling China from about the 18th to the 12th centuries BC.
46. South American cavy.
47. English courtier (a favorite of Elizabeth I) who tried to colonize Virginia.
49. Creeping shrub of eastern North America having white bell-shaped flowers followed by spicy red berrylike fruit and shiny aromatic leaves that yield wintergreen oil.
55. A member of the Caddo people of NE Texas.
58. Characterized by intense emotion.
59. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
61. A synthetic silklike fabric.
63. The 19th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
64. The chief solid component of mammalian urine.
65. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
67. A written proposal or reminder.
68. In or of the present month.
69. A block of solid substance (such as soap or wax).
72. The basic unit of money in Bulgaria.
73. An inflammatory disease of connective tissue with variable features including fever and weakness and fatigability and joint pains and skin lesions on the face or neck or arms.
77. A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.

Friday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today finds you sympathetic and understanding of the feeling of those close to you. You seem to have thrown your more judgmental attitude out of the window. You have learned you thrive when you surround yourself with those who are positive and uplifting. You are becoming the friend to others that you wish them to be for you. This is a great step in the right direction. Your life and all things in it seem to be full of happiness. You are on a very positive path. Hard work and dedication will lead you to great reward.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may find you tendency to be indecisive may cause conflict with someone you care about. Consider all the options diplomatically, then make a choice. Recognize that ignoring this situation is not the right choice. Consider consequences, then choose, and act. Someone may find your actions offensive. Pay no attention to anyone who doesn't seem supportive. They will get over it.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Today may find you a bit unsatisfied with your surroundings. It may be someone or the physical place you are in that is just not sitting right with you. You may feel as if someone or something is holding you back or may just feel frustrated by your life in general. This may be a great time for an evening out and about. Change your surroundings. Clear your head but choose your company wisely to avoid any conflict as this is a time you need to have fun. You have to find a comfortable balance between work life, family, and social life. Gemini, remember it is good for you to get out and enjoy yourself from time to time.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

The company you keep says a lot about you. Make time for your loved ones. Don't wait for a holiday or a special event. What is a little thing to you can make a big difference in the life of someone you care about. You are creative enough to turn a small act into a big memory. Take the time. Make the effort. The reward will be great.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have a tendency to be indecisive at times. This could cause conflict with someone special to you. Consider all the options and put much thought into your decisions today. Make a choice. This is not the time to procrastinate. Someone may be offended by or not agree with the choice you make. Remember, Leo, you can not please everyone all of the time. Do what is best for you and yours.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You can stop looking for perfect relationships. Since every person is flawed, a relationship between two of those persons can't be perfect. You just have to decide how much imperfection you can tolerate. Limit your relationships to the people who don't have the flaws you can't live with. Surround yourself with people who are aware of your imperfections and love you anyway. Peace is conceived when love and tolerance are united.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Songs From the Year 2003

Find and circle all of the songs from 2003 that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 22 letters spell an additional song title from 2003.



- ALL I HAVE
ANGEL
BABY BOY
BEAUTIFUL
CLOCKS
COME OVER
DRIFT AWAY
FIGHTER
FRONTIN'
GET BUSY
GET LOW
GOSSIP FOLKS
HEADSTRONG
I CAN
I WANT YOU
I'M WITH YOU
IGNITION
IN DA CLUB
INTO YOU
INTUITION
LANDSLIDE
LIKE A STONE
LIKE GLUE
MESMERIZE
MISS YOU
PICTURE
RAIN ON ME
RIGHT THURR
SAY YES
SENRORITA
SO GONE
SOMEDAY
STAND UP
STUCK
SUGA SUGA
SUNRISE
SUPERMAN
TROUBLE
UNWELL



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Why do today what you can put off until tomorrow? This seems to be your attitude today and you may be creating a stressful situation that can be avoided. Get in gear. Snap out of your dreamy state and take care of business. You may find others becoming frustrated with your lack of ambition today. Take a walk and a few deep breaths. Refresh and restart. There is no time like the present to get your focus back and get things done. Great reward will come from your hard work today.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is your time to shine. You are full of pride and proud of your accomplishments. You are being noticed in the workplace and have been excelling at your job. You are very observant of the feelings of those around you and are able to make them feel good about themselves. You feel much support from your peers and family. Everything in your world is beginning to feel healthy and come natural. You begin to feel as if something doesn't come from the heart it is irrelevant in your world. You surround yourself with people you feel are real and true friends. This is a great time for you and others begin to admire you not only for your accomplishments that the way you make them feel about themselves.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

The whole, big picture of life becomes clear when you stop focusing on the smaller parts: this is a time of planning, repairing and healing for forward motion. Seeing everything, and not just the parts, equips you to deal with issues and bumps in the road on a grander scale. Legal matters could cause you to wonder, but this is taken care of after some work; this could involve a mortgage, lease or will. Family matters are prominent and could cause changes in plans or decisions. When you make up your mind, there's no turning back which is fine with you; someone else may not be satisfied with this. You move further away from toxic people, places and things without even looking back.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may find yourself getting mixed signals from someone close to you. You feel as if you don't know up from down. The harder you try to please this person, the more you seem to do wrong. You could find yourself in the company of someone whose values are opposite of yours. You do not like what they represent. You have a strong sense of values and morals and are very picky about the company you keep. It is important to remain kind and try to be understanding. This is why they make chocolate and vanilla, not everyone has the same taste.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a time you feel more inward. You may be in the mood to only spend time with those closest to you. A nice evening at home will bring the most peace into your world today. This is a great time to do some soul searching. You have questions about what all happened in your world the led you to the place you are in today. You may be able to appreciate the hardships you have experienced and the lessons they taught you. This is a point you start to appreciate the wisdom you have gained through your life.

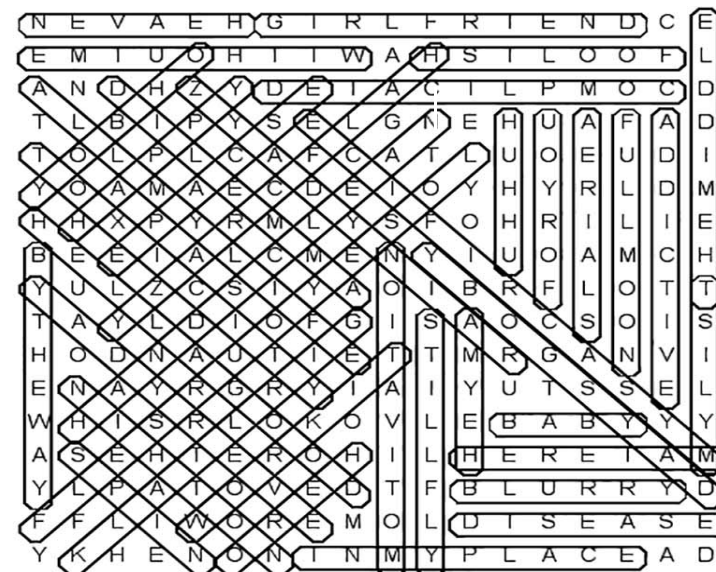


Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your relationships have taken priority in your life. You value the love you have for others and the love you feel from them. Your emotional needs are being deeply satisfied. There is a vast difference between independence and loneliness. At this time, you seem to be becoming more of a homebody. You find more at ease staying in surrounded only by your loved ones or close friends. This is where you belong as your feelings are finding you more reflective rather than expressive. You crave new beginnings, perhaps this would be a great time for a new experience or a new hobby.

Friday's Solution

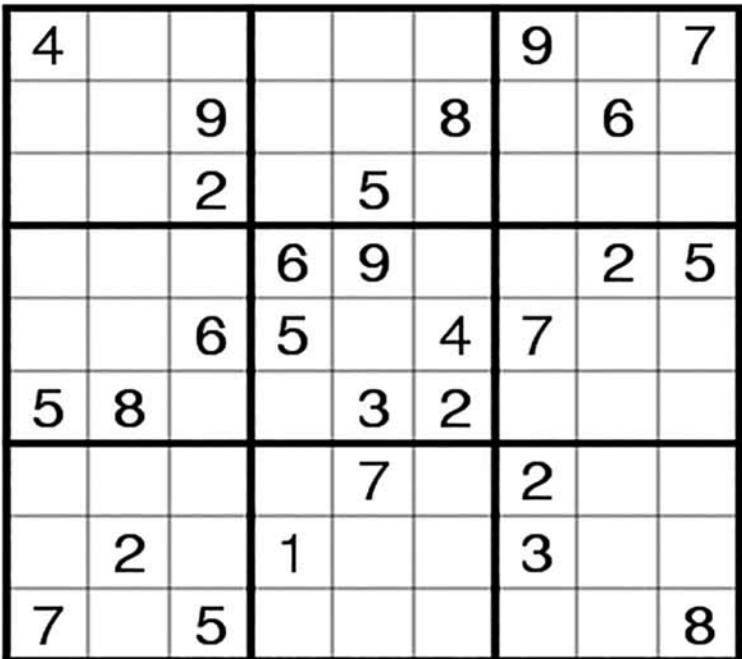
Songs From the Year 2002



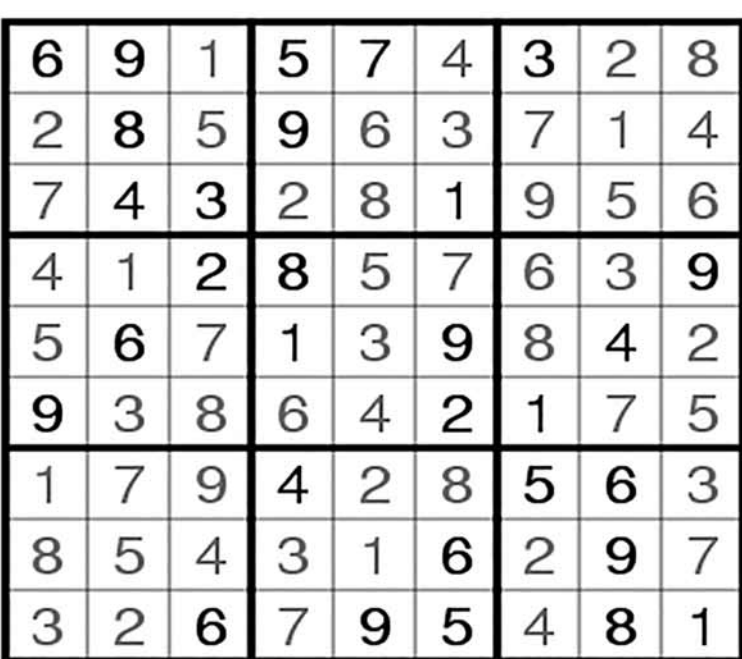
- ADDICTIVE
AERIALS
ALL MY LIFE
BABY
BLURRY
BY THE WAY
COMPLICATED
DAYS GO BY
DILEMMA
DISEASE
ESCAPE
EVERYDAY
FOOLISH
FOR YOU
FULL MOON
GIRL TALK
GIRLFRIEND
HALFCRAZY
HANDS CLEAN
HAPPY
HEAVEN
HELLA GOOD
HERE I AM
HERO
HEY MA
IN MY PLACE
LOSE YOURSELF
MOTIVATION
MY LIST
MY SACRIFICE
NOTHIN'
OH BOY
RAINY DAYZ
SPIN
STILL FLY
THE MIDDLE
TOXICITY
UH HUH
WITHOUT ME
WORK IT

The hidden song title is: CAN'T GET YOU OUT OF MY HEAD

Daily SuDoku



Friday's Solution



Lifestyle

SUNDAY, JANUARY 27, 2019



A model displays an outfit of Spanish designer Ana Locking Autumn/Winter 2019 collection during the Madrid's Mercedes Benz Fashion Week on January 25, 2019 in Madrid. — AFP

For Cuaron fans visiting Mexico, all roads lead to ‘Roma’

The success of “Roma,” which garnered 10 Oscar nominations this week, has made a star out of one of the movie’s key protagonists: the Mexico City neighborhood that gave it its name. Directed by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Alfonso Cuaron, who sumptuously shot it in black and white, the movie is set in the 1970s in the Mexico City neighborhood where he grew up, La Roma — today a magnet for film-buff tourists seeking the modern-day, full-color version.

The neighborhood Cuaron depicts as an upper-middle-class bastion of spacious art-deco houses and fancy chrome-clad cars fell on hard times when it was devastated by a 1985 earthquake that killed more than 10,000 people in Mexico City. But its central location and leafy streets helped bring it back, and today it is a hipster paradise of trendy bars, cafes, restaurants and shops. One of those streets in particular has drawn an unprecedented flow of tourists since “Roma” came out, according to residents: Tepeji street, where Cuaron grew up and meticulously recreated his boyhood home for the film.

Outside number 22 Tepeji, a newly installed metal plaque informs visitors: “This is where ‘Roma’ was filmed, 2016-2017. We loved the movie. It captivated us from the first moment. We decided to come see the house in person,” said Esteban Alvarez, 27, a musician from Costa Rica who was making the pilgrimage with his girlfriend. They have joined a stream of tourists and journalists

hunting for the locations where the highly autobiographical film was shot — Tlaxcala street, the busy intersection of Insurgentes and Baja California, the kindergarten where Cuaron went to school.

“It was like, ‘Oh, look! We saw that place in the movie! Is it really the same one?’” Alvarez told AFP. There is even a guidebook for people trying to retrace the film’s steps, while Conde Nast Traveler published an article this week to help tourists find “Mexico City Airbnbs that Could Have Been in ‘Roma.’”

Art imitating life

“Roma” is an intimate portrait of the two women who raised Cuaron: his nanny, played by breakout indigenous star Yalitza Aparicio, and his mother, played by actress Marina de Tavira — both up for Oscars. Die-hard fans will be keen to know that number 22 Tepeji is not in fact the house where Cuaron grew up. His family lived across the street, in number 21. The identical buildings were constructed in the 1930s. But Cuaron’s house was remodeled by subsequent owners, so he opted for the one opposite.

Cuaron has said that production designer Eugenio Caballero did such a good job recreating his childhood home that his family felt like they were inside the real thing when they visited the set. As visitors gathered outside number 22 one recent afternoon, Paulina Cruz slipped outside number 21 to walk the dog. Cruz is a domestic

worker employed by the family that lives in Cuaron’s old house. “I’m the nanny for the kids who live here now,” she said with a smile.

With her dark sunglasses and jeans, she looked little like Cleo, the meek nanny in “Roma.” But she said she loved the movie. “I was happy to see them give an important role to the domestic workers,” she said. “Just like in the movie, we really do grow very close to the families we work for, especially the children. Spending every day with them, they start to feel like family.” Living in the house where Cuaron grew up, she added, “is very cool.”

‘A party’

The owner of the house where the film was shot is Gloria Monreal, who said with a grin that turning her home over to the production team for several months was “a party.” Far from resenting the stream of tourists outside her front door, she said she was “very happy” to chat with them and pose for pictures. She even invites them to sign a guest book.

“I thought it would be nice to have all these lovely people write about what the film meant to them and give it to Alfonso as a gift,” said Monreal, who knew Cuaron as a boy. Nearby is Tlaxcala street, where Cuaron attended the Condesa kindergarten as a child. “I have such fond memories of it I want it to be in my movie,” the director told teacher Victoria Pantoja, the granddaughter of the school’s founder, when he visited.



The production team spent more than a month recreating the red facade of the 1970s, the slide and the rest of the playground. Pantoja, 32, hopes Cuaron will visit again. When he came to shoot the movie, the teachers were so star-struck that “nobody remembered to ask for a picture with him,” she said with a laugh. — AFP

In this file photo Mexican director Alfonso Cuaron arrives for the Los Angeles premiere of “Roma” at the Egyptian theatre in Hollywood. — AFP photos



People walk on January 19, 2019 in the neighborhood where the Netflix film Roma, with 10 Oscar nominations, was filmed in Mexico City.

At Sundance, a fresh look at man’s first walk on the Moon

It's easy to think that 50 years on, we know everything there is to know about the Apollo 11 mission and man's legendary first footsteps on the Moon. But never-before-seen NASA footage unearthed in the National Archives offered filmmaker Todd Miller a unique opportunity to revisit what he calls an "amazing testament of human ingenuity."

The result is the documentary "Apollo 11," which made its world premiere late Thursday at the Sundance Film Festival, six months before the formal 50th anniversary of the lunar walk on July 20, 1969. In an interview with AFP, Miller said he wanted to recount the unfolding of the mission without embellishment — no narration, just images, in a style reminiscent of France's cinema verite movement in the 1960s.

"What we didn't know when we started the project was that there was a treasure trove of 70mm, large format film, related to the Apollo program — namely, Apollo 11," Miller explained. The footage had been somehow lost in the depths of the National Archives for decades, after the US space agency NASA had filed it there. Miller said he spent two years rescanning "hundreds and hundreds of reels" from that find. And then NASA gave him access to 11,000 hours of uncatalogued audio recordings.

The director and his team listened to a fair bit of that, and relied on research done by experts who had been reviewing it for five years — and the film took on a whole new dimension. "A good 50 percent of the film is images that have never been seen before but really, 100 percent of it has really never truly been seen before — the quality of it all," he said. "We re-scanned all the new stuff but we also re-scanned existing material as well."

The end product is both intimate and monumental — the stunning new scans were done in high-definition, offering filmgoers a chance to see familiar images in a much larger format, as well as brand-new images of a defining moment in history.

‘Time capsule’

Miller says he vividly remembers when the projector came on for the first time, and he and his team saw the first new images. "It was an aerial shot of the Saturn 5 being — in large format, 70-millimeter — being taken out to the pad. Our jaws were on the floor," he said. "We knew we had large format material, but we didn't know A, how good it was, and B, we didn't know that they put a large-format camera on a helicopter and got an aerial of that moment," he added.

"It was really, really amazing." Like "First Man,"

Damien Chazelle's intimate biopic about Neil Armstrong that came out last year, "Apollo 11" also seeks to remind younger generations of the wonders of space, and how extraordinary the mission was. For Miller, the work and commitment of the astronauts involved offers "a primer for all that's happening now and for what's to come" in terms of future lunar exploration.

"I hope our film is kind of a time capsule, a historical record that people can watch and go 'Whoa, that is really amazing what those people did,'" he said. "When hundreds of thousands of people can come together like they did for this mission, they can accomplish great stuff, so I think it gives us all hope for the future." Over the years, Sundance has offered a platform for independent filmmakers and launched movies that have gone on to dominate the Oscars conversation, including 2015's "Manchester by the Sea."

Miller screened his last film, "Dinosaur 13" — a documentary about the largest Tyrannosaurus Rex fossil ever found — here in 2014. This year's festival, which runs through February 3, is the first since founder and screen legend Robert Redford said he was retiring from acting — maybe. On Thursday, he said he was planning to step back from being the face of the event, to focus on spending more time



An astronaut poses with the audience during the "Apollo 11" Premiere during the 2019 Sundance Film Festival at The Ray on January 25, 2019 in Park City, Utah. — AFP

French Oscar-winning composer dies aged 86

Prolific French composer Michel Legrand, who won three Oscars and five Grammys during a career spanning more than half a century, died Saturday aged 86, his spokesman said. Legrand lived in a musical whirlwind, with the same appetite for popular music to jazz, from conducting to film. "Since I was a child, my ambition has been to live completely surrounded by music, my dream was to not miss anything, which is why I have never focused on a single musical discipline," he said.

He first won an Academy Award in 1969 for the song "The Windmills of Your Mind" from the film "The Thomas Crown Affair". He followed that with Oscars for his music for "Summer of '42" in 1972 and for "Yentl" in 1984. Legrand, who had been scheduled to stage concerts in Paris in April, died early Saturday with his wife, the actress Macha Meril, his spokesman told AFP. During his long career, he worked with some of the music world's biggest stars such as Miles Davies, Ray Charles, Frank Sinatra, Aretha Franklin, Barbra Streisand, Liza Minnelli and Edith Piaf.

He also won five Grammys from 17 nominations, including one for the theme from "Summer of '42". "For me, he is immortal, through his music and his personality", French composer and conductor Vladimir Cosma told AFP on hearing of Legrand's passing. "He was such an optimistic personality, with a kind of naivety in optimism, he saw everything in rosy colours!"

‘A magical world’

Born in Paris on February 24, 1932, Legrand belonged to a family of musicians. His father, who left the family home when Legrand was just three, was a composer and conductor. "The world of childhood, mine, was a lonely world. I did not like going to school, I did not like the world of children and adults, I hated to hear 'eat your soup, go bed'," he remembered. At just 10 years old, he entered the Paris Conservatory of music.

"For me, who hated life, when I first came to the Conservatory I crossed the threshold into a magical world where the only question was music", he said. He began composing film music in the 1960s with the emergence of French New Wave directors such as Agnes Varda, Jean-Luc Godard and Jacques Demy. He composed the scores for Demy's "Les Parapluies de Cherbourg" ("The Umbrellas of Cherbourg") in 1964 and "Les Demoiselles de Rochefort" ("The Young Ladies of Rochefort") in 1967, for both of which Legrand received Academy Award nominations. He moved to the United States in the 1960s. "It was a real risk to leave France, landing in Hollywood without real commitment," he wrote in his 2013 autobiography, describing this step as "part of Russian roulette". The father of three children, he married his third wife, Macha Meril, in 2014. — AFP



In this file photo taken on November 9, 2005 French pianist Michel Legrand poses during a rehearsal with Cuban pianist Chucho Valdes before their joint concert in Madrid. — AFP

‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ director blasts new sex abuse allegations

"Bohemian Rhapsody" director Bryan Singer on Thursday dismissed a bombshell article detailing fresh sexual misconduct allegations — some involving teenage boys — as a "homophobic smear piece." The Atlantic on Wednesday published accounts from four new accusers — including two who said Singer had sex with them when they were underage — in an article that also chronicled years of similar allegations.

But 53-year-old Singer, who is behind such hits as the "X-Men" movies and "Superman Returns," said the article was timed to capitalize on the success of "Bohemian Rhapsody" — which is nominated for five Oscars, including best picture. "It is no surprise that, with Bohemian Rhapsody being an award-winning hit, this homophobic smear piece has been conveniently timed to take advantage of its success," Singer said in a statement sent to AFP by his attorney Thursday.

"The last time I posted about this subject, Esquire magazine was preparing to publish an article written by a homophobic journalist who has a bizarre obsession with me dating back to 1997," he added, without identifying the reporter. "After careful fact-checking and, in consideration of the lack of credible sources, Esquire chose not to publish this piece of vendetta journalism." "That didn't stop this writer from selling it to The Atlantic," he said.

‘Predatory’

The article's authors, Esquire journalists Alex French and Maximilian Potter, said they spent a year investigating lawsuits and allegations against Singer and interviewed more than 50 sources. One interviewee claimed Singer had sex with him in 1997, when he was 17. Another



In this file photo director Bryan Singer poses on arrival for the premiere of X-Men Apocalypse in central London on May 9, 2016. — AFP

alleged he also had a sexual encounter with Singer that year, when he was 15.

Both men said Singer knew they were under 18, the age of consent in California. "The portrait of Singer that emerges is of a troubled man who surrounded himself with vulnerable teenage boys, many of them estranged from their families," the article said. "Their accounts suggest that Singer didn't act alone; he was aided by friends and associates who brought him young men." "And he was abetted, in a less direct way, by an industry in which a record of producing hits confers immense power."

French and Potter explained on Twitter that the article ran in The Atlantic because it was rejected by executives at Hearst, which owns Esquire, for unknown reasons.



Disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein leaves State Supreme Court in Manhattan with his new team of lawyers in New York on January 25, 2019. — AFP

Weinstein granted request to change lawyers

A US judge granted Harvey Weinstein's request Friday to take on new lawyers to defend him against sexual assault charges, noting that two of them recently represented one of the Hollywood mogul's most high-profile accusers. Weinstein, who denies allegations of sexual misconduct by dozens of women, is switching from Ben Brafman to a team that includes Florida trial lawyer Jose Baez and Harvard Law professor Ronald Sullivan, both of whom defended actress Rose McGowan in a drug case last year.

McGowan was one of the first accusers to make public allegations about Weinstein, triggering his downfall in 2017 and the emergence of the powerful #MeToo anti-abuse movement that has since felled many public figures. She has claimed that Weinstein had someone plant cocaine that authorities found in her wallet. "If Rose McGowan was called to testify at your trial... the attorneys may not use any information they may have learned in representing her," New York judge James Burke warned Weinstein, who was dressed in a dark gray suit and black tie.

"Do you understand they might not cross-examine Ms McGowan as vigorously as other attorneys might have?" he added, to which the 66-year-old acquiesced. Sullivan and Baez indicated they were aware of the restrictions

they face in the case. "I have been messed with every step of the way in this fight against a super predator. So much evil, so much complicity," McGowan said on Twitter. "This case is a test of the presumption of innocence — he should be entitled to the same presumption as everyone else," Baez said outside the courtroom.

Baez gained attention for his 2008 acquittal of Casey Anthony, a mother charged with the murder of her daughter, and Sullivan is considered a specialist in criminal cases deemed "impossible" to defend. The judge's warnings relate to a key question ahead of Weinstein's trial: which women will be authorized to testify against him. Since October 2017, Weinstein has been accused of sexual harassment and assault by more than 80 women, including prominent actresses such as Ashley Judd and Angelina Jolie. The case brought in New York — focused on the alleged assaults on two women — is the only one that has resulted in criminal proceedings against Weinstein. The next hearing is scheduled for March 8 — after a one-day delay — and the Weinstein trial could begin in May. — AFP

DMX freed after year in prison for tax fraud

American rapper DMX was released early Friday from a West Virginia federal prison after serving a year behind bars for tax fraud, his lawyer told AFP. The 48-year-old performer — whose real name is Earl Simmons — pleaded guilty in November 2017 to evading \$1.7 million in US tax payments between 2002 and 2005. On top of jail time, the Internal Revenue Service ordered him to pay \$2.3 million in restitution.

Prosecutors said the star had dodged taxes by living on cash, without maintaining a bank account or filing required tax returns to the IRS. The native of Yonkers — a suburb of New York — will be under supervised release for three years. DMX, whose deep, gravelly voice and dark, often violent lyrics catapulted him to fame in the early nineties, has a colorful criminal history. The father of 15 has been arrested for a variety of offenses over the years including drug possession, reckless driving, animal cruelty and failing to pay child support.

Artistically he is best known for his 2000 smash hit "Party Up (Up In Here)," in which he belittles other rappers. DMX is rumored to have spent his year in prison writing new songs, with plans to drop a new album now that he is free. Entertainment news outlet TMZ also reported that the veteran rapper has offers to do a biopic. — AFP



In this file photo taken on June 13, 2012, Rapper DMX speaks during the 2012 Rock the Bells Festival press conference and Fan Appreciation Party on at Santos Party House in New York City. — AFP



Model display outfits of 'La Condesa' brand's Autumn/Winter 2019 collection by Spanish designer Marina Conde during the Madrid's Mercedes Benz Fashion Week on January 26, 2019 in Madrid. — AFP photos



Madrid Fashion Week

Lifestyle | Features



'The Remedy by the Recognition of the Rights of the Chosen One' is displayed at the "Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time: Art, Culture, and Exchange across Medieval Saharan Africa" exhibit at The Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University on January 25, 2019 in Evanston, north of Chicago, Illinois.



Paintings on panels titled 'Coronation of the Virgin' and 'The Crucifixion'.



A 'Baby Elephant' sculpture — AFP photos

US exhibit portrays Africa's interconnected medieval past

A first-of-its kind exhibition at a Chicago museum is challenging long-held views of the Middle Ages, exhibiting African artifacts that place the continent at the center of global trade and culture. The traveling exhibition "Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time" debuts at the Block Museum on the suburban Chicago campus of Northwestern University, before traveling to other North American museums.

The exhibit showcases more than 250 items, including many rare and precious artifacts on loan from West African institutions in Mali, Morocco and Nigeria, and traveling for

the first time outside of their home countries. The aims is to showcase what scholars have known for some time — that Africa was part of an interconnected world in the Middle Ages that brought wealth to the continent, and spread cultural and religious practices far and wide.

Africa "was definitely an economic engine" during the Middle Ages, said the Block Museum's Kathleen Berzock, who spent seven years curating the exhibit. "The driving idea behind the exhibition is that in the medieval period, Africa, and particularly West Africa, was playing an absolutely critical role in bringing together regions that

extended from Europe to North Africa to the Middle East," Berzock said.

Recent discoveries, new history

Organizers said the exhibit was the first time that a US museum had partnered with African counterparts to challenge notions of the continent isolated from the rest of the world during the eighth through sixteenth centuries. On display are artifacts that show evidence of global economic trade in African goods and materials, with emphasis on the role of West African gold.

These include rare fragmentary artifacts discovered at Saharan archeological sites, as well as African sculptures made of French copper, European religious artifacts made of African ivory, and other pieces of gold, ceramic, glass and textile. The objects tell a pre-slavery, pre-colonial narrative largely left out of history books and school classrooms, organizers said. "This history has not been brought to the fore," said Abdulkarim Kadiri, acting Director-General of Nigeria's National Commission for Museums and Monuments, who traveled to the United States for the show opening. "The recent discovery of these art objects has led to this exhibition," Kadiri told AFP. The exhibition next will travel to Toronto's Aga Khan Museum in September, and to the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art in Washington DC in April of 2020.



A 'Box with scenes of courtly life' and 'Casket' created from ivory.



Pieces of glass and ceramics titled 'Fragments'.

Holocaust museum stokes controversy among Hungary's Jews

As the world prepares to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day today, Hungarian Jews find themselves divided in a bitter dispute over the long-delayed opening of a new Holocaust museum in Budapest. The "House of Fates" complex, located on the run-down fringe of the city centre, is fronted by two 15-metre high towers of stacked cattle wagons connected by a giant, floodlit metal bridge in the shape of the Jewish Star of David.

The 24-million-euro (\$27 million) revamp of the sprawling site, a former railway station where Jews were deported to Nazi German death camps, was largely finished by 2015. But it has remained shuttered ever since, its exhibition space empty save for furniture in dusty bubble wrap, amid wrangles over its concept, suspicions from many Jews of official attempts to whitewash history, and political connections in its development.

Some 600,000 Hungarian Jews perished during the Holocaust, most of them deported in the space of a few months in 1944 with the assistance of the Hungarian authorities. Last September the government suddenly announced that it was handing ownership of the museum to EMIH (the United Hungarian Jewish Congregation). The group, affiliated with the international orthodox Chabad movement, was also tasked with finalizing the exhibition with a historian, Maria Schmidt, who is close to Hungary's nationalist-conservative Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

"A Holocaust museum should grab attention and stir emotion, and provide moral direction, not just information," Slomo Koves, chief rabbi of EMIH, told AFP last week. Koves says the museum — not likely to open before next year — will focus on personal stories of young people and aims to draw more than 100,000 high school students annually. "Kids these days are ignorant about the Holocaust, even Jewish kids, they need to be shaken out of their apathy," said Koves, 39, whose grandparents were Holocaust survivors.



'Not credible'

But the largest and longest-established Jewish organisation Mazsihisz worries that EMIH lacks the necessary expertise and that Schmidt has a reputation for glossing over the Holocaust. "She is not considered by experts as credible, no one knows what the museum's historical message will be," Mazsihisz leader Andras Heisler told AFP.

Schmidt's previous concept for the House of Fates covered just the years between 1938 and 1948, omitting rising anti-Semitism and the introduction of the first anti-Jewish law in post-World War I Europe under Hungary's interwar leader Miklos Horthy. Mazsihisz and international academics — including from the Yad Vashem Holocaust museum in Jerusalem — resigned from an advisory board over the distorted concept, leading to the deadlock.

Orban's government vehemently insists on its good faith towards the Jewish community, which at around 100,000 is the largest in central Europe. It introduced Holocaust education in schools, has supported another Holocaust museum in Budapest, and the renovation of several synagogues. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has also lauded Orban for his proclamation of "zero tolerance" of anti-Semitism.

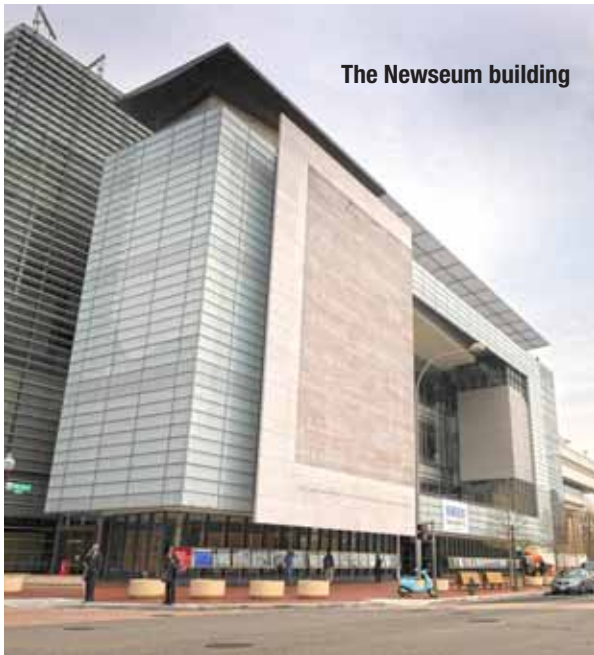
'Double game'

But many Jews regard Orban's track record on Jewish issues as chequered. An official memorial erected in 2014 that portrayed Hungary as an innocent victim of Nazi Germany incensed many Holocaust survivors. At a ceremony last week at the Grand Synagogue in Budapest — Europe's largest — to mark the anniversary of the liberation of the Budapest ghetto in 1945, some in the audience were unimpressed by a speech from a government official.

"He talked about Jewish-Christian European culture but outside a synagogue the government only ever speaks about Christian culture," Eva, 85, a Holocaust survivor, told AFP. Still others have accused the government of exploiting anti-Semitic tropes in its ferocious propaganda campaign against George Soros, the US-Hungarian billionaire of Jewish descent, whom Orban accuses of fomenting migration flows to Europe.

Last November, on the same day as the government announced funding for an anti-Semitism watchdog to be run by EMIH, a magazine owned by Schmidt depicted Jewish leader Andras Heisler surrounded by swirling banknotes. Orban plays a "double game" with the Jewish community, according to historian and author Krisztian Ungvary. "He is a populist trying to maximise votes, and that leads to sending signals toward the extreme right," Ungvary said.

As for the row over the museum, Ungvary says: "It would have been better to improve the existing albeit poorly run and designed Holocaust museum, the city does not need two". Koves insisted to AFP that the House of Fates exhibition is being reworked with international experts involved, and that it will tell the full story of the Holocaust. "Usually it is better to try work with the powers-that-be and make progress rather than protest and get nowhere," he said. — AFP



Newseum building, showcase for press, to be sold

The Newseum, a Washington museum showcasing the news media and promoting a free press, will shut its doors at the end of the year with a deal to sell the building housing it, the operators said Friday. The Freedom Forum, the creator and primary funder of the Newseum, agreed to sell the Pennsylvania Avenue building to Johns Hopkins University for \$372.5 million. The sale means the Newseum, which has attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors annually, will close its doors and seek a new location in the US capital area.

"We stand ready to continue much of the Newseum's important work for decades to come — through digital outreach, traveling exhibits, and web-based programs in schools around the world, as well as hopefully in a new physical home in the area," said Peter Prichard, chair of the Newseum board of trustees. The landmark building has hosted numerous conference and educational events since opening in 2008.

Johns Hopkins said it would use the facility, a short distance from the US Capitol, White House and Smithsonian museums, for its graduate academic programs in international relations, business and other areas. "With the acquisition and renovation of the Newseum, we will have an unparalleled opportunity to bring all of our current DC-based Johns Hopkins graduate programs together in a single, landmark, state-of-the-art building," Johns Hopkins president Ronald Daniels said.

The Newseum was launched with funding from the Freedom Forum, a nonprofit group created by USA Today founder Al Neuharth, but the center has been in financial difficulties for years. "This was a difficult decision, but it was the responsible one," said Jan Neuharth, chair and chief executive of the Freedom Forum. "We remain committed to continuing our programs — in a financially sustainable way — to champion the five freedoms of the First Amendment and to increase public awareness about the importance of a free and fair press." — AFP



People visit the new holocaust museum 'House of Fates' housed in what was the former 'Jozsefvarosi' railway station in Budapest. — AFP photos

Classifieds

Sunday, January 27, 2019

STATE OF KUWAIT
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Warm and with light to moderate variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h with a chance for haze.

BY NIGHT: Cool and Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain.

WEATHER WARNING	No Current Warnings		
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	<div>SFC. CHART 26/01/2019 0000 UTC</div>
KUWAIT CITY	22 °C	14 °C	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	25 °C	11 °C	
ABDALY	25 °C	09 °C	
BUBYAN	** °C	** °C	
JAHRA	26 °C	13 °C	
FAILAKA ISLAND	20 °C	14 °C	
SALMIYAH	17 °C	14 °C	
AHMADI	18 °C	15 °C	
NUWAISIB	27 °C	13 °C	
WAFRA	27 °C	12 °C	
SALMY	25 °C	09 °C	

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Sunday	01/27	Warm and with a chance for scattered light rain	27 °C	13 °C	SE-NE	15 - 40 km/h
Monday	01/28	Warm and Partly cloudy to cloudy + rising dust with a chance for rain that might be thundery at A significant decrease in temperature and some high clouds will appear	27 °C	14 °C	SE-NW	20 - 55 km/h
Tuesday	01/29		20 °C	12 °C	NW	10 - 35 km/h
Wednesday	01/30	Cool and Clouds will increase gradually	18 °C	09 °C	N-VRB	08 - 35 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	05:18
Sunrise	06:41
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:00
Sunset	17:21
Isha	18:41

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	25 °C
MIN. Temp.	11 °C
MAX. RH	100 %
MIN. RH	35 %
MAX. Wind	S 25 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

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Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
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Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

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Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
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Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
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Middle East Airlines`	22423073
Lufthansa	22422493
PIA	22421044



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

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 27/1/2019					Departure Flights on Sunday 27/1/2019				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
JZR	254	Amman	00:05	UAE 871	Dubai	12:50	KAC 117	New York	11:25
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	MSR 610	Cairo	13:10	KAC 515	Tehran	12:00
FHY	962	AYT	00:30	AXB 393	Kozhikode	13:15	JZR 221	Riyadh	12:00
FEG	1241	Alexandria	00:30	QTR 1078	Doha	13:35	JZR 213	Jeddah	12:00
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC 774	Riyadh	14:00	MEA 405	Beirut	12:55
KAC	102	London	00:50	KAC 204	Lahore	14:05	QTR 1075	Doha	13:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	KAC 792	Madinah	14:05	SAW 702	Damascus	13:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:00	FDB 059	Dubai	14:20	JZR 113	Doha	13:30
KAC	504	Beirut	01:15	KAC 672	Dubai	14:25	JZR 123	Dubai	13:40
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	KAC 364	Colombo	14:30	MSR 611	Cairo	14:10
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC 618	Doha	14:40	UAE 872	Dubai	14:15
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	GFA 221	Bahrain	14:40	AXB 394	Kozhikode	14:15
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	SVA 500	Jeddah	14:45	JZR 103	Bahrain	14:40
JZR	722	Alexandria	02:15	KAC 692	Muscat	14:55	QTR 1079	Doha	15:00
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	KNE 529	Jeddah	15:05	FDB 060	Dubai	15:10
RBG	551	Alexandria	02:25	KAC 788	Jeddah	15:10	GFA 222	Bahrain	15:25
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	ETD 303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	KAC 673	Dubai	15:40
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	JZR 222	Riyadh	15:30	SVA 501	Jeddah	15:45
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	KAC 562	Amman	15:35	KAC 775	Riyadh	15:50
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	OMA 645	Muscat	15:35	KNE 530	Jeddah	16:00
RJA	648	Amman	02:55	KAC 304	Mumbai	15:40	KAC 615	Bahrain	16:05
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	UAE 857	Dubai	15:45	KAC 619	Doha	16:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	JZR 732	Cairo	15:50	KAC 563	Amman	16:10
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:10	KAC 118	New York	16:05	ETD 304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	ABY 127	Sharjah	16:05	KAC 283	Dhaka	16:30
JZR	1736	Cairo	03:30	KAC 516	Tehran	16:20	OMA 646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:00	JZR 212	Jeddah	16:25	KAC 785	Jeddah	16:40
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC 542	Beirut	16:30	ABY 128	Sharjah	16:45
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC 502	Doha	16:35	KAC 675	Dubai	17:05
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	QTR 1072	Dubai	16:40	KAC 503	Beirut	17:15
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	FDB 051	Dubai	16:40	FDB 052	Dubai	17:40
KAC	784	Jeddah	04:30	JZR 114	Doha	17:10	UAE 858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	406	Kochi	04:45	SVA 510	Riyadh	17:15	QTR 1073	Doha	17:50
UAE	873	Dubai	04:55	GFA 215	Bahrain	17:30	KAC 343	Chennai	18:00
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	JZR 104	Bahrain	17:45	KAC 331	Trivandrum	18:00
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	JZR 214	Jeddah	17:45	JZR 721	Alexandria	18:00
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	UAE 875	Dubai	18:00	JZR 733	Cairo	18:10
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	JZR 302	Istanbul	18:15	SVA 511	Riyadh	18:15
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	FDB 063	Dubai	18:15	GFA 216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	284	Dhaka	05:15	JZR 124	Dubai	18:20	KAC 621	Doha	18:25
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	MSR 620	Cairo	18:30	JZR 127	Dubai	18:35
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	QTR 1080	Doha	18:30	JZR 501	Lahore	18:40
KAC	344	Chennai	05:50	SYR 341	Damascus	19:00	JZR 403	Hyderabad	18:40
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	RJA 640	Amman	19:00	KAC 381	Delhi	18:55
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:10	ABY 123	Sharjah	19:25	JZR 253	Amman	19:15
QTR	8511	Doha	06:25	RBG 555	Alexandria	19:25	FDB 064	Dubai	19:20
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	KAC 616	Bahrain	19:30	UAE 876	Dubai	19:30
BAW	157	London	07:05	KAC 156	Istanbul	19:30	MSR 621	Cairo	19:30
JZR	708	Luxor	07:15	GFA 217	Bahrain	19:30	QTR 1081	Doha	19:55
KAC	358	Kochi	07:35	KAC 776	Riyadh	19:50	RJA 641	Amman	20:00
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FDB 057	Dubai	19:50	SYR 342	Damascus	20:00
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC 104	London	19:55	RBG 556	Alexandria	20:05
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC 166	Rome	20:10	ABY 124	Sharjah	20:05
JZR	408	Ahmedabad	08:45	KAC 620	Doha	20:15	GFA 218	Bahrain	20:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	OMA 647	Muscat	20:20	FDB 058	Dubai	20:35
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC 674	Dubai	20:35	KAC 345	Ahmedabad	20:40
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	QTR 1088	Doha	20:35	KAC 301	Mumbai	20:55
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	DLH 624	Frankfurt	20:45	KAC 353	Bengaluru	20:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	FEF 1441	Asyut	20:45	JZR 401	Mumbai	20:55
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC 172	Frankfurt	21:15	KAC 357	Kochi	21:00
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:00	ETD 307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	OMA 648	Muscat	21:20
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	ALK 229	Colombo	21:20	DLH 624	Dammam	21:30
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	MEA 402	Beirut	21:30	FEF 1344	Sohag	21:30
JZR	702	Asyut	11:05	UAE 859	Dubai	21:35	QTR 1089	Doha	22:00
JZR	122	Dubai	11:10	GFA 219	Bahrain	21:45	ETD 308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	KAC 676	Dubai	21:45	KAC 1543	Cairo	22:15
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	KAC 564	Amman	21:55	MEA 403	Beirut	22:20
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	JAI 574	Mumbai	22:00	ALK 230	Colombo	22:25
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	QTR 1082	Doha	22:05	GFA 220	Bahrain	22:30
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	ETD 309	Abu Dhabi	22:15	KAC 383	Delhi	22:30
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	AIC 981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25	KAC 783	Jeddah	22:55
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	KAC 622	Doha	22:30	UAE 860	Dubai	23:00
				KAC 786	Jeddah	22:45	JAI 573	Mumbai	3:00
				JZR 128	Dubai	23:15	KAC 411	Bangkok	23:00
				FDB 071	Dubai	23:45	ETD 310	Abu Dhabi	23:05

Sudan professionals emerge as new force defying Bashir

CAIRO: For decades, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir has kept dissenting voices low and opposition groups in disarray creating a political vacuum that a group of professionals has recently rushed to fill. Public anger against worsening economic hardship and deteriorating living conditions has pushed doctors, engineers and university professors to come together under the umbrella of the "Sudanese Professionals Association" and lead nationwide calls for Bashir to step down.

Although the association remains unknown to many, its calls have echoed across the country bringing thousands of protesters onto the streets, including in the capital Khartoum. The protests were initially triggered by the tripling of bread prices. But they have swiftly evolved into deadly confrontations with the security forces. "The Sudanese scene has been lacking a leader on political, economic, security and social levels," an SPA spokesman Mohamed Youssef al-Mustafa told AFP, speaking from Khartoum. Sudan has about 100 political parties, but none have sought to steer the protest movement. So the association has sought to organize protests. But in the end, Mustafa says, "it's the people who lead."

It started when back in 2012, in response to new laws restricting the freedom of political parties, a group of 200 professors at the University of Khartoum formed a group, prompting other professionals in the capital to form similar gatherings, Mustafa says. Groups of veterinarians, media workers, pharmacists, teachers, lawyers and others were later created making up the main eight separate gatherings of the Sudanese Professionals Association by 2016. "Now every city in Sudan has a gathering of professionals," Mustafa said.

Unlike political parties, SPA has no orga-



OMDOURMAN, Sudan: Sudanese protesters chant slogans and raise signs against President Omar Al-Bashir during a demonstration in the capital Khartoum's twin city on Friday. — AFP

nizational structure and holds no records of the number of its members, he added. "It's not recognized by the government, but its setup is in line with Article 40 of the constitution," he said. The article stipulates "the right of peaceful assembly" as well as the "free-

dom of association" including forming and belonging to political parties, associations, trade unions and professional federations.

SPA has for years been concerned with resolving the issues of the professionals, gathered under its umbrella. But last month, it

took on a more political role as the protests swelled, strengthening the spirit of revolt, announcing schedules for demonstrations and organizing marches on the presidential palace. It has even proposed a plan to form a transitional government if Bashir quits.

And on Friday, the country's main opposition leader and former prime minister Sadiq Al-Mahdi threw his support behind the demonstrators. "This regime has to go immediately," Mahdi, leader of the Umma Party, told hundreds of worshippers at a mosque in Omdurman. "A period of transition will come soon... we are supporting this (protest) movement," Mahdi said, adding more than 50 people have been killed in the protests.

Officials say 30 people have died in the protests, while rights groups have put the death toll at more than 40. "The way protesters follow this group is strange," said Sudanese journalist Faisal Mohamed Saleh, pointing out that the protests always start exactly at the time designated by the group. "It's an achievement for this group, considering that the protesters don't even know who the main leaders of this association are. Protesters just trust them."

But Mustafa dismissed plans that SPA would turn into a political party. "There is no thought of turning the professional entity into a political party," he said, adding many members already belong to some political parties. But since Dec 19, the group has joined forces with Bashir's main opponents. Opposition groups including the National Consensus Forces Alliance and Nidaa Al-Sudan have signed a document with regime change being the main objective.

It also outlines a post-Bashir plan including rebuilding Sudan's justice system and halting the country's dire economic decline. Mohamed Al-Asbat, another SPA spokesman living in Paris, says the association will continue to use peaceful means to bring about political change. "The reason people are flocking to us is the association's ability to maintain peacefulness and use of soft communication," he said. — AFP

US calls to 'stand with freedom' in...

Continued from Page 1

He accused the United States of renewing a long history of imperialism in Latin America, saying that Washington treated it as a "backyard where you can do anything you want." But Russia managed to block a Security Council statement seen by AFP that would have offered "full support to Guaido and called the National Assembly that he heads "Venezuela's only democratically elected institution."

President Donald Trump's recognition of Guaido has enjoyed the support of many, but not all, Latin American powers including Brazil, Colombia and Argentina. European powers, after cautious initial statements, yesterday warned that they will recognize Guaido unless Maduro calls elections within eight days. "If within eight days there are no fair, free and transparent elections called in Venezuela, Spain will recognize Juan Guaido as Venezuelan president" so that he himself can call the vote, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said in a televised announcement.

French President Emmanuel Macron followed suit in a tweet, saying "the Venezuelan people must be able to freely decide on their future." Germany and Britain also joined in the ultimatum. Guaido quickly welcomed the support from the European powerhouses. "There continues to be progress in the European Union for the recognition and full support of our legitimate and constitutional struggle," he tweeted.

But other members of the 28-nation bloc such as Austria, Greece and Portugal are more reluctant. Greece's ruling left-wing party Syriza has publicly

backed Maduro, with party secretary Panos Skourletis voicing "full support and solidarity" to what to he called "the legal president". Sanchez insisted that Spain, which has some 200,000 of its nationals living in Venezuela, is "not looking to impose or remove governments in Venezuela, we want democracy and free elections in Venezuela".

Maduro's re-election last year was contested by the opposition and rejected by the US, EU and UN as a sham - but he has until now retained the loyalty of the powerful military. Guaido, who has managed to galvanize a previously divided opposition, this week attempted to attract military support by offering an amnesty to anyone who disavows Maduro, with no luck so far. In a Skype interview with Univision late Thursday, he went one step further by suggesting Maduro could be offered amnesty if he agrees to step down.

He has, however, rejected an offer of talks with Maduro, saying he won't attend a "fake dialogue" on a crisis that has left 26 dead in clashes this week between anti-Maduro activists and security forces. More than 350 people have also been detained this week in the protests, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said Friday. Guaido has called for another "major demonstration" next week. Maduro, for his part, called for a "popular rebellion against the coup" on the streets of Venezuela.

The Inter-American Human Rights Commission late Friday issued a statement warning that Guaido's life and health were in danger given the high political tension in the country. Maduro has given US diplomats until late yesterday to leave Venezuela. The United States said it was ignoring the orders as it no longer considers Maduro the president - but withdrew non-essential staff and argued that Maduro, who controls the security forces, still bore responsibility for diplomats' safety. "Do not test the United States on our resolve to protect our people," Pompeo warned. — AFP

the 1970s when the "hippie trail" brought Western travellers through the apricot and walnut orchards of the Swat Valley and Kashmir on their way to India and Nepal. Since then, deteriorating security and the imposition of a harsh interpretation of Islamic laws has chipped away at the number of visitors. But security has since improved dramatically in recent years, with militant attacks down sharply in the mainly Muslim country of 208 million people. The state Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation said last year tourist arrivals rose to 1.75 million in 2017, media reported. — Reuters

Democrats and Trump's Republicans to agree on a compromise that to reopen government and commit to wall construction.

Trump has spoken for weeks about using his presidential authority to declare a border emergency and bypass Congress, allowing himself to take funds from other sources for the wall. However this would almost certainly be challenged in court. So while Trump had said he would not "cave" in the standoff, the president was left with little alternative.

At his White House announcement, Trump sought to thank the federal workers who suffered as collateral damage in the political battle, saying they showed "extraordinary devotion in the face of this recent hardship". But Tiffany Cruz, who works at LaGuardia Airport in New York, which was also badly hit by delays, said she had little faith in Trump. "He's just reopening (government) at his convenience," she said. "I don't believe he cares about anything but himself."

With the shutdown ending, the question arises whether Trump will be re-invited to deliver his State of the Union address in Congress next Tuesday. Pelosi, who outfoxed him in the five-week showdown, had insisted he not deliver his speech until government reopened. On Friday she said the schedule remained undecided. — AFP

Moroccan man fears for safety after arrested wearing a dress

RABAT: Chafik Lafrid's life has become a nightmare since footage of his arrest in Marrakesh on New Year's Eve, wearing a dress and a wig, went viral on social media. Homosexuality is illegal in Morocco, and the 33-year-old, who occasionally dresses in women's clothes, had until that night kept secret the fact that he is gay. Until that is, he was detained after a minor traffic accident. Mistreated by the police and then attacked online, he said he now wants to emigrate as he fears for his safety. "I had an image of Morocco as a country that respects difference," he said bitterly. "What happened changed my mind."

Footage of his arrest has been seen millions of times online: Handcuffed, barefoot and wearing a short blue dress, he is escorted by police as a crowd of onlookers film and insult him. The police do nothing to intervene. Minutes earlier, Lafrid, an administrator at a private medical clinic, had been returning home from a party in Morocco's tourist capital. He was driving along a busy avenue when a scooter slammed into his car.

A police officer arrived at the scene and ordered him to step out of the vehicle, but Lafrid refused - wearing a lace dress, a curly, long wig and makeup, he was afraid of how the crowd of onlookers might react. "The policeman broke the window with his baton and

forced me out of the car," he said. "He took off my wig, dragged me to the ground and handcuffed me."

Images go viral

A journalist for a Marrekesh news website, who was accompanying the police patrol, filmed the scene. At the police station, officers took his photo, checked his identity and questioned him about the accident. He was then released. The rider of the scooter sustained minor injuries but did not press charges, and Lafrid faces no further legal action over the incident. But the next day, images of his arrest, the photos taken by the police and his personal documents went viral on social media.

Lafrid, interviewed in the capital Rabat because he did not want to be filmed in his home city, said he now fears for his safety. "My address has been published on the Internet, any fundamentalist could come and try to harm me," he said. He said his relationship with his parents, who had no idea about his secret life, was been destroyed, and he feels "humiliated" and "in shock".

After consulting a psychiatrist, he was granted a month's sick leave for depression. His boss, colleagues and patients at the clinic where he works have sent messages of support. But since the night of the accident, he has been living "in fear of being recognized", he said. He wears men's clothes and dons a baseball cap to make his face less visible.

And Lafrid has sought help from a local campaign group, the Alternative Movement for Individual Freedoms (MALI). Ibtissam Lachgar, the movement's joint coordinator, said Lafrid's experience reflects the homophobia in Moroccan society and in the state. "The state's representatives that night reflected that homophobia," Lachgar said, a rainbow flag on the wall behind her. — AFP

Pak eases visa rules to 'heaven...'

Continued from Page 1

The new visa regime comes after some countries eased travel advisories on Pakistan in light of improvements in security.

Pakistan was last a prominent tourist destination in

Trump retreats in wall showdown...

Continued from Page 1

Air traffic controllers were working without pay and in New Jersey's busy Newark Liberty International Airport staffing issues led to delays, raising the specter of a wider degradation of US air travel. This raised pressure to reach a deal - and Trump buckled, even at the risk of angering his rightwing voter base.

Conservative commentator Ann Coulter wasted no time in lashing out. "Good news for George Herbert Walker Bush: As of today, he is no longer the biggest wimp ever to serve as President of the United States," she tweeted, referring to the late president, a Republican moderate.

Trump says more border walls are needed to stop what he says are crisis levels of criminals and illegal immigration. Democrats say his focus on the wall distracts from more complex immigration problems and is used to whip up his base for political gain. On Thursday, two competing bills to end the partial shutdown failed in the Senate, underscoring the inability of

300 missing, many feared...

Continued from Page 1

the affected zone under orders from Bolsonaro. The disaster was the first big emergency faced by Bolsonaro and his government since he took office in early January, and perhaps one of the biggest disasters in Brazil's history. The full scope of the damage was still unclear.

As workers gathered in an administrative area for lunch at the Vale mine Friday, the area was suddenly engulfed by millions of tons of muddy trailings - a watery byproduct of the iron-ore mining operations - unleashed when the dam broke. The reservoir, 42 years old and 86 m high, had been in the process of being decommissioned, and Vale said it had recently passed structural safety tests. After overflowing a second dam, the vast muddy mass barrelled down toward Brumaldinho, population 39,000, but only glanced along it before spearing its way through vegetation and farmland, smashing houses and swallowing tractors and roads in its way.

Vale's CEO Fabio Schvartsman and Minas Gerais Governor Romeu Zema both expressed pessimism, warning the toll could rise. "From now, the odds are minimal (to find more people alive) and it is most likely we will recover only bodies," Zema told reporters late Friday. In Rio, Schvartsman spoke of a "human tragedy". "We're talking about probably a large number of victims - we don't know how many but we know it will be a high number," he said.

Vale shares plummeted on the New York stock exchange Friday, closing eight percent lower. The mining company, one of the world's biggest, was also

involved in a 2015 mine collapse elsewhere in Minas Gerais that claimed 19 lives and is regarded as the country's worst-ever environmental disaster. Minas Gerais officials obtained a court order blocking Vale's bank account in the state to the tune of \$270 million, money that would be used for victim relief, according to the G1 news website.

"Where are our relatives?" wailed Raquel Cristina, one of several people demanding information about their missing kin in the mud-hit area. "My five-year-old nephew is asking me if his dad died. What do I tell him?" asked another, Olivia Rios. Some of the firefighters used earth-moving machinery to dig down to engulfed dwellings. Would-be rescue volunteers were urged to stay away because of the slippery, perilous mud. Media were pressed not to use drones to avoid collisions with search and rescue helicopters.

Walter Moraes, a member of the Red Cross team sent to the disaster zone, told AFP that his relief group "will begin humanitarian actions helping people who were rescued and are homeless." The disaster recalled trauma from the 2015 dam break near Mariana, in Minas Gerais. That accident released millions of tons of toxic iron waste along hundreds of kilometers. Vale jointly operated that dam with Anglo-Australian group BHP.

The Brazil office of Greenpeace, the environmental activist group, said the dam break was "a sad consequence of the lessons not learned by the Brazilian government and the mining companies". Such incidents "are not accidents but environmental crimes that must be investigated, punished and repaired," it added. While the death toll has yet to be established in Brazil, it looked likely that the disaster at the mine could rank among the worst recorded. In Sept 2008, a moving wall of mud and rocks from an illegal iron ore mine slammed into the Chinese town of Taoshi, in northern Shanxi province, killing 262 people.— AFP

Harden extends streak as Rockets claim 121-119 victory over Raptors

Mitchell helps hot Jazz cool off Timberwolves

HOUSTON: James Harden extended his streak of consecutive 30-point games to 22 but had plenty of help as the Houston Rockets claimed a 121-119, wire-to-wire victory over the visiting Toronto Raptors, who dropped back-to-back games for the first time since mid-December. Harden continued his recent struggles from behind the 3-point line, missing 11 of 13 attempts. However, he relied on a variety of floaters and a 15-for-15 performance from the free-throw line to produce a game-high 35 points as the Rockets claimed back-to-back victories for the first time this month. Eric Gordon gave Houston a 119-108 lead with two free throws at the 1:19 mark, then Toronto closed with a dramatic 11-2 run. Kawhi Leonard (32 points, seven rebounds, five assists) misfired on a 3-pointer at the buzzer, and the Rockets held on to win. Kenneth Faried, making his home debut for the Rockets, posted an energetic double-double (21 points, 14 rebounds). Gordon added 24 points, PJ Tucker 18 and Austin Rivers 13 for Houston.

JAZZ 106, TIMBERWOLVES 102
Donovan Mitchell scored 24 points and dished out a career-high 11 assists to lead Utah to victory over Minnesota at Salt Lake City. Rudy Gobert tallied 18 points and 16 rebounds for his 41st double-double of the season. Kyle Korver added 16 points off the bench. Utah won for the eighth time in nine games. Karl-Anthony

Towns scored 33 points and collected 10 rebounds to lead Minnesota. Andrew Wiggins added 21 points and 11 rebounds for the Timberwolves, who entered on a three-game win streak.

BUCKS 108, HORNETS 99
Giannis Antetokounmpo finished with 34 points and 14 rebounds, and Milwaukee rallied from a 14-point deficit in the second half to beat visiting Charlotte. Milwaukee won its sixth straight and improved its home record to 22-4. The Bucks continue to have the best record in the NBA at 35-12. The Hornets had won four of their previous five games. Kemba Walker, in his first game since being named a starter in the upcoming All-Star Game, left with 2:06 remaining after sustaining what the team called a neck strain in a scrum for a loose ball.

MAVERICKS 106, PISTONS 101
One night after the media and players' votes overrode the will of the fans to make rookie sensation Luka Doncic an All-Star starter, Dallas' 19-year-old standout totaled 32 points, eight assists and eight rebounds in a victory over visiting Detroit. Along with Doncic, recently embattled Mavs guard Dennis Smith Jr. showed off his explosiveness with 19 points and five assists to give the Mavericks back-to-back home wins. Dallas' dynamic backcourt erased a spectacular performance by Pistons



HOUSTON: Kenneth Faried #35 of the Houston Rockets drives to the basket during the game against the Toronto Raptors on January 25, 2019 at the Toyota Center in Houston, Texas. —AFP

forward Blake Griffin, who is practically a shoo-in to be selected as an All-Star reserve next week. He was a one-man show for Detroit, collecting a game-high 35 points, plus seven rebounds and four assists.

NETS 109, KNICKS 99
Rookie Theo Pinson totaled career highs of 19 points and eight rebounds as surging Brooklyn extended its winning streak to six games by beating visiting New York. The Nets also extended their home winning streak to eight games. Brooklyn is 19-5 in its last 24 games, equaling the best 24-game stretch in franchise history, which has been done eight times and not since 2006. The Nets recorded their latest win by dominating the glass on a commanding 60-33 margin, making 32 of 47 free-throw attempts and getting 72 points from reserves.

NUGGETS 132, SUNS 95
All five Denver starters and three reserves scored in double figures, and Denver used a late second-quarter surge to take control and defeat visiting Phoenix. Paul Millsap scored 20 points while recording nine rebounds

and three steals to pace Denver. Nikola Jokic, the Nuggets' leader in scoring, rebounding and assists, was not in the arena after being suspended by the league earlier Friday for leaving the bench area during a scrum in Wednesday's loss to Utah. The Suns have lost seven straight since beating the Nuggets on Jan. 12. Phoenix was coming off a 14-point loss to Portland on Thursday and is now 0-9 in the second game of a back-to-back this season. Devin Booker scored a game-high 35 points.

WIZARDS 95, MAGIC 91
Jeff Green scored 24 points, including the go-ahead bucket in the final minute, and Washington escaped Orlando. Bradley Beal led the Wizards with 27 points—the final two to tie the game with 76 seconds remaining—and added six rebounds and seven assists. Washington is 8-5 since losing John Wall in December and improved to 6-2 in games on the second night of a back-to-back this season. Nikola Vucevic led all scorers with 28 points to go along with nine rebounds for the Magic. Aaron Gordon added 22 points, 11 rebounds and six assists. Orlando has lost five of its last six games. — Reuters

Schmidhofer wins super-G in Garmisch, Goggia second on return

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN: Austria's Nicole Schmidhofer won the weather-delayed women's super-G World Cup race in Garmisch-Partenkirchen yesterday as Olympic downhill champion Sofia Goggia claimed second on her return from a fractured ankle. Schmidhofer, the reigning world super-G champion, clocked 1min 19.98sec down the Kandahar course after the start was pushed back an hour and a half by heavy snowfall.

"I am very happy about the win," beamed Schmidhofer. "There was a long wait between the course inspection and the start. "The course was perfect-I just hope there won't be any more snow over night," she added, with one eye on Sunday's downhill. Goggia, who won the downhill title in Pyeongchang last year, announced her return from injury in style by finishing just 0.23sec back, while Swiss Lara Gut-Behrami was third at 0.45.

"I am really happy, I only came here to test the ankle and I didn't know what was going to happen," said Goggia, after three months out with injury, who insisted on sitting during post-race

interviews to rest her ankle.

"Training went well, so I decided to race. "It wasn't about skiing fast, it was about skiing with a free head." Having finished second in Garmisch last year behind US speed queen Lindsey Vonn, who currently has a knee injury, in both downhill races on the Kandahar, Goggia was an early leader before Schmidhofer bettered her.

America's Mikaela Shiffrin, the super-G and overall World Cup leader, is sitting out this weekend's races in Garmisch to prepare for the world championships which start in Are, Sweden, on February 5.

Goggia will have another shot at victory on her comeback in Sunday's downhill, scheduled to start at 1130 local time (1030 GMT), and said she is not thinking about the world championships-yet.

"I am just focused on Sunday's downhill and taking it one day at a time," said Goggia, who gave a theatrical bow to her fans with a huge smile on her face after her run. After four previous finishes on the podium, this was the first World Cup super-G victory for the 29-year-old Schmidhofer, who finishing second in the



GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN: Austria's Nicole Schmidhofer (L) and Switzerland's Lara Gut-Behrami (R) joke together after the women's Super G event of the FIS Ski Alpine World Cup in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, southern Germany, yesterday. — AFP

downhill last week in Cortina d'Ampezzo. "I have been so close in the past, so I am really pleased," said Schmidhofer.

LEDECKA CRASHES OUT
Several big names struggled on the 2.1km course, Ester Ledecka, the Olympic super-G champion, was the biggest casualty, crashing out after failing to judge the turn coming into the final straight.

"I was a bit too passive and didn't quite time my turn right and couldn't get through

the gate," said Ledecka.

"I tried to correct it with all my might, which is when I fell, but I am okay."

The Czech achieved the feat of winning Olympic gold medals in both the snowboarding parallel giant slalom and skiing's super-G in Pyeongchang last year.

The 23-year-old has opted to ski at the world alpine championships from February 5-17 in Are, Sweden, even though it clashes with the world snowboard championships from February 1-10. — AFP



KITZBUHEL: Austria's Marcel Hirscher competes in the first run of the Men's Slalom as part of the Alpine Ski World Cup in Kitzbuhel, Austria, yesterday. —AFP

in second on 671 and Pinturaull third (620). Switzerland's Ramon Zenhausern was the leader after the first run, 0.12sec ahead of Noel. But the Olympic silver medallist made a mistake halfway down his second run down the steeply-pitched Ganslern slope to finish sixth, 0.85sec adrift.

Another two-time winner on the hill, Germany's Felix Neureuther, was 11th (+1.94), while Sweden's Olympic champion Andre Myrher was seventh (+0.88). Bulgarian Alexander Popov, like Noel just 21, did incredibly well to finish fifth on the first run after starting with the unlikely bib number of 71. — AFP

Noel trumps Hirscher in Kitzbuehel slalom

KITZBUHEL: France's Clement Noel followed up on his Wengen win to trump Austrian Marcel Hirscher with a stunning victory in the men's World Cup slalom in Kitzbuehel yesterday. Clement, who missed out on Olympic bronze at the 2018 Pyeongchang Games by four-hundredths of a second, was sat in second place after the first run and held his nerve on the second descent of the Ganslern slope to clock a combined 1min 45.53sec.

It was the towering 21-year-old's second World Cup victory after his Wengen triumph last weekend and just his third podium after he finished second in Adelboden earlier this month. Hirscher, ninth after the first run, finished second thanks to a storming second run, eventually 0.29sec adrift of Noel.

Another Frenchman, Alexis Pinturaull,

came in third (+0.36), 0.17sec ahead of Norway's defending champion Henrik Kristoffersen. In snowy conditions, seven-time overall World Cup winner and current world slalom champion Hirscher, twice a winner in Kitzbuehel, looked to have snatched a third win with his superlative second run.

But in front of a huge crowd that included a cheering Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Austrian body-builder/actor-cum-California governor, Noel belied his age and relative inexperience on the circuit down two testing tracks.

The last time a French skier won two consecutive races was in 2011 when double world champion Jean-Baptiste Grange, who tore knee ligaments in Wengen last week, claimed victories in Kitzbuehel and Schladming.

"I don't really know what happened in the first run, but I'm more than happy with second place," said Hirscher, who had been seeking a fifth victory of the season before ending up with a 134th podium career finish.

Hirscher consolidated his massive lead of the overall standings, in which he now has 1,116 points, with Kristoffersen

Two-time skating champ Gold tells of crushing battle with depression

LOS ANGELES: Two-time US figure skating champion Gracie Gold said in a New York Times interview published Friday that she battled suicidal thoughts as she struggled with depression that has disrupted her life and career.

"I was suicidal for months," Gold told the Times, describing dark days when she was living in Detroit three years after a sparkling 2014 season brought her to the attention of the skating world.

"If I had just continued the way I was in Detroit, I'd probably be dead," said Gold, who was shutting out her family and gorging on food after years of limiting her calories.

Gold, 23, appeared to have a bright future on ice when she won a 2014 Olympic team bronze medal and finished fourth in the individual women's event.

But her bid to make the 2018 Games evaporated amid her mental health troubles, and her attempt to return to the sport last November saw her finish 10th in the short program before withdrawing from the free skate at a Grand Prix event in Russia.

She is not competing this week in the 2019 US championships in Detroit. Gold recalled developing concerns about her weight before the 2014 Olympics that prompted her to drastically cut her calorie intake.

"The more weight I lost, the quicker and faster I felt on the ice," said Gold, who shrugged off her mother's concerns that she was too thin. After earning a second national title, she was devastated to finish out of the medals at the 2016 World Championships and at a US team training camp that year teammate Ashley Wagner realized Gold was struggling.

It would be another year before Gold "snapped" at another training camp and was finally persuaded to enter an in-patient treatment program for eating disorders, with US Figure Skating covering the cost.

Now, Gold told the Times, she is training again, and getting into shape with a healthier diet and a new coach. She said her return to the sport feels like a new beginning, describing the sense of accomplishment she felt when she completed a clean triple Lutz. "You forget how magical those moments are," Gold said. —AFP

India's Sharma, Dhawan flay New Zealand in second ODI

Clinical demolition, following India's eight-wicket win in first match

MOUNT MAUNGANUI: India's celebrated opening pair Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan produced yet another century stand yesterday to set up an overwhelming 90-run win in the second one-day international against New Zealand.

Sharma put their match-winning effort at Mount Maunganui down to "a great camaraderie" after the pair put on 154 for the first wicket at better than a run-a-ball. The flying start laid the platform for India's 324 for four before Kuldeep Yadav weaved his magic with the ball to roll New Zealand for 234.

Such a clinical demolition, following the equally dominant eight-wicket win in the first match, left New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson frustrated. "It's not so much the losing it's probably just the way we're losing," Williamson said.

"It's two games in a row now where we haven't had control at any stage which is the part that is most frustrating," Sharma (87) and Dhawan (66) were rarely troubled in their stay at the crease which Sharma described as "a great partnership".

It was their 14th century stand from 93 innings as openers together. Only the now-retired Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly (21 century stands), Adam Gilchrist and Matthew Hayden (16) and Gordon Greenidge and Desmond Haynes (15) have produced more hundred-plus opening partnerships.

"We enjoy each other's company in the middle and we share a great camaraderie between us," Sharma said of their prolific run scoring. "When we bat together, we understand each other's game. That is more important and it's crucial for the team as well when you get that kind of start. I've always enjoyed batting with Shikhar."

Although New Zealand were able to match the required run rate through the first half of their innings none of the top order batsmen was able to settle in. When Dhawan was dismissed for 66 and India were one for 154 in the 26th over, New Zealand at the same stage were 146 for five.

Sharma offered a chance with an edge off the first ball of the innings which went to the boundary as New



TAURANGA: India's MS Dhoni plays a shot during the second one-day international (ODI) cricket match between New Zealand and India in Tauranga yesterday. — AFP

Zealand did not have a first slip. He faced 96 deliveries for his 87 and hit nine fours and three sixes while Dhawan's 66 came off 67 balls and included nine fours.

Virat Kohli (43) and Ambati Rayudu (47) were unable to lift the run rate above run-a-ball pace with accurate bowling by New Zealand for most of the final 10 overs. It took lusty blows from MS Dhoni and Kedar Jadhav to get the score over 300 when they smacked 35 runs in the last two overs.

While New Zealand scored freely in reply they lost wickets regularly. When Kane Williamson found himself

in the middle after the fifth over he tried to dominate, lashing out at Mohammed Shami with two sixes and a four off successive deliveries. But Shami ended the over bowling Williamson for 20.

After Ross Taylor was stumped for 33, Kuldeep Yadav began to work his magic. He removed Tom Latham for 34 and Colin De Grandhomme for three before claiming the wickets of Henry Nicholls (28) and Ish Sochi (nought) with successive balls to finish with four for 45 to go with his four for 39 in the first match of the series. —AFP

SCOREBOARD			
Completed scoreboard in the second one-day international between New Zealand and India at Mount Maunganui yesterday:			
India			
R. Sharma c de Grandhomme b Ferguson	87	K. Williamson b Shami	20
S. Dhawan c Latham b Boult	66	R. Taylor std Dhoni b Jadhav	22
V. Kohli c Sodhi b Boult	43	T. Latham lbw Yadav	34
A. Rayudu c&b Ferguson	47	H. Nicholls c Shami b Yadav	28
M. Dhoni not out	48	C. de Grandhomme c Rayudu b Yadav	3
K. Jadhav not out	22	D. Bracewell c Dhawan b Kumar	57
Extras: (lb 1, wd 10)	11	I. Sodhi b Yadav	0
Total: (for 4 wickets; 50 overs)	324	L. Ferguson c Shankar b Chahal	12
Fall of wickets: 1-154 (Dhawan), 2-172 (Sharma), 3-236 (Kohli), 4-271 (Rayudu)		T. Boult not out	10
Bowling: Boult 10-1-61-2 (4w), Bracewell 10-0-59-0 (1w), Ferguson 10-0-81-2 (2w), Sodhi 10-0-43-0 (1w), de Grandhomme 8-0-62-0 (2w), Munro 2-0-17-0 (1w).		Extras: (wd 2)	2
New Zealand		Total: (for 10 wickets; 40.2 overs)	234
M. Guptill c Chahal b Kumar	15	Fall of wickets: 1-23 (Guptill), 2-51 (Williamson), 3-84 (Munro), 4-100 (Taylor), 5-136 (Latham), 6-146 (de Grandhomme), 7-166 (Nicholls), 8-166 (Sodhi), 9-224 (Bracewell), 10-234 (Ferguson)	
C. Munro lbw Chahal	31	Bowling: Kumar 7-1-42-2 (1w), Shami 6-0-43-1, Shankar 2-0-17-0 (1w), Chahal 9-2-0-52-2, Jadhav 6-0-35-1, Yadav 10-0-45-4.	
		Result: India won by 90 runs. India lead the series 2-0	

Nepal's Paudel eclipses Tendulkar, Afridi with international fifty

DUBAI: Nepal batsman Rohit Paudel became the youngest male cricketer to score an international fifty yesterday at the age of 16 years and 146 days, breaking Sachin Tendulkar's previous mark.

He is also the youngest man to score a one-day international half-century, beating Shahid Afridi, who smashed a 37-ball century in an incredible first innings against Sri Lanka aged 16 and 217 days.

Indian legend Tendulkar scored his maiden Test fifty when 16 years and 213 days old. Paudel stroked a 58-ball 55 as Nepal, one of cricket's rising forces, thrashed the United Arab Emirates by 145 runs in the second ODI at Dubai.

His fellow teenager, the 18-year-old Sandeep Lamichhane, claimed 4-24 with his leg-spin as Nepal bowled out their hosts for just 97 in an ill-fated chase of 243 to win.

Paudel was, however, a fair way off the record for all internationals, with South African women's player Johmari Logtenburger having scored fifties in both Test and ODI cricket as a 14-year-old. — AFP

Cummins leads Australian rout of Sri Lanka

BRISBANE: Australia thrashed a disappointing Sri Lanka by an innings and 40 runs in the first day-night Test in Brisbane yesterday. Led by a brilliant display of fast bowling from Pat Cummins, the Australians dominated a Sri Lankan outfit that never came to terms with the pace and bounce of the Gabba wicket.

They made 144 in the first innings and just 139 in the



BRISBANE: Sri Lanka's Niroshan Dickwella plays a shot during the third umpire's dismissal of Sri Lanka's Lahiru Thirimanne during the third day the day-night Test cricket match between Australia and Sri Lanka at the Gabba Cricket Ground in Brisbane yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD	
Scoreboard from the opening day-night Test between Australia and Sri Lanka in Brisbane yesterday:	
Sri Lanka 144 (N. Dickwella 64; P. Cummins 4-39, J. Richardson 3-26)	
Australia 323 (T. Head 84, M. Labuschagne 81; S. Lakmal 5-75)	
Sri Lanka 2nd innings	
D. Karunaratne c Paine b Cummins	3
L. Thirimanne c Paine b Cummins	32
D. Chandimal c Patterson b Cummins	0
K. Mendis c Burns b Cummins	1
R. Silva c Burns b Cummins	3
D. de Silva b Richardson	14
N. Dickwella c Harris b Richardson	24
D. Perera c Patterson b Cummins	9
S. Lakmal stumped Paine b Lyon	24
D. Chameera not out	5
Extras: (b9, lb14, nb1)	24
Total: (for 9 wickets)	139
Did not bat: L. Kumara	
Fall of wickets: 1-17 (Karunaratne), 2-17 (Chandimal), 3-19 (Mendis), 4-35 (Silva), 5-69 (de Silva), 6-79 (Thirimanne), 7-109 (Dickwella), 8-110 (Perera), 9-139 (Lakmal)	
Bowling: Starc 14-0-57-0 (1nb), Richardson 13-5-19-2, Lyon 8.5-3-17-1, Cummins 15-8-23-6.	
Result: Australia won by an innings and 40 runs	

second in reply to Australia's first innings total of 323. Cummins took a career-best 6-23 in the second innings and 10 for the match to lead the Australians to a win inside three days.

He was well-supported by debutant Jhye Richardson, who took 2-19 to go with the 3-26 he claimed in the first innings. "If Pat bowls like he bowled in this Test match against anyone he's going to take wickets," Australian captain Tim Paine said.

"I thought he was just relentless with his line and length. I thought he and Jhye in particular-their discipline, their ability to just keep hitting the spot and wearing them down was outstanding."

Paine conceded the Sri Lankans went into the match at a disadvantage because of playing at the Gabba, where Australian hasn't lost since 1989. "It's completely out of their comfort zone," he said.

"It's hard enough for Australians to come from the

southern states and play on that wicket with the extra bounce." After starting their second innings 179 runs behind, the Sri Lankans never looked like making Australia bat a second time when they slumped to 19 for three and 35 for four.

Sri Lankan captain Dinesh Chandimal said the batting was simply not good enough to compete at this level. "Our batting was below par throughout the game, so that's the one area we'll have to improve," he said.

"If you can't score 300 in an innings it's always tough to beat a team like Australia, especially in Australia." Cummins exploited the conditions to the full in a superb seven over spell to start the day's play.

The 25-year-old, who dismissed Dimuth Karunaratne on the last ball of the day on Friday, took the first three Sri Lankan wickets to fall in yesterday's opening session. Cummins was in irresistible form, bowling with great venom and immaculate control. — AFP

Amir recalled for S Africa Twenty20

KARACHI: Pakistan recalled fast bowler Mohammad Amir in the 15-man squad for next month's three-match Twenty20 series against South Africa, while recent top performers missed out on selection.

The 26-year-old left-arm-er was left out of the limited-over and Test squads after a poor showing in last year's Asia Cup, but was brought back into both for the ongoing tour of South Africa.

Pakistan thrashed both Australia and New Zealand 3-0 in Twenty20 matches in the United Arab Emirates last year-though Amir did not take part in either series. Pakistan, who are currently playing a five-match one-day series in South Africa, will play Twenty20 matches in Cape Town on February 1, Johannesburg on February 3 and at Centurion on February 6.

Khurram Manzoor, Rizwan Hussain and Salman Butt-who amassed the most runs in Pakistan's National Twenty20 Cup held last month-all missed out on places. The Cup's top wicket-takers, Amad Butt, Umaid Asif and Mohammad Irfan were also overlooked.

Pakistan are ranked number one in Twenty20 internationals and have won nine consecutive matches as well as a world record 17 out of 19 T20Is they played last year. Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Rizwan and Shan Masood will return to the team after featuring in the one-day series.

Pakistan's chief selector Inzamam-ul-Haq said the selection was focused on this year's ICC Cricket World Cup and the Twenty20 World Cup to be held next year. "We need to give as much exposure and experience to our up and coming players as possible, but without compromising on the assignments in hand," he said. — AFP

Double-century Holder and ton-up Dowrich put Windies in total control

BRIDGETOWN: A magnificent unbeaten double-century by captain Jason Holder and a calm, supporting century from Shane Dowrich put the West Indies in total control after three days of the first Test against England at Kensington Oval on Friday.

Building on an already considerable first innings lead of 212 after Holder chose not to enforce the follow-on on the second evening, the skipper himself led the way with a commanding 202 not out, dominating an unbroken seventh-wicket partnership of 295 with Dowrich, who was on 116 when the second innings declaration came in the final session with the West Indies at 415 for six.

Set the virtually impossible task of getting 628 for victory, or less impossibly, batting a little more than two days to save the match, England openers Rory Burns and Keaton Jennings negotiated 20 overs to the close of play and will resume on the fourth morning with the tourists at 56 without loss.

Not one wicket fell on Friday despite 90 overs being bowled. Although they were again hugely outnumbered by the hordes of English supporters, this was a day of even more celebration for the locals, coming as it did a day after another Barbadian cricketing hero, fast bowler Kemar Roach, had led the demolition of England's first innings with a five-wicket haul as they folded for just 77.

Holder and Dowrich coped comfortably with everything England's bowlers challenged them with, including the second new ball which was taken as soon as it became available in mid-afternoon.

If anything it assisted in accelerating the scoring as the hard-hitting captain tore into a tiring, spirited attack. He brought up his third Test century and second against England with a straight six off expensive leg-spinner Adil Rashid after lunch.

At the other end Dowrich, also in pursuit of a third Test hundred, played the patience game while Holder tore into all



BRIDGETOWN: Rory Burns of England plays a shot during Day Four of the First Test match between England and West Indies at Kensington Oval yesterday in Bridgetown, Barbados. — AFP

bowlers. By the time the diminutive right-hander cut off-spinner Moeen Ali for four to reach the coveted landmark his partner had a first Test double-century well within his sights.

James Anderson and Ben Stokes were again the leaders of the England

attack but the lack of support from an effective third seamer again exposed the folly of omitting Stuart Broad, a man with 433 wickets from 134 Tests, in preference for the exciting but inexperienced left-arm swing bowling all-rounder Sam Curran. — AFP

Marseille crisis deepens as firework explodes, fans protest

Lille stay second, 10 points behind Paris Saint-Germain

MARSEILLE: Marseille's slide continued with a 2-1 home loss to Lille in a match that started with a fan protest, was interrupted for more than 30 minutes after a firework exploded on the touchline and also saw a red card and a Mario Balotelli goal on his debut.

The game ended with Marseille players berating referee Amaury Delerue and some fans invading the pitch. Lille won with a goal by Nicolas Pepe in the dying seconds of each half. The first was a penalty kick. The second, with 10-man Marseille attacking desperately, was stroked in unmarked from a similar distance.

There was just time for Balotelli to head in a meaningless goal, following a midweek switch from Nice, after a corner in the last footballing action of a night dominated by the disgruntled home fans.

Lille stay second, 10 points behind Paris Saint-Germain, who have two games in hand, but are six points ahead of Lyon, who visit Amiens today. "It's a cruel defeat, we spared nothing tonight," said Marseille coach Rudi Garcia. "It should have ended in another result than a defeat."

Marseille have won only once since late November. In that time they have been eliminated from three cups and dropped to seventh in the league. Frustrated fans called a strike for the first 10 minutes of Friday's game.

When the match kicked off swathes of the stands behind the goals at the normally vibrant Velodrome were empty except for banners hung by fan groups. Most were aimed at owner Frank McCourt and president Jacques-Henri Eyraud. Others picked out coach Rudi Garcia.

At the north end, one banner, signed by 'Marseille Trop Puissance', said: "90 minutes of silence for a leadership that wants to kill its own supporters." Opposite, the 'Winners' wrote a long message in English, presum-

ably for the benefit of McCourt, as American.

"You get scammed, your credibility takes a hit" read one line. "Fire the coach," said another. The messages were not all aimed at the club. One bore the name of Emiliano Sala, the former Nantes striker whose plane disappeared over the Channel.

The match was halted in the 57th minute after a firework, thrown from the crowd, exploded just inches away two Marseille players Kevin Strootman and Jordan Amavi. Strootman, perhaps thinking that the flaming object was a flare, was toeing it when it blew up. Delerue pointed to the player tunnel and the match officials and the visiting Lille team left the field. After kicking the ball around, the Marseille players followed suit.

Alain Marseille, one of the league's refereeing administrators, emerged from the match officials' changing room to tell French television: "If the safety of the players could not be guarantee...that's the end of the match."

But, following a 31 minute delay, the players re-emerged. Ten minutes after play restarted, Marseille's frustration bubbled over as one of their misfiring stars Florian Thauvin, outpaced by Youssuf Kone, kicked the Lille player and earned a red card, reducing the home team to 10 men.

Balotelli came off the bench in the 74th minute. In an end-to-end final 15 minutes, accompanied by more loud explosions in the crowd, the Italian had several chances to equalise.

Twice the ball fell to him on the edge of the area. He lashed the first best chance high over the bar. The second, in added time, he shinned wide. Then, after Pepe had made the game safe for Lille, Balotelli found the target. — AFP



MARSEILLE: Marseille's Guinean midfielder Bouna Sarr (R) fights for the ball with Lille's French forward Jonathan Bamba during the French L1 football match between Marseille (OM) and Lille (LOSC) on Friday, at the velodrome stadium in Marseille. — AFP

Solskjaer delights in 'classic' Man United display

LONDON: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer took pride in a 'classic' Manchester United display of attacking flair as his side beat Arsenal 3-1 in an absorbing FA Cup fourth-round clash on Friday. First-half goals by Alexis Sanchez and Jesse Lingard put United in control and although Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang replied for the Gunners, Anthony Martial sealed victory late on.

Solskjaer has now won eight matches in a row since stepping in as interim manager following the sacking of Jose Mourinho—a record that eclipses even the great Matt Busby. And while the statistics make that the best ever start by a United manager, the vibrant manner in which it has been achieved is perhaps even more impressive.

United have scored 22 goals under Solskjaer and have rediscovered the kind of attacking verve associated with the trophy-winning sides Solskjaer played in under Alex Ferguson. What is more, on Friday's evidence, he seems to have the handy managerial knack of knowing exactly when to shuffle his plethora of attacking options.

Martial and Marcus Rashford have been livewires under Solskjaer, but he left them on the bench against Arsenal and started with former Gunners forward Sanchez and Belgian powerhouse Romelu Lukaku.

Lukaku, in particular, was superb, producing an unstoppable display to run Arsenal's defence ragged at times, while Sanchez silenced the boo boys with a sublime opener from Lukaku's pass.



LONDON: Arsenal's Greek defender Sokratis Papastathopoulos (R) injures himself in this challenge with Manchester United's English midfielder Jesse Lingard during the English FA Cup fourth round football match between Arsenal and Manchester United at the Emirates Stadium in London on Friday. — AFP

Former Everton forward Lukaku also set up Lingard's goal. "I've had a (selection) headache since I came because the squad is full of good players," Solskjaer said. "Today we looked more like a proper team. We looked more structured. We'd worked hard at defending and counter-attacking. Counter-attacking is classic Manchester United-Wayne Rooney, Cristiano Ronaldo, Ji Sung-park—we've scored so many at Arsenal over the years."

"It was a massive step forward today for us. At Tottenham a couple of weeks ago we hung in and (goalkeeper) David de Gea saved us, but today our

structure was miles better." Lukaku summed up the mood under Solskjaer, agreeing that it feels like fun again playing for the club after a torrid spell.

"It does, it does," he said. "We had clear direction today and I'm really happy with the win and the manner in which we played. Look at the history of the club, we make a statement wherever we go."

"We look to dominate and create as many chances as we can." Arsenal boss Unai Emery could only look on with envy at the attacking resources available to Solskjaer and which were inexplicably so subdued under Mourinho. — Reuters

Tragedy over shadows sadness at Australia early Asian Cup exit

ABU DHABI: Any temptation to become overdramatic about the premature end to Australia's defence of their Asian Cup title would have ceased abruptly when the news of a genuine tragedy filtered through to the squad yesterday.

Teenager Bor Mabil, the sister of Socceroos forward Awer Mabil, was killed in the early hours of yesterday morning when a car in which she was a passenger crashed in Adelaide.

The death strikes a family that had already endured plenty of hardship on their journey to Australia from South Sudan via the refugee camps of Kenya and puts considerable perspective on the loss of a football match.

"FFA extends its deepest sympathies to Awer, the Mabil family, and Bor's friends, at this difficult time," Football Federation Australia (FFA) said in a statement. "FFA is providing support to Awer, his teammates, and Socceroos staff in the United Arab Emirates."

A review of an Asian Cup campaign that started with a shock 1-0 upset at the hands of Jordan and ended with Friday's loss to the Emirati hosts by the same score in the quarter-finals will already be underway at FFA headquarters, however.

It was the earliest exit for the Socceroos since their maiden 2007 campaign and followed a run to the final in 2011 and the title triumph on home soil four years later. The conclusions, once the data has been examined and the feedback received from staff and players, can come down to only one fundamental weakness – the inability of the Socceroos to get the ball into the net.

In their first knockout match, Graham Arnold's team dominated possession against Uzbekistan but needed a penalty shootout to get past the Central Asians after drawing blank over 120 minutes of play.

On Friday, they had 22 shots without finding a net, the most a side has managed in an Asian Cup contest without scoring a goal since Australia themselves in the 2011 final against Japan (26).

They missed the creative influence of Aaron Mooy, ruled out before the tournament by a knee injury, and on Friday the flair of the suspended Tom Rogic, but it is the failure up front that will continue to haunt Arnold unless he finds a solution.

The coach was at pains to emphasise that he had been in charge of the team for only four months and that the forwards were an inexperienced unit. "The whole frontline for the first three games had less than 10 games between all three of them," he said.

"I'm very, very proud of this group of players. They gave their all and that's all I can ask. "I think that we've done very, very well this tournament." Milos Degenek, whose back pass let Emirati striker Ali Mabkhout in for the winning goal on Friday, illustrated that the character that has long defined Socceroos teams remains intact.

"I don't feel sorry so much for myself as I do for my country and my team mates, because obviously we ended a tournament because of my mistake," the central defender told reporters. "I've got to deal with it. ... I can accept the fact that I did the mistake. That's football. I'll have many more in my life I think." — Reuters

Mabkhout again provides cutting edge for UAE

ABU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates have defied all predictions by reaching the semi-finals of the Asian Cup and while striker Ali Mabkhout is still firing it would be foolhardy to rule out a first continental title for the hosts.

Alberto Zaccheroni's side did little to fire up their supporters in the group stage, grinding out draws with Bahrain and Thailand and recording just one win over lightweights India. They needed a soft extra time penalty to get past Kyrgyzstan in the last 16 and were expected to depart in the quarter-finals when they met reigning champions Australia in Al Ain on Friday.

They held out the Socceroos until the 68th minute, however, when a sloppy back pass from Milos Degenek put Mabkhout through on goal and the striker rounded goalkeeper Mat Ryan for his fourth goal of the tournament.

It was his ninth Asian Cup goal in total after he won the golden boot with five in Australia four years ago and was a clear warning to last-four opponents Qatar that he should not be given any space in the penalty box.

"Everyone agrees that Mabkhout is a high-calibre striker and a big player," Zaccheroni said. "His performance



AL-AIN: Australia's defender Trent Sainsbury (R) is marked by United Arab Emirates' forward Ali Mabkhout during the 2019 AFC Asian Cup quarter-final football match between UAE and Australia at Hazaa bin Zayed Stadium in Al-Ain on Friday. — AFP

tonight was great. We rely on the collective performance and his goal was critical. It turned the whole match."

The semi-final is potentially politically sensitive because of the current rift between the tournament hosts and Qatar. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt launched a diplomatic and trade boycott of Qatar in June 2017. The countries accuse Qatar of supporting terrorism, which it denies.

Arch-pragmatist Zaccheroni, who led Japan to Asian Cup title in 2011, has managed to mute a lot of the background noise in the run-up to the tournament and on Friday praised his team's "champion character".

"I am a practical coach and I'm

always ready for any critique," he added. "My job is to look for and find a stable way of playing and my role as coach is to make the most of the elements I have in the right way and play a balanced style in defence and in attack."

"We had to play collectively today. The most important thing is that the players have confidence in the coach and they understand my way of playing. They are genuine players and they showed their quality throughout the 90 minutes."

The Italian will be hoping that a big crowd turns out in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday as his side look to emulate the country's best ever performance at an Asian Cup—a trip to the final the last time they hosted the tournament in 1996. — Reuters



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE		
Real Valladolid v Celta de Vigo		14:00
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Girona v FC Barcelona		18:15
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
Real Sociedad v Huesca		20:30
beIN SPORTS HD 1		
Athletic de Bilbao v Real Betis		20:30
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
RCD Espanyol v Real Madrid CF		22:45
beIN SPORTS HD 3		
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE SERIE A		
AC Chievo Verona v ACF Fiorentina		14:30
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
Atalanta v AS Roma		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
Bologna FC v Frosinone Calcio		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 1		
Parma Calcio 1913 v spal		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 7		
Torino FC v Internazionale Milano		20:00
beIN SPORTS HD 4		
SS Lazio v Juventus FC		22:30
beIN SPORTS		
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA		
Bayern Munich v VfB Stuttgart		17:30
beIN SPORTS HD 5		
Fortuna Dusseldorf v RB Leipzig		20:00
beIN SPORTS HD 5		
FRENCH LEAGUE		
Montpellier HSC v Caen		17:00
beIN SPORTS HD 6		
Amiens SC v Olympique Lyonnais		19:00
beIN SPORTS HD 6		
Toulouse FC v SCO Angers		22:00
beIN SPORTS HD 7		
Paris Saint-Germain v Stade Rennais		23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 6		

25 Schimdhofers wins super-G in Garmisch, Goggia second on return



26 India's Sharma, Dhawan play New Zealand in second ODI



27 Marseille crisis deepens as firework explodes, fans protest



MELBOURNE: Japan's Naomi Osaka celebrates with the championship trophy during the presentation ceremony with Czech Republic's Petra Kvitová (R) after the women's singles final on day 13 of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

‘Shocked’ Osaka wins Australian Open

First Asian, male or female to become world number one

MELBOURNE: Japan's Naomi Osaka said she was “in a state of shock” yesterday after holding her nerve to battle past Petra Kvitová and win the Australian Open in a three-set thriller that also gives her the world number one ranking.

The fourth seed and US Open champion triumphed 7-6 (7/2), 5-7, 6-4 in a 2hr 27min epic over the Czech eighth seed to claim back-to-back Grand Slams and become the first Asian, male or female, to hold the top spot. Melbourne Park erupted in thunderous cheers as the Japanese youngster fell to one knee, head bowed, before collecting the trophy from China's Li Na—who lifted the same silverware in 2014 to become the first Asian to win a major.

It was a cathartic moment for 21-year-old Osaka, whose breakthrough Grand Slam win at Flushing Meadows was marred by boos in the wake of losing finalist Serena Williams' tirade at the umpire. Rather than tearfully hiding her face as she did in New York, Osaka beamed with joy at a win she said was still sinking in.

“I felt like I was in a state of shock through the entire trophy presentation,” the 21-year-old said. Osaka was reluctant to say how she felt compared to Flushing Meadows but believed she and Kvitová were fairly supported in Melbourne.

“In New York, most of the crowd was for Serena and here it felt like it was split a little bit,” she said. “Honestly, when I was playing and I heard the crowd was for both of us I was very happy but at the same time I was trying to focus on the match.”

A rattled Osaka almost blew her title hopes with one hand on the trophy when she failed to convert three championship points leading 5-3 in the second set. The never-say-die Kvitová forced a deciding set before Osaka finally edged ahead with a decisive break early in the third.

“Of course I felt very disappointed and sad when I had three match points,” she said. “I tried to tell myself there's nothing I can do about it. I had to regroup and told myself I didn't want any regrets.”

Osaka is the youngest woman to win back-to-back majors since Martina Hingis in 1998 and the youngest number one since Caroline Wozniacki in 2010.

‘CONGRATS CHAMP!’

Her gutsy performance confirms her status as the leading light of tennis' new generation. “Well, after winning the US Open Naomi Osaka became a star. And now, after winning the Australian Open and becoming world number 1, she is a superstar! Congrats Champ,” 18-time Grand Slam winner Martina Navratilova tweeted.

Kvitová can console herself with a career-best performance at Melbourne Park, where she did not drop a set on her way to the final. It was her first Grand Slam decider since a burglar slashed her racquet hand in a 2016 knife attack and the Czech has shown she is again a contender at the majors.

“Thank you for sticking with me even when we didn't know if I would be able to hold a racquet again,” Kvitová told her team, with her voice cracking. “It's

crazy. I can hardly believe that I just played in a Grand Slam final again.”

The pair had never met before and Osaka initially struggled to unlock the lanky left-hander's serve, while Kvitová at times could not handle her opponent's powerful returns. The Czech blew three break chances in a crunch sixth game as the first set went to a tie-break, which Osaka ran away with it 7-2, taking the first set the Czech conceded in the entire tournament.

Kvitová regrouped with an early break in the second but Osaka did not panic, immediately breaking back. The Japanese star broke again to take control as Kvitová's error rate climbed, bringing up three championship points. But the Czech saved all of them.

She then won four straight games to win the set as Osaka left the court with a towel draped over her head. She regained her cool and clipped a clean backhand winner to take a break point in the third game of the decider and was up to the task when Kvitová forced her to serve for the match. —AFP

City continue quadruple quest, Wolves fight back

LONDON: Manchester City's quest for four trophies continued with a 5-0 thrashing of Burnley to march into the FA Cup fifth round as League One Shrewsbury narrowly missed out on shocking Wolves in a 2-2 draw yesterday.

City boss Pep Guardiola labelled talk of a quadruple as “fantasy” earlier in the week, but after cruising into the League Cup final in midweek, the English champions are in contention for a clean sweep of trophies as they challenge Liverpool in the Premier League and face Schalke in the last 16 of the

Champions League.

The defeat left Burnley to concentrate on their bid for survival in the top flight. Guardiola named a strong side with just four changes from last weekend's Premier League win at Huddersfield.

Gabriel Jesus continued his hot streak with a fine individual run and powerful finish past Nick Pope to open the scoring with his eighth goal in five games.

Burnley wasted a great chance to level when Matej Vydra fired wide with just Ederson to beat and within seconds Bernardo Silva's deflected effort gave City breathing space.

Kevin de Bruyne's brilliant free-kick then made it 3-0 and another wicked delivery from the Belgian forced Kevin Long to turn into his own net for the fourth before Sergio Agüero rounded off the scoring from the penalty spot. Wolves knocked out Premier League leaders Liverpool in the last round,

but needed a late fightback from 2-0 down to avoid the shock of the day at New Meadow.

Rangers loanee Greg Docherty smashed the third-tier side into the lead just two minutes into the second-half. Luke Waterfall gave the Shrews a two-goal lead 19 minutes from time with a towering header from a corner. They needed that cushion as Raul Jimenez came off the bench to give the visitors a lifeline and Matt Doherty levelled three minutes into stoppage time to save Wolves' blushes.

One League One side will be in the next round after a late Ben Whiteman penalty earned Doncaster a 2-1 win over Oldham.

Watford edged an all-Premier League tie despite Javi Gracia making 11 changes as Andre Grey and Isaac Success scored in a 2-0 win at Newcastle.

Newport County's fairytale continues as the League Two side, who beat Leicester in round three, equalised in stoppage time to earn a 1-1 draw at Middlesbrough. —AFP



MANCHESTER: Manchester City's Brazilian defender Danilo (3L) shoots to see his shot saved during the English FA Cup fourth round football match between Manchester City and Burnley at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England, yesterday. —AFP