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Panel increases annual leave to 35 days in private sector

Two MPs to grill commerce minister • Activist's citizenship returned



KUWAIT: (Left) HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends Kuwait University's annual graduation ceremony for honor students for the academic year 2017-2018 yesterday at the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Theater at the KU campus in Shuwaikh. (Right) HH the Amir receives a memento from National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Assembly delegation members yesterday. — KUNA (See Pages 2 & 3)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's health and social affairs committee yesterday agreed to increase annual leave in the private sector to 35 days from 30 currently as part of a number of amendments to the labor law, a lawmaker said. MP Osama Al-Shaheen said the amendment applies to both Kuwaitis and expatriates employed in the private sector. Annual leave was raised to 30 days - not including Fridays - several years ago, when the labor law underwent major changes.

Shaheen also said the committee approved a draft law regulating charity in the country. The bill stipulates tougher penalties for those who raise charity funds without a valid license and also raises penalties against those who disparage charitable work. The lawmaker said MPs intend to request that the Assembly gives priority to debate two legislations in today's regular session.

The first requires foreigners visiting Kuwait to have a medical insurance for the period of their stay in the country. The bill also states that the interior ministry will not issue a visit visa for foreigners without the medical insurance. It aims at preventing foreigners from coming to the country for medical treatment. The second bill deals with the call to establish a food authority, the lawmaker said.

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US downgrades its Palestinian diplomatic mission

JERUSALEM: The United States downgraded its diplomatic mission to the Palestinians yesterday, the latest in a series of steps by President Donald Trump's White House. Palestinian leaders say it is aimed at wiping out their cause. The move, following a decision announced in October, closes the US Jerusalem consulate general that had acted independently and served as a de-facto embassy to the Palestinians since the Oslo accords of the 1990s. It will be merged with the US embassy to Israel.

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Tornadoes kill 23 in Alabama; Amir sends condolences

BEAUREGARD, Alabama: Rescuers in Alabama stepped up the search for survivors yesterday after two back-to-back tornadoes ripped across the southern state, with the death toll of 23 expected to rise further. "The devastation is incredible," Lee County Sheriff Jay Jones told the local CBS affiliate. "It looks

almost as if someone took a giant knife and scraped the ground," he said. "There are slabs where homes formerly stood, there is debris everywhere, trees are snapped, whole ... forested areas are just snapped. I cannot recall at least in the last 50 years ... a situation where we have had this loss of life," Jones said.

He said the death toll stood at 23, some of them children. One of the dead was just six years old, with the toll likely to rise. "We have several people who are still unaccounted for," Jones said. "Unfortunately, we anticipate the number of fatalities may rise as the day goes on." Other people were hospitalized, some with "very serious injuries".

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BEAUREGARD, Alabama: A man carries items from his mother's home yesterday after it was destroyed in a tornado. — AFP

News in brief

US deploys THAAD to Israel

JERUSALEM: The US military has deployed its most advanced air and missile defense system to Israel for the first time, US and Israeli military officials said yesterday. The deployment, which began in March, was intended to test the US military's ability to rapidly deploy such weapons around the world, said a spokeswoman for US European Command. — Reuters

Pakistan airspace fully reopened

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan fully reopened its airspace yesterday, authorities said, days after it closed its skies to all air travel, leaving thousands stranded worldwide as tensions with nuclear arch-rival India soared. But the backlog means major delays are still expected and authorities have urged passengers to check for more information with their airlines. — AFP

Qatar defiant on arms purchases

DOHA: Qatar yesterday told rival Saudi Arabia not to meddle in its potential arms purchases from Russia, as the state weighs the purchase of the S-400 air defense system. "Regarding the arms sales that Qatar has with Russia... we believe that Saudi Arabia, or any other countries, it is none of their business," Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said at a news conference with his visiting Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov. — AFP

Saudi envoy's killer hanged

DHAKA: A Bangladeshi man was hanged in a jail outside Dhaka over the murder of a Saudi diplomat in 2012, an official said yesterday. Khalaf Al-Ali, 45, was shot in the capital's diplomatic zone in front of his rented apartment. Police at that time said 30-year-old Saiful Islam, who was hanged on Sunday, led the gang who tried to rob the diplomat. — AFP

'Momo' image creator says has destroyed doll

TOKYO: The Japanese artist behind the images that sparked the recent viral "Momo Challenge" hoax told AFP yesterday he destroyed the creepy doll long ago and never meant to harm anyone. The scary image with goggle eyes and a pained expression was based on a Japanese ghost called "ubume" - of a woman who dies during childbirth, explained Keisuke Aiso, head of Tokyo-based firm LINK FACTORY, which makes props for TV dramas.

The silicon-based sculpture, which stands

about one meter high, was first shown at a ghost-themed exhibition in Tokyo's swanky Ginza district in 2016 but attracted little attention at the time. It was one of many ghost-themed sculptures in Aiso's repertoire and the artist said: "It was meant to scare people, yes, but it wasn't meant to harm anyone." Aiso, 43, destroyed the sculpture last year because it began to deteriorate. "That was nothing to do with the recent case," he stressed.

The terrifying image has been at the center of a viral hoax, as reports surfaced that children were being induced by "Momo" into dangerous tasks and even self-harm and suicide. However, there is no evidence this is true and the myth seems to have been propagated mainly by concerned parents via social media. Aiso appeared bemused by the reports and told AFP: "I'd be happy if such a challenge never existed." — AFP



TOKYO: This handout picture taken in Aug 2016 shows the silicon-based sculpture Momo on display. — AFP

Award-winning Egypt journalist freed from jail

CAIRO: Award-winning Egyptian photojournalist Mahmoud Abu Zeid was released yesterday after spending nearly six years in prison following his arrest while covering a bloody crackdown on protests. The photographer, widely known as Shawkan, faces five years of strict supervision and will be required to spend every night sleeping at his local police station, but he vowed to resume his work. Last year Shawkan received UNESCO's World Freedom Prize for his "courage, resistance and commitment to freedom of expression," dismaying the Egyptian authorities who accused him of "terrorist and criminal acts".

Speaking at his home in Giza, he said the first moments of his release felt "as if I was flying". Imprisonment "was an experience that I can never forget," the 31-year-old told AFP. "It's bitter but it lets one look at life from a different perspective, a new perspective that one can't see except from this place," he said. He is determined to return to his career despite the restrictions placed on him, saying: "I will continue my work as a photojournalist in Egypt." His mother fears his journalism will expose him to more risk. "As a mother I always urge him to stay out of trouble... but he always says journalism is in my blood," said 61-year-old Reda Mahrous.

The Committee to Protect Journalists called on the Egyptian authorities "to end their shameful treatment of this photojournalist by removing any conditions to his release". Shawkan said he would take legal steps to try to end the restrictions.

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CAIRO: Egyptian photojournalist Mahmoud Abu Zeid, widely known as Shawkan, carries a camera at his home yesterday. — AFP

Amir, Crown Prince meet Speaker, MPs returning from Iraq, Jordan



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and National Assembly delegation members who participated in the 29th AIPU conference. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud hands His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah an invitation from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to attend the final ceremony of King Abdulaziz Camel Festival.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem and National Assembly delegation members who participated in the 29th AIPU conference.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan palace National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly delegation members who had an official visit

to the Republic of Iraq and participated in the 29th conference of the Arab Inter-Parliament Union (AIPU) held in the Jordanian capital Amman. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received Ghanem and the delegation mem-

bers who participated in the AIPU conference.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received an invitation from Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud to attend the final ceremony of King Abdulaziz Camel Festival in Riyadh to be held

this month. The invitation was handed to His Highness the Amir by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud. The reception was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. —KUNA

Jordan's King stresses importance of intensifying Arab efforts

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah II on Sunday stressed the need to intensify efforts to find political solutions to the crises experienced by some Arab countries. This came during King Abdullah's meeting with the heads of Arab parliaments participating in the 29th Arab Inter-parliamentary Union (AIPU) Conference held in Amman, Jordanian News Agency (Petra) said. King Abdullah II stressed the importance of the role played by the AIPU in seeking to unify the Arab positions on the regional challenges. He pointed out that the challenges facing the Arab nation require cooperation, unified positions in the interests of the Arab countries, to ultimately achieve security and stability in the region. The Jordanian King reiterated his country's position on the Palestinian issue, praising AIPU's positions in support of the Palestinian people's rights. Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem praised Jordan's support of the Syrian and Palestinian refugees' camps, Petra said. King Abdullah appreciated support of His Highness Kuwait's Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for Jordan and Arab issues.

Protection for Palestinians

Ghanem had called the AIPU to work on providing protection for the Palestinian people, pay extra attention to Palestinian conciliation and reject normalization of ties with Israel. Whoever wants to support the Palestinian cause should be ready for a "diplomatic and political battle" in a collective fashion, Ghanem said in a speech before an AIPU Conference in Amman. He asserted importance of coordination with all international partners to highlight the cause of occupied Jerusalem.

Ghanem rejected all attempts to tarnish historic facts surrounding Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine. He said Kuwait has always been a staunch supporter of the Palestinian cause, foremost through its non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council where Kuwait was acting upon instructions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, "the wise Arab leader," to issue a resolution to providing protection for the Palestinian people. All Israeli attempts to abort this resolution failed, he said, "triggering an American veto to topple this resolution." This resolution was then tabled to the UN General Assembly and won the support of 122 countries.

Ghanem said Kuwait parliament would table to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) conference in Doha, Qatar, next month an urgent motion to provide protection for the Palestinian people, urging AIPU members to support this move. He said Kuwait's National Assembly was ready to carry out any role to address differences among the Palestinian people. Ghanem called on AIPU to reject



AMMAN: Kuwaiti Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem speaks during the AIPU conference in Amman, Jordan. —KUNA

the normalization of relations with Israel. "We should, with one voice, reject normalization with an occupier and a criminal," he stressed. "No normalization with murderers of children and rapist of land."

Decisions approved

The AIPU Political and Parliament Relations Committee Affairs approved Sunday a number of decisions regarding the Palestinian issue, Jerusalem, and Israeli violations against the Palestinian people, and sacred Islamic and Christian sites. The committee, which included two members from the Kuwaiti Parliamentary delegation, Rakan Al-Nisf and Dr Ouda Al-Ruwaie, tackled activities within the Inter-Parliamentary Union, relations with international parliaments and other organizations, and coordination of the Arab Work Group in regional and international parliamentary unions, including Arab-African parliamentary cooperation in various fields.

Meanwhile, the committee announced opposition to all initiatives that do not heed Palestinian people's interests, especially much-anticipated US President Donald Trump's 'deal of the century.' The committee members had reiterated support to the Palestinian people and affirmed that the Palestinian cause would remain the core issue for the whole Arab nation, Chairman of the committee and Kuwaiti MP Dr Ouda Al-Ruwaie said following the committee meeting. They also concurred that no peace or stability could be achieved in the Mideast without a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian cause based on the relevant UN resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, he pointed out.

Ruwaie noted that the Arab lawmakers also condemned the repeated Israeli assaults on Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Israeli theft of Palestinian money through deducting sums from the Palestinian taxes money. The committee had also called for re-invigorating formerly approved plans and resolutions to back the struggle of the Palestinian people and as well as the AIPU Palestinian people steadfastness committee's plan intensify efforts to freeze the Israeli Knesset membership in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, he clarified. He, furthermore, stated that the committee had denounced the continued Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan Heights. —KUNA

EU, Kuwait fluent partners in fighting terrorism: Official

KUWAIT: Kuwait and the European Union (EU) enjoy a very fluent partnership in terms of fighting terrorism, said a senior official yesterday. "We are in the process of developing ideas already discussed some months ago to identify many concrete projects to feed our partnership," said Gilles de Kerchove, Counter-Terrorism Coordinator at the EU on his visit to Kuwait. In an exclusive interview with, De Kerchove said the two-day visit came "because we want a strong and balanced relationship, especially in regards to counter-terrorism."

The EU, by definition, is in favor of multilateralism and regional cooperation. Thus, we would like to see the GCC conflict come to an end. If we see we can do something to help in the process, of course we will do it." On his meeting with Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, the EU official noted that it mainly focused on combating the threat of terrorism, "as the Global Coalition has nearly completely destroyed the physical 'caliphate of Daesh'". Daesh is the Arabic acronym of the so-called Islamic State (in Iraq and the Levant and/or Sham). He elaborated saying "we are also concerned with dealing with the remains of Daesh, addressing the legacy and ideology of the group, which is still very strong and active. This can be addressed and detected in various ways, like through inspection of prisoners charged with terrorism, access to evidence, as well as aviation security, document fraud and terrorism-financing."

Therefore, Kuwait, currently a member of the UN Security Council, is seen by the EU as a "fluent partner" in this regard, noted De Kerchove. On the degree of terrorism prevalence in the Middle East region, especially in Iraq and Syria, he said "I have been to Iraq recently. They are confronted by many difficult challenges, including the huge number of those arrested on terrorism charges, the reconstructing of the security sector and politically help justice and reconciliation processes triumph, especially in post IS-Mosul." In Syria, the current situation is different, according De Kerchove, "especially after the US announcement of withdrawing its troops... its impact is difficult to predict with the existence of many major regional players like Turkey."

In Europe, "we have reduced significantly our vulnerabilities," he said. "The EU worked a lot in the last 3-4 years to address the challenge, and I think that explains why all security services are in a position to foil plots, to stop, and detect people who are close to the 'tipping points'; when they are likely to commit attacks." The Global Coalition did a great job in destroying the physical caliphate of Daesh, which reduces the ability of Daesh to plan attacks from their territory, but that doesn't mean there is no threat anymore. "The main threat, as we see it, is now 'home-grown': people that have not travelled to Iraq and Syria, who have no link with either Daesh or Al Qaeda, but are inspired by these ideologies. And those challenges for the security services, for several reasons," he said. First of



Gilles de Kerchove

these challenges is the number of people believed to be intensely radicalized, which is quite significant, he noted. "Being radical is not an offence in itself nor a crime," he indicated. "What is criminal is when one starts preparing a terrorist attack. And it's not easy to detect this tipping point. We still have a number foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), who went to Syria and Iraq and have not returned yet. So we have to be extra vigilant because some of them might want to return."

As for the other side of the coin, De Kerchove said that the far-right in Europe is also an issue to tackle, as it is "on the rise" yet still "marginal." Such political parties and populist movements do have followers and could as well have a negative impact on Muslim communities throughout Europe through the exploitation and justification of Islamophobia. "It is worrying... because we want to ensure societal cohesion, and that Europe remains open for migrants and asylum seekers," he said.

On what he termed "virtual caliphate", De Kerchove travelled to Silicon Valley in March 2017 to discuss with the IT industry how to tackle online extremism. At the European Council of June 2017, EU leaders called on the industry to help combat terrorism and crime online. Leaders expect the IT industry to establish a forum and to improve the automatic detection and removal of terrorist-related content, complemented by relevant legislative measures at EU level, if necessary. In September 2018, the Commission proposed new rules to stop the spread of terrorist content online. The measures include amongst others a one-hour deadline for content to be removed following a removal order from national competent authorities.

The EU leaders adopted a declaration on combating terrorism following the terrorist attacks in Madrid on March 11, 2004, agreeing to create an EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator as part of the measures foreseen in this declaration. In his capacity as Coordinator, De Kerchove of Belgium was appointed in September of 2007, and is in charge of coordinating the work of the Council in combating terrorism, presenting policy recommendations and proposing priority areas for action to the Council, monitoring the implementation of the EU counter-terrorism strategy, ensuring the EU plays an active role in the fight against terrorism and improving communication between the EU and other countries, among other duties and tasks. —KUNA

Amir attends Kuwait University honor students, graduation ceremony



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi, Kuwait University staff and graduates pose for a group picture at the ceremony. — Photos by Amiri Diwan and Kuwait University

KUWAIT: Under the patronage and with attendance of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Kuwait University (KU) held its annual honor students' graduation ceremony for the academic year 2017-2018. The ceremony was held yesterday at Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Theater at the KU campus in Shuwaikh. His Highness the Amir was welcomed upon arrival by Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi, KU Director Dr Hussein Al-Ansari and university senior officials. The ceremony was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly

Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, senior state officials and a host of graduates and citizens. Speaking on behalf of the graduates, valedictorian Sheikh Duaij Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Sabah thanked His Highness the Amir for his kind patronage of the event, which he said encouraged faculty members and students alike to exert more efforts in their areas of expertise. He dedicated his academic excellence to His Highness the Amir. He also thanked all of KU's professors for imparting their knowledge to him and fellow graduates, wishing Kuwait continued development, peace and prosperity. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and top state officials react during the event.



(From left) National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and Education Minister Dr Hamed Al-Azmi cut a cake as KU Director Dr Hussein Al-Ansari looks on.



A memento is presented to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for his patronage of the event.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah greets the attendants as he arrives to the venue.



A group of graduates seen during the ceremony.



Graduates honored on stage.



Three graduates pose for a picture.



Two graduates take a selfie.



A general view of the graduates.

Local

Photo of the Day



KUWAIT: Flowers decorating the area near Kuwait Towers. — Photo by Krishnadas Ramanujam (KUNA)

Kuwait seeks regional, international tourism recognition through Vision 2035

Plans to develop islands, northern region to attract tourists

KUWAIT: As part of its plan to transform the country into an international business and financial hub, the State of Kuwait is working on developing the tourism sector in line with the 'New Kuwait' or 'Vision 2035'. The strategic plan for tourism will aim at developing Kuwaiti Islands and the northern region of the country to attract visitors from all around the globe. The geography of Kuwait's islands provides many opportunities for investments and development by local and international business personnel. One of the most important ventures is to develop the locally well-known Island of Failaka and re-introduce it to the region and the world.

In 1982, a tourism resort was opened on Failaka to invite visitors to observe and appreciate the relics and areas dating back to thousands of years. Various Kuwaiti families also inhabited the Island. The current plan for the island focuses on reinvigorating the tourism scene in the Island to place it on the map of the must-see touristic locations in the State of Kuwait.

Back to the mainland, Souq Al-Mubarakiya is renowned for being one of the oldest existing markets in the country, attracting visitors coming from far and wide. The old architecture of the souk is one of the chief reasons people continuously visit the market, as if Al-Mubarakiya is channeling the old Kuwait amidst an ever-growing landscape of mod-

ern buildings and constructions in Kuwait City. If old exotic markets did not hit the spot, high-end shopping malls such as the Avenues, the 360 mall, the Gate, Al-Kout, and others will surely satisfy the need of visitors and tourists. For something a little bit nostalgic, tourists — familiar with Kuwait during the late-1970s onwards — will know of the north and south Al-Nugra shopping complexes in Hawalli area as well as Al-Salhiya and Al-Muthanna shopping complexes in Kuwait City.

On the coastline, several important landmarks — namely Kuwait Towers, the Grand Mosque, and the Green Island — greet visitors to the country along with Marina and Sharq Malls and various restaurant franchises. Also on the coastline is the Kuwait scientific center, opened on April 7, 2000, with its numerous facilities, dining options and entertainment services for the young and the old. People looking to satisfy their cultural wants should visit locations such as the Red Fort in

Jahra governorate, Seif Palace and Kuwait National Museum in Kuwait city, Al-Othman Museum in Hawalli, the Historical, Vintage, and Classical Cars Museum in Shuwaikh Industrial area, or the Tareq Rajab Museum of Islamic Calligraphy in Al-Jabriya. In addition, the Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC) — opened on October 31, 2016 — and the Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center (ASCC) —

Passengers increased to 14 million last year



KUWAIT: Failaka Island ruins. —KUNA photos



The Green Island.

opened on February 5, 2018 — have been hailed as significant leaps in boosting the cultural scene in Kuwait. The two establishments offer services to attendees and visitors whether learning about the history of the earth at the science museum in the ASCC or enjoying an evening of musical performances by renowned global artists in the JACC.

For an outdoor experience, people from Kuwait, the region, and the world could enjoy their time at Al-Shaheed Park — home for greeneries, fountains, breathtaking sculptures, and above all a spectacular view of Kuwait city during the evening. Since independence in 1962, Kuwait took special care to build infrastructure catering to the needs to tourists from around the globe while in recent decades

Kuwait launched its 'Hala February' festival, an initiative aimed at boosting the tourism sector in the country.

In 2018, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah launched the Kuwait Vision 2035. Amongst the important aspect of the strategy was the opening of Terminal 4 (T4) at Kuwait International Airport, which led to the increase of passengers to 14 million last year. Bolstering the tourism sector in Kuwait, according to governmental estimates, will create 90,000 job opportunities for the youth by 2035, making a direct and indirect impact on the touristic national gross product to around two percent with the possibility of going to four percent through attracting foreign investments. —KUNA

ABK celebrates national days with staff

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) celebrated National and Liberation Day with its staff members on 21 February, 2019, marking the start of the national celebrations. All employees at the Head Office and

across all branches were presented with the Kuwait flag and themed pins upon arrival, and enjoyed traditional sweets, breakfast and a variety of other hot drinks and juices throughout the day. The bank marked the start of its National and Liberation day celebrations earlier this month as it lit up its headquarters. ABK will continue to demonstrate its commitment towards the Kuwait community by celebrating its national holidays every year with its people, with the aim of spreading and strengthening the national spirit among its employees and the communities in which it operates.



Burgan Bank organizes fun day for elderly in Souq Al-Mubarakiya

KUWAIT: In cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, Burgan Bank organized a fun day for the elderly at Souq Al-Mubarakiya. One of the oldest and most visited markets in Kuwait, the Souq is a popular local landmark and tourist destination that reflects the Kuwaiti heritage and vibrant culture.

As part of Burgan Bank's mission to integrate all segments into the society, the fun day falls under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labors' regular entertainment programs which constitutes several initiatives and recreational activities for the residents of the home. During their visit, the elderly expressed their joy in visiting the prominent Kuwaiti market which brought back many good memories as they enjoyed every aspect of the authentic experience. Recollecting old times, they had strolled across famous shops and cafes and enjoyed a grand lunch at one of the restaurants. Burgan Bank ended the pleasant day out with a number of exciting gifts, including traditional clothes to bring further happiness and leave them with a smile on their faces.

Burgan Bank has continually affirmed its community commitment through the support of various and diverse social initiatives driven under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor also commended the Bank's continued support of all three - the orphaned children, the elderly and special needs segments.

The Bank's support of this initiative falls under its



dynamic full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural and health driven initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a leading Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the community.

Prime Minister orders stern control over stumbling projects

Firms behind incomplete projects to be denied access to future tenders

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah instructed strict control on projects, mainly faltering ones, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh said yesterday. Speaking after a weekly Cabinet meeting, the minister said the Cabinet discussed the projects' completion rate and delivery schedules as well as legal measures, including fines or withdrawal, against uncompleted projects. He quoted His Highness the Prime Minister as underlining the significance of applying punitive measures enshrined in Law 49/2016 regarding public tenders and its executive statute issued in February 2017 on faltering businesses. His Highness the Prime Minister also ordered ministers concerned to inform the Central Agency for Public Tenders about uncompleted projects in line with Article 85 of Law 49/2016 which states that the company which fails to adhere to a concluded contract should be denied access to any future tenders, he added. His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak also ordered that staunch action should be taken so as to preserve public funds, the minister noted.

Meanwhile, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed the cabinet about outcome of the first Arab League-European Union summit, commending speech of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the meeting. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said His Highness the Amir underlined common values between Arabs and Europeans, and highlighted EU's vital role at the international level, Saleh said. The EU, said His Highness the Amir, played a major role in security and stability in the Middle East and countering terrorism, which was affecting 'our security and stability'. He commended EU's support of the Palestinian cause towards reaching a just and final solution for the Palestinian people.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also briefed the cabinet about outcome of a ministerial meet-



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

ing of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), during which the top diplomats discussed boosting trade and economic exchange with the objective to reaching economic integration. The OIC foreign ministers decided to establish an endowment



Staunch action to preserve public funds

fund to support Palestinian refugees and UNRWA, he said, adding Kuwait was elected in OIC's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), said Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled.

In the meantime, the cabinet thanked leaders of the Gulf, Arab and Western countries

for celebrating Kuwait's national days, particularly GCC citizens who showed genuine feelings through festivities they held to mark the national days. Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of State for Services Khaled Al-Roudhan briefed the cabinet about his recent visit to Iraq and meetings with senior officials regarding the establishment of a free trade zone, said Saleh. Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi briefed the ministers about cross-examination of 15,514 university certificates and approved by Cultural Attaches in Egypt, Jordan, Los Angeles, Washington and Bahrain.

On the other hand, the cabinet discussed Ministry of Health's preparations to open Sheikh Salwa Al-Sabah Center for Stem Cell and Umbilical Cord in May. The cabinet approved in principles American universities that could accept scholarships for disabled people. Minister of State for Economic Affairs Maryam Al-Aqeel also briefed the cabinet about development projects implemented in 2018-2019. — KUNA

Street paving to start March 15

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) will launch on March 15 the plan it recently approved to pave various streets using an extra asphalt layer, well-informed sources said. The sources added that MPW recently reviewed various road maintenance contracts to prepare an integrated plan, noting that the process will be supervised by three different teams including the Qatari Lab, MPW and a third with representatives from Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), Kuwait University and the defense ministry's lab.

Meanwhile, the Orient Planet Research Company issued a report titled 'Fast Tracking Development: Road Infrastructure in the GCC', which stressed that roads, highways and bridges are among the most prominent infrastructure projects in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), as the region increasingly becomes a major player in hosting high-profile world events.

The report added that from a global perspective, the UAE and Saudi Arabia rank among the top 12 global markets for infrastructure investment and expenditure on road infrastructure has been a major growth factor in the region, with governments continuing to find these investments vital to both social and economic growth, noting that governments continue to give a high level of priority to road projects. "To help resolve budget

problems for these projects, there is a growing tendency towards providing enough funding through private public partnerships," the report explained, adding that the total cost of infrastructure projects in GCC states is \$1.14 trillion.

The report also noted that the total of 1,069 projects are being executed in the region and that road infrastructure projects have accounted for the largest share of government spending, which was estimated at \$122.6 billion in 2017 alone. The report added that UAE had allocated AED 15 billion (\$ 4.8 billion) for major projects serving the 2020 Dubai Expo. Saudi Arabia invested over \$400 million in nine major road projects and that the Kuwaiti government will execute a project to develop the 93-km-long Seventh Ring Road and plans to invest \$13.2 billion in executing 24 new road infrastructure projects.

Factories fined

Kuwait Municipality has once more enforced laws on violating companies and factories in the southern desert areas through filing two citations with the total value of KD 440,000 for not renewing their safety and storage licenses, said an official source at the municipality, noting that some of the violating companies had been illegally sub-leasing warehouses.

Meanwhile, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Fahd Al-Shula stressed the need to regulate the process of renting temporary marquees. In different concern, the municipality approved a request by Kuwait National Cinema Company to build a commercial, cultural and recreational complex on land plot number 49 and build multi-storey parking on land lot number 50 as per the contract signed with the finance ministry.

News in brief

Runaway juvenile found

KUWAIT: Ministry of Social Affairs' assistant undersecretary for co-op affairs and the ministry's official spokesperson Abdul Aziz Shuaib announced arresting the juvenile who had recently escaped from a juvenile social care home. Shuaib added that the juvenile was returned to the home after security forces managed to locate and arrest him. Separately, the ministry's assistant undersecretary for social care affairs Sheikh Al-Awadhi announced that nine ministry employees working in the juvenile and the disabled departments won leading positions in Kuwait's 22nd Quran memorization and recitation competition held under auspices of HH the Amir. — By Meshaal Al-Enezi

Sheep prices could increase

KUWAIT: Kuwait is preparing to deal with Australia's decision to stop the export of live sheep during the summer from June 1 until August 31, as the Kuwait Livestock Transport and Trading Company (KLTT) asked the commerce ministry's permission to stock sheep during this period to meet the needs of the local market, especially during Eid Al-Adha. Informed sources said the suggestion of the KLTT to the commerce ministry was a precautionary one as the local market may face a crisis in sheep supply. It asked to allow storing the quantities Kuwait consumes during this period efficiently, including its needs for Eid Al-Adha which reach 120,000 heads. Sources said if the commerce ministry accepts this request, prices of live sheep could increase by KD 7 per month during these months. This means that the price will increase by KD 7 in June, in July the increase will be KD 14, while in August, the customer will pay an additional KD 21 over the regular price of KD 49, which means sheep prices will increase by 43 percent during Eid Al-Adha, which will be in August. — Al-Rai

Jaber Hospital

KUWAIT: Health Minister Sheikh Dr Basil Al-Sabah said that Kuwait Investment Authority established a company named 'Kuwait Enaya Company for Hospitals Management' to manage Jaber Hospital. This was based on a Cabinet decision to manage and invest in the hospital through cooperation with an international medical center in order to enhance the medical services presented by health ministry hospitals. The minister said as for the expansion of Jahra Hospital, a committee was formed to study the mechanism of its management. — Al-Anbaa

Passengers caught with drugs at Terminal 4

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A man and a woman were arrested at Kuwait International Airport's Terminal 4 yesterday for attempting to smuggle banned substances into the country. Customs Information Committee member Nawaf Al-Mattar said a customs inspector suspected a passenger and found two pieces of hashish in his luggage. He added that a European woman had 500 illicit tablets on her.

Body found

A citizen's body was recovered by the coroner after it was found in the parking lot of Ardiya medical center. A patient called police, but when they arrived, they found the person was already dead. Al-Rai reported yesterday. An investigation was opened into the case.

Kidnap case

As the public prosecution ordered the continued detention of the suspects in the kidnapping of a lawyer, other surprises have appeared in the four Egyptians' confessions - that they filmed the lawyer who hired them to blackmail him after leaving Kuwait. It was found that the suspect lawyer had planted a tracking device in the victim's car and linked it to his mobile to monitor all his movements. The public prosecution began interrogations of the lawyer, who is accused of hiring the four expats to kidnap and torture another lawyer in exchange of KD 1,000 each. Al-Rai daily reported yesterday.

The lawyer denied the expats' claims, but they said they have a tape of him torturing his colleague, which they made in order to blackmail him. The suspect lawyer insisted on denying the torture, but the surprise was that police also discovered that he himself filmed the kidnapped lawyer in his farm with his hands cuffed and his head covered with a bag. But suspect still denied filming the victim, adding that he has nothing to do with him. When police searched the lawyer's house, they found the victim's wallet and his phone. When his farm was searched, the victim's car keys were found there.



KUWAIT: Drugs found with passengers arrested at Kuwait International Airport's Terminal 4 yesterday.

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French police hit with poo bombs

China accuses detained Canadian of stealing state secrets

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ALGIERS: Algerian students demonstrate at Algiers' school of medicine against ailing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's bid for a fifth term. — AFP

Anger brews as Bouteflika bids for 5th term

Protesters dismiss Bouteflika's promises as an 'insult'

ALGIERS: Algerians yesterday dismissed President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's promise to quit early if re-elected for a fifth time and said they were ready for new protests seeking his resignation. The ailing leader, who suffered a stroke in 2013, vowed in a letter read out on state television late Sunday to organize a "national conference" that would set a date for further polls which he would not contest.

"I pledge not to be a candidate in that election which will ensure I am succeeded in undeniable conditions of serenity, freedom and transparency," the letter read. "I listened and heard the cry from the hearts of protesters and in particular the thousands of young people who questioned me about the future of our homeland", it said.

His message—followed by the formal submission of his candidacy for the April 18 poll by his campaign manager Abdelghani Zaalane—failed to win hearts as new protests hit the capital Algiers and other cities. In central Algiers hundreds of mostly young demonstrators rallied peacefully overnight Sunday and into the early hours of yesterday as a helicopter buzzed overhead and police deployed gradually across the city. Similar protests were reported in other cities across the North African country overnight.

As the week unfolded yesterday, residents of the capital told AFP they were already planning for more protests as they dismissed Bouteflika's promises as an "insult". Bouteflika "thinks we're idiots. We said no (to him). And 'we' are a people 42-million strong," said



Local newspapers express their fury

Karim, a 22-year-old unemployed man who declined to give his surname. Mohammed, a 69-year-old retired man, insisted he was ready to take part in his "first ever" demonstration next Friday. "They want us to believe that he (Bouteflika) is the Messiah, a prophet, that there is no one else who can save this country," he said.

'Contempt'

Local newspapers also expressed their fury, with Al-Watan daily saying Bouteflika's bid for a fifth term showed "contempt" for the tens of thousands of Algerians who have taken to the streets since February 22 calling for him to resign. Liberte newspaper said Bouteflika's promises to serve a shorter term were merely a "maneuver" to placate the people "until he takes charge again". But El-Moudjahid daily, a mouthpiece of the government, said in an editorial that Bouteflika's pledge showed that he was "placing the dignity and interests of his compatriots and Algeria before anything else".

The president, who has rarely been seen in public since suffering a stroke, has been in Switzerland since February 24 for what the presidency described as "routine medical tests". There were no legal requirements for him to submit his candidacy in person and it was handed in by his campaign manager Zaalane just before a midnight deadline Sunday. Zaalane claimed that Bouteflika—who has ruled since 1999—had the backing of 19,700 national and local elected representatives and of 5.86 million voters. Their signed affidavits of support were brought Sunday night to the Constitutional Council—where presidential bids are for-

mally lodged—by the truckloads.

'Go away'

Hours earlier students demonstrating in central Algiers chanted "Bouteflika go away" and police fired water cannon to prevent some from reaching the Constitutional Council. Similar rallies took place in several cities across the oil-rich North African country and as far as France and Montreal in Canada. "Out out," shouted crowds in the Place de la Republique, central Paris, where protesters waved placards and some wrapped themselves in Algerian flags.

Protesters in Algeria have been mobilized by calls on social media, as many young people struggle to find jobs in a country where half the population is under 30. Bouteflika was the eighth candidate to register Sunday for the April poll. The others included retired general Ali Ghediri—an independent who was the first to announce he would run and has promised change, but whose popularity remains unknown. Bouteflika's former prime minister and key rival Ali Benflis announced Sunday he would not run in the race describing the upcoming election as no longer relevant because it was void of competition. The council has until March 14 to accept or reject the presidential bids. —AFP

Modi and Imran bask after 'good' Kashmir crisis

NEW DELHI: As tempers cool after an alarming confrontation between India and Pakistan, analysts say their leaders have emerged stronger—with Narendra Modi basking in his nationalist credentials and Imran Khan cast as a peacemaker. Some 400,000 people have signed petitions for Khan, the former playboy cricketer and prime minister since August, to get a Nobel prize, while Modi's political stock has also risen ahead of looming elections.

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since 1947, and two of the Asian nations' three wars have been over the Muslim-majority mountainous territory. An insurgency since the late 1980s—stoked by Islamabad, New Delhi says—in the part of Kashmir that India administers has killed tens of thousands of people, most of them civilians. On February 14 a suicide bombing claimed by a Pakistan-based militant group killed 40 Indian troops. Twelve days later Indian aircraft hit what New Delhi called a terrorist training camp deep inside Pakistan. In aerial skirmishes over Kashmir the next day, at least one Indian jet was shot down and its pilot captured by Pakistan. India said it also downed a Pakistani aircraft, a claim Islamabad denied.

'Peace gesture'

As the world held its breath, Khan, 66, made the surprise announcement that the captured pilot, handlebar-moustached Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, would be freed in a "peace gesture". Deadly shelling



NEW DELHI: Indian demonstrators hold a placard as they form a human chain with others during an anti-war demonstration called by pacifist organizations in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

over the de-facto frontier and clashes between Indian security forces and militants notwithstanding, Abhinandan's release on Friday looks to have taken the sting out of the standoff for now.

Khan's actions disarmed his opponents in parliament and on social media alike, with The News daily noting a "rare bonhomie... between government and opposition". Assuming it was Khan's decision to free the pilot—never a given in a country where the military plays such an outsized role—"it was the first correct one of (Khan's) political career", tweeted Gul Bukhari, a columnist who strongly opposes the government. Modi "looks like a war-mongering minuscule leader, while the Pakistani prime

minister looks like a statesman," said analyst Mosharaf Zaidi. Fahd Husain, a leading analyst and executive director of The Express Tribune, told AFP he has been "very pleasantly surprised" by Khan's attitude.

"It would have been very easy for him to go the aggressive route. People would have applauded it", he said. Zaidi said, however, that once the dust settles, politics will be back with a vengeance. "Pakistan has many problems: education, water, etc. And Imran Khan is the prime minister of all these problems", he added. Huma Yusuf, from the Wilson Center, cautioned that the challenge of initiating dialogue with India remains. "This incident has been tactfully handled, but the India-Pak relation has gone worse, no matter how well Imran Khan has handled it," she added.

Modi talked tough

No one is putting Modi forward for a Nobel but his tub-thumping rhetoric has won him some much-needed political points before India goes to the polls in a few weeks. Contrasting the more conciliatory sounding Khan, Modi has talked tough, saying that his "new India" would "fight as one" and deliver a "jaw-breaking response". Even doubts about the efficacy of the air strikes inside Pakistan and the embarrassing shooting down of the pilot have failed to dampen the national enthusiasm for Modi's response. The opposition Congress party—which before the crisis was looking increasingly confident ahead of the election—criticized only how it was kept out of the loop, but not the air raid itself. Omar Abdullah, a former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir as well as a Modi critic, was full of praise. "That's a strike deep inside Pakistan and is hugely embarrassing for (Pakistan)," he tweeted. Tavleen Singh, a veteran journalist, also lavished praise on the prime minister. — AFP

So far apart: India, Pakistan engage in war of counter-claim

NEW DELHI: An air strike by Indian warplanes inside Pakistan last week, and a subsequent retaliatory attack by the Pakistani air force, pushed the nuclear-armed neighbors to the brink of another war, but also triggered a fight over the truth about events. Below is a look at claims and counter claims from both sides. They disagree on most aspects.

Pulwama attack

The escalation in tension came after a suicide car bombing killed 40 paramilitary troops in Pulwama in Indian-administered Kashmir, a mountainous region also claimed by Pakistan, on Feb 14. India blames Pakistan for the attack, which was claimed by a Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), and says it has provided Pakistan with proof. India's foreign ministry said in a statement on Feb. 27 that a dossier was handed over to Pakistan with "specific details of JeM complicity in Pulwama terror attack and the presence of JeM terror camps and its leadership in Pakistan".

Pakistan has denied the accusation, saying it had nothing to do with the Pulwama bombing, which came right before a high-profile visit by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to Islamabad on Feb 17.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan told parliament on Feb 28: "We had such an important visit of the Saudi crown prince coming up. We knew that they would invest, there were contracts. Which country would sabotage such an important event by conducting a terror attack?"

Air strike impact

India said its warplanes struck a JeM training camp near the Pakistani town of Balakot in the early hours of Feb 26, acting on intelligence that the militant group was planning another suicide attack. "In this operation, a very large number of JeM terrorists, trainers, senior commanders and groups of jihadis who were being trained for fideyean action were eliminated," India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said in a briefing after the air strike. Fideyean is a term used to describe Islamist militants willing to fight to the death.

Pakistan acknowledged that Indian jets had crossed into its territory, but denied they had hit anything substantial. Under forced hasty withdrawal, Indian aircraft "released payload which had free fall in open area. No infrastructure got hit, no casualties", the Pakistan military spokesman, Major General Asif Ghafoor, said in a tweet. In New Delhi, a senior government official told reporters that at least 300 militants had been killed, although India's defense forces have since said they are unable to provide any detail on the number of casualties. "We hit our target," the chief of the Indian air force (IAF), BS Dhanoa, said yesterday. "The air force doesn't calculate casualty numbers, the government does that." — Reuter

International

Indonesia's conservative Aceh whips unmarried couples after hotel raid

Two women unable to walk after the painful punishment

BANDA ACEH: Six couples were publicly whipped in Indonesia's conservative Aceh province yesterday for relations outside marriage, with at least two women unable to walk after the painful punishment. Flogging is common for a range of offences in the region at the tip of Sumatra island, including gambling, drinking alcohol, and having gay sex.

It is the only province in the world's biggest Muslim-majority country that imposes Islamic law. The twelve people whipped yesterday were arrested late last year during a raid on a hotel in the province's capital Banda Aceh. Four people were each flogged seven times after being found with a member of the opposite sex who wasn't a relation. The others who were caught in more compromising positions received between 17-25 strokes for having intimate relations outside of marriage, an official said.

All 12 also served several months in prison before the public punishment. Some women cried out in pain as a masked sharia officer lashed them, and at least two had to be carried from the scene by sharia officers. Dozens of spectators and journalists watched quietly. Some winced occasionally after the blows, while others used smartphones and tablets to film the spectacle. "This law is designed to have a deterrent effect, not only for the offenders but for the spectators who watch the caning," said the head of the local public order agency, Marwan, who like many Indonesian goes by one name.

He added: "The pain of being flogged is not that bad, the embarrassment is worse." Rights groups have slammed public caning as cruel, and Indonesia's

President Joko Widodo has called for it to end. But the practice has wide support among Aceh's mostly Muslim population—around 98 percent of its five million residents practice Islam. Aceh adopted religious law after it was granted special autonomy in 2001, an attempt by the central government to quell a long-running separatist insurgency. In December, two men caught having sex with underage girls were whipped 100 times each.

Drug suspect faces death

In another development, a French man faces execution under Indonesia's strict drug laws after he was caught using a false-bottomed suitcase to smuggle narcotics into the Southeast Asian nation, an official said yesterday. Prosecutors have accused Felix Dorfin of trafficking four kilograms of cocaine, ecstasy and amphetamines. The 35-year-old from Benthune in northern France was arrested after arriving at Lombok island's airport from Singapore in September. "We are charging him with drug possession, carrying drugs to Indonesia from abroad, and trafficking drugs," lead prosecutor Ginung Pratidina told the court.

French drug suspect faces death penalty

He faced a potential death sentence if convicted, Pratidina added. Dorfin was read the charges with the aid of an English translator. The Frenchman escaped from jail in late January by sawing through bars on the second floor window of the prison and rappelling to freedom with a sarong. He spent nearly two weeks on the run before he was captured again in a forest in North Lombok. Police said Dorfin tried to bribe officers to let him go. A female police officer was arrested for allegedly



BANDA ACEH: An Indonesian woman is whipped in public in Banda Aceh yesterday. Six couples were publicly whipped in Indonesia's conservative Aceh province for relations outside marriage, with at least two women unable to walk after the painful punishment. — AFP

helping Dorfin escape from jail in exchange for Rp 14.5 million (around \$1,000).

Indonesia has some of the world's strictest drug laws—including death penalty sentences for drug traffickers. It has executed several foreign drug smugglers in the past including Australians Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran,

which sparked diplomatic tensions between the two countries. Indonesia has not executed anyone since 2016, but a number of foreigners are still on death row. Serge Allaoui, a convicted French drug smuggler, has been on death row since 2007, while British grandmother Lindsay Sandiford has been on death row since 2013. —Agencies

Israeli forces kill 2 Palestinians over car-ramming attack

RAMALLAH: Israeli forces yesterday shot and killed two young Palestinians who carried out a car-ramming attack in the occupied West Bank, injuring a soldier and a policeman, police and the army said. The army said security forces fired at three assailants, "neutralizing two of them and lightly injuring a third", while police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said two of the Palestinians were killed. "Assailants ran over a number of soldiers who had stopped at the side of the road on their way out of the village" of Kafr Nama, northwest of Ramallah, a military statement said. "An (army) officer was severely injured and a border police soldier was lightly injured as a result," the army said.

Rosenfeld said that the policeman injured in the pre-dawn attack was subsequently released from hospital. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised soldiers for having swiftly "eliminated" the Palestinians and vowed to fast-track the punitive demolitions of their homes. "I have ordered that the demolitions of these homes be speeded up," he said. "We are determined to continue our vigorous struggle against the murderers and



RAMALLAH: An Israeli army bulldozer removes a destroyed car, after two Palestinian were shot dead as they ran over troops, in the occupied West Bank village of Kafr Nama yesterday. — AFP

against terrorism everywhere." Israel regularly razes the homes of Palestinians accused of carrying out attacks against Israelis.

"House demolition is an administrative procedure. It is carried out without trial and without any requirement to present evidence," Israeli rights group B'Tselem says on its website. The Palestinian health ministry named the two men killed as Amir Mahmoud Darraj and Yussef Anqawi, both 20. Kafr Nama's mayor said that troops were leaving the village on foot after a raid to arrest a Palestinian suspect there when the incident occurred. Israel's army said its troops had arrested 11 alleged operatives of the Palestinian Islamist movement Hamas in the Ramallah area overnight.

Firebombs

It added that "an initial inquiry suggests that earlier in the evening, the assailants of the car-ramming attack also hurled firebombs at a crossing". "Additional firebombs were later found in the vehicle that had been used in the terror attack," the army statement said. Hamas, which runs the Gaza Strip and has fought three wars with Israel, praised the attack but stopped short of claiming it. A statement hailing the attack said the Palestinian people "will continue their struggle against the occupier until they achieve complete freedom and free their land". Palestinian car-ramming, knife and gun attacks against Israelis occur sporadically in the West Bank, which has been occupied by Israel since the 1967 Six-Day War. — AFP

in Bangui on February 6.

The deal brings together President Faustin-Archange Touadera and the leaders of the 14 armed groups who control most of the CAR. It is the eighth attempt to bring peace to the CAR, one of the world's poorest and most unstable countries, since mainly Muslim rebels ousted president Francois Bozize, a Christian, in 2013. France, the former colonial ruler, intervened militarily under a UN mandate as fears grew of a Rwandan-style genocide. The Seleka were forced from power and in February 2016, Touadera, a former prime minister, was elected president.

Anger

Under peace accord's provisions, Touadera agreed to form an "inclusive" government. But in the team unveiled on Sunday, the ministers in sensitive key posts all kept their jobs, while six of the 14 armed groups obtained no post at all. One of those left out, the Movement of Central African Freedom Fighters for Justice (MLCJ), a small group in the north of the country, warned the authorities "to look again" at the list.

The armed groups had also demanded that prime minister be chosen from their ranks. But the job was handed to Firmin Ngrebada, Touadera's former cabinet director. "By playing at 'Let's take the same people and start over', the president of the republic ... has stifled all hope at birth," the FPFC said. The deal was prepared in 2017 by the African Union and has the support of Bangui's partners, notably former colonial power France, along with a 12,000-strong UN stabilization mission, MINUSCA. — AFP

CAR peace deal under strain as militia quits

BANGUI: Less than a month after it was signed, the Central African Republic's peace agreement was under strain yesterday after a militia group abandoned the deal and a second said it was quitting a new government designed to be the keystone of the accord. The Democratic Front of the Central African People (FPDC), one of 14 armed groups that inked the so-called Khartoum Agreement, announced it was walking away in protest at a newly formed government. The FPDC "is resolved purely and simply to withdraw from the peace process," it said in a statement sent to AFP.

The group, whose stronghold is in the northwest, protested that the new government formed on Sunday was "far from being inclusive". Just hours after the ministerial list was unveiled, the Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic (FPRC), said it was leaving the government. The FPDC did not specify whether it planned to remain part of the peace process, but charged the authorities with "bad faith, amateurism and incompetence." The peace agreement was forged after negotiations in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum before being signed

4 US tourists and one pilot killed in Kenya chopper crash

NAIROBI: Four American tourists and a Kenyan pilot were killed when their helicopter crashed on a remote island in a lake in northwest Kenya, police said yesterday. The accident occurred in the Central Island National Park in Lake Turkana on Sunday evening, police said in a statement. "There were five people on board, four of them were US citizens and the pilot, Capt Marius Magonga," the Kenya Civil Aviation Authority said in a statement. Magonga was also a pilot for Kenya's deputy president, William Ruto, who owned the crashed helicopter.

The helicopter "lost contact and

crashed" shortly after taking off with a second chopper from Lake Turkana's Central Island, the statement said. Rescuers found the wreckage about seven hours later "with no survivors". "The cause of the incident is yet to be established and the details of the deceased will be released once the next of kin have been notified," a police statement said. Known as the Jade Sea, Lake Turkana, is the most saline lake in East Africa, the largest desert lake in the world, and a popular tourist spot.

Its Central Island is made up of three active volcanoes, according to the Kenya Wildlife Service. The lake is an important stopover for migratory birds and its islands are breeding grounds for the Nile crocodile, hippopotamus and several snake species. Last year, UNESCO placed the massive expanse of water on its list of endangered World Heritage Sites, in part because it is threatened by Ethiopia's construction of a hydroelectric dam on the Omo River, which replenishes the lake seasonally. — AFP

Dutch recall envoy from Iran in murder plot row

THE HAGUE: The Netherlands said yesterday it had recalled its ambassador from Tehran after Iran expelled two Dutch diplomats in a dispute over an alleged plot to assassinate regime opponents. Dutch authorities accused Iran in January of involvement in the murder of two dissidents on Dutch soil in 2015 and 2017, and the EU slapped sanctions on Tehran over the killings. Foreign Minister Stef Blok said in a letter to parliament that the government "has decided to recall the Netherlands' ambassador to Tehran for consultations" over the row.

Iran's decision to expel the Dutch officials—which was not previously announced in public—was "not acceptable and is negative for the development of the bilateral relationship," Blok said. He said Iran's move was itself a tit-for-tat response to the Netherlands' expulsion of two Iranian embassy workers in June 2018 "due to strong indications from (Dutch intelligence) that Iran has been involved in the liquidations on Dutch territory of two Dutch people of Iranian origin." Iran had informed Dutch authorities of the decision to expel the two diplomats on February 20 and they were deported back to the Netherlands on Sunday, Blok said. The Dutch had also summoned the Iranian ambassador over the issue, Blok said. Dutch police have previously named the two murder victims as Ali Motamed, 56, who was killed in the central city of Almere in 2015, and Ahmad Molla Nissi, 52, murdered in The Hague in 2017. — AFP

HINDUSTAN PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED (INDIA)

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International

Two more teenagers killed as knife murders in Britain soar

Surge in knife crime blamed on drug gangs, social media provocations

LONDON: Two teenagers were killed in knife attacks in Britain over the weekend, bringing the total number of people killed in stabbings this year to at least 24 and pushing the bloodshed to the forefront of national concern. British Interior Minister Sajid Javid said he would be meeting police chiefs this week to find ways to tackle the problem as he called for an end to the "senseless violence".

"Young people are being murdered across the country, it can't go on," Javid said. Police say the surge in knife crime in a country where guns are hard to obtain has been driven by several factors, including rivalries between drug gangs, cuts to youth services, and provocations on social media. Many have occurred in poor areas of the capital, London.

The issue has shot to the top of the political agenda after figures show the number of deaths from stabbings reached a record high last year. The num-

ber of children in England aged 16 and under being stabbed rose by 93 percent between 2016 and 2018.



At least 24 stabbed to death this year

At the same time, police have suffered big cuts in staffing and funding under austerity measures imposed by Prime Minister Theresa May's govern-

ment. In the latest deaths, 17-year-old schoolboy Yousef Ghaleb Makki, was stabbed in a village near Manchester while he was visiting a friend. Two boys, also aged 17, have been arrested on suspicion of murder.

Jodie Chesney, a 17-year-old Girl Scout, was killed in a knife attack in a park in east London. Her family have called her murder a "totally random and unprovoked attack". "A Knife to the Heart of Britain", the Daily Mail splashed across its front page on Monday along with a photograph of Chesney. British media also made much of the fact that Makki lived in an affluent area and went to a private school. Most attacks take place in more deprived areas with higher general crime rates.

National emergency

Two weeks ago, three teenagers were stabbed in

Birmingham, central England, prompting a senior regional police official to say Britain was facing a national emergency. A total of 285 knife and sharp instrument homicides recorded in the year ending March 2018, the highest number since Home Office records began in 1946. The previous high was in the year ending March 2008, with 268 homicides by stabbing.

Nineteen murders have taken place in London this year, according to the Metropolitan police. The government said it had set out a range of actions to tackle violent crime, including a 200 million pound (\$265 million) youth fund and an independent review of drug misuse. It has also proposed an extra 970 million pounds in police funding for 2019-20. "We're taking action on many fronts & I'll be meeting police chiefs this week to hear what more can be done. Vital we unite to stop this senseless violence," Javid said. — Reuters

News in brief

Helicopter crash kills five

TEHRAN: An emergency medical helicopter crashed in a southwestern Iranian village yesterday en route to treat a pregnant mother, killing all five people on board, state TV reported. "Following the request to save the life of a 26-year old pregnant mother who needed emergency care ... a helicopter was dispatched which unfortunately had an accident," said Pir Hossein Koolivand, who heads Iran's emergency services. "Three crew members and two first aid workers were martyred", he added. Koolivand did not elaborate on the cause of the crash. The crew was dispatched to a mountainous village 30 kilometers from Shahr-e Kord city in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province, emergency services spokesman Mojtaba Khaledi told semi-official news agency ILNA. State news agency IRNA said the helicopter collided with a transmission tower, while state TV said it had crashed into the mountains. — AFP

CEO widow, stepsons charged

PETALING JAYA: The widow and teenage stepsons of a Malaysian CEO who died last year were charged with his murder yesterday, in a shocking twist to a case that has captivated the country. Nazrin Hassan was the chief executive of Cradle Fund, a Malaysian firm that is an agency of the finance ministry and invests in start-ups. He died at his home outside Kuala Lumpur in June last year. It was initially thought he was killed after his mobile phone exploded and started a fire. But the fire and rescue department later found traces of petrol at the scene, and his death was reclassified as murder. His wife, 43-year-old Samirah Muzaffar, and her two sons from a previous marriage, aged 13 and 16, were arrested in the early hours yesterday. They were later brought to a magistrates court outside the capital, where a huge scrum of journalists was waiting, and charged with murder. — AFP

Up to 100 feared trapped

JAKARTA: Indonesian authorities warned yesterday that up to 100 people could still be trapped and feared dead inside a collapsed illegal gold mine despite a painstaking rescue effort that has so far plucked 19 people alive from the rubble, but also seen nine deaths. Search teams at the unlicensed mine on Sulawesi island have been hampered by steep terrain, unstable soil and dangerously narrow mining shafts since a landslide caused the accident last Tuesday. While authorities said the search and rescue effort would continue for another week, they made no mention of continuing efforts to get food and water to any possible survivors. National disaster agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said the number of miners inside the shafts at the time of the accident was still not known as survivors had given varying tallies. — AFP

Archbishop accuses Russia

SIMFEROPOL: The head of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Moscow-annexed Crimea said yesterday he had been released by police, accusing Russian authorities of seeking to tarnish his reputation. Archbishop Kliment was taken off a bus in the Crimean capital of Simferopol on Sunday as he was preparing to travel to southern Russia to visit a Ukrainian who is being tried on terrorism charges. Kliment said he had been reported for allegedly stealing religious items from his own church and swearing at the bus station. "This is absolutely absurd: they are accusing a priest of stealing church ware and indecency," the 49-year-old Father Kliment said. He said he was reported for allegedly swearing by an apparently homeless man who swore himself. "It was rather funny," Archbishop Kliment, who was released late Sunday, accused the Russian authorities of seeking to tarnish his good name and prevent him from attending the trial of Ukrainian Pavlo Hryb. — AFP

French police hit with poo bombs

MARSEILLE: French police are facing a new form of weapon during "yellow vest" protests — bags of fecal matter thrown bomb-like by demonstrators. On Saturday "bags filled with faeces were thrown at police and exploded. Three policemen were soaked through with it," Rudy Manna from the Alliance police trade union in the southern port city of Marseille told AFP. One policeman also suffered an elbow injury when hit by "a poop-filled projectile", Marseille police headquarters said.

Similar incidents took place in the southern city of Montpellier, police trade union representatives said. Police said there had been calls on social media ahead of Saturday's demonstrations for demonstrators to arm themselves with "Caca-tovs" - after Molotov cocktails but filled with "caca", the French term for poo. "The policemen were deeply humiliated," Manna said, adding that none of the perpetrators, hidden in a crowd of about 1,000 demonstrators in Marseille, had been identified.

Saturday marked the 16th straight weekend of "yellow vest" demonstrations in France since November, which have often seen security forces targeted with



PARIS: Protesters gather on the Denfert-Rochereau square in Paris, during an anti-government demonstration called by the 'Yellow Vest' (gilets jaunes) movement. — AFP

stones and other projectiles. Authorities said nearly 40,000 people took part. A total of 11 people have died during the demonstrations which began over fuel

taxes but mushroomed into a revolt by people in rural and small-town France against French President Emmanuel Macron. — AFP

Merkel's successor slammed as intersex toilet joke falls flat

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel's anointed successor, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, faced harsh criticism yesterday over a carnival joke that ridiculed intersex people. The CDU party chief and likely future conservative candidate for the chancellery, usually dubbed just AKK because of her tongue-twister name, made the joke in a carnival speech last week. Attempting to poke fun at politically progressive Berlin, she said newly introduced toilets for intersex people were "for those men who don't know whether to pee standing up or sitting down".



Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer

The comment was greeted with jeers, fanfare and booming laughter in the Lake Constance town of

Stockach in southern Germany, but fewer people were laughing when it was shared on the website queer.de and Twitter. "Another one of those days that make you cringe... is it really that difficult to make a humorous speech without flat jokes beating up on minorities?" commented lawmaker Jens Brandenburg of the liberal FDP party. Similar criticism rained down from MPs across party lines on 56-year-old AKK, the former premier of the tiny state of Saarland.

The Social Democrats' general secretary Lars Klingbeil charged that the comment showed "an absolute lack of respect" for intersex people, whose legal status was only formally recognized in Germany last year. The newspaper Koelner Stadt-Anzeiger in Cologne, a city at the heart of Germany's carnival tradition, slammed AKK's joke as "low-brow", "sordid", "populist" and tapping into society's "culture wars". AKK, a devout Catholic who has spoken out against same-sex marriage, was named "Miss Homophobia 2018" in an online poll conducted by gay and lesbian rights group Enough is Enough. — AFP

Late winter snow hits US northeast

NEW YORK: New York faced its biggest snowstorm of the winter yesterday as snow spread across the northeastern United States, infuriating commuters who juggled canceled planes and trains and faced icy travels ahead as temperatures plunge. A band of winter weather stretching from Maryland to Maine dumped 15 inches (38 cm) of snow overnight on downtown Boston and 5 inches (13 cm) on New York's Central Park, said meteorologist Marc Chenard of the National Weather Service.

That was enough for New York Mayor Bill de Blasio to take the rare step of shutting the nation's largest public school system and for New Jersey Transit, the largest statewide public transportation system in the United States, to cancel about a dozen commuter trains. "This is horrible!" said Steve Wesley, 56, as he shoveled snow from his driveway in Maplewood, New Jersey, a New York City suburb. Wesley's two-mile local commute by

car was delayed nearly two hours by the four to six inches of snow.

"This is not what I want to be doing," said Wesley, a sales representative for a power equipment distributor. "I'm usually the first one into the office. And if I get there and the parking lot is not plowed, I'll be shoveling that too." Nearly 1,000 US flights were canceled, most at Boston Logan International and New York area airports, according to FlightAware.com. Government offices and libraries in Boston were closed. In New Jersey, where Governor Phil Murphy declared a state of emergency ahead of the storm, state workers had a two-hour delay.

Commuting challenges may mount over the remainder of the work week as snows melt and then temperatures drop, icing over roadways. "Each day is a little bit cooler," said Chenard, noting the week's highest temperatures for the Northeast will be in the low 30s. "You'll get some melting during the day, especially when the sun is hitting the snow, and then at night it's going to be cold enough to refreeze. Any road surfaces that aren't treated, certainly could get icy at night into the morning." — Reuters



NEW YORK: A boy sleds in Central Park after a late season snowstorm, causing New York Mayor Bill de Blasio to announce that New York City public schools would be closed. — AFP

Germany to strip dual national militia fighters of citizenship

BERLIN: Germany plans to strip dual nationals who fight for a foreign militant group of their German citizenship, the government said yesterday, as Western nations eye the return of IS jihadists warily. "There are plans to introduce a legal amendment, for Germans with multiple nationalities who fight for a terror militia, to lose their German citizenship," said interior ministry spokeswoman Eleonore Petermann.

Justice Minister Katarina Barley has separately said that the change would be "implemented soon", her spokeswoman said. Under German law, individuals with more than one nationality can already lose their German citizenship if they fight for a foreign army without permission from the German defense ministry. The amendment would therefore add participation in combat for a foreign militant group to the existing law.

The new rule would also only apply under strict conditions—the individual must be above 18 years of age, and have more than one nationality, so that he or she would not be left stateless after losing the German citizenship. The legal change will not apply retroactively, meaning that German IS fighters who are already jailed will not be affected. Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert rejected claims that the amendment would leave dual nationals feeling like "second-class citizens".

"We must not forget what this is about," he said. "This is about concrete participation in combat operations for a terror militia abroad," he said. Merkel's government had committed to examining such an amendment during their coalition negotiations last year, he noted. With the Islamic State organization crumbling, many European countries are now being confronted with the urgent question of what to do with returning fighters. — AFP

International

From camps to factories: Muslims accuse China of using forced labor

'Re-education' - efforts to fight terrorism and separatism: China

ALMATY: As Gulzira Auelkhan toiled stitching gloves in a factory in China's troubled Xinjiang region, her managers made no secret of where her production would be sold. "They told us openly that the gloves will be sold abroad, so we should do a good job," Auelkhan recalled of a labor stint she says was enforced by Chinese "re-education" officials. Auelkhan, a 39-year-old Chinese citizen of Kazakh descent, says she was part of a network of mostly Muslim minorities in Xinjiang who pass from what China calls "vocational training centers" to factories where they are forced to work for far less than the local minimum wage.

China says the education centers are part of its efforts to fight terrorism and separatism in Xinjiang—a region populated by mostly Muslim minority groups—and denies any use of forced labor. But rights groups, and former workers like Auelkhan, say the practice used against Chinese minorities is widespread and at least one foreign company has dropped its Chinese supplier over the concerns. Auelkhan says she was transferred to the glove factory at the Jiafang industrial estate in Xinjiang's Yining county after spending 15 months in two different "re-education" facilities.

More than a million people from Muslim minorities—mostly ethnic Uighurs, but also Kazakhs like Auelkhan, Kyrgyz and Hui—are being held in internment centers across Xinjiang, according to a United Nations panel of experts. Auelkhan has residency rights in Kazakhstan but had travelled to China to see family when she was detained and put into a re-education centre. She said life in the camps was brutal, with residents

struck over the head with electrified batons for spending more than two minutes in the bathroom.

US firm halts imports

So even though they were not free to leave, it was an improvement when she and hundreds of other camp inmates were transferred to work at the factory, Auelkhan told AFP in Kazakhstan's biggest city Almaty. "Every day we were taken to

between 820 and 1,460 yuan per month, according to official statistics. Beijing and officials in the region have fiercely denied any connection between the camps and under-paid labor. A representative of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region Government Press Office told AFP by email that there was "no labor contract between Education and Training Centers and enterprises" and "no enterprise obtains labor from training centers".

But rights groups insist the connection exists and some companies have started taking notice. In January, Badger Sportswear, a firm based in the US state of North Carolina, announced it would stop sourcing clothing from its Xinjiang supplier Hetian Taida over concerns it was using forced labour linked to the "re-education" campaign. Auelkhan believes she was only released from forced labour because of a public campaign launched by her husband and supported by a Xinjiang-focused rights group in Almaty.



China denies camp and under-paid labor connection

and from a dormitory three kilometers from the factory," she said, hugging the five-year-old daughter she didn't see for nearly two years. "When we were studying at the camp they told us we would be taught a trade and work for three months," Auelkhan said. Auelkhan said she was paid only 320 yuan (\$48/42 euros) for close to two months' work before her time at the factory was curtailed in December and she was allowed to return to her family in Kazakhstan.

Xinjiang's average minimum wage ranges

'Assigned a job'

Originally, re-education officials had told her and other centre residents that they would be "at (their) disposal" for at least six months, she said. Oil-rich Kazakhstan's government is a Beijing ally that positions itself as "the buckle" in China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road trade and investment agenda, a strategy for infrastructure and development projects throughout Asia, Europe and Africa. Kazakh diplomats have entered into a dialogue with Beijing over Xinjiang, without publicly mentioning the re-education centers or criticizing China's policies. In December a representative of Kazakhstan's



ALMATY: Petitioners with relatives missing or detained in Xinjiang hold up photos of their loved ones during a press event at the office of the Ata Jurt rights group in Almaty, Kazakhstan. —AFP

foreign ministry said during a briefing that China had allowed more than 2,000 ethnic Kazakhs to travel to Kazakhstan as "a kind gesture".

The ministry refused repeated requests from AFP to clarify the remarks, which lent hope to many in Kazakhstan that they would be able to bring Xinjiang-based relatives over the border to

safety. For most, however, this has been a crushing false dawn. During a recent visit to the Almaty office of the Ata Jurt rights group dedicated to supporting relatives of the Xinjiang missing, AFP spoke to several Kazakhs who claim their relatives have merely swapped "re-education" for other forms of confinement. —AFP

Japan okays research using human cells in animals

TOKYO: Japan has given the green light to a controversial research process involving implanting animals with human stem cells that could eventually help grow human organs for transplant inside animal hosts. The decision by the education and science ministry Friday to revise its guidelines means Japanese researchers can now apply for permits to carry out studies employing the technique, a ministry official said.

The process involves implanting embryonic animals, likely first pigs, with human "induced pluripotent stem" (iPS) cells, which can transform into the building blocks of any part of the body. The idea is for the iPS cells to grow into transplantable human organs inside the animal embryos. Japan had previously required researchers to terminate animal embryos implanted with human cells after 14 days "due to ethical concerns over the vague line between human beings and animals," the official said.

The old regulations also prevented researchers from placing the embryos into animal wombs to allow them to develop. But the ministry has dropped both restrictions "as we have concluded that there is technically zero risk of producing a new organism mixing human and animal elements under the research," the official added.

Researchers will now, for instance, be allowed to create animal embryos with a human pancreas and transplant it into the womb of a pig, which could in theory result in the birth of a baby pig with a human pancreas. In practice, where similar research has been carried elsewhere, the embryos have been terminated before delivery, avoiding the thorny moral issues raised by creating creatures that contain both human and animal cells. —AFP

New Zealand tells 'bumbling jihadi' he's on his own

WELLINGTON: A New Zealander dubbed "the bumbling jihadi" can expect little help from his homeland after being captured in Syria by forces fighting the Islamic State group, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern warned yesterday. Mark Taylor, 42, told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation he spent five years with Islamic State but fled in December and surrendered to Kurdish forces because conditions had become unbearable.

"There was no food, no money, basic services were pretty much collapsed," he said from a Kurdish prison. "I was in a pickle myself and had to make a final deci-

sion, which was to leave." Taylor earned his derogatory nickname in 2015 after sending out a series of pro-IS tweets but forgetting to turn off the geo-tagging function, giving away his location. He told the ABC the bungle earned him 50 days in an IS prison.

He also burned his New Zealand passport in a propaganda video and urged extremists in Australia and New Zealand to "commence operations". Prime Minister Ardern ruled out stripping Taylor of his New Zealand citizenship because he is not a dual citizen and so has no alternative. "We of course follow our obligations in international law regarding ensuring we do not deem anyone stateless," she said. But she also said New Zealand could offer Taylor no consular assistance because it had no diplomats where he is being held and only knew what had been gleaned from media reports.

"We have no connection with the forces detaining him, so it's difficult for us to provide information," she said, adding that Taylor would likely have to contact

New Zealand officials in Turkey if he hoped to eventually return home. Justice Minister Andrew Little said if that happened, Taylor could probably expect to face charges under anti-terror laws. "It is very clear what happens when you transgress the provisions of that legislation... there's a range of penalties, including imprisonment," he said. Ardern said New Zealand was not obliged to give Taylor legal representation if he was charged overseas, nor did it have to pay his way home.

Ardern refused to say how serious a threat Taylor would represent if he went back home but said "contingency planning" had been made to ensure New Zealanders were safe from returning jihadis. She also declined to comment on details of Taylor's ABC interview, in which he insisted he was not an IS fighter and lamented the fact he had been "too poor" to afford a Yazidi slave while with the extremist group. "I wouldn't want to be drawn on those comments because I do not want to be seen to jeopardize any potential case in the future," she said. —AFP

China accuses detained Canadian of stealing state secrets

BEIJING: China yesterday accused detained Canadian citizen Michael Kovrig of stealing state secrets which were passed on to him from another detained Canadian, Michael Spavor, in what is likely to further ramp up tension between Ottawa and Beijing. Businessman Spavor, who worked with North Korea, and former diplomat Kovrig were picked up in early December, shortly after Canada arrested Huawei Technologies Co Ltd chief

financial officer Meng Wanzhou, who faces extradition to the United States. China has repeatedly demanded Meng be released, and reacted angrily last week when Canada's government approved extradition proceedings against her.

In a short statement on its microblog, the ruling Communist Party's Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission said Kovrig had often entered China using an ordinary passport and business visas "stealing and spying on sensitive Chinese information and intelligence via a contact in China". "Spavor was Kovrig's main contact and provided him with intelligence," the commission added, without giving details. Kovrig severely violated Chinese laws, and China will start the next judicial proceedings in due course, it said. "China is a country with rule of law and will firmly crack down on criminal acts that severely undermine national security."

While Canada says China has made no specific link between the detentions and Meng's arrest, experts and

former diplomats say they have no doubt it is using the cases of the two men to pressure Canada. Kovrig works for the International Crisis Group (ICG), which focuses on conflict resolution and has denied any involvement in espionage. Canadian diplomats have been allowed to see the two men. However, sources familiar with the case have said Kovrig has not been allowed access to lawyers or family members, unlike Huawei's Meng.

It is not clear what conditions Spavor is being held in. China has said it is fully guaranteeing both men's lawful rights. Kovrig also holds Hungarian citizenship. Canada arrested Meng on Dec. 1 as she was changing planes in the city of Vancouver, at the request of the United States, which has filed sweeping charges against Huawei and Meng that paint the company as a national security threat. Meng has been charged with bank and wire fraud to violate US sanctions against Iran. She is free on bail and denies the charges against her. —Reuters

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EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
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Berlin arms policy risks 'German-free' defense projects

Germany's latest restrictions on arms exports risk making Berlin a pariah in Europe's defense industry, threatening future collaboration on weapons development and its own ambitions to foster a common European defense policy. Germany's decision to unilaterally halt all shipments of military equipment to Saudi Arabia in November after the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi has brought long-standing differences between Berlin and its European partners over arms controls to a tipping point.

The move has put a question mark over billions of euros of military orders, including a £10 billion deal to sell 48 Eurofighter Typhoon jets to Riyadh, and has prompted some firms such as Airbus to strip German components from some of their products. With British defense contractor BAE Systems, the company behind the Eurofighter Typhoon, warning that the German embargo would weigh on its financial performance, London and Paris are racing to convince Berlin to lift it.

The Social Democrats (SPD), junior partners in Chancellor Angela Merkel's government, want to keep the arms freeze against Saudi Arabia in place and reach agreement on a more restrictive export policy, keen to avoid further losses among German voters who are cautious on arms sales. Merkel's conservatives, keen to smooth the rift with France and Britain, are piling pressure on the SPD by accusing them of jeopardizing German industry and jobs.

But the SPD notes that the coalition parties agreed last year to halt future arms sales to any countries involved in the Yemen conflict, which includes Saudi Arabia. Paralyzed by domestic political squabbling, Berlin on Friday put off a decision about extending the embargo beyond its current March 9 deadline till the end of the month, fuelling concerns among European allies and industry. "We see no way to resolve the issue at this point," said one European industry official. "There's a complete stalemate."

Partnership with France

Germany, which has tightened controls on arms sales in recent years, accounts for just under 2 percent of total Saudi arms imports. But its role in making components for other countries' exports means that Berlin can still derail lucrative European projects. In addition to the Eurofighter Typhoon contract, Germany's Saudi arms ban is also holding up shipments of Meteor air-to-air missiles to Saudi Arabia by MBDA, which is jointly owned by Airbus, BAE Systems and Italy's Leonardo, since the missiles' propulsion system and warheads are built in Germany.

Two sources familiar with coalition discussions said the parties could agree to a partial lifting of the freeze for a number of patrol boats being built for Saudi Arabia by privately-held Luerssen, and the Meteor missiles, since neither system is being used in the Yemen war. However nothing was decided, and the Eurofighter sale was still in question. Agreements covering the Eurofighter and the Meteor missile were meant to prevent any country unilaterally halting exports but they were framed as memorandums of understanding to safeguard confidentiality, not binding formal treaties.

Berlin's failure to abide by these agreements and its lack of coordination with France on the Saudi arms embargo have Paris convinced it needs a binding agreement before moving ahead on joint weapons programs with Germany valued at tens of billions of euros over the next decades. Paris and Berlin have drafted a bilateral paper spelling out that the two countries will only block each other's exports when "direct interests or national security are compromised", excluding something like the Khashoggi case.

But discord within Germany's ruling coalition has stalled its completion, according to two sources familiar with the issue. It also remains unclear if the bilateral pact needs German parliamentary approval. The SPD had no immediate comment on the issue, but party leader Andrea Nahles last month said her party would insist on agreement on tighter German export guidelines before moving forward on other issues such as Franco-German defense ties.

Eric Trappier, chief executive of Rafale-maker Dassault Aviation, said last week it was watching the process closely. "It is obvious that if we are really going to launch a Franco-German fighter program, the export rules need to be defined as soon as possible," he told reporters. Dirk Hoke, head of Airbus Defence and Space, told Reuters an agreement was imperative before the two countries could move ahead on the new warplane, or sign a contract as expected by year's end for joint work on a new European drone. "This will harm Germany's partnership with France in the longer-term if no serious, long-term solutions are found," he said.

The spat over arms also impedes German and French efforts to more closely integrate European defense procurement and programs, and ultimately build a European army. Exports are critical to ensuring the success of any jointly developed programs because they make them more economical. "Germany's export policies are the main reason behind France's decision to develop a successor to the Franco-German anti-tank weapon of the 1970s," said Matthias Wächter, a senior official with the BDI Federation of German Industry. "We in industry have the impression that the German government is paralysed when it comes to military procurement and export." Asked whether Berlin's policy was isolating it in Europe, Germany government spokesman Steven Seibert said: "We know that this issue is a topic for several of our most important allies and that a decision is required. That is why we are carrying on intensive discussions inside the German government, and will make decisions in March." —Reuters



A plaque is displayed next to the former office of the inventor of the World Wide Web Tim Berners-Lee (on the right) at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) on Jan 29, 2019 in Meyrin near Geneva. —AFP

Is the Web an 'out-of-control monster'?

Thirty years ago this month, a young British software engineer working at a lab near Geneva invented a system for scientists to share information that would ultimately change humanity. But three decades after he invented the World Wide Web, Tim Berners-Lee has warned that his creation has been "hijacked by crooks" that may spell its destruction. Berners-Lee's old office at Europe's physics lab CERN now looks no different than the others lining the long, nondescript corridor within the expansive compound.

The only indication that history was made here is a small commemorative plaque and a page from an old CERN directory hung on the door, with "MOMENTARILY OUT OF OFFICE!" written in jest next to Berners-Lee's name. "Tim worked a lot," said technician Francois Fluckiger, who took charge of the web team after Berners-Lee left for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1994. "The lights were always on in his office," Fluckiger told AFP.

History in the making

Berners-Lee was responsible for CERN's internal directory but was interested in ways to allow the thousands of scientists around the world who cooperated with the lab to more easily share their work. His vision for "a decentralized information management system" soon gave birth to the Web. Primitive forms of the Internet - a network linking computers - had previously existed, but it was the World Wide Web that allowed Web pages to be collected and accessed with a browser. "Very early on, we had the feeling that history was in the making," Fluckiger said.

In 1990, Belgian scientist Robert Cailliau came onboard to help promote the invention, which used Hypertext Markup Language, or HTML, as a standard

to create webpages. They created the Hypertext Transfer Protocol, or HTTP, which allows users to access resources by clicking on hyperlinks, and also Uniform Resource Locators, or URLs, as a website address system. At the end of 1990, Berners-Lee set CERN's first web navigator server into action.

The browser was released outside of CERN in early 1991, first to other research institutions and later to the public. Fluckiger, now retired, hailed the Web as one of three major inventions in the 20th century that enabled the digital society, alongside the Internet Protocol (IP) and Google's search algorithms. But he lamented the "online bullying, fake news, and mass hysteria" that flourish online as well as threats to privacy. "One has to ask oneself if we did not, in the end, create a completely out-of-control monster."

'Crooks and trolls'

Berners-Lee has launched his own campaign to "save the Web". At the Web Summit in Lisbon last November, he called for a new "Contract for the Web", based on access for all and the fundamental right to privacy, among other things. "The Web has been hijacked by crooks and trolls who have used it to manipulate people all over the world," Berners-Lee warned in a New York Times op-ed in December, citing threats ranging from the dark web, to cybercrime, fake news and personal data theft.

In January, the man dubbed the "father of the web" urged the global elites at the World Economic Forum in Davos to join the fight against the "polarization" of online debates. He called for discussion platforms that connect people with different opinions and backgrounds, contrary to today's common practice of creating online ghettos, filter bubbles and feedback loops where people rarely encounter opinions differ-

ent from their own.

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres also voiced concerns at Davos over the direction the web was taking. He warned of the impact "of the dark web and the deep web and all the problems of cyber security", and called for the creation of "soft mechanisms" to help rein in countries using this technology to violate human rights.

Open source

Back in 1989, no one could have foreseen the importance of the emerging Web. CERN has held onto only a few souvenirs from the early days: the first memo that Berners-Lee drafted about his invention, his black NeXT computer station and his keyboard. But while CERN may not have preserved many keepsakes to memorialize the historic invention, it has strived to prevent the web from falling into the wrong hands.

In 1993, the organization announced it was putting the web software into the public domain, which could have allowed any individual or business to claim it as their own and control its development. But destiny, with a little help from Fluckiger, helped avert potential disaster. After discussions with CERN's legal service, Fluckiger decided in 1994 to launch a new open source version of the web.

That proved a crucial move that allowed CERN to retain the intellectual property rights to the invention while giving access to anyone to use and modify the web freely and without cost. In 1995, the intellectual property rights were transferred to a consortium set up by Berners-Lee based out of MIT, called W3C. "We were lucky that during those 18 months, no one seized the web," Fluckiger said. "Otherwise, there might not have been a web today." —AFP

With worries of war and upcoming election, support surges for Modi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has slammed opposition parties for demanding evidence about last week's military strike inside Pakistan, and support for him is rising, pollsters say, despite the questions about how successful it was. It's very tricky to be seen questioning the armed forces in India, particularly when there is conflict with arch-enemy Pakistan. But that hasn't stopped opposition leaders from raising doubts about the government's official claims that a "very large number" of members of an Islamist militant group were killed in the strike by Indian warplanes early on Feb. 26.

The government has rejected the demand for proof. "At a time when our army is engaged in crushing terrorism, inside the country and outside, there are some people within the country who are trying to break their morale, which is cheering our enemy," Modi said at an election rally on Sunday. "I want to know from (the opposition) Congress and its partners why they are making statements that are benefiting the enemies."

With tensions at fever-pitch with nuclear rival Pakistan, and India's general election due by May, the stakes are high. Pakistan responded with an air strike of its own, but no one was killed in that operation. The situation is slightly calmer but remains fraught; the two armies continue to regularly trade artillery fire at places along the frontier. "If (the opposition) continues this campaign on ... national security, I'm afraid it is not going to stick and it's only going to help Modi," Yashwant Deshmukh, the founder of polling agency C-Voter, told Reuters. "Modi's is a presidential campaign, and this is going to help him." The agency has not published any poll after the military strike, but Deshmukh said Modi's approval rating has soared to levels not seen since mid-2017, according to C-Voter's estimates.

Opinion polls conducted before the tensions with Pakistan broke out mostly predicted Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would struggle to win a majority because of a slowing economy, low rural incomes and the government's inability to provide more jobs. But pollsters and political analysts say Modi's support is now rising, mainly because rightwing parties like the BJP typically have an advantage

over others on national security issues.

"It doesn't matter what India did or what Pakistan is doing, at least from the electoral perspective," said Rahul Verma, a fellow at the New Delhi-based think-tank, Centre for Policy Research. "What matters is what kind of perception the media and the BJP and Modi can create. If they can create it like a crisis, we did something, we need a strong guy leading the country, they have an advantage. So the details don't matter." Indian air force planes carried out last week's strike in retaliation to a suicide attack in the disputed Kashmir region that was claimed by the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad militant group. At least 40 paramilitary troopers travelling in a convoy were killed, the worst such attack in three decades of insurgency in Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region claimed by both Hindu-majority India and Islamic Pakistan.

'Terrorists or trees?'

A top government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said last week that at least 300 suspected militants were killed in the retaliatory Indian air strike, while the president of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Amit Shah, put the figure at more than 250. Pakistan has said the Indian bombs hit a largely empty hillside near the northeastern town of Balakot without hurting anyone.

"300 terrorists dead, yes or no?" Navjot Singh Sidhu, a leader of the Congress party, asked in a tweet yesterday. "What was the purpose then? Were you uprooting terrorists or trees? Was it an election gimmick? Deceit possesses our land in guise of fighting a foreign enemy. Stop politicising the army, it is as sacred as the state."

But pollsters say opposition parties may be making a mistake by questioning Modi on national security when emotions are running high. They say that instead the opposition needs to get back to focusing on the BJP's poor record on creating jobs and tackling farm distress. Those issues helped Congress oust the BJP from power in three states late last year. "It is deeply regrettable and politically immoral on the part of the BJP to make political capital out of military endeavors during cross-border tensions with Pakistan," Congress spokesman Sanjay Jha said. "PM Narendra Modi and BJP President Amit Shah are singularly responsible for lowering the political discourse in our country."

Mehbooba Mufti, who governed the state of Jammu and Kashmir in alliance with the BJP until they split last year, agreed that it was important for the opposition to not let Modi make the election all about the strikes. —Reuters

EU girds for cyberthreats to parliament vote

With campaigning for May's European Parliament elections shifting into high gear, security officials are preparing for potential attempts by Russia-linked hackers to sway the vote - and potentially deepen divisions in the bloc. "There's a strong likelihood that people will try to manipulate the debates and falsify the European election results," the EU's security commissioner Julian King told France's *Absace* newspaper last week.

The vote is shaping up as a continental clash between populist and eurosceptic movements on the one hand, and pro-European internationalists on the other. "It is already clear this will be the most consequential parliamentary vote in the EU's history," the European Council on Foreign Relations wrote in a recent report. Moscow has long denied allegations of hacking and meddling in foreign elections through social media disinformation campaigns thought to be piloted by Russia's GRU military intelligence agency. But suspicions are rife that Russia has much to gain by helping populist and eurosceptic movements, some of which want to end EU sanctions on Moscow over its annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. The biggest threat, officials say, is a three-pronged attack seen in other high-stake votes: the hacking of a political party; targeted leaks of any sensitive data, either raw or manipulated; and surreptitious social media campaigns to keep the information in the headlines.

That was the scenario that played out in the US presidential election of 2016, when Russian hackers are suspected of trying to tilt the outcome by hacking the Democratic Party. Russian hands were also seen behind an 11th-hour hacking of Emmanuel Macron's party ahead of the 2017 French presidential elections, when thousands of files were leaked online. So-called "state actors" are also thought to have been involved in Britain's Brexit vote, and in the hacking of Australian political parties last month. "We stand a good chance of being hit with something big" ahead of the May 23-26 election, said a

source in the French security services, who requested anonymity to discuss the risks.

Bogus accounts

In January the European Commission urged platforms like Google and Twitter, but also advertising firms, to make more progress on their pledge to fight "fake news" by removing bogus accounts and curbing suspect sites. "Several actions are being taken or already implemented to allow the EU and member states to react quickly, efficiently and in coordination in case of attacks," according to an internal report by a European security service seen by AFP. "But for now they are mainly declarations of intent that have yet to be tested," it said.

One cyber-spying group in particular - known as APT28, Pawn Storm, Fancy Bear or other monikers - is thought to have staged many of the recent attacks targeting European institutions and political groups, including NATO and the German parliament. The common thread in all these attacks "is the exfiltration of information without being detected," said Loic Guezo of the Japanese IT security firm Trend Micro. "The group suspected in these operations always targets Western institutions involved in elections or political decision-making in Western countries that could have an impact on Russian government policy," Guezo said.

The stolen data is then strategically leaked to discredit their target. "The advantage is that because it's intercepted information, it gives people the impression that they have access to the 'truth', to raw, unfiltered information," according to a recent report by the French foreign and defense ministries. While that may indeed be the case, often the stolen data is first tweaked or manipulated before being leaked and spread by viral social media campaigns.

"Russia has developed an information arsenal, with manipulation strategies that use bots and fake accounts" to propel the disinformation into the mainstream media, said Kevin Limonier, a researcher at the French Geopolitical Institute in Paris. Media outlets and personalities are then charged with amplifying the leaked data or misinformation into the mainstream. Limonier described "an ecosystem revolving around a few structures in Russia, hidden behind shell companies, that lead to Yevgeny Prigozhin," a businessman with close ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin. —AFP

Business

TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2019

12 Al-Sayer holds 3-day family fun event for Hala February**13** Kuwait inflation remained low in Q4 2018 despite Dec pick-up**14** KAMCO and Global sign MOU to commence merger process

LONDON: An anti-Brexit protester draped in a composite of the EU and Union flag walks past more flags outside the Houses of Parliament in London yesterday.—AFP

May unveils \$2.1bn fund for Brexit-backers

Ministers deny it is a bribe to win support for EU exit deal

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday set out plans for a 1.6 billion pound (\$2.11 billion) fund to help to boost economic growth in Brexit-supporting communities with ministers denying it was a bribe to win support for her EU exit deal.

The "Stronger Towns Fund", details of which appeared in newspapers last month, is seen by many as part of May's efforts to win support for her Brexit deal from opposition Labour lawmakers who represent areas, particularly in northern England that voted strongly in favor of leaving the European Union.

Britain is due to leave the bloc at the end of the month and May, whose exit deal with Brussels was rejected by a large majority of lawmakers in January, has promised parliament will get to vote on a revised deal by March 12. The government said the fund would be targeted at places that had not shared fairly in the country's prosperity and would be used to create new jobs, help to train people and boost economic activity.

"Communities across the country voted for Brexit as an expression of their desire to see change; that must be a change for the better, with more opportunity and greater

control," May said in a statement. "These towns have a glorious heritage, huge potential and, with the right help, a bright future ahead of them." The opposition Labour Party's finance spokesman, John McDonnell, said the fund was "Brexit bribery". "This towns fund smacks of desperation from a government reduced to bribing Members of Parliament to vote for their damaging flagship Brexit legislation," he said in a statement.

However, Communities Secretary James Brokenshire said the money was not linked to support for the withdrawal agreement. "This is funding is there regardless of the outcome," he told BBC radio when asked if the money was a bribe. Obviously we want to see a deal happening. But no, there is no conditionality in that sense."

One billion pounds has already been allocated, with more than half going to towns across the north of England. A further 600 million pounds will be available for communities around the country to bid for, the government said. Critics said that the fund, when divided between a large of areas, would not provide individual towns with that much money, nor make up for what they had lost as a result of government cuts in recent years.

Brokenshire did not say how many towns would benefit but said the money could be "transformative".

"It can make that difference on creating the jobs, actually putting the skills in place and changing people's lives in a modern positive economy," he said.

Sterling gained yesterday on signs some pro-Brexit lawmakers were increasingly willing to compromise with Prime Minister Theresa May, increasing the chances the British leader will get her Brexit deal through parliament next week. Media reports over the weekend also suggested London was softening its demands of the European Union in renegotiating parts of the Brexit withdrawal deal that is deeply unpopular within large parts of May's own Conservative party. The Sunday Times said a group of Brexit-supporting lawmakers who previously rejected May's deal have set out changes they want to see to her agreement in return for her support.

The British parliament is set to vote on May's deal next week, although the vote could be held sooner. If it fails to pass, lawmakers will get to vote on whether to delay Brexit, currently set for March 29.

Hopes for a delay to Brexit and bets that a no-deal

Brexit is a far less likely outcome sent sterling surging last week. The British currency is up 3.7 percent against the dollar so far in 2019 and 4.7 percent versus the euro. "The nonetheless rising odds of PM May's deal succeeding (albeit we still think it is a below 50 percent probability event) are now helping GBP," ING analysts said in a note. Sterling rose as much as half a percent against the euro to 85.60 pence before settling at 85.79 by 1115 GMT. Versus the dollar, the pound added 0.1 percent to \$1.3218. Last week sterling rose as high as \$1.3351 as investors piled back into the currency in the belief a disorderly no-deal Brexit was far less likely. While Brexit negotiations dominate the headlines, concerns about a slowdown in the British economy continue to build.

Britain's construction industry reported the first fall in activity in almost a year last month, with the IHS Markit/CIPS Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) falling to 49.5 in February from January's reading of 50.6, although the pound was unmoved after the release. Economists polled by Reuters had expected a reading of 50.3. The PMI for Britain's dominant services sector is published today.—Reuters

Easier for China to face tariffs than bend to US pressure

BEIJING: China will acknowledge concessions made in any trade deal with the United States for the sake of stabilizing shaky relations, but is unlikely to yield to demands it alter its economic model even if faced with continued tariffs, many trade experts believe.

US President Donald Trump has warned he could walk away from a China deal if it were not good enough, even as his advisers touted "fantastic" progress towards an agreement to end a dispute that has put tit-for-tat tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of each other's goods. Such optimism has taken a different shape in Beijing, where the delay on a once "hard" March 1 deadline for a US tariff hike reinforced views that Trump's appetite for tough measures has weakened as the 2020 presidential election draws closer and a strong US economy shows initial signs of flagging.

Chinese concessions in any deal are likely to fall short of US demands for deep change in the way the world's second-

largest economy works.

Revamping decades of state planning will not happen overnight, Chinese experts argue. And President Xi Jinping faces political realities at home, where being seen as kowtowing to Trump would be less palatable than navigating the near-term impact continued trade tensions might have on China's own slowing economy, they say.

One Chinese official told Reuters that China's domestic reform was a long-term process.

"If the United States carries out overall restrictions or pressure based on its own interests, China will not accept it," the official said. Tu Xinquan, a trade expert at Beijing's University of International Business and Economics, said it would be difficult for Xi to agree to US demands that China revamp the role of state-owned enterprises and other core industrial policies. Xi would likely be prepared to go as far as to give "visible, politically influential commitments" to Trump, such as to buy more American goods and improve protection of intellectual property rights (IPR).

The United States has long complained that Beijing has systematically obtained American companies' intellectual property through coercion and outright theft. But improving copyright and trademark enforcement is seen by hardliners in Washington as a practical and self-interested move for China, now that it has innovative companies of its own. China verifiably cracking down on the more existential threat of forced technology transfer - which officials deny actually occurs - or substantially curbing the influence of state-owned companies in the economy is seen as less likely.—Reuters

Huawei's Meng Wanzhou lodges complaint against Canada authorities

MONTREAL: Chinese telecoms giant Huawei's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, has filed suit against Canadian authorities for violating her constitutional rights when she was arrested in Vancouver, her lawyers said Sunday. As she suffered "serious breaches of her constitutional rights," she is "seeking damages for misfeasance in public office and false imprisonment" when detained at Vancouver International Airport on December 1, attorneys Howard Mickelson and Allan Doolittle said in a statement.

The 47-year-old businesswoman was changing planes in Vancouver when she was detained at Washington's request on suspicion of violating US sanctions on Iran-sparking arrests of Canadians in China that were seen as retaliatory. Her lawyers charge impropriety in the conditions under which Meng was interro-

gated for three hours by the customs officers, officially as part of a routine inspection, before being served with her official arrest.

During those three hours, the customs officers searched her phones and computers as well as her luggage, in violation of her rights, the lawyers said. The complaint was lodged Friday, the same day that Canadian justice officials launched Meng Wanzhou's extradition process to the United States.

The US Justice Department accuses Huawei and its chief financial officer of circumventing US sanctions against Iran, but also, via two affiliates, stealing trade secrets from US telecommunications group T-Mobile. The daughter of Huawei's founder, Meng was released on parole in mid-December in Vancouver, where she owns two residences, on a bond deposit of C\$10 million (\$6.6 million), wearing an electronic bracelet and handing over her passports.

She is scheduled to appear before a Vancouver judge next Wednesday "to confirm that a writ of court has been issued and to schedule a date for the extradition hearing," the Canadian court has explained.

The extradition procedure can take months or even years because of the many appeal possibilities. China is furious over the US charges against Meng, saying they are the product of "strong political motivations" and an attempt to undermine its flagship telecoms company. Huawei has strenuously denied any wrongdoing.—AFP

Business



Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer at Toyota Dream Car Art Contest Exhibition



Audience attending entertainment show

Al-Sayer holds 3-day family fun event for Hala February

Pushing boundaries with Toyota

KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons, a subsidiary of Al-Sayer Holding joined Hala February celebrations, pushing the boundaries for Toyota with one of its kind family events at Kuwait International Fair Grounds Mishref. The 3-day event was filled with fun and excitement for the huge number of visitors who grabbed the chance to participate in several activities and win attractive prizes. The event exceeded expectations of more than 10,000 visitors.

Speaking during the opening ceremony of the event Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer, CEO Al-Sayer Holding said, "We extend our most sincere greetings and sincere wishes to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. We congratulate all citizens and residents on the 58th National Day and the 28th Liberation Day.

This event is dedicated to our beloved public in Kuwait."

Games for kids, virtual reality, gaming stations, stage activities for families, raffle draws, art contest, driving academy for kids, magic shows, dance performances, live musicians, food outlets were some of the key attractions at the event to entertain the audience in addition to the experience of driving the fleet of Toyota cars, whether saloon or four-wheel drive.

"We have also arranged special in addition to special display of Toyota cars, test drive counter, 4x4 test track. National Bank of Kuwait, Boubyan Bank, Warba Bank and Kuwait International Bank have associated with us, making it easier for visitors to evaluate suitable financing options," added Mubarak Al-Sayer.

Al-Sayer business units including Toyota Genuine Spare Parts



Kids Driving Academy

Division, Motul Oil, Yokohama Tires and Cofran lubricants, partnering companies of HAYYAK loyalty program, Naser Al-Sayer's ARB 4x4 Accessories, Soft Drinks Factory, Carribou Coffee as well as Group CSR Department also participated in this special event.

Mubarak Sayer extended his sin-

cere gratitude to all partners of event who stepped forward with enthusiasm to be part of this important occasion and also thanked Kuwait International Fair Ground Management, the event Organizers and Al-Sayer business units and team members for their support and efforts towards setting up this event.



Kids entertainment show



Kids gaming station



Visitors at the venue



Toyota test drive

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar/Transfer	304.300
Euro	346.340
Sterling Pound	405.940
Canadian dollar	231.580
Turkish lira	58.410
Swiss Franc	308.310
US Dollar Buying	297.000

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.719
Indian Rupees	4.298
Pakistani Rupees	2.221
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.690
Nepali Rupees	2.679
Singapore Dollar	226.410
Hongkong Dollar	38.769
Bangladesh Taka	3.608
Philippine Peso	5.885
Thai Baht	9.701
Malaysian ringgit	77.826

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.201
Qatari Riyal	83.633
Omani Riyal	790.903
Bahraini Dinar	808.560
UAE Dirham	82.904

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.650
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Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.342
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.222
Tunisian Dinar	103.150
Jordanian Dinar	429.800
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	0.203
Syrian Lira	0.000
Morocco Dirham	32.407

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.990
Canadian Dollar	229.335
Sterling Pound	403.950
Euro	348.045
Swiss Frank	306.250
Bahrain Dinar	808.290
UAE Dirhams	83.155
Qatari Riyals	84.390
Saudi Riyals	81.945
Jordanian Dinar	429.975
Egyptian Pound	17.345
Sri Lankan Rupees	1.693
Indian Rupees	4.289
Pakistani Rupees	2.192
Bangladesh Taka	3.612
Philippines Peso	5.868
Cyprus pound	18.085
Japanese Yen	3.715
Syrian Pound	1.590
Nepalese Rupees	2.685
Malaysian Ringgit	75.580
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.740

Thai Bhat	10.555
Turkish Lira	57.025
Singapore dollars	224.844

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.395193	0.409093
Czech Korune	0.005462	0.014762
Danish Krone	0.042236	0.047236
Euro	0.337981	0.351681
Georgian Lari	0.132000	0.132000
Hungarian 0.001002	0.001192	
Norwegian Krone	0.031377	0.036577
Romanian Leu	0.055896	0.072746
Russian ruble	0.004620	0.004620
Slovakia	0.009096	0.019095
Slovenia Krona	0.028735	0.033735
Swiss Franc	0.297691	0.0308691
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.207313	0.219313
New Zealand Dollar	0.200752	0.210252
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.223451	0.232451
US Dollars	0.300200	0.305500
US Dollars Mint	0.300700	0.305500
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003051	0.003852
Chinese Yuan	0.043915	0.047415

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036679	0.039429
Indian Rupee	0.003643	0.004415
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000017	0.000023
Japanese Yen	0.002632	0.002812
Korean Won	0.000260	0.000275
Malaysian Ringgit	0.070963	0.076963
Nepalese Rupee	0.002609	0.002949
Pakistan Rupee	0.001537	0.002307
Philippine Peso	0.005796	0.006096
Singapore Dollar	0.219291	0.229291
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001363	0.001943
Taiwan	0.009747	0.009927
Thai Baht	0.009285	0.009835
Vietnamese Dong	0.00013	0.00013
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.792591	0.808091
Egyptian Pound	0.017111	0.019711
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000211	0.000271
Jordanian Dinar	0.424290	0.433290
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.022112	0.046112
Omani Riyal	0.784071	0.769751
Qatar Riyal	0.079294	0.084234
audi Riyal	0.080060	0.081360
Syrian Pound	0.001290	0.001510
Tunisian Dinar	0.096623	0.104623
Turkish Lira	0.050391	0.063891
UAE Dirhams	0.081425	0.083125
Yemeni Riyal	0.000989	0.001069

Business

NBK ECONOMIC REPORT

Kuwait inflation remained low in Q4 2018 despite Dec pick-up

Inflation could hit 2.0% in 2019 as housing pressures

KUWAIT: Inflation remained low in 4Q18, ending the quarter at 0.4 percent y/y, up only slightly from 0.3 percent in September and having hit a 15-year low of just 0.1 percent in November. Our measure of core inflation, which excludes food and housing, also edged up to 1.7 percent from 1.5 percent at the end of Q3. The pick-up in headline inflation in Q4 was due to higher prices for transport and education, but also a slower pace of deflation in housing services and clothing.

Inflation averaged just 0.6 percent overall in 2018, down from 1.5 percent in 2017 and its lowest since 2002, weighed mostly by weak price pressures in food and housing. Core inflation also fell, to 1.9 percent from 3.3 percent in 2017 as prior fuel subsidy cuts roll out of the annual comparison.

Housing services deflation

Housing deflation slowed to -1.1 percent in December from -1.5 percent in September, supported by slower year-on-year deflation in rents although rent prices have been essentially unchanged for the past nine months. Looking forward, it is likely that there will be a modest pickup in housing services inflation starting in March due to a base effect, following a fall in rents in March 2018. Moreover, with the apartment market now showing signs of recovery, it is possible that rents may start to rise in the near-to-medium term.

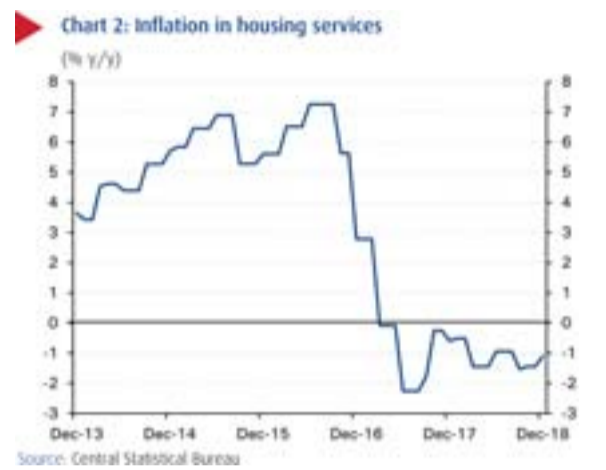
Inflation picks up slightly

Food and beverage prices - a component worth 17 percent of the CPI basket - fell back into deflation at -0.1 percent y/y in December from 0.4 percent in September. Food inflation averaged just 0.1 percent in 2018 overall, helped by falls in international food prices. But inflation in most other categories picked up through the



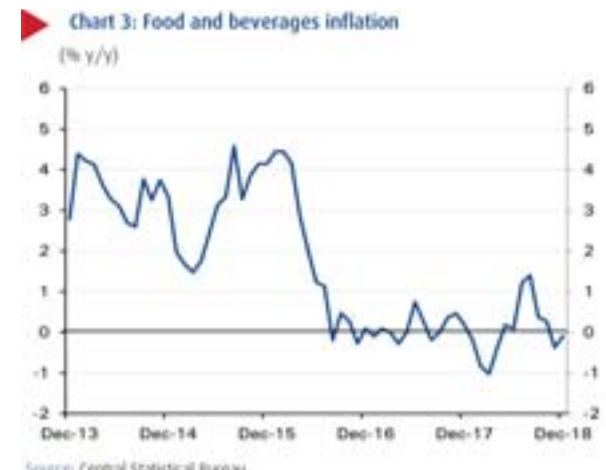
quarter, the largest shifts coming in education (to 2.4 percent from 1.0 percent) and transport (2.2 percent from 1.0 percent); deflation in the clothing segment also eased (-0.6 percent from -1.4 percent). The most notable component that went the other way was the miscellaneous category, where inflation fell (to 0.4 percent from 1.7 percent) through the quarter helped by smaller price rises in the personal care segment.

It is also notable that deflation in the services category persists, though slowed to -0.9 percent in December from -1.4 percent in September. Service sector items tend to be less tradable across borders than goods, so can reflect conditions in the domestic economy more so than external factors or the exchange rate. Deflation

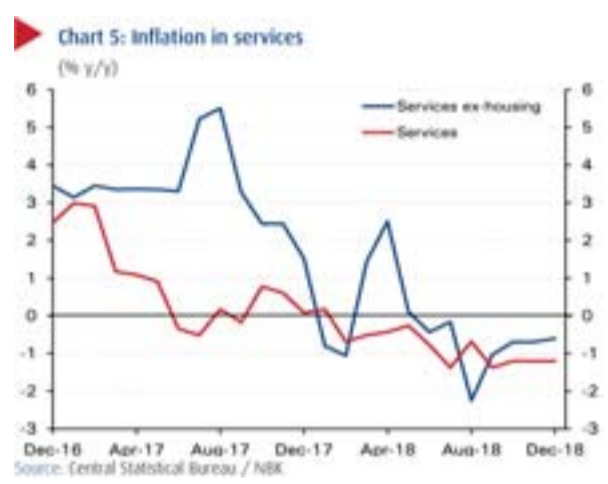
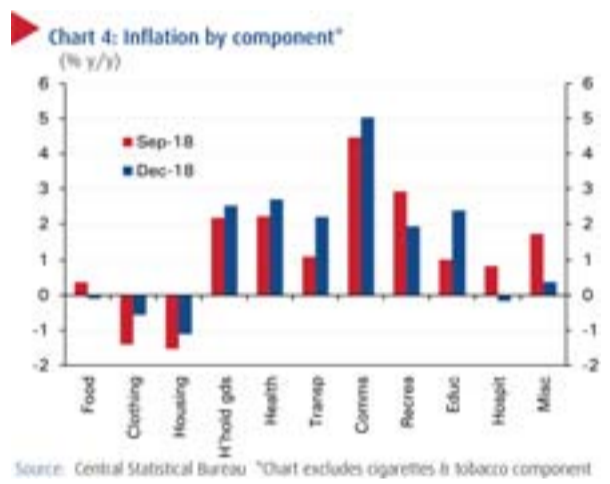


in services is present even once excluding the impact of price falls in the housing segment, which is an important services component. The price of services fell overall in 2018, by 0.7 percent y/y, while the prices of goods - durable, semi-durable and non-durables - rose.

Inflation is expected to pick up in 2019, but will remain within manageable limits at an average of 2.0 percent. Inflation has been kept low in the recent past by a combination of falling housing costs, weak food price pressures, the relative strength of the Kuwaiti dinar (due to the peg to the currency basket dominated by the US dollar, which strengthened last year), and only modest rates of economic growth.



Looking forward, the headline rate will be lifted by an expected easing in deflation in the housing sector, which has continued to move into recovery mode with prices for both houses and apartments now rising year-on-year. However elsewhere, price pressures should be well contained. International food prices have shown no discernible pick up over recent months so we do not expect a strong inflationary impulse from this area. Meanwhile, core inflation is seen little changed at 2.2 percent in 2019 given ongoing strength in the US dollar (and by extension the dinar), and moderate non-oil growth. We also do not expect any significant subsidy cut measures over the coming fiscal year and the implementation of VAT is unlikely before 2021 at the earliest.



CPI component	% y/y annual average		% m/m			% y/y		
	2017	2018	Oct	Nov	Dec	Oct	Nov	Dec
Food & beverages	0.1	0.1	0.4	-0.6	0.5	0.3	-0.4	-0.1
Tobacco & cigarettes	1.2	11.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.5	13.5	13.4
Clothing & footwear	1.4	-0.5	-0.1	0.3	0.2	-1.6	-1.3	-0.6
Housing services	-0.4	-1.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	-1.4	-1.4	-1.1
Furnishings & household maintenance	3.4	2.0	0.2	0.3	0.3	2.2	2.3	2.5
Healthcare	0.3	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.3	2.1	2.1	2.7
Transportation	10.2	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.1	1.0	2.2
Communication	-0.7	3.7	0.6	0.5	0.1	4.2	4.7	5.0
Recreation & culture	3.2	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	1.7	1.9
Education	2.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.0	1.0	2.4
Restaurants & hotels	3.1	1.7	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.8	0.8	-0.2
Other goods & services	1.7	3.5	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.7	0.4	0.4
*CPI ex food and housing	3.3	1.9	0.2	0.0	0.4	1.3	1.3	1.7
General Index	1.5	0.6	0.2	-0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.4

China says US trade talks progress 'well received'

BEIJING: The "substantive progress" China and the United States have made in their trade talks has been "well-received" in both countries and around the world, a senior Chinese official said yesterday, maintaining Beijing's previous upbeat assessment of discussions.

"History shows cooperation is the best choice for the world's two largest economies," Zhang Yesui, a former Chinese ambassador in Washington and now spokesman for China's largely rubber-stamp parliament, told a news briefing. China and the United States have imposed tit-for-tat tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of each other's goods, and the talks are aimed at de-escalating a conflict that has roiled financial markets, disrupted manufacturing supply chains and shrunk US farm exports. "So far they have achieved substantive progress on many issues of mutual interest," Zhang said ahead of parliament's opening today.

"Economic and trade ties between China and the United States are mutually beneficial, win-win by the nature, and we hope that both sides can continue to step up consultations, to reach a mutually-beneficial, win-win agreement."

Zhang's remarks echoed comments made late last month by the Chinese government's top diplomat. Zhang noted that aside from the trade dispute, the two countries also regularly clash over issues like human rights, the disputed South China Sea and self-ruled Taiwan, which China claims as its own.

While China will defend its sovereignty, security and development interests, it is also dedicated to having a relationship with the United States based on mutual respect and non-confrontation, he said.

"The two countries' history, culture, social system and development stage certainly have many differences," Zhang said. "It's totally normal to have differences and disputes, but this does not inevitably lead to antagonism or confrontation."

It is in neither country's interests to clash or have confrontation, Zhang added.

"Using the old thinking of the Cold War to deal with new problems in the context of globalization definitely won't get you anywhere."

Foreign investors

China's legislature will vote next week on a highly-anticipated bill that will bring "a fundamental change" for foreign investors, an official said yesterday, in a move that could help



WASHINGTON, DC: Rep Bill Pascrell (left) talks with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer during a House Ways and Means Committee hearing in Washington, DC. —AFP

ease US trade tensions. The draft foreign investment law will be the most closely watched item at the annual two-week session of the rubber-stamp National People's Congress, which opens today. The legislation seeks to address longstanding complaints from foreign companies, though Europeans voiced concerns that it was being fast-tracked to meet US demands on trade.

The bill will eliminate the requirement for foreign firms to transfer proprietary technology to Chinese joint-venture partners—a central issue in China's trade negotiations with the United States.

It also promises to abolish the "case-by-case approvals" process for foreign investments. NPC spokesman Zhang Yesui said at a news conference. The change will ensure that foreign investors will enjoy the same privileges as Chinese companies in most sectors, except those placed on a "negative list".

Beijing uses negative lists to identify areas that are either off-limits to non-state businesses or that require them to go through an application and approval process.

"Areas for prohibiting and restricting foreign investments shall be clearly listed and areas outside the negative list will be fully open," Zhang said. "Chinese and foreign investment will enjoy the same treatment." The new "unified law" will replace three existing laws on Chinese and foreign equity joint ventures, non-equity joint ventures and wholly foreign-owned enterprises.

"This is a fundamental change in our foreign investment management system, which will improve the openness, transparency and predictability of the investment environment," Zhang said. —Agencies

lions of dollars' worth of each other's goods, roiling financial markets, disrupting manufacturing supply chains and shrinking US farm exports.

A source briefed on the negotiations told Reuters the two countries appear close to a deal that would roll back US tariffs on at least \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods. Stock markets welcomed the news, with European markets following their Asian counterparts higher. The pan-European STOXX 600 index was up 0.4 percent.


MSCI's All Country World Index, which tracks shares in 47 countries, was up 0.1 percent on the day. "The market rebound has been driven by the prospect of a US-China trade deal and the pause in Fed rate hikes," said Rupert Thompson, head of research at UK-based asset manager Kingswood.

"While hopes on both fronts are likely to end up being vindicated, the good news would largely now seem to be in the price and the scope for further gains not that obvious." —Reuters

World shares tick higher on US-China trade deal optimism

LONDON: Global shares rose yesterday amid growing optimism the United States and China will reach a trade agreement as soon as this month. US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping might seal a formal trade deal around March 27, given progress in talks between the two countries, the Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday.

The two nations have imposed tit-for-tat tariffs on bil-



شركة البترول الوطنية الكويتية
Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC)

**KUWAIT NATIONAL PETROLEUM COMPANY (KNPC)
(Internal Purchasing Committee)**

MRF/PQ-001 "PRE-QUALIFICATION OF APPLICANTS FOR KNPC SPENT CATALYST SALE FOR METAL RECLAMATION FACILITY (MRF) IN KUWAIT."

- As a part of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) initiative for private sector participation in Kuwait Oil sector, KUWAIT NATIONAL PETROLEUM COMPANY (KNPC) invites qualified and experienced local, Gulf & International companies for pre-qualification for Sale of KNPC Spent catalyst to be used in New Metal Reclamation facility (MRF) in Kuwait.
- The successful Bidder shall sign a Twenty (20) year Agreement with KNPC to purchase all types of spent catalyst generated in KNPC Refineries.
- The Contractor shall construct and operate new Metal Reclamation Facility (MRF) in Kuwait where metals will be recovered from spent catalysts generated in KNPC Refineries in Kuwait. The Contractor shall be responsible for collecting, handling, transporting, processing, metal recovery and disposal of catalyst waste in compliance with K-EPA regulations. The Contractor shall execute the contractual obligations in a safe manner in accordance with KNPC Health, Safety and Environment Policy and in compliance with all Regulations as mentioned in Auction documents and to be commensurate with the scope of work.
- KNPC shall evaluate the applications and pre-qualify the Companies meeting KNPC requirements as mentioned in PQ document, forms and Questionnaires.
- The qualified Companies shall be allowed to participate in Auction and submit final Auction offer to purchase all type of spent catalyst from KNPC.
- The details of Scope of Work & Pre-qualification document, forms & Questionnaires shall be downloaded from the link shown below:
www.knpc.com/KNPC/media/pdf/MRF-PQ-document-pdf.pdf

Starting from March 3, 2019.

- The PQ documents to be filled in as required and shall be submitted to the IPC (Room no., 1A-046) in KNPC Head Office, Al-Ahmadi in a closed envelope along with application fee of KD 100/- (One Hundred Kuwaiti Dinars) non-refundable in a form of certified cheque or receipt of deposit in favor of KNPC account. The PQ number, title and the closing date should be indicated on the envelope.
- The closing date to submit the PQ Applications shall be not later than 1:00 pm, of Thursday 13/06/2019.
- For any enquiry, Applicants may contact (mrfproject@knpc.com).
- IPC invites the Applicants to attend the Auction envelopes opening meeting in Room 2A-050, 2nd Floor, KNPC Head Office at Al-Ahmadi at 08:00 am of the first Sunday following to the Application closing date.

IPC Secretary

KAMCO and Global sign MOU to commence merger process

Both entities take first steps to conclude largest merger in Kuwait's investment sector

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company ("KAMCO") and Global Investment House ("Global"), two leading firms in the asset management and investment banking industry, announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") to cement the merger talks and commence the regulatory process. Under the terms of the MOU agreement, KAMCO will be the merging entity and Global will be the merged entity, marking another milestone towards forming a leading pan-MENA non-banking financial services firm, with a greater value proposition and enhanced operational capabilities to clients, shareholders and talent.

With the signing of the MOU, KAMCO and Global will combine their accumulated two decades worth of knowledge and expertise to become a regional non-banking financial services powerhouse. The merger is categorized as the largest of its kind in Kuwait's investment scene and will offer an array of best-in-class financial products and services.

It will also position the combined entity as the largest asset management and investment banking firm in Kuwait, in terms of assets under administration and management totaling \$13 billion across funds and segregated accounts, with investment banking credentials totaling \$21 billion across equity and debt capital markets, mergers and acquisitions and real estate.

The combined entity will:

- Create a larger, stronger and more resilient entity that can support government and private sector development plans
- Serve thousands of clients from seven local offices, enhance total returns to the shareholders and provide opportunities to a multi-cultural pool of talent
- Fortified with diverse cross-market financial and human capital, the merger will capitalize on economies

of scale to sustain market fluctuations, participate in government projects and support developing local economies across core MENA markets

- Will result in the first and largest of its kind M&A in Kuwait's non-banking financial sector with a wider array of financial products and services at par with foreign firms

- Capture synergies arising from economies of scale and create value in product offerings and human capital

On this occasion, Entisar Al-Suwaidi, Vice Chairman of KAMCO, said, "We consider this strategic decision to merge with Global to be a significant step towards transforming the regional asset management and investment banking scene. Our goal is to become the preferred choice for our stakeholders: clients; financiers; talent; regulators; counterparties; and service providers."

She added, "We are single-minded when it comes to building our capacity to achieve this goal. At the core of our business ethos is to consistently deliver on a promise. This depends the trust bestowed on us by our stakeholders, which ultimately contributes towards building more diversified and sustainable economies of markets in which we operate. We are proud of our heritage built on core values and we believe we are able to contribute in building the future of the financial markets across the region. The combined entity will strengthen the regional presence in core MENA markets, specifically in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan and Turkey."

Al-Suwaidi added, "I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to the members of the board of directors and executive management for their hard work and dedication throughout this journey. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all the regulatory authorities and governing bodies for



Faisal Sarkhou



Entisar Al-Suwaidi

their cooperation and assistance in streamlining this process starting with the acquisition until this milestone. Reaching such a milestone in our journey towards our goal would not have been possible without the trust and confidence of our valued clients, financiers and team members."

A leading firm

Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, Chairman of Global, said, "By signing this MOU, we seek to establish a combined entity that aspires to be a regional leader within the non-banking financial services. We believe that this merger will result in creating the largest asset management and investment banking firm in Kuwait and amongst the top in the MENA region, benefiting the clients and shareholders of both companies."

He added, "We look forward to growing our operations, taking advantage of new opportunities in regional emerging capital markets, and tackling challenges more aggressively while achieving sustainable measurable results for our stakeholders. Moving ahead with the planned merger, a first of its kind in the Kuwaiti invest-

ment sector, we plan to leverage the outstanding resources of both firms to create a larger diversified and efficient entity with a wider range of product offerings and client tailored services."

Sarkhou added, "We aim to capture synergies arising from combining two entities with longstanding track records and enhanced value propositions to our product and service offerings, providing current and potential clients with a refined and memorable experience. Through this merger, we believe that by expanding into a larger entity we will have the financial means and human capital to enrich each stakeholders' experience."

Decisions related to merger

Given that both firms have their grassroots in Kuwait, the merger is a natural progression to KAMCO's 70% acquisition in Global from NCH Ventures last September. After the acquisition, both firms engaged in an extensive integration exercise involving soliciting feedback from clients, shareholders and teams.

Each firm appointed an independent CMA licensed asset valuer to arrive at the fair valuation. After receiving the valuation reports, KAMCO and Global appointed Protiviti as the investment advisor and Hossam Legal as legal counsel. The investment advisors presented their recommendations to the respective entities' board of directors for endorsement.

The Board of Directors of the two companies endorsed the fairness opinion submitted by the independent investment advisor, declaring the readiness to merge. This included the fair value of each company, recommended swap ratio of 0.75522821 KAMCO shares for each Global share, and recommendation to call for an Extraordinary General Assembly of both companies to vote on the merger, after obtaining the approval of the relevant regulatory authorities.

VIVA launches the all-new Samsung Galaxy S10

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launches the all new Samsung Galaxy S10, with VIVA Postpaid commitments, with a one day special offer on 5 March 2019 at all VIVA's stores, and special experience corners at Avenues Mall Phase 4 and Marina Mall stores.

Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA commented: "At VIVA, our state-of-the-art infrastructure supports a range of telecom services that enable smartphone makers like Samsung to unleash the full potential of their world-class devices, to enrich our customers' experience."

The latest additions to Samsung's Galaxy smartphone lineup pushes it further into the future. Galaxy S10+ has a cutting-edge dual in-display selfie camera module. It also features a super secure on-screen fingerprint scan, 5 pro-grade cameras, a large 6.4-inch display, 4,100mAh battery and come with three different storage options.

The Galaxy S10 boasts extraordinary features, including a large 6.1-inch display, a super secure on-screen fingerprint scan, multi pro-grade cameras, a cinematic infinity display, wireless powershare and 3,400mAh battery and will be available with 128GB storage and 8GB of RAM. The Galaxy S10e features a 5.8-inch infinity display, dual rear-facing cameras, an in-display selfie camera, a side-mounted fingerprint scanner, a 3,100mAh battery and will be available with 128GB of internal storage and 6GB of RAM.

AUB announces draw winners

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank announced the names of the winners of the second draw of shop and 'Win up to 100 percent Cash Back' of the value of your Purchases' campaign, which took place on 3 March 2019 at the Bank's main branch in the presence of the Ministry of Trade and Industry's representative. The lucky winners: Ahmad Mousa Battah, Massimo Casini, Ghanim Harbi Al-Shammari, Riham Fouad Alghanim and Tareq Fouad Al-Ali, all redeemed up to 100 percent cash-back of the value of their purchases using their AUB Credit Cards with a maximum cash-back of KD 1,000.

The campaign was designed to reward the Bank's customers with up to 100 percent cash-back on their purchases made using their AUB Credit Cards, with a maximum cash-back of KD 1,000 for each winner. To be eligible, the AUB Credit Cardholder had to spend KD 100 or above during the three months campaign period which ran from January 2019, until the end of the current March. The campaign offered 15 prizes throughout three draws, each with five prizes. Entry into the draw was calculated based on the total value of purchases made during the period of the campaign. Customers received one chance in the draw for every KD 10 they spent locally in Kuwait, and received three chances in the draw for every KD 10 they spent abroad. In addition to the exciting cash-back campaign benefits, customers who spent using AUB credit cards automatically benefited from the Pearls reward program as well as AUB's instant discount program. These offers provided customers a real added value that rewards the AUB Credit Card and ATM card holders through unique discounts at major well-known companies and retail outlets in Kuwait."

TBY interview with KISR Director General

KISR plays key role in shaping Kuwait's future: Dr Samira

KUWAIT: The Business Year (TBY), a global media group providing business and economic information on national economies, had the pleasure to meet with Dr Samira A. S. Omar, Director General of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), as part of its upcoming edition of The Business Year: Kuwait 2019, produced in partnership with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and the German Business Council Kuwait (GBCK).

For over 50 years, KISR has been a pioneer in the region regarding scientific research and R&D. Ioana Popa, TBY's Country Director for Kuwait, underscored the importance of featuring KISR in The Business Year: Kuwait 2019, pointing out that, "this year will be a special edition in which we will highlight the new trends of the Kuwaiti economy and for this reason it was primordial for us to feature KISR." TBY's Country

Editor, Kevin Delaplace Haro, echoed the institute's importance, adding "KISR is a highly reputable entity in the country and in the region; its role in shaping the future of Kuwait is undeniable and we are happy to count with Dr. Omar's comments."

KISR is currently completing its eighth five-year strategic plan that will end in 2020, aiming to develop key research programs that will meet the demands and challenges the country faces in respect to scientific and technological developments. In fact, Kuwait has both environmental concerns and food security issues and KISR's research is playing a vital role in developing the know-how that will help Kuwait overcome these concerns. In that regard, Dr. Omar said "our aquaculture and oceanography research started with the establishment of the institute and our society relies on the fish stock." She also shed light on the institute's mission: "KISR's task is to identify economically important species in order to study the stocks and monitor their status, but also develop aquaculture techniques to grow these fish in tanks for commercialization, while enhancing their population in the open sea." KISR also employs the latest technology that helps monitor weather conditions and prevent possible environ-



The TBY team with Dr Samira A. S. Omar

mental disasters.

Nuclear energy was another interesting topic that was discussed during the interview. KISR is an active member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As such, KISR is looking for ways to use nuclear energy for food and agriculture, as well as the environment. Dr. Omar said that KISR is "using isotopes and radiation to enhance wheat production, for example, and record acidification for climate change assessment." Notably, KISR is playing a key role in assisting the government in terms of nuclear safety and control.

Dr. Samira A. S. Omar was appointed Director General of KISR in February 2016. The Business Year: Kuwait 2019 will feature views and insights from more than 100 senior executives and government officials across all sectors, obtained through face-to-face interviews in the country. The publication will also feature sector reviews, analyses, focus articles, and contributions from foreign guest speakers. It will be launched on June 13 in London and will be widely distributed locally and internationally at major economic forums, investment forums, and conferences.

SL Grand Edition launches in March 2019: Fresh air for the luxury Roadster

KUWAIT: Grand Edition - this is what especially exclusive Mercedes-Benz special edition models are called. The new Grand Edition models of the SL 400 (combined fuel consumption 8.4 l/100 km, combined CO2 emissions 191 g/km) and SL 500 (combined fuel consumption 9.8 l/100 km, combined CO2 emissions 223 g/km) come with numerous highlights and special color combinations on the exterior and in the interior, complemented by standard appointments for an even more luxurious driving experience. The exclusive Roadster can be ordered from March 2019 onwards.

For the paint finish of their Grand Edition model, the customer can choose between four metallic tones, standard black, brilliant white (designo dia-

mond white bright), various tones of grey and obsidian black. Applications in high-gloss chrome and matt silver ensure a special look for the front bumper.

The Grand Edition models have 48.3 cm (19 inch) (front) and 50.8 cm (20 inch) (rear) AMG 10-spoke forged wheels. These are painted high-gloss black and have a high-sheen rim flange and spokes. The badges with the SL Grand Edition logo placed laterally on the mudguards subtly reference the special model's status.

The designo tundra brown pearl leather with its shimmering metallic surface catches the eye on the interior. It is also on the multifunction sports steering wheel, among other things. The upper and lower segment of the steering control rim are designed in tundra brown pearl leather. The grip zone is particularly easy on the hand in perforated black Nappa leather. The traditionally extensive standard equipment in the SL is topped by the Grand Edition models: In addition, these have, among other things, the AIRSCARF neck-level heating system, the sports suspension lowered by 10 mm and firmer tuning, active multicontour seats with massage and dynamic handling function, seat climate control, the Driving Assistance Plus Package and Active Parking Assist.



Gulf Bank winners of Al-Danah weekly draw

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its weekly draw on 3rd March 2019 announcing the names of its winners for the week from the 24th February till the 28th February 2019, in which five winners will receive KD 1,000 each, every week.

The winners this week are:

- Saleh Nashmi Hasan Alajmi
- Anwar Waleed Kathem Olthman
- Hamed Ebrahim Alnasrallah
- Haider Hussain Abdullah Kakooli
- Fatima Abdullah Ghadhan Alshumari

The first Gulf Bank Al-Danah's quarterly draw 2019 for the prize of KD 150,000 will be held on 27 March 2019, the 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.

What's On



LAPA organizes Gipsy King concert

L OYAC's Academy for Performance Arts (LAPA) recently organized a concert for the famous Gipsy King and Andre Reyes band at the Shaheed Park's Amphitheatre. The concert attracted a large audience who enjoyed the band's first show in an Arab and GCC country listening to a mixture of flamenco, salsa and pop music and songs such as Bambole, Bailame, Ceramba and Algeria. Speaking on the occasion, the band's manager, Manuel Jose thanked the Shaheed Park management and the Kuwaiti people for their warm welcome adding that the band's next stop would be Dubai's opera house on March 6.



Future Eye Theatre conducts professional acting training course

Future Eye Theatre is a prominent drama group in Kuwait which has been exploring, inventing and performing innovative and unique theatrical experiments and experiences for its audience for years now. Its most recent venture was a two-day Theatre Training Workshop led by prominent Theatre director of Kerala and faculty of Thirissur School of Drama Prof Sreejith Ramanan on the 15th and 16th of February at Symphony auditorium, Riggae.

Day one was for adults and day two was for kids. The inaugural function was presided over by the President of Future Eye Theatre, Shemej Kumar, who is an award-winning and renowned Indian theatre director in the State of Kuwait. Prof Ramanan lighted the ceremonial lamp and Vattiyorkavu Krishnakumar, the General Secretary of Future Eye delivered the welcome address in the presence of Murali Nair and Sathesh Vaarijakshan, who are patrons of Future Eye.

The adult group on day one consisted of 30 Theatre enthusiasts from very diverse walks of life including doctors, engineers, nurses, IT and sales professionals, journalists, dancers and housewives including a Jamaican art teacher working in Kuwait, Michelle Natasha Johnson. The intense but fun-filled training, which focused mainly on increasing the flexibility & sensitivity of the

body, slow motion exercises and voice modulation techniques which are core skills for exceptional theatrical performances was an enlightening experience to the participants. Day two was even more fun-filled with games when the instructor brilliantly mingled with the kids like one among them and engaged them in interactive activities which was a sheer delight and welcome break from the monotonous academic routine.

The icing on the cake for kids was the surprise visit and solo performance of Mercy Mathew aka "Daya Bhai", the renowned social worker engaged in uplifting the lives of tribal community in India, who was on a visit to Kuwait. Daya Bhai also felicitated on behalf of the troupe Deepu Mohandas, an ace talent of Future Eye who was relocating to Dubai. There was also a pre-workshop orientation session on 14th evening on the topic "World Theatre Today" when Prof Ramanan explicated and showed visuals from the international theatre arena to the utter awe and excitement of a crowd comprising of prominent theatre and media personalities of Kuwait. Thus the very enriching and exhilarating two-day workshop turned out to be an unforgettable experience to the organizers and participants alike. Future Eye expresses its deepest gratitude to Prof Sreejith Ramanan, participants and especially parents of the kids who attended the workshop.



FOCC marks 20th anniversary of 'ABK CRYcket 2018'

Friends of CRY Club, Kuwait (FOCC) celebrated their 20th Anniversary of conducting school cricket tournament in Kuwait on January 18, 2019 at the lush green Kuwait Oil Company stadium, Al Ahmadi. In fact, the FOCC- organized tournament is very the first of its kind to promote grass root level cricket in Kuwait providing school children an opportunity to play competitive and organized level cricket. Having established in 1998, FOCC successfully hosted the "ABK CRYcket" tournament which was sponsored by Ahli Bank of Kuwait.

As seen last year, the venue was perfect to launch the much-awaited tourney as the facility had all the required amenities and ambience to conduct a tournament. The weather though, was quite chilly - especially in the morning session but otherwise the entire day was brilliant and

the enthusiasm of the participants, parents and friends was high.

"CRYcket" is an annual softball cricket tournament, played in 7-over match format, for children in two age groups of under 12 (U-12) & under 14 (U-14). The tournament is open to Schools, Clubs and independent teams and is completed in a single day, with two matches being played simultaneously. This year, the "Dashing Knights" clinched the winners' trophy in the U-14 category for the second successive year and MG 7 Warriors were the Runners Up. The winner's trophy in the Under-12 was clinched by MG 7 Warriors and Runners Up was CCC. The best player awards were claimed by Anirudh S of Dashing Knights in the U 14 Category & Aryan Siju of MG 7 Warriors in the U 12 category.

Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continued their event sponsorship for the "ABK CRYcket 2018" for the third successive year and FOCC would like to extend their gratitude to ABK Management for their support. FOCC extends its thanks to the continued Gold sponsorship from the Talal & Lulwa Alajeel Education Fund and Bronze sponsorship from German Printing

Press. Our thanks to other sponsors Hussein & Qaisar Int. Co., Al-Soor Clinic, Al-Mailem Tires, Career Hunters, Dar Al-Saha Poly Clinic, Payal Jewelers, Curry Leaves Restaurant, KAPICO Travels, IFL World Travel Mgt., Aman Exchange, Wilhelmsen Ships Service, Pizza Inn and Well Wishers.

We had new CRY buddies who joined us this year who helped support and run The KID'S CORNER, raffle tickets sale and BUY for CRY during the tournament. As usual toys, books and many household items were available at amazing bargain prices. The raffle draw was as usual a huge success and featured over 13 prizes to be won.

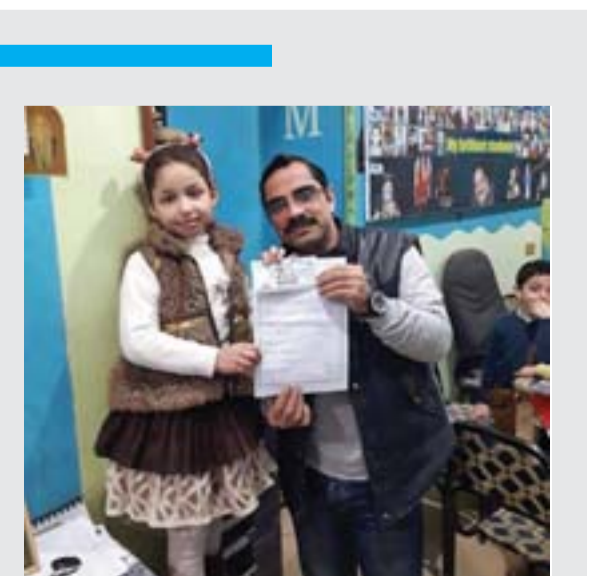
This year we had a record registration of 23 teams, out of the 24 available slots. FOCC would also like to give a big thank you to all the players, team managers, coaches and the parents. Most importantly, we highly appreciate the umpires and scorers, our unseen strength, year after year. FOCC is proud to be partners with CRY - in our joint mission to help the underprivileged children. Those interested in joining hands with FOCC may please visit www.focckuwait.org, or contact any of the volunteers. With CRY, everybody wins.



Kalashram disciple's Kathak catches kudos in Kuwait

Kalashram, the world renowned Kathak center by Pandit Birju Maharaj, India's maestro in Kathak dance form, stole hearts in Kuwait when one of the disciples performed during the visit of the minister of External Affairs of India Sushma Swaraj to Kuwait. The disciple, Manju Sibi, also

performed Kathak, one of Indian classical dance forms, during the National and Liberation Day festivities last week at the Millennium Hotel, Kuwait. Manju Sibi has been training various dance forms and has mastered Kathak over the recent years ever since she learnt the dance lessons from Pandit Birju Maharaj.



In a creative gesture meant to encourage his students and offer them more incentives to excel in his subject, English teacher Medhat Kolaib recently rewarded his outstanding student, Mariam Dhahi Ezziddine with a financial prize for getting a full mark in a drop quiz. Congratulations Mariam and thanks a million to such a creative teacher.

US seeks to cut dialysis costs with more home care versus clinics

A trial payment design that would improve care in the early stages of kidney disease

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration is working on a new payment approach for treating kidney disease that favors lower cost care at home and transplants, a change that would upend a dialysis industry that provides care in thousands of clinics nationwide. The goal is to reduce the \$114 billion paid by the US government each year to treat chronic kidney disease and end-stage renal disease, a top area of spending.

The US Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), which provides Medicare health benefits to more than 55 million Americans, is looking at a trial payment design that would improve care in the early stages of kidney disease, increase access to kidney transplants and favor home dialysis over clinic-based treatment, CMS head Seema Verma told Reuters in an interview. "A lot of the way the program has been set up, it creates a lot of perverse incentives to actually keep people in an institutional setting," said Verma, who first signaled in a speech this year that CMS wanted to curb costs and improve quality of life for kidney disease patients through a new payment structure. Indeed, consultants say home dialysis has been slow to take off because doctors prefer to send patients to clinics.

The changes pose a particular risk to DaVita Inc and Fresenius Medical Care AG, which operate more than 5,000 US dialysis clinics and control around 70 percent of the market. They could also provide an opening for new rivals, including CVS Health Corp, which seeks to offer lower-cost home dialysis, and startups Cricket Health and Somatus, which focus on early intervention to slow progression to kidney failure.

"We have to be open to what I'm hearing coming out of (CMS), that they want to look at different ways for us being

paid and how can we really try to create more opportunities for these patients to be better served," Fresenius Medical Care Chief Executive Rice Powell told analysts. The company is expanding in home dialysis with its \$2 billion purchase of NxStage, a US maker of home-use dialysis machines.

Fresenius Medical Care said it plans to convert some dialysis clinics into "transitional care units" to train people for care at home. It aims to boost the percentage of its US customers using home dialysis to more than 15 percent by 2022 from around 12 percent currently. DaVita recently launched new technology, including remote monitoring and telehealth, to improve the patient experience at home and "champions" home dialysis, a company spokeswoman said.

Kidney disease on the rise

Nearly 15 percent of the US adult population was suffering from chronic kidney disease in 2018, fueled by growing rates of diabetes and hypertension, according to the government's US Renal Data System. In 2016, more than 720,000 people were estimated to have progressed to kidney failure. That is forecast to climb as high as 1.26 million people by 2030.

Without a transplant, patients with end-stage kidney disease require dialysis to clear their blood of waste and excess fluid, which involves spending three-to-five hours hooked up to a machine three times a week. Home dialysis would not only be cheaper, since it would not require nursing assistance once a patient is properly trained, but could be done at night, freeing people for a regular work schedule. DaVita and Fresenius Medical Care offer two forms of home dialysis: hemodialysis,

which requires a machine and special filter much like in clinics, and peritoneal dialysis, which utilizes the lining of the abdomen to filter waste from the blood.

CMS is considering the benefits of peritoneal dialysis, which is used more widely outside the United States. Peritoneal dialysis machines are around the size of a desktop printer, smaller than home hemodialysis machines. DaVita believes home dialysis could eventually account for up to 25 percent of treatments if physicians are educated on its merits, and it plans to build fewer new clinics.

Meanwhile, US pharmacy chain CVS is preparing to enter the dialysis business and has more retail outlets than Fresenius Medical Care and DaVita clinics combined, as well as deep enough pockets to drive disruption. CVS said last April its kidney care plans involve a program to identify the disease early and delay the need for dialysis. It will also seek regulatory approval for its own home dialysis device. CVS Chief Executive Larry Merlo, in an interview, said it wants a home care solution "which is going to be more patient friendly and we believe lower cost than the therapies that exist today."

Medicare pays for home dialysis, but adoption has been slow. Only around 8 percent of end-stage renal disease patients were on home dialysis in 2016. The US Department of Health and Human Services, which oversees CMS, is also seeking to increase the number of kidney transplants through proposals it hopes will expedite access to organs. More than 20,000 people received kidney transplants in the United States in 2018, a fraction of the more than 100,000 people on the waiting list. CMS has also finalized new rules that beginning next year will offer

financial incentives for new drugs to treat kidney failure.

'Killer gap'

Proponents of home care say more frequent dialysis can improve patient outcomes by avoiding the so-called "killer gap" - a two-day wait between clinic sessions associated with increased hospitalization and death. Hospitalization accounts for about 40 percent of Medicare spending on dialysis patients. "Imagine if we could keep patients out of the hospital by dealing with this killer gap ... giving them the tools to treat themselves," said John Milad, CEO of Britain-based Quanta Dialysis Technologies, which is working on a simpler dialysis machine for home use. "The savings that are available there are as big as everything that is being spent on dialysis."

CVS is working on its home hemodialysis device with DEKA Research & Development Corp, a New Hampshire-based company owned by Segway scooter inventor Dean Kamen, according to sources familiar with the arrangement. Startups including Quanta, France's Physidia and California-based Outset Medical, are working on user-friendly dialysis machines for home use. US-based Cricket Health and Somatus use data analysis to detect high-risk chronic kidney disease patients earlier, educate them on treatment options and provide home dialysis services.

Cricket CEO Arvind Rajan said the government could save money via a flat fee to manage patients earlier in the disease and reward providers who keep costs down. "The most profitable thing you can do is keep a patient from kidney failure and the least profitable thing you can do is have the patient on in-center dialysis," he said. —Reuters

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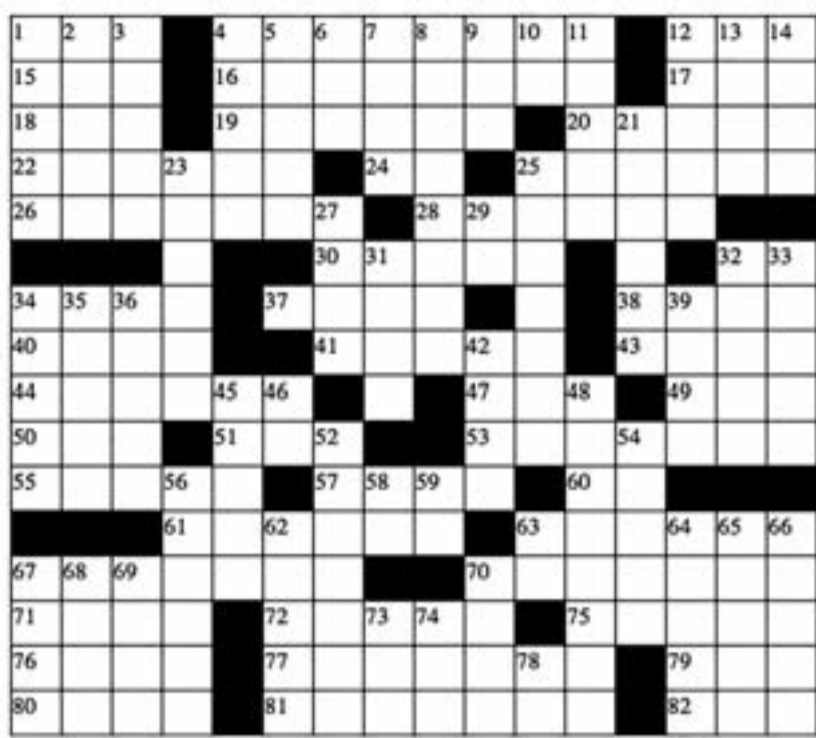
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Stars

CROSSWORD 2149



ACROSS

1. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
4. An underground tunnel with recesses where bodies were buried (as in ancient Rome).
12. The compass point midway between south and southeast.
15. Take in solid food.
16. Temporary cessation or suspension.
17. Payment due by the recipient on delivery.
18. A groove or furrow (especially one in soft earth caused by wheels).
19. Go into retirement.
20. The capacitance of a capacitor that has an equal and opposite charge of 1 coulomb on each plate and a voltage difference of 1 volt between the plates.
22. Of or relating to a wedding.
24. A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
26. A member of the Mayan people of the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico.
28. Not subjected to an aging process.
30. An annual award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for achievements in motion picture production and performance.
34. Ctenophores lacking tentacles.
37. One thousandth of a second.
38. Made agreeably cold (especially by ice).
40. United States composer noted for his innovative use of polytonality (1874-1954).
41. A republic in the West Indies on the western part of the island of Hispaniola.
43. A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
44. Guinea fowl.
47. Headdress that protects the head from bad weather.
49. A belief (or system of beliefs) accepted as authoritative by some group or school.
50. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.
51. Step on it.
53. A state in which the level of carbon dioxide in the blood is lower than normal.
55. A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
57. Large sweet juicy hybrid between tangerine and grapefruit having a thick wrinkled skin.
60. Informal terms for a mother.
61. Evergreen Indian shrub with vivid yellow flowers whose bark is used in tanning.
67. Sounding as if pronounced low in the throat.
71. Being or occurring in fact or actuality.
72. A pilgrim who journeys to Mecca.
75. A popular island resort in the Netherlands Antilles.
76. Medium-sized tree having glossy lanceolate leaves.
77. An annual publication including weather forecasts and other miscellaneous information arranged according to the calendar of a given year.
79. A rapid escape (as by criminals).
80. Chief port of Yemen.
81. A poor white person in the southern US.
82. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A hat that is round and black and hard with a narrow brim.
2. An island republic on Nauru Island.
3. Of or relating to Attica or its inhabitants or to the dialect spoken in Athens in classical times.
4. A unit of weight for precious stones = 200 mg.
5. A poplar that is widely cultivated in the United States.
6. Vietnamese New Year.
7. The 16th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
8. Italian poet considered the national poet of modern Italy (1835-1907).
9. Used of a single unit or thing.
10. One million periods per second.
11. Make less visible or unclear.
12. Flesh of young Atlantic cod weighing up to 2 pounds.
13. A cleansing agent made from the salts of vegetable or animal fats.
14. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
21. Relating to or containing acetic acid.
23. The basic unit of money in Gambia.
25. Of or relating to the heart.
27. A piece of metal covered by leather with a flexible handle.
29. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
31. (used especially of vegetation) Having lost all moisture.
32. Pepsi Cola is a trademarked cola.
33. Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
35. A small pendant fleshy lobe at the back of the soft palate.
36. Relieve from military service.
39. (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.
42. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
45. An Indian tree of the family Combretaceae that is a source of timber and gum.
46. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
48. Medium-sized larch of Canada and northern United States including Alaska having a broad conic crown and rust-brown scaly bark.
52. (Greek mythology) One of the three Gorgons.
54. A person who handles or caresses in a clumsy or over-familiar manner.
56. A fine usually white clay formed by the weathering of aluminous minerals (as feldspar).
58. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
59. A unit of luminous flux equal to the amount of light given out through a solid angle of 1 steradian by a point source of 1 candela intensely radiating uniformly in all directions.
62. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
63. A blow that renders the opponent unconscious.
64. Scale-like structure between the base of the wing and the halter of a two-winged fly.
65. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
66. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
68. (of persons) Highest in rank or authority or office.
69. A feeling of intense anger.
70. Superior to the average.
73. A doctor's degree in dental medicine.
74. The first month of the year.
78. A radioactive element of the actinide series.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

If you have vacation days, take one today. You'll find yourself arguing with those you may not be able to win against such as your boss. Go backpacking or fishing something that takes your mind off work pressures and how your life really ought to be. Let go of thinking you're not getting the rewards you think you should right now. Give yourself some time to think your actions over before putting them into gear. This isn't the day that you'll back down peacefully if anyone rubs you the wrong way. Try to turn your thoughts to love especially if you have someone about which you care. Make love not war today.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You feel as if you're boring others today and you could be right. Take the time to assess the situation rather than pouring out your thoughts to those who will listen now. Others always seem to think that a quiet person knows it all and has the wisdom to boot. That's not always true though, which you very well know at this time. Don't worry. Most of the people you're associated with today, especially at work, don't even realize you're having this kind of trouble. There may be one who sympathizes with you today. Hopefully it's your life's partner. It'll get better.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

At work tread carefully expressing your thoughts. Others might not be open to new ideas at this time. Do your work by doing what is necessary to get through the day. Make a date for lunch with someone you love, perhaps a picnic by the water with ducks. This will give you the much-needed break you desire away from intimidating coworkers. Gemini. Your day will move much quicker and you'll be home earlier. Take time with to court your lover tonight because mental, emotional and physical love is what you need more than anything now.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

At work it seems that everyone is coming to you for suggestions both on the work front and with their lives in general. You're the helper again today. Besides the fact that you're learning more about the people close to you and can truly sympathize, this is like reading a "Dear Abby" column with you being the one giving the answers. You're able to take into account your own life and all the positive things that are happening for you just by it's being a normal work day. Cancer. You may be complimented for something you do or how you look. Take this day in and enjoy.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may be thinking of a new home possibly in a new area right now. You're not as happy with how things are working out in that part of your life. This could be because you're unsure of your love life along with a few other items. Work today leaves you feeling that you're less thought of by your coworkers. This isn't your finest time and you're well aware that affects your life. Perhaps you should take off early and decide what is really best for you now. Once a logical decision is made, then you can act upon it, Leo, without regret.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You can see through any given emotional situation both at work and at home. Having that ability can cause some deep discussions, perhaps you might call them arguments. Be thoughtful of explaining human emotion to someone you know has a problem even if they haven't told you about it yet. Sometimes people don't want to think others know of their problems. Whether you're right or wrong, they don't want to acknowledge anything you say. That could lead to words. At work you won't be seen as helpful if you promote this. At home you might be seen as starting a disagreement which your lover will surely have issues with. Virgo. Keep your opinions like cards, close to your vest.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your management abilities and healthy quick thought processes plus your capacity for understanding what makes others tick puts you on top of the boss's list today. Quick thinking is great but changing your mind at the drop of a hat isn't. That could give coworkers the wrong message. Do this, no do this, no back to the first "Do" item can have people running in circles. Be sure of what you instruct others to accomplish before setting it into motion. Also, watch your temper. Libra. Although it's unlike you to rage you could find yourself going there without what you consider good reason.



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

Work and being respected for your part in that work is what is sorely needed in your life now. It gives you reason to continue the career you're in now. Obstacles in your work life are quickly overcome and leave you with a sense of self-worth that's hard to beat. You need to be needed and you want to be wanted but you don't know how to go about getting those gifts easily. You don't want to ask but sometimes that's the only way people have of knowing your needs. Your secret side holds you back sometimes.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Though you're ready and willing to do the work that you're doing right now it seems that you're at a standstill trying to get people willing to listen to you. It's like herding cats. No one will cooperate. It's not that you can't explain items in an understandable manner. Your family and friends have told you how good you are at that. Still, you feel inadequate to get your point across at work today. When you're finished on the job try to do something that helps you with your confidence levels like have dinner with those who love and support you.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

At home you're distant from someone you love or thought you loved. You're not sharing as some might expect you to do and the reason you're not is because someone one in the household doesn't really want to hear your feelings, or so you think. You're in a sensitive mood and your lover might not understand your actions now. Capricorn. You don't want to share your thoughts and personal issues with that person now. At work you're able to understand and identify with coworkers giving them the benefit of your life's experience.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Taking the initiative at work today, you immediately upon arrival at work, start putting together the ideas you've worked on all weekend. Plus, you're gotten more ideas to assimilate into your plan also. Coworkers see the value of those ideas and rush to help. Realization is there that this can make everyone more money. Tonight, enjoy time with friends and family again. Expand your ability to get more work done by inviting workmates that you can communicate with for more ideas too. After all, work is at the top of your list now.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Thank goodness you're in the mood for work today after the last few. You've thought life through and you're capable of making good, intelligent work decisions. You have the carry through to make them work. Be careful at work though, because you might find yourself in the midst of an argument that gets emotional. That wouldn't be the best thing for you at any time but more so not now. Don't let another be in control of you or your work situation. Go home and make a light dinner then go walking just to eliminate some of the worktime stress.

Wordsearch Puzzle

70's Songs 1 - Word Search

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

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| ANGIE | ISLAND GIRL | OHIO |
| BETH CONVOY | LAST DANCE | RHIANNON |
| DELTA DAWN | LAYLA | ROXANNE |
| DREAM WEAVER | LE FREAK | SUMMER NIGHTS |
| FIRE AND RAIN | LOWDOWN | SUPERSTITION |
| FREE BIRD | MIRACLES | THE JOKER |
| HELP ME | MISS YOU | WATERLOO |
| | NIGHT MOVES | |

Yesterday's Solution

60's Songs 2 - Solution

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

- | | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| BLUE MOON | HAIR | SURF CITY |
| BUS STOP | HEY JUDE | THE BOXER |
| CHAIN GANG | LAST KISS | THESE EYES |
| CRAZY | MY GIRL | VOLARE |
| DIZZY | PEOPLE | WILD THING |
| EL PASO | RESPECT | WIPEOUT |
| FINGERTIPS | SHERRY | WORDS |
| GALVESTON | SPOOKY | |

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

Lifestyle

TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2019



A member of the "Salgueiro" samba school performs during the first night of Rio's Carnival at the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, early yesterday. — AFP

Making a splash at Malaysia's mermaid school

Wearing tails made of plastic fins covered by shimmering fabric, five women glided through a pool at a Malaysian centre that teaches people how to swim like mermaids. The academy, in the coastal town of Klang, southwest of Kuala Lumpur, is among several that have sprung up around the world to cater to the growing popularity of swimmers emulating the mythical creatures. The students—wearing bikini tops as well as their mermaid tails—circled underwater and did somersaults, all the time trying to keep their eyes open. "It's quite tough," said Koh Yi

Xuen, who is 27 and has been learning the special swimming technique for about three years. "We have to open our eyes in the water, and our legs are tied up."

Lee Boon Leong said he started offering the lessons at his swimming academy after a company approached him and asked to hire someone who could swim like a mermaid for a product launch. The school, which now has five instructors, has taught about 500 women to swim like mermaids. Lee said it is possible to learn the basics in about 16 hours of classes over three months. Mermaids, which have

the upper body and head of a woman and the tail of a fish, are creatures from folklore. The Disney animated classic "The Little Mermaid", based on the fairy tale by Danish author Hans Christian Andersen, spurred new interest in the creatures and the way they swim in recent years. — AFP



25-year-old Naomi Wong Jiag performing dolphin kicks wearing a mermaid tail.



This picture shows swimmers (from left) Teo Jia Yin, Chan Yushi, Naomi Wong Jiag, Koh Yi Xuen, and Teo Jia Qin posing wearing their mermaid tails before a swim in a pool in Klang, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. — AFP photos



Swimmers (From left) twin sisters Teo Jia Yin and Teo Jia Qin, Naomi Wong Jiag, Koh Yi Xuen and Chan Yushi performing, wearing mermaid tails, in a swimming pool in Klang, on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.



A blind violinist Abie Baker wears a wristband receiving the movement from a specially developed baton which turns them into vibrations.

'Haptic baton' offers new hope for blind musicians

A conductor's baton has been created that allows the visually-impaired to follow its movements, opening up the potential for blind people to join more orchestras. The 'Haptic Baton' contains sensors that pick up even slight motions. These are then transmitted via radio signals to vibrating devices attached to musicians' wrists or ankles. They vibrate and buzz in different ways to indicate to the player the pace and dynamics the conductor wants.

Violinist Abie Baker, who went blind as a child due to a cataract operation, said she was confident that with the device she could start playing her instrument at the same time as others. "In the past we've been reliant on hearing sounds around us. So I've been playing in a violin section and I've been reliant on hearing the other musicians putting up their instruments and then guessing roughly when to come in," she told Reuters. "So this is bril-

liant because there's no need to count in or anything. I can literally just feel a buzz or two and then know to come in and I can come in confidently knowing that it's right, which is amazing," she added. When playing as a soloist, blind pianist Kevin Satizabal said he has previously had to sit close to the conductor and listen for their breathing to know when to begin.

"But if you're in a big orchestra and you're miles from the conductor, that's going to be really, really difficult information to pick up and this technology essentially plugs you into the conductor's movements, which is really exciting," he said. "Orchestras won't have any excuse not to hire visually impaired musicians because the technology's right there allowing them to be an integral part," he added.

The Human Instruments device was developed by designer Vahagn Matossian. He was inspired by the 'Beat Buzz' baton which was created by his father, composer Rolf Gehlhaar, in 2017. The 'Haptic Baton' is a prototype being tested with musicians, including the The Paraorchestra and Friends. Its development is ongoing but Matossian hopes it will be available to rent or buy in 2020. — Reuters



Conductor Ewan Campbell uses a specially developed baton which opens up the orchestra to blind musicians, transmitting its movements to vibrating bands worn on violinist Abie Baker's wrist and pianist Kevin Satizabal's ankle in a studio in London.

Kings of Leon set for new festival Fusion Presents

Kings of Leon are set to play the inaugural Fusion Presents festival in Liverpool this summer. The 'Sex on Fire' hitmakers - who released the album 'WALLS' in 2016 - will play their only festival show of 2019 in the UK at the new event - which comes from the organisers of the popular Fusion Festival - on August 30 at Sefton Park. The Nashville rock band - who supported the Pixies at British Summertime Hyde Park last summer - will be joined at the one-day rock extravaganza by BRITs Critics' Choice winner Sam Fender and Franz Ferdinand, plus Liverpool's very own Circa Waves Echo & The Bunnymen. Event Director, Damien Sanders commented: "Liverpool is an iconic city, entrenched in music heritage and we've wanted to launch

a new event for the last couple of years. "The biggest challenge has been finding the right artist for the job. "We're over the moon that we were able to secure one of the world's most successful rock bands to launch Fusion Presents and we cannot wait to see them perform in our new home, Sefton Park." Fusion Festival was originally held at the seaside location of Otterspool Promenade, and 2018 saw pop acts including Fifth Harmony's Ally Brooke and the likes of The Vamps, Raye, Becky Hill, Yungen and Grace Carter perform. Tickets for Fusion Presents will be on sale from 9am on Friday.



Carrie Underwood announces UK arena tour

Carrie Underwood has announced a UK arena tour. The 35-year-old country pop star will play shows in Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow and Manchester, before wrapping the run in support of her latest LP 'Cry Pretty' with her biggest headline show at London's The SSE Arena, Wembley on July 4. Announcing the news by waving the Union Jack flag in a video on her Instagram account, she said: "Hey everybody, Carrie here. "I just wanted to check in and say that life is good and we are all getting very excited that the 'Cry Pretty Tour' is going to be starting soon in May. "I've got some news, we are coming to the UK at the end of June, bringing the 'Cry Pretty Tour' overseas and we are just super excited and we can't wait to see you guys there. Woohoo!" Carrie will be joined by UK country duo The Shires - comprised of Ben Earle and Crissie Rhodes - at the shows. The last time the 'Love Wins' singer played this side of the Atlantic was at C2C: Country to Country London in 2016. Whilst her last tour was the 'Blown Away Tour' in 2012, which included a date at London's Royal Albert Hall. Carrie - who gave birth to her second child with husband Mike Fisher, a son named Jacob, last month - returned to the stage in April last year after a nasty fall that saw her require 40 stitches. The award-winning star - who also has three-year-old Isaiah with her spouse - appeared at the American Country Music (ACM) Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas to perform her new single 'Cry Pretty'. She received a standing ovation from the star-studded audience, which included Nicole Kidman, Keith Urban, Gwen Stefani and Blake Shelton. The 'Before He Cheats' hitmaker injured herself badly when she fell on some steps at her home back in November, breaking her wrist - which was fitted with a titanium implant - and requiring over the extensive amount of stitches to her face. The singer kept a low profile as she recovered from the surgery, concealing her injuries from the cameras. However, Carrie reassured her fans that she was getting back to her usual self. In a newsletter posted to The Official Carrie Underwood Fan Club website, Carrie told her loyal fans at the time: "First off, physically, I'm doing pretty darn good these days! My wrist is almost back to normal, about 90% there ... and the docs say that last 10% will come in time. And my face has been healing pretty nicely as well. I definitely feel more like myself than I have in a while. One of the silver linings for me in this healing process is the time I've gotten to spend with Mike and Isaiah. I've been calling it "forced relaxation." Sometimes I think things happen in order to make us slow down. (sic)"

CHRISTINA AGUILERA ANNOUNCES FIRST UK TOUR IN OVER A DECADE

Christina Aguilera has announced her first UK tour in 13 years. The 'Beautiful' hitmaker will bring 'The X Tour' to Glasgow, London, Manchester and Birmingham in November, following her Las Vegas residency. The 38-year-old pop superstar will play all her hits - including 'Genie in a Bottle' and 'Fighter' - and songs from her most recent LP, 'Liberation'. The 'Dirty' star's last run on British soil was in 2006, on the 'Back to Basics Tour' in support of her album of the same name. Christina's 16-date 'Christina Aguilera: The Xperience' residency will kick off inside the Zappos Theater at Planet Hollywood on May 31, and the 'Stripped' hitmaker previously teased that she is creating a multi-sensory show with elements of "mother nature". She said: "This is the next chapter in something new, exciting, creative and epic for my fans. "I'm such a visual person and I've been acquiring all these inspirations. You know I love a theme and a concept and I'm creating a specific world for this show. "We are playing with elements of Mother Nature and visual effects. I'm excited where that takes us. I always like to get what they're feeling and thinking. We're going to touch on a

little bit of everything and make that into an amazing experience - which is the title of the show." Christina - who has son Max, 11, with first husband Jordan Bratman and four-year-old Summer with partner Matthew Rutler - wrapped her hugely-successful 'Liberation' tour last November, and the experience of getting back on the road inspired her new residency. She added: "Liberation' was such a success for me. The last time I had been on tour was when I was pregnant with my son [2007's Back to Basics]. And being such a mama bear and wanting to take care of my kids and all of that first it was a long time coming. "I want[ed] to get back to my fans and definitely [get] back to what my soul needed to do. "To be on that stage has always been my first love since I was a tiny little girl. The whole point of 'Liberation' was getting back in touch with myself, finding that love, being in my artist body again, finding my true self and identity on stage again. It was just like coming home. And I want to take that to Las Vegas." Tickets for Christina's 'The X Tour' UK dates go on sale on March 8 via LiveNation.co.uk



Mattel's Film Chief says Barbie movie will be 'positive'

The 'Barbie' film will have a "very positive" message for women and show what a great influence the iconic doll has been since her creation. Mattel Film Chief Robbie Brenner has said. Margot Robbie has been cast to play Mattel's most famous ever toy, who celebrates turning 60 this year, in the upcoming live-action film which will follow Barbie as she is expelled from Barbie Land for failing to live up to the expectations of its residents. Brenner accepts that some people will want to complain that a film is being created around Barbie, who has been criticized by some commentators for portraying unrealistic beauty standards and outdated gender roles, but the female executive insists critics are completely misunderstanding what Barbie stands for. When asked about the "inevitable backlash" surrounding the 'Barbie' movie, Brenner told The Hollywood Reporter: "Barbie is turning 60 this year. But if you go back to the root of Barbie and who created Mattel ... Ruth Handler created Barbie because she wanted her daughter to have something amazing to play with and her husband created Hot Wheels for their son. "[Barbie] was actually way ahead of her time if you go back and look at all of the amazing things that she did way beforehand. "Now she embodies what the world looks like today with all the different body types and ethnicities. It is a very inclusive and empowering doll, and that's what we want to come across. "For the people who want to hate and come down on it, they were going to do that anyway. The movie will be very positive." Ruth was inspired to create Barbie after watching her daughter Barbara playing with paper dolls as if they were adults. With the help of her husband Elliot - who worked for toy manufacturer Mattel - she developed and launched Barbie in 1959 and instantly had a hit on their hands which has lasted to this day. Despite criticism that Barbie promotes sexist gender stereotypes, the titular doll has held many jobs: in the 60s she was a nurse, a ballerina and became an astronaut, whilst in more recent years Barbie has been an architect, a teacher and video game developer. The 'Barbie' film will be produced through Margot's Lucky Champ production company, Mattel and Warner Bros. Pictures. 'Mary Queen of Scots'



star Margot, 28, has previously admitted it is an honor to portray the iconic toy who she believes has promoted empowerment and "self-discovery". She said: "Playing with Barbie promotes confidence, curiosity and communication throughout a child's journey to self-discovery. "Over the brand's almost 60 years, Barbie has empowered kids to imagine themselves in aspirational roles from a princess to president. I'm so honored to take on this role and produce a film that I believe will have a tremendously positive impact on children and audiences worldwide. I can't imagine better partners than Warner Bros. and Mattel to bring this film to the big screen."

Olivia Colman didn't prepare her Oscars speech

Olivia Colman didn't prepare her Oscars acceptance speech. The 42-year-old actress was hailed for her humorous and touching speech when she went on stage to collect her prize for Best Actress In A Leading Role for her portrayal of Queen Anne in 'The Favorite' at this year's Academy Awards, and has now revealed that none of her words were planned and when she stated it was "quite stressful" to win she meant it as she doesn't know how "anyone is composed" when collecting prizes. When asked how much of her speech was prepared, she told OK! magazine: "None of it. I've just been told I forgot [to thank] Melissa [McCarthy] and Yalitza [Aparicio] as well, but you know it's not an everyday occurrence. I don't know how anyone is composed and remembers everything because it's a very weird situation." Olivia was overwhelmed with emotion and appeared stunned as she picked up the accolade at Los Angeles' Dolby Theatre in front of the star-studded crowd. Talking to the stage, she said: "It's genuinely quite stressful. This is hilarious. I've got an Oscar. If I forget anybody, I'll find you later and give you a massive snog but I'm sorry." Olivia - who has three children with husband Ed Sinclair - tried to thank her parents but the emotion grew too much. She said: "My mum and my dad... you know. "My kids who are home and watching. Well, if you're not, well done but I sort of hope you are, this is not going to happen again."



Larson didn't feel any pressure playing Captain Marvel

Brie Larson didn't feel any pressure playing Carol Danvers in 'Captain Marvel'. The 29-year-old actress is portraying the titular superhero in the first female-led standalone film Marvel Cinematic Universe movie but she insists she didn't feel any responsibility whilst shooting the movie to guarantee it be a box office success as she just wanted to do the "best job she could" on set. In an interview with The I Paper, she said: "I don't know if I'm crazy, because so many people have been like, 'You must feel pressure, you must feel responsibility?' And I'm like, 'I don't, is that bad?' "I just don't think that it's helpful to me or helpful to this story or helpful to the work to feel that way. For me it's just like

I really love this character, I love Carol, and I think there is a lot of value in it. "I just wanted to focus on the best job I could do, and I know especially with a movie this big it seems like it's like this public thing - but when you're on set it's super private so that is how it felt, it felt like we were making a small movie." The 'Room' star undertook nine months of intense physical training to prepare for the role, at the end of which she could deadlift 225 pounds, and she admits before the regime started she never believed she could train so hard for so long. She said: "My goal was just to train really hard for nine months and see what happened, and I didn't even think it was possible for me. "And the reason why I did it was basically for this, for these moments, for these conversations, when we are discussing what it feels like or what it looks like to be a female, a self-identified female, and be strong." Larson stars in the film with Djimon Hounsou, Jude Law, Ben Mendelsohn and Samuel L. Jackson.

Lifestyle | Fashion

Founder of Ted Baker fashion house quits over harassment claims

Ray Kelvin, the founder of British fashion brand Ted Baker, resigned as its chief executive yesterday following allegations of harassment. Kelvin stepped down "in the best interests of the company", executive chairman David Bernstein said. Kelvin was forced to take a leave of absence last year after claims that he enforced a "hugging" culture, massaged employees, kissed their ears and asked some to sit on his lap. Kelvin founded his first store in Glasgow in 1988. Ted Baker had 544 stores in August 2018, with 201 in Britain, 110 in Europe and 108 in North America.

Kelvin, who denies allegations of misconduct, said stepping away was the "right thing to do". "The past few months have been deeply distressing and I'll now be taking time privately with my family to consider what my next adventure will be. Bye for now," he said. The allegations against him first surfaced in a petition against him. Two employees, who did not wish to be identified, spoke to BBC radio. "There was nothing inherently wrong with the actual hugs, but the uncomfortableness came from what tended to accompany them: unwanted personal comments, kisses on the cheek, neck stroking," said a male staff member.

'New leadership'

A female worker said the hugs could go on for 40 seconds and he would whisper in people's ears. "He would go in for a hug, regardless of any apparent desire from those he was hugging," she said. "Kissing necks, massaging people's ears. This would happen every day if he was in a good mood." An internal independent committee has been investigating the allegations alongside a law firm. The company is on the FTSE 250 stock exchange. Its shares were up 0.85 percent shortly after 0900 GMT. Bernstein said: "Ray Kelvin founded the business 32 years ago and has, together with the fantastic team around him, been the driving force behind

it becoming the global brand it is today.

"However, in light of the allegations made against him, Ray has decided that it is in the best interests of the company for him to resign so that the business can move forward under new leadership." The shockwaves of the MeToo movement started to hit British business last year. A series of very public sackings, suspensions and departures suggested that Britain's finance world was waking up to the toxic implications of sexual harassment and workplace bullying. — AFP



Models present creations by Stella McCartney during the Fall-Winter 2019/2020 Ready-to-Wear collection fashion show in Paris, yesterday. — AFP photos



Kuwaiti artist celebrates 50 years of diplomatic relations with Albania



On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the diplomatic relations between the state of Kuwait and the Republic of Albania, the Kuwait photographic pictures exhibition was opened earlier in the Albanian Capital Tirana, reflecting the beauty of the smiles and generous hospitality of the Albanian people by Kuwaiti artist Ibtisam Nasser Al-Houti, wife of Kuwaiti Ambassador to Albania Favez Mushari Al-Jasim.

The exhibition was held at the Albanian National Historic Museum under the slogan "Albanian Hospitality's Bright Smile". The opening ceremony was attended by government representatives and heads of diplomatic missions and a large number of artists. Artist Ibtisam Al-Houti lauded the Albanian peaceful people who preserve family ties and co-live with all groups of

the society in a natural harmony with love and respect for others.

She said "I wanted to express the feelings of love and gratitude to this loving society that loves its guests, which made my stay with them among the best days that carry unforgettable memories. Albania, despite its small area, is rich with historic landmarks of successive civilizations, which reflects the heritage and importance of this place".

The exhibition included 42 photographs taken by Artist Al-Houti with her camera in six Albanian cities, showing the hospitality of the people, customs and traditions, as well as showing popular costumes and food that is unique to each area.



Baristas behind bars: UK prisoners swap crime for coffee

Every morning, the whirr of an industrial-scale coffee roaster and the sharp hiss of a milk frother can be heard as customers queue to get their caffeine fix at a most unusual spot: inside one of Britain's toughest young offenders prisons. Staffed by prisoners aged 18 to 21, the Redemption Roasters cafe inside Aylesbury prison, about 50 miles (80 km) northwest of London, trains inmates with specialty coffee skills in a bid to help them to find jobs upon release.

The small-scale coffee company is part of a growing number of businesses globally that aim to have a positive social impact while turning a profit. For 20-year-old Vince, whose real name could not be identified, being productive and learning new skills instead of sitting idly in a cell means his years in jail have not been squandered. "It's quite useful for my mentality knowing that two years hasn't just been wasted and that I can actually improve myself whilst being in here," said Vince, who is due for release next January.

"Everyone (working in the cafe) has the same goals. They do want to go out and live a crime-free life. Being around people like that is much better for your mental health," he added. With about 4,000 men aged 18-20 in prison in the U.K. last year, according to official statistics, helping them find meaningful and stable work when they leave custody is a key priority, the justice ministry says. About one in three adult prisoners commit a crime within a year of their release, government data shows, costing the country roughly 15 billion pounds (\$19 billion) annually.

Reoffending

Laura Sapwell, governor of Aylesbury prison, said the institution has more than



A 20-year-old male prisoner makes coffee inside Aylesbury prison where specialty coffee company Redemption Roasters is training him with industry-level skills so they can work in the coffee sector upon release, Aylesbury, United Kingdom. — Reuters

400 young men. Almost 70 are serving life sentences. "A large proportion of our men arrive at Aylesbury without having had a job in the past," Sapwell told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Our aim here is to give those men who are going to be released from Aylesbury the best possible opportunity to get work and accommodation and all the other things that we know reduce their risk of re-offending in the future," she said.

Yet across Britain's prison system the record is poor. Sixty percent of prisons fail to get inmates into education or training placements, even when there were spaces available, according to a 2018 report by the prison watchdog. The Inspectorate of Prisons, which scrutinizes the condition of prisons across England and Wales, reported that many inmates felt frustrated for not

being able to leave their cells to do purposeful activities in the day, which led to violence.

Sitting around

It is a problem that Redemption Roasters, one of the most popular work placements at Aylesbury, aims to tackle. "If they don't have a workshop placement in a prison, they just sit around, they're just locked up," said co-founder Max Dubiel, whose team also runs shorter courses at other prisons. "And that's not a great place to be psychologically, but also not great to prepare you for life on the outside," he said.

Redemption Roasters - which invests profits from its London cafes and beans back into the prison scheme - trains 10 Aylesbury inmates at a time with barista,

coffee roasting, customer service and food hygiene skills for up to a year. Its coffee roaster, the first of its kind inside a British prison, is used to produce a special 'Aylesbury' blend of beans that is sold across the country. "The more coffee we sell, the more trainees we train about coffee, the more training academies we can open and the more skills we can bring across," said Dubiel.

Back on track

Redemption Roasters wants more businesses to consider hiring ex-offenders, and has since employed three former inmates, including 23-year-old Mohammed, who left prison last October and now works full-time in one of its London cafes. Mohammed, who declined to reveal his real name, said unrealistic expectations of what life would be on the outside, or the enticements of a life of crime, such as money, could lead people back to jail. "You're in such a negative place and then you're looking forward to coming out (of prison) and if you can't get into employment and you're not earning money, it could be a lot for you to handle," he said.

Mohammed said he was grateful to be given a second chance but said there were many others like him who wanted to move on from their past and start afresh. "If you can give someone an opportunity to get into employment ... then you definitely should because you'll be changing their life," he said. "I'm not saying that everyone's a good person but there's definitely people out there that want to get their life back on track and be normal civilians," he added. — Reuters

The Prodigy singer Keith Flint dead at 49



In this file photo taken Keith Flint of The Prodigy, performs at the 10th annual Incheon Pentaport Rock Festival in Incheon, west of Seoul on August 9, 2015. — AFP

Keith Flint, the singer and iconic frontman of British rave scene band The Prodigy, has died at the age of 49, the electronic pop group said. Police said they were not treating the death as suspicious after finding his body yesterday in Essex, northeast of London. "We attended and, sadly, a 49-year-old man was pronounced dead at the scene. His next of kin have been informed," Essex Police told AFP. "The death is not being treated as suspicious and a file will be prepared for the coroner." The Prodigy issued a statement calling Flint a "true pioneer, innovator and legend", Britain's domestic Press Association news agency reported.

Heavily tattooed and topped with a bleached mohawk, Flint helped turn The Prodigy into one of the most influential groups to emerge from the underground rave scene. Their biggest hits included "Firestarter" and "Smack My B**h Up", which merged intense dance beats with punk elements. "There was a real determination for it to have zero compromise," Flint told AFP in 2015. "There really needed to be an antidote to the DJ scene, which made it quite brutal." — AFP

British royals appeal for online kindness after trolling of Kate and Meghan

Britain's royals unveiled a new protocol yesterday for users of their social media channels, asking for kindness and warning of possible police action following a rise in abusive comments, often aimed at Prince Harry's pregnant wife Meghan. Abusive and even threatening remarks have become commonplace on the comment sections and Twitter feeds of the royal family, with Kate and Meghan, the wives of Queen Elizabeth's grandsons Prince William and Harry, particular targets.



File photo shows Prince Harry and his wife Meghan, Duke & Duchess of Sussex, visit the Kasbah of the Udayas near the Moroccan capital Rabat. — AFP

Unveiling their "Social Media Community Guidelines", Buckingham Palace, Clarence House and Kensington Palace - the offices for the queen, her son and heir Prince Charles, and William and Harry - outlined what behavior they expected from users of their channels. "We ask that anyone engaging with our social media channels shows courtesy, kindness and respect for all other members of our social media communities," the guidelines said.

They stated that comments must not be defamatory, obscene, threatening, or abusive; be discriminatory in any way; be "off-topic, irrelevant or unintelligible" or contain advertising. The protocol said royal officials would determine whether the guidelines

had been breached and anyone who did so would be blocked or have their comments hidden or deleted. "We also reserve the right to send any comments we deem appropriate to law enforcement authorities for investigation as we feel necessary or is required by law," it said. Some 3.87 million accounts follow the Royal Family's Twitter feed and another 1.69 follow that of Kensington Palace as the House of Windsor seeks to reach out directly to royal fans and showcase its work, with the overwhelming number of messages supportive.

However, while the palaces gave no explanation as to why they had issued the guidance now, there has been rising abuse of Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, and Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, since the former U.S. actress married Harry last May.

A source from Kensington Palace told Hello! magazine, which launched a campaign in January to end the online abuse, that officials were spending hours each week addressing sexist and racist comments aimed at the duchesses. These included a number of violent threats while there have also been vicious online rows between rival supporters of the two royals, and even those who report on their activities.

"It is not just the royal princesses who are being trolled, every royal journalist, every royal correspondent is being trolled as well," royal biographer Claudia Joseph told Reuters. "People see their opinions as valid and I don't think they totally understand journalists do research, that the royals have a job to do." Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York and ex-wife of the queen's second son Prince Andrew, called on social media firms to do more following the Hello! Campaign, saying it was not a matter of free speech. "Much of social media has become a sewer," she said on Twitter last month. "Tech firms need to do much more to take a stand against online abuse, rather than shrugging their shoulders." — Reuters

Samba schools ready to roll for giant Rio Carnival

Thousands of dancers from Rio de Janeiro's elite samba schools were set Sunday to roll out their traditional parades of feathers and sequins-combined with a large dose of social and political commentary-as the main business of the giant annual Carnival gets under way. It's the first Carnival since the election of President Jair Bolsonaro, the far-right leader who rode a wave of support from conservatives and evangelical religious groups-who hold a dim view of the Carnival's excesses-into office last year.

In total, 14 samba schools from the elite so-called "special group" will parade at the packed purpose-built stadium known as the Sambodrome, to compete for the prestigious Carnival title. Each school, featuring up to 4,000 shimmering dancers, elaborate giant floats and deafening percussion, will take 75 minutes to parade down the 700 meters (yards) Sambodrome track. The Carnival formally kicked off Friday with the traditional symbolic passing of a key to the city to the festival-leading "King Momo" character-unleashing giant street parties known as "blocos" in Rio, Sao Paulo and across Brazil.

One of Sunday's most anticipated groups is current champions Beija-Flor, which triumphed last year with spectacular, hard-hitting floats depicting violence and corruption in Brazil.



This year, the school will tell the story of its 70 years in existence under the theme "The Fables of Beija-Flor". The parades begin at 9:15 pm (0015 GMT) and last well into the early hours of the next morning. The two biggest schools, Portela and Mangueira, are among those participated yesterday.

Portela's parade will pay tribute to Brazilian singer Clara Nunes, an icon of the 1970s and the first artist of her time to publicly defend Afro-Brazilian religions. A section of their parade will feature dancers in costumes designed by French designer Jean-Paul Gaultier. The other major school, Mangueira, will perform what its artistic director Leandro



Viera calls the "B-side" of Brazilian history, with a parade extolling the heroes and heroines of the country's long-sided black, indigenous and poor populations.

The troupe will also honor black city councilor Marielle Franco, a respected and outspoken defender of human rights in the slums of Rio, who was shot dead in March of last year. Authorities expect seven million people-including one and a half million Brazilian and foreign tourists-to participate in this gigantic outdoor party. — AFP



Members of the Beija-Flor samba school perform during the first night of Rio's Carnival at the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil yesterday. — AFP photos



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Tuesday, March 5, 2019

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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Warm with light to moderate variable wind to south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate south easterly wind to light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h.

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 04/03/2019 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	23 °C	13 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	24 °C	06 °C		
ABDALY	25 °C	08 °C		
BUBYAN	-- °C	-- °C		
JAHRA	25 °C	10 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	22 °C	12 °C		
SALMIYAH	21 °C	15 °C		
AHMADI	21 °C	14 °C		
NUWAISIB	24 °C	10 °C		
WAFRA	25 °C	07 °C		
SALMY	22 °C	07 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Tuesday	03/05	Warm	25 °C	07 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h
Wednesday	03/06	Warm and Partly cloudy with a chance for scattered light rain	24 °C	11 °C	SE-NE	15 - 40 km/h
Thursday	03/07	Warm	24 °C	10 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Friday	03/08	Warm and Clouds will increase gradually with a chance for rain that might be thundery later on	26 °C	08 °C	S-NW	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	04:52
Sunrise	06:11
Zuhr	12:00
Asr	15:20
Sunset	17:49
Isha	19:06

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	22 °C
MIN. Temp.	05 °C
MAX. RH	83 %
MIN. RH	20 %
MAX. Wind	W 32 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	0 mm

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

REQUIRED Executive Secretary (Female)

- Should be graduate
- Fluent in English Language
- Knowledge of Computer Skills.
- Short Hand typing.

Work requirement

Good Communication, Banking LC's and Correspondence

Send CV's to Email:

yazco_22@yahoo.com

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Shaik Masthan Basha, holder of Indian Passport No. L7719785 and Civil ID No. 291031002941 has changed my name from Dudekula Masthan Basha to Shaik Masthan Basha hereinafter in all my dealings and docu-

ments, I will be known by name of Shaik Masthan Basha. (C 5449) 4-3-2019

EMERGENCY 112

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

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 5/3/2019					Departure Flights on Tuesday 5/3/2019				
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time		Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	
JZR	254	Amman	00:05	MSR	610	Cairo	13:10	KAC	545
JAI	572	Mumbai	00:15	AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:15	JZR	113
THY	766	ISL	00:30	QTR	1078	Doha	13:35	SAW	702
JZR	734	Cairo	00:50	KAC	672	Dubai	14:00	MSC	412
THY	772	Istanbul	00:50	KAC	286	Dubai	14:20	JZR	611
JZR	722	Alexandria	00:55	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	JZR	123
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:00	KAC	618	Doha	14:40	MSR	611
KAC	102	London	01:20	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:45	UAE	872
DLH	625	Dammam	01:25	KAC	692	Muscat	14:55	AXB	394
RJA	642	Amman	01:35	KNE	529	Jeddah	15:05	QTR	1079
UAE	853	Dubai	01:45	KAC	788	Jeddah	15:10	FDB	060
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	GFA	222
IGO	1757	Kochi	01:55	FEW	441	Asyut	15:25	KAC	673
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:15	JZR	222	Riyadh	15:30	SVA	501
KLM	446	Bahrain	02:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	KAC	775
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KAC	562	Amman	15:35	KAC	743
QTR	1086	Doha	02:40	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	KNE	530
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	JZR	732	Cairo	15:50	KAC	615
JZR	1736	Cairo	03:00	SYR	341	Damascus	16:00	KAC	619
MSR	612	Cairo	03:05	JZR	152	Mashhad	16:00	KAC	563
RBG	211	Luxor	03:05	ABY	127	Sharjah	16:05	ETD	304
KKK	1268	Istanbul	03:05	KAC	118	New York	16:05	FEW	342
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	KAC	516	Tehran	16:20	OMA	646
MSR	606	Luxor	03:10	JZR	212	Jeddah	16:25	KAC	785
QTR	1076	Doha	04:00	KAC	502	Beirut	16:30	ABY	128
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	542	Cairo	16:30	JZR	105
KAC	414	Bangkok	04:00	QTR	1072	Doha	16:35	SYR	342
IGO	1751	Chennai	04:10	FDB	051	Dubai	16:40	FDB	052
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	JZR	114	Doha	16:40	KAC	283
UAE	873	Dubai	04:55	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:10	UAE	858
FDB	069	Dubai	05:00	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:15	QTR	1073
KAC	382	Delhi	05:05	JZR	214	Jeddah	17:30	KAC	331
THY	770	Istanbul	05:10	UAE	875	Dubai	17:45	KAC	343
JZR	404	Hyderabad	05:10	FDB	063	Dubai	18:00	JZR	733
KAC	1544	Cairo	05:10	JZR	124	Dubai	18:15	JZR	771
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	QTR	1080	Doha	18:20	THY	771
JZR	112	Doha	05:25	MSR	2620	Cairo	18:30	KAC	623
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	05:30	RJA	640	Amman	18:30	UAE	874
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:40	KAC	744	Dammam	19:00	KAC	167
JZR	402	Mumbai	06:05	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:00	RJA	643
KAC	284	Dhaka	06:10	RBG	555	Alexandria	19:25	GFA	212
KAC	362	Colombo	06:10	NIA	0161	Cairo	19:25	JZR	115
KAC	302	Mumbai	06:25	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	KAC	171
THY	6376	Istanbul	06:30	KAC	616	Bahrain	19:30	KAC	165
KAC	678	Dubai	06:55	KAC	156	Istanbul	19:30	THY	6376
BAW	157	London	07:05	JZR	612	Tbilisi	19:40	FEW	442
KAC	204	Lahore	07:10	KAC	776	Riyadh	19:50	FDB	054
JZR	708	Luxor	07:15	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	KAC	501
KAC	358	Kochi	07:35	JZR	106	Bahrain	20:00	KAC	787
KAC	354	Bengaluru	07:35	KAC	166	Rome	20:10	KAC	613
FEW	241	Alexandria	07:40	KAC	620	Doha	20:15	JZR	731
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	OMA	647	Muscat	20:20	BAW	156
KAC	384	Delhi	08:00	KAC	546	Cairo	20:30	KAC	691
KAC	304	Mumbai	08:20	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35	JZR	141
UAE	855	Dubai	08:35	KAC	674	Dubai	20:35	KAC	541
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	DLH	624	Frankfurt	20:45	KAC	561
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KAC	172	Frankfurt	21:15	KAC	741
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	ABY	126
IRA	675	Lar	09:40	ALK	229	Colombo	21:20	KAC	671
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	MEA	402	Beirut	21:20	KAC	101
IGO	1753	Ahmedabad	09:40	KAC	168	Paris	21:30	JZR	151
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	UAE	859	Dubai	21:35	UAE	856
JZR	410	Delhi	10:00	GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45	KAC	773
IRC	6507	Shiraz	10:30	KLM	445	Amsterdam	21:50	ETD	302
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	564	Amman	21:55	KAC	617
KAC	624	Doha	10:40	JAI	574	Mumbai	22:00	FDB	056
JZR	116	Doha	11:10	QTR	1082	Doha	22:05	JZR	211
JZR	122	Dubai	11:10	ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15	IGO	1754
QTR	1074	Doha	11:35	AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25	IRA	674
JZR	216	Jeddah	11:45	RBG	213	Sohag	22:30	KAC	155
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	786	Jeddah	22:45	QTR	1071
KAC	614	Bahrain	12:25	BBC	043	Dhaka	23:00	SVA	513
MSC	411	Asyut	12:30	ETH	3711	LGG	23:00	KAC	117
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	MSC	501	Alexandria	23:05	KAC	515
JZR	714	Sohag	12:35	JZR	128	Dubai	23:15	JZR	213
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	MSC	405	Sohag	23:30	JZR	221
KAC	742	Dammam	12:50	JZR	254	Amman	23:40	MEA	405
JZR	142	Al Najaf	12:50	FDB	071	Dubai	23:45	QTR	1075



Smoke and fire billow after shelling on the Islamic State group's last holdout of Baghouz in the eastern Syrian Deir Ezzor province on Sunday. — AFP

Philippines seizes 1,500 rare turtles

MANILA: Some 1,500 live exotic turtles - some restrained with duct-tape - have been found inside an airline passenger's luggage, Philippines authorities said yesterday, as they vowed a crackdown on the lucrative wildlife trade. The Philippines is a major source and transit point of wildlife trafficking, according to a 2018 report by the US State Department. The turtles and tortoises were found at Manila airport on Sunday in the luggage of a Filipino passenger, who had arrived from Hong Kong, hidden among clothes and shoes.

The person fled before authorities could confront him, customs officials said. "We saw the images from the x-ray (machine)," Manila airport customs chief Carmelita Talusan told AFP. "We never expected it would reach as

many as 1,530," Talusan said. "Our staff were taking care not to hurt them because duct tape was used to immobilise the turtles." Talusan said the matter was under investigation and authorities had identified the passenger, who could face charges of violating the nation's illegal wildlife trading law, which carry a maximum two years in prison.

The turtles seized were estimated to be worth 4.5 million pesos (\$87,000), the customs bureau said. Among the animals found were the Indian Star Tortoise, classified as "vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The turtles confiscated on Sunday were likely destined to be sold in the Philippines or smuggled to other countries using false documents, environment officials said.

"It's for business purposes. Those turtles are expensive. It's such a lucrative business. There are buyers and collectors who treat them as pets," environment undersecretary Benny Antiporda told AFP. "We are stepping up our all-out drive against the black market of endangered species." Antiporda added the Philippines would ask Chinese authorities whether they wanted to take back the confiscated turtles which were being quarantined and treated in Manila.

Sunday's haul was the latest in a series of seizures of smuggled wildlife at the capital's airport. More than 50 iguanas were discovered in the luggage of a passenger from Bangkok last month, with some of the animals hidden in water bottles and socks, Talusan said. — AFP



MANILA: This undated handout photo received yesterday shows turtles found inside a suitcase covered with duct tape. — AFP

US downgrades its Palestinian...

Continued from Page 1

where a new Palestinian affairs unit will operate. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says the move will not constitute a change in policy and is intended to improve "efficiency and effectiveness". The State Department said yesterday that "the administration remains fully committed to efforts to achieve a lasting and comprehensive peace that offers a brighter future to Israel and the Palestinians".

But the change means Washington's relations with the Palestinians will now fall under the authority of US ambassador to Israel David Friedman, who has been a supporter of Israeli settlement building in the occupied West Bank. Palestinians view him - along with Trump's administration - as blatantly biased in favor of Israel. Palestinian leaders froze contact with the White House after Trump's 2017 decision recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and castigated the consulate closure.

Saeb Erekat, Palestine Liberation Organization secretary general, called the closure "the last nail in the coffin of the US administration's role in peacemaking". Senior Palestinian official Hanan Ashrawi said "the Trump administration is intent on leaving no room for doubt about its hostility towards the Palestinian people and their inalienable rights as well as its abject disregard for international law and its obligations under the law". Israeli officials had not commented on the move yesterday.

At the ornate consulate on Agron Street in downtown Jerusalem, the flag ceremony was kept low key under grey winter skies. Friedman, who helped spearhead May's relocation of the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to a different converted consular building in south Jerusalem, was not present. US officials said the Stars and Stripes

banner was taken down and presented to departing consul Karen Sasahara as a farewell gift, in keeping with foreign service custom, after which another US flag was run up. "Our work and our team will continue to work on reaching peace in this land," Sasahara said on YouTube.

The State Department has not confirmed reports that the consul general's residence in Jerusalem will eventually become the home for the US ambassador as part of the embassy's move to the disputed city, which occurred last May. Located near Jerusalem's Old City, it has been the home of the consul general since 1912, while the US permanent diplomatic presence in the city was established in 1857.

Trump, who is expected to release his long-awaited peace plan in the coming months, has also cut more than \$500 million in Palestinian aid in a bid to force Palestinian leaders to negotiate. Palestinian leaders call it an attempt to blackmail them into accepting a plan that they believe will destroy their hopes for independent statehood. Trump's decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem broke with decades of international consensus that the status of the city must first be decided upon through negotiations by Israel and the Palestinians.

Israel occupied mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War and later annexed it in a move never recognized by the international community. It sees the entire city as its capital, while the Palestinians view the eastern sector - where key holy sites for Christians, Muslims and Jews are located - as the capital of their future state. The consulate closure comes amid growing warnings over diminishing possibilities for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israeli settlement construction approvals in the West Bank on land the Palestinians consider part of their future state has accelerated since Trump took office. Trump has been far less critical of settlement construction than Barack Obama's White House. The White House is expected to unveil its plan for what Trump calls the "ultimate deal" - Israeli-Palestinian peace - sometime after Israel's April 9 elections. — Agencies

denied any such violations.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet yesterday decided to return the citizenship of Saad Al-Ajmi, which was revoked about four years ago when the government revoked the citizenship of several opposition activists. The government has so far returned the citizenship of several of these people but others have not yet been returned.

In the meantime, opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani yesterday reiterated his threat that he would use all available constitutional tools against the government if authorities do not refer a suspected bribery and money laundering case involving MPs and businessmen to the public prosecution. Adasani said in a statement that he will continue to pursue this issue, which involves using millions of dinars to inflate the bank accounts of some MPs and businessmen. He said he will use constitutional tools - a reference to grilling - if the government fails to take proper action or takes a long time to do so.

Award-winning Egypt journalist...

Continued from Page 1

He was detained in Aug 2013 while covering clashes between security forces and supporters of ousted Islamist president Mohamed Morsi that turned into a bloodbath in which hundreds of demonstrators died. "We were arrested in the first 30-40 minutes (after the clashes started). We were stripped of our equipment," he said. "The others were released two hours later ... I left my home to take photos and I didn't return for five and half years."

Shawkan was put on trial along with 739 defendants, most of them charged with killing police and vandalizing property. It was one of the largest mass trials since the 2011 uprising that toppled veteran president Hosni Mubarak. In September an Egyptian court upheld death sentences against 75 defendants and gave Shawkan a five-year jail term - which covered the time he had already served - but he remained

in jail awaiting his release.

Shawkan was accused of "murder and membership of a terrorist organization" - charges that can carry the death penalty - sparking condemnation from international rights groups which demanded his release. Amnesty International said at the time he had been convicted "simply for doing his job as a photojournalist and documenting the police brutality that took place that day". Amnesty hailed his release but denounced "the ludicrous probation measures" which will require him to spend the night at a police station for the next five years. Another 214 people who were sentenced in September to five years in prison were freed from prison yesterday.

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, a former army chief, was elected in 2014 nearly a year after leading the military's overthrow of Morsi following mass protests against the Islamist's year-long rule. Sisi, who critics say has carried out a widespread crackdown on dissent, was re-elected in March 2018 after securing more than 97 percent of the vote in the absence of any serious competition. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) ranks Egypt 161st out of 180 countries on its press freedom index. More than 30 journalists are still in prison in Egypt according to the rights group. — AFP

Tornadoes kill 23 in Alabama...

Continued from Page 1

HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday sent a cable of condolences to US President Donald Trump. In his cable, the Amir expressed his sincere condolences to the victims of the tornadoes that struck Alabama and resulted in the deaths of dozens of people and destruction of public facilities, wishing mercy to the deceased and swift recovery to the injured. Cables of similar sentiments were sent by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Trump.

Search operations for those still missing had to be halted on Sunday night due to hazardous conditions, but were renewed yesterday morning with agencies from across the state and from neighboring Georgia joining the hunt. The swath of destruction left was a quarter mile wide and stretched for the "several miles that it traveled on the ground," according to Jones.

The powerful winds picked up a billboard from the Lee County Flea Market in Alabama and dumped it some 20 miles away, across the state line in Georgia, local media reported. More than 6,000 homes were left without power in Alabama, according to PowerOutage.US, while 16,000 suffered outages in neighboring Georgia. The search for missing people was focused in the area around Beauregard, about 95

km east of the state capital Montgomery.

While the heavy rains that accompanied the high winds had relented overnight, many roads in the worst-hit areas were blocked by debris, hindering search efforts. Residents in the town of Smith Station told local TV news crews of their shock at turning up to work to find their businesses destroyed, and seeing crying co-workers comforting one another. One bar in the town appeared to have lost its roof and most of its walls, in images screened by MSNBC, while a cell tower was completely destroyed.

"My sister and niece have been under tornado watch and warnings all day in Montgomery ... Prayers up for Alabama," Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Ava Duvernay tweeted Sunday. Trump expressed his condolences to those affected and said on Twitter that the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, "has been told directly by me to give the A Plus treatment to the Great State of Alabama and the wonderful people who have been so devastated by the Tornadoes."

The National Weather Service (NWS) had issued a tornado warning for areas including Lee County on Sunday, calling on residents to "TAKE COVER NOW! Move to a basement or an interior room on the lowest floor of a sturdy building. Avoid windows." The warning for the first twister was issued at 2:58 pm, the NWS said. The warning for the second came less than an hour later, at 3:38 pm. NWS Birmingham said the first tornado to hit was "at least an EF-3 & at least 1/2 mi wide." The EF-3 designation - on a scale of 0 to 5 - means the tornado had winds of 218 to 266 km per hour. Around a dozen tornadoes were reported to have touched down in Alabama and Georgia in the course of the day, CNN reported. — Agencies

Panel increases annual leave...

Continued from Page 1

Opposition MPs Mubarak Al-Hajraf and Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei yesterday decided to file a joint grilling against Commerce and Industry Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan over alleged violations. The two lawmakers signed the grilling request and went to the speaker's office to file it, but couldn't do so before the end of the day's working hours, as the speaker was at a meeting with HH the Amir. As a result, they decided to file the grilling today so as it can be debated two weeks later. Several MPs had warned Roudhan over alleged violations and had threatened to file to grill him. He has

Sports

Brett Gardner, Judge power Yankees past Tigers 7-1

Host Cubs win battle of Chicago teams in Mesa

FLORIDA: Brett Gardner and Aaron Judge each hit two homers as host New York notched a 7-1 victory over Detroit on Sunday at Tampa, Fla. Gardner and Judge hit back-to-back homers off Tigers left-hander Daniel Norris to start the bottom of the first. Gardner hit a second solo blast off Norris in the second inning while Judge hit a two-run shot off right-hander Spencer Turnbull in the fifth. Detroit pitchers served up six homers overall as Gary Sanchez and Isiah Gilliam also went deep. The lone run for the Tigers was courtesy of Ronny Rodriguez's fifth-inning blast.

ANGELS 4, ATHLETICS 1
Albert Pujols went 3-for-3 with a homer and Mike Trout hit a two-run shot as Los Angeles beat visiting Oakland at Tempe, Ariz. Luis Barrera's run-scoring double accounted for the Athletics' tally.

CUBS 13, WHITE SOX 4
Kris Bryant homered and had three RBIs and right-hander Yu Darvish pitched two hitless innings as the host Cubs won the battle of Chicago teams in Mesa, Ariz. Jose Abreu, Adam Engel and Danny Mendick homered for the White Sox.

ROCKIES 9, GIANTS 3
Pat Valaika homered twice and Nolan Arenado added a two-run blast as host Colorado knocked off San Francisco at Scottsdale, Ariz. The Giants had 12 hits but left 10 runners on base.

REDS 11, BREWERS 5
Derek Dietrich homered and drove in four runs to help Cincinnati cruise to the victory over host Milwaukee at Phoenix. Reigning National League MVP Christian Yelich hit his first homer of the spring for the Brewers.

NATIONALS 4, ASTROS 2
Trea Turner drove in three runs and also scored on Brian Dozier's single as host Washington defeated Houston at West Palm Beach, Fla. Astros right-hander

Gerrit Cole struck out three and walked one during two hitless innings.

ROYALS 13, INDIANS 7
Chris Owings hit a grand slam to cap an eight-run sixth inning to help visiting Kansas City knock off Cleveland at Goodyear, Ariz. Leonys Martin and Carlos Santana went deep for the Indians.

RANGERS (SS) 11, PADRES 3
Rougned Odor slugged a two-run homer to cap an eight-run third inning as Texas routed visiting San Diego at Surprise, Ariz. Buddy Reed stole his fifth base of the spring for the Padres.

BLUE JAYS 5, YANKEES (SS) 2
Billy McKinney and Rowdy Tellez each hit homers as Toronto defeated visiting New York at Dunedin, Fla. Luke Voit homered for the Yankees.

RAYS 10, PIRATES 4
Avisail Garcia homered and drove in four runs to lead Tampa Bay past host Pittsburgh at Bradenton, Fla. Joey Wendle also went deep for the Rays while Pablo Reyes homered for the Pirates.

BRAVES 6, MARLINS 5
Andres Blanco drilled a one-out homer in the bottom of the ninth inning as Atlanta edged Miami at Kissimmee, Fla. Adam Duvall hit two of the Braves' five homers while Deven Marrero had a two-run single for the Marlins.

DODGERS 6, RANGERS (SS) 3
Austin Barnes drove in three runs and Alex Verdugo had a two-run double as host Los Angeles defeated Texas at Glendale, Ariz. Matt Davidson hit a two-run homer for the Rangers.

METS 10, CARDINALS 8
Dominic Smith went 3-for-4 with a homer and four



CHICAGO: File photo show Detroit Tigers first baseman Miguel Cabrera (24) singles against the Chicago White Sox in the first inning at Guaranteed Rate Field in Chicago, Ill.

RBIs to help New York slide past host St. Louis at Jupiter, Fla. Matt Carpenter and Tyler O'Neill hit homers for the Cardinals.

MARINERS 7, DIAMONDBACKS 3
Tim Beckham delivered a tiebreaking two-run double during a four-run sixth inning to help host Seattle down Arizona at Peoria, Ariz. Wilmer Flores had two of the Diamondbacks' eight hits.

ORIOLES 7, TIGERS (SS) 5
Anthony Santander hit a three-run homer and Austin Hays smacked a solo shot as host Baltimore defeated Detroit at Sarasota, Fla. Niko Goodrum homered and

had four RBIs for the Tigers.

RED SOX 9, TWINS (SS) 7
Tony Renda hit a three-run homer during Boston's seven-run sixth inning as the Red Sox beat visiting Minnesota at Fort Myers, Fla. Andrew Rosales and Brian Navarreto went deep for the Twins.

PHILLIES 3, TWINS (SS) 3
Right-hander Jake Arrieta struck out four during three perfect innings as Philadelphia and host Minnesota tied at Fort Myers, Fla. Andrew Romine hit a two-run homer for the Phillies and Jonathan Schoop hit a two-run blast for the Twins. —Reuters



Owings hit a grand slam

Muir secures golden double at European indoors

GLASGOW: Laura Muir claimed her second gold medal of the European Indoor Championships by winning the women's 1500 metres final on Sunday to back up her success in the 3000m. Shelayna Oskan-Clarke also took gold in the 800m as Britain's women made it a clean sweep in the middle-distance events on the final night in Glasgow.

However, those golds were not enough for the hosts to top the medal table despite picking up 12 medals in all as Poland led the way with five golds to Britain's four. Muir followed up her 3000m gold on Friday by recording an emphatic victory in the 1500m by coming home in four mins 5.92 secs—more than three seconds ahead of Poland's Sofia Ennaoui with Ireland's Ciara Mageean in third.

The crowd at the Emirates Arena came to see the Glasgow University graduate shine and Muir powered away

in the penultimate lap. "I set myself a big test this weekend," said Muir. "There was a lot of pressure of me but I'm so pleased to have done the job and win the double gold.

"It's so special for me to do this on my home track. It was such a big opportunity for me so I'm so glad I could deliver." Oskan-Clarke delivered a dominant performance to come home nearly half a second clear of the 800m field in 2:02.58. "I know I'm strong, but it is just about making the right moves at the right times," she said. "It's hard indoors because if you don't do that, it's too late. I wanted to be out there early and hold on for home. I knew I'd have no regrets then." The British men also had success in the 800m as Jamie Webb took silver. There were also silvers for Holly Bradshaw in the pole vault, Tim Duckworth in the heptathlon and the women's 4x400m relay team.

Poland's Marcin Lewandowski denied Norwegian teenager Jakob Ingebrigtsen a middle-distance double in the men's 1500m final. And the Polish women ensured their country topped the medal table with victory in the 4x400m relay.

Earlier, Ethiopian Yomif Kejelcha broke the world indoor mile record when he clocked three minutes 47.01 seconds



GLASGOW: Britain's Laura Muir celebrates gold in the women's 1500m final at the 2019 European Athletics Indoor Championships in Glasgow yesterday. — AFP

during an invitational meet in Boston on Sunday. The 21-year-old smashed the 22-year-old record of 3:48.45 set by Morocco's Hicham El Guerrouj in 1997.

Kejelcha had come within one hundredth of a second of the record when he clocked 3:48.46 at the Millrose Games in New York last month. The twice world

indoor 3,000 metres champion was also targeting the indoor 1,500m record but narrowly missed it with a 3:31.25.

That made Kejelcha, who is coached by Alberto Salazar, the third-fastest in the event behind compatriot Samuel Tefera's February world record of 3:31.04 and El Guerrouj's 3:31.18. — Reuters

Australia's Patu suspended for biting opponent

ADELAIDE: Australia's national women's captain Liz Patu has been suspended for six weeks after pleading guilty to biting an opponent during a Super W game in Australia, Queensland Rugby Union (QRU) said.

Patu faced a Rugby Australia disciplinary hearing yesterday after being accused of biting her Wallaroos team mate Rebecca Clough in a Super W match at the weekend. "Following the hearing at QRU headquarters at Ballymore, Judicial Officer Chris Newton issued Patu with a suspension of six weeks after she had entered a plea of guilty to the offence," QRU said in a statement <http://www.redsrugby.com.au/News/NewsArticles/tabid/581/ArticleID/18489/Queensland-Rugby-Union-statement-regarding-Liz-Patu-judicial-hearing.aspx>.

Under World Rugby's regulations, the maximum penalty for biting is a four-year ban but Patu was allowed a 50 percent reduction on the minimum sanction of 12 weeks due to mitigating factors, her previous good character and her clean disciplinary record.

The incident occurred during a ruck in the 70th minute when Rugby WA lock Clough remonstrated with Queensland prop Patu before approaching the referee to show her a bite mark on her left forearm.

Patu, who will miss the rest of the Super W season as a result of the suspension, apologised in a statement. "I apologise to Rebecca Clough, the Rugby WA Women's team, my own team mates and the wider rugby public. My actions the other night were unacceptable and will not be repeated," Patu said.



Australia's women's rugby captain is facing the possibility of a long stint on the sidelines after allegedly biting the arm of one of her national teammates during a Super W match on Sunday.

Queensland Women's XV assistant coach Tyrell Barker said they supported the punishment. "Behaviour like this is unacceptable in our game... Her actions on the weekend were out of character," Barker said.

"We will work with Liz to ensure that when she returns to play, she will demonstrate the spirit of rugby and abide by the laws of the game." Queensland Women are top of the standings with 10 points after winning their first two matches. — Reuters

All Blacks captain to delay comeback

WELLINGTON: All Blacks captain Kieran Read is not expected to make his first appearance in Super Rugby for the Canterbury Crusaders for another three weeks, the team said yesterday. Read and fellow All Blacks forward Sam Whitelock had already been granted an extended break which will keep them out of the first four weeks of the competition with an eye to keeping them fresh for the Rugby World Cup in Japan later this year.

All Blacks hooker Codie Taylor had also been kept in cotton wool for the first three weeks of Super Rugby, although none have really been required with the Crusaders unbeaten after the first three weeks. "Read is two or three, probably, weeks away," Crusaders assistant coach Jason Ryan told reporters in Christchurch on Monday. "We are not 100 percent sure yet."

"We will just see how he goes. He is back into his training, and so forth. We are pretty confident," Ryan admitted that the decision to keep Read sidelined was a mix from both the Crusaders and All Blacks.

"A bit of both," he said when asked who had the final decision. "We can't sort of say much more than that." He is looking good, training today and jumping in the lineouts and he had a good week last week."

Read also had a late start to Super Rugby last year after undergoing spinal surgery at the end of 2017, but returned for the playoffs and the All Blacks' Rugby Championship tests and end-of-year tour. The Crusaders face the winless Waikato Chiefs in Christchurch on Saturday, with Taylor likely to be considered for that match, Ryan added. Whitelock may come into contention for their clash with the Otago Highlanders in Dunedin on March 16, with Read possibly travelling to Wellington to face the Hurricanes on March 29. The Crusaders also received some welcome news on Monday with Super Rugby's ruling body SANZAAR acknowledging that match officials had made an error in reducing the nine-times champions to 14 men for the final six minutes of their 22-12 victory over the Queensland Reds.

Referee Marius van der Westhuizen told Richie Mo'unga he had to leave the field because flyhalf Mitchell Hunt had not undergone a Head Injury Assessment (HIA) and therefore could not be replaced.

SANZAAR, however, confirmed the decision had been incorrect and acknowledged that as Hunt had suffered a "concussive" event, he was not required to have an HIA. "SANZAAR has today confirmed that sideline match officials made an incorrect ruling towards the end of the Reds versus Crusaders match," the governing body said in a statement. "Unfortunately a sideline official determined that as no HIA had been carried out Hunt was simply injured and therefore not allowed to be replaced. "This led to Mo'unga incorrectly being taken from the field." —Reuters

Nicolas Hamilton back on track and doing it his way

DUNSFOLD AERODROME: Nicolas Hamilton, half-brother of five-times Formula One world champion Lewis, is back on the racetrack and keen to set the record straight. The 26-year-old, who has overcome cerebral palsy to establish himself as a disabled racer, is set for a full season in the British Touring Car Championship (BTCC) and feels he deserves some credit. "I made my announcement and people were saying 'Oh, he's only there because of his brother and it's all money talking,'" he told Reuters.

"Lewis hasn't given me a penny towards my motorsport so I want to start telling that story because people need to know. It's so hard, people assume so much. "It's just not how we are. I'm not a person who uses people. Lewis has achieved what he's achieved due to his own abilities, with my dad being behind him. The last thing I want to do is knock him up for a couple of million quid and say come and support me racing." Speaking at the recent launch of a Team BRIT racing academy for disabled drivers, Hamilton said he would never put Lewis, Britain's highest-earning sportsman, on the spot. "I'm here standing today on my own, I've done so well to get here in the first place and the last thing I need is help," he added.

The Briton, who did a few races in the BTCC in 2015, suspected Lewis and father Anthony, who did help earlier in his career with funding, would rather he did something else. —Reuters

Sports

Jets' Wheeler scores four goals in beating Jackets

Sharks explode in third to defeat Blackhawks

COLUMBUS: Blake Wheeler scored a career-high four goals, three in the third period, and the Winnipeg Jets opened their four-game road trip with a 5-2 win over the Columbus Blue Jackets. Wheeler, who has five goals and seven assists during a six-game point streak, tipped home a shot from Nathan Beaulieu to snap a 2-2 tie with 12:16 left in regulation. Wheeler then converted a nifty pass from Patrik Laine at 17:47 of the third and ended his brilliant night with an empty-netter in the final minute. Mark Scheifele had three assists and Connor Hellebuyck made 40 saves for the Central Division-leading Jets, who won their second straight to begin a road stretch against Eastern Conference playoff contenders. The Blue Jackets, fighting just to make the postseason, lost their second straight to conclude a 2-3-0 homestand despite outshooting Winnipeg 42-26. The Jets were without winger Adam Lowry, who served the first of a two-game suspension for high-sticking Nashville's Filip Forsberg on Friday.

CAPITALS 3, RANGERS 2 (SO)

Alex Ovechkin was awarded the game-winning goal in the fourth round of the shootout and Washington extended its winning streak to four games with an unusual victory over host New York. In the shootout, Ovechkin did not put the puck in the net but as he released the shot, New York goaltender Alexander Georgiev threw his stick in an attempt to stop it. Officials originally declared it was not a goal but after a review in Toronto, the call was overturned as Washington beat the Rangers for the sixth straight time. T.J. Oshie and Nicklas Backstrom scored in the shootout for the Capitals, who also won for the 11th time in 16 games and temporarily moved two points ahead of the New York Islanders into sole possession of first place in the Metropolitan Division. Defensemen Kevin Shattenkirk and Anthony DeAngelo scored in the shootout for the Rangers, who lost their fourth straight game (0-1-3).

GOLDEN KNIGHTS 3, CANUCKS 0

Marc-Andre Fleury had 19 saves to pick up his second consecutive shutout and league-leading eighth of the season as host Vegas cruised over Vancouver. It was the league-leading 32nd victory this season for Fleury, who also garnered his 56th career shutout, just one behind Clint Benedict (57) for 20th place on the NHL all-time career shutouts list. Fleury has 436 career victories, one away from tying Jacques Plante for

eighth place in NHL history. Max Pacioretty, Ryan Carpenter and Reilly Smith all scored goals for Vegas, which outshot the Canucks 48-19, including 38-14 over the first two periods. Jacob Markstrom finished with 45 saves for Vancouver, which lost its third straight game (0-2-1) and sixth in their last seven (1-4-2).

PREDATORS 3, WILD 2 (SO)

Ryan Johansen scored in the fourth round of the shootout as Nashville skated to a win over Minnesota in St. Paul, Minn., in the opener of a home-and-home series. Nashville defenseman Ryan Ellis scored in the second round before Minnesota's Zach Parise sent a backhander between the pads of Juuse Saros in the third to extend the shootout. Johansen ended the contest after slowly skating in on Alex Stalock before backhanding the puck inside the left post. Filip Forsberg scored and Nick Bonino snapped a 15-game goal drought as the Predators salvaged the finale of their three-game road trip to remain one point behind first-place Winnipeg in the Central Division. Jason Zucker and Eric Fehr each scored for the Wild, who saw their five-game winning streak end.

FLYERS 4, ISLANDERS 1

Brian Elliott made 29 saves and four different players scored goals in the first 40 minutes as Philadelphia rolled over host New York. The Flyers won despite playing without third-leading scorer Jakub Voracek and losing center Nolan Patrick in the opening minutes. Voracek sat out for the first time this season due to a lower-body injury, and Patrick exited with an upper-body injury after getting hit in the helmet by the puck on a shot by New York's Cal Clutterbuck. Forward Travis Konecny and defenseman Travis Sanheim scored in the opening period for the Flyers, who improved to 17-4-2 since dropping eight straight Dec. 27-Jan. 8. The Islanders lost their second straight and dropped consecutive regulation games for the first time since Dec. 4-6.

SHARKS 5, BLACKHAWKS 2

Melker Karlsson scored twice in the third period as San Jose won back-to-back games for the first time in nearly three weeks, defeating visiting Chicago. Tomas Hertl, Timo Meier and Marcus Sorensen also scored for the Sharks, who had alternated wins and losses for their previous eight games. San Jose pulled within three points of Pacific Division-leading Calgary.



NEW YORK: Skating in his 400th NHL game, Brendan Smith #42 of the New York Rangers is stopped by Braden Holtby #70 of the Washington Capitals at Madison Square Garden on Sunday in New York City. — AFP

Micheal Haley, Joonas Donskoi and Tim Heed each had two assists. Dylan Strome and Erik Gustafsson scored for the Blackhawks, and goalie Cam Ward stopped 29 of 33 shots. Chicago went 1-2 on its three-game California trip.

SENATORS 3, PANTHERS 2

Rookie Rudolf Balcers' power-play goal broke a 2-2 tie with 2:35 left and helped Ottawa snap a seven-game losing streak while also giving interim coach Marc Crawford his first win at the expense of host Florida in Sunrise, Fla. Florida's Mike Hoffman, who played seven seasons with the Senators, rang the potential game-tying goal off the post with nine seconds left and Panthers goalie Roberto Luongo off the ice for the extra attacker. Zack Smith and Brian Gibbons scored goals for Ottawa, which won for the

first time since Feb. 16. Aleksander Barkov and Troy Brouwer tallied for the Panthers, who lost their fourth straight (0-3-1).

DUCKS 2, AVALANCHE 1

Jakob Silfverberg and Cam Fowler each scored goals as Anaheim showed it still has some fight left with a victory over visiting Colorado, halting a five-game losing streak. Ducks goaltender John Gibson made 25 saves in his second game since returning from multiple injuries. The Ducks' victory also came during the return of captain Ryan Getzlaf, who had missed the previous five games with an upper-body injury. The Avalanche dropped their second consecutive game, derailing their efforts to get back into playoff contention in the Western Conference. Colorado has lost three of its past four games following a four-game winning streak. — Reuters

Tahir to quit one-day international cricket

JOHANNESBURG: Veteran leg-spinner Imran Tahir said yesterday he would retire from one-day international cricket after the World Cup in England and Wales, which ends on July 14. But he said he would like to continue playing for South Africa in Twenty20 internationals. Tahir, who will turn 40 later this month, played a starring role for South Africa, taking three for 26, in their eight-wicket win in the first one-day international against Sri Lanka at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

His performance drew attention to the fact that he was not on the list of contracted players for the 2019/20 year released by Cricket South Africa last week. But he revealed yesterday that he had reached an agreement with CSA for his contract to expire at the end of July, extending his 2018/19 contract by three months. In a statement released by CSA, Tahir said he would re-assess his freelance future after the World Cup. "I have always wanted to play in the World Cup," he said. "I have a mutual understanding with Cricket South Africa and going forward I decided that I would finish at the World Cup, that is why I am contracted until then. After that, Cricket South Africa has allowed me to go and play around the world in various leagues but I would also love to play T20 cricket for South Africa."

Tahir said retiring from one-day internationals was a difficult decision. "I would love to play for as long as I can," he said, "but there is a stage in your life where you have to make big decisions." He said, though, that



JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's Imran Tahir appeals for a leg before wicket (LBW) decision as Sri Lanka's Kusal Mendis misses a shot during the first one day international (ODI) cricket match between South Africa and Sri Lanka at the Wanderers Stadium, Johannesburg, on Sunday. — AFP

he would like to play for South Africa in the 2020 ICC T20 World Cup in Australia.

Tahir, who has taken 156 wickets in 95 one-day

internationals, played in the 2011 and 2015 World Cups. He also played in the 2014 and 2016 World T20 tournaments. — AFP

Mitchell claims first PGA win with big final putt

TOKYO: Keith Mitchell sank a clutch 15-foot birdie putt at the last hole to win his first PGA Tour event with a one-stroke victory at the Honda Classic on Sunday.

The second-year professional edged out Brooks Koepka and Rickie Fowler with a final round 67 to finish at nine-under 271. The more experienced Koepka (66) and Fowler (67) put the pressure on but Mitchell denied them a chance at a playoff at PGA National with his long putt. The 27-year-old began his day with back-to-back bogeys, then roared back with birdies at four of the final seven holes. "I've been close before and I let my emotions take over," Mitchell told NBC television. "I bogeyed the first couple of holes and I said, 'Not again.'"

He finished the day with a big smile to go with six birdies and three bogeys. "I was trying to focus on what was going on," Mitchell said. "My mind started wandering there a little bit at the end ... and then I hit a great putt."

Ryan Palmer (63) and Lucas Glover (66) shared fourth at seven-under 273 and 56-year-old Vijay Singh (70) was sixth at six-under as he missed a chance to become the oldest player to win a PGA Tour event. A thrilling final nine holes saw as many as six players tied for the lead at Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

Palmer set the early tone with his splendid early finish that included eight birdies and a bogey in the round of 63. As he watched from the clubhouse for several hours, things heated up on the tough back nine.

Third-round co-leader Wyndham Clark (72-275) and the surging Koepka and Fowler, who made a 45-foot birdie putt at the 17th, also were tied for the top at one point. Finally it came down to Mitchell, Koepka and Fowler.

Koepka birdied two of his last three holes, and Fowler closed with four birdies in eight holes. Mitchell birdied the par-three 15th hole from



PALM BEACH GARDENS: Keith Mitchell poses with the trophy after winning the Honda Classic at PGA National Resort and Spa on Sunday in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. — AFP

four feet and then made the clutch putt at 18 even though his tee shot ended up in a bunker. Singh lost a

chance to be in the mix when he hit his tee shot badly at the 17th and the ball rolled into the water. — Reuters

Cricket to make Asian Games return at Hangzhou 2022

MUMBAI: Cricket will return to the next Asian Games at Hangzhou 2022 after the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) added it to its sports programme for the next edition of the continental event. Cricket has struggled to grow beyond its traditional bases and was last played at the Olympics in the 1900 Paris Games.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has been pushing for the game's Olympic return with the shortest 20-over format and hopes it will find a place at the 2028 Games in Los Angeles.

The Asian Games remains the largest multi-sports event that features cricket and Guangzhou 2010 and Incheon 2014 included both men's and women's competitions. Cricket was, however dropped for the Games in Jakarta-Palembang last year but was added back for Hangzhou at the OCA general assembly in Bangkok, where Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah was re-elected president of the OCA unopposed for an eighth term.

"Cricket will return at Hangzhou," OCA honorary life vice president Randhir Singh told Reuters. Cricket made its maiden appearance in the Commonwealth Games in 1998 when the South African men's team won the gold medal in Kuala Lumpur but has not featured in the quadrennial competition since then.

The ICC has submitted a bid for the inclusion of women's Twenty20 in the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. Singh, who has been appointed as the chairman of the coordination committee for the Asian Games, said he visited Hangzhou last month to see venue options to host cricket.

"They showed us grounds which were a bit small. We asked options for bigger grounds," he added. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is open to cricket's inclusion provided all top teams compete but the Indian cricket board (BCCI), the game's richest and most influential, has been rather reluctant.

The powerful BCCI fears it might lose its autonomy and be answerable to the country's Olympic committee. The BCCI did not allow its teams to participate in Guangzhou and Incheon blaming a packed international schedule but the Indian Olympic Association was hopeful they would be able to convince the board for 2022.

"We will send a letter to the BCCI requesting them to send a team for Hangzhou 2022. We welcome the OCA's decision to include cricket for the next Games," IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta told Reuters from Bangkok. The BCCI officials were not available for comment. — Reuters

Sports

Balotelli posts goal celebration video on social media mid-match

Lyon thrash Toulouse to strengthen grip on top-three spot

PARIS: Mario Balotelli showed off a new goal celebration on Sunday as he took a selfie video with his Marseille teammates and posted it on social media during their 2-0 win over Saint-Etienne. The Italian scored his fourth goal in six Ligue 1 games since joining Marseille from Nice in January by hooking home Florian Thauvin's 12th-minute corner with an excellent acrobatic volley.

"Balotelli takes the pressure, he takes the limelight. He reminds me of (Zlatan) Ibrahimovic and he scored an Ibrahimovic goal," said Saint-Etienne coach Jean-Louis Gasset. "He has brought back the public, the confidence, and many of his teammates will raise their level of play."

As he celebrated his volley, Balotelli took a phone from the cameraman behind the goal before filming the video with his laughing teammates and posting it on his Instagram story. The 28-year-old then carried on playing. He was not the first player to produce a selfie-based celebration, after Roma great Francesco Totti took a picture of himself after scoring against Lazio in the capital-city derby in 2015. Marseille doubled their advantage nine minutes later through a Thauvin penalty and closed out the win with ease.

Rudi Garcia's men have now taken 13 points from their last five league matches to leapfrog Saint-Etienne into fourth, just five points adrift of Lyon in the race for the third and final Champions League spot.

Earlier on Sunday, Moussa Dembele scored twice as Lyon thrashed Toulouse 5-1 to strengthen their grip on a top-three spot. Bruno Genesio's Lyon, who are also through to the French Cup semi-finals and claimed a 0-0 first-leg draw in the Champions League last 16 against Barcelona, continued their strong season by moving six points clear of fourth-placed Saint-Etienne.

"Often this season, we haven't been calm under pressure, but against Toulouse it was a good match," said Lyon captain Nabil Fekir, whose 21-year-old younger brother Yassin made his Ligue 1 debut as a 79th-minute substitute.

"Playing with my brother was a huge pleasure." The home side took less than 10 minutes to break the deadlock at the Groupama Stadium as Memphis Depay fired home a wonderful individual goal.

Mathieu Dossevi levelled for Toulouse on the quarter-hour mark, but the visitors folded after Bertrand Traore restored Lyon's advantage in the 30th minute. Nabil Fekir netted a penalty five minutes later, and former Celtic striker Dembele compounded Toulouse's misery in the second half.

He powered through the pitiful away defence midway through the second period and slotted a left-footed shot into the corner, before tapping in his 13th goal of the season shortly afterwards from Fekir's low cross.

Traore also had another goal ruled out by VAR for offside, while Toulouse finished the game with 10 men as former Bastia midfielder Yannick Cahuzac was sent off for the 11th time in his Ligue 1 career.

LILLE SEE OFF DIJON

Lille remain second behind Paris Saint-Germain after Christophe Galtier's men claimed a narrow 1-0 win over struggling Dijon. With PSG still 17 points clear at the top with a game in hand, Lille are well-placed to secure a return to the Champions League group stage for the first time since 2012.

Dijon, who remain five points from safety in 19th spot, made life tough for Lille at the Stade Pierre-Mauroy until Wesley Lautoa put through his own net in the 72nd minute. "We will continue to work to be able



MARSEILLE: Marseille's Italian forward Mario Balotelli (R) vies with Saint-Etienne's French defender Timothee Kolodziejczak during the French L1 football match between Olympique de Marseille and AS Saint-Etienne at the Velodrome Stadium in Marseille, southern France on Sunday. — AFP

to hold off the teams who want to take our place, qualifying for the Champions League is a dream we will try to achieve," said Lille forward Rui Fonte.

Elsewhere, Patrick Vieira's Nice boosted their hopes

of qualifying for next season's Europa League as Youcef Atal's 20th-minute strike was enough to see off Strasbourg 1-0. Nice are seventh in the table, four points adrift of Marseille. — AFP

Reus urges Dortmund to write history against Spurs

DORTMUND: Marco Reus has called on Borussia Dortmund to write history today as the Bundesliga leaders attempt to turn around their Champions League tie at home to Tottenham Hotspur. After losing 3-0 to Spurs at Wembley in the first leg of the last 16, Dortmund face a monumental task against Mauricio Pochettino's team at Signal Iduna Park in the return fixture. Only three clubs, Barcelona, Roma and Deportivo La Coruna, have ever managed to progress in the Champions League knockout phases after losing the first leg by three goals or more. "I think there have already been some games in

the stadium where history has been written - we can do it," said Reus, Dortmund's top-scorer and captain who missed the first leg with injury.

"But we need a top performance and have to score at the right moment." Dortmund will be at near full strength, with only wing-back Lukasz Piszczek sidelined by injury. Spurs were the last team to win a Champions League game at Dortmund, in November 2017, when Son Heung-min and Harry Kane scored in a 2-1 group stage victory.

After Reus' defiant words, Dortmund head coach Lucien Favre offered a more modest perspective. "We know that it's going to be difficult, but you never know," said Favre. Signal Iduna Park has seen some big nights in Europe, most recently when Atletico Madrid were routed 4-0 in the group stage last October.

And no Borussia fan could forget Poland striker Robert Lewandowski, now at Bayern Munich, scoring all of Dortmund's goals when Real Madrid were routed 4-1 in the semi-finals in 2013. However, the home side

must bounce back from a dreadful run of results to have any chance of overhauling Spurs.

Having crashed to a shock 2-1 defeat at strugglers Augsburg in the Bundesliga on Friday, Dortmund have just one win in seven games. After four weeks out with a thigh injury, Reus says he is ready, and could even play the full 120 minutes if they force extra time.

"I feel good, it was clear I wouldn't play the 90 minutes against Augsburg," said Reus, who managed 66 minutes in Friday's defeat. "But we'll see how tomorrow goes, I am ready - ready to go for the 120 minutes."

Having been nine points ahead of Bayern Munich in the Bundesliga in December, Dortmund's lead has eroded and Bayern drew level on 54 points at the weekend. Dortmund only top the table on goal difference, but a win over Spurs - regardless of whether the Germans progress - would be a huge boost to confidence.

"We are very dissatisfied with the current results," said Reus. "We have to show more of our mentality and then we'll get out (of the current low) again." — AFP

England bids farewell to WCup-winning keeper Banks

STOKE-ON-TRENT: Crowds of mourning fans joined luminaries of English football for a final farewell yesterday to Gordon Banks, a steelworker's son who became one of the world's greatest goalkeepers and will be remembered for his miraculous save against Pele.

Team mates from England's 1966 World Cup win and members of former clubs Stoke City and Leicester came to join a cortege from the Stoke stadium to the funeral for Banks who died aged 81 last month. "He was so humble, honest to God, he didn't really understand what he had achieved in life and why people made such a fuss of him," friend Terry Conroy, who starred with Banks and scored in Stoke's 1972 League Cup win, told Reuters.

Banks was best known for the stunning one-handed save from a Pele bullet header that bounced awkwardly in front of him during England's group-stage game against Brazil at the 1970 World Cup. "With the luck of the gods, the angle at which I'd managed to lift that ball was perfect, and it ballooned in the air and over the bar," the genial Banks said in one of the many recountings begged by fans and media. Footage shows Banks chuckling afterwards, as England's Bobby Moore jokingly chides him for not catching the ball. His achievements went far further than stopping Pele. Banks won 73 national caps, played nearly 500 times for Leicester and Stoke and won two League Cups, before a car crash blinded him in one eye. He remained in Stoke, a former mining and pottery city, where he would watch games, attend charity events and take a weekly walk round Trentham Gardens. "He donated his tie to a charity event I was involved in and we raised 200 pounds (\$265.56). Such a gentleman," reminisced Phillip Steele, 76, next to a statue of Banks at the hilltop stadium decked in flags, scarves and flowers.

Some 2,000 fans were at the Bet365 stadium to watch



STOKE-ON-TRENT: A statue of Stoke City and England's former goalkeeper Gordon Banks is pictured draped in scarves to honour England's World Cup winning goalkeeper, outside the Bet365 stadium in Stoke-on-Trent, central England yesterday, ahead of his funeral. — AFP

proceedings on a big screen. Others lined the route of the funeral procession, which was to stop outside the old Victoria Ground where Banks plied his trade before ending at Stoke minster for a religious service.

Goalkeepers Jack Butland, Joe Hart and Kasper Schmeichel were to be pall-bearers. Fellow World Cup winners Bobby Charlton and Geoff Hurst were also expected. In a largely working-class city obsessed with football, Banks was viewed as a reminder of simpler days before the Premier League's mega-millions.

Everyone had their favourite save. "Mine was a penalty he stopped against Geoff Hurst at Stoke's 1972 League Cup semi-final at West Ham," Conroy said. "If he hadn't saved that, we wouldn't have been in the final and won our first trophy in more than 100 years."

certainly wrapped up an eighth straight title for the unbeaten Turin giants who have 72 points out of a possible 78 with 12 games left.

Juventus raced into a 2-0 halftime lead after Napoli goalkeeper Alex Meret was sent off in the 25th minute. The visitors then had Pjanic dismissed and Napoli's Jose Callejon pulled one back before Insigne let the Turin side off the hook.

The game hinged on an incident in the 25th minute when Napoli fullback Kevin Malcuit's back pass was intercepted by Cristiano Ronaldo, forcing Meret to come out of his penalty area and lunge at the Portuguese forward who went to ground.

The referee awarded a straight red card without reviewing the incident on the pitchside monitor. Replays, though, suggested that, although Ronaldo had to jump

over Meret's outstretched leg, no contact was made.

"The rules, as I understand them, say that Meret should be sent off whether he makes contact or not," said Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri. "The referee decided, as did the video assistant."

However, Napoli coach Carlo Ancelotti said the referee should have seen the replay himself. "The game was influenced by a controversial decision - did Meret touch him or not, which direction was the ball going? It would have been easier if the referee had looked on the monitor, given that it is there," he said.

Meret's dismissal meant Napoli striker Arkadiusz Milik was sacrificed and replaced by substitute keeper David Ospina, whose first job was to pick the ball out of the net as Pjanic scored from the resulting free kick after 28 minutes. — Reuters



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE	
Borussia Dortmund v Tottenham Hotspur	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 2	
Real Madrid CF v Ajax Amsterdam	23:00
beIN SPORTS HD 1	
FRENCH LEAGUE	
FC Girondins de Bordeaux v Montpellier HSC	21:00
beIN SPORTS HD 6	

'Chaos' in Chinese football as new signings barred

SHANGHAI: Moves to boost Chinese football by introducing naturalised players have been thrown into disarray after clubs were ordered not to pick several new signings from abroad. China has previously resisted the naturalisation policies followed by other countries but the Chinese Football Association opened the door to foreign-born players of Chinese descent at the end of last season.

The change in approach could eventually bolster a national squad that is sorely lacking international-class players and has qualified for the World Cup only once, in 2002. However, four trumpeted new arrivals failed to take the field, with domestic media saying they had been barred for the first two games of the Chinese Super League season. "As for the specific reason, none of the parties responded publicly," the Beijing Youth Daily said last week. "It is reported that the Chinese Football Association has previously drafted a rule for guiding the legitimate naturalisation and deploying the naturalised players."

"However, until now, this rule has not been officially announced." The Shanghai Observer said there was confusion among the clubs over the naturalisation policy, leading to "complete disorder" and "chaos".

Beijing Guoan signed Norwegian-born John Hou Saeter and former England youth international Nico Yennaris during the January-February transfer window, saying it hoped they would eventually play for China.

Both have Chinese mothers, with former Arsenal midfielder Yennaris tweeting that it was "an exciting opportunity for me to play in the birth country of my mother and grandparents". Yet neither was involved in Friday's opening-day 1-0 win at Wuhan Zall, despite the 21-year-old Saeter coming on as a substitute the previous week in the Super Cup, the season's curtain-raiser.

Saeter, now known as Hou Yongyong, and Yennaris (now Li Ke) travelled to Wuhan but were not included in the squad at the 11th hour, Beijing Youth Daily said. Also missing from the first round of CSL matches was Gabon-born Alexander N'Doumbou, the former Marseille midfielder signed last month by Shanghai Shenhua and who also goes by the name Qian Jiegei. Defender Tyias Browning, the former England youth international who recently joined Guangzhou Evergrande from Everton, also failed to appear for his new club. Browning reportedly has a Chinese grandfather and Evergrande previously said they were in the process of having him naturalised.

Naturalisation is an attractive proposition for clubs because they are restricted to starting a maximum of three overseas players each game. But there are hints of disquiet over the initiative. Chen Xuyuan, chairman of CSL champions Shanghai SIPG, said naturalisation was tantamount to taking "a short-cut". "Personally, I'm not very fond of the idea of buying too many naturalised players," Chen said last week, vowing instead to focus on developing players from SIPG's youth ranks. "But if a player is of Chinese descent, he can still be developed," Chen added. Some football observers and fans online said it was more evidence of muddled thinking at the CFA, which regularly comes under fire for its running of the game. — AFP

Juve win after two sent off, Napoli miss late penalty

NAPLES: Serie A leaders Juventus held on to win 2-1 at Napoli in a stormy top-of-the-table clash on Sunday which saw both teams have a player sent off and Lorenzo Insigne miss a late penalty for the hosts.

The win, courtesy of goals from Miralem Pjanic and Emre Can, took Juve 16 points clear of Napoli and almost

25 Muir secures golden double at European indoors



26 Mitchell claims first PGA win with big final putt



27 England bids farewell to WCup-winning keeper Banks



Harden drops 42, Rockets dump Celtics

Trail Blazers pull away in fourth quarter, drop Hornets



BOSTON: James Harden #13 of the Houston Rockets handles the ball against the Boston Celtics on Sunday at the TD Garden in Boston, Massachusetts. — AFP

BOSTON: James Harden scored 42 points before fouling out, and the visiting Houston Rockets extended their winning streak to five games with a 115-104 victory over the Boston Celtics on Sunday. Before being whistled for his sixth foul with 1:44 left to play, Harden staved off a furious Boston rally with a driving layup and a 3-pointer over two defenders that extended the lead to 112-100. The Celtics, once down 71-43, scored the opening 10 points of the fourth quarter and had cut the margin to nine on a Marcus Smart second-chance basket at the 4:40 mark. The Celtics rallied behind their reserves, with Jaylen Brown posting 15 points and six rebounds off the bench to lead the charge. Boston recorded a 31-9 advantage in bench points. Eric Gordon matched his career high with eight 3-pointers and scored 32 points to complement Harden, who was 6 of 18 on treys. Chris Paul added 15 points and 12 assists as Houston, which finished 21 of 51 from beyond the arc, improved to 12-0 this season when Paul records double-digit assists.

THUNDER 99, GRIZZLIES 95

Russell Westbrook scored 22 points, including two big shots in the closing stretch, to lead Oklahoma

City past visiting Memphis. The win snapped a four-game losing streak for the Thunder, the team's first since an 0-4 start to begin the season, and kept them tied with Portland for third place in the Western Conference after the Trail Blazers won at Charlotte earlier in the day. Avery Bradley scored 27 points to lead the Grizzlies, who have lost six of their last eight.

PISTONS 112, RAPTORS 107 (OT)

Blake Griffin had 27 points and seven rebounds, and Detroit scored the final 10 points of overtime to defeat visiting Toronto. Luke Kennard and Reggie Jackson had 19 points apiece for Detroit, which has won nine of its last 11 to reach the .500 mark at 31-31. Andre Drummond had 15 points and 17 rebounds despite foul trouble. Wayne Ellington added 11 points for Detroit, which beat coach Dwane Casey's former team for the second time this season.

TRAIL BLAZERS 118, HORNETS 108

Rodney Hood came off the bench to score 27 points, including 21 in the fourth quarter, as Portland knocked off host Charlotte. The Trail Blazers bolted to a 15-point lead in the first quarter but then had to pull away again in the fourth quarter, going on a 15-2

run in the final six minutes. Hood scored 14 of 16 Portland points in one stretch of the quarter. Portland won for the sixth time in its last seven games. Jeremy Lamb scored 23 off the bench to lead the Hornets.

WIZARDS 135, TIMBERWOLVES 121

Bobby Portis had 26 points and 12 rebounds, Bradley Beal scored 22 points and host Washington defeated Minnesota. Reserve Jabari Parker added 22 points for Washington, which had lost five of six. Karl-Anthony Towns led the Timberwolves with 28 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, his first sub-30 point effort in four games. Derrick Rose scored 18 points off the bench.

CLIPPERS 128, KNICKS 107

Landry Shamet made four 3-pointers in the first eight minutes as Los Angeles went on to rout visiting New York. Shamet finished with 21 points, all on 3-pointers, and Danilo Gallinari added 20 for the Clippers, who were beginning a stretch of eight consecutive games at the Staples Center. The Clippers will be listed as the visiting team on Monday night when they return to their home floor to face the rival Lakers. Noah Vonleh (17 points, 12 rebounds) and

Mitchell Robinson (16 points, 13 rebounds) recorded double-doubles for the Knicks, who likewise were playing the opener of a back-to-back sequence.

CAVALIERS 107, MAGIC 93

Jordan Clarkson scored 18 points off the bench, and Cleveland enjoyed a big fourth quarter to top visiting Orlando. Collin Sexton had 17 points on 6-for-11 shooting. Kevin Love posted a double-double with 16 points and 14 rebounds, and Cedi Osman finished with 14 points and six boards. Magic big man Nikola Vucevic led all scorers with 28 points on 13-for-16 shooting. He pulled down 13 rebounds and dished out six assists.

HAWKS 123, BULLS 118

Alex Len scored a season-high 28 points and made two key free throws in the final seconds as visiting Atlanta hung on to beat Chicago. Len picked up the scoring slack for the Hawks, who were without two starters and saw point guard Trae Young ejected in the third quarter. Len was 9 of 18 from the floor and made five 3-pointers to go along with nine rebounds and two blocked shots. Lauri Markkanen led Chicago with 19 points and nine rebounds. — Reuters

Nawal El Moutawakel, torch bearer for Muslim sportswomen

MONACO: Nawal El Moutawakel took just 54 seconds to go from the "dark to the light" when she became the first Muslim woman from Africa to win Olympic gold in the 400 metres hurdles at the 1984 Games.

The 56-year-old Moroccan has since forged a successful career as a sports administrator having twice been Minister of Sports, and is an influential member of both the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Association of Athletics Federations.

"I consider myself a role model with my other Olympic champions back home in Morocco," she told AFP. "I could have stayed and spent most of my life enjoying my glory of 1984 but no, that's wrong."

"54 seconds allowed me to go from dark to light, like

I said from zero to hero. I would like to share every single moment with the younger generation."

El Moutawakel, whose victory in Los Angeles was marked by the then King Hassan II ordering every girl born that day named in her honour, said the hurdles on the track reflected the challenges she had faced in her life. However, she always met them head on, claiming "my victory meant no more just washing the dishes for women". "In my religion, women were never forbidden to compete," she said at the recent Laureus awards. Women could compete equally as men, and that's why I felt growing up in an environment that was very supportive, very positive until today, so I don't think there is any resistance whatsoever."

El Moutawakel supports her claim by citing a passage from the Koran in Arabic. "Teach your children how to run, do horse-back riding, and also swimming," she said. "This is in our religion. He never said, teach your daughter, or teach your son. It says 'teach your children', and in children, there is a son and daughter."

El Moutawakel, a mother of two children, daughter Zineb and son Roda, certainly received all the support she desired from her parents, especially her father

Mohammed. He allayed her fears of how much bigger some of her rivals were by saying "rubies and diamonds come in small packages."

"My father was a judoka, my mum did physical activities at high school, we grew up five brothers and sisters, we were all in the same club and we all did athletics so I was in an environment that was very positive, very supportive," she said. "I never felt any resistance (to her wanting to be an athlete) whatsoever. "Until the day I won in 1984, August 8th, when many microphones were placed in front of me, talking about this resistance. "And I was like, what do you mean?"

El Moutawakel, whose great regret is her devoted father did not live to see her moment of glory, dying in a car crash in early 1984 a week after she had started university in the United States, found the spotlight unnerving. "When I ran in 1984, my coaches (Iowa University's Ron Renko and Pat Moynihan) were teaching me how to run, but they weren't teaching me how to speak," she said. "So all of a sudden I had hundreds of journalists with microphones wanting me to speak, and I said 'I have nothing to say, I showed you in my performance.'" — AFP



Nawal El Moutawakel