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Kuwait Times



THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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JAMADA ALTHANI 24, 1437 AH

No: 16832

Yemen peace talks on track for April 18



Google red-faced after April Fools' prank goes wrong



Messi, Ronaldo and Co battle to be La Liga top dog



150 Fils

SAUDI-OWNED ARABIYA TV SHUTS OFFICES IN LEBANON

PROTESTERS RAID SAUDI-OWNED NEWSPAPER'S OFFICES



Min 13°
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BEIRUT: A journalist of the Saudi Asharq Al-Awsat daily looks at the damage yesterday after the newspaper's offices were stormed following the publication of a cartoon mocking Lebanon. (Inset) Lebanese cameramen and reporters of Al-Arabiya channel stand at the entrance of their office yesterday. — AFP/AP

BEIRUT: Beirut-based employees of the Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya channel said the station has decided to shut down its Lebanon operation amid tensions between Riyadh and Beirut. The channel's Beirut correspondent Adnan Ghamloush said the decision to shut down "for security reasons" was communicated to the staff yesterday through a lawyer, and effectively puts 27 employees out of work. He declined to give other details and the nature of the security threat remained unclear.

Also yesterday, a group of activists briefly raided the Beirut office of a Saudi-owned newspaper, Asharq Al-Awsat, protesting a cartoon published in its yesterday's edition. The cartoon depicted the Lebanese state as an April Fool joke, printing the Lebanese flag with the words "April's Fool" over it. The insulting cartoon provoked a storm over social media, with many, including politicians, demanding an apology.

The Beirut offices of Al-Arabiya and its sister channel Al-Hadath, which offers extensive coverage of political news, have been closed and they no longer have any correspondents in Lebanon, a spokesman told AFP. In a statement, the Dubai-based channel said it has "restructured" its operations in Lebanon "due to the difficult circumstances and challenges on ground, and out of Al-Arabiya's concern for the safety of its own employees and those employed by its providers". It said it would nonetheless "continue to closely cover Lebanese affairs."

Lebanon's Minister of Information Ramzi Greige dismissed the suggestion of security concerns, however. "Of course there are no security grounds for closing the Al-Arabiya office in Beirut. There may be political reasons for taking this step, but I don't know until I seek clarification from them," Greige told Reuters.

In the lobby of the Al-Arabiya offices in downtown Beirut, half a dozen security guards stood watching as employees left the building for the last time. One security guard was changing the lock on the office door. After exiting the building, several employees stood around smoking cigarettes and drinking coffee. One of them said they had learned of the decision to shut the Beirut offices only yesterday morning. — Agencies

'MADMEN' WOULD GLADLY USE NUKES, OBAMA WARNS

WASHINGTON: More cooperation is needed to prevent the Islamic State group's "madmen" and other extremists from getting a nuclear weapon, US President Barack Obama warned yesterday as global leaders met in Washington. The threat of terrorists of using nuclear material in a "dirty bomb" - or even obtaining an atomic weapon - has loomed large over the summit, punctuated by revelations that IS members tracked a Belgian nuclear scientist on video.

"ISIL has already used chemical weapons, including mustard gas, in Syria and Iraq," Obama said, using an acronym for the IS group. "There is no doubt that if these madmen ever got their hands on a nuclear bomb or nuclear materi-

al, they most certainly would use it to continue to kill as many innocent people as possible."

The summit - attended by dozens of world leaders and delegates - is focused on securing global stockpiles of nuclear materials, much of it used in the medical and power industries. Obama said about 2,000 tons of nuclear materials are stored around the world at civilian and military facilities, some of them not properly secured. "Just the smallest amount of plutonium - about the size of an apple - would kill and injure hundreds of thousands of innocent people," he said. "It would be a humanitarian, political, economic and environmental catastrophe with global ramifications for decades." — AFP



WASHINGTON: US President Barack Obama stands alongside Jordanian King Abdullah (left) and other world leaders during the 2016 Nuclear Security Summit yesterday. — AFP

MAN ARRESTED OVER PROFANE ONLINE VIDEOS

KUWAIT: Local authorities arrested a man known for his profanity-filled online videos as he flew into the country from London. The Interior Ministry on Thursday night announced the arrest of Salem Abdullah Ishtail Al-Doussari, a Kuwaiti in his early 40s.

In a statement carried by the state-run Kuwait News Agency, the Interior Ministry accused Doussari of making "vulgar remarks" against HH the Amir and regional leaders, as well as "slurs targeting a religious sect". It wasn't immediately clear yesterday if Doussari had a lawyer. He had come to the attention of Kuwaitis via Snapchat, a mobile-messaging application. — Agencies

UN ENVOY ENCOURAGES YEMENI PARTIES TO 'ENGAGE CONSTRUCTIVELY' IN KUWAIT TALKS

NEW YORK: UN Envoy to Yemen encouraged parties taking part in the next round of peace talks held in Kuwait, to seize the opportunity to provide a mechanism for a return to a peaceful and orderly transition.

The UN Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed said in a statement yesterday that the talks aim to reach a comprehensive agreement, which will end the war and allow the resumption of inclusive political dialogue in line with UN Security Council resolution 2216 as well as other relevant resolutions. The talks he added, are to be based on the GCC Initiative and the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference.

The Special Envoy encouraged the parties to engage constructively in the talks, including on the areas of the withdrawal of militias and armed groups, the

handover of heavy weapons to the State, interim security arrangements, the restoration of state institutions and the resumption of inclusive political dialogue, in addition to the creation of a special committee for prisoners and detainees.

As the preparations are currently underway for Yemeni-Yemeni peace talks, to be held under the auspices of the United Nations in Kuwait starting April 18, the UN envoy said "I am looking forward to the active participation of relevant parties in the talks."

Ould Cheikh Ahmed noted that the are planning and preparing at full speed, as the UN political experts have already been deployed to Sana'a and Riyadh in order to work with the delegations gearing up for the resumption of talks. "Another team is on its way to Kuwait to finalize the preparations with

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs," the statement added.

Within this same context, Ould Cheikh Ahmed welcomed the encouraging steps taken recently between Saudi Arabia and Ansarallah, such as the release of prisoners and the relative calming at the borders. "These initiatives reinforced the spirit of the confidence building measures recommended at the previous round of talks and there is no doubt that they can provide an important drive to the political process," he said.

The parties to the conflict have agreed to a nation-wide cessation of hostilities beginning at midnight on April 10. "With political will, good faith and balance, they could take this opportunity to end the conflict and pave the way towards a permanent and durable end of the war," he added. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

AMIR OFFERS CONDOLENCE OVER TURKISH BLAST VICTIMS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolence to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan over the victims of Thursday's bombing that left scores of people dead or injured. In his cable, His Highness the Amir strongly condemned the horrible terrorist act that violates all religious and human values, and that targeted innocent people and the country's security and stability.

His Highness the Amir also reiterated Kuwait's firm position rejecting all forms and manifestations of terrorism, praying to Allah the Almighty to bless the victims' souls with mercy and those injured a swift recovery. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent the Turkish president similar cables.

Meanwhile, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem sent a cable of condolences to Turkish Parliament Speaker Ismail Kahraman over the bombing that occurred in Diyarbakir earlier Thursday, which killed and wounded scores of people, including policemen. Ghanem expressed full solidarity with the Turkish people against all criminal attempts to destabilize security, and renewed calls for the boosting regional and international efforts to combat terrorism. —KUNA

PALESTINE LAUDS KUWAIT'S GAZA RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS



Palestinian Minister of Housing and Public Works Mufeed Al-Hasaynah

GAZA: The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has praised Kuwait's continued support to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, particularly the reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip. In the name of President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, the PNA expresses most gratitude to His Highness the Amir, government, and people of Kuwait for their generous grant to those affected by the Israeli war on Gaza, Minister of Housing and Public Works Mufeed Al-Hasaynah said in a press conference. Hasaynah also valued the efforts exerted by Marwan Al-Ghanem, Arab Regional Director in the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), in light of the grant agreement, worth \$200 million, signed between KFAED and the PNA to support reconstruction efforts in Gaza, adding that his government will allocate \$75 million of the Kuwait grant for the Strip residents. —KUNA

FIVA EXTOLS TIES WITH VINTAGE CARS MUSEUM

DOHA: Patrick Rollet, President of the Federation International des Vehicules Ancienne, or Federation of Classic Cars (FIVA), touted yesterday his organization's close ties with Kuwait Historical, Vintage and Classic Car Museum. FIVA cooperates with the Kuwaiti car museum on technical and legal issues and values the museum's efforts at endearing classical and vintage cars to the public, Rollet said on the sideline of the 2016 Qatar Concourse D'Elegance showcasing luxury classic and vintage cars.

On Kuwait's participation in the Qatari exhibition of ancient cars, he said what struck his eye was Kuwait's entry of a vintage Aston Martin db24, a rare and much esteemed luxury car. He recalled the Kuwait Concourse

D'Elegance held last year which brought together nearly 80 vintage cars for general exhibition, saying it



Patrick Rollet

was a highly successful event. In this year's Qatari event which started last Tuesday and is slated for five days, about 100 vintage and classic cars are on display, all vying for valuable prizes.

FIVA was founded in 1966 in response to an idea formulated by a handful of organizations representing the interests of historic vehicle enthusiasts within a number of different countries. The founders felt that the time had come for an international body to promote and guide the interests of the historic vehicle movement throughout the world. At present FIVA can boast over 85 member organizations in more than 62 countries throughout the world, which in turn represent more than 1,500,000 historic vehicle enthusiasts. —KUNA

VETERAN ASTRONOMER OJAIRI ALIVE AND WELL

KUWAIT: Renowned Kuwaiti astronomer and meteorologist Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi is alive and well despite rumors that stated



Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi

that he passed away, the Kuwait Science Club (KSC) confirmed yesterday. Reports speculating Ojairi's death went viral on social media since late Thursday night, and even became a trending topic on Twitter early Friday morning. Kathem Jum'ah, Assistant Secretary General of KSC, said that he contacted KSC's honorary chairman Ojairi and confirmed that he is okay. He further urged social media users to abstain from spreading unverified news, and show respect to a scholar in Ojairi's status. Ojairi, 95, is credited for introducing astronomy and meteorology to Kuwait, where he

built the country's first observatory in the early 1970s. The Ojairi Calendar, first issued in 1952, is considered the most authentic and used calendar in Kuwait to follow dates and prayer times. He also has several publications, researches and a library named after him. It is worth mentioning that this is not the first time in which rumors on Ojairi's death spread on social media on April 1st, also known as 'April Fool's Day.'



بدون ألوان اصطناعية

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COUNCILOR URGES MORE EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN CAMPING SITES' CLEANLINESS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The camping season came to an end on Thursday March 31, and Kuwait Municipality branches are set to start sending teams to remove violating camps starting from tomorrow. The municipality called upon camp owners to remove the camps in order to avoid forced removal and citations.

Meanwhile, Municipal Council Engineer Ali Al-Moussa criticized what he described as "several forms of violations against the Kuwait environment" committed during this year's camping season, including lack of proper cleanliness standards. "While 90 per cent of camps have already been removed, piles of waste and leftovers can be seen in the desert," Al-Rai daily quoted Moussa yesterday. He further criticizes campers who failed to clean their camps' sites before handing those sites over to the municipality following the end of the camping season.

Kuwait Municipality started in recent years to license camping sites in order to help protect the environment by receiving insurance payments from campers that are only refundable if the sites were left clean



Ali Al-Moussa

after the end of the camping season. Moussa said that regulating the camping process has been a 'partial success' on that regard, indicating that according to official statistics, the level of environment protection that it has achieved varied between 30 and 40 per cent only. "In order to achieve better success, new laws and conditions must be implemented," he said, suggesting that stricter punishments against violators are required.

TIME HAS COME TO INCREASE ENERGY FEES: MINISTER

KUWAIT: Energy fees should be increased in accordance with the government's study to maintain Kuwait's credit ranking in the global market, Minister of Electricity and Water Ahmad Al-Jassar said. Calling the current 2 fils per kilowatt tariff as 'outdated,' Jassar told Al-Anbaa daily that now is the time to 'restructure' electricity and water increases to become on par with local and international markets' indicators.

Jassar further indicated that studies show that under the current rates, Kuwait will bear KD 1.7 billion in subsidies in the coming budget for power and water production, without paying attention to the fluctuation of oil prices. The minister further explained that the goal behind restructuring power and water prices is not to collect money, but to commit the consumer to rationalizing, because "he who does so will find out that his bill remains the same."

The National Assembly's Financial Affairs Committee is scheduled to discuss a draft law for new power charges on Sunday and its head MP Faisal Al-Shaye said the panel has different plans to reduce the government proposals. National Assembly Speaker Marzouk Al-Ghanem meanwhile announced that the National Assembly plans to study the new charges and government's economic reforms in the next session on April 12. The government proposed to raise electricity charges by several-folds, especially for apartments inhabited mostly by expatriates.

It was not immediately known if MPs will reduce the government proposals for citizens and expatriates as well. Several lawmakers have already criticized the government proposals say-



Minister Ahmad Al-Jassar

ing it will constitute a major burden on consumers.

Under the proposed plan, electricity fees would increase as follows: for private houses (normally inhabited by Kuwaitis), the bill proposes to raise current electricity charges of 2 fils per kilowatt to as follows: For consumption of up to 3,000 kilowatts - 5 fils per kilowatt; For consumption of between 3,000 - 6,000 - 8 fils per kilowatt; For consumption between 6,000-9,000 - 10 fils per kilowatt; For consumption above 9,000 - 15 fils per kilowatt. As for apartments (mostly inhabited by expatriate), the new proposed rates are as follow; For consumption of up to 1,000 kilowatt - 5 fils per kilowatt; For consumption between 1,000-2,000 - 10 fils per kilowatt; For consumption above 2,000 kilowatt - 15 fils per kilowatt. The bill also proposes smaller increases to water charges.

30 ARRESTED IN FAKE DOMESTIC HELP OFFICE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Residency department detectives arrested a number of people for running a fake domestic help office, harboring absconding maids and offering illegal domestic help services. Investigations went underway after police received information about the activity of five Ethiopian nationals who would provide employers with services of the runaway maids for up to KD 250, and gave them fake receipts. Once the maid arrives to her new employer's home, she would have arranged with the men in charge of the office to run away again so that her services can be offered to another employer. A total of 30 people, 17 men and 13 women, all Ethiopian were arrested after police obtained a warrant from the prosecutor to raid the illegal office. The suspects were taken to the proper authorities for further legal procedures.



KUWAIT: Smoke comes out of a container after firefighters tackled a blaze reported yesterday in Farwaniya.

No injuries in fire

Farwaniya fire station responded to a call about a fire in a container near the area's

co-operative society branch. The fire was contained and put out. No injuries were reported.

Crime

Report

Search for thieves

KUWAIT: Jahra detectives are looking for three men who committed four armed robberies within less than three hours. In one reported case, the suspects attempted to steal a citizen's car when he left it with the engine running. The car's owner returned to the vehicle before they managed to escape with it, but they attacked him with a knife and drove away with the vehicle, leaving him behind bleeding. In each of the three other cases, an expatriate told Taima police that he was mugged by three men who claimed to be detectives.

told Salam police station officers that they were insulted by a 20-year-old citizen who was accompanied by his 21-year-old brother. The complainants said that while patrolling the area, they asked the driver of a German-made vehicle to pull over, but he refused to cooperate. The man then insulted the officers and escaped, according to their statements. Investigations are ongoing in search for the suspect.

Burns

A 24-year-old girl told Nugra police that she suffered burns after receiving laser hair removal treatment in a Hawally clinic. A medical report stated that burns were noticed on the thighs, lower abdomen, pelvis, arms and neck. — Al-Anbaa

Police assaulted

Two policemen from Hawally back-up force

NATIONAL GUARD, US ARMY CONDUCT DRILL ON LOGISTICS

KUWAIT: The Kuwait National Guard and American Army conducted on Thursday a drill on logistics, as part of a joint agreement to share expertise. The joint agreement is part of 2020 strategic pact signed by the National Guard and other countries' military institutions to improve the performance of its manpower, Head of the National Guard's freightage and logistics directorate Colonel Khaled Abdulasalam told reporter. He added that today's exercise aimed at sharpening skills of the national guards in combat and teaching them how to act swiftly and efficiently in critical situations. — KUNA





KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

HELLO ARTISTS...

Welcome to the Student's Art Competition. I hope you are ready to paint a beautiful painting and win wonderful prizes. The theme for your painting must be related to planting and greening, basically anything pertaining to our environment. We are looking for a great painting. So, please pick up your color pencils, paint brushes, crayons or whatever you prefer and start drawing and painting.

Good luck to you, our young artists.

- Competition is open to ages from (6 - 8) (9 - 11) (12 - 14) and (15 - 17) & Special needs.
- The competition is open for all schools in Kuwait (Government and Private)
- **The competition will start on March 10th and will continue till April 14th 2016.**
- 10 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
- All participants will receive a certificate of appreciation.
- All schools participating in the

- competition will receive an appreciation plaque.
- Any school or individual interested to participate in this competition is welcome to visit the office of Kuwait Times and collect the drawing sheets.
- Drawing sheets will be given to schools FREE of charge.
- Only drawing sheets provided by the Kuwait Times will be allowed.
- You can use any kind of color pencils, paint brushes or crayons.

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Participation Form

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Tel: Fax:

Address:

Total number of interested student's are
6 - 8 years 9 - 11 years 12 - 14 years 15 - 17 years Special need

Name: Signature:

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NCCAL PLANS TO REVIVE LIBRARIES



KUWAIT: The role of public libraries dwindled away in recent years due to several reasons, notably the spread of the information and communications technology and the tendency for scholars and readers to use the internet.

Out of keenness on reviving this role, the Cabinet has recently decided to transfer the jurisdiction over libraries and their staffers, facilities, equipment and books, from the Ministry of Education to the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL).

The decision, to take effect as of Friday, April 1, is the sixth in a chain of transfers of the management of the library sector between the two sides over the last 35 years; it came in response to a request from the Ministry.

Speaking to KUNA, NCCAL's Assistant Undersecretary for the Sector of Culture and Arts Mohammad Al-As'ousi, said the decision makers are convinced that the Council is competent enough to take charge of the libraries sector since it is responsible for the cultural activities on the national level.

"The Council has stepped up efforts and set out plans for modernizing the libraries and equipping them with the latest technologies," he said.

"The NCCAL plans for encouraging the public to read include creating interactive atmospheres between the administrators of a library and its frequenters through leveraging the relevant technologies. Libraries are no longer warehouses for books; they are rather platforms and think tanks for readers and researchers to network and get in an easy, fast and credible way whatever knowledge they need," As'ousi pointed out.

Despite the technological revolution, many people find traditional books appealing as a credible source of information, he said, citing as evidence the data of sales at the book fairs. The first public library was founded in Kuwait in 1913 as a privately-owned one, while the first state-owned public library was founded in 1936 with 289 books on display. —KUNA



International

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**Muslim moms fight
merchants of terror**

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go after court rebuke**

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of Donald Trump**

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PARIS: A picture taken yesterday in Paris metro shows a fake station's name, rebaptized "First of April" instead of "Fourth of September" (Quatre Septembre) by the RATP (state-owned public transport operator responsible for most of the public transport in Paris) for April Fools' Day. —AFP

GOOGLE LEFT RED-FACED AFTER PRANK

APRIL FOOLS IS NO JOKE: XINHUA

LONDON: The joke was on Google yesterday when it had to pull an April Fools' Day prank featuring characters from the "Despicable Me" movies that landed users of its Gmail service in trouble. To mark the annual day of practical jokes, the US technology giant added an extra send button to its email service that included a gif of a minion, one of the yellow creatures from the popular animated comedy films. But many unsuspecting users hit the button and sent important business emails and reportedly even funeral arrangements with the light-hearted cartoon.

"This is horrible - Just sent an email to a client with this stupid icon on it," wrote user David Kitner on the Gmail help forum. "I can't afford these stupid pranks!" Another user, Faye Davies, added: "I send a legal document which affects mine and my family's life and you stick that button in the place of a send button... Grow up." Google later withdrew the feature and apologized. "Well, it looks like we pranked ourselves this year," it said. "The MicDrop feature inadvertently caused more headaches than laughs. We're

truly sorry. The feature has been turned off."

Meanwhile readers of newspapers around the world were left puzzling over whether a series of improbable stories were true or not. Britain's papers, traditional bastions of the April Fools' tradition, concentrated on the June 23 referendum on membership of the European Union to trick readers. The Guardian claimed to have exclusive information that Greek-born Prince Philip, Queen Elizabeth II's husband, would defy Britain's strict constitutional rules and come out in favour of the EU, given his "impeccable European credentials".

According to the paper's "well-connected source", the royal family had turned against London mayor and high-profile anti-EU campaigner Boris Johnson as he had "made it difficult to get around London in a decent-sized Daimler". However, there were apparently concerns that Philip could not be trusted with a live broadcast given his "propensity for swearing," the paper's prank story said. The spoof came after a recent Sun newspaper story claiming that the queen was in favour of Britain leaving the EU which

prompted Buckingham Palace to complain to Britain's press watchdog.

Crime-Fighting Cats?

The Paris Metro service (RATP) joined in the fun, renaming major stations. The Opera metro station became Apero - the shortened French word for aperitif - while Crimee was renamed Crimee Chatiment, which when spoken sounds like the French for Fyodor Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment". The Japan Times, an English-language newspaper, duped readers with a headline promising "revolutionary robots to take care of Japan's kids", playing on stereotypes of Japan's obsession with technology and childcare.

Clothes retailer H&M surprised online shoppers by launching its Mark Zuckerberg Collection Pack, which consisted of a pair of jeans and seven identical grey T-shirts in honour of the Facebook founder's restrained fashion sense. English-language website The Beijinger claimed that Zuckerberg had accepted a "green card" from China's Communist government and was

moving to the capital after a high-profile visit to Beijing last month.

Not all in China saw the funny side, with official news agency Xinhua posting on micro-blog Weibo that the occasion "does not conform with our nation's cultural traditions, nor does it conform with the core values of socialism". "Don't believe rumors, don't create rumors and don't spread rumors," it urged. Britain's Thames Valley Police launched a recruitment video for its new feline division, set up to harness cats' curiosity and gift of nine lives to fight crime, although they were to be kept apart from the dog division.

Taking a drier approach, Poland's leading liberal daily Gazeta Wyborcza claimed that Pope Francis had sent a letter to Prime Minister Beata Szydlo calling for an end to the country's political crisis. Back on the Brexit theme, Britain's Daily Telegraph warned that France and Germany were to gang up and boot England out of this summer's Euro 2016 football tournament if they voted to leave the EU, punishing them for a lack of solidarity. —AFP

DJIBOUTI'S GUELLEH EYES FOURTH TERM WIN

DJIBOUTI: After 17 years under his rule, few doubt Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh will fail to win a fourth term in polls next week, with a divided opposition already calling the vote a sham. Supporters of Guelleh - president since 1999 of the tiny but strategic former French colony whose port guards the entrance to the Red Sea and Suez Canal - are confident of victory in the April 8 vote.

Since campaigning began on March 25 portraits of "IOG", as Guelleh is nicknamed, have lined the baking hot streets of Djibouti city, capital of the arid Horn of Africa nation of some 820,000 people, where Guelleh supporters parade in the green party colours of his Union for the Presidential Majority (known by its French acronym, UMP). "We are optimistic, especially when we see that the opposition party is straggling", said Foreign Minister Mahamoud Ali Youssouf. Guelleh won the last polls five years ago with 80 percent of the vote, after

parliament changed the constitution in April 2010 to clear the way for a third, and now a likely fourth, term. The main opposition group, the so-called Union for National Salvation (USN), is a collapsing coalition of opposition parties.

Divided Opposition

Three of the seven parties that made up the USN have decided to boycott the polls entirely - the Movement for Democratic Renewal and Development (MRD), the Republican Alliance for Democracy (ARD) and Movement for Development and Freedom (MODEL) - while the remaining parties are fielding two competing candidates, Mohamed Daoud Chehem and Omar Elmi Khaireh. "Our party has decided not to participate in the election because we consider it to be a sham election, the minimum requirements of transparency are not guaranteed," said MRD leader Daher Ahmed Farah.

After parliamentary elections in 2013 which Guelleh's UMP won with 49 percent amid furious opposition claims of fraud, parties had demanded the creation of an independent electoral commission, a key element of a 2014 pact to resolve a political deadlock and end street protests. Under that deal the opposition agreed to accept just 10 members of parliament - instead of the 52 they claimed to have won - in exchange for government commitments to better protection for opposition parties and the establishing of an independent election body. But the commission was not created.

"The MRD has never believed in the sincerity of this agreement," said Farah, who said the government had only wanted, "to stop the protests and demobilise the opposition." But those who are taking part in the polls next Friday say a previous decade-long boycott - from 2003 to the last polls in 2013 - has only allowed the ruling party a free hand. "We saw that we had not advanced",



Ismail Omar Guelleh

said presidential hopeful Chehem. The other USN candidate, Omar Elmi Khaireh, argues there is a need for "change" after "38 years of dictatorship" since independence from Paris in 1977. But their erstwhile USN allies suggest the real motivations of the candidates in challenging the 68-year old Guelleh are less noble. — AFP



DIYARBAKIR: Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (center) speaks on a bus yesterday during a visit to this Kurdish-dominated city. — AFP

TURKISH PM IN DEFIANT VISIT TO DIYARBAKIR AFTER ATTACK

DAVUTOGLU TAKES PART IN FRIDAY PRAYERS

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey: Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu yesterday made a rare visit to the Kurdish-dominated city of Diyarbakir, declaring he was "not scared" after an attack by rebels that killed seven police. The car bomb attack on a police bus in Diyarbakir Thursday - which underlined the precarious security situation in the main city in Turkey's southeast - was claimed by the military wing of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Turkish security forces have since the summer waged a relentless campaign to drive PKK militants out of urban centres in the southeast, leading to ferocious clashes that show no sign of abating. Davutoglu began his visit - which took place under heavy security - by attending

a funeral ceremony for the police killed. In a symbolic move, he then took part in Friday prayers outside the Great Mosque in the central Sur district. "They thought that we would be scared. But we are not scared, we will not waver and we will go right to the end," he said.

Pictures showed army snipers in position on the roof of the mosque. Davutoglu sought to make contact with the people, at one point kissing a baby. "Perhaps they thought 'Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu will not come to Diyarbakir for fear of these attacks'. But dear people of Diyarbakir, are you scared of them?" he added. Parts of Sur have been under curfew since the military launched a major operation against the PKK in the area on Dec 2, with the clashes

causing widespread destruction to the historic district.

In a statement coinciding with Davutoglu's visit, the PKK's military wing, the People's Defence Forces (HPG), claimed responsibility for Thursday's bombing of the police bus. The rebels said the attack was in revenge for the actions of the army in Sur. The premier's visit was his first to Diyarbakir since the operation began. He last visited on the eve of November elections. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said this week that 355 members of the security forces had been killed in fighting with the PKK since a two-year truce collapsed last summer. He also claimed 5,359 members of the PKK had been killed but it was not possible to confirm that toll. — AFP

SUPPORT GROWS FOR LIBYA UNITY GOVT

TRIPOLI: Libya's UN-backed unity government won the support of guards who secure the country's key oil terminals, the latest pledge of loyalty for a cabinet facing strong opposition from rival political forces. Libya's warring sides are under intense international pressure to cede power to prime minister-designate Fayed Al-Sarraj, whose arrival in the capital on Wednesday angered a rival Tripoli-based government.

But there are signs that allegiances are starting to shift in favor of Sarraj, a businessman from Tripoli who was a member of a committee that paved the way to national dialogue. Yesterday, an official from a unit of guards in charge of securing installations in Libya's so-called "oil crescent" in the east of the country said it had pledged loyalty to Sarraj's government. "All the oil terminals under our jurisdiction have been placed under the authority of the unity government," the official who declined to be named told AFP. He said that revenues from oil exported from those terminals, including the main one at Ras Lanuf, would be allowed only if they are "for the benefit" of the Government of National Accord (GNA). Libya has been awash with weapons since the 2011 uprising that ousted and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi, with a slew of militias battling for control of its cities and oil wealth. It has had two rival governments since mid-2014, when the Libya Dawn militia alliance overran Tripoli, forcing the internationally recognized government to flee to the east. Oil is Libya's main natural resource, with reserves estimated at 48 billion barrels, the largest in Africa. It had a pre-revolt output capacity of about 1.6 million barrels per day, but unrest has forced a major slump in production.

Control of the oil industry is essential for the new government, which not only needs to unite the divided country but also shore up its economy. On Thursday, 10 western cities also rallied around Sarraj's government and urged Libyans to back it, in a major blow to the unrecognised Tripoli authorities who are refusing to cede power. The announcement came in a statement on the official Facebook page of the Sabratha municipality near the border with Tunisia. "The situation of the country is sad. Life is very expensive, there is no cash, and so we saw that it's time to support this government in order to start solving all of these issues," said Sabratha mayor Hussein al-Dawadi. — AFP



TRIPOLI: Fayed Al-Sarraj, prime minister of the UN-backed unity government, is greeted by people on a street in the capital yesterday. — AFP

PALMYRA SCARRED FOREVER BY IS

PALMYRA, Syria: Jihadists have reduced several temples, columns and other treasures to heaps of stone in Syria's ancient city of Palmyra, which archaeologists fear will never be fully restored to its former glory. On the rocks at the entrance to the 2,000-year-old Temple of Bel, jihadists have written in black: "The Islamic State. No entry for civilians or brothers (fighters)." While the temple's outer walls, main entrance and courtyard have survived, the main cella or prayer chamber has been destroyed, according to AFP journalists who visited the world heritage site.

Ochre and beige-colored blocks of stone that once formed the cella walls, rooftop and eight 16-m tall fluted columns now lie on the ground. Syria's antiquities director Maamoun Abdulkarim says he is hopeful that part of the temple can be restored now that the jihadists have fled. "Of course the Temple of Bel will never be the same. According to our experts, we will definitely be able to restore a third of the destroyed cella, or maybe even more if we carry out additional studies with UNESCO's help," Abdulkarim said. "It will take five years of field work." The city was recaptured on Sunday by Syrian and Russian troops who drove out IS jihadists who had occupied it for 10 months.

World Heritage

In Palmyra's stunning Roman theatre, jihadists have written their names on one wall while another is riddled with bullet marks. It was at this second-century structure that the children of IS fighters were made to kill army soldiers in public executions. Where the cella of the shrine of Baal Shamin once stood, only four columns now remain. And the remains of the Arch of Triumph, dating back to the era of

Roman Emperor Severus in the third century, lie on the ground, leaving only the two columns that once sustained the central crown still standing.

"It won't be complicated to restore it because all the building blocks are there and the arch had already been put back up in the 1930s," Abdulkarim said. "I invite archaeologists and experts everywhere to come work with us because this site is part of the heritage of all humanity," he said.

'Savagery'

At the National Museum, the jihadists committed some of their worst atrocities against Palmyra's heritage. They threw several of the city's famed busts of large-eyed, ornately dressed women to the ground. They mutilated portraits. They erased the painted faces of dinner guests portrayed in ornate frescoes of funerary banquets. "Experts believe that 30 percent of the old city of Palmyra has been destroyed," said provincial governor Talal Barazi, who came to inspect the damage. "I have seen proof of IS' obscurantism. The damage they caused to the antiquities bears witness to their savagery," he said.

"I am happy because the museum's finest pieces were evacuated before they arrived," Barazi said, referring to 400 pieces of inestimable value that were transferred to government-held Damascus before IS took control of Palmyra.

Hotels close to the museum, once buzzing with tourists, are vacant. A nearby church was turned into a recruitment centre by IS jihadists. The regime's Palmyra jail, which IS blew up soon after seizing the city, had been notorious for hellish torture of detainees, including political prisoners. But IS created several makeshift prisons of its own across the city, including in a government courthouse. —AFP



PALMYRA: The remains of Temple of Bel's 'cella', which was blown up by militants of the Islamic State (IS) group, are seen in this ancient Syrian city on Thursday. — AFP



VIENNA: An Austria based graduate from Chechnya receives her diploma from Maynat Kurbanova (left) of the so called "motherschool" on March 8, 2013. — AFP

MUSLIM MOMS FIGHT MERCHANTS OF TERROR

GLOBAL PROJECT FIGHTS RADICALIZATION

VIENNA: There were small signs that her son was changing: He prayed more and swapped jeans for traditional long tunics. "But I wasn't worried. Not for one second did Syria enter my mind," Fatima Ezzarhouni told AFP. And yet that's where the young man was headed in June 2013 when he left his home in the Belgian city of Antwerp, a day after his 18th birthday, to join militants. Almost three years on, Ezzarhouni gets the occasional phone call from her son confirming he's still alive, but never revealing his exact location.

"I have this feeling that I will never see him again," said the 44-year-old, fending off tears. "But at least now I know I'm not alone anymore." Ezzarhouni is one of the newest members of a global project that fights jihadism not with soldiers, but moms. The so-called Mother Schools teach Muslim women how to spot early signs of radicalization in children or develop coping mechanisms if the intervention comes too late. After completing the 10-module course, the graduates then go on to train other women.

Race Against Recruiters

The Vienna-based Women Without Borders (WWB) organisation created the initiative in close cooperation with anti-terrorism experts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), also headquartered in the Austrian capital. Though independent, the WWB receives funding from various Austrian ministries, the European Union and the US State Department. "Women are so well placed to work in the security arena because this is a mission about safeguarding their families," WWB founder Edit Schlaffer told AFP. "They are in direct competition with recruiters, those toxic influences from mosques who step in when children reach adolescence and tell them: 'You're wonderful, glory is waiting for you, join us in building the caliphate.'"

Although there are other female-run programs targeting radicalization in various countries, the WWB project is the only truly global one. The first school opened in 2012 in

Tajikistan - an Islamist breeding ground next to Afghanistan - before branches were rolled out in other nations plagued by violence, such as Pakistan and Nigeria. In February, WWB organised its first training session for the new initiative in Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population.

Although most practice a moderate form of faith in this southeast Asian country, the Islamic State (IS) has provided a potent rallying cry for radicals. Hundreds are thought to have joined the militant group in Syria and Iraq. "We heard from other mothers whose children were recruited by extremists. We could see what their strategies are, which is very relevant," Mother School participant Khotimun Susanti told AFP in Jakarta. "Indonesian women are not used to speaking out... so we learnt that we need to develop this culture of openness." Schlaffer stressed that a key part of the program focused on current affairs. "I've met mothers in Indonesia who thought their sons had gone off to work as foreign laborers in Syria. They had no clue where Syria was. When I told them it was a war zone, they broke down," she said.

The project is now also taking root in Europe where terrorists have been spreading fear with a string of attacks, the latest hitting Brussels on March 22. While schools in Austria and Belgium are already up and running, new ones will open in Britain and Sweden later this year. Ezzarhouni said she first heard about the initiative from another Belgian mother, Saliha Ben Ali, whose 19-year-old son Sabri died in Syria three years ago. "Sabri's radicalization was very fast, it happened in three months and we didn't see the signs," said Ben Ali, a social worker from the city of Vilvoorde, near Brussels. "Four days after he had left, he sent his first message: 'Please mum, don't be angry. I came here to help Syrian people because nobody helps them.'" Both Ezzarhouni and Ben Ali recently attended a Mother Schools workshop in Vienna, which united Muslim women from around the globe to share their experiences and receive training on engaging their communities back home. —AFP

POLICE RESCUE 75 'SEX SLAVES' IN LEBANON

BEIRUT: Lebanon's security forces have dismantled the country's largest known sex trafficking ring and freed 75 mainly Syrian women, a security source said yesterday. They had been raped and beaten, while some showed signs of "mutilation", a statement from the Internal Security Forces said. "This is the largest sex trafficking ring we've uncovered since the outbreak of the Syrian war," a Lebanese security source told AFP.

Police officers in the Mount Lebanon region north of Beirut "identified and arrested a group of people who made up

Lebanon's most dangerous human trafficking network", the ISF statement said. They "rescued 75 women, most of them Syrian nationals who had been subjected to beatings and psychological and physical torture, forced to perform sexual acts and had indecent images of them taken and distributed," it said.

The ISF arrested two men and eight women guarding the apartments where the victims were kept, but two other suspects remain at large, according to the statement. Security forces also arrested a doctor and a nurse who worked for the

traffickers. "During their interrogation, the doctor admitted to performing nearly 200 abortions" for the captive women, the ISF said in a statement. The security source also said that "an eight-month-old baby, likely the child of one of the rescued women" was found during the raid. Even before the Syrian conflict erupted in 2011, Syrian women had been pushed into the illicit sex trade in neighboring Lebanon. "However, as with any war, conflict has made Syrian women and children even more vulnerable," the security source said. "They pay the highest price." — AFP



BEIRUT: In this March 15, 2016 photo, a Syrian refugee woman holds her child as she begs for money on a sidewalk. — AP

GERMANY'S COLD WAR-ERA FM GENSCHER DIES

BERLIN: Germany's longest-serving foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, whose tireless Cold War diplomacy paved the way for his country's peaceful reunification, has died at age 89, his office said yesterday. His marathon 1974-92 tenure as Germany's chief diplomat broke longevity records in Europe and spanned some of the continent's most dramatic moments, including the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall. Having fled communist East Germany as a young man, the trained lawyer and liberal politician became a leading advocate for East-West dialogue, and a champion of European unity.

Tributes quickly poured in after news that he had died late Thursday of heart failure surrounded by his family. Chancellor Angela Merkel, who grew up behind the Iron Curtain, praised the "globally respected statesman" and recalled how political milestones achieved in part by Genscher "gave me and millions of others in East Germany and eastern Europe hope for change".

When Genscher took office, Europe looked to be forever divided into two nuclear-armed camps, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. When he stepped down, Germany was reunited and Soviet communism had been consigned to history. Genscher, who served in both centre-left and conservative governments, had long rejected demonizing the Soviet Union and argued early that Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms presented a historic opportunity for detente.

Gorbachev yesterday praised Genscher as "one of first Western politicians who called for taking seriously" his reforms, saying that "when the Cold War ended and the reunification of Germany happened, his critics had to admit that he was right". Genscher negotiated Germany's 1990 reunification and the withdrawal of Soviet forces with his sceptical US and Russian counterparts, James Baker and Eduard Shevardnadze. That agreement, said Merkel, "is his lasting achievement and the culmination of his political career".

'Symbol of Hope'

A watershed moment for Genscher was a September 1989 speech at the West German embassy in Prague, where the courtyard was packed with thousands of East Germans desperate to head west. Genscher spoke from the balcony to announce a deal with the Czech communist government allowing them safe passage. "We have come to you to tell you that today your departure..." he said - but the rest of the sentence was lost to history as it was drowned out by jubilant cheers.

That joyful moment turned Genscher into "a symbol of hope" in divided Germany, eastern Europe and beyond, said European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker, adding that "it is in part a tribute to his work that today we are a European Union of 28" member states. Genscher had not always received such praise. He often exasperated US and British diplomats who believed his mediator role weakened NATO and its nuclear deterrence.—AFP



Hans-Dietrich Genscher



BEIJING: Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (right) prepares to speak at the opening ceremony of the 4th Ministerial Conference of Istanbul Process of Afghanistan as Afghan President Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai applauds at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing yesterday. — AP

RENZI COMES UNDER FIRE AS SLEAZE FORCES MINISTER OUT WIRETAP AT CENTER OF SCANDAL

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi yesterday rebuffed calls to quit after one of his ministers resigned over allegations she tweaked the country's 2015 budget to suit her businessman boyfriend. Economic Development Minister Federica Guidi stepped down on Thursday, hours after it was announced that her partner, Gianluca Gemelli, is under criminal investigation for abusing his personal connection to the centre-left government in a suspected bid to help his engineering company win contracts with French oil group Total.

At the centre of the scandal is a wiretap recording of Guidi telling her partner that an amendment to the budget law streamlining the approval process for new oilfields in southern Italy would be approved. Gemelli is suspected of having lobbied for the amendment on behalf of Total, which is developing a field at Tempa Rossa in the Basilicata region. "We should be able to put it to the Senate tomorrow," the minister is heard to say on the wiretap recording.

Commentators were unanimous in saying the remark had left Guidi, 46, with no option but to quit while Renzi was widely reported to have been left fuming over the damage the episode has done to his government's image. Speaking to Italian media in Washington, the premier said Guidi had not acted illegally but that the appearance of impropriety had made it right that she had gone. "I believe she made a mistake with this call," Renzi said. "But something has changed in Italy. In the past this would not have led to a resignation, now it does." Prosecutors suspect Gemelli had lobbied for the amendment in return for his company being included in Total's list of preferred bidders for contracts at Tempa Rossa.

'Monstrous Conflict of Interest'

Opposition leaders seized on Guidi's resignation as fresh evidence that Renzi's administration was every bit as prone to sleaze as its predecessors. "It's the umpteenth monstrous conflict of interest for this government and the ultimate responsibility lies with Renzi," said Matteo Salvini, leader of the far-right Northern League. Guidi's resignation came almost exactly a year after then transport minister Maurizio Lupi resigned after it emerged a businessman embroiled in a major public works corruption scandal had given Lupi's son a €10,000 Rolex watch.

"This fossil of a government needs to call it a day," the populist Five Star movement said in a statement issued by its group in the Senate. Lawmakers from the Italian Left (SI) and disaffected leftists who were formerly in Renzi's Democratic Party (PD) said the scandal represented a wider malaise caused by the premier's allegedly authoritarian style and preference for secret backroom deals. "Guidi did the right thing by resigning but it does not put an end to the questions raised by this investigation," they said.

Berlusconi Slams Wiretaps

The charges against Gemelli emerged from what was originally an investigation into the illegal disposal of liquid waste from another oil extraction plant in the mountainous southern region of Basilicata. Six employees of the Val d'Agri centre were arrested on Thursday on suspicion of conspiring to disguise toxic material as harmless waste and Italian energy group ENI has suspended production at the 75,000-barrels-a-day facility.

Renzi will have been relieved Guidi went quickly. But he was left to count the cost of a damaging blow to his attempts to portray himself and his government as representing a break from cronyism and corruption. The 41-year-old continues to enjoy good approval ratings and has won plaudits for pushing through reforms of the labor market and Italy's parliament in the two years since he seized power in an internal party coup.

But he faces a potentially tricky test at local elections expected in June. The ease with which prosecutors were able to tap the phone conversation of a government minister reflects the extensive powers enjoyed by Italian investigators when they are probing suspected corruption. Partly a legacy of the country's long battle against various mafia groups, these powers are rarely contested although one prominent politician did speak out yesterday. Former premier Silvio Berlusconi, a convicted tax fraudster who is well acquainted with having his phone tapped, described the treatment of Guidi as a "violation of democracy". — AFP

BOKO HARAM DENIES SURRENDER IN NEW VIDEO

KANO, Nigeria: Boko Haram released a new video yesterday denying any suggestion it might surrender, just over a week after shadowy leader Abubakar Shekau appeared in a rare message looking dejected and frail. Shekau, unseen on camera for more than a year, released an unverified video late last month saying his time in charge of the Nigerian jihadist group may be coming to an end. If the video indeed depicts Shekau, he appears thin and listless, delivering his message without his trademark fiery rhetoric.

It prompted speculation from the army that the Islamist group was on the verge of collapse in the face of a sustained military counter-insurgency. However, in Friday's message, Boko Haram maintained it was a potent fighting force, with men holding AK-47s posing in front of Toyota Hilux pick-up trucks and a lorry mounted with a military cannon. "You should know that there is no truce, there is no negotiations, there is no surrender," an unidentified masked man in camouflage said in a prepared script in Hausa, the dominant language in the north, in the video posted on YouTube. "This war between us will not stop."

The video, of markedly better quality than Shekau's and including Arabic subtitles, featured nine masked Boko Haram fighters standing on sandy ground in an undisclosed desert location. It is unclear if the masked people in the video include the Boko Haram leader. Shekau was still the head of the "West African wing", said the masked speaker, likening Boko Haram to the Islamist insurgencies in Iraq, Libya and Syria.

In March 2015, Boko Haram pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group, another deadly terror organization. But there were few signs that Boko Haram - now styled as Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP) - has drawn benefits from the partnership. Since then Nigeria's army has won back swathes of territory from the militants, liberating thousands of people who had been living under Boko Haram control.

The video appears to confirm collaboration between Boko Haram and the Islamic State group, Africa security specialist Ryan Cummings told AFP. "The production quality bears the hallmarks of the Islamic State's media wing," Cummings said, explaining that it is expected that Shekau shun the limelight. —AFP

S AFRICA CONSTITUTION WIELDS 'MIGHTY SWORD'

JOHANNESBURG: When he became South Africa's top judge in 2011, Mogoeng Mogoeng was derided as everything from a legal lightweight and political stooge to Christian zealot and apartheid lackey. Five years later, the 55-year-old son of a miner and a housemaid is being feted as the savior of a young democracy. Alongside damning findings against President Jacob Zuma, who made him Chief Justice, Mogoeng laid out with unassailable legal clarity and flashes of literary flair the soul of a 20-year-old constitution cherished as a blueprint for a better society.

For the millions who watched on television, it was the day the supreme law, embodied in the 11 judges - black and white - sitting impassively in an old apartheid prison in Johannesburg, reasserted itself in a state that has lost its way since the idealism of Nelson Mandela's four years in office. In a unanimous ruling, the court ordered Zuma to pay back some of the \$16 million spent doing up his sprawling private residence, and declared that he had failed to uphold and respect the constitution, an impeachable offence.

Although the judgment may not mean Zuma's immediate political demise - the African National Congress and its large parliamentary majority could yet protect him - it reaffirmed the faith of many South Africans in their broader democracy. "It's a winning situation. Everyone is very happy with the ruling," said student Fighter Makobudi. "I'm

quite sure that the president is going to do the right thing and step down."

The rand, pummelled since December by a string of Zuma-related scandals, most notably his unexplained axing of a respected finance minister, hit a four-month high. For many, there was a sense of relief that the ANC, whose dominance has reduced parliament to little more than a rubberstamp, was being held to account. "I feel like I am breathing new air," said one caller to the Talk Radio 702 station.

'Ugly Head'

Although Mogoeng receded into the background after his ruling, his intervention is likely to be felt for years to come as South Africa's fractured society negotiates and contests the basis of political power. One of his main detractors, cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro, who has depicted Mogoeng as a moron, Bible-bashing fanatic and salivating Zuma lapdog, admitted publicly he had got it wrong. "Justice Mogoeng, you have really proved yourself," Shapiro, better known by his pen name Zapiro, said on the ENCA television channel. "I'm eating humble pie."

Newspapers heralded the judgment as the start of a new chapter for a country that has been floundering under the weight of a stagnating economy, sliding credit ratings and a procession of scandals emanating from Zuma's front

door. "South Africa wakes up to a new reality - we must not allow ourselves to be intimidated or abused by those in power," the Times said in an editorial. "Today, we remain resolute that the constitution is the bedrock of our democracy."

Before the ruling, Zuma's legal team had begged the court to keep its judgment as narrow as possible for fear of political fallout months before important provincial elections. Mogoeng ignored them, laying out how the constitution's checks and balances were designed to stop abuse of power - and how they had been undermined by Zuma, who for two years disregarded the findings of Public Protector Thuli Madonsela, a constitutionally mandated watchdog.

"Constitutionalism, accountability and the rule of law constitute the sharp and mighty sword that stands ready to chop the ugly head of impunity off its stiffened neck," he stated in a preamble that set the tone for the hour-long ruling. He likened Madonsela to a "Biblical David" taking on the Goliath of state corruption, a simile that spawned lurid cartoons and headlines. "Chop Zuma the Ugly Head", the Sowetan newspaper, a popular read among Johannesburg's black middle classes, said on its front page. The government said Zuma was studying the ruling and would decide the appropriate action in due course.—Reuters

ZUMA FACING CALLS TO GO AFTER COURT REBUKE AU CHIEF TO QUIT BLOC AMID RETURN RUMORS

JOHANNESBURG: South African President Jacob Zuma faced a chorus of calls yesterday to step down after a court ruled that he breached the constitution in a judgement that engulfed him in a fresh bout of controversy. Zuma retains widespread loyalty within the ruling African National Congress (ANC) whose lawmakers dominate parliament, but his tarnished image has shaken the party ahead of local elections. The main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, hailed a damning verdict by the country's top court Thursday that Zuma had violated the constitution by refusing to repay public funds spent on his private home.

"This judgement is an immense victory for democracy, for the rule of law, and for the people of South Africa," DA leader Mmusi Maimane told reporters yesterday. "It simply cannot be business as usual when President Zuma has been found to have violated the constitution." The party has launched impeachment proceedings against the head of state, in a move likely to fail as it would require the support of a two-thirds majority in parliament. But the impeachment attempt is set to keep Zuma's misdeeds in the public eye ahead of municipal elections this year when the ANC risks losing control of Gauteng province, which includes Johannesburg and Pretoria. The storm of press criticism focused on Zuma's refusal to comply with an ombudswoman's orders to repay money spent on a swimming pool, chicken run, cattle enclosure and amphitheatre at his rural homestead. "There is only one way South Africa can escape a full-blown constitutional crisis... and that would be his resignation or dismissal," said the Sowetan newspaper. "He has no legal or moral authority to govern."

Loyalists Fight Back

The upgrades, which were valued in 2014 at 216 million rand (then \$24 million), became a symbol of alleged corruption and greed within the ANC, which has ruled since



Jacob Zuma

Nelson Mandela came to power in 1994 after the end of apartheid. Zuma loyalists fought back to defend the embattled president. "We have learnt lessons from the judgement' and wish to state it unequivocally' unambiguously and categorically clearly that we firmly stand behind the ANC President," the influential ANC Women's League said in a statement.

Zuma is due to retire in 2019 when his second term in office ends. One of the names considered a possible candidate to replace him is his ex-wife and African Union Commission chief, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. Her spokesman yesterday confirmed that she would step down when her term ends in July, presenting an opportunity for her to return to domestic politics after leaving AU headquarters in Ethiopia. Zuma, who remains on good terms with his former wife, on Thursday issued a brief statement saying he accepted the Constitutional Court's ruling.

His presidency has been rocked in recent months by his sacking of two finance ministers within days, and allegations that a wealthy business family had so much influence that they could appoint ministers. Pravin Gordhan, the current finance minister, vowed yesterday to oversee a "transparent, thorough and professional" procedure to determine how much Zuma would have to pay back over the home upgrades.

Dlamini-Zuma, 67, was the first woman to



Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

hold the AU's top job when she was elected in 2012. She beat the incumbent, Jean Ping of Gabon, in a closely fought election over several rounds of voting. An experienced diplomat, a veteran of the fight against apartheid and a doctor by training, she has served as health, interior and foreign minister in South Africa.

Speculation is already rife in the corridors of the AU as to her successor. Algerian Foreign Minister, and former AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra, has long been seen a possible candidate. But SADC countries, the regional organization in Southern Africa, appear determined to keep the role, pushing the name of Botswana's Foreign Minister, 64-year old Pelonomi Venson-Moitoi. She was a journalist before joining her government's civil service.

'Limited and Often Late'

Dlamini-Zuma's time at the AU has been given mixed reports. Under her tenure, the AU launched a vast development proposal for Africa, "Agenda 2063", called for better economic integration of the continent, and hosted visits by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US President Barack Obama. "It opened the debate on how Africa we want for the next 50 years," Eben said, adding her tenure has "boosted the image" of the bloc.—AFP

BURUNDI POLICE HOLD COMEDIAN FOR THREE DAYS

NAIROBI: A popular Burundi comedian known as "Kigingi" was held by police for three days after poking fun at the president, his family said yesterday. Humorist and Buja FM radio host Alfred Aubin Mugenzi was arrested on Tuesday by Burundi's National Intelligence Service (known by its French acronym SNR) and charged with insulting President Pierre Nkurunziza. He was apprehended at a hotel in Muramvya, 50 km east of the capital, while on a promotional tour for a beer company.

Family members said the comedian was taken to the capital Bujumbura and "held in SNR dungeons" for three days before being released yesterday. Rights groups have accused the SNR of torturing or simply disappearing suspects. SNR officers told Mugenzi's family he was arrested over a skit he performed in neighboring Rwanda last year, in which he lampooned football-mad Nkurunziza, showing him refusing to leave the pitch despite receiving two yellow cards - a reference to the president's refusal to stand down last year after two terms in office.—AFP

ACTIVISTS DECRY NAIROBI PROJECT AFTER LIONS KILLED

NAIROBI: A new road and rail project cutting through a nature reserve on the outskirts of Nairobi threatens wildlife, livestock and people, conservationists said yesterday, after two lions were killed this week. Kenyan wildlife rangers shot dead a male lion named "Mohawk" on Wednesday after it strayed from Nairobi National Park and attacked and injured a resident. The next day rangers found the body of another lion outside the reserve, speared to death in a township south of Nairobi.

Conservationists said construction work on the transport projects was affecting animal behavior and leading more big cats to try to escape in search of quieter hunting grounds. "Before construction started in the park, the lions were not escaping, so there are indications that the noise and blasting is affecting their movements," said Robert Ndetei, species conservation manager at World Wildlife Fund's Nairobi office.

"If you don't plan properly, if you don't do proper environmental-impact assessments, then you are doomed to fail, and at the Nairobi National Park this could lead to more lions and other animals coming into contact with a growing human presence," Ndetei told Reuters. Nairobi National Park is home to about 35 lions. There are about 2,000 left in the whole of Kenya.—Reuters



NEW YORK: Demonstrators condemn Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's remarks about women and abortion on Thursday. —AP

THE NINE LIVES OF DONALD TRUMP

WASHINGTON: Is this week's Donald Trump controversy the one that will finally derail the bombastic real estate developer's foray into presidential politics? Opponents are hoping that unlike previous flaps, the frontrunner in the race for the Republican nomination won't be able to recover from his statement that women who have illegal abortions should be punished. Next Tuesday's primary in the American heartland state of Wisconsin will be an indicator of whether The Donald has finally crossed the line with his supporters, who until now have stood by their man despite controversies that would have torpedoed the political aspirations of most traditional candidates.

A poll conducted by Marquette University Law School showed Texas Senator Ted Cruz in the lead in Wisconsin, with 40 percent support among likely voters, 10 points ahead of Trump. Ohio Governor John Kasich, the third candidate in the Republican race, had 21 percent in the poll, which had a margin of error of 5.8 percentage points. The survey was conducted after a week dominated by highly personal attacks between Trump and Cruz, whose wives were dragged into the mudslinging. In a race where Trump makes headlines seemingly every day, on Tuesday this week his campaign manager was charged with battery for allegedly grabbing a reporter at a news conference. Rather than heed calls to fire Corey Lewandowski, Trump has unequivocally backed his top staffer and instead questioned reporter Michelle Fields's version of events, even suggesting she threatened him by approaching him after the event. Then on Wednesday, Trump said during an interview with MSNBC that he thought abortion should be banned and women who get the procedure under such a ban should be punished. After an outcry from all corners of the political spectrum, the reality TV star quickly backpedaled and issued a statement saying the woman should be considered as a victim. In the United States, abortion is a hot-button topic that defines political candidacies and not an issue where a presidential hopeful can afford a gaffe.

'Mental'

Not only were Democrats predictably outraged, Trump even managed to antagonize anti-abortion conservatives who say only doctors who perform the procedure should be punished. "Once again Donald Trump has demonstrated that he hasn't seriously thought through the issues, and he'll say anything just to get attention," the ultraconservative Cruz said. He's even testing the patience of his most ardent public supporters. "Do you realize our candidate is mental? It's like constantly having to bail out your 16-year-old son from prison," conservative commentator and until now steadfast supporter Ann Coulter said after Trump tweeted an unflattering photo of Cruz's wife next to a photo of his own wife, a former model. The long road to the Republican national convention in July is already littered with controversies over women, Islam and immigrants. It's not known how much of a factor they played in Trump's 12 defeats so far. Although his popularity seems ironclad among the relatively small segment of Republican primary voters, a new survey shows Trump with a 67 percent unfavorability rating among Americans overall - the most disliked major-party candidate in the 32-year history of the Washington Post-ABC News poll.

The Teflon Candidate?

But in the last two months, Trump has repeatedly defied political correctness and remained atop the Republican race thanks to supporters who say they admire his business acumen and "refreshing" lack of restraint. In one week in early February, Trump took positions unimaginable for a major Republican candidate: accusing George W Bush of negligence before the Sept 11, 2001 attacks, promising to be "neutral" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, publicly clashing with Pope Francis and professing that he liked the principle underpinning President Barack Obama's health care reform legislation. —AFP

TRUMP HOLDS MEETING WITH GOP LEADERSHIP

PARTY UNITY DISCUSSED

WASHINGTON: Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump made a surprise closed-door visit to the Republican National Committee on Thursday after a tumultuous two days on the campaign trail that included a reversal of his pledge to support the party's nominee. Trump, who is also struggling to contain the fallout from his Wednesday comment that women who have abortions should be punished if the procedure is outlawed, said afterward he had a "nice meeting" to talk about party unity with RNC Chairman Reince Priebus. "Looking forward to bringing the party together," Trump said on Twitter. "And it will happen!"

Priebus said the meeting was scheduled days ago and included a discussion about the process heading into the party's July convention in Cleveland. Trump leads the Republican race, but is at risk of falling short of the 1,237 delegates needed to become the party's nominee in the Nov. 8 election, raising the prospect of a contested convention. "We did talk about unity and working together and making sure when we go to Cleveland, and come out of Cleveland, that we're working in the same direction," Priebus told the Fox News Channel.

Trump's relationship with the RNC has been contentious at times, and he recently complained the party was not treating him fairly as it prepared for a possible contested convention. On Tuesday, Trump backed away from the loyalty pledge he signed in September promising to support the party's eventual nominee and not to run an independent campaign for the White House. The RNC pledge has unraveled as Trump's remaining rivals, US Senator Ted Cruz of Texas and Ohio Governor John Kasich, also indicated

they were unlikely to observe the pledge if Trump was the nominee.

Priebus refused to say if the discarded loyalty pledge was discussed at the meeting with Trump, which lasted just under an hour. The billionaire businessman was in Washington for a morning gathering of his newly established foreign policy team. A source who attended said the group discussed threats from Islamic State militants, nuclear proliferation, homeland security assessments and European security levels. Trump's campaign also announced

it was setting up a Washington office to run its convention and delegate operations and work with the RNC and Congress.

'Simple Misspeak'

The campaign has been busy trying to dig out from under an avalanche of criticism over Trump's abortion comment, even though he quickly reversed his stance. Trump pulled back from his initial comments within an hour, first in a statement saying that US states should handle abortion issues and later saying doctors who perform abortions are the ones who should be held responsible.

"You have a presidential candidate that clarified the record not once but twice," Trump spokeswoman Katrina Pierson told CNN, calling the initial comments a "simple misspeak". She said Trump was "pro-life with exceptions" and said his statements after the comments in an MSNBC interview were an accurate depiction of his views. "We shouldn't make this a 24-hour headline when we have things like terrorism going on in the world."

Trump's latest controversy threatened to further erode his standing with women voters, many of whom have been offended by his use of vulgarities and insulting language to describe women during the campaign. The abortion flap erupted as Trump campaigned in Wisconsin ahead of the state's primary on Tuesday. The primary will be particularly important because all 42 delegates will be awarded to the winner of the popular vote, rather than distributed proportionate to the vote. Two opinion polls released in the last two days showed Cruz moving ahead of Trump by 10 percentage points in Wisconsin.—Reuters



WASHINGTON: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump waves as he gets into his vehicle on Thursday following a meeting at the Republican National Committee. —AP

NEW TAXIDERMY CLASS A HIT AT MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL

CROSWELL, Michigan: Students all over the US dissect animals as a kind of high school rite of passage. Not many, though, stuff and mount the critters afterward. A Michigan high school is teaching students to do just that. Croswell-Lexington High offered a taxidermy course for the first time this school year. So far, it's been a hit. Sixty students enrolled in the first two sections, and about a dozen had to be turned away, said Ryan Cayce, the principal at the school about 80 miles north

of Detroit in a community near Lake Huron that long has embraced hunting and fishing.

Teacher Kyle Tubbs, who owns a taxidermy business, last year pitched the idea of a stand-alone class to Cayce, who gave it the green light. Senior Matt Barker, a trapper and hunter, said the course is perfect for him. "This is one of the best classes that I've had, because it's a very hands-on class," Barker said, taking a break from fleshing an opossum he trapped in his grandfather's backyard.

Students in the 13-week class must bring in an animal that they hunted, trapped or found dead. Road kill counts. In Miesha Brenton's case, the red-bellied woodpecker the senior worked on was a gift from the family cat. "I just want this eye to be where it's supposed to," an exasperated Brenton said to her lab mates before jamming a blade into the bird's eye. Brenton said many people think the class is gross, but "it's just kind of something that's cool to learn, especially if you like biology."

The class meets state standards for science instruction, Tubbs said. Many students in the taxidermy class already have taken biology, Cayce said. "It fits in and integrates well with the other physical science courses," he said. And art, said Tubbs, who points out that students who mount a full-bodied animal are asked to create its natural habitat, which could include representations of water, dirt and plants. "Trying to make something dead look like something that's living again takes ... skill," said Claire Knapp, a junior who was drawn to learning about taxidermy after taking an anatomy course.

For the students who didn't make it into the inaugural offering, there's always next school year. "I never thought that it would be this popular and (have) this much interest," Tubbs said. "It's just really cool for me, doing taxidermy and as a teacher, to see the interest that we have with this class." —AP



CROSWELL, Michigan: Croswell-Lexington High School taxidermy teacher Kyle Tubbs helps student Paige Kasper with placement of a rabbit's pelt on a form during the school's taxidermy class on Jan 19, 2016. —AP

NOISY WELCOME IN US AS ERDOGAN DEFENDS STANCE

WASHINGTON: Journalists and supporters of Kurdish militants scuffled and traded insults with Turkish guards protecting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Washington ahead of his meeting with US leader Barack Obama. A small group of protesters gathered Thursday outside the Washington think tank where the Turkish president was to speak, brandishing the banners of the YPG, a Kurdish militant group based in Syria. Ankara regards the YPG as an affiliate of the PKK, Turkey's main Kurdish separatist movement, and has declared it a terrorist threat. However, Washington sees the YPG guerrillas as key allies in its cam-

paigned against the Islamic State group. Just ahead of Erdogan's arrival at the Brookings Institute in Washington, Turkish security officials clashed with the crowd - both sides exchanging insults and scuffling - before local police were able to separate them. The Turkish guards also set about the press. One aimed a chest-high kick at an American reporter attempting to film the harassment of a Turkish opposition reporter, and another called a female foreign policy scholar a "PKK whore."

Turkish security tried to prevent two Turkish journalists, one of them working for the opposition daily Zaman that has been

seized by the government, from entering. All this happened before an Obama-Erdogan meeting that seems to have been arranged at the last minute. Having previously stated the pair were unlikely to hold sit-down talks - a decision widely perceived as a snub from Washington - the White House said the two men had in fact met on the sidelines of a nuclear security summit. They discussed US-Turkey cooperation on regional security, counterterrorism and migration, it said.

The absence of a presidential meeting on Erdogan's trip to the US capital had been glaring. The two countries are meant to be close NATO allies in the thick of a fight against the Islamic State (IS) group in Syria. But tensions have been stirred by Ankara's attacks on Kurdish militants, some of whom are seen by Washington as the best bet for tackling IS in Iraq and Syria. Turkey says the militants are linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has fought a long battle for Kurdish independence. Turkish forays into northern Iraq have also strained ties. The White House has been increasingly outspoken in recent months about threats to free speech and democracy in Turkey. And on Thursday it restated its belief in the need for press freedom in Turkey, amid ugly scenes at an Erdogan speech in the US capital. As the Turkish leader flew in to the US capital ahead of the nuclear safety summit, news broke of another deadly bomb attack targeting police in his country's southeast, where his forces are battling Kurdish militants. — AFP



WASHINGTON: Pro-government activists of Turkey welcome Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit on the sidelines of the nuclear security summit in front of the Brookings Institute on Thursday. — AFP



RIO DE JANEIRO: Supporters of Brazil's Workers' Party (PT) demonstrate in support of President Dilma Rousseff and former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Thursday. — AFP

BRAZILIANS MARCH TO SUPPORT ROUSSEFF

BRASILIA: Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff's fight against impeachment gathered speed when tens of thousands of people marched nationwide to oppose what they said was a "coup". The rallies late Thursday were part of a concerted attempt by Rousseff to turn the tide ahead of an impeachment vote over her alleged manipulation of government accounts to disguise the depth of Brazil's recession during her 2014 reelection.

Further boosting Rousseff, her chief ally in the spiraling political crisis fiery ex-president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva - won a major court battle that removes him from the jurisdiction of a crusading anti-corruption judge. The peaceful demonstrators, many waving the red flags of Rousseff's Workers' Party, gathered in 31 cities, including Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and northern centers like Recife.

The Globo news site quoted police estimates for total turnout at more than 110,000, while organizers claimed nearly 600,000. At one of the larger rallies, in Brasilia, police told AFP that at least 25,000 to 30,000 people marched. "No to the coup," said one placard popular at the protests. "Democracy," read a large banner at the gathering in Rio, where more than 5,000 people turned out across the city some four months ahead of the 2016 Olympics. — AFP

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INDIAN POLICE DETAIN 5 OVER FLYOVER COLLAPSE

KOLKATA: Indian police said yesterday they have detained five staff at the company building a flyover that collapsed, killing at least 25 people, as hopes of finding more survivors faded. Emergency workers using specialist equipment have pulled nearly 100 people out alive from under the huge concrete slabs and metal girders that fell onto a busy street in the eastern city of Kolkata on Thursday, crushing cars and pedestrians. Yesterday, they said there was little hope of finding any more survivors under the rubble of the flyover, which had been under construction since 2009. "The rescue operation will not stop until all the blocks of concrete and iron girders have been cleared," said deputy police commissioner Akhilesh Chaturvedi as he announced the toll had risen to 25. "Nearly 300 rescuers, including army and disaster management personnel, are working around the clock to clear the rubble."

Police said they had detained five employees of IVRCL, the contractor behind the construction project, which has denied responsibility for the disaster in the capital of West Bengal state. "Five people of the Hyderabad company have been detained for questioning," said Kolkata deputy commissioner of police Akhilesh Chaturvedi, referring to the contractor. Another police official speaking on condition of anonymity said the five "hold senior positions in the company".

Police earlier said they had registered a case of culpable homicide against the firm, whose offices in Kolkata have been sealed by investigators. Derek O'Brien, a state lawmaker, said

the company had been blacklisted in other states and had a "bad reputation". "The law will take its own course, no one will be spared," he told reporters in Kolkata. Construction of the two-kilometre-long flyover began in 2009 and was supposed to



KOLKATA: Relatives of a man killed in a flyover bridge collapse mourn next to his body yesterday, a day after the disaster. —AFP

be completed within 18 months, but has suffered a series of hold-ups. A company representative infuriated victims on Thursday when he described the disaster as an "act of God".

Yesterday, the company appeared again to deny any respon-

sibility for the disaster, and said the construction had been repeatedly delayed because it had been unable to get the necessary approvals. "Prima facie we feel it is a mere accident for which we also feel very, very sorry," IVRCL's legal chief Seetha Peddpathi told reporters in the southern city of Hyderabad where the company is based. "IVRCL and its staff will cooperate with the investigations and provide maximum support."

'Gross Negligence'

Survivors being treated at a nearby hospital described how tonnes of metal and concrete came crashing down onto the busy street without warning. "The flyover collapsed in front of me. When I tried to escape, I was hit," said housewife Sabita Devi. Hospital manager Sitaram Agarwal said many people were being treated for head and leg injuries sustained in the disaster. Authorities initially struggled to get cranes and other large machinery through the narrow streets of Burrabazar, one of the oldest and most congested parts of the city. The disaster is the latest in a string of deadly construction accidents in India, where enforcement of safety rules is weak and substandard materials are often used. The Times of India said it was "another brutal reminder of (the) shoddy quality of construction and gross neglect of public safety in our cities", calling for a thorough inquiry to determine what went wrong. The construction firm's Mumbai-listed shares slid for a second day yesterday, closing down 9.7 percent at 5.77 rupees a share. —AFP

NORTH KOREA FIRES MISSILE, TRIES TO JAM GPS SYSTEMS

US, JAPAN, S KOREA WARN PYONGYANG

SEOUL/WASHINGTON: North Korea fired another short-range missile off its east coast yesterday, South Korean officials said, as regional leaders met in Washington to discuss the threat of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. It was the latest in a series of North Korean missile launches during what has been an extended period of elevated military tension on the Korean peninsula, triggered by Pyongyang's fourth nuclear test on Jan 6. The launch came as the South Korean coastguard reported that

Korea has been the focus of the US president's talks with the leaders of China, South Korea and Japan.

Obama spoke Thursday of the need to "vigorously enforce the strong UN security measures" imposed on the North after its latest nuclear test and subsequent long-range rocket launch. Pyongyang's state media has labelled the summit a "nonsensical" effort to find fault with the North's "legitimate access to nuclear weapons". Existing UN sanctions ban North Korea from

"North Korea's GPS jamming is a clear act of provocation... we call for an immediate end to it," the South's defence ministry said in a statement. "If North Korea continues its GPS jamming attempts despite our will, we - with close cooperation with the international community - make North Korea pay the price," the statement said without elaborating.

Provocations

In Washington, Obama joined South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Thursday, vowing to ramp up pressure on North Korea in response to its recent nuclear and missile tests. Meeting on the sidelines of a global nuclear security summit in Washington, the three leaders recommitted their countries to each others' defense and warned they could take further steps to counter threats from Pyongyang.

Obama held separate talks with President Xi Jinping of China, the closest North Korea has to an ally, and said they both wanted to see "full implementation" of the latest United Nations sanctions against Pyongyang. But Xi offered no sign that China was prepared to go beyond its consent to the Security Council measures imposed in early March. "We are united in our efforts to deter and defend against North Korean provocations," Obama told reporters after the US-Japan-South Korea meeting. "We have to work together to meet this challenge."

Relations between Park and Abe have been frosty in the past, but the two have been brought together in recent months by shared concerns about North Korea, which conducted a fourth nuclear bomb test on Jan 6 and launched a long-range rocket in February. The United States has sought to encourage improved ties between South Korea and Japan, its two biggest allies in Asia, given worries not only about North Korea but also an increasingly assertive China. —Agencies



North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un visits the Sinhung Machine Plant in South Hamgyong Province. —AFP

around 70 fishing vessels had been forced back to port after GPS navigation issues caused by North Korean radio-wave jamming.

South Korea's defence ministry said the surface-to-air missile was fired at around 12:45 pm (0345 GMT) from the eastern city of Sondok. The range and precise trajectory could not immediately be confirmed, a ministry official said. The South's Yonhap news agency said it flew 100 kilometres (60 miles) into the East Sea (Sea of Japan). The launch came in the middle of a two-day nuclear security summit being hosted by Barack Obama in Washington, at which North

conducting any ballistic missile test, although short-range launches tend to go unpunished.

Last month, the North upped the ante by test-firing two medium-range missiles, which were seen as far more provocative given the threat they pose to neighbours like Japan. Earlier yesterday, Seoul said North Korea was using radio waves to jam GPS signals in South Korea, affecting scores of planes and vessels. The coastguard said 71 out of 332 fishing boats that set out for sea yesterday morning had to return after GPS problems compromised their navigation systems, Yonhap reported.



YANGON: Ethnic Kachin activist Patrick Kum Ja Lee poses for a picture with his wife and prominent Human Rights activist May Sabe Phyu outside Insein prison yesterday. —AP

ARMY MPs SLAM BILL ON SUU KYI 'ADVISOR' ROLE

YANGON: Myanmar military MPs yesterday said a plan to bolster Aung San Suu Kyi's power with a special advisory role was unconstitutional, as the new civilian government tussled with the army just days after taking office. The Southeast Asian nation was dominated by the military for more than half a century until Wednesday when Suu Kyi and her pro-democracy party took power. The Nobel laureate, whose party secured a landslide election win in November, has vowed to rule the country despite a constitutional block on her becoming president.

In a surprise early act of parliamentary business by the new government, Suu Kyi's party proposed a bill to grant her a special "state counsellor" position. If passed it would give the 70-year-old a steering role over parliament, buttressed by the four ministerial posts she already holds in the new cabinet. But in a sign of early turbulence between her party and the still hugely influential army, military MPs challenged the move in an upper house debate yesterday that saw the bill pass its first legislative hurdle. Colonel Myint Swe raised fears the plan would place the "president and the advisor at the same level". "This is in opposition to the constitution. So I would like to suggest the bill be amended according to the constitution," he told lawmakers. Another army lawmaker, Colonel Hla Win Aung, also decried the naming of Suu Kyi in the bill and warned it could "destroy" the balance of power between government branches. The army is reserved a quarter of all parliamentary seats by a junta-era charter.

Meanwhile, a prominent political prisoner was released yesterday after he finished his six-month jail sentence, coincidentally on the day that Myanmar's new, democratically-elected government began working. Patrick Kum Ja Lee's release was on schedule and not ordered freed by the new government. But it serves as a reminder that President Htin Kyaw will soon have to confront the military to free scores of other political prisoners still in jail for speaking out against its rule. Many are supporters of Suu Kyi. —AFP

Kuwait Times BUSINESS

US nonfarm payrolls up solidly; wages rebound

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Ford appoints Alghanim Auto as importer-dealer

18

VIVA records KD 43 million profit

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SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 2016



Ahli United Bank maintains stability, diversity of income

19



SHANGHAI: A man rests on a bench in a busy street in Shanghai yesterday. Chinese factories ramped up activity in March for the first time in nine months, official data showed. — AFP

WORLD EQUITIES SUFFER POOR START

LONDON: Global stock markets slumped yesterday on the first day of the second quarter, with investors rattled over new economic concerns in Japan before vital US data, dealers said. Tokyo fared the worst, spearheading losses across most of Asia as a key survey showed confidence at Japan's manufacturers slumped to a three-year low. Around 1100 GMT, Frankfurt and Paris stock markets were down around 2.0 percent before the looming US jobs data, which provides a vital snapshot of the world's biggest economy and clues on the path of Federal Reserve interest rates.

After a painful sell-off in January and February, world markets had enjoyed a healthy rally in March as many central banks loosened the monetary belt to make borrowing easier. Stocks soared Wednesday after Federal Reserve chief Janet Yellen indicated that the US central bank was unlikely to raise interest rates in the first half of this year, citing ongoing concerns about the slow global economic growth. However, investor sentiment turned negative Thursday on lower commodity prices at the end of a volatile first quarter, as the Fed-driven rally fizzled out.

'Hesitant start' to Q2

"Equity markets are having a hesitant start to the second quarter despite Janet Yellen's dovish speech this week," VTB Capital economist Neil MacKinnon said. "A disappointing business survey in Japan is weighing on sentiment as investors wait for details of today's US jobs report." The Bank of Japan's quarterly Tankan report of 10,000 firms showed sentiment plunged in January-March to plus six from 12. The survey marks the difference between the percentage of firms that are upbeat and those that see conditions as unfavourable.

Forecasts had been for a reading of plus eight. The figures are the worst since Prime Minister Shinzo Abe put his growth drive fully into action in 2013 and will ramp up pressure on him as the economy struggles to gain traction. Analysts also said the figures will likely push the central bank to unveil another round of monetary easing measures, on top of the huge bond-buying scheme already under way and after an unprecedented move to negative interest rates.

Tokyo's Nikkei index dived 3.6 percent, with a stronger yen also hitting exporters. There were sharp losses across Asia,

with Hong Kong down 1.3 percent and Sydney 1.6 percent lower at the close. Seoul, Singapore and Wellington were also heavily sold off. However, Shanghai ended the day with a 0.2-percent gain thanks to end-of-day buying ahead of a long holiday weekend. A surprise jump in a gauge of Chinese manufacturing helped Shanghai post a slender gain although investors were jolted by news that Standard & Poor's had lowered its credit rating outlook on China to negative.

Caution before data

Wall Street diverged Thursday ahead of US Labor Department non-farm payrolls report, which analysts expect will show the economy added 200,000 jobs in March. "We typically see a more cautious approach in the lead up to major economic events and today's US jobs report is one of them as it has the potential to influence the Fed's policy decision, albeit not this month's when a hike appears to be off the table," said analyst Craig Erlam at traders Oanda. He added yesterday that "the sell-off in oil today, putting the (energy) sector under pressure, is weighing on indices". Oil prices fell as ongoing worries about the global supply glut overshadowed the benefits of a weakening dollar.— AFP



TOKYO: Japanese vehicles are parked before being loaded onto a cargo ship for export at Yokohama port, near Tokyo. — AP

JAPAN BUSINESS MOOD SOURS TO 3-YEAR LOW, ADDS TO DOUBT OVER 'ABENOMICS'

BIG FIRMS' FY2016 CAPEX SEEN DOWN 0.9%

TOKYO: Business sentiment among Japan's big manufacturers deteriorated to the lowest in nearly three years and is expected to worsen in the coming quarter, a closely watched central bank survey showed yesterday, heightening pressure on Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the Bank of Japan to do more to shore up the ailing economy. Big firms also plan to cut capital expenditure plans in the current fiscal year, underscoring the challenges the BOJ faces in aggressively printing money to nudge risk-shy companies into boosting spending.

To keep the economy afloat, Abe may have to delay yet again a sales tax hike scheduled for next year. The weak reading will also keep the BOJ under pressure to loosen monetary policy further when it reviews its quarterly forecasts later this month, some analysts say. "This data confirmed the very cautious stance of Japanese firms reflecting the market volatility since January. There's no signs of corporate sentiment bottoming in coming months," said Mari Iwashita, chief market economist at SMBC Friend Securities. "There's more than a 50 percent chance the BOJ will consider easing policy further this month."

The headline index gauging big manufacturers' sentiment stood at plus 6 in March,

half the level seen three months ago and worse than a median market forecast of plus 8, the survey showed. It was the lowest reading since June 2013, as exporters felt the pinch from sluggish emerging market demand and yen rises that erode their competitive advantage overseas. Big non-manufacturers' sentiment dropped to plus 22 from plus 25 three months ago, deteriorating for the first time in six quarters, as spending by overseas visitors moderated.

Sentiment soured for manufacturers and non-manufacturers big and small for the first time since June 2014, when Japan was reeling from the blow of a sales tax hike in April of that year. Both big manufacturers and non-manufacturers expect sentiment to worsen in the coming three months, underscoring companies' concern over the murky global economic outlook. "The slowdown in emerging economies, particularly that of China, has affected business sentiment. The impact was big for big manufacturers with direct exposure to global economic conditions," a BOJ official told reporters in a briefing.

The yen's rise is also expected to hurt profits. Big manufacturers based their business plans on the assumption the dollar would average 117.46 yen in the current fis-

cal year, higher than recent levels around 112 yen, suggesting that corporate profits could be revised down ahead. In a sign uncertainty over the global outlook is hurting companies' spending plans, big firms plan to cut capital expenditure by 0.9 percent for the current fiscal year from year-before levels. Japan's economy shrank in October-December due to weak exports and consumption. Many analysts now expect it to have contracted again in January-March, which would put the country back into recession, commonly defined as two straight quarters of negative growth.

The gloomy survey will add pressure on the BOJ to do more to prop up growth, though many central bankers are reluctant to ease again soon with financial institutions still struggling to digest the impact of January's controversial decision to adopt negative interest rates. The tankan showed financial institutions' sentiment deteriorating sharply in March, most likely due to the pain they are feeling from negative rates and dwindling profit margins. The government, for its part, is already considering compiling a fresh fiscal stimulus package and delaying next year's sales tax hike to prevent external factors from disrupting a fragile economic recovery. — Reuters

FIRST DAY ON THE JOB FOR JAPAN'S NERVOUS RECRUITS

TOKYO: Hundreds of thousands of Japanese started their first day on the job yesterday in an annual ritual born from the country's fast-disappearing jobs-for-life work culture. More than 500 recruits pumped their fists in the air and shouted "yacchae, Nissan" ("go for it, Nissan") at the automaker's welcoming ceremony, while Japan Airlines' new hires-clad in black suits and spotless white shirts-tossed paper aeroplanes inside a giant hangar. April 1 is the start of Japan's fiscal year, a day when new hires-some awkwardly struggling to get comfortable in formal attire-fan out across Tokyo and other major cities to report for their first day of work.

Missing the big day, known as "shinsotsu ikkatsu saiyō" in Japanese, can prove difficult for procrastinators, who often struggle to find jobs after leaving university. Companies visit campuses to get their hands on cream-of-the-crop students before they finish their studies. Among them was Risa Tsunematsu, who admitted she is slightly wary about making the jump from university to the corridors of a big bank. "I'm nervous. It's a new start after university life," the 22-year-old said.

Ryohei Wasada worried the new job would take up a lot of his time compared to university, which he described as the "summer holiday" of his life. "Student life in Japan is really fun. There is no way that my working life will be more fun than that," said the 22-year-old, who is joining the sales department of a kitchen and bathroom supply maker. Over at the Bank of Japan, governor Haruhiko Kuroda tried to ease the nerves of more than 150 aspiring central bankers. "I've been a working adult for about 50 years, but my career at the Bank of Japan is just three years old so I'm only a bit more senior than all of you," the 71-year-old central bank chief said.

'It's all a process'

Some 910,000 people started new jobs countrywide on Friday, although not all are fresh university graduates, according to Kyodo News agency. Japan's post-war working culture has long been dominated by the popular image of selfless employees devoting themselves to the company, working punishing hours to secure the nation's future and accepting they will be moulded in line with the firm's corporate culture. "It's a very important practice that is seen as the right way to transition from education to work," said Yuki Honda, a Tokyo University professor who specializes in youth employment. During Japan's post-war expansion, "the demand for labour was huge so corporate Japan wanted employees to join firms right after graduation", she added. But as the once-soaring economy soured in recent decades, part-time and contract work has become much more common for a younger generation of workers. These days, many frustrated new hires leave their first job within a few years and some critics, including Honda, say the hiring-all-at-once ritual puts unhealthy pressure on students to find employment before graduating. Japanese tend to view it as "abnormal" not to transition right away from school to a job, Honda said. But Aiko Shigeta, a 21-year-old international affairs graduate at Temple University, thinks the hiring process creates a sense of unity. "The majority of the students are guaranteed a job at the end," she said. "In Europe and the United States, you are on your own and have to try to find a job yourself. Here in Japan it's all a process." — AFP

SAINSBURY'S BUYS CATALOGUE CHAIN ARGOS FOR £1.4 BILLION

LONDON: British supermarket group Sainsbury's said yesterday it had clinched a £1.4-billion takeover of Home Retail Group, owner of catalogue chain Argos. The cash-and-stock offer, worth the equivalent of \$2.0 billion or 1.8 billion euros, is aimed at creating a "multi-product, multi-channel" business, the pair said in a joint statement. Argos sells household items, including televisions, furniture and gardening tools.

"The boards of Sainsbury's and Home Retail Group plc are pleased to announce that following further discussions, the Home Retail Group directors now intend unanimously to recommend the acquisition," the statement said. Sainsbury's will pay 0.321 new shares and 55p per share in cash to buy Argos, in a deal which gives Home Retail Group shareholders 12 percent of the combined business. The deal was expected to complete in

the third quarter of this year, subject to regulatory and shareholder approvals.

"The combined business will offer a multi-product, multi-channel proposition, with fast delivery networks, which we believe will be very attractive to customers and which will create value to both sets of shareholders," added Sainsbury's chairman David Tyler on Friday. The sale of HRG's home improvements and gar-

dening chain Homebase to Australian business Wesfarmers is a condition of the deal going through. South African household goods group Steinhoff decided last month to walk away from the bidding process for Home Retail Group, clearing the way for Sainsbury's. At the same time, French household goods group Conforama—which is majority-owned by Steinhoff—agreed a deal to buy electricals retailer Darty. — AFP

TESLA UNVEILS CHEAPER MODEL AIMED AT MASS MARKET

SAN FRANCISCO: Tesla unveiled a new, cheaper model of its electric car aimed at the mass market on Thursday, taking more than 115,000 orders in the past 24 hours—nearly three times the number of cars it produced in all of last year. The company said orders were piling up even though the new car won't be available until late next year. The new Model 3 will have a base price of \$35,000, half that of the two models it now sells—the Model S and the Model X, which start at \$70,000. "The total number of orders for the Model 3 in the past 24 hours has now passed

115,000," said company founder Elon Musk at a presentation of the new car. The Model 3 is scheduled to hit the market late next year. Musk described it as "the final step in the master plan: a mass market, affordable car." With Model 3, Tesla aims to show it can appeal to the general public and produce cars en masse.

It should account for the lion's share of the 500,000 cars that Tesla had set as its production goal for 2020. Last year, it turned out 50,000. Model 3 is designed to have a range of at least 215 miles with a

fully charged battery and be able to carry five adults comfortably. The car will also be compatible with a fast-charging battery system and Tesla's "Autopilot" self-driving system. Special safety features are available at no extra cost, Musk said without going into detail. "Even if you buy no options at all, this will be an amazing car," he said. Some analysts said this moment is as big for Tesla as the unveiling of the iPhone was for Apple.

Before Thursday's presentation, lines formed outside Tesla stores as people waited to place orders for the new car.

Jessica Caldwell, an analyst with the automotive website Edmunds.com, put it this way: "This has to be a first for the automotive industry: lines of people waiting to place an order for a car that won't be available for over a year." "This is the type of buzz that you see with Star Wars movies or new iPhones or even cronuts. And it's not just in Silicon Valley or LA. This is a phenomenon we're seeing across the country," she wrote. "If there's ever been any evidence that Tesla is primed to make the leap to mainstream car buyers, this is it," Caldwell wrote. — AFP



CALIFORNIA: A man looks into the Tesla store in Santa Monica, California, where customers are waiting in line to put a \$1,000 deposit on Tesla Model 3. — AFP

US NONFARM PAYROLLS UP SOLIDLY; WAGES REBOUND

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE RISES TO 5.0%

WASHINGTON: US employment increased solidly in March and wages rebounded, signs of economic resilience that could allow a cautious Federal Reserve to gradually raise interest rates this year. Nonfarm payrolls increased 215,000 last month, the Labor Department said yesterday. Data for January and February was revised slightly down to show 1,000 fewer jobs created than previously reported.

Average hourly earnings increased seven cents. While the unemployment rate rose to 5.0 percent from an eight-year low of 4.9 percent, it was because more Americans continued to return to the labor force, a sign of confidence in the jobs market. The labor market has largely shrugged off slowing global economic growth, a robust US dollar that has hurt manufacturing exports, and cheap oil prices, which have hit energy sector profitability. Fed Chair Janet Yellen said on Tuesday that slowing world growth and lower oil prices posed a downside risk to the US economic outlook, adding that she considered it appropriate for policymakers to "proceed cautiously in adjusting policy." Fed officials last month downgraded their economic growth expectations and forecast only two more rate rises this year. The US central bank raised its benchmark overnight interest rate in December for the first time in nearly a

decade. Financial markets have almost priced out the likelihood of a rate hike at the Fed's June policy meeting and see a roughly 47 percent chance of an increase in November and a 57 percent probability at the December meeting, according to CME FedWatch.

The employment report came on the heels of recent data showing sluggish consumer spending and weak business investment on capital in the first two months of the year, as well as some deterioration in the international trade balance. Those reports prompted economists to slash their first-quarter GDP growth estimates to as low as a 0.9 percent annualized pace from as high as a 2.0 percent rate. The economy grew at a 1.4 percent rate in the fourth quarter.

Wages bounce back

Though employment gains have slowed after averaging 282,000 jobs per month in the fourth quarter, there is little labor market strain from the global slowdown, which helped to ignite a massive stock market sell-off at the start of the year. Wages increased last month, with average hourly earnings rising 0.3 percent. That lifted the year-on-year earnings gain to 2.3 percent from 2.2 percent in February.

Economists say a growth rate of between

3.0 percent and 3.5 percent in wages is needed to lift inflation to the Fed's 2.0 percent target. Though the Fed's preferred inflation measure is currently at 1.7 percent, Yellen has expressed skepticism over the sustainability of gains, citing transitory factors.

There were improvements in other labor market measures. The labor force participation rate, or the share of working-age Americans who are employed or at least looking for a job, rose a tenth of a percentage point to 63 percent, the highest level since March 2014. Employment gains in March were broad-based. But manufacturing lost 29,000 jobs, the largest number since December 2009, despite signs of stabilization in the factory sector. Mining purged 12,000 more jobs last month. Mining payrolls have declined by 185,000 jobs since peaking in September 2014, with three-fourths of the losses in support activities. Oilfield service providers Schlumberger and Halliburton Co have announced thousands of job cuts as they try to cope with reduced profits from a prolonged slump in oil prices. Construction payrolls rose 37,000, increasing for a ninth straight month. Retail employment surged 47,700 after rising strongly in January and February despite weak sales. Government payrolls increased 20,000 last month. — Reuters

UK RAISES MINIMUM WAGE

LONDON: Britain's Conservative government raised the minimum wage by 7.5 percent yesterday in a move denounced by critics as largely symbolic in an era of state austerity. Around 1.8 million employees will benefit from the National Living Wage (NLW). Workers aged 25 and over will now earn a minimum hourly gross wage of £7.20 (\$10.36, 9.10 euros) compared with £6.70 previously. "The National Living Wage will play a central role in moving Britain to a higher wage, lower tax, lower welfare economy," said British finance minister George Osborne. "It will also mark the end of the gender pay gap for some of our lowest paid and hardest working people."

The new increased amount compares with an 8.50 euro minimum wage rate in Germany and almost 9.70 euros in France. In Britain, where unemployment is relatively low at around 5.0 percent, large wage inequalities persist and London School of Economics professor Alan Manning described the NLW as "more symbolic" than anything else. "It's significant but I don't think one should exaggerate its significance," he told AFP. The rise in the NLW represents just 0.1 percent of the country's wage bill, while workers under the age of 18 will still earn below £4.00 an hour as a minimum wage.

The hourly rate of £7.20 is below the amount recommended by the lobby group Living Wage Foundation, which claims that workers aged 18 and over should earn at least £8.25 an hour, rising to £9.40 in London where housing rents tend to be far higher compared with the rest of the country. "Today's new legal minimum is an important step forward in tackling low pay in the UK," said Katherine Chapman, director of the Living Wage Foundation. "We welcome the news that millions of workers will get a pay rise. However, the job is not done when it comes to tackling low pay," she said. "Around six million people earn below the voluntary Living Wage in the UK, with women, young people and part-time workers most affected by low pay."

Key issue for voters

Workers' representatives meanwhile stress that the introduction of the NLW should be seen alongside cuts to welfare payments. Tim Nichols, senior media officer at the Trades Union Congress-Britain's biggest union organization—said "many people on the lowest pay are also reliant on in-work benefits, such as tax credits or housing benefit, to ensure a sufficient minimum household income". Nevertheless, the NLW is a notable turnaround for the Conservative Party of Prime Minister David Cameron after it opposed the introduction of the minimum wage in 1999 when Tony Blair's Labour was in power. "When they opposed it, they thought the national minimum wage would destroy lot of jobs," said Manning.

"The minimum wage is often popular with voters who are actually quite conservative on many issues, because many of them think that if people work hard and can't earn enough to support themselves and their families, there is something wrong with... society." Business lobby group the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) gave a lukewarm response to the National Living Wage. "Companies are committed to raising prosperity and living standards, but for wage increases to be sustainable they must go hand-in-hand with productivity growth," said Josh Hardie, deputy director-general for policy and campaigns at the CBI.

"If the National Living Wage doesn't get this balance right, it will risk being unaffordable for many firms. Smaller businesses and those in key sectors like hospitality, retail and care are likely to be particularly affected," he said. The Federation of Small Businesses has meanwhile called on the Low Pay Commission, an independent body advising the government on the minimum wage, to take into account any economic difficulties as the government looks to lift the NLW to around £9.00 by 2020. — AFP



CEO CONFERENCE TO KICK OFF ITS FIRST EDITION

DUBAI: CEOs and VPs from the Arabian Gulf region and beyond will come together under one roof on April 5, 2016, for the Top CEO Conference and Awards at the Westin Mina Seyahi, Dubai. The event, which is held in recognition of the very best in GCC business leadership, is organized by TRENDS magazine and INSEAD - the leading international business school - and sets the standard for business awards programs in the region by honoring only leaders from publicly listed companies.

Economic diversification and technology were the two most disruptive forces in the GCC last year. As low oil prices continue to adversely affect the government budgets in the Arabian Gulf countries as well, cybersecurity and the digital element pose huge risks for the GCC economies. Regional and international speakers at the TOP CEO Conference will discuss the most pressing issues, including 'Economic Diversification', 'When Tech Kills Your Business' and 'Cybersecurity', with the aim of

finding solutions for economic improvement.

"The biggest challenge for businesses is the disruptive factors that are beyond the control of their boardrooms, which is why the solutions discussed at the Top CEO Conference are of crucial importance," said Julien Hawari, Co-Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Mediaquest Corp. "The Top CEO Conference not only recognizes and celebrates the achievements of the region's leading CEOs, but also provides a platform for the most pressing issues in the financial, economic and business sectors to be openly discussed," he added.

The International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) managing director Christine Lagarde said at a recent event in the UAE that the country's authorities had made the correct measures in building large fiscal and external buffers to advance economic diversification and, more recently, they have taken steps to address the consequences of the sharp drop of oil prices, notably the

reform of fuel subsidies. Lagarde noted that there is a need to pursue gradual fiscal consolidation by raising non-oil revenues and fully phasing out energy subsidies, as well as a requirement to safeguard financial stability and to continue implementing growth-enhancing reforms.

The first edition of the TOP CEO Conference will also play host to the second TOP CEO Awards. The award's stringent and open evaluation procedures position it as the foremost leadership awards ceremony in the region and a benchmark for business leaders and their respective organizations. It has stood out as a distinctive and unique event, as only the CEOs of listed GCC companies are evaluated. The awards are presented following an analysis of the financial statements of these companies, with the assessment process being fully audited to ensure that corporate governance and transparency form part of the overall ranking.

CHINA FACTORIES SCENT HINT OF SPRING; EUROPE REMAINS CHILLY

LONDON: Activity in China's vast factory sector grew for the first time in nine months during March to bring a hint of spring to the global economy, although growth remained weak in Europe, leading to a muted response in financial markets. A survey due later on is expected to show the United States enjoyed a return to growth after five months of contraction alongside another strong jobs report.

Headlining in Asia was a rise in the official version of the Chinese Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) to 50.2, beating forecasts and above the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction. The private Caixin/Markit PMI found output, total new orders and output prices all returned to growth, while a survey of the service sector surprised with its strength.

"It does seem to indicate that the manufacturing sector is warming up a bit," said Raymond Yeung, senior economist at ANZ in Hong Kong. "New orders were up 2.8 points, which is a very strong figure." "We think there are basically two factors driving the recovery: the first is a possible acceleration in infrastructure spending. The second is a broader pick-up in external demand." However, while euro zone factories rounded off the first quarter in slightly better shape than initially thought the growth in activity remained weak despite the deepest price-cutting since late 2009.

The euro zone survey suggested manufacturing is still dragging on the

wider economy. It came soon after the European Central Bank unleashed a bold easing package in its latest attempt to spur growth and drive up inflation - which at -0.1 percent in March was nowhere near its 2 percent target goal - but it doesn't seem to be working yet. Despite the price-cutting and ECB stimulus, Markit's PMI for the euro zone only rose to 51.6 from February's year-low of 51.2, only slightly better than an earlier flash estimate of 51.4.

The bloc's economy grew just 1.6 percent in 2015 and the first quarter's PMIs suggest there will be little improvement anytime soon. "The softening of forward looking components in the past two months is consistent with our scenario of a slower growth in Q2-Q3," said Apolline Menuet at Barclays. Looking at the country breakdowns, growth remained weak in Germany and activity contracted in France but Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria and in particular Ireland saw robust expansions. In Britain, outside the currency bloc, manufacturing growth edged up in March from its weakest level in nearly three years, suggesting the sector will contribute little to economic growth in early 2016.

Chinese spring

The relatively upbeat Chinese surveys should give some comfort to Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen who this week cited the global risks emanating from there as one reason to be cautious on raising U.S. rates. Yet, China watchers still

suspect more support will be needed from Beijing, especially if it wants to avoid a politically unsettling rise in unemployment.

Ratings agency Standard & Poor's underlined the need for faster reform when it changed China's credit outlook to negative on Thursday. The economic pulse across the rest of Asia was more erratic. South Korea's PMI bounced to within a whisker of 50 in March while stronger shipments of smartphones and steel saw exports decline at the slowest pace in four months. Indonesia put an end to 17 straight months of contraction as its PMI popped up to 50.6, with output, new orders and employment all improving. Japan, however, was busy going backwards as the Markit/Nikkei PMI of 49.1 was the lowest since February 2013.

That echoed a gloomy survey of manufacturers from the Bank of Japan which found sentiment at its darkest in nearly three years, a result that lopped 3 percent off the Nikkei. All of which heightened pressure on Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the central bank to do more to shore up the stuttering economy. "This data confirmed the very cautious stance of Japanese firms reflecting the market volatility since January. There's no signs of corporate sentiment bottoming in coming months," said Mari Iwashita, chief market economist at SMBC Friend Securities. "There's more than a 50 percent chance the BOJ will consider easing policy further this month." — Reuters



FORD APPOINTS ALGHANIM AUTO AS IMPORTER-DEALER

KUWAIT: Ford yesterday announced that it has selected Alghanim Auto as a new importer-dealer in Kuwait for the sale and service of Ford vehicles in the country. Alghanim Auto is a part of the Alghanim Industries group of companies, dedicated to support the Ford vehicle sales and services in Kuwait. "We welcome AlghanimAuto to the Ford family," said Kalyana Sivagnanam, Vice President Marketing, Sales and Service, Ford Middle East and Africa. "Offering our customers in Kuwait world class products and a best in class ownership experience remains our priority, and we are confident that Alghanim Auto will provide a strong network of world class facilities in order to offer our customers the very best levels of Ford services and conveniences."

"We are proud to be selected as a new importer-dealer for Ford in Kuwait," said Omar K Alghanim, Chief Executive Officer, Alghanim Industries. "Our company has established one of the best reputations in the region for superior customer satisfaction and service. Our ongoing commitment to excellence offers a one-stop convenience for all Ford customers' automotive requirements. "We are very excited to work closely with Ford and go even further with existing and future Ford customers by elevating their experience as part of our exciting, joint journey."

This partnership will allow Ford to utilize Alghanim Industries' deep market expertise to expand the Ford customer base in Kuwait. Ford is committed to bring 30 new vehicles to Middle East and Africa by 2020 - part of its new regional strategy. "Kuwait is an important market for Ford, and we believe this announcement will help increase our footprint in the country. Together with our new partner, we will grow the business and deliver excellent products and customer experience in Kuwait," said Thierry Sabbagh, Managing Director, Ford Middle East.

AUB CONTINUES ITS STRONG PERFORMANCE

BANK MAINTAINS STABILITY AND DIVERSITY OF ITS INCOME

KUWAIT: The Chairman of Ahli United Bank - Kuwait, Dr Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf stressed in the general assembly convened on Thursday that the management of Ahli United Bank, with its successful strategy and conservative policy, together with its risk-prudent management and its commitment with the highest standards of Banking practices, was able to continue its strong performance and maintain the stability and diversity of its income, along with development of its financial indicators and the lines of its businesses; notwithstanding the difficult circumstances witnessed in 2015, represented in the slump in oil prices, and the sharp fall in the gulf stock markets indicators, in coincidence with the adverse developments resulting from the increased instability in the geopolitical conditions in the region.

Quorum in the general assembly reached 93.56% and it ratified distributions of cash dividends by 5% and bonus shares by 10% of the issued and paid up capital (i.e. 5 fils per share, and 10 shares for each 100 shares respectively).

Strong Financial Indicators

Dr Al-Mudhaf indicated that Ahli United Bank - Kuwait, was able to maintain strong financial indicators, whereas the net profits amounted to KD 42.8 million for the year 2015 against KD 47 million for the year 2014, following charging additional precautionary provisions for the year 2015 totaling KD 8.1 million, along with an exceptional provision for the impairment in value amounting to KD 7.9 million, and the other precautionary provisions, to hedge for the market volatilities following the sharp slump in oil prices in 2015.

Dr Al-Mudhaf expressed his satisfaction for the return on average shareholders' equity (ROAE) in Ahli United Bank - Kuwait reached 12.7%, notwithstanding taking precautionary optional and exceptional provisions, thereby ranking on the top of the return on average shareholders' equity on the level of Banks operating in Kuwait.

AUBK realized a return on average assets (ROAA) by 1.2%, which is among the highest rates in the market, along with realizing gains by 30.2 fils per share for the year 2015, and this reflects the Bank's financial position strength and its continued capability to realize returns from the Bank core business activities. Returns on Depositors Investment Accounts Exceeding the Returns in the Banking Market During the Year 2015. Dr Al-Mudhaf pointed out that the returns on investment accounts in Ahli United Bank - Kuwait, surpassed the returns in the Banking market in 2015, stressing that these returns are among the highest returns given by Kuwaiti Banks.

In accordance with the Bank business results in 2015, the return on annual investment accounts reached 2.11% per annum, while the return on semi-annual investment account reached 1.6% per annum, and the return on saving accounts reached 1.55% per annum. Al-Mudhaf said also that assets rose to KD 3,904 million by the end of 2015, against KD 3,597 million at the end of 2014. This was attributable to the increase in the funding portfolio by KD 200 million, to reach KD 2,680 million, at the end of 2015.

Customers confidence came in support of this growth, whereas the Bank total customer deposits at the end of 2015 rose by 8.4% to reach 2,661 million compared to KD 2,454 million at the end of 2014. Dr Al-Mudhaf

showed that in accordance with Basel III recommendations, the capital adequacy standard reached 15.51% (before the proposed distributions), thus exceeding the minimum requirement of 12.5% determined by the Central Bank of Kuwait, whereby these positive result reflect the Bank's adoption of a balanced approach and conservative risk management policies.

High Credit Ratings

On the credit ratings, Dr Al-Mudhaf pointed out to AUBK's success in maintaining its high credit rating made by the International Credit Rating Agencies. Fitch Rating affirmed the Bank long-term credit adequacy at A+, and on the short term at F1, with stable future outlook. Moody's affirmed the Bank's local currency deposits at A2 with stable future outlook. Capital Intelligence affirmed the Bank's long term foreign curren-

their loyalty and support they have accorded to the Bank. Our thanks are extended also to AUBK's valued customers for the confidence they place in the Bank which is a source of pride, and drives us to continue working to maintain the outstanding position that AUBK enjoys. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I also express our thanks and appreciation to our executive management for their efficiency in performing their duties, and to all Bank staff for their dedication and continued efforts they expend to realize these results and to enhance the position of the Bank.

The Chief Executive Officer, Richard Groves said, "In my first year in Ahli United Bank - Kuwait, I am pleased that the Bank witnessed another year of strong underlying growth, notwithstanding the continued global and regional economic challenges and difficulties. The Board of Directors approved a new, five year strategy for the Bank in March

the international "The Banker" magazine for the third consecutive year. This award was in appreciation of the Bank's accomplishments and progress in providing distinguished Islamic Banking services.

In addition, the Bank was awarded the title of "The Second Most Secure Islamic Bank in Kuwait for 2015" by "Global Finance" which also included Ahli United Bank in the list of the Most Secure Banks in the GCC. The selection came after a strict evaluation process of the stability of regional Banks. During the year the Bank also received the Quality Award in Banking Operations for 2015 from JP Morgan Chase and, for the fourth year in a row, the Bank received CommerzBank's Annual Award for Payments in recognition of the excellent performance in executing trade and financial payments. These awards reflect the Bank's high level of operational competence.



cy credit rating at A+, and enhanced the foreign currency short term credit rating at A2. These ratings reflect the strength of the Bank's financial position, with its stability and capability to realize good performance in future.

Dr Al-Mudhaf concluded his statement in the general assembly saying, "On behalf of my colleagues members of the Board of Directors, the Executive Management of AUBK and myself, I extend our deepest thanks and appreciation to His Highness the Amir of the State Shaikh Subah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Subah, and his Crown Prince, Shaikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Subah, may God protect them, praying Almighty Allah to help them for the welfare and prosperity of our beloved country Kuwait. I also extend my thanks and gratitude to the officials in the Central Bank of Kuwait, headed by the Governor, Dr. Mohammad Yousef Al-Hashel, for their sound management of the monetary policy in the country and their objective directions and continued monitoring to ensure the stability and integrity of the Banking system.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to all our shareholders for

2015. The agreed Vision for the Bank during 2015-2019 is "To become a leading innovative Islamic Bank operating with international standards while placing our customers always First".

Our mission includes the provision of innovative Sharia-compliant financial solutions, competitive products and quality services for customers; to maintain the highest level of corporate governance and risk management with a solid capital base; to achieve maximum returns for shareholders on a sustainable basis; to develop our human resources and in a meritocratic management structure, thereby becoming an employer of choice; to adopt the latest technology to meet the needs of our customers; and to contribute to the social and economic advancement of local communities in line with our commitment to corporate social responsibility.

Several Awards in 2015

Groves expressed his pride that AUBK won several awards during the year 2015, that underscore our positive growth in 2015. As a result of implementing best Banking practices, the Bank received the award of the "Best Islamic Bank in Kuwait for 2015" from

Future Prospects

Groves went on to say, "We look forward to achieving more success and progress in 2016 and in the years to come to satisfy the aspirations of our clients with the rapidly changing developments in the Banking sector. We also emphasize the importance of diversity and continued development in our services and products thereby continuing to add value to our Banking activity. Again, this approach is underscored by the positive reviews issued by the international credit ratings agencies in 2015.

Groves added, I would like to express my gratitude to the Board of Directors for their active and continued support and invaluable guidance throughout the year and similarly to our Fatwa & Sharia Supervision Board. I also wish to thank the Governor and staff of the Central Bank of Kuwait for their inestimable support and guidance for the Bank and management. "I would like to offer my deepest thanks to all our clients for their ongoing business and the faith they place in us and to all my colleagues in Ahli United Bank, Kuwait, for their professionalism, commitment and hard work which have been essential in achieving another year marked by a strong performance and sustainable growth".

HOW UK COMPANY FORMATION AGENTS FUEL FRAUD DATA SHOWS MILLIONS FLOWED THROUGH 'DORMANT' BUSINESSES

LONDON: British government efforts to crack down on money laundering and fraud through UK businesses are failing to tackle a key area - the role of company formation agents - a Reuters study of the sector shows. Some formation agents, who typically offer to create new businesses for fees of about 200 pounds (\$288) or less, fail to perform significant due diligence on who their customers are or why they are buying new companies, according to lawyers. The agents offer to set up companies within a day or even a few hours, allowing time for only minimal checks.

The weaknesses of the system make it vulnerable to abuse. A Reuters analysis of bank transaction data gives a unique insight into how newly-formed UK businesses were used to conceal huge flows of money that originated in Russia and eastern Europe. The bank transaction data spanned 2006 to 2008; such data is rarely available and Reuters was unable to obtain more up-to-date information. Frances Coulson, head of insolvency and litigation at Moon Beever solicitors, said the data showed how

illicit money passes through Britain.

She said such flows still continue because no regulatory or investigatory changes have had any significant effect in clamping down on the practice. "This is going on now and all the time," said Coulson, who is a trustee director of the Fraud Advisory Panel, a body set up by the Institute for Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. "All the indicators are that it's getting worse." Coulson said better due diligence - such as checking identification documents - by company formation agents and the UK corporate register, Companies House, would help combat fraud.

Formation agents, also known as company service providers, are regulated by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the UK tax collector, which maintains a list of approved agents. However, HMRC does not publish the list, thus preventing potential customers from easily checking the status of an agent. New rules coming into effect later this year are intended to improve corporate transparency. From June, British authorities will

begin compiling and publishing details of "people with significant control" of businesses. The aim is to prevent fraudsters from setting up companies whose directors and shareholders are nominees - people who are directors in name only and are acting on behalf of someone else - or opaque corporations. However, critics say there are no new funds to help police the system.

Secret millions

An indication of the scale of fraud through UK companies can be found in data detailing 1.3m transactions that originated in Russia and Eastern Europe and passed through two US banks between April 2006 and November 2008. A Reuters analysis of the data shows that nearly \$2 billion was paid into the bank accounts of newly-created UK companies and limited liability partnerships (LLPs) that went on to claim in corporate filings that they were not trading and were dormant. Receiving large sums of money while claiming to be dormant is a breach of UK company and tax laws.—Reuters



VIVA PROFIT HITS KD 43 M

TOTAL REVENUES REACH KD 277 MILLION

KUWAIT: Kuwait Telecommunications Company (VIVA) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Extraordinary General Meeting at the Regency Hotel on 31 March 2016, and the attendance represented 76.65% of the number of ordinary shares of the company. The AGM approved the board of directors' report and the auditors' report and the sharia committee's report for the year ending on 31 December 2015, and the whole clauses mentioned in the AGM's agenda.

In addition, the AGM approved financial statements and the board of directors' recommendation to not distribute any dividends for the fiscal year ended 31 December 2015. On the other hand, the EGM approved the whole agenda's clauses including the amendments on the memorandum of association and the policy according to the companies' law 1/2016 and the instructions issued by the Capital Markets Authority.

Dr Mahmoud Ahmad Abdulrahman, Chairman of the Board, said: "In 2015, VIVA was able to generate KD 43 million in net profit (earnings per share of 86 fils) compared to KD 40 million (earning per share 81 fils) in 2014. These results reveal the solid performance of the company's revenues and operations through the continued upward trend of financial and operational indicators.

This reflected positively on shareholder equity which reached KD 93 million, also the Company's board of directors recommended not to distribute any dividends for the fiscal year ended 31 December 2015, this recommendation is subject to the approval of the



shareholder's at the annual general assembly and the specialized regulating authority.

"These excellent results foster VIVA's position as leader Telecom Company in Kuwait and the region, due to plans, strategies, serv-

ices and creative offers that meet deeply the market's needs and the customers' expectations," concluded Dr Abdulrahman. Eng Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Badran, VIVA's Chief Executive Officer said: "VIVA was able to accomplish this growth in an extremely competitive telecom market in Kuwait. VIVA was able to maintain its position as the second largest telecom operator in the Kuwaiti market in term of subscribers and revenues, which positively affected the company's financial performance, expanded our market share while increasing our customer base by 2% to reach 2.5 million subscribers in 2015.

Total revenues reached KD 277 million, representing a strong growth of 16% compared to the same period last year." "VIVA continues to look forward and benefit from the best new technologies to provide our clients with advanced innovative services while achieving further growth and accomplishments. We are proud to be the first leading telecom company to launch the Voice Over Long Term Evolution (VoLTE) in partnership with Huawei for the first time in Kuwait and the Middle East.

This is in addition to VIVA's commercial presence across Kuwait, which has expanded to 70 branches, enabling us to be closer to our customers and to meet the growing

demand for our products and services. Our achievements were also recognized in the second half of the current year as shown by our winning of several awards for excellence in the Kuwaiti telecom sector, including "Best Industry Call Center" and "Best Medium Help Desk" from Insights - Middle East Call Center Awards 2015, the only Call Centre dedicated, Professional Services Organization in the Middle East," continued Al-Badran.

Al-Badran concluded: "I would like to express my appreciation to the whole VIVA family, including all our employees, our business partners, customers and shareholders, to whom we owe our success." Abdulaziz Abdullah Al Qatie, Chief Financial Officer said: "VIVA's performance continued to be steady and strong which enhanced the company's main financial indicators, and increased its customer base, where the rate of return on total assets stood at 16%, while the percentage of return on equity reached 46% during 2015. On the other hand, the company managed to reduce funding to equity ratio of x1.71 at the end of 2014 to x0.78 at the end of 2015. This has positively affected free cash flow, which has reached KD 32 million in 2015, reflecting a growth of 67%, compared to 2014."

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Weekender

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A model presents a creation for Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology Emerging Design Collection at the 'BIFT ELLASSAY' Scholarship Awarding Ceremony during China Fashion Week in Beijing. — AP (See Page 28)

King of rock star chic Hedi Slimane leaves YSL

SEE PAGE 27

Kutcher thinks parenthood is 'greatest'

The 38-year-old actor dotes on 18-month-old Wyatt - whom he has with his wife Mila Kunis - and can think of nothing better than being a father. He gushed to E! News: "It's legitimately the greatest thing ever." Ashton is also excited about his latest venture, new Netflix series 'The Ranch', in which he stars alongside former 'That '70s Show' co-star Danny Masterson, and the two actors can see a lot of similarities between their new characters and their former alter egos. Ashton - who plays failed semi-pro NFL player Colt - said: "I think the magic thing is it has that same feeling of a couple friends hanging out or a couple brothers hanging out." And Danny - who portrays his

brother Rooster - added of the series: "It's usually Hollywood making fun of Middle America and we wanted to be Middle America making fun of Hollywood." Ashton recently admitted he doesn't let his young daughter eat sweets so gave her a toy egg filled with raisins for Easter recently, rather than traditional chocolate treats. He said: "We didn't want to put candy in [her Easter basket] because she's one-and-a-half and she's not quite ready. We're not quite ready for her to be ready for candy, so we did Cheerios and raisins. She loved the raisins!"



Naomi Campbell loves Idris Elba 'dearly'

The 45-year-old supermodel has laughed off reports she is dating the 'Luther' actor - who recently split from girlfriend Naiyana Garth - because they have been friends for so long and she would never think of him in that way. She said: "I don't know why [people thought we were dating]. Because I've known Idris for like for 10 to 15 years, 15 years. And when he takes a picture of me on my fashion events for my charity, no problem there. "All of a sudden, bing-bam-boom, we're a couple. It's craziness. I mean we are very good friends. I trust him. We have a great friendship. "I mean, I've never had the press push me to be with someone and it's so wrong. "I love him as a friend dearly. I always will. So that part they got right but they got it in all the wrong context." Naomi is incredibly proud of the 43-year-old actor but wishes he had received more recognition for his "brilliant" work. She told E! News: "And I'm so happy for all the success he's having because he's bloody brilliant. He deserves it. I'm sorry he didn't get that BAFTA, he deserved that BAFTA in England."



Steven Tyler hates modern technology

Although the 68-year-old Aerosmith singer "loves notoriety" he is not a fan of selfie culture, social media or society's general obsession with the Internet and thinks people are "dying slowly" online. Speaking to Rolling Stone magazine, he said: "Everybody's got a camera attached to their iPhone, so you can't go anywhere without a picture. I have a great T-shirt that says 'SCREW YOUR SELFIE' that I walk through airports with. "You are what you eat. Sleep with one eye open. Follow your dreams. There's a lot of them. Also, people today are dying slowly. They're either on the Internet too much and they lose their job, or they're fucking eating too much. All that stuff is going to take you down. It's as obvious as balls on a tall dog." Someone who shares his aversion to modern life is Foo Fighters frontman Dave Grohl and the 'I Don't Want to Miss a Thing' hit-maker classes him as one of his heroes. He said: "He could have gone the way of the rest of Nirvana, but he came out from behind the drums and became a guitar-playing lead singer. The two of us are birds of a feather. You won't meet two more country, down-to-earth, help-my-wife-make-the-pie type of people than myself and David."



Rosie O'Donnell will never get married again

The 54-year-old comedienne, who has walked down the aisle twice before, is adamant she'll never tie the knot again after her divorce from Michelle Rounds was finalised at the Manhattan Supreme Court in New York yesterday. Speaking to reporters as she left the matrimonial court, according to the New York Post newspaper, she declared: "She'll never marry again. You can print that!" Rosie married Michelle, 44, in 2012 but their romance was short-lived as they split just two years later in 2014. The brunette beauty filed for divorce from the headhunter shortly after they announced their split, but they have spent the last 15 months fighting over money and how they would raise their three-year-old adopted daughter, Dakota. And this wasn't the first split Rosie has been through as she also went through a similar ordeal when she called time on her relationship with Kelli Carpenter-O'Donnell in 2007. The couple, who have children Chelsea, Blake and Vivienne together, got married in 2004 after just a short time of dating, but their union was annulled later that year when the California courts ruled gay marriages were illegal. The pair stayed together but separated three years later. Rosie also has now-grown-up son Parker, who she took in as an infant in 1995.





Hiddleston doesn't think he'll play **James Bond**

The 35-year-old actor has been honest about his interest in the role and his desire to take over 007's tuxedo when Daniel Craig walks away from the part. Hiddleston's 'Thor: The Dark World' co-star and friend Idris Elba is also being tipped for the iconic part but he insists they've never discussed it and he has no control over the rumor mill. When asked if he and Elba have ever talked about Bond, he quipped: "I know, right? We should. What the hell is going on? Honestly, I have no control over it." The Bond rumors intensified after Hiddleston appeared in a scene in BBC TV series 'The Night Manager' ordering 007's signature drink, a vodka Martini. But the actor insists it means nothing. He told The Daily Beast: "Oh, right! Yeah! Honestly, I didn't think about it as I said it. I can't remember if it was in the script or I improvised it. I'm pretty sure I improvised it though because, actually, [co-star] Hugh Laurie really loves a vodka Martini. So I was just in that mode "It's pretty great that in the age of box sets and Netflix, to still have it be (a TV event). I'm so happy to hear that people have set their watches and rushed back early to tune in."



Kendall Jenner secretly dating **Jordan Clarkson**

The 20-year-old model was spotted out with the 23-year-old basketball star in Hollywood on Wednesday and it has now been claimed they have actually been together for "months". A source told People magazine: "They have been secretly dating for months and they are super into each other." He is super sweet and a total gentleman and Kendall loves that." The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star was most recently romantically linked with One Direction hunk Harry Styles, but that wasn't a serious relationship as the 'Little Things' hitmaker - who she first dated in 2013 - didn't want a commitment. A source said: "She really likes Harry but he's like any other young rockstar and has trouble committing." Kendall's friend Selena Gomez recently revealed her pal had a secret boyfriend. When Capital FM presenter Roman Kemp asked if he could audition to join Selena's famous squad, she said: "Maybe not for the squad necessarily but boyfriend material is always good... none of them are single just so you know. "Taylor [Swift] is not single, Gigi [Hadid] is not single, neither is Kendall. I am the only single one!" In February, Kendall was said to be "flattered" by the interest shown in her by soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo. The 31-year-old sportsman first hinted at his admiration for Kendall by liking one of her photographs on Instagram and followed that up by sending her a series of flirty messages inviting her out to party with him when she was in Barcelona, Spain. A source said: "Kendall is very flattered by the attention as Ronaldo is one of the most famous men in the world. "She was still hurting from Harry so welcomed the attention he was giving her but didn't want to make a big thing out of it." — Bangshowbiz

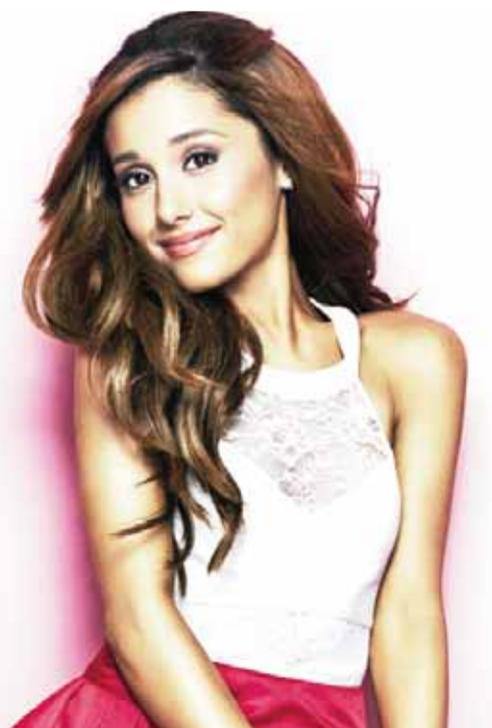
Nick Jonas wore a purity ring understanding the implications

The 'Jealous' hitmaker and his brothers, Joe and Kevin, wore the jewelry when they were growing up as a sign of chastity but he admits it wasn't really their choice but "demanded" by someone at the church. Explaining where the rings came from, he said: "I came from an incredibly religious home, growing up my dad was a pastor, and much like The First Family or people in front of the public eye, we were highly scrutinized as a family within the church and looked at as, well I guess you would call an example of what that family image should be. So long before our career started in music, that was what we were dealing with. "There was a person in the church who at one point demanded that all the kids in the youth group put these purity rings on and make this commitment, so without a full understanding of what we were stepping into, we all made this commitment." The 23-year-old singer ditched the ring when he "fell in love" and started to "make his own choices". He added in a Reddit AMA: "So I started making my own choices, fell in love with somebody, made the choice to have sex with them, and from that point on it was about me being a man and being okay with my choices. And then it related to my art and people's view of me and the public eye."



Grande 'almost died' during her tour

The 'Dangerous Woman' hitmaker was waiting to be propelled on stage when the contraption snapped and nearly crushed her during her Honeymoon tour last year. She explained: "Opening night of my Honeymoon tour I almost died. For real, I'm not exaggerating. I usually exaggerate, but I'm not. "You know how they have those toaster things where people come up from the stage and you pop up? Something happened with mine and I was singing the beginning of 'Love Me Harder' and I was going up on the thing, and long story short, the thing I was standing on had this wooden plank and it snapped!" The 22-year-old singer bravely channelled her inner "Superman" and managed to get out of the sticky situation. Speaking on Alan Carr: Chatty Man, she added: "The thing was still going up so I was being pushed against the stage, and it was like Indiana Jones, and it was really scary. "I had to Superman myself out of the thing, and my guitar guy helped me get out, and then I went on stage a different way. It was really scary."





In this Tuesday, March 22, 2016 photo filmmaker Patrick O'Brien, who was diagnosed with ALS in 2005 at age 30, sits for a portrait in Chelsea. — AP

Using just his eyes, filmmaker captures his fight with ALS

Patrick O'Brien was a young, budding New York City filmmaker and DJ known as "TransFatty" when his legs suddenly started trembling uncontrollably. Walking became a struggle. He'd lose his balance and often fall down. Then, in 2005, came the diagnosis: amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS. The 30-year-old native of Kensington, Maryland, was given two to five years to live.

But rather than let it defeat him, O'Brien - whose DJ name came from his love of junk food - turned the cameras on himself and wrote, directed and produced an acclaimed new documentary. "TransFatty Lives" captures O'Brien's rapid deterioration and the unexpected turns his life took over the next decade, including a whirlwind relationship that led to the birth of his son, Sean, and his eventual breakup with Sean's mother. No longer able to speak or move, O'Brien finished the documentary by communicating to his family and film collaborators Lasse Jarvi, Doug Pray and others using a computer system that lets him type out words through eye movements.

The film won the audience award for best documentary at last year's Tribeca and Milan film festivals. It had a short theatrical release in New York and Los Angeles, and is available for download on digital platforms. A screening is slated for Sunday at the Showcase Cinemas in Revere, Massachusetts.

Story to share

O'Brien, now 41 and living in a center for ALS patients in nearby Chelsea, Massachusetts, said the response has been his "wildest dream come true." "We knew we had a story to share," he wrote to The Associated Press this week using the same typing system that allowed him to complete the film. "Witnessing friends, family and strangers come together to help shoot, edit and produce the film is just as much a part of the story as is my getting ALS."

The film unflinchingly captures how O'Brien lost control of his legs and arms, needed a feeding tube after losing the ability to swallow, and was placed on a ventilator when he could no longer expand and contract his diaphragm. O'Brien balances those emotionally wrenching moments with an impish sense of humor.

He has beers poured into his feeding tube. He sits in his wheelchair naked in front of the White House to raise awareness about ALS. He takes the now-famous "ice bucket challenge" surrounded by young women.

"I know how difficult it was for him to make that movie, both emotionally and physically," said Barry Berman, CEO of the Chelsea Jewish Foundation, which runs the ALS home where O'Brien now lives. "Hopefully, Patrick will inspire others to keep moving through their own adversities."

Steve Saling, who also has ALS and encouraged

O'Brien to join him at the Leonard Florence Center for Living, said the film shows the "harsh reality" of ALS, a gradually debilitating disease affecting motor neurons that allow the brain to control voluntary movements.

The rate and progression of ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease, varies. But loss of speaking, eating and breathing functions is common. Senses like sight, touch, hearing, taste and smell aren't generally affected.

Disables superhero

O'Brien's mother, Bonnie O'Brien, said it was hard for the family during the filming, but they never once considered asking him to stop. "This kept him going," Bonnie said from her home in College Park, Maryland. "It's our life on that film." The roughly 1 1/2-hour-long film is framed as a letter from father to son.

"I don't want you to be afraid of me," O'Brien says at the film's outset, using his computer-generated voice. "I want you to know your dad, who I used to be and who I am now." He expresses hope he'll be there when his son is older. "We have a lot to talk about. Trust me," O'Brien says at the film's close. "I've had an amazing life so far, and I'm thankful for all the people that have helped me through it - most of all you."

But it's been years since O'Brien has seen his son. He's not even sure Sean, now 8, has seen the film. The boy lives in Largo, Florida, with his mother, a family friend named Laura Silverthorn, according to Bonnie O'Brien. "People tell me Sean is a little too young for the film, but I'm not sure. Sean is tough," O'Brien wrote to the AP. "Maybe Sean will hate the film. He doesn't have to love it. The one person I was hoping would like it is Laura. If she liked it, I just might die with a smile on my face after all."

The couple broke up not long after Sean's birth. O'Brien and his family say the breakup wasn't acrimonious; it just became too much for Laura to care for both O'Brien and a new baby. It was O'Brien's decision to return to his family as his health worsened, they say in the film. Since moving to Massachusetts in 2010, O'Brien has found a measure of comfort.

During a recent visit, he sported flaming pink hair that matched his room's hot pink paint. His wheelchair console let him control everything in the room, from the television to the window shades, temperature and lights. But O'Brien's time is limited. Lately, he fears his eyesight is failing him, possibly robbing him of his last means of contact.

"I'm worried about getting locked in," O'Brien wrote. "I have to tell myself to not be afraid." Until then, he's looking for new stories to tell. "I have a few ideas brewing," he wrote. "One is about a disabled superhero." — AP

'Batman v Superman' hits \$530 million globally

"Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" continued to dominate the global box office on Wednesday, picking up \$28 million worldwide. The superhero match-up's total stands at \$530.4 million. Domestically, it earned \$8.1 million, pushing the stateside haul past \$200 million after six days of release. In China, "Batman v Superman" has earned \$69.4 million since opening last weekend.

The numbers are impressive, but Warner Bros needs the film to be a juggernaut. The studio invested \$250 million to produce the film with the hopes that it would inspire an interconnected series of comic-book films to rival those made by Marvel. "Batman v Superman" is intended to lead into two Justice League films, a super-team that is DC Comics' answer to the

Avengers, and there are a number of standalone films centered on the likes of Wonder Woman and the Flash that are slated to hit theaters in the coming years.

Reviews for "Batman v Superman" have been harsh, with critics faulting the film for being over-stuffed. Audiences have been gentler, handing the film a B CinemaScore. Despite the reviews, "Batman v Superman" is expected to easily top the box office this weekend, pulling in roughly \$66 million. Zack Snyder directs "Batman v Superman," with Ben Affleck taking on the Dark Knight and Henry Cavill reprising the role of the Man of Steel. — Reuters



John Green producing underdog soccer film

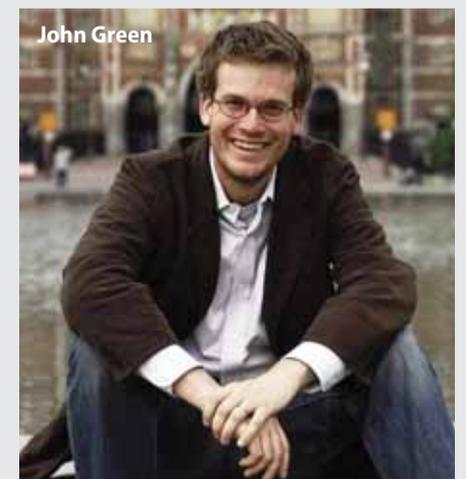
Fox 2000 is developing a British soccer movie with "The Fault in Our Stars" author John Green, Rosianna Halse Rojas and Temple Hill Entertainment. The story centers on the AFC Wimbledon's origins in 2002 and how, over the course of just a few years, a rag-tag group of underdogs managed to climb five tiers and become a professional team in the Football League.

Temple Hill, which produced the hit 2014 movie "The Fault in Our Stars," and Green both have first-look deals at the studio. Erin Siminoff and Molly Saffron are overseeing the project for Fox 2000, while Isaac Klausner is overseeing for Temple Hill.

The club's origins stem from Wimbledon FC, one of the oldest and most storied British football organizations, being moved 56 miles north to Milton Keynes in 2002, despite massive opposition. In response, a group of die-hard fans decided to start a new amateur club from scratch at the bottom of the ninth tier with the aim of the newly formed AFC Wimbledon always being owned by its fans.

Green announced the news on his Twitter account. He also described the project in a post titled "The Greatest Sports Story Never Told" on Medium. "Most of my professional life has been devoted to telling stories for and about teenagers," he wrote. "But after my novels 'The Fault in Our Stars' and 'Paper Towns' were adapted into movies, I pitched the producers (Temple Hill) and studio (Fox 2000) of those movies a somewhat different

story, about the greatest underdog sports story you've never heard, starring a bunch of middle-aged people with absolutely no athletic talent. And today, an agreement was announced, so I wanted to drop by Medium and explain why my next film project is about not American teenagers, but a lower league English football club." Green was an executive producer on Fox's 2015 adaptation of his novel "Paper Towns," which Temple Hill produced. An adaptation of his novel "Looking for Alaska" has been in development at Paramount for several years with Rebecca Thomas coming on board to direct last June. Temple Hill is also producing. — Reuters





Musician Sean Lennon



Singers Michael Stipe and Karen Elson perform together.

Musicians turn out for **David Bowie** tribute concerts



Singer Deborah Harry

A sold-out Carnegie Hall audience joined a children's chorus in a singalong to David Bowie's "Space Oddity" Thursday, a sweet end to a tribute concert that turned into a memorial through some bizarre timing.

Jakob Dylan, Michael Stipe, the Flaming Lips and Heart's Ann Wilson were among the artists who joined Bowie's former collaborator Tony Visconti and other musicians who had performed with the late rock star. "God bless David Bowie," Dylan said after performing the 1970s anthem "Heroes."

Organizers of an annual benefit for music education that focuses on the work of a particular artist had decided last fall that Bowie would be featured for its 13th year. They publicly announced it in January - just hours before Bowie's family said the rock star had died on Jan 10. The concert sold out in two hours, demand so fierce that a second show was added for Friday at Radio City Music Hall.

After Bowie died, so many artists who were invited to perform said they wanted to do it that organizers didn't have enough room and had to turn some away, said Michael Dorf, who produced the show. "We felt kind of awkward because we are usually so humbly grateful to anyone who wants to participate in this," he said.

Embracing the catalogue

For much of the night, an enthusiastic, quick-to-its feet audience tried to will the performers into a better show than they gave. While some of Bowie's best-known work was featured, there was an equal amount of more obscure songs from his career. Stipe, the former R.E.M. singer who now sports a flowing, grey beard and nose ring, sang a hushed version of "Ashes to Ashes" in duet with Karen Nelson.

Blondie leader Deborah Harry wore a silver hoodie, and brought the crowd to its feet with her take on "Starman." Cyndi Lauper, with cotton candy-pink hair, struggled with the lyrics to "Suffragette City" and Laurie Anderson's "Always Crashing in the Same Car" sounded under-rehearsed. Wilson got the audience moving with "Let's Dance," while Rickie Lee Jones spoke-sang an acoustic version of "All the Young Dudes."

After a feedback-drenched take on "The Man Who Sold the World," Joseph Arthur unfurled an American flag that had an unprintable message to Donald Trump spray-painted on it. The Flaming Lips injected a necessary note of weirdness. Singer Wayne Coyne wore a suit of lights and sat atop the shoulders of a bandmate dressed as Chewbacca for "Life on Mars."

A tiff the night before cost the show one of its best-known acts, the Roots. Leader Questlove said the Roots were pulling out, annoyed that the drummer for the band Holy Holy would not share equipment during a rehearsal. — AP



In this June 5, 2007 file photo, David Bowie attends an awards show in New York.



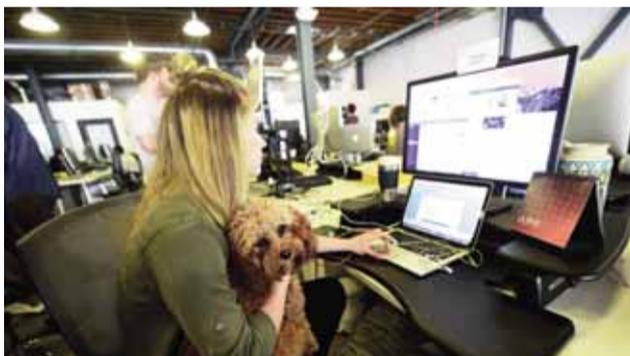
Perry Farrell performs at The Music of David Bowie tribute concert at Carnegie Hall. — AP photos



DogVacay co-founder and CEO Aaron Hirschorn walks Rocky (R) and Maggie (L/white) near the company's offices in Santa Monica, California. — AFP photos



Waiting and hoping to adopt, Sydney Rivette holds the leash tied to Treaty Tuesday at the DogVacay offices.



Waiting and hoping to adopt, Sydney Rivette holds the leash tied to Treaty Tuesday at the DogVacay offices.



Michael Schneider of tech startup 'Getservice' poses behind a glass window at company office in Beverly Hills.

Silicon Beach: LA tech hub where the sun always shines

Better known for its palm trees and celebrities, Los Angeles is also emerging as a tech hub, with its so-called Silicon Beach area offering a sun-kissed alternative to Silicon Valley. In recent years tech companies large and small, including Facebook, Google and Snapchat, have opened offices in Santa Monica, Venice or Marina del Rey—better known for shirtless surfers than web geeks. They are joined by hundreds of cutting-edge startups and tech incubators like GumGum that are gobbling up space along Southern California's Pacific coast.

At DogVacay in Santa Monica, a sort of Airbnb for pets that impressed actor Will Smith so much that he invested in it, co-founder Aaron Hirschhorn says he has never looked back on his decision to set up shop downstream from San Francisco.

"Here I am a bigger fish in a smaller pond," said the 37-year-old, as about a dozen pooches owned or being cared for by employees lounged on cushions or strutted about in the sprawling open office space. "I'm not competing with Facebook or Google to recruit engineers. It's a very close-knit community of techies and the networking is great."

Skyrocketing commercial prices in the San Francisco area, historically considered the center of gravity for tech companies, is a key reason many start-ups have been relocating to Los Angeles. "It is so expensive for a company to expand in San Francisco," said Michael Schneider, 35, founder of Service, an outsourced customer service center that seeks to resolve disputes between customers and businesses. "You have to raise at least 50 percent more for the same thing," he added, while acknowledging that San Francisco was unlikely to lose its title as "the tech epicenter of the world."

Star power

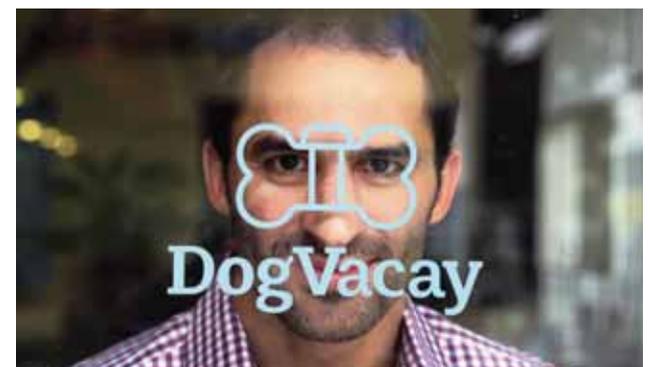
Another draw to the Los Angeles area for techies is the quality of life, said Schneider, whose startup—his fifth since high school—has raised \$3 million since he founded it nine months ago. "You have the weather, a change of pace and you get away from a very endogenous environment in the Bay Area (of San Francisco) where everybody only talks about tech," he said.

The tech boom in Los Angeles has been fed by a number of local success stories in the last five years, including Snapchat, now valued at \$16 billion, the streaming service Hulu, valued at \$10 billion, or

the dating app Tinder (\$3 billion). Even Hollywood celebrities are taking notice of Silicon Beach's growing allure and riding the wave of success.

Model and actress Jessica Alba in 2011 co-founded Honest Company, one of LA's hottest startups that makes non-toxic and eco-friendly products. The actor Ashton Kutcher has invested in some of the world's most buzzed about startups. Among the hottest today is Dollar Shave Club, in Santa Monica, which sells razors and other grooming products, or Scopely, a mobile-game network company that has seen 600 percent growth over the last 10 months.

"Los Angeles has always been a trend-setting city and it's important if you're building consumer-oriented mobile companies," said Michael Jones, a venture capitalist and founder of the incubator Science, in Santa Monica. But Jones, who recently started Wishbone, a trends app geared toward teenagers, said San Francisco—at least for now—remains the nerve center for tech investors. "Can we have 10 companies over \$1 billion here? I think it's possible," he said. "I'm not sure though that we can do 50." Nonetheless, he expects Los Angeles will continue to give San Francisco a run for its money. "I think the LA scene can grow extremely big," he said. — AFP



DogVacay co-founder and CEO Aaron Hirschorn poses behind the company's logo on the entrance to company offices.



This file photo taken on October 1, 2012 shows French fashion designer Hedi Slimane acknowledging applause at the end of the Yves Saint Laurent Spring/Summer 2013 ready-to-wear collection show in Paris. — AFP photos

King of rock star chic Hedi Slimane leaves YSL

Designer Hedi Slimane—the man credited with reviving skinny jeans—left Yves Saint Laurent yesterday after revolutionizing the French fashion label with his rock star chic look. His departure, the latest in a merry-go-round of changes at the top of French fashion, was announced by YSL's parent group Kering which said he had given the label back "its authority".

One of the hottest properties in fashion, Slimane remade the brand in his four years in charge in his own rock 'n' roll image. Slimane's exit has been long predicted, with clear signs for some time that all was not well despite rocketing profits.

He drew a starry fan club of celebrity customers including Lady Gaga, Angelina Jolie, Kate Hudson, Amal Clooney, Jared Leto and Justin Bieber. In a cryptic goodbye message on Twitter, the designer—a talented photographer—posted a picture of the fashion house's co-founder Pierre Berge in a mirror.

In what now seems a highly symbolic gesture, he kissed the late Yves Saint Laurent's partner—who gave him his first big break—after presenting his final show for the label last month in Paris before disappearing backstage. The 47-year-old Parisian was accused by some of denigrating Saint Laurent's hallowed legacy with his grungy rock star chic inspired by the American west coast music scene.

High-profile departures

Women's Wear Daily was scathing about his last collection for the label, a full-throttle revival of 1980s glam that it judged gave "the finger" to YSL's traditions. Others, however, saw the show as a triumph and praised him for revolutionizing the brand best known for its founder's fine tailoring and which had been in danger of stagnating.

In contrast, Slimane's appeal rests on his hugely popular biker jackets, skinny jeans and shoes styles worn by musicians ranging from Mick Jagger and David Bowie to Daft Punk and The Libertines. His massively influential skinny look first hit the catwalks after he took over the menswear range at Christian Dior in 2000.

Such was the designer's hold on the fashion imagination that Chanel boss Karl Lagerfeld even admitted to losing weight to squeeze into his jeans. The Belgium designer Anthony Vaccarello, who recently brought his racy look to Versace's Versus brand, is said to be the favorite to replace Slimane.

French fashion has been shaken by a series of high-profile departures over the last year, with Dior still without a creative director after Raf Simons left. Commentators have blamed the high turnover on the massive pressure now on designers to produce more and more collections, with many including Slimane, also having their own personal lines.

Industry insiders have long claimed that talks on renewing Slimane's contract had stalled, with the designer snubbing the Paris catwalk to hold his last menswear show in his adopted home of Los Angeles. The star-studded "Saint Laurent at the Palladium" event in February was billed as his tribute to the



Photo shows French fashion designer Hedi Slimane attending the HBO Films and Picturehouse premiere of "Last Days" at The Sunshine Theatre in New York City.

American city, whose rock and social scene he has documented on his photo blog "Hedi Slimane's Diary".

Rocketing profits

However, Kering chief executive Francois-Henri Pinault paid tribute to Slimane yesterday. "(What) Yves Saint Laurent has achieved over the past four years represents a unique chapter in the history of the House. "I am very grateful to Hedi Slimane, and the whole Yves Saint Laurent team, for having set the path... which will grant longevity to this legendary brand."

Profits have skyrocketed since Slimane has been in charge, with revenue doubling as he gave the haute couture brand a street style edge. Revenues rose 37.4 percent to 287 million Euros (\$318 million) in the last quarter, making Saint Laurent one of the fastest-growing European houses.

"A new creative organization for the house will be communicated in due course," Kering said in a statement. "Under the creative helm of Hedi Slimane, the house has enjoyed a holistic reform that has brought back its utmost modernity and fashion authority, while keeping alive and respecting the original vision of Mr Saint Laurent." — AFP

Video Game Hall of Fame reveals finalists for May induction

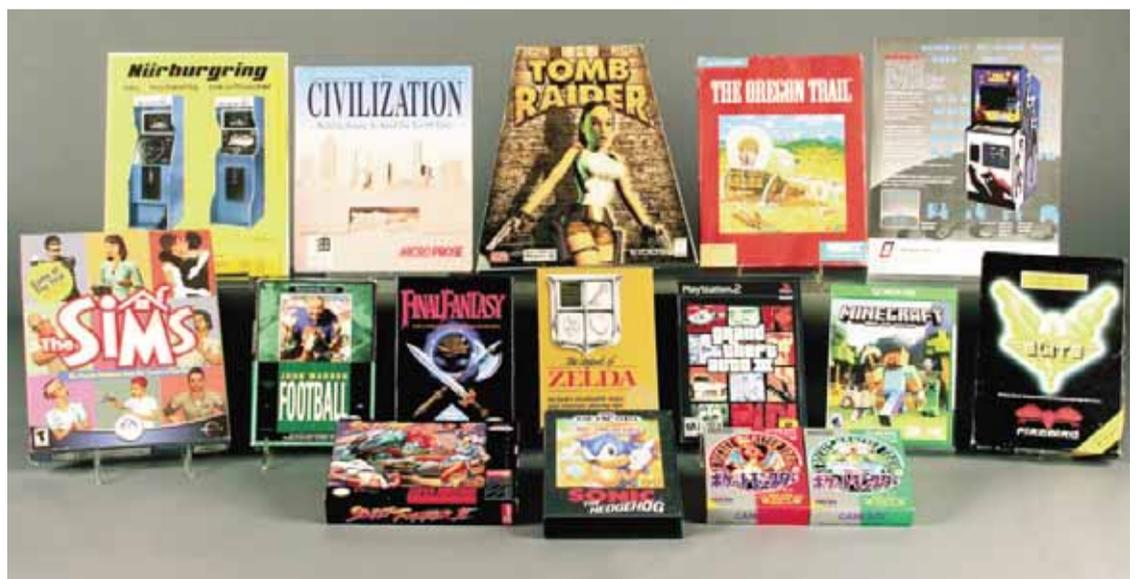
"Sonic the Hedgehog," "Space Invaders" and "John Madden Football" are among 15 games named Tuesday as finalists for the World Video Game Hall of Fame. The winners will be inducted May 5 at The Strong museum in Rochester, where the hall opened last year.

The contenders also include: "Elite," "Final Fantasy," "Grand Theft Auto III," "The Legend of Zelda," "Minecraft," "Nurburgring," "The Oregon Trail," "Pokemon Red and Green," "Sid Meier's Civilization," "The Sims," "Street Fighter II" and "Tomb Raider."

The finalists "span decades, gaming platforms and countries of origin, but what they all have in common is their undeniable impact on the world of gam-

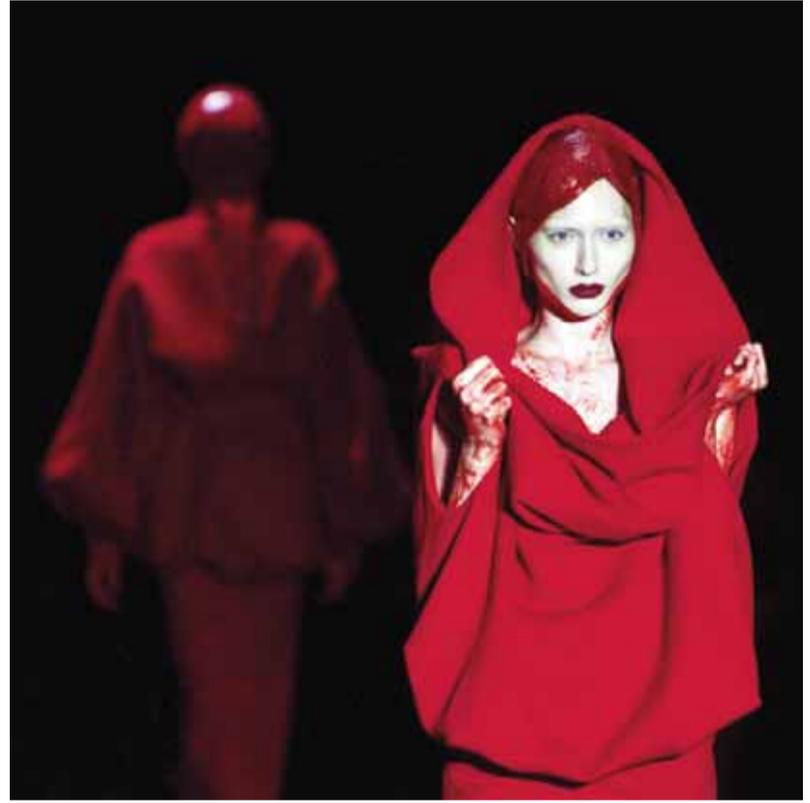
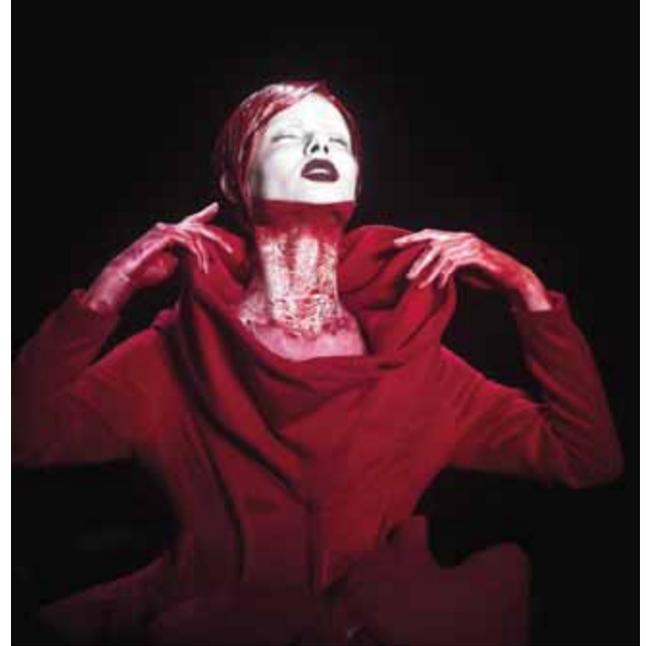
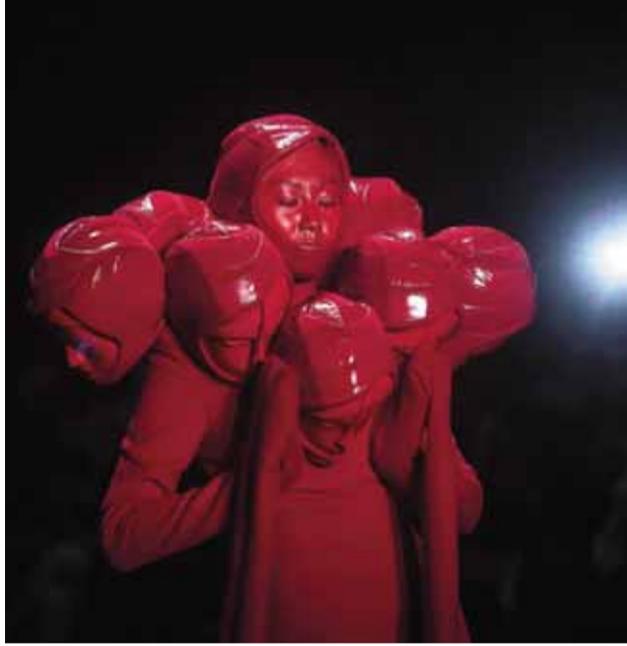
ing and popular culture," said Jon-Paul Dyson, director of The Strong's International Center for the History of Electronic Games. The list was culled from thousands of nominations from more than 100 countries, hall officials said. An international advisory committee of journalists, scholars and others will guide the final selection.

"Whether it's an iconic game like 'The Legend of Zelda,' a pioneering educational title like 'The Oregon Trail,' or an innovator like 'Elite,' which forever changed the design and development of other games," Dyson said, "they're among the most influential games of all time." —AP



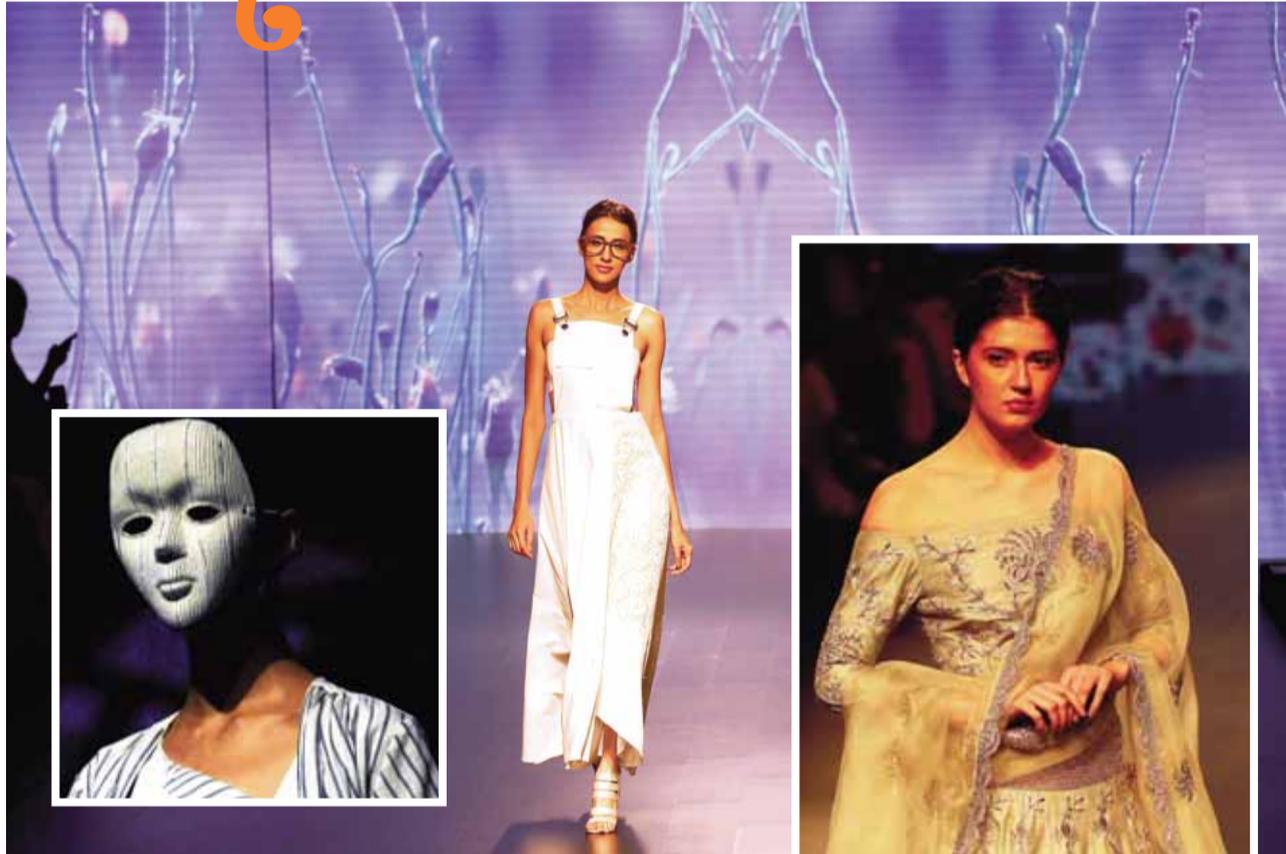
This undated photo released by the The Strong museum shows the 15 finalists of the World Video Game Hall of Fame.— AP

CHINA FASHION WEEK



Model parade creations from the Hu Sheguang Collection during the China Fashion Week in Beijing. — AFP/AP photos

India FASHION WEEK



Model showcase creations from designers Debashri Samanta and Payal Singhal during Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) summer/resort 2016 in Mumbai. — AFP/AP photos



FCC PROGRAM TO HELP POOR GET ONLINE WILL START IN DECEMBER

NEW YORK: Low-income Americans are expected to be able to apply for help from the federal government in paying for Internet access in December.

The Federal Communications Commissioners voted, 3-2 along party lines, Thursday to expand the \$1.5 billion Lifeline program, a \$9.25-a-month subsidy, to Internet as well as phone service. It can be used with cellphone Internet or home Internet.

It's the latest federal government attempt to close a "digital divide" between those who have access to the

Internet and those who don't, as the ability to go online becomes seen as an increasingly important part of modern life, key for looking for jobs and going to school.

FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler said the agency is addressing abuse and fraud problems with improvements like making an independent party check that people are eligible rather than having phone or Internet providers do it.

Providers get payments for signing up customers, and then pass along discounted or free service. There had been prob-

lems with some providers signing up ineligible customers. Having someone else verify that people are ineligible could help remove the incentive for them to do that.

The program will have a \$2.25 billion budget, but that amount could be raised. There was a fair amount of drama accompanying the FCC meeting, which was delayed for several hours. The two Republican commissioners had wanted a lower, \$2 billion cap on spending, among other changes, and said that an agreement with Democratic Commissioner Mignon Clyburn went out the window at

the last minute after pressure from Wheeler.

Clyburn said that she changed her mind because she didn't want to limit the impact of Lifeline, which she said could help millions of households that don't have Internet access. She said she heard from "a wide range of individuals."

Wheeler called the idea that he bullied Clyburn "balderdash."

Lifeline was started in 1985 and expanded to include wireless phones in 2005. It's paid for with fees on Americans' phone bills. — AP



PALO ALTO: Apple CEO Tim Cook laughs while visiting with customers during a visit to the Apple Store, Thursday, in Palo Alto, Calif. The new Apple iPhone SE and 9.7 inch iPad Pro were available for sale from Thursday. — AP

RESOLUTION IN FBI-APPLE CASE PROLONGS LARGER LEGAL BATTLE

SAN FRANCISCO: The FBI's victory in breaking into a San Bernardino killer's iPhone without Apple's help merely prolongs a battle over how far the government can go to examine private messages, photos and other files. "There's a clash of values and interests that I think will continue," said Ed Black, head of Computer and Communications Industry Association, a trade group whose members include Google, Facebook and Microsoft.

Federal prosecutors have appealed a court ruling that said Apple doesn't have to help them extract data from another iPhone in a New York drug case. Speaking in general, the Justice Department said it will continue seeking digital evidence, "either with cooperation from relevant parties or through the court system when cooperation fails."

After finding its own way to access files on the San Bernardino iPhone, the Justice Department said it no longer needs a court order to force Apple to remove safeguards against guessing that iPhone's passcode. That means Magistrate Sheri Pym won't be ruling on whether a centuries-old law, known as the All Writs Act, provided legal authority for compelling Apple's assistance.

Some in the tech industry worry that authorities will now try to pursue a smaller company - one without the financial and legal resources that Apple had - to win a favorable legal precedent that authorities could then use to pressure other firms - including heavyweights like Apple. "When

you're a company of five people, you don't have a general counsel's office. You have a card table that everyone sits and codes at," said Morgan Reed, executive director of a tech industry group known as ACT, which represents software application developers.

Although the Justice Department repeatedly insisted that its request for Apple's help applied only to the San Bernardino iPhone, Apple said having to rewrite its iPhone software would make all phones less secure and open the door to more demands from government authorities, both in the United States and other countries.

Tech companies say they turn over the customer data they have, when faced with a legal court order. But many companies are increasingly using encryption and other safeguards that put at least some customer data out of their reach. Companies say they're determined to protect customers' privacy against unwarranted intrusion.

WEALTH OF INFORMATION

On the flip side, today's popular smartphones contain a wealth of information about their users - who they talk to, where they travel, what they view online - which authorities can use to prosecute suspects, unravel plots and identify accomplices.

"Every case is now a cyber investigation," said Ed McAndrew, a former federal cyber-crimes prosecutor now in private practice. "You're going to have electronic devices and

technology and online storage in virtually every case." State and federal authorities in several jurisdictions have confirmed they would like to get access to encrypted smartphones seized in a variety of criminal investigations. In at least a dozen pending cases, the government has cited the same All Writs Act as legal authority to compel Apple's cooperation. The FBI might be able to apply the same forensic technique it used with the San Bernardino iPhone, but it's not clear if that will work with newer iPhones that have added security features, said Jonathan Zdziarski, an independent computer forensics expert. The San Bernardino iPhone was a 5C model, which largely had 2012 hardware, although it had a recent version of the iPhone software.

Late Wednesday, the FBI agreed to help an Arkansas prosecutor unlock an iPhone and iPod belonging to two teenagers accused of killing a couple. What is unclear is whether the FBI - which already had the ability to get data from some phones - is using the same techniques as in San Bernardino.

Meanwhile, the government's authority under the All Writs Act remains in dispute. Any decision in the pending New York case will likely be appealed again, said Fred Cate, a law professor and fellow at the Indiana University Center for Applied Cybersecurity Research. "There's no question that will be up in the air until the Supreme Court rules on it," he added. — AP

HIGH-TECH NORDIC HEADSETS IMPROVE HEARING ON THE BATTLEFIELD

STOCKHOLM: Swedish-based Invisio, which will provide high-tech headsets to French security forces at the Euro 2016 football championship this summer, expects military orders in emerging markets to boost revenue further this year.

Invisio's headsets are already sold to US and British military forces. The in-ear product turns vibrations from jawbones into sound and cancels external noise so that a speaker can be heard clearly even when standing close to a running jet engine or a loud explosion on a battlefield.

Invisio, whose share price soared 500 percent last year, started in mobile phone headsets but changed tack in 2008 as its main customer Motorola suffered big losses to focus on products for the military, law enforcement agencies and firefighters.

That shift into products made for extreme environments means it now competes in a niche market with limited competition and high barriers to entry. The company says it has won all public tendering processes it has taken part in since 2012.

A breakthrough for Invisio came at the end of 2013 when the US military placed orders as part of a modernisation drive. The following year, sales surged 136 percent and the company turned to profit after reporting losses for more than a decade.

Now, Invisio plans to expand outside its main markets in Europe and North America to selected countries in Asia, the Middle East and South America. "I am completely certain that we will win orders in new countries this year," Chief Executive Lars Hojgard Hansen told Reuters, but declined to say which countries were most likely.

Invisio was founded in 1999 in Copenhagen, which became an audio technology hub after Denmark decided to subsidise the sector in the 1960s. Several of the world's largest makers of hearing aids are based in Denmark.

The now-Swedish company employs about 40 people and is one of a number of high-tech firms which have grown out of the Nordic region to compete on a global stage. Invisio headsets can protect a soldier's ears by bringing loud noises such as explosions or gun shots down to safer levels. A user who wants to hear something from a greater distance can opt to increase the volume by up to five times.

Hearing loss is a major problem for military personnel and the US government has said it pays more than one billion dollars each year for hearing aids and compensation to war veterans with hearing impairments.

Invisio, which estimates the current market for its products at about 4 billion Swedish crowns (\$492 million), has carved a niche for itself where more old-fashioned products such as earplugs or construction-site ear protectors are often used.

"I believe more and more countries will jump on the bandwagon when they see the benefits," Hojgard Hansen said. Recent orders from NATO countries Britain, Canada and Australia helped to contribute to a 14 percent increase in sales in 2015 to 230 million crowns (\$28 million). This year, Invisio won an order from French security forces, which will use the equipment at the Euro 2016 starting in June. — Reuters

SPOTIFY ADDS \$1 BILLION TO WAR CHEST ON WAY TO IPO

LOS ANGELES: Music streaming leader Spotify has raised \$1 billion in debt as it looks to buy companies that could accelerate its growth before listing shares on the public market within the next couple of years, according to two people familiar with the matter.

The war chest was raised through convertible bonds sold to private equity firm TPG, hedge fund Dragoneer Investment Group and others, said the people, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal hadn't closed yet.

Along with some \$600 million in cash on its books now, the funds put several

acquisition targets in Spotify's sights: competing streaming companies like Deezer, Tidal or Pandora; or connected speaker companies such as Sonos. It's possible no acquisition will happen.

The bond sale was earlier reported by The Wall Street Journal.

"This financing gives them the strategic resources to further strengthen their leadership position," said TPG partner David Trujillo, in a statement.

Spotify has jumped out to a lead in the global race to acquire music subscribers, with CEO and founder Daniel Ek tweeting last week the Swedish company had 30 million paying customers.

Apple Music amassed 10 million after its launch last year. French company Deezer has about 6 million, while Rhapsody has 3.5 million. SoundCloud just got into the race by launching its paid tier on Tuesday.

Yet Spotify is still losing under \$100 million per year, one person said. It has plenty of cash to survive as it moves toward its goal of break-even, but using an acquisition to add subscribers, engineering talent, ad-sales personnel, video capabilities or revenue from other product lines could speed up that goal, the person said.

The funds are not earmarked for any

particular acquisition, the people said.

However, the cost of the debt to Spotify rises the longer it takes to offer its shares to the public. The Journal reported that the bonds can be converted to shares in Spotify at 20 percent below an initial public offering price if Spotify goes public within a year. The discount rises by 2.5 percentage points every six months after that.

The interest Spotify pays on the debt will also rise from 5 percent by 1 percentage point every six months until an IPO up to 10 percent, the Journal said. Both people said the terms described by the Journal were generally accurate. — AP



SAN FRANCISCO: Microsoft HoloLens co-creator Kudo Tsunoda, left, displays the developer version of the HoloLens augmented reality headset as technical fellow Alex Kipman, right, looks on during the keynote address at the Microsoft Build Conference, Wednesday, in San Francisco. — AP

MICROSOFT BEGINS FIRST SHIPMENTS OF HOLOLENS

SAN FRANCISCO: Microsoft began its first shipments of its HoloLens augmented reality headgear Wednesday, staking its place in what is expected to be an emerging computing platform. HoloLens is being delivered to application developers, with Microsoft opting for augmented reality rather than virtual reality in devices such as the Oculus Rift from Facebook.

While virtual reality is fully immersive, the partly immersive augmented reality allows users to multitask via virtual images superimposed on their normal field of view.

At the Microsoft Build developers' conference, the US tech giant showed some of the possibilities for HoloLens—such as giving users a view of Mars that up to now could only be seen by space vehicles, and an inside view of the brain by medical specialists aiming to deal with a cerebral tumor. Aiming to encourage new applications for the device, Microsoft noted that developers can create "new mixed reality" with holograms to enable users to see and experience things in new ways.

Microsoft unveiled the HoloLens goggles a year ago as rivals such as Oculus were moving in virtual reality.

The holographic capabilities in the Microsoft gear can open doors for developers to augment tasks from complex surgery to motorcycle design, according to the company.

The developer editions will be available for \$3,000 for app makers and other Microsoft partners. One of the partners is NASA, which uses HoloLens to help users move about as if they are on Mars and figure out where they want the Rover to go.

Pamela Davis, dean of the Case Western Reserve University medical school, led a demonstration showing how holographic images of the body and its organs, including the brain, can be used in doctor training. With the goggles and Windows 10, Microsoft said in a statement it was "extending the Windows experience to holograms and allowing developers to begin helping build the future of holographic computing."

The move by Microsoft comes just two days after Oculus began deliveries of the first Rift devices to consumers.

Marketers predict virtual headsets will soon top wish lists for kids and young adults from the Silicon Valley to Hong Kong. But some analysts say virtual reality will be eclipsed by augmented reality within a few years. — AFP

MICROSOFT PITCHES SMART CHATS WITH COMPUTERS

SAN FRANCISCO: Microsoft wants you to talk more with your computer - and have more useful conversations. The giant software company is promoting new uses for Cortana - its voice-activated answer to Apple's Siri digital assistant - including the ability to interact with software "bots" that can have limited conversations with users and help with tasks like booking a hotel room, ordering a meal or arranging a delivery.

Voice-activated services like Siri, "OK Google," or Amazon's Alexa can already perform tasks for users like playing a song at a request or answering a question. Bots are smarter than traditional software apps, though, using artificial intelligence to respond to a wider range of commands and in a convenient, conversational way.

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, at the opening Wednesday of the company's annual conference for software developers, touted the power of "conversational intelligence" as he outlined a long-term vision in which Cortana, a central feature of Windows 10, becomes a digital concierge for other online interactions.

"Bots are the new apps," Nadella told developers.

Lilian Rincon, a program manager for Microsoft's Skype service, demonstrated how this might work. After receiving a video message from her boss that mentioned an upcoming conference in Dublin, Rincon used Cortana to mark the dates on her calendar. Cortana then used Skype to contact a hotel chain's bot, which suggested a room and helped Rincon make a reservation for those dates.

Integrating Cortana with other companies' bots could increase the use of Microsoft's services, and make them more valuable, said analyst Ross MacMillan, who follows tech companies for RBC Capital Markets, in an email on Wednesday.

Bots are not perfect, however. Microsoft recently shut down an experimental Internet bot called "Tay" after some Twitter users taught it to make offensive statements. Nadella acknowledged the episode Wednesday, saying it shows the importance of designing technology to be "inclusive and respect-

ful." Cortana isn't as well-known as Siri or OK Google. But unlike those services, which are mostly found on smartphones and tablets, Microsoft has made Cortana available on desktop and laptop PCs, via Windows 10.

But Microsoft, after seeing its business suffer because fewer people buy new PCs, has also released Cortana as an app for smartphones and tablets that run Apple's iOS or Google's Android operating software. Similarly, Skype also works on those platforms. Microsoft is now releasing programming tools for developers to build bots that will interact with Cortana. Not surprisingly, Microsoft would be glad to see people use these services on Skype, the Internet video and voice-calling service that it owns. But some of its tools for creating bots will work with other messaging services: Microsoft listed Slack and standard text messaging, among others.

Microsoft Corp. also on Wednesday announced a free upgrade this summer to Windows 10 that adds some new features and expands others. The company has touted Windows 10 as the operating

system for a wide range of devices, from personal computers to hand-held gadgets, Xbox game consoles and even the company's HoloLens augmented-reality headset. Microsoft says Windows 10 is now running on 270 million devices, up from 200 million in January. Analysts say that's a respectable figure, considering it was released last July, although Microsoft is aiming for 1 billion devices in a few years.

The Windows 10 upgrade will include expanded abilities for Cortana, which will be able to provide reminders or answer questions even if it's on a device, such as a tablet or smartphone, where the user hasn't unlocked the screen.

Another new feature will extend Microsoft's biometric software, Windows Hello, so users can log into more apps and online accounts through fingerprint or facial recognition. The upgrade also expands the ways in which users can write their own notes or draw lines and sketches with a digital pen on websites, maps and other images that are displayed on their screens. — AP



SAN FRANCISCO: Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella delivers the keynote address at the Microsoft Build Conference, Wednesday, in San Francisco. — AP



01:20 PI
02:50 The Aviator
04:50 The Man In The Iron Mask
06:35 Saved!
08:05 One More Kiss
09:45 Alexander The Great
12:00 The Aviator
13:35 Everybody's Fine
15:15 The Man In The Iron Mask
17:25 The Magnificent Seven Ride!
19:10 Mirrormask
20:45 Big Screen
21:00 Cursed
22:45 Big Screen
23:00 Suspect Zero

07:00 Charlie Rose
08:00 Countdown
09:00 Countdown
09:30 On The Move
10:00 On The Move
11:00 The Pulse
12:00 Bloomberg Surveillance
13:00 Bloomberg Surveillance
14:00 Bloomberg Go
15:00 Bloomberg Go
16:00 Bloomberg Go
17:00 Bloomberg Markets
18:00 Bloomberg Markets: European
Close
19:00 Bloomberg Markets
20:00 Bloomberg Markets
21:00 Bloomberg Markets
21:30 Brilliant Ideas
22:00 Bloomberg Markets
23:00 What'd You Miss?

14:30 Dialogue
15:00 News Update
15:15 China 24
16:00 News Update
16:15 Global Business
17:00 News Update
17:15 World InSight
18:00 Asia Today
18:30 Culture Express
19:00 News Update
19:30 The Heat
20:00 Africa Live
21:00 Global Business
21:30 Dialogue
22:00 News Update
22:15 China 24
23:00 News Update
23:15 World InSight



00:20 Fast N' Loud
01:10 Salvage Hunters
02:00 Redwood Kings
02:50 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown
03:40 Extreme Collectors
04:05 The Liquidator
04:30 Garage Gold
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 Chasing Classic Cars
06:00 You Have Been Warned
06:50 Troy
07:40 Superhuman Science
08:05 Superhuman Science
08:30 Men, Women, Wild
09:20 The Island With Bear Grylls
10:10 So You Think You'd Survive?
11:00 Salvage Hunters
11:50 Redwood Kings
12:40 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown
13:30 Misfit Garage
14:20 Street Outlaws
15:10 Extreme Car Hoarders
16:00 Redwood Kings
16:50 Redwood Kings
17:40 Redwood Kings
18:30 Redwood Kings
19:20 Redwood Kings
20:10 Redwood Kings
21:00 Misfit Garage
21:50 Overhaulin'
22:40 Extreme Car Hoarders
23:30 Killing Fields

01:08 The Loch Ness Monster Revealed
01:55 Alien Planet Earths
02:42 Sci-Fi Science
03:04 Sci-Fi Science
03:29 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie
04:16 The Loch Ness Monster Revealed
05:03 Alien Planet Earths
05:50 Building The Biggest
06:37 How Do They Do It?
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:23 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie
08:08 Sci-Fi Science
08:30 Sci-Fi Science
08:53 Building The Biggest
09:38 How It's Made
10:00 How It's Made
10:23 Invent It Rich
11:08 Alien Planet Earths
11:53 Building The Biggest
12:38 Penn & Teller Tell A Lie
13:23 How It's Made
13:46 How It's Made
14:10 Sci-Fi Science
14:32 Sci-Fi Science
14:57 Invent It Rich
15:44 Alien Planet Earths
16:31 Building The Biggest
17:18 Sci-Fi Science
17:40 Sci-Fi Science
18:05 Mythbusters
18:50 Da Vinci's Machines
19:40 Space Pioneer
20:25 How It's Made
20:50 How It's Made
21:15 Sci-Fi Science
21:37 Sci-Fi Science
22:00 Da Vinci's Machines
22:45 Space Pioneer
23:35 Mythbusters

Reservations
03:50 Tattoo Hunter
04:35 American Guns
05:20 Extreme Engineering
06:05 Gunslingers
06:50 Mao's Cold War
07:35 Origins
08:00 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
08:50 Bush Pilots
09:40 Extreme Engineering
10:30 Gunslingers
11:20 Origins
11:45 Chasing Classic Cars
12:10 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
13:00 Bush Pilots
13:50 Extreme Engineering
14:40 Gunslingers
15:30 Origins
15:55 Chasing Classic Cars
16:20 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
17:10 Bush Pilots
18:00 Extreme Engineering
18:50 Gunslingers
19:40 Origins
20:05 Chasing Classic Cars
20:30 Aircrash Unsolved: The Mystery Of...
21:20 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
22:10 Extreme Engineering
23:00 Aircrash Unsolved: The Mystery Of...
23:50 Gunslingers



00:45 I'm Alive
01:40 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
02:35 Tanked
03:25 Animal Cops South Africa
04:15 Gator Boys
05:02 Treehouse Masters
05:49 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
06:36 Meet The Orangutans
07:25 America's Cutest Pets
08:15 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
09:10 Treehouse Masters
10:05 Tanked
11:00 America's Cutest Pets
11:55 Bondi Vet
12:25 Bondi Vet
12:50 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
13:45 Gator Boys
14:40 Treehouse Masters
15:35 Tanked
16:30 Animal Cops South Africa
17:25 River Monsters
18:20 River Monsters
19:15 Tanked
20:10 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
20:40 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
21:05 Treehouse Masters
22:00 River Monsters
22:55 Gator Boys
23:50 River Monsters



00:00 News Update
00:30 Dialogue
01:00 News Update
01:15 China 24
02:00 The Heat
02:30 News Update
03:00 Global Business
04:00 News Update
05:00 News Update
06:30 Dialogue
07:00 News Hour
08:00 Global Business
09:00 News Update
10:30 Sports Scene
11:00 Global Business
12:00 News Update
12:30 Culture Express
13:00 Africa Live
14:00 News Update



00:00 CNBC Conversation: David Hertz
00:30 CNBC Conversation: Carolyn Fairbairn
01:00 U.S. Squawk Alley
02:00 Asia Squawk Box
04:00 Asia Street Signs
06:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report
07:00 Capital Connection
08:00 Squawk Box Europe
11:00 Europe Street Signs
12:00 Worldwide Exchange
13:00 U.S. Squawk Box
16:00 Squawk On The Street
18:00 U.S. Squawk Alley
19:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report
20:00 U.S. Power Lunch
22:00 U.S. Closing Bell



00:20 How It's Made
00:44 How It's Made



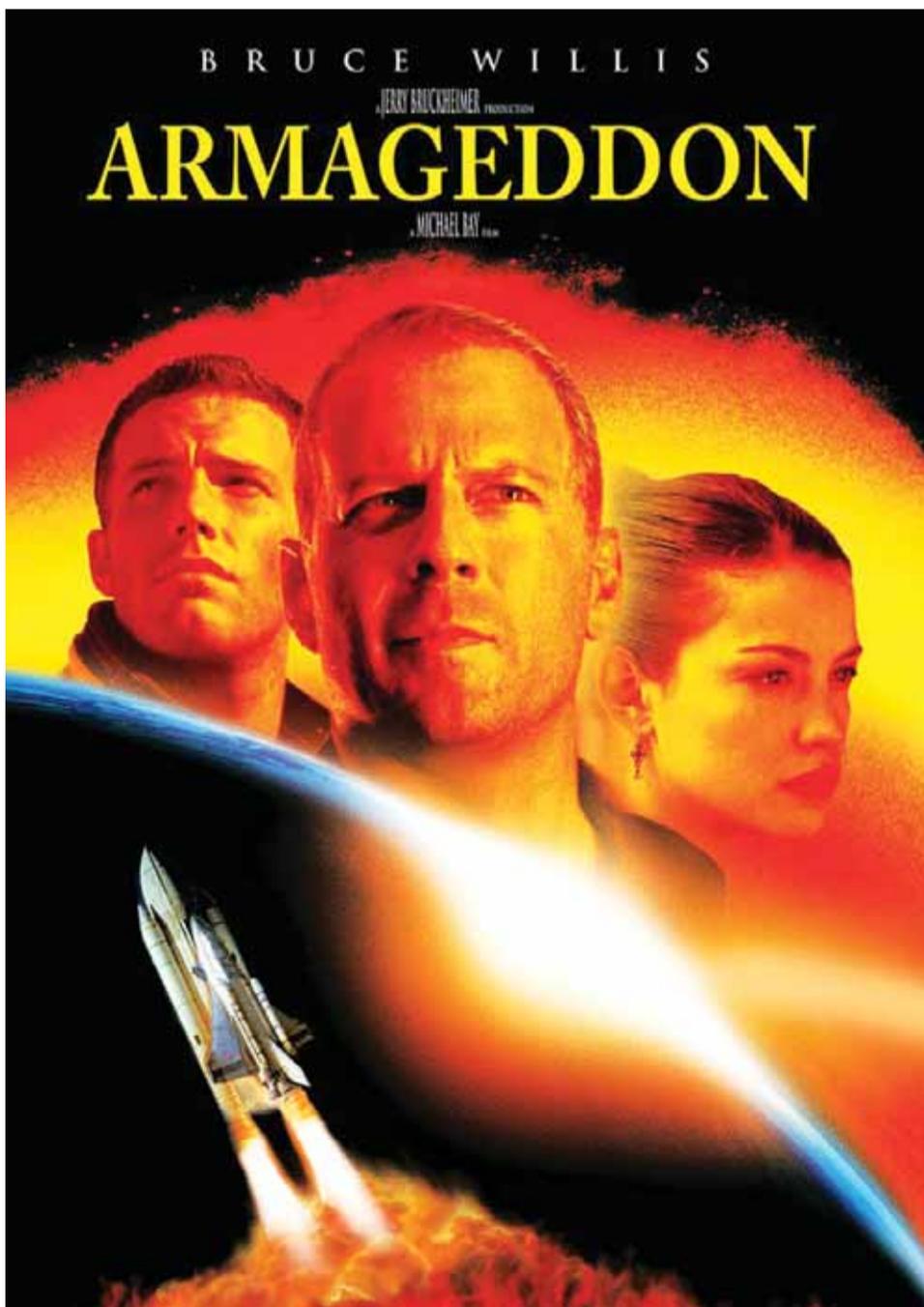
00:05 Art Attack
00:30 Henry Hugglemonster
00:45 Calimero
01:00 Zou
01:15 Loopdidoo
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Calimero
02:20 Zou
02:30 Loopdidoo
02:45 Art Attack
06:00 Zou
06:20 Loopdidoo
06:35 Art Attack
07:00 Calimero
07:10 Zou
07:25 Loopdidoo
07:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
08:05 Sofia The First
08:30 Goldie & Bear
08:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:10 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
09:35 Doc McStuffins
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Goldie & Bear
11:00 Miles From Tomorrow
11:25 Special Agent Oso
11:40 The Hive
11:50 Handy Manny
12:15 Jungle Junction
12:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
13:00 Sofia The First
13:25 Miles From Tomorrow
13:50 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
14:15 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
14:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
15:10 Miles From Tomorrow
15:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
16:00 Sofia The First
16:25 Jungle Cubs
16:50 Aladdin
17:15 Gummi Bears
17:40 Goldie & Bear
18:05 Miles From Tomorrow
18:30 Sofia The First
18:55 Doc McStuffins
19:10 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
19:35 Miles From Tomorrow
20:00 Goldie & Bear
20:30 Sofia The First
21:00 Jungle Cubs
21:25 Aladdin
21:50 Gummi Bears
22:20 Lilo And Stitch
22:50 Zou
23:05 Henry Hugglemonster
23:20 Calimero
23:35 Zou
23:50 Loopdidoo



00:10 Eastenders
00:45 Holby City
01:40 Stella
02:30 Happy Valley
03:25 Doctors
03:55 Eastenders
04:25 Stella
05:10 Father Brown
06:00 Holby City
06:55 Stella
07:45 Doctors
08:15 Eastenders
08:45 Stella
09:30 Father Brown
10:20 Doctor Who
11:10 Doctor Who
12:00 Doctor Who
12:50 Doctor Who
13:35 Holby City
14:35 Doctors
15:05 Eastenders
15:35 Death In Paradise
16:30 Death In Paradise
17:25 Death In Paradise
18:20 Doctors
18:50 Doctors
19:25 Father Brown
20:15 War And Peace
21:00 Happy Valley
22:00 Luther
22:55 Stella
23:45 Doctors



00:00 Charlie Rose
01:00 Bloomberg West
02:00 First Up With Angie Lau
03:00 Trending Business
04:00 Trending Business
05:00 Asia Edge
06:00 Bloomberg West



DEATH RACE ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

00:00 Violetta
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Violetta
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:00 Violetta
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Mouk
06:00 Lolirock
06:25 Sofia The First
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
07:40 Jessie
08:05 Shake It Up
08:30 Shake It Up
08:55 That's So Raven
09:20 That's So Raven
09:45 Girl Meets World
10:10 Girl Meets World
10:35 Home On The Range
12:15 Cars Toons
12:20 Jessie
12:45 Jessie
13:10 Austin & Ally
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:00 Liv And Maddie
14:25 Descendants Wicked World
14:30 Liv And Maddie
14:55 Dog With A Blog
15:20 Dog With A Blog
15:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
16:10 Violetta
17:00 I Love Violetta
17:10 Evermoor
17:35 Evermoor
18:00 Evermoor
18:25 Evermoor
18:43 Best Friends Whenever
19:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
19:30 Violetta
20:20 I Love Violetta
20:30 Home On The Range
22:00 Binny And The Ghost
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:10 Hank Zipzer
23:35 Binny And The Ghost

SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 2016



06:00 Boyster
06:10 Super Matrak
06:35 Super Matrak
07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
07:25 K.C. Undercover
07:50 Supa Strikas
08:15 Annedroids
08:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
09:10 Kirby Buckets
09:35 Guardians Of The Galaxy
10:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
10:25 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
10:50 K.C. Undercover
11:20 K.C. Undercover
11:45 Supa Strikas
12:10 Supa Strikas
12:35 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
13:00 Annedroids
13:30 Mighty Med
13:55 Mighty Med
14:20 Kickin' It
14:44 Kickin' It
15:10 Guardians Of The Galaxy
15:15 Rocket Monkeys
15:40 Guardians Of The Galaxy
16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
16:30 Kirby Buckets
16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
17:25 K.C. Undercover
17:50 Supa Strikas
18:15 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
18:40 Mighty Med
19:05 Cars Toons
19:10 Annedroids
19:35 Phineas And Ferb
20:00 Kirby Buckets
20:25 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
20:55 K.C. Undercover
21:20 Pickle And Peanut
21:45 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
22:10 Mighty Med
22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am
KSA



00:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
01:25 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
02:20 E! News
03:15 Giuliana & Bill
04:10 The E! True Hollywood Story
05:05 E! Entertainment Special
06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
07:50 Style Star
08:20 E! News
09:15 Giuliana & Bill
10:15 Giuliana & Bill
11:10 The Grace Helbig Show
11:35 The Grace Helbig Show
12:05 E! News
13:05 Dash Dolls
14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
16:00 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
17:00 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
18:00 E! News
19:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
20:00 WAGs
21:00 WAGs
22:00 E! News
23:00 Botched



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
01:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
02:00 Tia Mowry At Home
02:30 Tia Mowry At Home
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
05:00 Iron Chef America
06:00 Chopped
07:00 Man Fire Food
07:30 Man Fire Food
08:00 Chopped
09:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To



FAST GIRLS ON OSN MOVIES HD



Basics
09:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
10:00 The Kitchen
11:00 Anna Olson: Bake
11:30 Anna Olson: Bake
12:00 Chopped
13:00 The Pioneer Woman
13:30 The Pioneer Woman
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Man Fire Food
15:30 Man Fire Food
16:00 Chopped
17:00 The Kitchen
18:00 Anna Olson: Bake
18:30 Anna Olson: Bake
19:00 Chopped
20:00 Iron Chef America
21:00 Chopped
22:00 Cutthroat Kitchen
23:00 Man Finds Food
23:30 Man Finds Food

00:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
01:05 Emmerdale
01:30 Eggheads
02:00 Coronation Street
03:25 The Jonathan Ross Show
04:20 Come Dine With Me Couples
05:15 Come Dine With Me Couples
06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
07:00 Eggheads
07:30 Grantchester
08:25 The Jonathan Ross Show
09:20 Keep It In The Family
10:15 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
11:05 Eggheads
11:35 Come Dine With Me Couples
12:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?
13:25 Emmerdale
13:50 Emmerdale
14:20 Coronation Street
14:45 Keep It In The Family
15:35 The Jonathan Ross Show
16:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
17:25 Remember Me
18:20 Emmerdale
18:45 Emmerdale
19:10 Coronation Street
19:35 The Jonathan Ross Show
20:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
21:25 Remember Me
22:20 Coronation Street
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Emmerdale
23:40 Keep It In The Family



00:10 Eat Street
00:35 Eat Street
01:00 Cesar To The Rescue
01:50 Rustic Adventure Argentina
02:15 Eat Street
02:40 Eat Street
03:05 Cruise Ship Diaries
03:30 Tales From The Bush Larder
03:55 Tales From The Bush Larder
04:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
04:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
05:10 Eat Street
05:35 Eat Street
06:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
06:50 Cesar To The Rescue
07:40 Rustic Adventure Argentina
08:05 Eat Street
08:30 Eat Street
08:55 Cruise Ship Diaries
09:20 Tales From The Bush Larder
09:45 Tales From The Bush Larder
10:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of

Australia
10:35 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
11:00 Eat Street
11:25 Eat Street
11:50 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
12:40 Cesar To The Rescue
13:35 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
14:00 Baking Good, Baking Bad
14:30 Baking Good, Baking Bad
14:55 Cruise Ship Diaries
15:25 Tales From The Bush Larder
15:50 Tales From The Bush Larder
16:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
16:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
17:15 Eat Street
17:40 Eat Street
18:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
19:05 Cruise Ship Diaries
19:30 Tales From The Bush Larder
20:00 Tales From The Bush Larder
20:25 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
20:50 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
21:15 Eat Street
21:40 Eat Street
22:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
22:55 Cesar To The Rescue
23:45 Ariana's Persian Kitchen



00:30 Hot In Cleveland
01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
01:30 Web Therapy
02:00 The Brink
02:30 You're The Worst
03:00 Mad Love
03:30 Living With Fran
04:00 Two And A Half Men
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 My Name Is Earl
06:00 The Bernie Mac Show
06:30 Community
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:00 Two And A Half Men
08:30 My Name Is Earl
09:00 Mad Love
09:30 Kevin From Work
10:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
10:30 Community
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 The Bernie Mac Show
12:30 Two And A Half Men
13:00 My Name Is Earl
13:30 Community
14:00 Living With Fran
14:30 Kevin From Work

15:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
15:30 Hot In Cleveland
16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
16:30 The Bernie Mac Show
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 Fresh Off The Boat
18:30 Black-Ish
19:00 2 Broke Girls
19:30 The Simpsons
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Hot In Cleveland
21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
22:00 Comedians
22:30 The Brink
23:00 You're The Worst
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:00 You're Next
02:00 Don't Look Back
04:00 Destruction: Las Vegas
06:00 Flightplan
08:00 The Malay Chronicles: Bloodlines
10:00 Need For Speed
12:15 Batman Unlimited: Animal Instincts
13:45 Armageddon
16:15 Flightplan
18:00 Need For Speed
20:15 Hercules



00:00 Seven Psychopaths
02:00 Mystery Men
04:15 50 First Dates
06:15 Rush Hour 2
08:00 500 Days Of Summer
10:00 50 First Dates
11:45 Mystery Men
14:00 Dunston Checks In
16:00 500 Days Of Summer
18:00 Spy Hard
20:00 Date Night
22:00 A Million Ways To Die In The West



01:30 One Last Look
03:00 Foxcatcher
05:15 A Valentine's Date
07:00 1911
09:00 10 Years

11:00 A Valentine's Date
13:00 Atlas Shrugged Part 2: The Strike
15:00 God Help The Girl
17:00 10 Years
19:00 Not Fade Away
21:00 A Walk Among The Tombstones
23:00 By The Gun



01:00 What Dreams May Come
03:00 At Any Price
04:45 The Apostle
07:00 Won't Back Down
09:00 Blackfish
10:30 The Apostle
12:45 Les Miserables
15:30 Secret Window
17:30 Blackfish
19:00 Out Of The Furnace
21:00 What Maisie Knew
23:00 Twice Born



01:00 The Woman In Black 2: Angel Of Death
03:00 4 Minute Mile
05:00 Pixels
07:00 Louder Than Words
09:00 4 Minute Mile
11:00 Night At The Museum: Secret Of The Tomb
13:00 Pixels
15:00 Until She Came Along
17:00 Fast Girls
18:45 Jupiter Ascending
21:00 Child 44
23:30 Dom Hemingway



01:15 Miffy The Movie
02:45 Columbus In The Last Journey
04:30 Mamma Moo And Crow
06:00 Miffy The Movie
08:00 Blackie And Kanuto
10:00 Rugrats In Paris: The Movie
11:30 The Olsen Gang In Deep Trouble
13:00 Columbus In The Last Journey
14:30 Egon And Donci
16:00 Curious George: Back To The Jungle
18:00 Rugrats In Paris: The Movie
20:00 Blue Elephant 2
22:00 Egon And Donci
23:30 Curious George: Back To The Jungle



00:00 The Wedding Ringer
02:00 A Promise
04:00 Metallica: Through The Never
06:00 The Book Of Life
08:00 In My Dreams
10:00 Hellboy: Sword Of Storms
12:00 Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes
14:15 Next Goal Wins
16:15 In My Dreams
18:00 The Remaining
20:00 Winter's Tale
22:00 Wild Card



00:30 Gillette World Sport
01:00 Top 14 Highlights
01:30 NRL Premiership
03:30 PGA Tour
07:00 Golfing World
08:00 Trans World Sport
09:00 World Rugby
09:30 Live Super Rugby
11:30 NRL Full Time
12:00 Live NRL Premiership
14:00 Formula-E Championship
Sound Of The Future
14:30 Gillette World Sport
15:00 Super Rugby
17:00 Golfing World
18:00 Super Rugby
19:55 Live Super Rugby
22:00 Golfing World

APPEAL FOR INFORMATION ABOUT KUWAITI RESISTANCE FIGHTERS

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is an appeal on behalf of Marshal Byiers, a Scottish gentleman who lived in Kuwait during the 1980s. While here, he lived with his family in Fahaheel city, more specifically, in a building owned by Khalif Al-Fulaij.

Marshall worked for a company called EW Sable, and was trapped in Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion. He was held hostage by the Iraqi forces for a brief period of time.

He was eventually put in contact with members of the Kuwait Resistance by Larry Banks at the British Embassy. While Mr Byiers never met the resistance fighters in person, they spoke over the phone and they provided him with food, cigarettes, and a small radio at great personal risk to them self. The men who knew him would likely be in their 50s now. His personal friend was a Kuwaiti gentleman names

Sami Al Dabbous, who we're having trouble locating.

After the war, Marshall returned to Scotland. We are a group of filmmakers who are currently working on a documentary that narrates Marshall's story, and, after 26 years, we are flying him back to Kuwait for the first time, for what will probably be quite an emotional closure to his journey.

Marshall would really like to meet the

person that helped him during the Iraqi occupation. Marshall is due to arrive to Kuwait on April 4-9. The documentary tells his story and we would like the opportunity to tell the story from the side of the man who helped him. If you or anybody else has any personal history with this story or anybody involved in it, please contact us at the following email Hamadaam@vcu.edu or phone number (965) 6668-0061.



ICSK CROWNS KHAITAN IDOLS ON KG GRADUATION CEREMONY

In an auspicious and exhilarated atmosphere, The Indian Community School Kuwait, Khaitan celebrated Graduation and Crowning ceremony- an exciting milestone for pre-primary students of the school.

The event was graced by the presence of Chief Guest HIRAK Mukherjee, Country Manager of Air India Kuwait, Honorary Secretary to the Board of Trustees Vijay Karayil, Parent representative to the Board of Trustees from Khaitan Branch Nizar K V, Members of the Parent Advisory Council and parents.

The welcome dance performed by kindergarten students was spectacular. The Principal K G Shirsath extended a warm welcome to all the guests. Other dances added to the liveliness of the day making it a memo-

orable one. In his Presidential address, Vijay Karayil emphasized that the first school of child is his home and the best teacher is one's own mother. The Chief Guest HIRAK Mukherjee addressed the gathering and spoke about the relevance of education.

The highlight of the day was the Crowning of Khaitan Idols where the most competitive 'boy' and 'girl' students of every LKG and UKG sections were crowned and honored with mementoes and certificates for their excellence in academic and non-academic fields. The reminiscences of the pre-school days shared by UKG students were touching. For the grand finale of the function, each child adorned in special graduation dress marched elegantly on the stage to receive their diplomas.



An interactive session on 'understanding media' was recently conducted by Malayali Media Forum, for the students of Indian schools in Kuwait. Five students of India International School got the prospect of attending the session.



ABK SPONSORS CRYCKET TOURNAMENT

Friends of CRY Club (FOCC) joining hand with Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is proud to announce the 19th "CRYcket 2016" tournament for children that will be held on Friday, April 8, 2016 at Al-Sahel Sports club, Abu Halifa. Established in 1997 in Kuwait, FOCC is a children's sports and cultural organization, associated with CRY (Child Rights and You), India.

The one day "CRYcket" tournament for children under 12 (Born on or after 01.01.2004) and Under 14 (born on or after 01.01.2002) category is a very popular annual family event where spectators, parents and well-wishers enjoy a carnival atmosphere. This is the only format of grass root level cricket tournament in Kuwait where young talents are spotted and which has been conducted consistently for the past 19 years.

The children are grouped into teams in two age categories and the game is played with softball. Twelve teams each are set to participate in the Under-12 and Under-14 categories. The 12 teams are placed in four groups and initially play in the round robin league leading to one winner from



each group, who will clash in the semifinals. The winners and runners-up in the finals of both groups are awarded with trophies. Three special trophies are also awarded to the best overall player in each age category and the youngest player of the tournament. Additionally, medals and certificates of participation from CRY-India will be given to each player of

all teams.

The 7-over matches for both categories will be played simultaneously on two playgrounds. Professional umpires will control the games assisted by official scorers and ground managers. The teams will play in this tournament in recognition of a much felt need to support less fortunate children.



The Kuwait Foundation for The Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) recently hosted a lecture by the internationally renowned Professor Richardo Hausmann of Harvard University, titled 'Economic Complexity and Secrets of Economic Growth.'

BRAZIL'S WOES MOUNT AS SWINE FLU ADDS TO ZIKA

SAO PAULO: Brazil, the country hardest hit by the Zika virus, is facing another health problem with the Olympics it is hosting just months away: a swine flu outbreak. The outbreak of Type A of the H1N1 virus has killed 46 people in less than two months in Brazil. That is 10 times the figure for all of 2015, the Health Ministry said.

In Rio de Janeiro, which will host the Games from August 5-21, a first fatality

was reported Thursday by health care authorities. Through March 19, 305 cases were reported throughout the country, compared to 141 in all of 2015. A large majority — 260 cases, 38 of them fatal — were reported in the Sao Paulo region, the economic and financial engine of the now struggling South American powerhouse.

People have been waiting in line for more than three hours outside some

hospitals to get vaccinated. In Brazil the H1N1 virus has normally appeared in recent years between May and July when temperatures are cooler. But this year it has caught health authorities by surprise as it began in February.

It is not clear why, but many doctors say it stems from Brazilians who traveled to the northern hemisphere in the first months of the year. A major H1N1 outbreak sparked a World Health

Organization pandemic alert in June 2009, after the virus emerged from Mexico and the United States. The epidemic killed around 18,500 people in 214 countries. The alert was lifted in August 2010. Since late 2015 Brazil has been at the epicenter of the Zika virus crisis. The virus has been blamed for birth defects in babies born of women infected with the virus, which is carried by mosquitos. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: This combination of file photos shows (From L) obese people in Los Angeles, Mexico City and Manchester. — AFP

SURVEY: ONE IN FIVE ADULTS MAY BE OBESE BY 2025

RATIO OF OBESE ADULTS HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED

PARIS: One in five adults could be obese by 2025, said a major survey yesterday that warned of a looming epidemic of "severe obesity" with significant health and economic costs. The ratio of obese adults has more than doubled in the 40 years since 1975, and will climb further in the coming nine, the research showed.

Of about five billion adults alive in 2014, 641 million were obese, it found. The figure was set to exceed 1.1 billion by 2025. "There will be health consequences of magnitudes that we do not know," author Majid Ezzati of Imperial College London told AFP of the research published by The Lancet medical journal. "Obesity and especially severe and morbid obesity, affect many organs and physiological processes. We can deal with some of these, like higher cholesterol or blood pressure, through medicines. But for many others, including diabetes, we don't have effective treatment."

People are divided into healthy or unhealthy weight categories based on a universally-adopted measure dubbed Body Mass Index (BMI) — a ratio of weight-to-height squared. A healthy BMI ranges from 18.5 to 24.9. One is considered underweight below 18.5, overweight from 25 up, and obese from 30 — when the risk of diabetes, stroke, heart disease and some cancers escalates massively. With a BMI of 35 one is categorized as severely obese, and from 40 upward as morbidly so.

Weighty flip-flop

Among men globally, obesity tripled from 3.2 percent of the population in 1975 to 10.8 percent in 2014 (some 266 million), and among women it rose from 6.4 percent to 14.9 percent (375 million), said the survey — 12.9 percent combined. This was equivalent to the average adult, 18 and older, being 1.5 kilos (3.3 pounds) heavier every decade. "If the rate of obesity continues at this pace, by 2025 roughly a fifth of men (18 percent) and women (21 percent) will be obese," according to a statement by The Lancet.

More than six percent of men and nine percent of women will be severely obese. The ratio of underweight people in the world declined at a slower rate than obesity grew, said the authors — from about 13.8 percent in 1975 to 8.8 percent for men, and 14.6 percent to 9.7 percent for women. "Over the past 40 years, we have changed from a world in which underweight prevalence was more than double that of obesity, to one in which more people are obese than underweight," said Ezzati. At current rates, more women will be severely obese (a BMI of 35 or more) than underweight by 2025, and the world will miss its stated target of halting obesity at 2010 levels. In 2014, the world's fattest people lived in the island nations of Polynesia and Micronesia, where 38 percent of men and more than half of women were obese, said the study.

Nearly a fifth of the world's obese adults (118 million) lived in six high-income countries — the United States,

Britain, Ireland, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The US was home to one in four severely obese men and almost one in five severely obese women in the world.

Surgery as a solution?

At the other extreme, the paper said, Timor-Leste, Ethiopia and Eritrea had the lowest BMI numbers in the world, with averages as low as 20.1. More than a fifth of men in India, Bangladesh, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Ethiopia, and a quarter of women in Bangladesh and India, were underweight.

"The global focus on the obesity epidemic has largely overshadowed the persistence of underweight in some countries," the research paper said. It warned that unless waistlines stop expanding, existing drugs for high cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure "will not be able to fully address the hazards of such high BMI levels." Stomach-shrinking bariatric surgery may become the "most effective intervention for weight loss and disease prevention", the survey authors suggested. "To avoid an epidemic of severe obesity, new policies that can slow down and stop the worldwide increase in body-weight must be implemented quickly and rigorously evaluated," said Ezzati.

The survey claimed to be the most comprehensive of its kind conducted to date. It used data from 1,698 studies involving 19.2 million adults from 186 countries which are home to 99 percent of the world's population. Children were excluded. — AFP

CAN WE HIDE EARTH FROM ALIEN SPECIES?

PARIS: The fate of humanity if aliens were to discover Earth with its balmy climate and bountiful resources, has long been a concern for scientists — many of whom fear the worst. Physicist Stephen Hawking is among those to have warned that ET and his friends may be much more intelligent than us, and may view human beings as little more than troublesome bugs. Now a duo of astronomers from Columbia University in New York have proposed an innovative method to hide our planet from prying extraterrestrial eyes — using massive lasers. And it's not a joke, they say.

Alien scientists, argued David Kipping and Alex Teachey, may be trying to find habitable planets using the same technique we do — searching for a slight dip in light when a planet "transits" between the star it orbits and the telescopes watching it. Planets do not emit their own light and, if they were visible to the naked eye, would appear as dark dots tracking across their bright stars.

But these exoplanets are too far away to see, and all our telescopes can pick up is a small decrease in the starlight emitted during transit. If aliens spot us using this technique, Earth would be a logical target for alien settlement. It orbits within the so-called "habitable zone" — not too close nor too far from the Sun — where the temperature is right for liquid water, the essence of life.

In a paper published Thursday in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society (RAS) in London, Kipping and Teachey said Earth's Sun transits could be masked by shining huge lasers to cover the dip in light.

Strange but true

"Despite the timing, it's really not an April Fool's joke," RAS deputy executive director Robert Massey assured AFP yesterday. "This is a serious piece of work." Humanity's search for a planet capable of hosting life remains an academic pursuit — there is no solar system near enough to reach without time travel.

Since its launch in 2009, NASA's Kepler exoplanet-hunting space telescope has found thousands of candidates. Astronomers have verified the existence of nearly 2,000 faraway worlds, but most of those orbiting in habitable zones have been gas giants.

"The transit method is presently the most successful planet discovery and characterization tool at our disposal," wrote the duo. "Other advanced civilizations would surely be aware of this technique..." Within the wavelength spectrum of visible light, the transit signal could be masked with a monochromatic laser emitting about 30 million watts (MW) for 10 hours at a time, once a year.

One MW can power several hundred homes for an hour. A universal cloak effective at all wavelengths, would require a much larger array of lasers with a total output of 250 MW, said the team. "There is an ongoing debate as to whether we should advertise ourselves or hide from advanced civilizations potentially living on planets elsewhere in the Galaxy," Kipping said in a statement. "Our work offers humanity a choice, at least for transit events, and we should think about what we want to do." — AFP

RARE CRANE A BOOST TO TAIWAN'S TROUBLED WETLANDS

TAIPEI: It has a Facebook page, two books and its own brand of rice. A Siberian crane that landed in Taiwan after getting lost on migration over a year ago even made international headlines when it was found wandering outside a train station.

But to conservationists, the crane known is more than just a flash-in-the-pan media star. It is a godsend in their push for environmentally friendly farming as the island's birds suffer at the hands of development and pollution. Taiwan is a mid-point stop on one of the world's eight major migratory routes and a wintering ground for numerous waterbirds from Siberia, China, Japan and Korea on their way further south.

However, in some areas of the island waterbird numbers are down due to the destruction of habitats. There had never been any reported sightings of the rare white crane in Taiwan until December 2014 when the crane first made the wetlands after taking a wrong turn on its migratory route. It hit the headlines again last winter when it was found wandering around a subway station in Taipei and was returned once more to Jinshan.

The Siberian crane is on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's red list of critically endangered species with an estimated population of less than 4,000. "I didn't expect the crane to stay. I thought it would fly away very soon," said farmer Huang Cheng-chun, whose rice and lotus field is nicknamed "little crane base" since the bird took residence there. "When I work, the crane follows me around. It's like a friend to me. It's been helpful by eating a lot of apple snails (a pest) in the field."

As the crane helped rid them of pests, more farmers in the area agreed to go green to protect the bird's health, a boost for ecologists, who had until then been struggling to persuade them to stop using pesticides, rat poisons and herbicide. Last year, pre-orders for "Jin Ho rice"—which combines Jinshan and the Chinese word for crane "Ho"—were sold out months before the harvest.

The eco-friendly farming area in Jinshan has now expanded from 3.5 to 10 hectares. "It's inevitable that the bird will leave," said Liao Jen-hui, director of the Taiwan Ecological Engineering Development Foundation. "We hope that by the



TAOYUAN: Photo shows a flock of dunlin, *Calidris alpina*, flying above the debris at Hsu Chia Tsu wetland. — AFP

time it's gone, eco-friendly farming and the Jin Ho rice brand will be well established." Thanks to safer farming methods, the Chingshui wetland now has an abundance of food for birds and more migratory flocks stopping by, including the black kite, rarely seen there previously, the foundation said.

Disappearing habitats

But elsewhere in Taiwan, habitat destruction caused by industrial development and pollution is taking its toll. While the number of endangered black-faced spoonbills hit a record total of 2,060 in January this year, only 14 were seen on the northeastern coast of Yilan, half the number from 2014, the Chinese Wild Bird Federation said.

The decrease was likely linked to wetlands being converted into bed-and-breakfasts and

aquaculture ponds, said Tsai Shih-peng, president of the federation. In central Changhua county, the number of far eastern curlew has dropped from around 3,000 in 1993 to 600 in recent years since a huge coastal industrial park was set up, he added.

"There have been many cases of wetlands being filled up for economic and industrial projects that damaged the habitat, especially smaller plots that attracted less attention," added Jeff Yeh, director of the Guandu Nature Park in Taipei. The Guandu wetland, a major wintering ground for waterbirds in northern Taiwan, was saved from being turned into a stadium in 1996 after lobbying from civil groups to protect the area.

Cruelty to birds

There are also new man-made threats, espe-

cially with the trend of posting image of birds on social media, said Chinese Wild Bird Federation's Tsai. Some birdwatchers use food to lure a bird out and throw stones if it is not a rare kind. They were also seen trimming trees to expose bird nests, removing chicks from nests or chasing birds in wetlands in order to snap better shots, according to Tsai.

In one shocking case, a Japanese bush warbler, a migratory bird found in Taiwan in the winter, died after swallowing a pin believed to be used by birdwatchers to keep a worm in place so they could photograph it eating. "These people are not interested in ornithology or conservation. They just want to take more photos of birds than their peers and get more 'liked' on their Facebook for their vanity," Tsai said. — AFP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (31/03/2016 TO 06/04/2016)

SHARQIA-1
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 12:00 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 3:00 PM
 NO FRI+SAT
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 3:00 PM
 FRI+SAT
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 5:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 7:00 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 9:00 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 11:00 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 1:00 AM

SHARQIA-2
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 1:15 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 3:30 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 5:45 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 8:45 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 11:45 PM

SHARQIA-3
 HIGH-RISE 12:30 PM
 HIGH-RISE 3:00 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 5:15 PM
 HIGH-RISE 7:30 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 9:45 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 12:45 AM

MUHALAB-1
 HIGH-RISE 1:15 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 1:30 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 3:30 PM
 HIGH-RISE 5:30 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 7:45 PM
 HIGH-RISE 9:45 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 12:05 AM

MUHALAB-2
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 11:30 AM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 1:45 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 1:45 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 4:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 6:00 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 8:00 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 11:00 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 1:15 AM

MUHALAB-3
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 12:15 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 3:15 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 6:15 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 9:15 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 12:15 AM

FANAR-1
 HIGH-RISE 12:45 PM
 HIGH-RISE 3:00 PM
 HIGH-RISE 5:30 PM
 HIGH-RISE 8:00 PM
 HIGH-RISE 10:30 PM
 HIGH-RISE 12:45 AM

FANAR-2
 EDDIE THE EAGLE 1:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 1:45 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 3:45 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 5:45 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 7:45 PM
 EDDIE THE EAGLE 9:45 PM
 EDDIE THE EAGLE 12:15 AM

FANAR-3
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 11:45 AM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 1:45 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 3:45 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 6:45 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 8:45 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 10:45 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 12:45 AM

MARINA-1
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 1:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 3:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 5:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 7:00 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 9:00 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 11:00 PM
 JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END) 1:00 AM

MARINA-2
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE 12:15 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE 3:15 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE 6:15 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE 9:15 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE 12:15 AM

MARINA-3
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 1:15 PM
 NO FRI+SAT
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 1:30 PM
 FRI+SAT
 HIGH-RISE 3:30 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 5:45 PM
 HIGH-RISE 8:00 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 10:15 PM
 HIGH-RISE 12:30 AM

AVENUES-1
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 11:30 AM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 1:45 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 4:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 6:15 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 8:30 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE 10:45 PM

AVENUES-2
 EDDIE THE EAGLE 1:30 PM
 EDDIE THE EAGLE 3:45 PM
 LONDON HAS FALLEN 6:00 PM
 EDDIE THE EAGLE 8:15 PM
 EDDIE THE EAGLE 10:30 PM
 EDDIE THE EAGLE 12:45 AM

AVENUES-3
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 12:15 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 2:30 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 4:45 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 7:00 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 9:15 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 11:30 PM

AVENUES-4
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 1:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 3:15 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 5:30 PM
 Special Show "KUNG FU PANDA 3" 5:30 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 7:30 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 9:45 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 12:05 AM

AVENUES-5
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE 1:00 PM
 Special Show "BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE" 1:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 2:00 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D 4:00 PM
 Special Show "KUNG FU PANDA 3" 5:00 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE 7:00 PM
 Special Show "BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE" 7:00 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 10:00 PM
 10 CLOVERFIELD LANE 1:00 AM

360°-1
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D 1:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 2:00 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D 4:00 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE 7:00 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D 10:00 PM
 HIGH-RISE 1:00 AM

360°-2
 MY LITTLE PONY: EQUESTRIA GIRLS - FRIENDSHIP GAMES 12:30 PM
 MY LITTLE PONY: EQUESTRIA GIRLS - FRIENDSHIP GAMES 2:15 PM
 MY LITTLE PONY: EQUESTRIA GIRLS - FRIENDSHIP GAMES 4:15 PM
 MY LITTLE PONY: EQUESTRIA GIRLS - FRIENDSHIP GAMES 6:00 PM
 VETTAH- Malayalam 7:45 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 7:45 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 10:45 PM

360°3
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 12:45 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 3:00 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 5:15 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 7:30 PM
 KUNG FU PANDA 3 9:45 PM
 BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE 12:15 AM

AL-KOUT.1

Invitation for Parents and Professionals
"Kuwait Center for Autism" Present:

Robert A. Naseef, Ph.D
 USA, PA (Pennsylvania)

'A Trip with my Son with Autism'

Tuesday, April 5, 2016 at 7:30pm
 Kuwait Center for Autism Auditorium

Lecture in English accompanied by Arabic translation

where he'll share his experience as a father & specialist about problems faced by parents with their autistic children

Mubarak Al-Abdallah (west Mishref) - Block 6, Street 3
 Tele: 25 30 9 300 / 66 27 84 34 / 99 73 22 54
 Email: kwautism@gmail.com

Prayer timings

Fajr:	04:20
Shorook	05:40
Duhr:	11:52
Asr:	15:23
Maghrib:	18:05
Isha:	19:23

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



Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers use seats

Arrival Flights on Saturday 2/4/2016

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:05
KLM	413	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
THY	772	Istanbul	01:05
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:35
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55
FDB	067	Dubai	03:05
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10
QTR	1076	Doha	03:15
KKK	6507	Istanbul	03:20
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:25
JZR	503	Luxor	04:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
FDB	5061	Dubai	06:30
BAW	157	London	06:40
JZR	529	Asyut	06:50
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	06:55
KAC	416	Jakarta/Kuala Lumpur	07:15
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	07:20
KAC	204	Lahore	07:40
QTR	1086	Doha	07:40
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50
KAC	382	Delhi	08:00
KAC	206	Islamabad	08:25
KAC	352	Kochi	08:30
KAC	344	Chennai	08:30
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:00
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:10
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:20
QTR	1070	Doha	09:25
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
OMA	641	Muscat	10:05
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
SAW	701	Dammam	11:00
UAE	873	Dubai	11:05
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30
IAW	157	Al Najaf	11:50
NIA	151	Cairo	11:55
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
JZR	241	Amman	12:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
FBA	831	Al Najaf	13:30
JZR	779	Jeddah	13:35
KNE	460	Riyadh	13:50
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDB	057	Dubai	14:10
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
JZR	175	Dubai	14:45
KAC	788	Jeddah	14:50
KAC	512	Mashhad	14:50
KNE	462	Madinah	14:55
KNE	472	Jeddah	15:05
NIA	251	Alexandria	15:30
OMA	645	Muscat	15:30
KAC	562	Amman	15:40
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:45
JAD	301	Amman	15:55
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
FDB	051	Dubai	16:30
JZR	357	Mashhad	16:30
KNE	474	Jeddah	16:35
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	16:40
RJA	640	Amman	16:55
KAC	542	Cairo	16:55
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
KNE	470	Jeddah	17:45
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	17:45
MSR	614	Cairo	17:50
JZR	325	Al Najaf	17:50
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:55
KAC	118	New York	17:55
SVA	500	Jeddah	18:00

UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
KAC	502	Beirut	18:00
FDB	063	Dubai	18:05
JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
ABY	123	Sharjah	18:45
QTR	1080	Doha	18:55
IRA	669	Mashhad	18:55
KAC	742	Dammam	19:05
KAC	614	Bahrain	19:10
KAC	774	Riyadh	19:25
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
CLX	856	Luxembourg	19:35
KAC	618	Doha	19:35
KAC	176	Geneva/Frankfurt	19:35
KAC	104	London	19:40
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05
KNE	480	Taif	20:10
JZR	189	Dubai	20:15
FDB	061	Dubai	20:20
OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
KAC	786	Jeddah	20:30
ABY	121	Sharjah	20:35
FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:55
JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55
QTR	1088	Doha	21:00
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
KAC	676	Dubai	21:45
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
KLM	415	Amsterdam	22:05
AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:25
KAC	564	Amman	22:25
FDB	059	Dubai	22:30
JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
FDB	071	Dubai	23:45
THY	764	Istanbul	23:50
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:55
MSC	403	Asyut	23:55
JZR	125	Bahrain	23:55

Departure Flights on Saturday 2/4/2016

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JZR	528	Asyut	00:05
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
MSC	502	Alexandria	00:55
JAI	573	Mumbai	01:00
MSC	416	Sohag	01:00
KLM	413	Amsterdam	01:35
THY	773	Istanbul	02:30
SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:35
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45
UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
PGT	859	Istanbul	03:55
OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
FDB	068	Dubai	04:00
MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:15
KKK	6508	Istanbul	04:20
QTR	1077	Doha	05:00
THY	765	Istanbul	05:15
FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
RJA	643	Amman	07:05
THY	771	Istanbul	07:05
FDB	5062	Dubai	07:10
GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
JZR	240	Amman	07:15
JZR	778	Jeddah	07:55
FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	511	Mashhad	08:30
QTR	1087	Doha	08:40
BAW	156	London	08:45
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:25
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:40
UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
KAC	101	London/New York	09:55
KAC	541	Cairo	09:55
KAC	561	Amman	10:00
JZR	174	Dubai	10:10
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:25

JZR	356	Mashhad	10:30
KAC	501	Beirut	10:30
FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
QTR	1071	Doha	11:00
KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:00
OMA	642	Muscat	11:05
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	11:25
RBG	554	Alexandria	12:00
SAW	702	Dammam	12:00
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:20
UAE	874	Dubai	12:30
NIA	152	Cairo	12:55
IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:05
FDB	076	Dubai	13:10
MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	324	Al Najaf	14:25
FBA	832	Al Najaf	14:40
KNE	481	Taif	14:50
PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	14:55
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KAC	785	Jeddah	15:00
FDB	058	Dubai	15:10
QTR	1079	Doha	15:10
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
JZR	188	Dubai	15:40
KAC	617	Doha	15:45
KAC	613	Bahrain	15:50
KAC	773	Riyadh	15:50
KAC	741	Dammam	15:55
KNE	463	Madinah	16:00
KNE	473	Jeddah	16:05
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:25
OMA	646	Muscat	16:30
NIA	252	Alexandria	16:30
JAD	302	Amman	16:40
KAC	563	Amman	16:45
KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
KNE	475	Jeddah	17:25
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	17:30
FDB	052	Dubai	17:35
QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
RJA	641	Amman	17:55
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
KNE	471	Jeddah	18:45
JZR	238	Amman	18:50
MSR	615	Cairo	18:50
JZR	554	Alexandria	19:10
FDB	064	Dubai	19:20
ABY	124	Sharjah	19:25
UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
SVA	505	Jeddah	19:30
IRA	666	Esfahan	19:55
GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	283	Dhaka	20:35
KAC	353	BLR	20:40
KAC	361D	Colombo	20:45
QTR	1081	Doha	20:50
KAC	351	Kochi	20:50
JZR	124	Bahrain	21:05
CLX	856	Hong Kong	21:05
MSR	607	Luxor	21:05
KNE	461	Riyadh	21:10
KAC	331	Trivandrum	21:10
ABY	122	Sharjah	21:15
OMA	648	Muscat	21:20
FDB	062	Dubai	21:20
DLH	634	Doha	21:45
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
QTR	1089	Doha	22:00
KAC	381	Delhi	22:00
KAC	301	Mumbai	22:10
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:10
MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	23:00
QTR	1083	Doha	23:05
KLM	415	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
KAC	205	Islamabad	23:10
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:15
KAC	411	Bangkok/Manila	23:35
FDB	060	Dubai	23:35

WORDSEARCH PUZZLE

Movies: Science Fiction

Find and circle all of the Science Fiction movies that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an additional Science Fiction movie.

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

- | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| ALIEN | FANTASTIC VOYAGE | ROBOCOP | TERMINATOR |
| BLADE RUNNER | FLASH GORDON | SCANNERS | THE ABYSS |
| BODY SNATCHERS | FLATLINERS | SHIVERS | THE FLY |
| BRAZIL | FORBIDDEN PLANET | SILENT RUNNING | THE MATRIX |
| COCOON | FRANKENSTEIN | SOLARIS | THEY LIVE |
| CONTACT | GATTACA | SOYLENT GREEN | TOTAL RECALL |
| CUBE | INDEPENDENCE DAY | SPIDER-MAN | TRANCERS |
| DARK CITY | JURASSIC PARK | STAR WARS | TRON |
| DEEP IMPACT | LOGAN'S RUN | STARGATE | VIDEOGAME |
| DUNE | MAD MAX | STARMAN | WESTWORLD |
| EQUILIBRIUM | METROPOLIS | STARSHIP TROOPERS | |

Yesterday's Solution

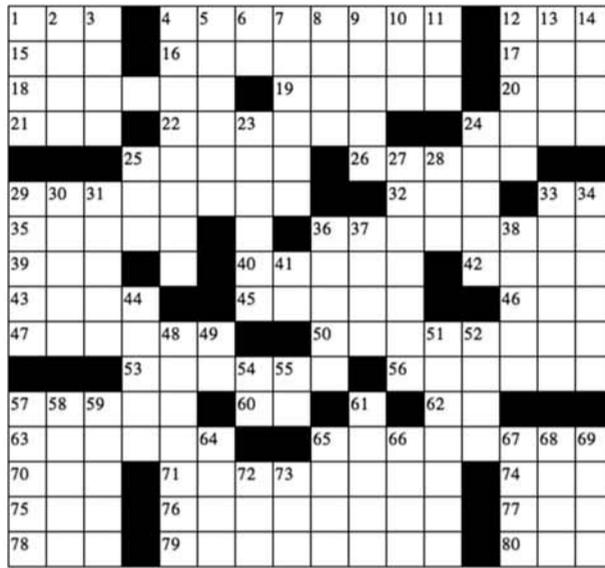
Movies: Musicals

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

- | | | | |
|---------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| A CHORUS LINE | CHICAGO | HELLO, DOLLY! | PAL JOEY |
| ALL THAT JAZZ | EVITA | HIGH SOCIETY | SHOW BOAT |
| ANNIE | FAME | HOLIDAY INN | SILK STOCKINGS |
| BLUE HAWAII | FANTASIA | JAILHOUSE ROCK | SOUTH PACIFIC |
| BRIGADOON | FUNNY FACE | LA TRAVIATA | STATE FAIR |
| BUGSY MALONE | FUNNY GIRL | MARY POPPINS | SWEET CHARITY |
| CABARET | GIGI | MOULIN ROUGE | SWING TIME |
| CALAMITY JANE | GODSPELL | MY FAIR LADY | THE MUSIC MAN |
| CAMELOT | GREASE | NEWSIES | TOMMY |
| CARMEN | GYPSY | OKLAHOMA! | TOP HAT |
| CAROUSEL | HAIR | OLIVER! | WEST SIDE STORY |

The hidden movie is: A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM

CROSSWORD 1214



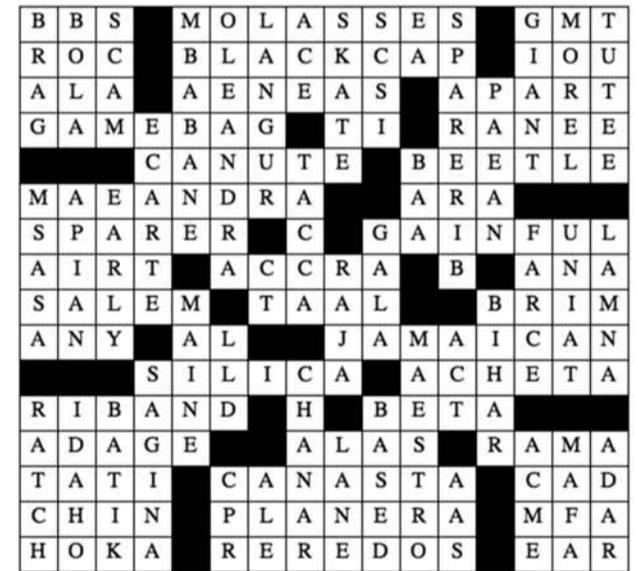
ACROSS

1. A periodic paperback publication.
4. Capable of being weakened.
12. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
15. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
16. Thorny Eurasian shrubs.
17. Small cubes with 1 to 6 spots on the faces.
18. Disparaging terms for the common people.
19. (Norse mythology) God of poetry and music.
20. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
21. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
22. A motley assortment of things.
26. A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trademarks Aleve and Anaprox and Aflaxen).
29. A region of northern France on the English Channel.
32. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
35. Of or relating to Oman or its people.
39. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
40. A person who acts as host at formal occasions (makes an introductory speech and introduces other speakers).
42. Set down according to a plan.
43. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
45. A device that, on receiving radar signals, transmits coded signals in response to help navigators determine their position.
46. Large African antelope having a head with horns like an ox and a long tufted tail.
47. Echo repeatedly, echo again and again.
50. Of or relating to anestrus.
53. Small tree of dry open parts of southern Africa having erect angled branches suggesting candelabra.
56. Direct in spatial dimensions.
57. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
60. A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
62. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
63. Monoamine oxidase inhibitor (trade name Nardil) used to treat clinical depression.
70. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
71. A juvenile between the onset of puberty and maturity.
74. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
75. Characteristic of a mob.
76. A member of the North American Indian people of the Pit river valley in northern California.
77. The administration of a strong electric current that passes through the brain to induce convulsions and coma.
78. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
79. (Mexico) Thin unleavened pancake made from cornmeal or wheat flour.
80. The residue that remains when something is burned.

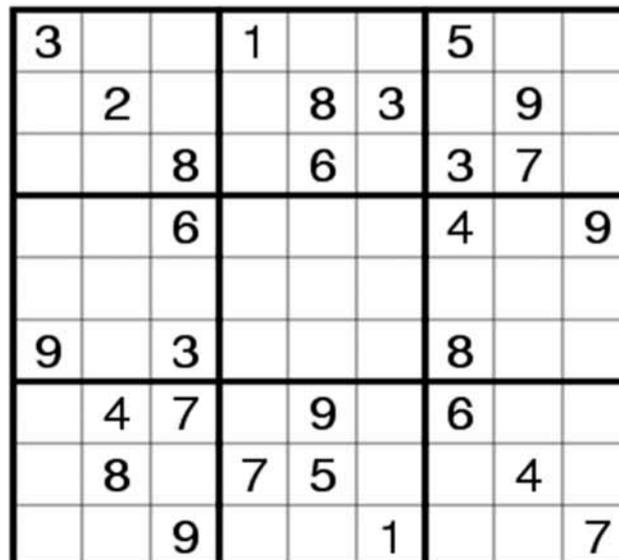
DOWN

1. God of death.
2. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
3. Mentally or physically infirm with age.
4. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
5. British writer noted for romantic adventure novels (1856-1925).
6. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
7. Coarsely ground grain in the form of pellets (as for pet food).
8. A sensation (as of a cold breeze or bright light) that precedes the onset of certain disorders such as a migraine attack or epileptic seizure.
9. An ancient city in northern Portugal.
10. (Irish) Ancient Irish god (probably a god of the sun).
11. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
12. A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
13. A person who has lied or who lies repeatedly.
14. A three-tone Chadic language.
23. A person who gains weight.
24. A means of serving.
25. A device for creating a current of air by movement of a surface or surfaces.
27. Filled with a great quantity.
28. (folklore) Fairies that are somewhat mischievous.
30. An iconic mental representation.
31. A hidden storage space (for money or provisions or weapons).
33. A medical establishment run by a group of medical specialists.
34. A compound formed by an addition reaction.
36. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
37. A historical area and former kingdom in northwestern Spain.
38. A high wave (often dangerous) caused by tidal flow (as by colliding tidal currents or in a narrow estuary).
41. Informal terms for a mother.
44. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
48. The type of environment in which an organism or group normally lives or occurs.
49. A Russian river.
51. A vast Asian region of Russia.
52. (British) Traditional jazz as revived in the 1950s.
54. In operation or operational.
55. A doctor's degree in optometry.
58. A radioactive gaseous element formed by the disintegration of radium.
59. Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus Draba having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
61. German philosopher whose three stage process of dialectical reasoning was adopted by Karl Marx (1770-1831).
64. Wife or mistress of Zeus and mother of Apollo and Artemis in ancient mythology.
65. East Indian cereal grass whose seed yield a somewhat bitter flour, a staple in the

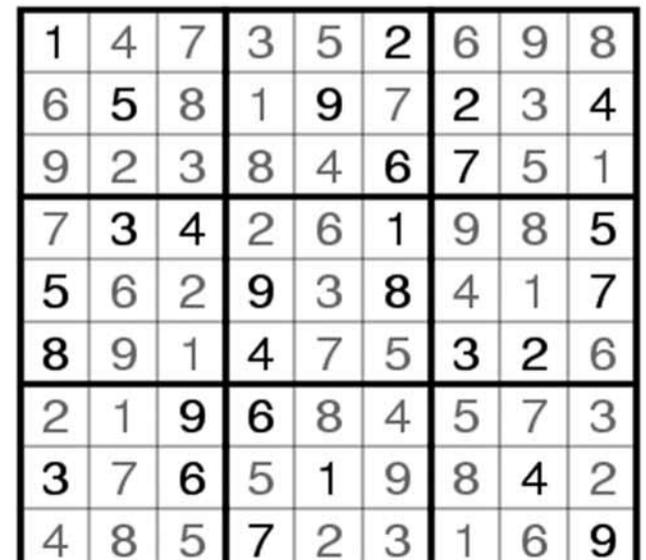
Yesterday's Solution



Daily Sudoku



Yesterday's Solution



ROSSI MARKS 20 YEARS IN SADDLE, EYES ARGENTINA REPEAT

RIO HONDO: Nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi hopes to celebrate 20 years as a world championship rider with a second successive Grand Prix of Argentina victory tomorrow. The 37-year-old Italian made his debut in the lower 125cc class in Malaysia in 1996 before winning his first world title the following year. A 250cc world crown followed two seasons later with seven in the elite class of the sport placing him comfortably amongst the greats. Into his third decade, Rossi has claimed 112 victories, 211 podiums, 61 pole positions as well as 92 fastest laps.

Victory at Argentina's Rio Hondo track

12 months ago set Rossi on his way to what looked increasingly like it would be a 10th title until his season imploded in the closing stages and Yamaha teammate Jorge Lorenzo snatched a third world title instead. "Last year, we had an excellent race," said Rossi, who fought wheel to wheel with bitter Honda rival Marc Marquez in an intriguing duel which ended with the Spaniard falling off his bike before coming home in second. "It will be difficult to repeat the same result this year but we are going to try."

"I couldn't get onto the podium in Qatar (last month's season-opener where

he finished fourth) but I still had a good race anyway. We worked well throughout the weekend. "In Argentina we will have to do the same thing, but we'll have to do better in the race, and try to get on the podium. I really like the Termas track and we will try to do our best."

In Qatar, 28-year-old Lorenzo started on pole and won the floodlit race in the Gulf for a third time, with Andrea Dovizioso on a Ducati taking second and Marquez in third.

For Lorenzo, it was a 62nd career win and 41st in the elite class. However, he has struggled in the two races held in

Argentina—he was fifth in 2015 and third in 2014. "I want to race at a circuit where in the past we struggled a bit. On the other hand, we need to keep our feet on the ground," said Lorenzo. "We started the championship in a perfect manner but we still need to understand what the behaviour of the bike is like for different track layouts." Marquez, the 2014 winner in Argentina, remains optimistic of another triumph tomorrow.

"It's a circuit that I like," said Marquez, who revealed he had taken 60 hours to reach the venue from his Spanish base. "We are always quick here." — AFP

MUNOZ, MIYAZATO LEAD WAY AT MISSION HILLS

RANCHO MIRAGE: Azahara Munoz burst out of a form slump at an opportune time and Ai Miyazato's renaissance continued at the ANA Inspiration on Thursday as the pair shared the opening round lead in the first women's major of the year.

Spain's Munoz and Japanese Miyazato each carded rounds of five-under-67 at Mission Hills Country Club in Rancho Mirage, California to share top spot, one clear of Scotland's Catriona Matthew, South African Lee-Anne Pace and Japan's Shiho Oyama.

Munoz, who has failed to finish higher than 33rd this season and has not recorded an LPGA top 10 since August last year, carded six birdies but dropped back with a bogey on her final hole.

"Obviously one round is not going to completely change my confidence but I am feeling good," Munoz told reporters.

"I have actually been playing really well and my scores haven't shown it at all. I think it was just a matter of time until things started happening and it did today. Hopefully it stays like that."

Miyazato, world number one back in 2010, sat 157th in the rankings before finishing third last week at the Kia Classic.

The 30-year-old opened with four birdies in her opening six holes and then tacked another onto her tally on the 18th to prove her improvement in form was not a false dawn.

"I was really happy to play my game again. I was kind of struggling the last few years but I got through," Miyazato said. "I am still in the process but I know I am moving forward and I feel good."

Ryann O'Toole, Gerina Piller and 2014 champion Lexi Thompson shared top American honours with three-under-69s to be tied for sixth, while world number one Lydia Ko rode a rollercoaster with four birdies and two bogeys in a round of 70. "I was striking my irons and everything pretty good but I didn't hit my driver very well especially on the back nine so I think that's where my bogeys kind of came from," Ko admitted after taking a share of 14th.

"I gave myself quite a few looks up the hill for birdie but I just wasn't able to commit to my speed and I left quite a few out there that were on line but short. That's the last thing you want to be doing."

"But a two under start to the first major of the year I am pretty pleased with that." Defending champion Brittany Lincicome settled for an even par 72. — Reuters



RANCHO MIRAGE: Azahara Munoz of Spain reacts to a shot on the 16th hole during the 2016 ANA Inspiration Championship at the Mission Hills Country Club on Thursday in Rancho Mirage, California. — AFP



HUMBLE: Jordan Spieth of the United States hits his approach shot on the tenth hole during the second round of the Shell Houston Open at the Golf Club of Houston yesterday in Humble, Texas. — AFP

DAY, SPIETH, SCOTT, MCILROY SET FOR MASTERS SHOWDOWN

AUGUSTA: World number one Jason Day, defending champion Jordan Spieth, form-finding Rory McIlroy and a host of past winners are converging on Augusta National with sights set on a champion's green jacket.

The 80th Masters tournament begins Thursday with Australia's Day, fresh off triumphs at the World Golf Championships Match Play and Arnold Palmer Invitational, trying to win his second major in a row after taking his first at last year's PGA Championship. "It's one tournament that I've always wanted to win," Day said. "I've always wanted to put the jacket on and go back every year. So the motivation and the want, there's no problem."

"It has been good for me confidence-wise over the last two weeks. But it is going to be a tough one. It's great to go there as number one. It's something I'm definitely going to be embracing. It will be fun to walk through the gates as number one in the world."

Day, who shared second at the Masters in 2011 and took third in 2013, leads a wide open field including 22-year-old Spieth, a wire-to-wire winner last year who matched Tiger Woods' 72-hole tournament record, and McIlroy, who would complete a career Grand Slam with a Masters triumph.

"I've got to understand there's going to be a lot of hype around Jordan. There's going to be a lot of hype around Rory, because he

could finish his career Grand Slam. There's going to be a lot of hype around myself. Embrace it. Understand there's going to be some hype."

Australia's Adam Scott, the 2013 winner, is fresh off back-to-back wins at the Honda Classic and Doral. South African Charl Schwartzel, the 2011 champion, won in March at Innisbrook and Bubba Watson, the 2012 and 2014 champion, captured the Riviera crown in February. Add three-time winner Phil Mickelson playing well and the stage is set for another dramatic showdown for golfing glory among the Georgia pines. "It's an exciting lead up to the Masters with a lot of top players in great form," Scott said. "There are so many that I'd be surprised if some or all of these guys aren't there come Sunday, from Bubba to Jason to Jordan to Rory."

SPiETH, MCILROY CONFIDENT

Spieth, excited for the Texas barbecue at his champions dinner, is playing at Houston the week before Augusta to peak his form.

"I feel much more confident than I did about Augusta," Spieth said at the WGC Match Play. I played very, very solid and most importantly I made a lot of birdies and that's something I haven't been doing."

McIlroy hasn't managed a triumph in the Masters run-up, but likes his chances.

"Seeing the guys that have won, with Bubba in LA, Adam in those two starts in Florida, Charl in Tampa and Jason, everyone is running in good form," McIlroy said. "Everyone is playing well and that's really what you want, your game rounding into form and playing to the best of your abilities."

"I feel like I'm close. I'm probably not quite where they are and I haven't had the confidence of getting a win this year, but I feel like it's close. Very confident going to Augusta knowing where my game is and knowing that I'm right where I need to be. My game feels in really good shape."

Schwartzel, Mickelson hot

Schwartzel, who birdied the last four holes on Sunday to win his Masters title, snuck in some practice at Augusta ahead of his playing in Houston and liked what he saw of the legendary layout. "The course is in good shape and it just made me excited again," he said. "You get a good feel for it, just to familiarize yourself again, hit some shots." And he has the confidence of a PGA victory just a month before the Masters. "Innisbrook was big for me because I knew my game was good enough to win," Schwartzel said. "It's one thing to sort of know that but to know it's good enough is a different thing and just having that win makes you believe more." — AFP

HIGHLANDERS END FORCE JINX TO GO TOP

WELLINGTON: Defending champions the Otago Highlanders survived a scare against the Western Force to go top of the New Zealand Super Rugby conference yesterday.

The Highlanders scored four tries to two in a 32-20 victory but had to work hard after trailing 14-0 early in a bruising encounter. The result snapped a decade-long winning streak for the Force in Dunedin, where the Australians have been an unlikely bogey team for the Highlanders. "They put some pressure on us in the first 30 (minutes) and we just managed to get some momentum in the second half. I was

stoked with the way we finished," Highlanders co-captain Shane Christie said. Going into the match, the Highlanders had only won three of nine previous meetings with the Force, with their last win in Dunedin way back in February 2006.

But they have maintained last year's sparkling form in 2016 and now have five wins on the trot.

In contrast, the Force have managed only one win from six and were thumped 53-10 by the Waikato Chiefs last week.

Coach Michael Foley said before kick-off that the Australians were hurting and determined to salvage

some pride in the last match of their New Zealand road trip.

They backed his tough talk on the field, racing to a 14-0 lead with two tries in the first eight minutes.

The first came when fullback Ben Smith coughed up the ball after Patrick Osborne threw him a hospital pass on the line, allowing Dane Haylett-Petty to swoop in.

Then Ben McCalman's run split the Highlanders' much-vaunted defence after centre Ben Tapuai held off two tacklers to set him up with a one-handed offload. Osborne made up for his earlier blunder to put the Highlanders on the board in the

16th minute, crossing from out wide after a sweeping backline move. They levelled at 14-all against the run of play when flanker Dan Pryor found himself in the right place after Osborne launched a run from deep within his own half.

The New Zealanders used their counter-attacking skills again to take the lead when Matt Faddes chased down a chip kick for the Highlanders' third try.

Osborne had another try disallowed but helped seal the game four minutes from time when he made yet another break to set up Jason Emery for a five-pointer. —AFP

IN SOCCER-MAD BRAZIL, FENCING TARGETS YOUNG FANS FOR OLYMPICS

RIO DE JANEIRO: Forget Neymar and Pele. Children in Rio de Janeiro are lifting their sights and their swords to new idols as a round of fencing workshops takes to public schools.

The International Fencing Federation (FIE), together with Brazilian and state federations, will reach 40 public schools in March and April, visiting two each day.

The aim of the project is to whip up a following for the Olympic sport, little known in this soccer-mad nation, as Rio gears up for the Summer Games in August. Students take to the sport well, hoping to emulate the quick-footed heroes they grew up with in movies, says coach Arno Schneider.

"Children have that dream of the sword fights that they see in films, in Zorro, Romeo and Juliet - a duel very similar to what we have in this sport," he says.

To see a Reuters photo essay, please click on <http://reut.rs/1Vb9fdH>. Those taking part in the project get free tickets to the Fencing Grand Prix and to the World Championships in the Arena Carioca 3 venue in late April, an official Olympic test event. With a newfound enthusiasm for the sport, 12-year-old Cacique da Silva Felicia says he will be the first one rooting for Olympic fencers when the Games come to Brazil. "I thought it was really cool, I would like to do it again if there were another opportunity," he says. "When (the Games) come to Rio, I'll be here cheering for Brazil." —Reuters



BETHLEHEM: Participants run along Israel's controversial separation barrier, which divides the West Bank from Jerusalem, in the biblical West Bank town of Bethlehem during the 4th Palestine Marathon yesterday. —AFP

KENYA IN 'DANGER' OF MISSING OLYMPICS

NAIROBI: Kenya's Olympic chief warned yesterday the east African track giants were in danger of missing Rio after politicians failed to pass a law criminalising sports doping ahead of a key deadline. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) gave Kenya until April 5 to tighten its anti-doping law and provide funding for a proposed Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK), after Nairobi missed an earlier February 14 deadline. Kenyan lawmakers on Wednesday held the preliminary reading of a bill criminalising sports doping, but then went on recess, making it impossible to pass the bill into law by the Tuesday deadline.

The bill is intended to save Kenyan athletes from an Olympics ban threatened by IAAF president Sebastian Coe.

Kip Keino, the National Olympic Committee of Kenya (NOCK) chairman, said he will appeal to WADA to give Kenya more time to complete the process. "Kenya is in danger of being locked out of the Olympics," Keino, himself a two-time Olympic 1,500 metre gold medallist, told AFP. "I am very disappointed with the attitude taken by the leaders. They don't get the magnitude of all this - they have badly let down the youth of this country." The proposed Anti-Doping Bill establishes the anti-doping agency and proposes a \$1,000 (100,000 Kenyan shillings) fine, and/or a year in jail for athletes caught doping.

Those caught smuggling or administering banned substances face a \$30,000 (3 million Kenyan shillings) fine or a three-

year jail term. But it will require two further parliamentary hearings, possible committee hearings and presidential assent before becoming law, a process that can take months.

When Kenya missed the February deadline to prove it was doing enough to combat drug-taking, Coe said he would severely punish any country guilty of attempting to cover up doping.

Keino said he had been pushing lawmakers to pass a law for years. "I brought up the idea in 2013 in South Africa, when Kenya, Jamaica and USA was under discussion, and again in 2014," he added. "Jamaica and the US were able to resolve their own cases, leaving Kenya alone in this thing. It has taken us three years to get our house in order."

Many in Kenya fear doping is rife among their top-class runners, who have been the source of enormous national pride.

In parliament, Keino has the strong backing of lawmaker Wesley Korir - a former Boston 2012 marathon champion turned politician. "It is a shame that we have to go and beg WADA now, and yet we had a chance to make things right," said Korir, who has led efforts in parliament to push the bill through.

"The country's future, whether to participate in the Olympics is now under the mercy of WADA," said Korir, the first person to call for doping to be criminalised in Kenya, after many athletes were suspended for drug-related offences. —AFP

PHIL KESSEL SCORES TWICE AS PENGUINS TOPPLE PREDATORS

PITTSBURGH: Phil Kessel scored twice and the surging Pittsburgh Penguins moved within striking distance of a 10th straight playoff berth with a 5-2 win over the Nashville Predators on Thursday night. Kris Letang, Patric Hornqvist and Nick Bonino also scored for Pittsburgh, which improved to 10-1 in its last 11 games. The Penguins will clinch a spot in the postseason if Detroit loses in regulation on Friday against Minnesota. Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 22 shots to reach the 35-win plateau for the seventh time in his career. James Neal and Ryan Johansen each had a goal and an assist for the Predators, who failed for a third straight game to wrap up a playoff bid. Pekka Rinne stopped 25 shots before sitting out the third period in favor of backup Carter Hutton.

PANTHERS 3, DEVILS 2

Jonathan Huberdeau scored twice to move Florida back into first place in the Atlantic Division with a 3-2 win over New Jersey. Jaromir Jagr had a pair of assists and Al Montoya made 23 saves for Florida, which broke a tie with Tampa Bay for the division lead. The Lightning lost to Montreal 3-0 Thursday night. Mike Sislo and Blake Pietila scored for New Jersey, and Keith Kinkaid made 36 saves. Huberdeau scored his second goal by skating in along the goal line left of Kinkaid and banking in a close shot for his 18th at 3:13 of the third period. Jagr's assist on the play gave him 60 points this season, marking the 18th time he had accomplished the feat.

STARS 4, COYOTES 1

Jamie Benn scored his 40th goal, Antti Niemi made 31 saves and Dallas beat Arizona to move two points ahead in the Western Conference race. Dallas (103 points) pulled away from second-place St. Louis (101). The Stars have four games remaining, and the Blues have five. The loss eliminated the Coyotes from playoff contention. Arizona's Martin Hanzal scored the game's first goal 17:07 into the first period, but Dallas tied it less than a minute later on Patrick Eaves' 10th goal. The Stars' Radek Faksa scored 11 seconds into the second period. Benn's goal came 10 minutes later, and Patrick Sharp added a power-play goal into an empty net with 1:11 to play.

HURRICANES 4, RANGERS 3

Victor Rask scored the go-ahead goal with 10:54 left, and Carolina rallied to beat New York in former captain Eric Staal's return to his old home arena. Jeff Skinner, Patrick Brown and Justin Faulk also scored for the Hurricanes, who trailed 3-2 after two periods. Ryan Murphy had two assists and Cam Ward made 24 saves. Chris Kreider, Mats Zuccarello and Rick Nash scored for New York and Derek Stepan had two assists during a three-goal second. Henrik Lundqvist finished with 24 saves for the Rangers, who fell to 27-2-2 when leading after two.

KINGS 3, FLAMES 0

Jeff Carter scored twice, Jonathan Quick made 21 saves in his fifth shutout of the season and Los Angeles reclaimed the Pacific Division lead with a win over Calgary. The Kings moved one point ahead of the idle

Anaheim Ducks with their 46th win this season, tying the franchise record most recently set in their Stanley Cup-winning 2013-14 campaign. Quick earned his 42nd career shutout, extending his own NHL record for American-born goalies. He also earned his 39th win of the season to match the franchise single-season record, which he set in 2009-10. Joni Orto stopped 26 shots for the Flames, who have allowed 134 goals on the road, tied with Ottawa for worst in the league.

ISLANDERS 4, BLUE JACKETS 3

John Tavares scored twice and Anders Lee got a power-play goal 5:23 into the third period to lift New York over Columbus. Thomas Hickey also scored for New York, which improved to 42-25-9. The Islanders have won three straight to get to 93 points and have solidified their grip on the first Eastern Conference wild-card berth. New York is 24-9-4 in 37 games at Barclays Center this season, and four of the Islanders' final six games are at their new home in Brooklyn.

SENATORS 3, WILD 2

Cody Ceci got a goal with 3:57 left that deflected off two Minnesota players to help Ottawa beat the Wild. Ceci's ninth goal of the season bounced off Erik Haula and goaltender Devan Dubnyk's skate. Erik Karlsson and Jean-Gabriel Pageau scored, Craig Anderson made 23 saves and Ottawa won its second straight game a night after being officially eliminated from the playoffs. Zach Parise scored his team-high 25th goal for Minnesota, which had its season-high six-game winning streak snapped. Haula tied it early in the



LOS ANGELES: Andy Andreoff (right) of the Los Angeles Kings celebrates his goal to take a 3-0 lead over the Calgary Flames during the third period at Staples Center yesterday in Los Angeles, California. —AFP

VANUCKS 4, SHARKS 2

Jannik Hansen scored the tiebreaking goal with 5:03 remaining and Vancouver snapped a nine-game losing streak by beating San Jose. Daniel Sedin and Bo Horvat scored in the first period and the Canucks rebounded after blowing another late lead to avoid matching the longest losing streak in franchise history. Markus Granlund added an empty-net goal and Ryan Miller made 32 saves to help Vancouver earn its second win in San Jose in March. Patrick Marleau and Logan Couture scored for the Sharks, who lost for the 22nd time at home this season and will now likely have to open the playoffs on the road. San Jose is five points behind Los Angeles and four back of Anaheim in the Pacific Division with the Kings having one game in hand and the Ducks two. Martin Jones made 22 saves.

Thomas Greiss stopped 21 shots as New York swept the five-game regular season series with Columbus. Brandon Dubinsky, Brandon Saad and Boone Jenner scored for the Blue Jackets, and Sergei Bobrovsky made 23 saves.

CANADIENS 3, LIGHTNING 0

Rookie Mike Condon made 26 saves for his first NHL shutout and Montreal beat Tampa Bay. Tampa Bay started play tied with Florida for first place in the Atlantic Division at 93 points each. The Panthers beat the New Jersey Devils 3-2 on Thursday night. David Desharnais, Torrey Mitchell and Phillip Danault scored. Condon stopped Ondrej Palat's penalty shot with 11:08 left in the second. He also made a save on Nikita Kucherov's in-close backhand during a power play late in the period.

third, but the Wild fell to 2-21-5 this season when trailing after two periods. Dubnyk made 19 saves.

SABRES 4, MAPLE LEAFS 1

Cal O'Reilly and Johan Larsson each scored twice and Buffalo extended its home dominance over Toronto. Buffalo built a 3-0 lead and Larsson capped Buffalo's seventh straight home win over Toronto by scoring into an empty net in a meeting of two Atlantic Division rivals who have already been eliminated from playoff contention. The Sabres also improved to 17-1-1 in their past 19 home games against Toronto in a run that dates to Feb. 4, 2009. Brooks Laich scored for Toronto and Tobias Lindberg set up the goal in his NHL debut. The Maple Leafs acquired Lindberg in a multiplayer deal that sent captain Dion Phaneuf to Ottawa last month. Chad Johnson made 25 saves for Buffalo. —AP

WE'RE NOT JUST DRUMMERS IN THE WINDIES BAND: SIMMONS

MUMBAI: Aggressive opening batsman Chris Gayle usually hogs the headlines but West Indies' advance to the World Twenty20 final against England has shown they are by no means a one-man band, according to batsman Lendl Simmons.

Gayle scored an unbeaten century in the Caribbean side's first pool match against England, which set up their successful run chase of 183, reaching the target with 11 balls to spare in Mumbai. Since then, he has scored nine further runs.

He was dismissed for five in the semi-final against India before Simmons smashed 82 from 51 balls, while Andre Russell scored 43 from 20 to guide their side into Sunday's showdown with Eoin Morgan's team in Kolkata on Sunday.

"I think England will certainly be aware that it's not a one-man show in this team," Simmons told reporters.

"Chris Gayle didn't get off but we still managed to get over the line and it was a big total.

"Even when he didn't perform, we were still able to get up and fight and that shows a lot of character from our players."

The team have needed to rely on their character and collective will after a turbulent few months in which they have been pilloried for their performances in test matches and one day internationals.

They have also been galvanised by yet another bitter pay dispute with their board, who less than two months ago threatened to send a second string side

to the tournament in India unless the squad accepted their offer.

Since Gayle's blistering start to the tournament, others have assumed the mantle of trying to chase down the totals they have been set in all five games.

Andre Fletcher scored 84 not out in their seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka, while Johnson Charles (32) and Marlon Samuels (43) saw them to a three-wicket win over South Africa.

"Every one of our players are match winners in our team," Simmons added. "We have a lot of batting power and I think we can chase any run total, we always back ourselves to chase totals."

That confidence has also been evident in Morgan's side after they comfortably accounted for New Zealand in the other semi-final, with man of the match

Jason Roy epitomising the aggressive attitude that has filtered through the team.

That aggression, and confidence, made them a better outfit than the England team that won the World Twenty20 in 2010, according to the captain of that side, Paul Collingwood.

"In the past our line-up probably had one or two players that were real match-winners, this team is full of match-winners," Collingwood told the ECB website. "These guys are mentally different to what we used to be. 'Who dares wins' is pretty much the motto.

"We probably would think, 'this is a big game' and pull back a little bit. It seems to be the other way round for these guys, they seem to thrive on the excitement of the big stage." — Reuters

NZ'S GRANT ELLIOTT CALLS TIME ON ONE-DAY CRICKET

AUCKLAND: A year after he created what has been considered New Zealand's most memorable cricketing moment, all-rounder Grant Elliott has retired from one-day international cricket.

The 37-year-old Elliott hit a six from the penultimate ball off South Africa's Dale Steyn in the World Cup semi-final last year to propel New Zealand to their first World Cup final. The shot was voted by the New Zealand public as the sporting moment of 2015.

"I have played my last one day game," Elliott told Newshub at Auckland Airport on Friday after the New Zealand team returned home from the World Twenty20 tournament in India following a semi-final exit.

"But there is three formats. I won't

be considered for test cricket, I haven't seen my test clothing for a few years. There's still T20 cricket and my body feels good. "I'm going to reassess and let the dust settle. As long as I'm enjoying my cricket, I haven't made a call on anything yet. So I'll just get home and assess it."

Originally from South Africa, Elliott moved to New Zealand to play international cricket, making his test debut against England in 2008 but only competed in five matches in almost two years. He developed into a successful limited-overs player but was a surprise selection in New Zealand's World Cup squad last year, having not appeared for the team in more than 14 months. He also spent more than two years out of the side prior to that. The right-hand-

der's composure was most evident during the tournament as New Zealand went through pool play unbeaten and his 84 not out against South Africa in the semi-final typified his influence on the team.

Elliott also top-scored with 83 in the final against.

Australia, who won the game at the Melbourne Cricket Ground by seven wickets.

His last one-day international was in February against Australia at Seddon Park in Hamilton, when he scored his 11th half century.

He finished with 1,976 runs at 34.06 with two centuries. Elliott was also a handy slow-medium bowler, who finished with 39 wickets at 30.23 in his 83 one-day internationals. — Reuters



KOLKATA: Former Indian cricketer Sourav Ganguly, right, talks to ICC Head of Event Chris Tetley ahead of the final match between England and West Indies during the ICC World Twenty20 2016 cricket tournament in Kolkata, India, yesterday. — AP

KHAWAJA, VOGES, BURNS EARN AUSTRALIA CONTRACTS

SYDNEY: Usman Khawaja, Adam Voges and Joe Burns were among seven new players to be handed central contracts yesterday as Australia rebuild after a series of retirements.

The new players were not on the initial list for the 2016/2017 season announced a year ago but they have since forced their way into the selectors' plans.

Nathan Coulter-Nile, John Hastings, Peter Nevill and Peter Siddie have also been added to the 20-man list as Australia looks ahead to the home Ashes series starting in late 2017.

"There is a lot of talent within this group and we have confidence that the players chosen can be successful in all three forms of the game," chief selector Rodney Marsh said in a statement.

"Following a number of high-profile retirements, we believe this group of players gives us a healthy blend of youth and experience to represent Australia at the highest level." Michael Clarke, Brad Haddin, Ryan Harris, Mitchell Johnson, Chris Rogers and Shane Watson all called it quits for Australia last year.

Australian media said batsman Khawaja was expected to pocket more Aus\$1 million (\$770,000) from his new contract after his sparkling form in all three formats.

Burns is reaping the benefits of his ascension to Test opener, replacing the retired Rogers, which included his man-of-the-match 170 against New Zealand in Christchurch in February.

Voges, 36, has also been in the runs, making 239 in Wellington as his Test average temporarily climbed above the great Dan Bradman's 99.94. The minimum value of a Cricket Australia contract for the 2016-17 season is Aus\$270,000 while any player awarded an upgrade contract will earn at least Aus\$230,000 (\$176,000), CA said. CA's contracted players 2016-17: George Bailey, Joe Burns, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Patrick Cummins, James Faulkner, Aaron Finch, John Hastings, Josh Hazlewood, Usman Khawaja, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Marsh, Shaun Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Peter Nevill, James Pattinson, Adam Voges, Peter Siddie, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, David Warner. — AFP



KOLKATA: England's captain Eoin Morgan (L) and Moeen Ali (2R) play football with teammates during a training session ahead of the World T20 final against West Indies at the Eden Gardens stadium in Kolkata yesterday. — AFP

LET DOWN BY TEAM MATES, KOHLI'S GOLDEN WORLD T20 RUN ENDS

NEW DELHI: As the full toss left Andre Russell's blade and settled deep into the stands, dropping a deathly silence across the Wankhede Stadium, Virat Kohli stood dazed, gazing at the trajectory of the ball and perhaps wondering what else he could have done.

For the umpteenth time in the World Twenty20, the 27-year-old had papered over the cracks in India's top order, his unbeaten 89 accounting for almost half of his country's 192 in the semi-final against West Indies.

In between the 11 boundaries and single six that flowed from his bat, the supreme athlete ran himself ragged, regularly converting singles into twos and occa-

sionally two into threes. Kohli the bowler also resurfaced when it mattered.

The evening dew had effectively defanged the Indian spinners, while their pacers bled boundaries, leaving Mahendra Singh Dhoni in an unenviable position.

The India captain, as is his wont, sprang a surprise by tossing the ball to Kohli and the part-time dabbly-dobbler struck immediately, dismissing the dangerous Johnson Charles (52) with his first delivery and ending a 97-run partnership.

Kohli was in the thick of things again in the 18th over, collaborating with Ravindra Jadeja to almost send back West Indies hero Lendl Simmons.

Jadeja took a running catch but as

momentum was taking him over the ropes, he lobbed the ball inside for Kohli to grab. TV replays, however, confirmed Jadeja's foot had touched the boundary and it was declared a six. Simmons and Russell set alight a hot and humid night with batting pyrotechnics that left the 2012 champions needing only eight runs off the last over.

Once again, Dhoni handed the ball to Kohli, hoping the golden arm of the man who could do no wrong would pull off a miracle. It was not to be. Kohli conceded a single off the first delivery and followed it up with a dot ball to raise Indian hopes of an improbable victory.

Russell hit the following ball for four, though, and deposited the next over deep

mid-wicket and into the stands to break 1.2 billion Indian hearts.

As Russell and Simmons were mobbed by their team mates, Kohli stood alone with his thoughts.

India's test captain finished the World Twenty20 with 273 runs from five innings with a staggering 136-plus average and a strike rate of almost 147.

Only Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal (295) scored more and he had the advantage of playing extra matches in the qualifying stage of the tournament.

His prodigious scoring means Kohli will remain in the mix for the player-of-the-tournament award but for a proud team man, it would probably mean very little. — Reuters

DHONI FAR FROM RETIRING WHEN QUIZZED OVER FUTURE

MUMBAI: India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has mostly played retirement questions with a straight bat in the past, but the 34-year-old opted to go on a playful attack when asked about his future following the hosts' World Twenty20 semi-final defeat.

Undoubtedly India's most successful ever captain, Dhoni stunned all when he announced his decision to quit test cricket in the middle of an Australian tour in 2014, handing over the mantle to Virat Kohli. So it was not unusual for a journalist to ask Dhoni if he was keen to continue playing after India's seven wicket defeat by West Indies knocked them out of their home tournament on Thursday.

The Indian Twenty20 captain, though, took the surprising step of asking the inquirer to come and sit next to him on stage and discuss the matter.

"You want me to retire?" a grinning Dhoni asked with his arm draped around the nervous-looking journalist.

"No, I don't. I was just asking," the Australian reporter answered.

"Do you think I am unfit, looking at me running?" Dhoni said.

The journalist responded: "No, very fast."

"Do you think I can survive until the 2019 World Cup?" Dhoni asked, referring to the 50-over tournament in England and Wales. "Sure, yes, sure," came the reply.

"Then you have answered the question," Dhoni said with a big smile while giving the journalist a pat on his back as he quickly left the stage amid laughter from the room. Dhoni has led India to the World T20, the 50-over World Cup, the Champions Trophy and also the top of the world test rankings. He said he would have preferred one of his compatriots from the cricket-crazed country to have probed.

"I would have asked whether he has a son who is old enough to play and is a wicketkeeper to play," he said. "He would have said 'no' then I would have said maybe a brother who can play and who is a wicketkeeper."

"You fired the wrong ammunition at the wrong time," he told the journalist, with another smile on his face. — Reuters



KOLKATA: Australia's Nicola Carey stretches at a practice session, ahead of the World T20 women's final against the West Indies, at the Eden Gardens stadium in Kolkata yesterday. — AFP



SILIGURI: Indian cricket fans burn portraits of players as they stage a funeral of the Indian cricket team in the streets of Siliguri on Thursday, after India's defeat in the men's semi-final match between India and West Indies in a World T20 cricket tournament match played at Mumbai. — AFP

GREAT GREAT GREAT! STUNNING WIN HELPS WINDIES SMILE AGAIN

MUMBAI: West Indies captain Darren Sammy said he hopes to help Caribbean fans smile again by completing a unique hat-trick at the World Twenty20 after stunning India to reach the final.

An emotional Sammy said the West Indies had their backs to the wall before shocking India by seven wickets to emulate their women's team, who also won their semi-final hours earlier.

After the West Indies won the Under-19 World Cup in February, a double victory in Kolkata on Sunday would seal an unprecedented treble and hint at a cricketing revival for the islands after years of decline.

Sammy's team, champions in 2012, will face England in tomorrow's men's title match while the West Indies women will play their first World Twenty20 final against Australia.

"We came here on a mission. We were inspired by the U-19 boys earlier this year, the ladies won earlier today, now we have two West Indies team in the final," said an

emotional Sammy at the post-match presentation. "We feel this is this West Indies team against everyone else." Chasing 193, the West Indies were struggling at 19 for two after losing star batsman Chris Gayle for five, when Lendl Simmons rose to the occasion to become their unlikely hero.

Fighting jetlag after flying in as a late replacement for the injured Andre Fletcher, Simmons, who survived two no-ball catches, hit an unbeaten 82 to silence a raucous crowd.

"Great great great!!! Well done Windies!!! #silence #wankhede #WestindiesvsEngland #ICCW20 #finals proud to be West Indian," tweeted Caribbean legend Brian Lara.

Before the match, Sammy had said the semi-final was a "David and Goliath" encounter, with more than a billion Indians willing their team to win.

The West Indies dominated cricket in the 1970s and 1980s, winning the 50-over World Cup in 1975 and 1979, but they have

since fallen on hard times. A bitter pay dispute with the West Indies Cricket Board on the eve of the tournament did not raise optimism about their chances of making an impression in the tournament.

But the former Test powerhouse defied their doubters to beat England, Sri Lanka and South Africa in the group stage and then make India eat humble pie in Thursday's semi-final.

The women's victory earlier also came as a surprise and captain Stafanie Taylor hoped the win would act as a catalyst for women's cricket in the Caribbean.

"I don't think it's that popular," said the destructive opening batswoman. "If you look at Australia, they have that foundation which we're trying to build in the West Indies. After being in the final, and I hope that we win, it might change everything in the West Indies. "People will know more about females playing the game, which we want. We want girls coming out to play the game." — AFP

VILLA DROP AGBONLAHOR AFTER SHISHA PIPE PICTURES

LONDON: Aston Villa forward Gabriel Agbonlahor has been dropped from the first team pending an investigation after pictures were published by British media of him apparently smoking a shisha pipe. Villa, who are bottom of the Premier League, announced that Agbonlahor would not be included in the squad for today's Premier League game against Chelsea as the club looks into his behaviour while on holiday in the United Arab Emirates.

The decision to remove Agbonlahor from the squad was taken by caretaker manager Eric Black, who took over this week after Remi Garde was sacked following a dismal five-month spell in charge.

"There's an ongoing investigation which will run its course, I'm sure," Black told reporters yesterday.

"Obviously I can't give you any more information on that as we stand but that is underway. I've taken the decision myself that I want us to focus on football matches now so I've removed Gabby from the squad for today.

"We don't need this to be about Gabby Agbonlahor. We need this to be about the 18 players who are possibly going to play for Aston Villa today."

Villa are nine points adrift at the bottom of the table and 12 short of Norwich City in 17th place.

They have won only three league games in a woeful campaign and parted company with manager Garde this week after he failed to turn around their flailing fortunes having replaced Tim Sherwood, who was sacked in October.

Agbonlahor, who has three England caps, has played 18 games for Villa this season but scored just once and dropped to the bench for Garde's final match in charge, a 1-0 defeat to Swansea City before the international break. The 29-year-old Agbonlahor was pictured during a trip to Dubai with club team mate Micah Richards and Crystal Palace pair Dwight Gayle and Fraizer Campbell.

"It's part and parcel, unfortunately, of modern-day football. I can assure you Aston Villa's not the only club that's had to deal with this," Black added.

"It's not specific to Aston Villa. We'll deal with it in the right manner and try to remove those issues and focus purely on what this club should be about. That's playing football and the next challenge is Chelsea today." —Reuters

CONFIDENT CAVALIERS SHRED NETS IN CLEVELAND

CLEVELAND: LeBron James scored 24 points to move into 12th place on the NBA's career scoring list as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Brooklyn Nets 107-87 on Thursday night. James passed Dominique Wilkins with a three-point play in the first quarter. The four-time MVP, who didn't play in the fourth quarter, has 26,689 career points. Kevin Love added 19 points for Cleveland (53-22), which leads Toronto by 2 1/2 games for the top seed in the Eastern Conference. Thaddeus Young led Brooklyn with 18 points. James, who also had 11 assists, sparked a 25-6 run to end the second quarter. After returning with 7:27 remaining, he

Chicago held on. The Bulls won their second consecutive game following a four-game skid and trail Indiana by one game for the final playoff spot in the East. James Harden had 24 points and eight assists for Houston, which dropped a half-game behind Utah and Dallas, who are tied for the seventh and eighth seeds in the West.

MAGIC 114, PACERS 94

Evan Fournier scored 25 points and Nikola Vucevic added 24 to lead the Orlando Magic past the Indiana Pacers. The Magic have won three straight since snapping a six-game losing streak, includ-

points and 11 assists for the Thunder, who lead the Clippers by 5 1/2 games in the race for the No. 3 seed in the NBA's Western Conference playoffs. The Clippers played without usual starters Chris Paul, DeAndre Jordan and J.J. Redick, as coach Doc Rivers chose to rest them. Blake Griffin also was out, serving the last game of a four-game team-imposed suspension. Jamal Crawford and Austin Rivers carried the load offensively, each scoring 32 points and going a combined 12-of-17 from 3-point range. Los Angeles led by as many as nine in the second half but couldn't hold on as the Thunder outrebounded the Clippers 46-26.

PELICANS 101, NUGGETS 95

Luke Babbitt scored 22 points and Tim Frazier had 11 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter, leading the injury-riddled New Orleans Pelicans past the Denver Nuggets. Babbitt had 10 of the Pelicans' first 12 points and scored on a driving layup with 2:08 left to give them a 94-89 lead. After Denver cut the deficit to 94-91, Babbitt hit two free throws and Frazier sank a 3-pointer to seal the game. New Orleans took the lead for good, 81-80, on Frazier's high-arching shot early in the fourth quarter. He then scored six points on a three-point play and 3-pointer to give the Pelicans a 92-84 advantage. Toney Douglas added 20 points and a season-high 10 assists for New Orleans. Darrell Arthur tied a career high with 24 points for Denver, which is on the verge of following the Pelicans and being eliminated from the Western Conference playoff picture. Gary Harris added 16 points for the Nuggets, and Kenneth Faried had 10 points and 12 rebounds.

TRAIL BLAZERS 116, CELTICS 109

Al-Farouq Aminu scored a career-high 28 points, including a career-best six 3-pointers, as the Portland Trail Blazers extended their winning streak at home to a season-high six games with a victory over the Boston Celtics. With only six regular-season games remaining, Portland (40-31) holds the sixth seed in the West. Boston (39-37) entered as the East's fourth seed, but fell to sixth with the loss. CJ McCollum added 17 points and Damian Lillard had 14 for Portland, helping to avenge a 116-93 blowout loss to the Celtics two weeks ago in Boston. Isaiah Thomas led the Celtics with 22 points. —AP

THUNDER 119, CLIPPERS 117

Kevin Durant scored 31 points, Steven Adams hit a go-ahead tip-in with 26.9 seconds left as the Oklahoma City Thunder held on to avoid a potentially embarrassing loss, edging the depleted Los Angeles Clippers. Russell Westbrook added 26



CLEVELAND: Cleveland Cavaliers' Timofey Mozgov, left, from Russia, and Brooklyn Nets' Thomas Robinson battle for a rebound in the second half of an NBA basketball game Thursday, in Cleveland. —AP

scored eight points as Cleveland built a five-point margin into a 63-39 lead at halftime.

BULLS 103, ROCKETS 100

Nikola Mirotic scored 28 points and Jimmy Butler added 21 to lead the Chicago Bulls past the Houston Rockets. In a pivotal game for two teams fighting for the final playoff spots in their conferences, the Bulls were fueled by a strong fourth quarter in which they outscored the Rockets 32-20. Chicago entered the fourth facing a nine-point deficit but was able to overcome thanks to hot shooting from Mirotic. Trevor Ariza attempted a tying 3 at the buzzer, but it rimmed out and



BOGOTA: FIFA President, Gianni Infantino attends a press conference in Bogota on Thursday. With the challenge of changing the image of FIFA, hit by a corruption scandal since last May, president Gianni Infantino closed in Colombia his South American tour. —AFP

LEADERS CSKA FACE CHALLENGE FROM ZENIT

MOSCOW: Russian Premier League leaders CSKA Moscow will undergo a stern test of their title ambitions tomorrow when they visit reigning champions Zenit St Petersburg.

The match represents a key game in an increasingly exciting title race, that has seen several sides keep themselves in contention with just nine matches to play.

CSKA's lead is far from unshakable as they are just two points ahead of second-placed Rostov, while Lokomotiv Moscow are three points further back in third, with Zenit fourth, six points behind CSKA.

CSKA and Russia head coach Leonid Slutsky, who oversaw the national side's 4-2 friendly defeat to France on Tuesday, said his players will need to switch their focus back to domestic games after fulfilling their international commitments.

"The match in Paris gave me a lot of food for thought but it's history now," Slutsky said. "Now we need to revert back immediately to our remaining commitment this season, the national championship, as we want to maintain our lead.

"I expect a very hard clash in Saint Petersburg. There's no doubt that Zenit intend to defend their title and the upcoming match is an excellent chance to improve their position in the table." Zenit manager Andre Villas-Boas meanwhile expressed confidence that his team were on course to retain their title, especially if they could grab a win tomorrow.

"We're now six points from CSKA. That is not that much," the former Porto, Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur coach said. "We can narrow the gap to just three points if we win the next game. But a single win is not enough and we need to keep on winning. "I believe we can become the champions again, though a lot of teams are still in the race for the first place. Possibly everything will be decided in the very end of the championship."

Meanwhile, Rostov need a win in their home match with Spartak Moscow today to give a boost to their unlikely title challenge and, temporarily at least, move top of the table. —AFP



Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Aston Villa v Chelsea	14:45
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	
Arsenal v Watford	17:00
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	
Sunderland v West Bromwich	17:00
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
West Ham v Crystal Palace	17:00
beIN SPORTS 9 HD	
Norwich City v Newcastle	17:00
beIN SPORTS 11 HD	
Stoke City v Swansea City	17:00
beIN SPORTS 12 HD	
Bournemouth v Man City	17:00
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
Liverpool v Tottenham	19:30
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	

SPANISH LEAGUE

Atletico v Real Betis	17:00
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Las Palmas v Valencia	19:15
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Barcelona v Real Madrid	21:30
beIN SPORTS 1 HD	
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Celta de Vigo v Deportivo	23:05
beIN SPORTS 9 HD	

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

Carpi v Sassuolo	19:00
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
Juventus FC v Empoli	21:45
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Bayern Munich v Eintracht	16:30
beIN SPORTS 5 HD	
Hannover v Hamburger	16:30
beIN SPORTS	
Mainz 05 v Augsburg	16:30
beIN SPORTS	
Ingolstadt V Schalke 04	16:30
beIN SPORTS 10 HD	
Darmstadt V Stuttgart	16:30
beIN SPORTS	
Borussia V Werder Bremen	10:30
beIN SPORTS 5 HD	

FRENCH LEAGUE

PSG V OGC Nice	18:00
beIN SPORTS 6 HD	
Troyes AC V Angers	21:00
beIN SPORTS	
Rennes V Stade de Reims	21:00
beIN SPORTS 6 HD	
Guingamp V Montpellier	21:00
beIN SPORTS	
Toulouse FC V Caen	21:00
beIN SPORTS 9 HD	
Ajaccio V Saint Etienne	21:00
beIN SPORTS	

HIDDINK URGES CHELSEA TO PLAY FOR PRIDE

BIRMINGHAM: While Chelsea are effectively marking time until the end of the season, their visit to Aston Villa today brings them into confrontation with a club that this week attempted to jolt life into a disastrous campaign. Villa, rooted at the foot of the Premier League and 12 points adrift of safety, dismissed boss Remi Garde just four months after the Frenchman was installed in place of Tim Sherwood. Both clubs are now looking for a new manager, with Chelsea still to confirm whether Italy coach Antonio Conte will be the permanent successor to Jose Mourinho who was dismissed in December. The appointment of Guus Hiddink as interim manager has brought stability and the Blues will travel to Villa Park hoping to maintain their 14-game unbeaten league run since the Dutchman took charge. At this stage of the season, Chelsea would usually be embroiled in a fight for silverware on several fronts.

However, their exit from the Champions League and the FA Cup means there will be no silverware coming to Stamford Bridge this season,

with the club having an outside chance of qualifying for next season's Europa League. But Hiddink urged his players to show pride and ensure they don't switch off in the closing weeks.

"First of all we want to get the maximum out of the team regarding the league table, to get the best position possible," Hiddink said. "But also we appeal to the players to say hey, you are a big club which has had a very difficult season and is recovering step by step. "We are unbeaten in the league so far, and when you play as a big club in a difficult situation, you must have pride as well."

CHAOTIC SEASON

Chelsea striker Diego Costa is suspended but Radamel Falcao will return to the squad for the first time in five months. Villa moved to sack Garde on Tuesday after just 147 days in charge, with first-team coach Eric Black handed the reins on a temporary basis. The chaotic season has turned the focus on owner Randy Lerner who is keen to sell the club, but Doug Ellis, the previous owner, main-

tains he would sell the club to the American again even knowing what he knows now. "Yes, I would," the 92-year-old told BBC Radio 5 live. "When I did the deal with Randy, he made it clear he wouldn't be able to come to many matches and he certainly hasn't. "I said I'd be there for him at any time because I left £20 million in for new players. Consequently he hasn't asked." Lerner has come under fresh scrutiny for not providing funds for Garde during the transfer window.

And the owner has faced renewed criticism for his handling of the club by the protest group 'Out The Door On 74', who are behind the move by Villa fans to protest against his regime by leaving the last two home matches after 74 minutes - marking the club's formation in 1874. The group said in a statement: "He was hung out to dry by Mr Lerner. "The January window slammed shut with zero investment provided, not a single player joined a squad that had finally shown some mettle but was still woefully short of both consistent quality and numbers." —AFP

MESSI, RONALDO BATTLE TO BE LA LIGA'S TOP DOG

MADRID: Today's meeting between Barcelona and Real Madrid pits the two most expensive strike forces in history against one another. Barca hold a big 10-point advantage over Madrid in the La Liga title race, but the battle to be the league's top scorer between Barca's Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar and Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and Gareth Bale is a lot tighter.

Here, AFP sports looks at the numbers behind the six men hoping to land Spain's Pichichi prize for La Liga's top marksmen.

Cristiano Ronaldo (28 goals)

Much criticised for not reaching his usual heights this season, Ronaldo is still La Liga's top scorer thanks in large part to having played every minute of the league season so far. Ronaldo hasn't scored against in four games against opponents in La Liga's top four, but has looked back close to his best in recent weeks with seven goals in his last five games and is tied with Raul as the third highest scorer in Clasico history with 15 against Barca.

Luis Suarez (26 goals)

Finally free from suspension and controversy to play a full season, Suarez has become Barca's top scorer this season with 43 in 43 games in all competitions, 26 of which in La Liga.

Such is the ease with which Barca have been winning, suspicions in Madrid have arisen that Messi's decision to pass a penalty into Suarez's path against Celta Vigo in February and allow him to take spot-kicks against Sporting Gijon and Rayo Vallecano were with the intention of aiding his challenge to Ronaldo to top the scoring charts.

Yet, the penalty spot is the one place from which the Uruguayan hasn't been deadly as his efforts against Sporting and Rayo were both saved.

Lionel Messi (22 goals)

Despite missing two-months of the season due to knee ligament damage and playing a greater role as creator since Suarez's arrival last season, a surge of 24 goals since



BARCELONA: Barcelona's defender Marc Bartra (2ndR) and Barcelona's Brazilian defender Dani Alves (R) vie with a teammate for the ball during a training session at the Sports Center FC Barcelona Joan Gamper in Sant Joan Despi, near Barcelona yesterday on the eve their Spanish League Clasico football match FC Barcelona vs Real Madrid. —AFP

the turn of the year, 16 in La Liga, have Messi in the hunt for a fourth Pichichi. The five-time World Player of the Year is also tantalisingly close to another significant milestone as he needs just one more to reach 500 career goals after registering his 50th for Argentina as they saw off Bolivia in midweek.

Neymar (21 goals)

After a brief mid-season dip the Brazilian has come back into goalscoring form with four in three games before the recent international break. His best run came in Messi's absence earlier in the campaign with nine in six La Liga games in October and November, culminating in a sensational performance as Barca inflicted a humiliating 4-0 thrashing on Madrid.

Karim Benzema (20 goals)

The Frenchman has significantly the best minutes per goal ratio in La Liga with one every 78 minutes he's on the pitch. Staying there has been Benzema's trouble in a season disrupted by injury and off-field scandals, but he is already just one off his best ever tally in a Liga campaign.

Gareth Bale (15 goals)

Injuries have also ravaged Bale's season, but the Welshman's impressive strike rate of 15 in just 16 league starts also has him on course for his best goalscoring season since arriving in Spain three years ago. Bale has just one El Clasico goal to his name, but it was his most spectacular one in a Madrid shirt as he ran half the length of the field before slotting home to win the Copa del Rey final in 2014. —AFP

Sports



Messi, Ronaldo battle to be La Liga's top dog

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KEY BISCAZYNE: Kei Nishikori of Japan in action against Gael Monfils of France in their quarter final match during the Miami Open presented by Itau at Crandon Park Tennis Center on Thursday in Key Biscayne, Florida. — AFP

NISHIKORI FENDS OFF MONFILS

KYRGIOS STUNS RAONIC

MIAMI: Kei Nishikori withstood a blistering early assault and saved five match points before battling past Frenchman Gael Monfils 4-6 6-3 7-6(3) in a bruising quarter-final at the Miami Open on Thursday. The Japanese number one will face 24th seed Nick Kyrgios in the semi-finals after the Australian upset 12th seeded Canadian Milos Raonic 6-4 7-6(4).

Sixth seed Nishikori appeared to have his match in control when leading 4-2 in the final set but his usually reliable forehand repeatedly let him down as he fell behind 4-5 0-40 on serve before mounting a gutsy fightback. He saved four match points in that 10th game, and a fifth in the 12th, before racing into a 6-3 lead in the tiebreak as Monfils made a string of unforced errors, Nishikori finally sealing the win with a forehand crosscourt winner. "When I was down 4-5 and 0-40, I thought I almost gave up the match," Nishikori, 26, told ESPN in a courtside interview after an epic encounter between two of the most athletic players on the ATP World Tour that lasted two-and-a-half hours. "But I tried to play one point at a time and tried to focus on what I had to do, especially my serve. In the tiebreak, I just tried to focus again and fight harder." Nishikori, who also reached the last

four in Miami two years ago, was left reeling in the opening set as the 16th-seeded Monfils played high-risk, aggressive tennis right from the start, highlighted by an explosive service game. "I was a little bit surprised how he played, especially the first couple of games," said Nishikori. "I was waiting for a little bit more long rallies and I wasn't expecting to play that fast so I had to make some adjustment."

Kyrgios took down his more fancied opponent in two sets to reach the last four for the first time in a ATP Masters 1000 event, riding a break in the first game of the match all the way to victory.

"I knew it would be a tough match. Milos has played great the last couple of weeks and the only person he's lost to is Djokovic so I knew it would be a tough task," Kyrgios said. "I played really well out here, the crowd was a lot of fun, the atmosphere was really good and I thought the level of tennis was really good as well."

"To be honest I didn't think I was going to break during the match but I broke him in the first game. I came out really energetic and I got pretty lucky and that definitely made me more relaxed and made me play my game a little bit easier." — Reuters

AZARENKA ADVANCES TO MIAMI OPEN FINAL

MIAMI: In-form Victoria Azarenka battled past an ailing but determined second seed Angelique Kerber to set up a Miami Open final showdown against Svetlana Kuznetsova with a 6-2 7-5 victory on Thursday.

With the victory, the 13th-seeded Belarusian gained revenge for a quarter-final loss to the second-seeded German at the Australian Open, her only defeat of the season, but had to fight tooth and nail to earn it in a 94-minute tussle. Kerber, who had her upper left leg covered in heavy strapping, looked dead and buried on several occasions in the second set but was able to stay alive with a gutsy break when Azarenka served for the

match at 5-4. Parity was short-lived, however, as Kerber handed back the break in the next game and Azarenka did not waste another opportunity to seal the deal to move one win away from a third Miami title and second straight tournament triumph. "I am very happy I stayed really strong in the end and actually started really well," Azarenka, who beat Serena Williams to claim the Indian Wells title on March 20, said in a courtside interview.

"I started to dictate (early) and I think the beginning was really important," she added of the victory over the Australian Open champion. — Reuters