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THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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JAMADA ALTHANI 29, 1437 AH

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UAE LABOR MEET FINDS EXPATS STILL TROUBLED

ABU DHABI: Laborers gathered yesterday for an event aimed at showcasing how the United Arab Emirates is trying to make labor laws more understandable instead discussed unscrupulous bosses, abuses and poor conditions rampant across the Gulf Arab states. Wearing handed-out white baseball caps reading "I (heart) UAE," laborers praised the Emirati effort at translating labor laws while still complaining about stagnant wages and being suckered by agents into jobs they didn't want.

"The companies are gaining. They are making all the profits. What about the laborers?" asked Adnan Chaudhry, 30, of Pakistan, who works in human resources at a copper manufacturing plant. "The managers are up, up, up and the laborers are down, down, down." Gulf nations long have relied on migrant labor to build their oil-funded skylines, drive their taxicabs and clean their hotel rooms. In the UAE, a federation of seven emirates on the Arabian Peninsula, foreign workers vastly outnumber locals.

In recent years, however, the conditions workers face has gained particular attention ahead of Qatar hosting the 2022 FIFA World Cup. An Amnesty International report last week alleged migrant laborers faced abuse that in some cases amounted to forced labor while working on one stadium that will host the tournament.

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ABU DHABI: A senior administrator from the Dubai Labor Office speaks to several hundred workers gathered at a residential camp for laborers and managers during an event yesterday. — AP

By B Izzak and A Saleh

KUWAIT: The National Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee yesterday rejected a government draft bill to raise power charges and approved a much milder one made by the committee itself, the head of the committee said. MP Faisal Al-Shaye said based on government studies, a third of the Kuwaiti population consumes less than 6,000 kilowatts a month and the committee decided to keep charges unchanged for this section.

Those consuming between 6,000 and 12,000 kW will pay 5 fils per kilowatt and 10 fils for those consuming above this level. Shaye said that based on studies, people over-consume by 30 percent and the Assembly bill aims to rationalize this consumption. The lawmaker said that according to the bill approved by the committee, people consuming up to 6,000 kW will still pay KD 12 per month and the government will pay KD 1,800 in subsidies.

The bill aims at saving 20 percent of power consumption to enable the government to build new residential areas without the need to build new power plants, he said. Shaye said those who consume above 6,000 kW will have to pay little extra charges or cut their consumption to below the 6,000 kW level.

A comparison with Gulf states shows that for consumption of up to 6,000 kW, Kuwaitis will pay KD 12, while in Saudi Arabia consumers pay KD 48, in Bahrain KD 34.500 and as much as KD 132 in Dubai, he said. Shaye said the new charges will be implemented on the commercial sector after three months and on

Continued on Page 13

NILESAT DROPS HEZBOLLAH TV

BEIRUT: A leading Arab satellite operator cut transmission of Hezbollah's television channel Al-Manar yesterday amid rising tensions between the Lebanese Shiite group's backer Iran and Sunni powerhouse Saudi Arabia. In a statement distributed to journalists, Hezbollah "sharply condemned" the move. Officials at both Al-Manar and Cairo-based Nilesat confirmed the transmission had been cut over accusations the channel violated its contract by airing programs promoting sectarian divisions.

"This is a political decision, not an industry decision. Al-Manar has nothing to do with sectarian strife," the channel's general manager Ibrahim Farhat told AFP, calling the move "unjust and arbitrary." "This is part of the political problem in the region, that they're taking out on the media," Farhat said. Asked about the decision to cut Al-Manar's transmission, a senior Nilesat official said channels "must abide by not airing any violent or racist content, or provoking sectarian strife." "No other channels have violated the contract," he told AFP, in response to a question on whether any other Lebanese channels would be affected.

The cut came ahead of an expected visit this week by Saudi King Salman to Egypt, which operates the Nilesat satellite. Hezbollah said the decision was part of "the

attack against the Resistance (Hezbollah) and all its branches by some Arab organizations." "We in Hezbollah condemn this unjust decision against Al-Manar and we demand that the responsible officials at Nilesat immediately rescind this decision," the group said in a statement.

Last month, Gulf Arab states led by Saudi Arabia blacklisted Hezbollah, the leading force in Lebanon's governing bloc, as a "terrorist" organization. The kingdom halted a \$3 billion programme of military aid to Lebanon to protest what it said was "the stranglehold of Hezbollah on the state". It also urged its citizens to leave Lebanon and avoid travelling there. Al-Manar said on Twitter that it could still be watched via a Russian satellite or online.

The moves against Hezbollah come amid a spike in tensions between its backer Tehran and Riyadh this year after demonstrators stormed the kingdom's missions in Iran following Saudi Arabia's execution of a Shiite cleric. The kingdom cut diplomatic ties with Iran and led Arab allies in a series of retaliatory measures against it. While Saudi Arabia is the main supporter of Syria's Sunni-led rebels, Hezbollah is fighting alongside President Bashar Al-Assad's troops, who are backed by Iranian military advisers. — AFP

QATARI ROYAL FREED BY IRAQ KIDNAPPERS

DOHA: A member of the Qatari royal family has been released by kidnapers in Iraq nearly four months after being taken captive while on a hunting trip, Qatar said yesterday. A Pakistani national was also released, the Qatari foreign ministry said. The pair, who have not been named, were among more than 20 people abducted from a desert hunting party close to the Saudi border last December. "Efforts are still ongoing to free the rest of the 26 kidnapped," a brief statement published on Qatar's official QNA news agency said. It was unclear if any other Qatari royals were still being held.

Faleh Al-Zayadi, the governor of Muthanna province where the hunters were seized, told AFP at the time that "a number of members" of the Qatari ruling family were among those abducted. He said the kidnapers were heavily armed and travelled in dozens of vehicles. A foreign ministry spokesman told AFP that negotiations were continuing with the Iraqi government to try to secure the release of the remaining abductees. It is not known if any ransom was paid for the two men who were freed.

The hunters were abducted when gunmen attacked their camp in a Shiite-majority area of southern Iraq. Nine members of the party managed to escape and cross into nearby Kuwait. Earlier this year, the Doha government said Baghdad had a "responsibility" to free all those who had been kidnapped.

Continued on Page 13

ISRAELIS ARRESTED IN ROMANIA ON SPYING CHARGES

BUCHAREST: Two workers from an Israeli intelligence company have been arrested in Romania for trying to intimidate the head of the national anti-corruption agency and hacking emails, officials said yesterday. An arrest warrant was issued on Sunday for Belgian David Geclowitz and Israeli-born Ron Weiner, who holds a French passport. Both work for Israeli firm Black Cube. "An investigation has been launched and two people have been arrested," said Mihaela Porimbe, a spokeswoman for prosecutors fighting organized crime.



Laura Kovesi

Probes by the DNA have cost a string of prominent Romanians their jobs in recent years.

The arrest warrant said Geclowitz and Weiner had in March set up a "criminal group ... aimed at sullyng Kovesi's image". They are suspected of harassing three people close to her, making "numerous threatening telephone calls and hacking into e-mails ... hoping to uncover possible acts of corruption." They are also thought to have hacked into the mails of Kovesi's friends and relatives and are believed to have been employed by a client being investigated by the anti-corruption agency, judicial sources said.

Black Cube has several former operatives of Israeli spy agency Mossad on its payroll, according to Romanian media. Former Mossad director Meir Dagan was the company's honorary president until his death last month. — AFP

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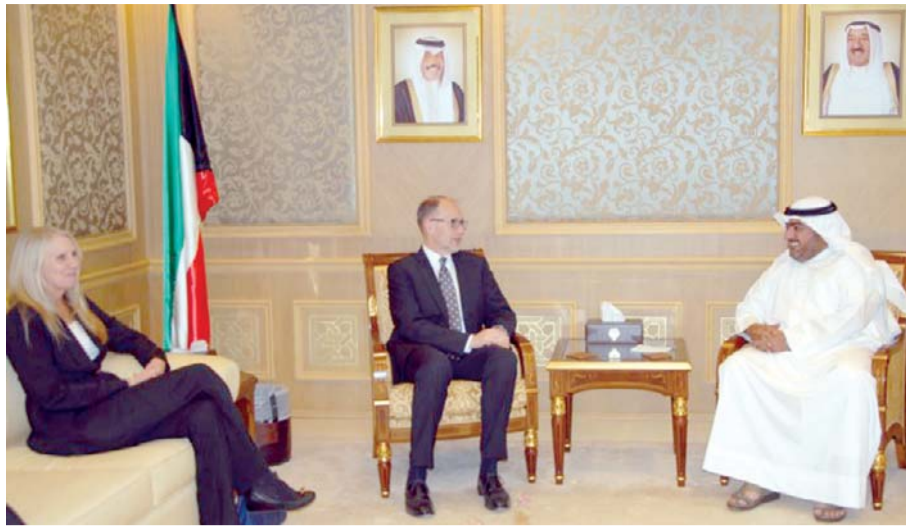
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KUWAIT: Kuwait National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah meets with US Ambassador to Kuwait Douglas Silliman. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Iraq and Head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Jan Kubis. —KUNA

Commentary

US INVESTMENT SUMMIT OPENS

By Douglas A Silliman
US Ambassador
to the State of Kuwait

KUWAIT, US DISCUSS MUTUAL TOPICS



KUWAIT: Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Kuwait National Security Bureau Chief Sheikh Thamer Al-Ali Al-Sabah met with US Ambassador to Kuwait Douglas Silliman yesterday to discuss issues of mutual concern. The two sides also discussed means of boosting bilateral ties between the two countries and the recent developments in the region, the bureau said in press statement. The meeting was attended by assistant chief of the bureau Sheikh Sabah Shamlan Al-Sabah.

UN envoy

Meanwhile, Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Iraq and Head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) Jan Kubis at Bayan Palace. During the meeting, they discussed the latest developments of search for Kuwaiti prisoners, missing persons, properties and

archives, in addition to UNAMI activities. Assistant Foreign Minister for the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and several senior officials of the Foreign Ministry were present in the meeting.

Kuwait-Saudi ties

Also yesterday, Kuwait's Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah affirmed the depth of bilateral relations and keenness of both sides to strengthen and develop them. Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah made the remark during a meeting with Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the country Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez. During the meeting, the ambassador handed the minister a written letter from Saudi Deputy Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz. —KUNA

Investors from around the world will gather in Washington, DC, June 19-21 for the SelectUSA Summit, the largest and most important conference focused on attracting foreign investment to the United States. The Summit is a great opportunity for Kuwaiti companies and investors to meet with and hear from economic development organizations from throughout the United States, high-level government officials, and others working to facilitate foreign investment in the United States.

The United States and Kuwait have a long and rich history of cross-border commerce, investment and trade. America continues to be the premier investment destination for entrepreneurs and investors from Kuwait and throughout the world. Kuwait is one of the top 40 sources of foreign direct investment in the United States. Examples of recent Kuwaiti investments include the purchase of several Marriott hotels, a financial services company opening an office in New York, and investments in healthcare and technology companies.

Summit offers global investors information and connections to grow their businesses all across America

Success in the American market can help drive success globally. With a GDP nearly \$18 trillion, the US economy is incredibly diverse and provides a thriving culture of innovation, a productive workforce, strong intellectual property protection, and a stable energy supply. Companies of all sizes - from start-ups to multinationals - can find the ideas, employees, resources, and market they need to be globally competitive. As Warren Buffett, one of the world's most successful investors, said recently, "America's golden goose of commerce and innovation will continue to lay more and larger eggs."

Innovation will be the main theme of this year's Summit. We are a world leader in research and development, with strong laws to protect intellectual property. This year's Summit will feature panels and speakers at the forefront of innovation.

Last year, President Barack Obama, six Cabinet ministers, and three US state governors addressed representatives from more than 70 countries, and from all 50 states. Participants heard from several top executives and high-profile business and government leaders, who shared their insights on the latest business trends. US economic developers from across the country and international investors met face-to-face in more than 1,700 individual facilitated business meetings.

I strongly encourage all Kuwaiti businesses - from start-ups to multinationals - to consider registering for this year's SelectUSA Summit, June 19-21, in Washington, DC. The US Embassy is recruiting a Kuwaiti delegation to the event. Contact our commercial team to learn how the SelectUSA program can assist you with your investment efforts. America is open for your business.

For more information visit selectusasummit.us or send an email to office.kuwaitcity@trade.gov.

AZERBAIJAN IDEAL DESTINATION FOR GULF TOURISTS: MINISTER



KUWAIT: Minister of Information Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah (right) speaks to the press during a meeting with Azerbaijan's Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfaz Garayev. —KUNA

KUWAIT: Visiting Azerbaijan's Culture and Tourism Minister Abulfaz Garayev said that his country is an ideal destination for Gulf tourists due to various geographic, cultural, and environmental factors. Azerbaijan also enjoys several types of tourism that please most tastes such as sports, shopping, family, music, history, and arts. Garayev said in a press conference Tuesday.

He also noted that Baku provides fully equipped wellness resorts and spas for health tourists, in addition to all available services and facilities for bird hunting and fishing tourists, pointing out the several historic and religious sites in his country.

Gulf tourists will not feel as strangers when they visit Azerbaijan due to the two nations' similarities in traditions and customs, he said, adding that tourists will find how friendly and hospitable Azeri people are.

Assistant Undersecretary of the Tourism sector in Information Ministry Jassim Al-Habib said meanwhile that the Azeri minister's visit aims at activating and re-boosting tourism cooperation between the two countries. Azerbaijan has historic and cultural heritage, in addition to the country's fabulous nature and landscape that make the former Soviet state a significant destination for Kuwaiti tourists, Habib added, indicating that a tourism deal is to be signed soon between Kuwait and Azerbaijan.

Tourism cooperation

Minister of Information Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah meanwhile stressed the importance of utilizing media and cultural programs to market tourism in Azerbaijan for Kuwaiti tourists. Sheikh Salman made his remarks while meet-

ing with visiting Azeri Minister, reiterating the ministry's willingness to air Azeri programs and shows via Kuwait's TV and Radio to boost tourism in that country.

The ministry has laid out, through its 2030 strategy, a number of significant steps that aim at enhancing and improving its facilities and touristic services, he said, pointing out the need for legislative reforms to bolster this sector. Sheikh Salman, who is also the Chairman of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), stressed the importance of exchanging expertise between the two countries, and increasing Kuwaiti-Azeri cultural and touristic meetings. Garayev lauded the deep-rooted ties between his country and GCC States, reiterating his country's strive to attract Gulf tourists through opening Azeri airspaces for many Gulf airlines. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs Sami Al-Hamad and Egypt's Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs Ambassador Hisham Al-Naqib shake hands after signing an agreement. —KUNA

EGYPTIAN-KUWAITI COMMITTEE AGREES TO PROMOTE COOPERATION

KUWAIT: The Egyptian - Kuwaiti joint consular committee concluded its meeting yesterday and agreed to promote bilateral cooperation in many fields. Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs Sami Al-Hamad said "we discussed topics in favor of Kuwaitis' interests in Egypt like residence of Kuwaiti students and registration of possessions". The committee also dealt with other topics pertaining to affairs of the Egyptian community in Kuwait like procedures of entry, arrival and residence, he added.

At the conclusion, Hamad said the meeting was a chance to share views on different consular issues facing the two countries. He lauded efforts exerted in this regard and continued support aimed to make a successful meeting, mainly the directives of foreign ministers of the two countries that had a positive impact on continuing former meetings. Kuwait and Egypt have "historic and distinguished relations" which highly interest the two leaders, through harnessing all capabilities to cement these brotherly ties, he noted.

Meanwhile, Egypt's Assistant Foreign Minister for Consular Affairs Ambassador Hisham Al-Naqib told KUNA in a similar statement that setting up coordinative mechanisms to address some consular issues, like document authentication, residence and deportation, was one of prominent outcomes of the meeting.

"During the meeting, we agreed to enhance cooperation to facilitate the separation of labor complaints and entitlements of workers," he said. He added that the committee focused on different topics of mutual interest on the areas of health, security, labor, civil information and others. He pointed out that the meeting's report was a result of sincere efforts of the two sides that reflects keenness of officials on consular affairs so as to remove obstacles and address common issues.

Naqib indicated that the success made during this meeting stressed the need to hold regularly other meetings to discuss a number of issues in implementation of the two leaders' directives. He said Egypt looks forward to beginning applying what has been agreed on, with the aim of addressing obstacles facing citizens of the two countries and promoting bilateral relations. —KUNA

KUWAIT-JORDAN TRADE EXCHANGES SOAR TO \$400 MILLION: OFFICIAL

AMMAN: Trade exchanges between Jordan and Kuwait soared from \$44 million in 2000 to some \$400 million last year, by a percentage of 800 percent, said the Jordanian Minister of Commerce and Industry. Such continuing and substantial rise of the commerce exchanges between Kuwait and Jordan signaled development of the bilateral relations in general, particularly at this level, Maha Ali said in an interview yesterday.

Jordanian exports to Kuwait, last year, rose to \$295 million, placing Kuwait the sixth among Arab and foreign countries in trade cooperation with the Kingdom of Jordan, after coming 8th in 2014. Jordan exports to Kuwait various commodities and products, such as vegetables, fruits, livestock, papers, fertilizers, medicines, machines and equipment. The Kingdom imports from Kuwait diesel and poly-ethylene. The imports from the Gulf country reached \$105 million of value last year.

The two sides regularly hold meetings at the level of joint committees. The third session was held in Kuwait in November, 2012. The fourth round is forecast to be held in Kuwait in May. The technical commercial commission, which tackles hurdles that obstruct commercial cooperation between the two countries, held its regular meeting in Amman in June.

Minister Ali further affirmed the Kingdom's keenness on elevating level of bilateral investment cooperation, in the hope of establishing an economic partnership. Jordan dedicates full care for the Kuwaiti investments, estimated at \$12 billion, in the country, she said, indicating that Amman offers various facilities and incentives for the Kuwaiti entrepreneurs.

The Kuwaiti investments are in various sectors such as tourism, industries, banks, communications, property and transports. Moreover, Kuwaiti enterprises, estimated at \$800 million, centered in industries, agriculture and hospital, benefit from recent legislative and legal amendments.

The Kingdom has recently modified the relevant laws, centralizing jurisdictions in the Investment Authority, with aim of facilitating paper work and transactions as well as procedures related to permits. Kuwait's contribution to the GCC grant to the Kingdom accounts to \$1.20 billion. —KUNA

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KUWAIT: Firefighters rescue passengers following a collision on Fifth Ring Road under the King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Bridge.



Remains of a car that was destroyed during a suspect's botched escape from police in Maidan Hawally.

THREE KILLED, NINE INJURED IN TWO ACCIDENTS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Two people, a citizen and an Arab, were killed and six others injured after a horrific accident between a truck and an SUV on Wafra road near Sabah Al-Ahmad City. Firemen freed the trapped people and handed the injured to paramedics. Separately, South Salmiya Fire Center responded to a call about a collision and injuries on Fifth Ring Road under the King Faisal bin Abdulaziz Bridge. The collision left one man dead, while three others were injured and handed to paramedics.

Ex-con arrested

A man was arrested after a botched escape from police during which he caused one vehicle to be completely destroyed. The suspect, a Kuwaiti ex-convict wanted to serve five years in jail and other cases, had attempted to ram into patrol cars in Maidan Hawally during his escape attempt. But his plan backfired, as he instead drove into the parking lot in a building's basement, and caused a fire over there. Salmiya firemen brought the fire under control without injuries. The man was arrested and taken to the relevant authorities for further action. In another case, security source said a Kuwaiti youth was sent to the Drugs Control General Department after being charged with damaging state property and escaping from police. Police found 50 tablets suspected of being Captagon with him.



A firefighter tackles a blaze in a Shuwaikh warehouse.

Firemen injured

A food warehouse in Shuwaikh caught fire yesterday morning, prompting response from Industrial Shuwaikh, Shuhada, Ardhiya and backup fire centers. Firemen fought the fire from inside and outside and used ladders. One of the firemen was severely injured in the hand and was taken to hospital by paramedics. Two other firemen received hand burns and were treated onsite.



WEEKEND FORECAST: CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF RAIN

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Astronomer Adel Al-Saadoun said today's weather will be stable and that it would be cloudy during the weekend with a chance of scattered rain. Saadoun added that temperatures during the weekend would be 31-36 degrees centigrade during daytime and 16-18 degrees centigrade during the night.

Phone bills

The ministry of communication yesterday urged landline subscribers to pay their telephone bills to avoid automatic cutting of services due to take effect in April. The ministry explained that a warning audio-recorded message would be dialed to subscribers on April 10 followed by a second one on April 17 before cutting services on April 24 for those whose bills exceed the maximum limit of KD 50 for home lines and

KD 100 for commercial ones. The ministry explained that programmed cutting of services would also include lines of subscribers who had made agreements to pay their debts by monthly installments and failed to pay them, in addition to those who had not paid the annual subscription fees for over six months. Notably, landline subscriptions can be paid online through the ministry's website and the state's official electronic portal. Subscribers can also inquire about their bills by calling 123.

New case against Dashti

The interior ministry filed a new case against MP Abdulhameed Dashti for slandering Saudi Arabia. Notably, an arrest warrant has already been issued against Dashti for slandering Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The National Assembly has already lifted Dashti's parliamentary immunity to be tried over his previous charges

OIL UP AS KUWAIT REVIVES HOPE FOR OUTPUT FREEZE

ARAB MINISTERS DISCUSS WAYS TO FACE PLUMMETING PRICES

SINGAPORE/MANAMA: Oil prices climbed in Asia yesterday after Kuwait said an agreement to freeze output during a producers' meeting this month could still be reached despite conflicting statements by participants. But analysts said the rebound would not likely last owing to a painful supply glut and weak demand caused by the slowing world economy. At around 08:15 GMT yesterday, US benchmark West Texas Intermediate for delivery in May was up \$1.03, or 2.87 percent, at \$36.90 and Brent crude for June was 72 cents, or 1.90 percent, higher at \$38.59.

Both contracts eked out an increase on Tuesday, but prices are still well below the \$40 level reached last month following a rally driven by hopes of an agreement during the upcoming April 17 producers' meeting in Doha. Prices dived after Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said last week his country would only agree to limit output if rival producers, such as Iran, followed suit. But Iran, which has been raising production since the West lifted nuclear-linked sanctions in January, has insisted it should not be the one to cut back.

Key OPEC member Kuwait, however, said a freeze deal could still be reached without Tehran, Bloomberg News reported. It quoted Kuwait's OPEC governor, Nawal Al-Fezaia, as saying that major producers had no option but to reach an agreement and that a freeze could set a floor price. Ric Spooner, chief market analyst at CMC Markets in Sydney, said traders were likely to wait for the results of the meeting before making big bets. "Given the welter of statements... people are probably just going to ignore (the comments) until they get the results of the meeting," Spooner said. Comments by IMF chief Christine Lagarde that global economic recovery is still "too

slow" and "too fragile" further added to the gloom in the saturated oil market as it was bad news for demand, analysts said.

Inevitable procedures

The Arab Finance Ministers meeting in Manama, Bahrain, have discussed the inevitable procedures

falls that hit their budgets, especially one like Kuwait which mainly relies on oil as a source of income.

The topic featured high on the agenda of the meetings of the Arab financial institutions whose revenues declined as a result of the decline in prices, the minister said. He added that the meetings

affected Kuwait's economy seen in lower general revenues which in turn have chipped away at the nation's budget, Ahmed said on the sidelines of the meeting. Kuwait, he noted, has a long arm in fiscal responsibility over the years, enabling the government at this juncture to set in place reform poli-



and method to be adopted by countries of the region to face the falls in oil prices, Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Acting Oil Minister Anas Al-Saleh said. They addressed papers submitted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the issue, Saleh said yesterday on the sidelines of the 7th session of the Arab Finance Ministers Council and the meetings of the Arab financial institutions. The ministers also discussed each country's experience on countering the

endorsed the budgets of most institutions.

Plummeting prices

Kuwait, like other countries the bulk of whose incomes is derived from oil, currently faces challenges and deficits in its budget for this year and next year, said Masood Ahmed, Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Middle East and Central Asia Department.

The global slump in oil prices has

cies to deal head-on with the new financial and economic realities and to ensure the sustainability of the nation's economic growth.

Further, he opined that, to deal with falling revenues, Kuwait should constrict expenditures and seek alternative sources of revenues and income from non-oil origins. If that tack is followed, he said, the country will enjoy diversification of income and the generation of ample employment opportunities. —Agencies

GCC STATES ON RIGHT PATH FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: MINISTER

RIYADH: The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are on the right path to promote youth development through joint and purposeful activities that reinforce spirit of citizenship and belonging, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said. Sheikh Salman made those statement yesterday after he led the Kuwaiti delegation to the 30th meeting of GCC Ministers of Youth and Sports held in Riyadh. He added that the GCC states are keen on implementing the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz's vision for bolstering GCC joint action and encouraging youth and voluntary work.

He said that during a meeting with King Salman held earlier today, the Saudi Monarch offered the GCC ministers, unerring directives and advice on bolstering GCC unity and promoting joint action, as well as empowering youth to contribute effectively to development in the member states.

Referring to the agenda of today's ministerial meeting, Sheikh Salman said that it had discussed Kuwaiti proposals for promoting youth and voluntary work, making the utmost of the Kuwaiti efforts over the past seven years, since a youth ministry was established in the country.

The ministry enjoys care and attention from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The proposals put forward by the Kuwaiti delegation included one for a GCC creativity and excellency award, besides implementing a voluntary project for the GCC youth in 2016, in line of the Saudi Monarch vision.



RIYADH: Information Minister and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah attends the 30th meeting of GCC Ministers of Youth and Sports. —KUNA

In addition, the GCC sports and youth ministers addressed a Saudi initiative for forming a new media committee. They also discussed a host of topics on promoting pan-GCC ties through intensifying youth events to exchange expertise and knowledge.

Sheikh Salman appreciated the Kingdom's

honoring of a multitude of the GCC sports and youth leaderships. He thanked the Saudi officials for their hard efforts over the past days to secure successes for the ministerial meetings, topped with, General President of Youth Welfare Prince Abdullah bin Musa'ed bin Abdulaziz. —KUNA

KUWAIT PLAYS PROMINENT ROLE IN ACHIEVING ARAB SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: MINISTER



CAIRO: Minister of Social Affairs Hind Al-Subaih attends the meeting. —KUNA

CAIRO: Kuwait has played a key role in achieving sustainable development in the Arab countries, stressed Minister of Social Affairs Hind Al-Subaih yesterday. Subaih, also Minister of State for Planning and Development, made the statement on the sidelines of the ministerial conference on achieving the '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' in the Arab countries.

She said Kuwait's participation in the event is part of efforts of promoting cooperation among Arabs to provide a complete strategy on sustainable development. She added that priorities of Arab countries are similar and intertwined with the goals of development. "We, as Arab countries, should cooperate with international organizations as they have some indicators that we should take care of so as to achieve sustainable development," she said.

She called for boosting cooperation among Arabs to curb unemployment, poverty, hungry and other issues impeding development. The minister expressed her hope that the conference would issue some recommendations to help Arab countries achieve goals. Asked about presiding over a first session of the conference, she said it reviewed the 2030 development strategy submitted by Egypt, adding that it discussed a working paper on development planning in Arab countries. —KUNA

In Brief

KUWAIT HOLDS 4TH OIL CONFERENCE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) will sponsor Kuwait fourth oil and gas conference (2016) due on April 11-12, the KPC said yesterday. Deputy Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Acting Oil Minister and the KPC Board Chairman Anas Al-Saleh is set to attend conference, themed 'distinctiveness between competition and weak prices', it said. The event would provide "an effective platform for expertise exchange among the national and international companies" in the oil sector, said Nezar Al-Adsani, the Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. — KUNA



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HOLDS BIENNIAL ELECTIONS

KUWAIT: The bi-annual elections of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry kicked off yesterday with 19 candidates competing for 12 board seats. This is the 28th round of elections for the chamber, head of the elections' organizing committee Ahmad Al-Zabin said. There are 24,000 companies with the right to vote, he added. The number of voters until 11:30 am was 2,539, he said. The chamber's board consists of 24 seats with a term of four years. The elections are held every two years to elect half of the members. — KUNA



WHO HAILS KUWAIT'S AID TO SAVE SYRIANS' LIVES

GENEVA: The World Health Organization (WHO) hailed Kuwait's financial support of \$12.8 million to save the lives of Syrians by treating patients with chronic and life-threatening diseases since the war broke out in the country. In a statement released yesterday, WHO said that Kuwait financed the organization's efforts in Syria to cure different diseases including cancer, diabetes, kidney failure and many others. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A worker trims a palm tree near a building in Kuwait City yesterday. — Photo by Joseph Shagra



ABK REWARDS 'BEST OF THE BEST' EMPLOYEES IN RETAIL BANKING

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently held its Annual 'Best of the Best' Awards ceremony on 23rd March 2016 at the Jumeirah Hotel. This event is held each year to recognize the tremendous efforts of customer service employees and to thank them for their hard work, commitment, and consistent performance.

The 'Best of the Best' awards are based on two award categories namely, "The Best Branch in Service and Sales" and "The Best Staff in Service and Sales".

Stewart Lockie, General Manager of Retail Banking at ABK, said "We are very happy to see such committed staff working at ABK. Their hard work and compe-

tence is a key driver of success and it is a pleasure to be able to recognize their outstanding efforts."

Fawzy Al-Thunayan, General Manager of Board Affairs at ABK praised the outstanding efforts of ABK staff and pointed out that ABK has been awarded the "Best Retail Bank in Kuwait" by The Asian Banker, 'Best Retail Bank of the Year' by The European Magazine - a Thomson Reuters Affiliate, as well as the 'Best Customer Loyalty Program in Kuwait' from Banker Middle East. These awards are an endorsement of the efforts of ABK employees and their commitment to provide customers with the best banking solutions available.

KUWAIT EXPERIMENTS PLANTING ARJUN TREES

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) is experimenting with different varieties of trees to find those suitable for Kuwait's harsh local climate.

PAAAFR "is currently conducting a series of experiments to identify (new) plants that can be grown in Kuwait," Director of agricultural guidance Ghanem Al-Sanad said adding that some were proven successful after being planted in the local environment, despite Kuwait's arid climate and extremely hot summer temperatures.

Sanad explained that PAAAFR cultivated the arjun tree which can withstand the harsh conditions during the summer as well as low temperatures during the winter. In previous years, the Forestation and Rangelands Management Department at PAAAFR has executed numerous tree-planting projects, in accordance with the greening plans set forth by the State of Kuwait. The arjun tree comes from the Indian sub-continent and has been linked to the ancient Indian heritage (ayurveda) and used in folk medicine and also has cultural value in the Asian nation.

The arjun is usually found growing on river banks or near dry river beds in Bangladesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and south and central India. The arjun is about 20-25 meters tall; usually has a

buttressed trunk, and forms a wide canopy at the crown, from which branches drop downwards. It has oblong, conical leaves which are green on the top and brown below; smooth, grey bark; it has pale yellow flowers which appear between March and June; its glabrous, 2.5 to 5 cm fibrous woody fruit,



divided into five wings, appears between September and November.

Sanad said that arjun tree has medical benefits as its trunk contains calcium and magnesium salts and Algelokosadat. "Its content of antioxidants are equivalent to what is found in some vitamins and the leaves' juice is used as a cure beverage for many diseases." — KUNA



A number of graduates

KFH PARTICIPATES IN KU COLLEGE GRADUATION CEREMONY

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has participated in the graduation ceremony of Kuwait University's (KU) College of Business Administration as part of its social responsibility and supporting the youth and students.

The ceremony that encompassed over 200 students was held under the patronage of the National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and in the presence of Assistant Dean of Students Affairs Dr Mohammad Al-Fahad, and a number of faculty members.

Speaking at the event, Manager Group Public Relations at KFH Yousef Abdullah Al-Ruwaieh indicated that KFH is keen on assuming the social responsibility towards all segments of society, yet it strives to support the students as



Yousef Al-Ruwaieh speaking

they are key pillars in achieving the comprehensive development in the country. KFH supports their graduation projects and their various activities in line with its strategy and pioneering role in achieving the corporate social responsibility.

Ruwaieh expressed his sincere congratulations to the graduates and their parents for what they achieved. He extended his appreciation to the organizers for their exerted efforts in making the event a success.

Meanwhile, Dr Mohammad Al-Fahad praised KFH in recognition of the significant role it plays in shouldering social responsibility towards students and the educational process which reflects its prestigious status as a global leading Islamic financial institution.



KUWAIT: Waleed Al-Khashti, Corporate Communications and Relations Department Manager at Zain (left), Iman Al-Roudhan, Zain Kuwait's CEO (second from left) and Dr Qais Al-Duwairi, Director General of the Dasman Diabetes Institute (third from left) are pictured in front of the mobile clinic.



Chairman of Institute Regents Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, Zain Kuwait's CEO Iman Al-Roudhan and Director General of the Dasman Diabetes Institute Dr Qais Al-Duwairi tour an exhibition held as part of the event.



(From left) Abdellatif Sharaa, Dasman Diabetes Institute's Public Relations Director Tareq Al-Aryan, Director General of Kuwait Institute of Medical Specialties Dr Ibrahim Hadi and Director General of the Dasman Diabetes Institute Dr Qais Al-Duwairi. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

DASMAN INSTITUTE LAUNCHES MOBILE CLINIC TO RAISE DIABETES AWARENESS

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The Dasman Diabetes Institute celebrated World Health Day yesterday, which focused on fighting the chronic disease of diabetes under the slogan 'Fight Diabetes'. Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI) decided to expand awareness activities by launching a mobile clinic in cooperation with Zain in the presence of the institute's Director General Dr Qais Al-Duwairi, Chairman of Institute Regents Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, Director General of Kuwait Institute of Medical Specialties Dr Ibrahim Hadi and Zain Kuwait's CEO Iman Al-Roudhan.

Duwairi said the goal behind the mobile clinic is to spread awareness in the society by providing health information and advice during preliminary tests. He said the latest statistics by the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) shows the escalating rates of diabetes incidents around the world in 2015, and it is expected to have one adult with diabetes out of every 10 persons in 2040.

Kuwait's statistics

Dr Duwairi said Kuwait's statistics show the prevalence of Type 2 diabetes in the age group of 20 to 79 is around 20 percent, while Type 1 diabetes among children below 15 saw 37 cases out of 100,000, placing Kuwait third worldwide. He said the World Health Organization considers diabetes among the diseases that have reached critical levels in some developing nations, and described it as a national crisis with top priority that needs to be confronted.



Zain Kuwait's CEO Iman Al-Roudhan (left) speaks with Dr Qais Al-Duwairi, Director General of the Dasman Diabetes Institute inside the mobile clinic.

He said the DDI prepared a plan to hold various activities on the occasion of World Health Day including the mobile clinic that will visit various public and private places. He added that this comes within the efforts to spread health awareness in the society, which is part of DDI's mission to limit the effects of diabetes and its related complications in Kuwait. He said the plan calls for cooperation with Zain Telecommunications to spread health awareness among various groups in the society by using technological communications tools for messages with medical information.



Dr Qais Al-Duwairi, Director General of the Dasman Diabetes Institute speaks at the event.

Advanced studies

Dr Duwairi said the institute is currently conducting advanced studies in cooperation with international bodies, and mentioned that more than 109 publications were published on diabetes and its complications.

Meanwhile, Dr Sayer said diabetes now represents a danger in Kuwait and GCC countries, adding that people in the region are not aware of the danger of the disease and its complications that are now contributing to a higher mortality rate. He said there are programs supported by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences that rely on educating school stu-

Ten facts about diabetes

The World Health Organization (WHO) mentioned ten facts about diabetes, which are:

- Fact 1: About 422 million people worldwide have diabetes.
- Fact 2: Diabetes is one of the leading causes of death in the world.
- Fact 3: There are two major forms of diabetes. Type 1 diabetes is characterized by a lack of insulin production and type 2 diabetes results from the body's ineffective use of insulin.
- Fact 4: A third type of diabetes is gestational diabetes, which is characterized by hyperglycaemia, or raised blood sugar, with values above normal but below those diagnostic of diabetes, during pregnancy.
- Fact 5: Type 2 diabetes is much more common than type 1 diabetes.
- Fact 6: People with diabetes can live long and healthy lives when their diabetes is detected and well-managed.
- Fact 7: Early diagnosis and intervention is the starting point for living well with diabetes.
- Fact 8: The majority of diabetes deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.
- Fact 9: Diabetes is an important cause of blindness, amputation and kidney failure.
- Fact 10: Type 2 diabetes can be prevented.

dents to change their way of living and eating habits and be active, as this is highly important to keep their bodies healthy.

In its April 2016 report the World Health Organization (WHO) said that the number of people with diabetes has nearly quadrupled since 1980. Prevalence is increasing worldwide, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. The causes are complex, but the rise is due in part to increases in the number of people who are overweight, including an increase in obesity, and in a widespread lack of physical activity.

Diabetes of all types can lead to complications in many parts of the body and increase the risk of dying prematurely. In 2012 diabetes was the direct cause of 1.5 million deaths globally. A large proportion of diabetes and its complications can be prevented by a healthy diet, regular physical activity, maintaining a normal body weight and avoiding tobacco use. In April 2016, WHO published the Global report on diabetes, which calls for action to reduce exposure to the known risk factors for type 2 diabetes and to improve access to and quality of care for people with all forms of diabetes.



KUWAIT: Margaret Al-Sayer, KACCH's Founding Director, and Laila Al-Qatami, Assistant General Manager - Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank along with members of KACCH and Gulf Bank's teams.

GULF BANK VISITS KACCH

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank continues its support to the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital (KACCH) as part of its ongoing charitable com-

mitments. During the visit to the Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice, Laila Al-Qatami, Gulf Bank's Assistant General Manager -Corporate Communications

presented a cheque to the KACCH Founding Director, Margaret Al-Sayer, who expressed her sincere thanks and appreciation for the pivotal role Gulf Bank has made in caring for hospitalized children.

KACCH is one of Kuwait's leading NGOs, providing a wide range of services for hospitalized children. The association organizes and conducts different activities for hospitalized children with an aim of reducing the adverse effects of hospitalization on their development and well-being.

This donation is part of Gulf Bank's annual contribution and ongoing commitment to help provide superior levels of health care and an enhanced stay for hospitalized children.



KUWAIT GIFTS BOOK TO PERMANENT COURT

BRUSSELS: The State of Kuwait on Tuesday gifted the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) a copy of the organization's rules book, translated in Arabic. The Arabic copy is the first to be translated from English, with 1,000 copies provided, said Hafeeth Al-Ajmi, Kuwait's ambassador to the Netherlands. This translated copy will contribute to spreading legal culture in the Arab world, especially within academic bodies, he noted.

Meanwhile, PCA Director General Hugo Siblesz expressed deepest appreciation for Kuwait over such invaluable gift. PCA is an international organization based in the Peace Palace, The Hague, the Netherlands. It is not a court, does not have permanent judges, and should not be confused with the International Court of Justice, a separate institution also in the Peace Palace.

Established in 1899 by the first

Hague Peace Conference, the PCA is a permanent bureaucracy that assists temporary tribunals to resolve disputes among states (and similar entities), intergovernmental organizations, or even private parties arising out of international agreements. The cases span a range of legal issues involving territorial and maritime boundaries, sovereignty, human rights, international investment, and international and regional trade. — KUNA

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News

in brief

High school dropouts cost KD 91 million in five years

KUWAIT: Ministry of Education announced that the financial waste resulting from students failing or dropping out of high school reached KD 24 million in one year, and a total of KD 91.2 million in five years; from 2005 to 2010. Statistics showed that dropouts and failed students in high schools had cost the ministry KD 12.3 million in 2005-2006, KD 20.7 million in 2006-2007, KD 19.8 million in 2007-2008, KD 22.3 million in 2008-2009 and KD 16.1 million in 2009-2010, said Shokriya Al-Sa'eedi, the head of high school directors' council and high school supervisor at Ahmadi educational area. She was speaking on the sidelines of a symposium held at Safiya Bint Abdul Muttaleb school in Mangaf and attended by the ministry's Undersecretary Dr Haitham Al-Athari. Sa'eedi added that the largest number of dropouts was registered in Jahra educational area, where 35 percent of the students (15 percent boys and 18 percent girls) dropped out while Hawally had the least number of dropouts of less than one percent. — Al-Anbaa

'Mandoubs' renamed

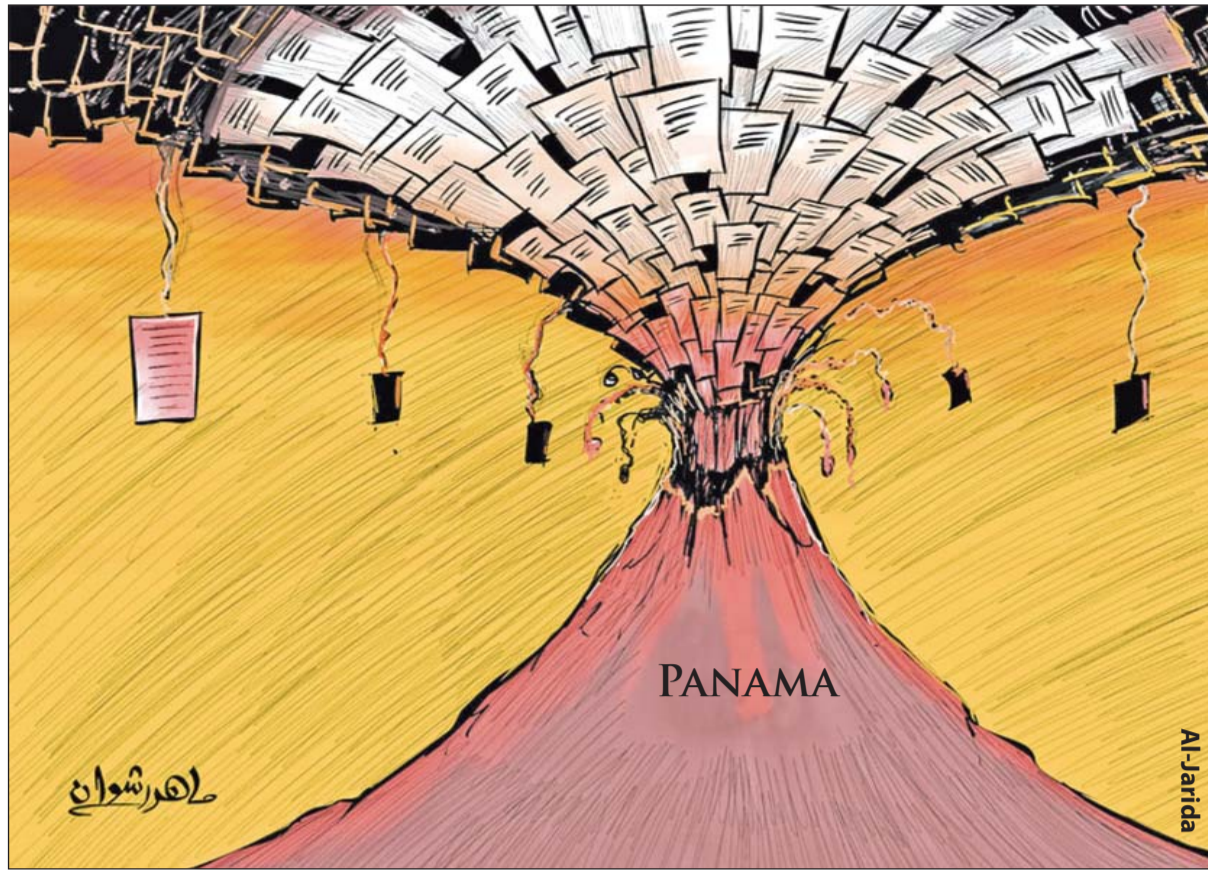
KUWAIT: The Manpower Public Authority issued a circular to amend the term 'mandoub' given to representatives of companies who carry out labor transactions with the relevant passports and social affairs ministry authorities, to 'general mandoub'. The title is given to the representative of every company that has more than 25 workers registered in their files, and not according to the estimated number needed. A second 'mandoub' designation can be given if the number of employees exceed 100. — Al-Anbaa

Detectives get more powers

KUWAIT: Director General of the Investigations Department Major General Fahd Al-Dousari gave directors of investigations authorities that were previously limited to the director general only, in order to get rid of bureaucracy and expedite cases. Dousary authorized investigations directors to temporarily shelve cases when the culprit is not known, and authorized them to issue "to whom it may concern" certificates in cases registered in their domain, based on applications submitted to them, instead of referring applicants to the directorate general. — Al-Rai

Subsidized products

KUWAIT: Kuwait Supplies Company's review of its annual contracts in regards to subsidized products showed drop in its prices. According to sources, the company's new contracts submitted to Ministry of Commerce and Industry for approval indicate a drop in spending on subsidized goods for the fiscal year 2016/2017 by nearly KD 1.7 million. The price of subsidized tomato paste in the new contracts dropped by KD 0.250 per dozen, while local frozen chicken's price dropped to KD 0.020 per kilo. The sources said the reductions made by the company were not limited to goods it contracts every year, rather it included subsidized goods that the company reviews the prices of monthly such as sugar, cooking oil, and lentils. — Al-Rai



Crime

Report

Two disappear with KD 1 million

KUWAIT: A Syrian man and his son bought several trailer trucks for KD 1.4 million and were to pay in installments. Then the dealers learned that the two had left the country after they were late in making payments. The dealers attempted to repossess the vehicles only to find out that the Syrians had sold them to a third party for KD 1 million. This raised the question of how the men were able to transfer the titles when there remained a lien against it. Detectives investigating the issue discovered that a Traffic Department employee helped transfer the title by removing the note in the computer system marking that the title had a lien against it. This enabled the men to sell several of the vehicles, take the money and flee the country.

Debtor caught

Police arrested a citizen in his 40s in Mangaf for financial cases and debt totalling KD 13,000. When the man was stopped and questioned, he claimed to have forgotten his ID at home. But he was suspected and taken in for further identification and later arrested.

Woman injured in fall

An Indian woman was admitted to Adan hospital's intensive care unit after falling from a height. Paramedics rushed to the call, and found the woman in critical condition. Investigations are underway, as Ahmadi detectives were informed. It is unknown if the woman jumped, fell or was pushed.

Fire in residence

Firemen rescued the guard of a concrete plant when fire broke out in his residence near Sabah Al-Ahmad residential area. Firemen rescued the Egyptian guard as the fire raged, as he was injured. The fire destroyed a room and the kitchen of the residence.

Artificial fingerprints

Special missions force arrested a Saudi national and a bedoon with nine envelopes of artificial finger prints (silicon) and were taken to criminal detectives for suspicion of forgery.

Ex-con rearrested

Policemen arrested an ex-convict citizen in Mubarak Al-Kabeer area after he attempted to escape from an inspection checkpoint. He was found wanted on attempted murder and rape charges. Police noticed that he turned away from the direction of a checkpoint, so policemen chased and arrested him. He will be sent to criminal detectives.

ATM card with PIN used

A thief withdrew KD 250 from the bank account of an Egyptian man, after finding the ATM card with the PIN written on it. The man told Maidan Hawally police that after losing the ATM card, he went to get a replacement and was surprised that KD 250 had been withdrawn. The detectives are investigating.

ELECTRICITY MIGHT KILL RETIREES

Al-Anbaa

By Thaar Al-Rasheedi

According to statistics of the Central Statistical Bureau (CSC) in 2013, the average salary of a Kuwaiti working in a civilian job was KD 1,376. Statistics also showed that over 340,000 citizens work in such jobs. So, with this official figure and now after the government made its proposal on increasing electricity consumption tariffs, each of those citizens would lose KD 1,050 every month in rent, electricity and water consumption bills by paying KD 600 for accommodating a five-member family and KD 450 for electricity and water, according to the new prices. This means that a citizen would pay 76 percent of his salary, leaving him with only 24 percent (KD 330) to go through the month. Just imagine this - a five-member family living on KD 330 a month. What kind of logic is this?

This means that a citizen would pay 76 percent of his salary, leaving him with only 24 percent to go through the month

The problem with the government's proposals is that they are based on false and inaccurate statistics, surveys and studies. According to a survey by the cen-

sus directorate two years ago, a Kuwaiti family's average income was KD 3,351. The same survey showed that 60 percent of citizens lived in villas, forgetting that 120,000 families were still waiting to get their government-provided houses and are paying rent.

Such inaccurate and imaginative surveys are behind the terrible situations we are going through and are most likely going to bring us more disasters because they are the basis of all government decisions. "Well, along with his wife, a citizen makes over KD 3,500 a month, and it is no harm if electricity bills jump from KD 45 to KD 450." This is apparently how the government thinks.

Well, this survey ignored over 107,000 retirees and that almost half of them get below KD 1,000 a month, according to a response by the finance minister to an inquiry filed by MP Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran. Those people will be slain by the new bills!

— Translated by Kuwait Times



BAHRAH TRADING COMPANY HOLDS OPEN DAY FOR RESQTEC IN COOPERATION WITH KUWAIT FIRE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

KUWAIT: Bahrah Trading Company (BTC), one of the Al-Sayer Group Holding Companies and exclusive distributor of RESQTEC products in Kuwait held equipment display and demonstration session at the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) Al-Rai Workshop. Latest technologies in materials and engineering to deliver the best, safest and most durable equipment that can withstand the harsh rescue environment was showcased during the session.

The event was attended by Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer CEO Al-Sayer Group Holding, Hamza Melakandy General Manager Bahrah Trading Company, RESQTEC delegates Dennis Beck Global Sales Director, Johan van den Haak Field Marketing Specialist, Lieutenant General Yousef

Abdullah Al Ansari Director General, Major General Khaled Rakan Al-Mekrad Deputy Director General for Prevention Affairs Sector, Brigadier General Mohammed Abdullah Al-Shatti Director of Capital Governorate Fire Department along with other senior officials from various sectors of KFSD.

According to Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer CEO Al-Sayer Group Holding "Historically BTC and Al-Sayer Group have partnered with strong global brands to bring best quality products to Kuwait. With this event we are repeating this tradition in cooperation with the Kuwait Fire Services Directorate. In addition to our business objectives, being a socially committed organization our aim is to care for lives of people."

Dennis Beck RESQTEC Global Sales Director said

"All our products are similar in the way that they are all dedicated to save lives and to guarantee safe conditions for the rescuer. RESQTEC has the global reach to support our customers in their rescue operations. We are focused on innovation and education that have the power to transform rescue in safe and timely operations.

Advantages

Explaining the advantages of RESQTEC products Hamza Melakandy, General Manager BTC said "As a leading global manufacturer of high performance rescue equipment, RESQTEC helps the rescue industry to operate under safe circumstances, to be capable and in control. We are excited about their innovative product line-up and will continue to offer excellent aftersales service." RESQTEC Zumro B V, is a leading multinational firm based in Lisse, Netherlands. With over 40 years of experience RESQTEC is the innovative solution provider of rescue and recovery equipment supporting rescue and recovery teams all over the world.

RESQTEC strives to be a true innovative solution provider that understands the complications of any rescue or recovery operation. Key areas of contribution for RESQTEC are to raise standards in daily rescue operations, to increase understanding by sharing knowledge and to develop the equipment that exceeds the expectations of our rescuers.

The solutions and products RESQTEC deliver are primary dedicated to extricate victims from entrapped positions, committed to delivering the best solutions by using the latest technologies in materials and engineering; to educate, but also to learn from the rescuer to convert today's knowledge in tomorrow's success.





Bogus identities with forged IDs vital for terror networks

TACKLING EXTREMISM: A POLITICAL MINEFIELD IN PAKISTAN

CRUZ INVIGORATES ANTI-TRUMP CAMP WITH WISCONSIN WIN

CRUSHING DEFEAT LEAVES TRUMP DAMAGED AND SHAKEN

WASHINGTON: Texas Senator Ted Cruz commanded new momentum yesterday in the race for the White House with a solid Wisconsin primary win, making it harder for frontrunner Donald Trump to clinch the Republican nomination outright.

Upstart senator Bernie Sanders also beat frontrunner Hillary Clinton in the Midwestern state, bolstering his claim to be a viable alternative standard-bearer to the former secretary of state and first lady.

Sanders has now won six of the last seven Democratic nominating contests against Clinton. But the Wisconsin results were almost certainly more damaging for Trump. The billionaire stormed to the fore last year with a brash anti-establishment message. But he has suffered setbacks in recent weeks with a string of controversial comments about abortion, NATO and nuclear weapons.

Cruz captured most of Wisconsin's 42 Republican delegates, making it far less likely that Trump will win the 1,237 delegates necessary to secure the nomination outright. This raises the prospect of a contested convention in July when the delegates meet to choose the party nominee for the November presidential election.

trajectory of the Republican race. "Trump needs every delegate to get to 1,237, and tonight was a significant setback," veteran election analyst Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia told AFP. "It's not impossible for Trump to still get there, but the likelihood is that Trump will be a few dozen delegates short of a majority," he added, meaning the likelihood of a contested convention has increased substantially.

Tuesday's results cement Cruz's status as the leading anti-Trump candidate, with Ohio Governor John Kasich far behind. Cruz used his victory speech to turn the spotlight on a possible face-off with Clinton. "Hillary, get ready. Here we come," he said. Cruz also predicted he could earn the 1,237 delegates needed to win the nomination.

That goal will be extremely difficult to reach: experts have projected Cruz would need to win 90 percent or more of remaining delegates to reach the magic number. With 98 percent of votes counted, Cruz, a conservative senator from Texas, was ahead with 48.3 percent of the vote, compared to 35 percent for Trump. Kasich was a distant third at 14 percent.

On the Democratic side, Vermont Senator Sanders led with 56.4 percent to 43.3 percent over Clinton. "This campaign is giving energy and enthusiasm to millions of Americans," Sanders told supporters in Wyoming, which holds a Democratic vote Saturday. Sanders said his momentum gives him an "excellent chance" to win California, Oregon and other states.

"We have a path toward victory, a path toward the White House," he declared. But Clinton, the onetime first lady who is aiming to become the nation's first female commander in chief, has the delegate math in her favor and can look forward to the upcoming races with some confidence.

She leads Sanders by double digits in New

York, her adopted home state which voted April 19, and Pennsylvania, which casts ballots a week later. Trump also leads handily in his home state of New York and in Pennsylvania.

Trump's sour grapes

His campaign for months had appeared to be fireproof. Yet the billionaire went into Tuesday's vote after a brutal week on the campaign trail. Analysts notably pointed to comments on abortion that damaged his standing with women voters.

After the Wisconsin vote, his team lashed out at Cruz, saying the senator had "the entire party apparatus behind

him." Trump had 740 delegates heading into Tuesday. Cruz had 474 and Kasich 145, according to CNN.

If none reaches the threshold of 1,237 before the Republican primary races wrap up on June 7, the nominee could be decided at a contested convention where, after the first ballot, delegates will be free to vote according to personal preference instead of being bound by the primary results. Clinton secured 1,742 delegates prior to Tuesday-including 483 so-called "super-delegates" who are not bound by primary results-while Sanders has 1,051, according to a CNN tally. A candidate needs 2,383 delegates to secure the Democratic nomination. —AFP

ELECTION 16

Wisconsin primary

Ted Cruz and Bernie Sanders beat their rivals in the Badger State:

Results as of 12:15 a.m. EDT April 6

DEMOCRATS

VOTES CAST: 837,172

B. Sanders 56.3% (45)

H. Clinton 43.4 (31)

(Delegates allocated out of 86)

PRECINCTS REPORTING: 83%

REPUBLICANS

VOTES CAST: 919,904

T. Cruz 48.9% (33)

D. Trump 34.3 (3)

J. Kasich 14.3

(Delegates allocated out of 42)

PRECINCTS REPORTING: 81%

SOURCE: AP Election Services AP

'Turning point'

"Tonight is a turning point. It is a rallying cry," Cruz told cheering supporters in Milwaukee after he received a hug from Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, one of several former 2016 presidential candidates to have endorsed him. "It is a call from the hard-working men and women of Wisconsin to the people of America. We have a choice, a real choice."

Trump made no public appearance after the results were announced. His campaign released a statement that criticized Cruz as, among other things, "worse than a puppet - he is a Trojan horse, being used by the party bosses attempting to steal the nomination from Mr Trump." Cruz and the anti-Trump movement had eyed Wisconsin as a firewall against the real estate tycoon's march to become the GOP flag bearer.

Analysts said Tuesday's vote could alter the



MILWAUKEE: Republican presidential candidate Sen Ted Cruz, R-Texas, raises hands with Wisconsin Gov Scott Walker (left) and his wife Heidi during a primary night campaign event. —AP

IRAN TO SEND TEAM TO SAUDI TO DISCUSS HAJ PILGRIMAGE

DUBAI: Iran plans to send a delegation to Saudi Arabia to discuss new arrangements for the haj pilgrimage to Makkah, Iran's Tasnim news agency said yesterday, the first official visit by either side since ties were severed in January.

The pilgrimage was marred last September by a deadly crush that killed hundreds of people, many of them Iranians, which drew up tensions between the two powers. It comes this year with Sunni powerhouse Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran still locked in a row that has fuelled sectarian tensions in the Middle East.

The head of Iran's haj organization, Saeed Ohadi, said Saudi authorities had invited Tehran to send a delegation to Riyadh on April 14 to discuss preparations for haj, which is expected to fall again in September this year. Ohadi told state news agency IRNA that the Iranian delegation members were still waiting for their visas and were expecting to meet the Saudi haj minister.

"The fate of this year's haj will be decided in this meeting," Ohadi said, according to Tasnim news agency. Saudi officials could not immediately be reached for a comment. Saudi Arabia has faced heavy criticism for its handling of the crush last year, in which up to 2,070 people were believed to have been killed according to a Reuters tally, making it one of the deadliest haj disasters in recent memory.

Saudi officials have stood by their official counts of 769 dead and 934 injured, figures that have not been updated since two days after the crush. Saudi King Salman ordered an investigation into the causes of the crush, which occurred as two groups of pilgrims converged at a crossroads in a tent city outside Makkah. But more than six months after the disaster, no findings have been published.

Iranian officials have accused Riyadh of mishandling the response and complained of delays in repatriating the bodies of the 461 Iranian nationals who died in Makkah. The disaster exacerbated tensions between Riyadh and Tehran, as many of the pilgrims killed were Iranian. Saudi Arabia severed ties with Iran after demonstrators angry at the execution of a prominent Shiite cleric attacked Saudi diplomatic missions. —Reuters

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JW MARRIOTT KUWAIT CITY

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) and 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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Tel: 24835616/7 Fax 24835620/1 or send an email to: ads@kuwaittimes.net

PANAMA PAPERS COULD ADD TO OUTRAGE IN PRESIDENTIAL RACE

AUSTIN: The Panama Papers, which illustrate how a small class of global elites find elaborate ways to shield their wealth from tax collectors, bank regulators and police, offer a glimpse into what's driving the populist outrage that has marked this year's presidential campaign.

The trove of 11.5 million leaked documents have thus far shed light mostly on foreign figures such as the prime minister of Iceland, who resigned Tuesday after the public learned that he used a shell company to shelter large sums of money while his country's economy floundered.

The reaction in the US, meanwhile, has been relatively muted. But voters and experts say the documents validate the frustration felt by Bernie Sanders' supporters on the left, who feel hard work is no longer enough to get ahead in America, and the anger of Donald Trump partisans on the right who say it will take someone who knows the insider system to dismantle it.

"We've recently heard the startling revelations about the tax dodge that is taking place in Panama," Sanders told supporters in Wyoming Tuesday night after his win in the Wisconsin Democratic primary. "In a time of massive income and wealth inequality, how does it happen that you have large, profitable multinational corporations who in a given year pay zero, not a penny, in federal income taxes?"

Wealth privilege

Retired Wisconsin high school teacher Steve Nibbe, who was voting for the Vermont senator in Tuesday's primary, said word of the documents made him "sit up and take notice." But he said he was not shocked.

"It just seems that those who have wealth - and sometimes that comes with privilege - are able to do things that other people are not," said Nibbe, 60, from Verona, outside the state capital of Madison. Joe Brettell, a

Republican strategist based in Houston, doubted whether the public's fury could get much worse.

"The populist anger being fueled primarily by white working-class Americans didn't need any more fuel," Brettell said. "They've already lived through the financial meltdown. They've already lived through the lack of middle class wage increases even as the stock market boomed." The passports of at least 200 Americans are included in the documents, according to news organizations that have access to them, though none are thought to be as famous as celebrities and politicians from other countries, such as Russian President Vladimir Putin and Argentine soccer star Lionel Messi.

In all, 12 current or former heads of state are included in the legal records from Panama's Mossack Fonseca law firm. They were first leaked to the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper based in Munich, Germany, and published Sunday by a consortium of news organizations around the world.

Charles Postel, a history professor at San Francisco State University who has studied American populism and wrote a book titled "The Populist Vision," said of Sanders, "This is just the type of thing that is animating his base." He described Trump as "more of a nationalist."

"His issue is not that these rich people are not playing by the rules. It's that we need powerful people who will protect Americans," Postel said. "That's a different thing that provokes outrage." The New York billionaire might even actually win points with supporters if he were among the rich and famous mentioned in the documents, Postel said. "If Trump said, 'Of course I put half of my money in the Virgin Islands,' none of his voters would object to that," Postel said. "They'd say: 'Sure, he's a billionaire. If I was a billionaire, I wouldn't pay my taxes either.'" — AP



JEFFERSON CITY: In this photo made Thursday, March 31, 2016, gay-rights supporter Mathew "Skippy" Mauldin holds a flag during rally outside the Capitol. — AP

BATTLE BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AND GAY RIGHTS SPLITS GOP STATES

EXPOSING RIFTS BETWEEN SOCIAL CONSERVATION AND PRO-BUSINESS

JEFFERSON CITY: Republican lawmakers upset about the Supreme Court decision legalizing gay marriage have advanced measures in about a dozen states this year that could strengthen protections for those who refuse on religious grounds to provide services to same-sex couples. The bills could benefit court clerks, photographers, florists, bakers, wedding-hall operators and others who say gay matrimony goes against their beliefs.

For a party already being torn apart by the presidential contest, the state legislative efforts have exposed deep rifts between the GOP's social conservatives and its pro-business wing. Business leaders worry that such measures will allow discrimination and scare away companies and major events.

So far, only a few proposals have become law. Those include narrowly tailored protections shielding Florida clergy from having to perform same-sex weddings and college religious organizations in Kansas from losing aid.

A far more sweeping one was signed into law Tuesday by Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant, despite objections from some major corporations. It creates a religious shield from government penalties for an array of people and organizations, including marriage-license clerks, adoption agencies, counselors and more than a dozen categories of businesses that provide wedding-related services. It applies not only to those with religious beliefs about gay marriage, but also to those who believe that sex outside marriage is wrong and that sexual identity is determined at birth.

Failed proposals

Other broadly written proposals have failed, stalled or are still working their way through legislatures. Some examples: Republican Gov. Nathan Deal of Georgia last week vetoed a religious protection bill passed by the GOP-led House, siding with top business executives who threatened boycotts and dire economic consequences.

A GOP-passed bill shielding clergy and religious groups from participating in gay marriages was vetoed last week by Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, a Democrat, who cited opposition from corporate leaders. In Tennessee, a coalition that includes the American Counseling Association launched an

online ad campaign against the Republican House speaker over a bill that would let counselors turn away patients based on religious beliefs. The ad warns: "Businesses won't come to a state that discriminates."

In Missouri, scores of activists rallied at the Capitol to protest a proposed constitutional amendment that would prohibit penalties against those who decline on religious grounds to provide wedding-related services to same-sex couples. The state Chamber of Commerce and Industry also came out against it. "This is a unique issue because two of the primary bases of the Republican Party are both the business interest and the social conservative. It's rare, but occasionally those interests are not aligned," said Missouri state Rep. Elijah Haahr, chairman of the committee considering the measure.

In several states, major businesses and sports organizations - including Coca-Cola, Delta Air Lines, Walt Disney Co, the NFL and the NCAA - have joined lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activists in raising concerns that such measures could legalize discrimination. Some religious leaders have countered that it is the faithful who face discrimination for living according to their beliefs. They cite government fines and lawsuits against florists, bakers and photographers who declined to do work for same-sex weddings.

"Good and commonsense bills that simply underscore or protect freedoms that we've had since the founding of our country are being attacked by large corporations seeking to thwart the democratic process," said Kellie Fiedorek, an attorney for Alliance Defending Freedom, a Scottsdale, Arizona-based group that has backed religious-objection legislation and led court fights in various states.

More than 60 state legislative measures allowing for religious refusals at the expense of LGBT rights have been introduced, according to the Washington-based Human Rights Campaign. "We're seeing definitely a greater number this year," including many with consequences that would be far-reaching, said Sara Warbelow, the campaign's legal director.

National forefront

The battle came to the national forefront last spring when Indiana and Arkansas passed religious

protection measures, then revised them after a backlash from businesses. Social conservatives intensified their push after the Supreme Court ruled in June that gay marriage is legal everywhere in the US.

Supporters say the measures are necessary to protect people such as Robert and Cynthia Gifford, who were fined \$13,000 for violating New York's anti-discrimination law after they declined to host a lesbian wedding at their Liberty Ridge Farm north of Albany in 2013.

The Giffords stopped hosting weddings altogether. But after recently losing an appeal, Cynthia Gifford said they plan to resume their wedding business. They will allow gay couples to get married on their property without personally participating in the ceremonies. "It would have been nice to be protected by the law," she said. "This has been financially tragic for our family."

Opponents of religious protection measures argue they could harm states financially by discouraging major businesses from hosting events or expanding operations in places seen as hostile toward gay employees or customers. The economic effect of such measures is open to debate.

A survey by the tourism promotion group Visit Indy found that Indiana's new law played a role in 12 conventions going elsewhere, costing Indianapolis as much as \$60 million in economic benefits. But that's just a fraction of the 1,100 conventions bid on by the city. Indianapolis still reaped a record \$4.5 billion in economic benefits from tourism in 2015. It also booked more future convention business than any year before, thanks to a surge from Indiana-based organizations that offset a decline from out-of-state businesses, said Visit Indy Vice President Chris Gahl.

While some Republican lawmakers this year have pointed to Indiana as a reason for caution, others have brushed aside threats of boycotts. In Georgia, the governor's veto rankled many religious conservatives. "This is why people are angry with the politicians of our nation," said Tanya Ditty, Georgia director of Concerned Women for America, a Christian group. "They are not elected to represent Hollywood values, nor Wall Street values. They're elected to represent the voters of Georgia, and that does not preclude people of faith." — AP

OBAMA EMBRACING ANTI-TRUMP ROLE

WASHINGTON: He won't be on November's ballot, but President Barack Obama is slowly embracing his role as the anti-Trump, taking on the Republican front-runner in ways that no other Democrat can. With Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders still fighting it out in the Democratic primary, the task has fallen increasingly to Obama to articulate the counter-message to Donald Trump, whose ascent to the White House would constitute an overwhelming rebuke to Obama. Democrats are working hard to use the contrast between Obama and Trump to paint the Republican candidate as anything but presidential.

For months, Obama and his aides mostly avoided getting dragged into the fray or letting the campaign din distract from Obama's agenda. The White House would sidestep questions about the latest Trump controversies, refusing to turn Obama into a pundit on the race to replace him.

When Obama waded in, it was only to offer implicit rebukes of the Trump phenomenon, such as his assertion in September that "America is great right now" - a not-so-veiled reference to the business mogul's campaign promise to "make America great again." Now the Trump criticism is coming with increasing frequency and ease. Asked Tuesday whether Trump's proposals were already damaging US relations, Obama answered unequivocally: "Yes."

"I am getting questions constantly

from foreign leaders about some of the wackier suggestions that are being made," Obama said. "They don't expect half-baked notions coming out of the White House. We can't afford that." The Democratic National Committee quickly circulated video of Obama's remarks, arguing they illustrated how Trump "simply doesn't have the temperament necessary to be commander in chief."

'Good luck with that'

Yet by calling attention to Trump's positions, the White House risks further elevating him, while giving Obama's critics a fresh reason to get behind the billionaire businessman. Obama has said repeatedly he doesn't believe Trump will win, and White House officials said there was no concerted effort to insert Obama more visibly into the election debate. After all, every minute Obama spends talking about Trump is a minute wasted when it comes to Obama's many unfinished pieces of business.

In his latest rebuke, Obama unloaded on Trump's proposal to compel Mexico to pay for a border wall by threatening to cut off remittances that Mexican immigrants in the US send back home. Asked about that idea, Obama issued a point-by-point rebuttal, arguing that would actually increase the flow of immigrants into the US and that tracking huge numbers of remittances was impossible. "Good luck with that," Obama said.

STUDENT KILLED BY HOMEMADE ROCKET HAD BRIGHT FUTURE

THOUSAND OAKS: At 18, Bernard Moon was looking at a bright future. A charismatic high school honors student and athlete, he had been accepted at elite universities. But his life was cut short this week by the blast of a homemade rocket - a failed nighttime science experiment on the tarmac of a Southern California elementary school.

A homemade chemical rocket attached to a skateboard blew up Monday night, mortally injuring Moon, who died at a hospital. His 17-year-old friend received minor injuries. The rocket was about a foot long and three-quarters of an inch in diameter, Ventura County sheriff's Capt. Garo Kuredjian said.

"It wasn't meant to go up into the sky," he said of the rocket. "It was meant to go horizontally to propel a skateboard." The blast appeared to be "a tragic accident," he said. It was unclear whether anyone was trying to ride the skateboard at the time, he said. Both teens attended Thousand Oaks High School in Ventura County. "Our hearts are broken," said a posting on the school's Twitter site. "The bonds of faculty, staff, & students will bring healing." The blast occurred on a courtyard at Madrona Elementary School. The experiment at the elementary campus wasn't sanctioned by any school, and the victims likely were using the courtyard because it's an open space, Kuredjian said.

Investigators did not immediately confirm reports that Moon may have been working on a project for the April 20 Ventura County science fair. He had placed in the 2014 and 2015 fairs. It wouldn't have been out of character for Moon, a high school varsity tennis player and honors student who took advanced science classes. He had been accepted to both the University of California, Berkeley and Brown University, friends said.

William Kim, 18, of Irvine, met Moon last summer at Boys State in Sacramento, a weeklong camp where one standout student from each California high school gathers to set up a mock government. Moon overwhelmingly was elected to head his fictional party, Kim said in a telephone interview. Moon was outgoing, friendly, charismatic, ambitious, well-versed in politics and could think on his feet, Kim said. He was the kind of leader "that made people laugh and feel comfortable," he added. "I still can't believe that I've just had a meal with him a month ago, talking as if nothing like this was ever going to happen," Kim wrote on Facebook. — AP

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An Egyptian man carries gas canisters on his donkey in the village of Al-Jendyaa, in the Bani Mazar province in Minya governorate south of Cairo on Tuesday. — AFP

QATARI ROYAL FREED BY IRAQ KIDNAPPERS

Continued from Page 1

Pressure has also been placed on Iraq by the Gulf Cooperation Council, of which Qatar is a member.

In a joint statement immediately after the kidnaping, the GCC said Iraq should take "decisive and immediate measures" to secure the release of the hunters. There is widespread enmity towards the Gulf Arab states in Shiite areas of southern and central Iraq because of their support for Sunni rebels in the conflict raging in neighboring Syria. Iran-backed Shiite militias, which

have a major presence in the region, have sent fighters to Syria to support President Bashar Al-Assad's regime.

The hunting party was in Iraq on an officially licensed expedition and Doha has put pressure on the Shiite-led government in Baghdad to help secure the hostages' release. Wealthy Gulf Arabs often brave the risks of travel to countries like Afghanistan and Pakistan as well as Iraq to hunt with falcons without the bag limits and conservation measures they face at home. Their favored prey is the houbara bustard, a large game bird once nearly hunted to extinction in the Middle East. — AFP

SAUDIS GRANT MOROCCO \$230M AID

RABAT: Saudi Arabia and Morocco have signed an aid agreement worth \$230 million, the Moroccan finance ministry said yesterday, part of a five-year package of financial assistance extended by wealthy Gulf states. Four Gulf states - Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates - agreed in 2012 to provide aid worth a total of \$5 billion to Morocco in the period 2012-2017 to help it weather "Arab Spring" protests.

Each of the four countries has committed \$1.25 billion to Morocco for the whole five-year period, in an effort to build up its infrastructure, strengthen its economy and foster tourism. The agreement signed yesterday is Saudi Arabia's 2016 part, Morocco's finance minister said. The \$230 million agreement was signed in Bahrain by the Moroccan minister, Mohammed Boussaid, and Saudi Finance Minister Ibrahim bin Abdulaziz Al-Assaf. It includes \$100 million of support to small and medium-

size enterprises), \$80 million of aid to agriculture and \$50 million for the health ministry.

Morocco has budgeted to receive a total \$1 billion in aid from the Gulf states for 2016. It hopes to cut its budget deficit to 3.5 percent of gross domestic product this year from an estimated 4.3 percent in 2015. Moroccan officials have said Morocco had received only 4 billion dirhams of the 13 billion (\$1 billion) expected in last year. It was unclear which Gulf countries have not provided their 2015 aid.

Rabat is anxious to avoid a drop in living standards and prevent a return of the street protests for political and economic reforms that King Mohammed managed to stifle in 2011 with constitutional reforms, social spending and harsh policing. The Gulf states have agreed a similar package of aid, also worth a total \$5 billion over a five-year period, for Jordan. — Reuters

PANEL REJECTS GOVT POWER TARIFFS, APPROVES...

Continued from Page 1

the investment sector or apartments (for expatriates) three months later. The Assembly is due to debate the new charges on April 12 along with the government's economic reforms. The debate could be postponed by one day if the Assembly decides to debate a grilling against commerce and industry minister. Shaye made no reference to any change in the government's proposals for raising power charges for apartments, where the overwhelming majority of expatriates live. The government proposed to raise charges to 5 fils for the first 1,000 kW, 10 fils for between 1,000 and 2,000 kW and 15 fils for above that.

Minister of Electricity and Water Ahmad Al-Jassar said after the meeting that there are differences between the government and Assembly's plans on power charges. He said that even after the proposed increase, the government subsidies will represent 80 percent of the cost and decreases to between 65 and 70 percent for higher consumption categories.

Rapporteur of the committee MP Mohammad Al-Jabri said that the panel's proposal can help save around KD 500 million in subsidies. MP Faisal Al-Kandari meanwhile said that electricity charges for Kuwaiti citizens must remain unchanged and the Assembly should reject both the committee and government proposals. He said the government should first search for other alternatives before harming people's income.

Meanwhile, MP Yousef Al-Zalzal yesterday said that when passed by the parliament, the manpower authority law was meant to regulate the labor market, provide suitable working environments for workers and facilitate business for the private sector. "Unfortunately, the manpower authority has turned into a haven of corruption where some employees are abusing both workers and employers by the powers invested in them by the law," he remarked, urging the minister of social affairs and labor to investigate the matter and hold these employees accountable for abusing the law to blackmail workers and employers. "I will expose corruption practiced by some of the authority's senior officials and employees and the government will be held accountable for this," Zalzal vowed.

Separately, MP Saud Al-Hurajji said the ministry of commerce and industry was being run without any practical plan or executive proceedings in terms of solving the problem of price increases. "Inflation and high prices are things that destroy and impede nations' progress," he added, noting that the government's duties included protecting consumers, guaranteeing quality of products and controlling the prices of basic consumer goods. Accordingly, Hurajji filed a parliamentary inquiry about the measures the ministry has taken in this regard, its plans to prevent manipulation of prices, proposals to control them and whether it was considering reviewing the list of subsidized goods.

UAE LABOR MEET FINDS EXPATS STILL TROUBLED

Continued from Page 1

Yesterday, Emirati officials gathered before several hundred workers at what appeared to be a model residential camp for laborers and managers on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi, the Emirati capital. They answered a series of questions from workers as Saqr Ghobash, the UAE's minister of human resources and emiratization, moved through the crowd, trailed by television cameras.

But even here, with security guards holding trays full of expensive chocolates, taxi drivers discussed how their housing didn't allow them to cook meals. Others talked about being in small rooms split in two, with 10 men sleeping inside at a time. An apprentice taxi driver said he had his pay docked any time he did poorly on an exam. "I'm not happy," said the taxi driver from Nigeria's southern Edo state, who asked his name not be used for fear of losing his job. "I wish I never came."

Gulf Arab nations have come under increasing scrutiny from human rights and labor activists over their treatment of low-paid workers. Labor unions are not allowed and strikes are illegal in the UAE, though

protests sometimes occur. Hundreds of migrant laborers staged a rare protest in November near the airport hosting the opening day of the biennial Dubai Airshow.

Habib Rehman, a Pakistani who works in human resources for a construction firm, said he appreciated the effort to translate labor laws into languages like Hindi, Tamil, Bengali and Urdu, but said a wider campaign was needed to educate all workers. Also, even laborers who know their rights sometimes face bosses who threaten to ban them from the UAE, he said. "There are people in between who have been misusing" the laws, Rehman said. "They put them under pressure, blackmailing them."

Ali Ebrahim Al-Shehhi, a senior administrator at the Dubai labor office who attended Wednesday's meeting, answered several of Rehman's questions, stressing workers should document what they see and never sign a paper they don't understand. However, when pressed by Rehman about bosses and company heads knowingly breaking the law, he said Emirati authorities wouldn't allow it. "The world has changed," Shehhi said. "You have to change your mentality." — AP

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Issues

NETANYAHU LOOKS
TO CHANGING AFRICA
FOR NEW ISRAEL ALLIES

By Jonah Mandel

Four decades after his brother was killed during a rescue operation in Uganda, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is embarking on an African mission of his own - but with very different aims. Galvanized by a growing demand for Israeli security assistance and his government's search for new allies, Netanyahu has put a fresh focus on improving ties with African nations. Part of his push involves a planned visit to the continent around the 40th anniversary of the July 1976 hostage rescue operation that resulted in his brother's death.

His itinerary has not yet been released, though Netanyahu said he has accepted an invitation to visit the continent from African leaders. Among them is the president of Kenya, with which Israel has strong ties, and a visit to that country seems likely. "Israel is coming back to Africa; Africa is coming back to Israel," Netanyahu recently told lawmakers and African ambassadors. He noted his visit would be around the anniversary of the rescue operation, which he called "a very dramatic national experience" and "for me, obviously, one of great personal consequence."

African nations that have survived colonialism and, more recently, the not-always-altruistic aims of Western nations and China certainly have reasons to be sceptical. But economic progress in many African countries has begun to change the dynamics, while the threat of Islamic extremism in parts of the continent has left governments in search of advanced defence technology. Certain countries would be especially keen to benefit from Israeli agricultural and water technology, said Naleem Jeenah, head of the South Africa-based Afro-Middle East Centre research institute. "The manner in which Israel has presented itself to these governments is in terms of huge opportunities," Jeenah said, adding that he believed "many countries" would be interested.

Netanyahu's planned trip, the first by an Israeli premier to Africa since Yitzhak Rabin visited Casablanca in 1994, is a culmination of years of rapprochement. It is also an opportunity for Israel to further deepen business ties with the economically growing African states in fields in which it possesses expertise. Israel hopes as well to gain more diplomatic support from African nations at the various UN bodies, where it faces harsh criticism over its occupation of the West Bank and blockade of the Gaza Strip.

Warming Ties

The Israeli-Arab conflict drove a wedge between African countries and the Jewish state in the 1960s. Pressure from North African nations, accentuated by the 1967 and 1973 wars between Israel and its neighbors, led African states to drop their relations with the Jewish state. Netanyahu's brother Yonatan was killed in a July 1976 commando raid in Entebbe, Uganda, to free passengers aboard an Air France plane hijacked by Palestinians.

By the time the commandoes arrived, non-Israeli and non-Jewish passengers had been released by the hijackers, leaving about 100 hostages. The hostages were freed in the raid but 20 Ugandan soldiers and seven hijackers were killed, along with several Ugandan citizens. The lone casualty among the Israeli assault team was Netanyahu's brother, who headed the operation.

Changes in diplomatic relations with parts of Africa began in the following decade, according to Aryeh Oded, who for years was an Israeli diplomat in African capitals and is now a researcher at the Hebrew University's Truman Institute. "Since 1982, the Africans realized they had made a mistake in cutting the ties," he said. Israel, however, still feeling the sting of the snub, "didn't have the desire to renew ties."

But in recent years, Israel's lack of progress in reaching peace with the Palestinians forced it to renew its African interests. "Under Avigdor Lieberman, Israel renewed its interest in Africa, because there were difficulties with Europe and other places," Oded said of the ultra-nationalist who as Netanyahu's foreign minister between 2009-2015 visited Africa a number of times.

Selling Security

At a recent conference on Africa-Israel ties, the foreign ministry's deputy director general for Africa, Yoram Elron, noted Israel's need for support from African nations in international forums. "Today relations with the African continent are high on our foreign policy agenda," he told dozens of African dignitaries and diplomats. Indeed in recent weeks Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta, Ghana's foreign minister and a delegation of African Muslim religious leaders visited Israel.

And Israeli foreign ministry director general and Netanyahu confidante Dore Gold recently paid a visit to his counterpart in South Africa. While Israel's trade with Africa constitutes only two percent of its foreign trade, the potential for growth exists. "Africa, which has today one of the highest growth rates in the world, presents many business opportunities in areas Israel has extensive expertise, such as agriculture, telecommunications, alternative energy and infrastructure," Elron said. —AFP

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ANTARCTICA: INT'L RELATIONS IN COLD CLIMATE

By Roland Lloyd Parry

Winter is coming, and like many scientists posted in Antarctica, Bogdan Gavrylyuk is looking forward to going home. It has been a year since the 43-year-old Ukrainian geophysicist started his latest posting, monitoring climatic phenomena on an island off western Antarctica. "Everybody misses home. Everybody has a family or a girlfriend and of course we miss them," he says. "But here, there is a job we have to do." He will ship out from Vernadsky Research Station in early April to make way for his replacement, before the sea freezes over.

Scientists call Antarctica the Earth's last wilderness. For some, it is also a paradise of international cooperation. It is home to thousands of researchers and technicians from various countries who share the territory under the Antarctic Treaty. In Gavrylyuk's office, blinking computer screens show graphs of data from meteorological instruments deployed around the wind-swept base. "We share a lot of important, interesting information between different Antarctic countries - data on the ozone layer, meteorological information, geophysical information. All the countries here are doing the same," he says. He also shows off a pair of keyboards on which he plays rock music in his free time. "I have a guitar, a flute, harmonica, keyboards. It helps me relax when I'm working hard on my project," Gavrylyuk explains.

Science and Peace

Diplomats cherish the Antarctic Treaty that has governed this continent since 1959. "It has lasted for over 50 years. It brings us all together for science and for peace," says Ray Arnaudo, who was formerly the US State Department's top official for Antarctica. "If you extended the boundaries of Antarctica by five degrees every couple of years, in 50 years you would have world peace," he says. "Some say I'm a dreamer." But when it comes to protecting the region, the Antarctic Treaty is prey to international politics beyond its icy shores.

"Antarctica has traditionally been a place where people have been able to cooperate more than they would on other issues. However there is an outstanding list of to-dos," says Claire Christian, acting director of the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition, a grouping of environmental NGOs. Run by Britain until it was sold to Ukraine in 1996, Vernadsky Station was one of the research bases whose atmospheric readings revealed the hole in the ozone layer in the 1980s, Gavrylyuk says.

Now the focus is on climate change. Antarctica's western peninsula has warmed by three percent on average over the past half-century, according to environmental groups. They hope the Antarctic Treaty's environmental commission, CCAMLR, can agree on measures to protect the continent. "There are a lot of political obstacles," says Christian. "It's been very diffi-



This photo taken on March 4, 2016 shows a panoramic spot over Brown Scientific Research Station, an Argentine temporary station in Paradise Harbor, Antarctica. —AFP

cult, for example, for countries in CCAMLR to agree to marine protected areas."

Antarctic Climate Change

At Argentina's Almirante Brown Station, biologist Rocio Fayó and her 10 colleagues lead an isolated life. "There is no Internet connection here, so the group has a very strong bond," says Fayó, 31, standing under the gray skies of Paradise Bay outside the red wooden hut where the team sleeps. "We've been up the peak over there a few times. We climb up and slide back down fast on our bottoms in the snow. It's good fun." Fayó has spent the summer studying micro-algae. Another researcher has set up a camera for monitoring penguins in the bay. Conservationists fear the penguins are threatened by climate change and fishing. Campaigners complain that some countries are resisting conservation efforts by fellow CCAMLR members. Andrea Kavanagh, head of the penguin campaign of Pew Charitable Trusts, a US lobby group, says Russia and China want to expand fishing near endangered penguin colonies.

Hiking the Frozen Sea

Far away from their countries, on the bases, staff say Antarctic relations run smoothly, however. "There's this great international collaboration. Politics is set aside here more than in most places," says laboratory supervisor Carolyn Lipke, 35. She is getting ready for a break after spending her sixth year at Palmer Station, one of several US Antarctic bases. Among various research projects at her station, chemists are examining spongy invertebrates on the seabed that they think give off toxins with potentially cancer-fighting qualities.

When they're not deep-sea diving for specimens or working in the lab, she says, the 40 or so staff here play cards, watch movies and hold open-mic talent shows. In winter, they can hike across the frozen sea to neighboring islands. A satellite Internet and phone link helps them keep in touch with loved ones. "That makes it easier to be here for long periods, and also for the scientists to communicate," Lipke says. "You can communicate with your family but you can also get a ton of work done." —AFP

TV CABBIE DRIVES VIEWERS TO LAUGH AT MALI LIFE

By Sebastien Rieussee

"This taxi is no ordinary taxi," shouts the driver, allowing his customer a moment to settle in the back seat before propelling his cab down the streets of Bamako, talking a mile a minute. The bombastic declarations of "F-One", a cabbie with tales even taller than the high standard of his profession, have hooked fans of Mali's newest hit TV show, "Taxi Tigui" (Taxi Driver), whose deft mix of satire and social commentary has a distinctly local twist.

Since its launch last month, the series has drawn huge attention, in part because it is 100 percent Malian: Set in the capital, recorded in the local Bambara language and produced in the country with Malian actors. "People were waiting for this, that's what we discovered with 'Taxi Tigui'," co-creator Toumani Sangare said. "It is really important for us to create content that looks like we do."

Each three-minute episode marks a significant change from the country's usual television diet of dubbed South American soaps, using comedy to delve more deeply into the national psyche. F-One boasts that his eponymous taxi is "the fastest in Mali", despite surviving bombings in Iraq, war in Afghanistan and an unlikely earthquake in central Paris that killed everyone in the vicinity. Mali's president is of course a regular customer.

So far, so cabbie. But the zany content often mirrors reality for Bamako's 16 million citizens: F-One and his customers start off arguing about the fare but weave their way around gender politics, romance and the challenges of being a good Muslim. "It's a caricature of society," said Sangare, a Franco-Malian who acts as a director and producer for "Taxi Tigui". "Each customer is the pretext for a sketch, an adventure," he told AFP.

'Rediscovering Daily Life'

Sangare teamed up with Frenchman and longtime Bamako resident Nicolas Frebault to cast a satirical eye on the dusty west African metropolis, producing 44 episodes. Viewers "rediscover daily life in Mali" through laughter, said the show's star Koman Diabate. "Everything that happens around us, whether cultural, economic or political - we talk about it." F-One, for example, embraces a pious mood in an episode set on a Friday, traditionally a day dedicated to the mosque in Muslim-majority Mali.

He refuses two would-be clients, shaking his head and running



A handout picture release by Banko production shows actors performing on the set of a new TV show "Taxi Tigui" on Feb 25, 2016 in Bamako. —AFP

prayer beads through one hand as he explains he is on his way to worship. When a final customer offers an impossibly large tip to get to a first date on time, F-One abandons all thoughts of Allah to take his amorous client to the girl in question at breakneck speed. "For sensitive topics, we often flip them around with humor so the taboo disappears amidst the laughter," said Sirafily Django, a "Taxi Tigui" scriptwriter and actor.

People See Themselves

Mali does not record audience figures but public reaction appears overwhelmingly positive. "I really liked it, it's what we see every day in Mali," said Marietou Togola, a student who watched the series premiere in Bamako. Three back-to-back episodes of "Taxi Tigui" are broadcast every Monday to Wednesday by state broadcaster ORTM, then repeated in the morning during the rest of the week. Typical is TV repairman Modibo Haidara who watched "Taxi Tigui" with his neighbors, saying he fell about laughing over how well Koman and his co-stars brought "the traditions, the reality of Mali" to the small screen.

Even rarer for a Malian show, "Taxi Tigui" was entirely financed through local sources, unlike previous local hits that relied on outside support, said Moussa Ouane, director of Mali's National Cinematography Centre (CNCM). The show "could not have happened without local support, financially speaking," said Sangare. Malian cinema has taken such huge blows in recent years that almost all of its public screens have shut, Ouane said, leaving television to fill the gap. "It is now much easier to produce television series than feature films," he said, and what's more, "people want to see themselves on the screen." —AFP

Sports

Watch out, Lewis!
Japan speed queen
guns for Formula One



Ground honour
for West Indies
captain Sammy



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TOP-RANKED DAY FAVORED AS MASTERS REACHES 80 Page 17



WOLFSBURG: Wolfsburg's midfielder Maximilian Arnold (3rdL) and teammates defend against a free kick during the UEFA Champions League quarter-final, first-leg football match between VfL Wolfsburg and Real Madrid yesterday in Wolfsburg, northern Germany. — AFP

WOLFSBURG UPSET REAL IN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

WOLFSBURG: Real Madrid suffered their first defeat in the Champions League this season when they were surprisingly beaten 2-0 at VfL Wolfsburg in their quarter-final first leg yesterday.

The Germans were celebrating a memorable last-eight debut after Ricardo Rodriguez's penalty in the 18th minute and Maximilian Arnold's strike in the 25th stunned the visitors only four days after their 'Clasico' win in Spain over Barcelona.

Despite making just one change to the lineup that started against Barca, Real coach Zinedine Zidane's team will now go into the return leg in Madrid next week with a clear disadvantage. The Spaniards, who

also saw Karim Benzema limp off with a foot injury in the 40th minute, enjoyed a strong start but never recovered from the quick two-goal strike by the Wolves and were lucky not to have conceded a third in the second half. "It was a breath-taking atmosphere and the fans carried us to this win," Arnold told ZDF television. "But we should keep calm. We did the 50 percent now we need to do the other 50 percent in Madrid where we must most likely play even better. But it still a great win. I will sleep very well tonight."

Chasing a record-extending 11th European crown, Real needed only 90 seconds to put the ball in the net but Cristiano Ronaldo's effort was ruled offside.

They kept up the pressure and Frenchman Benzema came close minutes later when his shot was blocked by Wolfsburg's Diego Benaglio. But the hosts were awarded an unexpected penalty when Andre Schuerrle went down in the box in a challenge with Casemiro.

Swiss international Rodriguez sent Keylor Navas the wrong way as the Costa Rica international conceded his first Champions League goal after 738 minutes.

Wolfsburg struck again seven minutes later with Arnold, who had earlier threatened with a 70-metre sprint, slid in to complete a superb passing move that left the Real backline dazed.

Things got even worse with Benzema taken off min-

utes before the break and Real struggling to develop any traction in their attacking game in the second half.

Champions League top scorer Ronaldo, with 13 goals this season, was rarely left without two players marking him, with Wolfsburg midfielder Bruno Henrique outstanding also in his defensive duties.

Ronaldo was also denied by Benaglio in their one-on-one in the 70th as Real grew more desperate, pouring forward in search of a goal. Wolfsburg lurked on the break and although Schuerrle twice failed to score despite racing clear, it did not prevent the German's from celebrating a memorable win. Real will host the second leg next Tuesday. — Reuters

CITY IN DRIVING SEAT AFTER SLAPSTICK NIGHT IN PARIS

PARIS: Away goals by Kevin De Bruyne and Fernandinho handed Manchester City a 2-2 first-leg draw at Paris Saint-Germain yesterday to give the English side the edge in their Champions League quarter-final tie.

On a night that will be remembered for some comical defending and a Zlatan Ibrahimovic penalty that was saved by City goalkeeper Joe Hart, the Premier League side twice punished mistakes by their hosts.

De Bruyne put City ahead on 38 minutes, only for Ibrahimovic to level after an embarrassing mix-up in the visitors' defence soon after. Adrien Rabiot then put PSG ahead just before the hour, but Fernandinho made it 2-2 on 72 minutes and ensured the French giants will be chasing the tie in next Tuesday's second leg.

City were appearing at this stage for the first time and were handicapped by the absences of injured captain Vincent Kompany, Yaya Toure and Raheem Sterling. However, Hart had recovered from injury in time to play and De Bruyne started after making his own comeback from two months on the sidelines at the weekend, giving the English side's attack a fearsome look to it.

PSG, conquerors of Chelsea in the last 16, feared Sergio Aguero the most, though, and the stocky Argentinian striker coaxed a yellow card out of David Luiz inside 20 seconds after getting in behind the Brazilian.

The home support were furious soon after when Serbian referee Milorad Mazic refused to give Paris a penalty after Blaise

Matuidi went down in the box under pressure from Eliaquim Mangala, but PSG did win a spot-kick in the 13th minute for a foul by Bacary Sagna on Luiz.

Ibrahimovic stepped up, but was thwarted by Hart, who dived low to his right to make the save. Perhaps the 34-year-old Swede was feeling the pressure in what could be his last chance to win the Champions League, because he passed up another huge opportunity midway through the first half, blazing over the bar after a Thiago Motta pass had split the away defence.

City made Ibrahimovic pay as they opened the scoring seven minutes before half-time, capitalising on loose play in the Paris midfield. Fernandinho intercepted a Matuidi pass intended for Rabiot and advanced towards the edge of the box before teeing up De Bruyne, who took a touch and fired past Kevin Trapp.

HORROR MOMENT

However, City inexplicably gifted the French champions an equaliser only three minutes later.

It was a horror moment for Hart and Fernando, with the goalkeeper choosing to play a goal-kick short to the Brazilian-born midfielder on the edge of the area despite Ibrahimovic lurking in close proximity. Fernando tried to release the ball, but Ibrahimovic stuck out a leg and diverted it into the net for his 39th goal of the season.

PSG came out in the second half with the momentum after that and they took the lead on 59 minutes thanks to one-time City youth player Rabiot. Edinson Cavani



PARIS: Manchester City's Belgian forward Kevin De Bruyne (R) vies with Paris Saint-Germain's Ivorian defender Serge Aurier (L) during the UEFA Champions League quarter final football match between Paris Saint Germain (PSG) and Manchester City yesterday at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. — AFP

turned a corner towards goal and Hart saved, but the ball fell kindly for Rabiot to tap in.

PSG sensed a chance to increase their advantage before the second leg and a Di Maria cross from the right was headed against the woodwork by Ibrahimovic. Instead City pounced on some more comical defending

to grab a second away goal, Fernandinho gleefully prodding into the net after neither Serge Aurier nor Thiago Silva were able to clear a low ball into the box from the away right. Those away goals, and the fact PSG will be without the suspended Luiz and Matuidi for the return, could prove crucial. — AFP

FIFA ETHICS JUDGE DAMIANI RESIGNS

GENEVA: Under suspicion in the fallout from the global offshore accounts investigation, Uruguayan lawyer Juan Pedro Damiani resigned as a FIFA ethics judge yesterday. Damiani was already under investigation by FIFA ethics prosecutors after being identified on Sunday in a vast leak of data from a Panama law firm specializing in tax avoidance schemes which can be exploited for money laundering.

His exit, after helping to ban former FIFA president Sepp Blatter from soccer last December, damages the scandal-hit world soccer body's efforts to rebuild its image and reputation under new leadership.

Damiani's formal resignation from the FIFA court was confirmed in a statement from the judging chamber without giving details.

The Penarol club president's links to disgraced former FIFA vice president Eugenio Figueredo were the center of the case against him. Damiani did not tell the FIFA ethics committee until March that he and his family's law firm had a "business relationship" with Figueredo, a fellow Uruguayan who had been arrested in Zurich almost 10 months earlier. Figueredo was indicted by American federal prosecutors investigating corruption in world soccer and later extradited to Uruguay. He has pleaded guilty to fraud and money laundering charges and acknowledged taking bribes.

On Sunday, Damiani was named in international media reports for his law firm's links to Panama law firm Mossack Fonseca. He is alleged to

have helped create offshore accounts and companies for three clients who have been indicted in the sprawling FIFA bribery investigation led by federal prosecutors in Brooklyn.

As well as Figueredo, marketing executives Hugo and Mariano Jinkis - a father and son from Argentina - are suspected of paying millions of dollars in bribes linked to acquiring broadcast rights for continental competitions, including the Copa America.

The Jinkis connection has also drawn new FIFA President Gianni Infantino into the reports, though he is not suspected of wrongdoing. As UEFA legal director in 2006, Infantino co-signed a contract selling Champions League TV rights for Ecuador to a subsidiary of the Jinkis-owned Full Play company.

Yesterday, UEFA offices in Switzerland were raided by federal police to seize documents relating to the rights deal. Switzerland's attorney general is leading a widening investigation of FIFA, and now UEFA, business which includes suspected undervalued sales of TV rights. Criminal proceedings against Blatter were opened last September.

In 2006, Blatter helped appoint Damiani as a member of a revamped FIFA ethics committee. Damiani also followed his father into football, succeeding him as president of Uruguay's 49-time champion Penarol.

Last week, Damiani hosted international media reports for his law firm's links to Panama law firm Mossack Fonseca. He is alleged to

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ASIAN SHARES SOFT AS DATA CASTS SHADOW OVER GLOBAL ECONOMY

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BAGHDAD: Iraqis have lunch at a restaurant in Baghdad, Iraq. The food business is booming, despite the war and an economic slump, as entrepreneurs find restaurants and eateries a safe business bet. —AP

IRAQ'S FOOD BUSINESS BOOMS DESPITE WAR

RESTAURANTS 'A SAFE BUSINESS BET', DESPITE SLUMPING ECONOMY

BAGHDAD: Iraqi businessman Zaid Nazo has always been sure of his nation's deep passion for food and wasn't afraid to dream big when he transformed his small Baghdad coffee shop in 1999 into a casual dining and takeaway restaurant. Today, the 41-year-old father of two has opened four branches and his chain is one of the most popular in Iraq. Many Iraqi entrepreneurs are finding restaurants and eateries a safe business bet, despite the country's slumping economy, prevailing violence and an ongoing war with the Islamic State group.

The food business is booming. There are 40 percent more restaurants in Baghdad today than there were in 2013 - when security and economic conditions in the country were much better - according to Shakir Al-Zamili, the chairman of Baghdad Investment Commission. It's unexpected when the city still faces almost daily bombings, large swaths of the country are under control of the extremist Islamic State group and Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi is embroiled in a political crisis over stalled reforms and allegations of rampant corruption.

A testament

It's also a testament to Iraqis' determination to triumph over violence. Nazo and his business partner, his close friend Marwan Rassam, established their first eatery - Saj Al-Reef or "Country Bread" in Arabic - in the upscale Baghdad neighborhood of Karrada 18 years ago. Then in 2007, they opened a second branch in Irbil, the capital of the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region, and a third in 2009, in the nearby town of Sulaimaniyah.

This February, he opened a new place in Baghdad's upmarket Mansour neighborhood. "I bet on the mentality of Iraqis," he said.

"The Iraqi people love to live ... and they make the most of every day because they don't know what tomorrow will bring," he added. The food boom has seen new establishments open all around Baghdad, from city rooftops to the banks of the Tigris River. Local businessmen are pouring millions of dollars into buying or renting property, bringing in foreign chefs and staff, competing with one another for the fanciest design, best decoration and most attractive cuisine.

And though suicide and car bombings regularly target large gatherings - including restaurants - the boom has not slowed. "Baghdadis live under huge pressure," said Al-Zamili, the chairman of the Baghdad Investment Commission. "Restaurants are the best place to vent daily frustrations and that's the main catalyst behind the spike in these projects." The government offers significant tax breaks for up to 10 years for new ventures, and expedites entry visas for foreign staff at such businesses.

After the Islamic State took much of northern and western Iraq in the summer of 2014, investors' appetite for restaurants, entertainment and hospitality projects slowed down considerably, said al-Zamili. Then it picked up and started to skyrocket, he says. Four out of 10 proposals that land before al-Zamili's commission are for restaurants or coffee shops. Baghdad has now more than 100 restaurants, coffee shops and eateries that are licensed by his commission - and twice as many are in the planning stages. Nazo likes to trace the Iraqi passion for food to antiquity.

Culinary arts

Last century, archaeologists discovered what is believed to be one of the world's oldest cookbooks - three clay tablets written in cuneiform script, dating to about 1700 BC. Housed at the Babylonian Collection of Yale University, they give cooking instructions for more than two dozen Mesopotamian dishes, including stews made of pigeon or lamb, a turnip dish and a kind of poultry pie. Culinary arts flourished when Baghdad was the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate, from the eighth to the thirteenth century, and many cookbooks have been preserved from that period. Iraq's signature dishes include masgouf, a grilled fish, as well as lamb kebabs and fire-roasted chicken. But many Baghdad eateries now offer American-style fast food, with added spice to appeal to the Iraqi palate.

Nazo remembers when he started in Karrada, they offered mostly traditional shawarma sandwiches wrapped with saj - traditional, unleavened flatbread baked on a dome-shaped metal griddle over a wood fire. His latest branch cost more than \$1 million and can seat 500 clients. Its menu touts nearly 70 Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, Chinese, French and Italian dishes. At a recent lunchtime, uniformed waiters briskly navigated through the packed, two-story establishment as families and young people huddled over wooden tables. There was a line waiting for a free table.

Anas Al-Sarraf, 28, runs the Baghdad Restaurants Guide, a Facebook page he has run since 2012. It keeps Baghdadis updated with the latest, attracting nearly 200,000 followers. "I

have adored food since my childhood," said Al-Sarraf as he waited for his order in the popular Scosi restaurant in Baghdad. "My dad and my grandmother used to take us to restaurants on weekends as a reward, and since then, my love for food has grown."

Hobby and passion

Al-Sarraf, who works for a private company, visits restaurants and coffee shops daily, spending nearly one-third of his \$1,200 monthly income on what he describes as his "hobby." But his passion and postings have caused problems with some restaurateurs, a few of whom have threatened him after he criticized their establishments. In one instance, he only just avoided a beating and arrest after photographing an eatery in the Shiite Sadr City area where Sunni extremists often carry out attacks.

The war, plummeting oil prices and austerity are hitting the Iraqi budget and have led to a slow down for most businesses. Baghdad has also been hit by an increasing number of bombings and suicide attacks. But that bleak picture of a nation at war has not deterred restaurateur Salam Mijbar Mohammed. The 40-year old has just inaugurated the third branch of his Scosi chain, which also offers a range of Middle Eastern and Western dishes. He is investing nearly \$2 million in the venture and believes that future for Iraq's food scene is promising. "Whenever there are bombings, we expect a slow business day, but hours later we see a big turnout and that's what encourages us," he said, with a slow smile. —AP

GLOBAL FALLOUT FROM OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS

Reports drawn from 11.5 million leaked documents detailing how and where politicians, businesses and celebrities hide their wealth are triggering reactions around the globe. The reports by an international coalition of media outlets working with the Washington-based International Consortium of Investigative Journalists are based on documents from the Panama-based law firm Mossack Fonseca, one of the world's biggest creators of shell companies. Here's a look at some reactions the reports are drawing.

ARGENTINA

The office of Argentine President Mauricio Macri confirmed a report by La Nacion newspaper that a business group owned by Macri's family had set up Fleg Trading Ltd. in the Bahamas. But it said Macri himself had no shares in Fleg and never received income from it.

AUSTRALIA

A tax agency said it is investigating more than 800 wealthy people for possible tax evasion linked to their alleged dealings with Mossack Fonseca. The Australian Tax Office said that it had linked more than 120 of those people to an offshore services provider in Hong Kong, but did not name the company.

CHINA

The reports say the Panamanian law firm had arranged offshore companies for relatives of at least eight present or past members of the Communist Party's Politburo Standing Committee, the apex of power in China. Among those it mentioned was the brother-in-law of President Xi Jinping. China's foreign ministry denounced the reports as "groundless." State media are ignoring the reports and search results of websites and social media for the words "Panama documents" were blocked.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Center for Investigative Journalism said the leaked documents show that 283 Czech citizens are

associated with offshore companies. The center said the most favorite offshore haven for Czechs are the Seychelles, followed by the British Virgin Islands, Bahamas and others. Interior Minister Milan Chovanec says police will investigate the data.

FRANCE

A French prosecutor launched an investigation into possible money laundering after the release of the leaked documents. Several hundred French citizens reportedly feature among the individuals mentioned.

ICELAND

News reports alleged that Prime Minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson and his wife set up a company in the British Virgin Islands. The reports have prompted calls for a no-confidence vote in parliament against him. Gunnlaugsson says there is nothing new in the information in the data leak but offered to dissolve parliament and call a new election. The president refused the request, but will consult with other party leaders before agreeing to end the coalition government.

ITALY

Italian weekly L'Espresso said about 1,000 Italian clients turned up in a database of offshore accounts cited in the media investigation, including Luca Cordero di Montezemolo, the chairman of carrier Alitalia and head of Rome's 2024 Olympics bid. L'Espresso said documents showed a series of contracts set up in 2007 indicated Montezemolo as the head of a Panama-based company named Lenville. It said Montezemolo, who was Fiat chairman and Ferrari CEO at the time, declined comment when contacted.

NEW ZEALAND

Prime Minister John Key rejected ICIJ's characterization of his country as among 21 tax havens used by Mossack Fonseca. "Tax havens are where there is nondisclosure of information," Key said. "New Zealand has full disclosure of information."

NORWAY

The bank DNB said it regrets having helped about 40 customers open offshore companies in the Seychelles with the help of Mossack Fonseca. The bank was reacting to a report in Norwegian newspaper Aftenposten showing it had helped customers set up shell companies in the Seychelles to avoid taxes. The bank said "that it was legal to set up this type of companies doesn't mean that it was correct for us to do it for these customers."

RUSSIA

Documents published by more than 100 media outlets alleged that President Vladimir Putin's friends, including leading cellist Sergei Rodulgin, were engaged in an offshore scheme. Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said there is nothing to implicate the president. Peskov suggested that the publication was a smear campaign with Putin as a target with a goal of influencing Russian politics.

SPAIN

Spanish tax authorities said they are investigating allegations of tax irregularities involving soccer player Lionel Messi and movie director Pedro Almodovar. Messi's family released a statement Monday denying wrongdoing and threatened to sue media outlets that released the information linking the Argentine player to accounts in Panama. Almodovar's brother says the company for them was dissolved a few years after it opened in the 1990s.

UKRAINE

The leaks indicate that Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko set up an offshore holding company to move his candy business to the British Virgin Islands, possibly depriving Ukraine of millions of dollars tax revenue. Poroshenko had promised voters he would sell his business when he ran for office. Poroshenko insists he has done nothing wrong and hasn't managed his assets since being elected. Some adversaries are calling for his removal from office. —AP



WASHINGTON: Pedestrians pass by a banner announcing the 2016 spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank outside of the IMF headquarters yesterday. The annual meeting runs from April 15-16. — AFP

BRITISH FARMER FEARS LOSING BRUSSELS LIFELINE

THETFORD: Toby Bulgin's face wrinkles worriedly as he surveys his farm and contemplates the looming vote on Britain's EU membership that could leave his livelihood hanging in the balance. The sunbathed fields, bleating lambs and birdsong on his farm in Norfolk, eastern England, seem a long way from the European Union's corridors of power in Brussels. But Bulgin fears that if Britain leaves the EU, it could deal a hammer blow to the nation's already-ailing agriculture sector.

As part of an EU sustainable agriculture drive, it subsidizes Bulgin to flood some fields to create a habitat for wading birds, the money compensating for the loss of space in which to rear cattle. "At the moment, we get our single farm payment, which, I presume, if we come out of the EU, could well end," he said while inspecting a flock of newborn lambs from his four-wheel drive vehicle. "I think the government would do trade deals which would be very, very negative for British agriculture," he said of a post-Brexit world. "If there is no threat to make them do what they should be doing, they are going to be a nightmare," he added.

Uncertainty over subsidies

British farms are heavily subsidized by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, with



THETFORD: British farmer Tony Bulgin checks a cow at his farm in Thetford, Norfolk, south east England. — AFP

payments flowing from Brussels depending on the size and type of farm, along with its environmental program. A typical British farmer receives £27,000 pounds (\$38,000/34,000 euros) per year-more than the salary of a new teacher-according to a report by the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP). Grants account for 30 to 40 percent of Bulgin's income, but can far exceed 50 percent on other farms.

The referendum on whether Britain should remain in the EU or leave will be held on June 23. There are no certainties about the future for the nation's farmers if Britain leaves the EU and the 28-country bloc's subsidy system. "There is no such thing as a cheap lunch," warned Bulgin, plunging his pitchfork into a mound of hay destined for the sheep pen. "Somewhere along the line, either the consumer has to pay more money



THETFORD: A picture shows lambs in a pen at the farm of British farmer Tony Bulgin in Thetford, Norfolk, south east England. — AFP

for food, or the farmer has to be subsidized to produce cheap food. "If we don't have subsidies and the rest of Europe has subsidies, farmers here won't last," he added.

Fear of the unknown

Farming Minister George Eustice is also in favor of leaving the union, but has struck a more reassuring note. "The UK government will continue to give farmers and the envi-

ronment as much support-or perhaps even more-as they get now," he recently told farmers. But the soothing words have been offset by concerns over post-Brexit uncertainties. "Farmers are in a bad economic situation to begin with," said Allan Buckwell, author of the IEEP report. The instability caused by Britain's EU divorce negotiations could trigger "a serious depression or recession in British agriculture," warned the professor. — AFP

News

in brief

Puerto Rico lawmakers eye potential debt moratorium

SAN JUAN: Puerto Rico's lawmakers yesterday were debating whether to declare a moratorium on servicing the US commonwealth's crushing \$70 billion debt. Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla is backing the bill to stop the loan payments as what he sees as the best way to guarantee services for the 3.5 million residents of the US territory in the Caribbean, in the absence of a US bailout. The Senate approved the bill early Tuesday. The US Congress so far has not granted the island the right to enter bankruptcy protection, as the White House and Puerto Rican governor have sought. Puerto Rico has been locked in recession for a decade, and defaulted on some debt payments at the beginning of the year. Despite sweeping spending cuts and some policy reforms, Puerto Rico has not been able to stop the deterioration of its budget deficit.



Yemeni airport security and transportation officials greet a plane from the Iranian private airline, Mahan Air after it lands in Sanaa, Yemen. — AP

Saudi Arabia bans Iran's Mahan Air over safety

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's aviation authority has banned Iran's Mahan Air from using its airports and air space over safety concerns. The General Authority for Civil Aviation said it decided to "stop completely permits granted to Iran's Mahan Air, ban it from landing in the kingdom's airports or passing through its air space," according to a statement carried by the official Saudi Press Agency. The authority cited "violations of national regulations related to safety of international carriers," without giving any details. Saudi Arabia severed all air links with Iran in January after the two countries cut diplomatic ties following Riyadh's execution of prominent Shiite cleric Nimr Al-Nimr. In Iran, civil aviation official Ebrahim Moradi said the Saudi ban would have no impact because the country's planes had already halted flights into the kingdom's air space. "Since the break in relations, Iranian airlines have had no plans for flights to Saudi Arabia and have not used Saudi airspace," he said.

Bahrain's BBK marketing convertible capital bonds

DUBAI: BBK, formerly known as Bank of Bahrain and Kuwait, has started marketing convertible securities to investors which will boost its capital reserves, it said in a bourse statement yesterday. The instruments-which have a perpetual tenor and will enhance the bank's Tier 1, or core, capital-are being offered at 1 dinar (\$2.65) each and carry an annual interest rate of 8.25 percent. The securities are being marketed between Apr 3 and Apr 18, according to the filing. In February, the bank's chief executive told Reuters that BBK planned to issue a 100 million dinar (\$265.3 million) convertible bond by the end of March to boost its capital ratios. The bank, Bahrain's fourth-largest by assets, had a capital adequacy ratio, a key indicator of its financial health, of 14.87 percent at the end of December, above a minimum requirement of 12.5 percent.



BANGALORE: Customers share a conversation at The Biere Club in Bangalore. — AFP

India's Central Bank cuts key interest rate

NEW DELHI: India's central bank yesterday cut its key interest rate to a five-year low of 6.5 percent citing a dip in inflation, in line with economists' expectations. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it would lower the benchmark repo rate, the level at which it lends to commercial banks, by 25 basis points down from 6.75 percent. "Retail inflation measured by the consumer price index (CPI) dropped sharply in February after rising for six consecutive months," RBI governor Raghuram Rajan said in a statement following the RBI's first policy meeting of the fiscal year 2016-17. In a Bloomberg News survey of 42 economists, 36 had expected a cut of 25 basis points, while four had expected a deeper cut of 50 basis points and two foresaw no change.

EUROPE MAJOR ECONOMIES END FIRST QUARTER ON A SOUR NOTE

BLOC'S ECONOMY PROBABLY GREW 0.3% IN Q1

LONDON: Europe's major economies ended the first quarter on a sour note, with lacklustre growth in nearly all key business surveys, as jitters about a global slowdown and fears Britons may vote to leave the European Union weighed on demand. The latest Purchasing Managers Indexes will make glum reading for European Central Bank policymakers, coming just weeks after they unleashed a bold easing package in their latest attempt to spur growth and inflation in the currency bloc.

So far there is scant evidence the stimulus has had much effect and they will be particularly concerned by survey evidence showing companies cut prices again last month. "It really dents hopes that the weakness we saw in January and February is just related to temporary concerns about the global economy. There is something more fundamental going on," said Jennifer McKeown at Capital Economics.

"Without ECB stimulus I suspect that things would have been a lot worse but it certainly is evidence that we are still in a deflationary environment in the euro zone. There is a real risk going forward

that households start to put off purchases." The ECB targets inflation just below 2 percent, but flash data showed last week it was -0.1 percent in March. Producer prices fell more than expected in February and the pace of their monthly decline increased, excluding volatile energy prices. There are few signs the latest round of stimulus has had much impact on growth either. Markit's final composite PMI for the bloc, seen as a good guide to growth, barely improved on February's 13-month low of 53.0, nudging up to 53.1.

That was above the 50-mark that divides growth from contraction but down from an earlier flash estimate of 53.7, pointing to first quarter growth of 0.3 percent, Markit said, weaker than the 0.4 percent prediction in a March Reuters poll. Across the channel in Britain, which doesn't use the euro, its PMI recovered only slightly last month after reaching its lowest in nearly three years in February. Markit said the reading pointed to first quarter growth of 0.4 percent, in line with the latest Reuters poll, but below the 0.6 percent growth recorded in the previous three months. "Investment is starting to

take a pause for breath while everyone waits for the referendum to come and go," said Alan Clarke at Scotiabank.

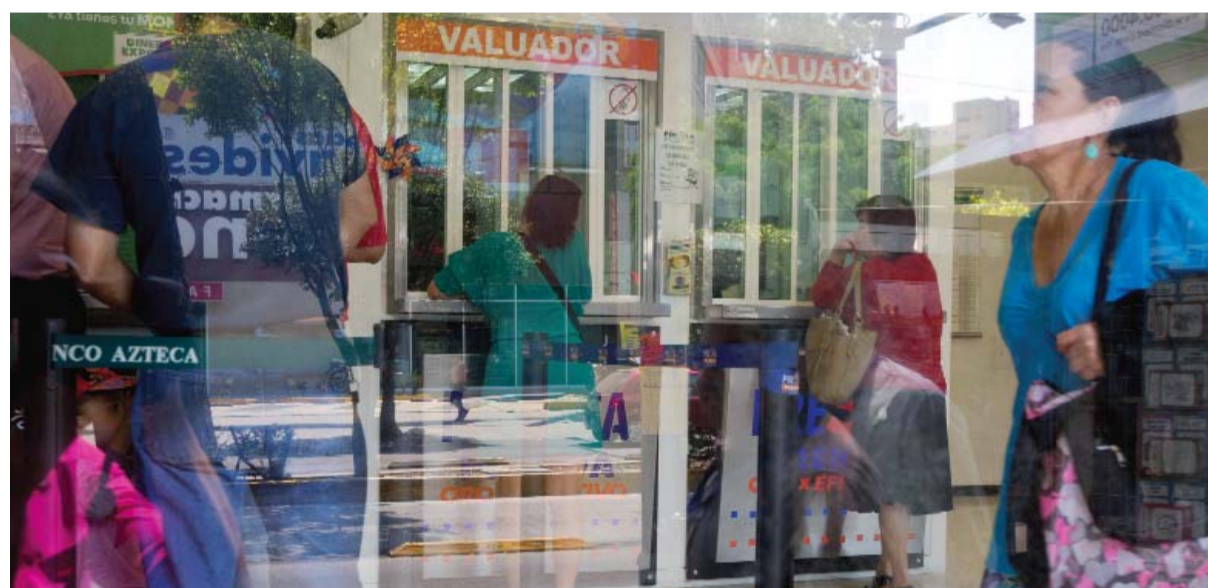
Britain will hold a referendum on whether to leave the EU on June 23. A poll of businesses on Monday showed the possibility of a vote in favor of leaving was causing companies to put investment plans on hold. Investors are also concerned about a hard landing in China, which would send shockwaves around the world. Analysts still suspect more government support will be needed from Beijing. International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde yesterday turned up the volume on her calls for stronger action by the world's economies to boost growth, warning downside risks were increasing without decisive action.

Downs and ups

Price-cutting failed to stem a slide in the PMI for the euro zone's dominant service industries. It fell to a 14-month low of 53.1 from 53.3, a steep decline from the flash 54.0 estimate. New business growth also decelerated, and the sub-index fell to a 14-month low of 52.7

from February's 53.4. France's composite PMI, which includes both services and manufacturing, only rose to the breakeven 50 mark while Germany's suggested the slowest pace of growth in eight months in March. The fall in the German index comes after official data earlier on Tuesday showed industrial orders unexpectedly dropped 1.2 percent in February due to weaker foreign demand. They had been expected to rise 0.2 percent.

"Today's weak new-order reading to some extent exaggerates the actual situation in the manufacturing industry," said Thomas Strobel at UniCredit. "However, sluggish global trade, in particular due to low economic activity in China and emerging Asian markets, poses downside risks to German exporters." In more upbeat news, Spain's services industry, worth around half the country's economic output, expanded in March at its fastest pace since November. Growth in Ireland's services businesses also strengthened in March. Official data showed euro zone retail sales rose 0.2 percent in February, beating expectations for no change. — Reuters



MEXICO CITY: Customers are seen inside a business offering money transfers and loans in Mexico City. US Republican Presidential frontrunner Donald Trump is threatening to block billions of dollars in US remittances to force Mexico to pay for his proposed border wall. — AP

BILLIONS IN US REMITTANCES A LIFELINE FOR MANY IN MEXICO

MEXICO CITY: The billions of dollars in US remittances that Donald Trump is threatening to block to force Mexico to pay for a border wall are a financial lifeline for the Latin American country's economy and millions of individuals who are supported by relatives up north. For families across Mexico, the transfers help put food on the table and clothe children. They can make it possible to start a small business, put an addition on a cinderblock home or buy a secondhand truck to use on a farm.

So it's not surprising many Mexicans had negative reactions Tuesday to the Republican presidential candidate's proposal to cut off remittances from the more than 11 million Mexicans living in the United States unless Mexico makes a one-time payment of \$5 billion to \$10 billion. "That money they send so their family here can live, I don't know how they could do that to them," said Ramiro Altamirano Macedo de la Concha, a 76-year-old taxi driver in Mexico City. "That man is half-crazy."

One US group that favors reduced immigration called for less emphasis on the wall and more on ensuring people in the United States without authorization cannot work or enjoy benefits and services. "If you don't think you will ben-

efit from coming here illegally, you won't come here illegally," said Ira Mehlman, spokesman for the Federation for American Immigration Reform. Mehlman said Americans have "made it perfectly clear" they are willing to pay for fencing where necessary if that reduces the cost of immigration. "It is not about punishing Mexico, it is about benefiting the people of the United States. ... We don't need to threaten Mexico," he said.

Mexican government officials declined or did not respond to requests for comment. Remittances to Mexico hit nearly \$24.8 billion last year, more than the country gets from oil exports. Nearly all of that originated in the United States, with most of it going directly to individuals. Trump's plan would hurt "because the remittances that come from the United States are a great help," said Carlos Martinez, a Mexico City resident whose brother in Seattle sends about \$300 to their parents every other month.

The funds filter into Mexico's broader economy through purchases and investments, and stimulate production. Alfredo Coutino, Latin America director for Moody's Analytics, said remittances account for 2.5 percent of Mexico's GDP,

and the country's central bank has said they are responsible for keeping poverty from rising.

If Trump's proposal were to become reality, "it would go directly to consumption and, in practice, affect families who receive this income and who have begun to build new homes, ... to have flat-screen TVs, to have cellphones, and so on, in the most remote towns of the country," Coutino said. That includes places that have seen higher levels of emigration due to poverty or violence, such as Oaxaca, Chiapas, Veracruz, Michoacan and Jalisco states. "It would be hard for us. ... How are we going to support our family?" said Arnulfo Gonzalez, a 40-year-old in New York who sends \$600 to \$1,500 a month to his mother in Oaxaca. "Since we can't vote, we don't have any say."

Others were skeptical that the plan would ever be put in place. "It's not reasonable. It's not logical. That rhetoric is just electoral strategy," said Aracelis Lucero, who was born in the United States and whose parents send money to relatives in the Mexican city of Puebla. "We shouldn't give it too much importance. All this is a bit frightening because people like this are being considered for the presidency. — AP

QATAR NATIONAL BANK REPORTS 7.1 PERCENT RISE IN NET PROFIT

DUBAI: Qatar National Bank yesterday reported a 7.1 percent rise in first-quarter net profit, beating analysts' forecasts as the largest bank in the Gulf Arab region continued growing strongly despite the impact of lower oil prices. The bank, half owned by Qatar's sovereign wealth fund, said net profit was 2.9 billion riyals (\$796.5 million) in the three months to Mar 31. Analysts at EFG Hermes and SICO Bahrain had expected a profit of 2.77 billion and 2.71 billion riyals, respectively. Low oil prices have taken their toll on some of the Gulf region's banks, complicating plans to raise capital to meet demands of regulators, as well as squeezing available liquidity to lend to local economies.

QNB's loan growth though, at 16.4 percent year on year to 402 billion riyals, remained strong. Government spending on infrastructure and projects linked to the 2022 soccer World Cup has been a major source of credit growth in the country. "We see the results in a positive light due to stable loan growth and significant decline in provisions; however, continued pressure on net interest margins and the health of its associates remain a concern," Naveed Ahmed at Global Investment House, said. He calculated that QNB's provisioning for bad debts declined 75.8 percent year on year.

Devaluation

QNB has ambitions to become the largest bank in the Middle East and Africa by 2017. It has now achieved that target, according to Thomson Reuters data, overtaking at the end of last year the previous largest lender by assets, South Africa's Standard Bank. The achievement was aided by the significant depreciation in the value of the South African Rand in the second half of 2015. QNB has grown partly via acquisitions, including a deal in December to buy Turkey's Finansbank from National Bank of Greece for 2.7 billion euros. It also bought Societe Generale's Egyptian business for \$2 billion in 2013, and took a 23.5 percent stake in pan-African lender Ecobank International a year later.

QNB's loan growth pushed net interest income 4.3 percent higher to 3.3 billion riyals, helping to offset small declines in income from fees and commissions and foreign exchange. The bank's asset base rose 9.7 percent to 550 billion riyals despite the impact of the devaluation of Egypt's currency last month. — Reuters

The move by the north African country to reduce the Egyptian pound's value by 14.5 percent to help to alleviate a currency crisis, effectively wiped out 7 billion riyals of QNB's assets and 5 billion riyals of its deposits, the bank said. Deposits stood at 403 billion riyals on Mar. 31, up 10.1 percent year on year. Finansbank is likely to be incorporated into the bank's financial results in the second quarter, QNB said. — Reuters

ASIAN SHARES SOFT; DATA CASTS SHADOW OVER GLOBAL ECONOMY

TOKYO: Asian share prices won some reprieve yesterday after a sharp fall in the previous session, but gains were modest as soft economic data from the United States and Europe cast a shadow on the global economic outlook.

than expected in February in the latest indication that economic growth in the world's largest economy weakened further in the first quarter. The data prompted economists to cut their first-quarter gross domestic product growth estimates by as much as half a percentage point to as low as a 0.4 percent annualized rate, which would be its slowest growth in two years.

Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde said on Tuesday that the global economy is recovering but growth is fragile and weak, and risks are increasing. "Her comments raised expectations that the IMF's global economic forecast due next week will be revised down," said Masahiro Ichikawa, senior strategist at Sumitomo Mitsui Asset Management.

to weaken their currencies with "arbitrary intervention." His comments dimmed any prospects of currency intervention by the Japanese authorities to stem the yen's rise in the near future, analysts said.

week low of 0.716 percent while traders reduced bets on a Fed rate hike in June further. Interest rates futures are pricing in about 20 percent chances of a June rate hike, compared to more than 50 percent in mid-March.

In addition, the US trade deficit widened more

Adding to the gloom, International Monetary

Shinzo Abe said countries should avoid seeking

Investors were also attracted to the safety of bonds, pushing down yields of top-rated government debt.

Oil prices extended their rebound after Kuwait insisted major producers will agree to freeze output later this month even as key player Iran continued to balk at the plan.

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Table with 6 columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low. Includes Price Index, Weighted Index, KXS 15, Volume, Value (KWD), and Number of Trades.

Table with 12 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Lists various securities like MARIN, IKARUS, IPG, NAPESCO, etc.

GOLD SLIPS 1%; DOLLAR RECOVER SOME LOSSES

LONDON: Gold fell 1 percent yesterday as a recovery in equities and the dollar prompted some profit-taking after Tuesday's rally, though price moves were muted as traders awaited the minutes of the US Federal Reserve's last policy meeting.

Daniel Briesemann. "We wouldn't rule out gold heading a little lower, but nonetheless it should be well supported because of the very loose monetary pursued by the central banks, and tonight's minutes from the FOMC, which should give support."

Gold, which is sensitive to rate increases as they lift the opportunity cost of holding the non-interest-yielding metal, posted its biggest quarterly rise in nearly 30 years in the first three months of 2016 as expectations for rate rises faded.

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GLENCORE SELLS ITS AGRI-BUSINESS STAKE TO CANADA'S PENSION FUND

ZURICH: Swiss commodities giant Glencore announced yesterday it was selling nearly half of its vast agriculture business to a Canadian pension fund for \$2.5 billion (2.2 billion euros), in cash.

Mark Jenkins, the senior managing director at CPPIB also hailed the deal. "As an asset class, agriculture is an excellent fit for a long-term investor like CPPIB, and we are excited about the opportunity to acquire a significant stake in Glencore Agri," he said.

The deal announced yesterday, which is subject to regulatory approvals and is expected to close during the second half of the year, values Glencore's entire Agricultural Products business at \$6.25 billion.

Glencore said it intends to finance with short term debt on closing. "We are pleased to be partnering with CPPIB as we embark on the next stage of the development of Glencore Agri," Glencore chief Ivan Glasenberg said in the statement.

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NEW YORK: People walk past the Nasdaq MarketSite in New York.

Table with 12 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Lists securities like KIN, FACIL, IFA, NIN, etc.

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CHINA CONSIDERS DEBT-EQUITY-SWAPS FOR BANKS



SHANGHAI: A man rides an escalator in front of high rise buildings in the financial district Lujiazui in Shanghai yesterday. — AFP

SHANGHAI: China is considering a plan that would allow banks to swap bad debts for equity in the borrowing firm, according to reports, as the banking sector faces mounting bad loans and slowing growth in the world's second-largest economy. Under the proposed scheme, banks would write down debts of companies in return for equity stakes, business magazine Caixin said. The government could allow swaps for as much as 1.0 trillion yuan (\$155 billion), it said, quoting an executive at the China Development Bank.

Authorities could approve the move as early as this month, Bloomberg News reported Tuesday, quoting a person with knowledge of the matter. The move could lead to the ownership of some struggling Chinese companies changing in developed economies, such debt-for-equity swaps frequently dilute existing shareholders on a huge scale, effectively handing over the company to its creditors. But enabling inefficient companies to shed debt could prop them

up instead of pressuring them to go bankrupt, analysts said, reducing the impetus for market-oriented reforms. "Bank ownership stakes in clients would result in moral hazard issues, amplifying long-term financial risks," Nomura said in a note.

The speculation follows flat growth in net profits and rising bad loans at the nation's biggest banks last year. The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) - the nation's biggest bank - eked out a 0.48 percent rise in net profit to 277.13 billion yuan as its non-performing loan (NPL) ratio rose to 1.50 percent in 2015 from 1.13 percent the year before. China Construction Bank, the country's second-largest lender, reported flat growth in net profit last year, as bad loans reached 1.58 percent, up from 1.19 percent in 2014. Nomura said the move could lower risk in the banking system in the short term, "but we do not view this as the ultimate solution to the NPL problem". — AFP

AUSTRALIA CENTRAL BANK HOLDS INTEREST RATE AT A RECORD LOW

SYDNEY: Australia's central bank held interest rates at a record low but indicated it could cut them in the future as recent strength in the domestic currency threatens to derail economic growth. The economy's bumpy transition away from resource-based growth after an unprecedented surge in mining investment has been hurt by a slowdown in China, its largest trading partner, and plunging commodity prices. While GDP expanded by a better-than-expected 3.0 percent last year, the recent buoyancy in the housing market which has helped to support growth has softened, while consumer sentiment is weakening.

The Reserve Bank of Australia warned that the climbing Australian dollar, a commodity-linked currency, would jeopardize the economy's transition. Exports from non-resources sectors as well as services industries would be hurt by an increasing exchange rate. "The Australian dollar has appreciated somewhat recently," RBA governor Glenn Stevens said in a statement after the monthly board meeting, acknowledging the recent rise in commodity prices and easing moves by other central banks. "Under present circumstances, an appreciating exchange rate could complicate the adjustment under way in the economy."

The local unit went from 75.84 US cents to 76.23 US cents after the statement,

reflecting investors' disappointment that Stevens did not use stronger language to try to talk down the dollar. At the last monthly meeting on March 1, it traded around 71.40 US cents. "The key takeaway for me is that they've made it clear that they don't want a stronger currency," National Australia Bank's co-head of FX strategy Ray Attrill said. "It arguably implies 'we don't like it but there's not much we can do about it.'" The central bank also highlighted the global low inflation environment and said consumer prices in Australia are "likely to remain low over the next year or two".

"Continued low inflation would provide scope for easier policy, should that be appropriate to lend support to demand," Stevens said. Analysts said while the consumer price index - which has been below the RBA's target band of two to three percent for several months - was likely to increase in the first quarter of this year, further currency rises could soften inflation. "If the Aussie dollar strength continues through (the second-quarter), CPI will weaken providing a case for a potential cut in (the second half)," IG Markets' Angus Nicholson said in a note. The Reserve Bank has slashed rates by 275 basis points since November 2011 to boost the economy, but it has been almost a year since its last cut in May 2015. — AFP



TOKYO: A man takes a photo in front of an electronic stock indicator of a securities firm in Tokyo. — AP

BOJ LIKELY TO DEBATE POSSIBILITY OF EASING

MANY IN BOJ WARY OF USING DIMINISHING POLICY TOOLS

TOKYO: Bank of Japan policymakers will likely debate the possibility of easing monetary policy further at a rate review this month, as a raft of gloomy data threatens their scenario that a moderate economic recovery will accelerate inflation towards a 2 percent target, sources familiar with their thinking said.

If the central bank were to act, it would more likely increase asset purchases than cut interest rates, the sources said, as financial institutions are still scrambling to adjust to a negative rate policy deployed in January. But a decision on whether to ease at the April 27-28 review will be a close call as many BOJ officials are wary of using their limited policy tools again so soon, especially as the negative rate move has proved unpopular among the public.

"It will be a question of whether the BOJ feels it has forestalled risks in January or whether they feel that January's action wasn't enough," said one of the people familiar with the BOJ's thinking. The BOJ stunned markets in January by adding negative interest rates to its massive asset-buying program, dubbed "quantitative

and qualitative easing," to forestall the risk of external headwinds derailing a fragile economic recovery. But the move failed to boost stock prices or arrest an unwelcome yen rise, drawing criticism from lawmakers and investors as confusing rather than calming markets.

Weak data deepens dilemma

A slew of weak data has since kept the BOJ on edge. Business sentiment soured and corporate inflation expectations weakened in January-March, the BOJ's "tankan" survey showed, casting doubt on the bank's argument that aggressive money printing will prompt firms to boost spending in anticipation of future price rises. Japanese stock prices have slumped on investors' concerns that sluggish emerging market demand and the yen's rebound will hurt corporate profits, threatening to undermine the BOJ's efforts to brighten public sentiment with bold monetary action.

BOJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda has insisted that Japan's economic recovery remains intact, and blamed sharp declines in oil prices for keep-

ing inflation roughly flat. While many BOJ officials agree with Kuroda that Japan's fundamentals remain solid, some worry the economy is losing the momentum needed to push up inflation as weak exports and household spending threaten to tip Japan into recession. Sources have told Reuters that the BOJ is likely to slash its inflation forecasts in a quarterly review to be conducted at the April meeting, and push back the timing for hitting its 2 percent target.

That will heighten pressure on the BOJ to ease again. But many board members are hesitant of doing so now, with some openly questioning the merits of pushing down already low borrowing costs with unconventional policy steps. Kuroda told parliament yesterday that financial market moves would be among key factors in deciding whether to act, suggesting the likelihood of an April easing may depend on how the yen and stock prices perform ahead of the meeting. "We need to take a comprehensive look at various factors in deciding (the best mix of steps) at the time, including market moves, particularly those in Japan," Kuroda said. — Reuters



SYDNEY: People pass a man begging for change along a street in the central business district of Sydney. Australia's central bank held interest rates at a record low but indicated it could cut them in the future as recent strength in the domestic currency threatens to derail economic growth. — AFP

US IS EMERGING AS A TAX HAVEN

WASHINGTON: The US lambastes and strong-arms countries that help drug lords and millionaire investors hide their money from tax collectors. Critics say it should look closer to home. America itself is emerging as a top tax haven alongside the likes of Switzerland, the Cayman Islands and Panama, those seeking reform of the international tax system say. And states such as Delaware, Nevada, South Dakota and Wyoming, in particular, are competing with each other to provide foreigners with the secrecy they crave. "There's a big neon sign saying the US is open to tax cheats," says John Christensen, executive director of the Tax Justice Network.

America's openness to foreign tax evaders is coming under new scrutiny after the leak this week of 11.5 million confidential documents from a Panamanian law firm. The Panama Papers show how some of the world's richest people hide assets in shell companies to avoid paying taxes. Christensen's group, which campaigns for a global crackdown on tax evaders, says the United States ranks third in the world in financial secrecy, behind Switzerland and Hong Kong but ahead of notorious tax havens such as the Cayman Islands and Luxembourg.

2010 law

Under a 2010 law, passed after it was learned that the Swiss bank UBS helped thousands of Americans evade US taxes, the United States demands that banks and other financial institutions disclose

information on Americans abroad to make sure they pay their US taxes. But the US doesn't automatically return the favor. More than 90 countries have signed on to a 2014 information-sharing agreement set up by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development; the US is among the few that haven't joined.

American banks don't even collect the kind of information foreign countries would need to identify tax dodgers. "The banking lobby has resisted changes in the law that would allow more sharing of data," says Peter Cotorceanu, a Zurich-based lawyer who specializes in private banking. In a report last year, the Tax

Justice Network complained that "Washington's independent-minded approach risks tearing a giant hole in international efforts to crack down on tax evasion, money laundering and financial crime." It said foreign elites have "used the United States as a bolt-hole for looted wealth." — AP



SUNNY ISLE: Condo buildings line the beach in Sunny Isle, Florida. A report by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists referred to as the 'Panama Papers,' based on information anonymously leaked from the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonesca, indicates possible connections between condo purchases in South Florida and money laundering. — AFP

WESTPAC BANK FACES COURT AMID PROBE

SYDNEY: Westpac Bank has vowed to "vigorously defend" itself against allegations it manipulated the inter-bank lending rate after Australia's corporate regulator launched legal action against the financial giant, the second case in a lengthy investigation. The Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) said it began legal action Tuesday against Westpac in the federal court for manipulating a key market interest rate, which is used as a benchmark in domestic financial markets, from April 6, 2010 to June 6, 2012.

"ASIC contends that, on 16 occasions... Westpac traded Prime Bank Bills in the Bank Bill Market with the intention and likely effect of influencing the setting of the bank bill swap reference rate (BBSW) to its advantage and to the disadvantage of parties to certain products who had an opposite exposure to the BBSW," court documents said. The documents quoted Westpac managing director for group treasury, Colin Roden, in a telephone conversation with another trader in 2010, as saying: "I knew it was completely wrong but fuck it, I might as well, I thought fuck it." "We've got so much money on it, we just had to do it, right," Westpac's group chief finan-

cial officer Peter King said the bank "will be vigorously defending ASIC's allegations in court".

"We reject the allegations made by ASIC and do not believe Westpac, or any employee, has acted unlawfully in relation to the instances detailed by ASIC," he added in a statement late Tuesday. The global financial sector has been hit by recent scandals such as the rigging of the Libor (the London Interbank Offered Rate) interest rate and foreign exchange rates. Major banks have been slapped with billions of dollars in fines by US and British regulators and others are facing court.

The legal proceedings against Westpac follow similar court action against ANZ Bank in an ongoing three-year probe by ASIC, adding to the woes of a banking sector already under scrutiny over rising bad debts in the resources sector and a softening housing market. Global banks RBS, UBS and BNP Paribas were fined between Aus\$1 million (US\$750,000) and Aus\$1.6 million by ASIC for potential misconduct involving the bank bill swap rate in 2013 and 2014. Shares in Westpac closed 1.55 percent lower at Aus\$28.68 in Sydney. — AFP



DJIBOUTI: Workers seal packages in the port of Djibouti. Djibouti has been in the lucrative position of offering landlocked Ethiopia its only access to the sea since Ethiopia went to war with Eritrea next door in 1998. (Right) Workers load goods at the port of Djibouti. — AFP



TINY DJIBOUTI THINKS BIG WITH CHINA-BACKED INFRASTRUCTURE SPLURGE

DJIBOUTI: The tiny Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti, which votes tomorrow in presidential elections, is hitching its wagon to the star of neighboring Ethiopia with a series of cross-border projects funded mainly by China, the new power-broker in the region. Djibouti's President Ismael Omar Guelleh, in power since 1999, is seeking a fourth term as head of the former French colony that sits at the entrance to the Red Sea and Suez Canal.

The vote, which the opposition has already branded a sham, will test support for a series of infrastructure projects that aim to increase the already outsized influence of the country of around 800,000 people, home to America's biggest-and only permanent-military base in Africa. Djibouti has been in the lucrative position of offering landlocked Ethiopia its only access to the sea since Ethiopia went to war with Eritrea next door in 1998. During the two-year conflict, Addis Ababa relied on

Djibouti's main port to import weapons.

Since then Ethiopia's economy has grown exponentially, and with it the tide of imports flowing through Djibouti to the country of 97 million people, which accounts for 86 percent of all goods transiting through Djiboutian ports. Not content to rely on passing trade and playing host to the military bases of several world powers, Djibouti is now looking to play a bigger role in east Africa, in tandem with fast-growing Ethiopia. "Even if the country has a very good strategic location, small economies like ours need to be integrated into regional development efforts," Foreign Minister Mahamoud Ali Youssouf said.

A 'model' for east Africa

In 2011, Djibouti was hooked up to Ethiopia's electricity grid. Two further interconnectors are planned, one of which could transport Ethiopian power across the Red Sea

to Yemen. A 752-kilometre railway line linking the city of Djibouti to Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa is scheduled to open soon, with another line for exporting potassium from the northern Ethiopian city of Mekele through the Djiboutian port of Tadjourah set to soon follow. In the past year the neighbors have also announced two major energy projects. A multi-billion-dollar pipeline will transport natural gas from Ethiopia to a liquefaction plant and export terminal at Damerjog in Djibouti, while in the other direction, a planned 550-kilometre pipeline will carry diesel, gasoline and jet fuel from Djibouti's ports to central Ethiopia.

Completing the list of cross-border projects is a water pipeline to channel drinking water from Ethiopia to Djibouti, which like Ethiopia is prone to droughts. "Our relationship is gaining momentum," said Tewolde Mulugeta, spokesman for the Ethiopian foreign ministry, who sees the deepening ties

between the two countries as "a model" for the region. It is a view shared in Djibouti. "The main thing is that the development benefits not only the two countries but also other countries in the region," Energy Minister Ali Yacoub Mahamoud said. "That is why we must combine our resources, our efforts and our ideas".

Chinese money

The two countries see themselves as the engine of closer cooperation within the regional IGAD grouping, which also includes Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. Ethiopia and Djibouti's special relationship has been welcomed by China, a major investor in the region.

Most of Djibouti's 14 major infrastructure projects, which have been valued at a total 14.4 billion dollars, are being funded by Chinese banks, including the railway line that

will halve transit times from Djibouti to Addis Ababa. "These are very big investments," Djibouti's foreign minister said, explaining that China was "the only partner that accompanied us along this path."

China is also funding the pipeline that will transport natural gas to the port in Djibouti for export to the Asian powerhouse, and recently signed an accord with the Red Sea state on the construction of a free trade zone around 50 kilometers from Djibouti city. Economists warn that Djibouti is becoming too reliant on Chinese credit. The country's public debt burden is forecast to rise from 60 per cent in 2015 to around 80 percent in 2017, according to the International Monetary Fund. "It's a dilemma," admits Youssouf, the foreign minister. "The more indebted we are, the more we depend on our creditor. But what alternative is there? Countries can only develop if they have infrastructure." — AFP



MOSCOW: An elderly man looks around at a supermarket in Moscow, Russia. The World Bank has cut its growth forecasts for the Russian economy, predicting it will contract 1.9 percent this year due to low oil prices and international sanctions, and warns of a rise in poverty. — AP

POVERTY RISING AT THE FASTEST PACE IN RUSSIA

UKRAINE PLANS RUSSIAN OIL IMPORT BAN

MOSCOW: Poverty is rising in Russia at the fastest pace since the dark days of financial and political crisis in the 1990s, the World Bank warned yesterday. The organization, which slashed its economic growth forecasts, said 20.3 million people are this year expected to be living at or below the official poverty level of 9,662 rubles (\$142) a month. Last month, the Russian statistics service said the number of people officially living in poverty spiked nearly 20 percent in 2015 to 19.2 million - some 13 percent of the population. "The projected increase in 2016 would return poverty rates to their 2007 levels, undoing nearly a decade's worth of gains."

It would represent the largest increase in the poverty rate since the 1998-1999 crisis, far exceeding the increase observed during the global financial crisis in 2008," the report states, adding that the government has little money to spare to fight poverty. The World Bank predicts the economy will contract 1.9 percent this year as it suffers from the drop in prices for its oil exports and international sanctions. That is significantly worse than its last estimate of a 0.7 percent contraction, made in December, and the IMF's forecast in January of a 1 percent contraction.

The World Bank's chief economist for Russia, Birgit Hansl, praised the Russian Central Bank for limiting inflation but warned of continuing pressure on government finances. "Maintaining fiscal

sustainability will become an especially pressing challenge as low oil prices deplete fiscal buffers," she said in a statement. The new report is based on estimated average oil prices of \$37 per barrel for 2016, rather than the \$49 figure used in the December report. Oil traded just below \$39 per barrel Tuesday afternoon.

Kiev's trade war

In another development, Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk said he intends to introduce a ban on oil imports from petro-giant Russia as part of Kiev's trade war with Moscow. The former Soviet republic has put up stiff barriers against products from Russia in reprisal for its March 2014 annexation of Crimea and alleged support for pro-Moscow separatists who have been waging a two-year war in eastern Ukraine.

Moscow has its own wide-ranging trade restrictions against Ukraine that mirror those it imposed on the West in response to punitive measures the United States and EU nations slapped on Russian individuals and state-held firms. Yatsenyuk told a government meeting that "we have introduced a number of sanctions against Russia. But for some reason, one of the key elements—the purchase of Russian oil products—did not make this list." He asked the economy minister to "develop a mechanism for banning the purchase of oil products from the aggressor, which Russia is." — Agencies

RUSSIA SEES OIL PRICE \$45-\$50 'ACCEPTABLE'

MOSCOW: Russia believes an oil price at \$45-\$50 per barrel is acceptable to allow the global oil market to balance, as it prepares to meet leading oil producers in Doha later this month, sources familiar with Russian plans said yesterday. Leading oil producers plan to meet in Doha on April 17 to cement a preliminary deal reached between Russia, Venezuela, Qatar and Saudi Arabia in February to freeze oil output at levels reached in January, to curb a surplus on the oil market.

"Now there is discussion of how long production will be frozen and ways to monitor the agreement," one of the sources said. "The level of \$45-50 (per barrel) is acceptable from the point of view of market balance: if prices go higher shale oil production could start to recover." A Russian Energy Ministry spokeswoman con-

firmed that the information provided by the sources was correct.

Oil producers such as Russia and Venezuela are highly dependent on energy revenues, with their state budgets at risk after global oil prices fell to under \$40 per barrel from over \$115 in June 2014. The Doha meeting is expected to bring together major oil producers, including the ex-Soviet nations Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, which along with Russia have seen their currencies falling sharply on weak oil. The key question concerns Iran, which saw its oil output curtailed for years by sanctions that have been lifted this year, and wants to bring its output to pre-sanctions levels before sticking to any agreement. Tehran plans to attend the Doha meeting, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said this week. — Reuters

RIPPED JEANS, MIRROR SHADES: THAI RETAIL GETS HIP TO \$50BN STIMULUS

LUXURY MALLS, DEPARTMENT STORES, HYPERMARKETS SPRING UP

BANGKOK: In a downtown Bangkok mall, ripped jeans and mirror sunglasses aimed at fast-fashion teens show how Thai retailers are getting ready for the next big thing - a government stimulus package they're betting will revive sales after years of stagnation. The goods are on sale in US brand Aeropostale Inc's first Thai store, recently opened in a joint venture with Robinson Department Store. The country's third-biggest retailer plans 15 of the shops this year, even if Aeropostale's allure has faded back home. Thai luxury malls, department stores and hypermarkets are all opening new outlets. Amid record tourism numbers, the military government is readying long-term stimulus spending that retailers see topping \$50 billion to support a fragile recovery from 2014, when months of street protests and a coup brought Southeast Asia's second-biggest economy to a standstill.

"The economy is recovering slowly," Robinson's Chief Financial Officer, Dissatat Wisetvara, told Reuters in an interview, targeting more than \$5 million in sales from the Aeropostale stores this year. "We hope the stimulus measures will help spur the economy and purchasing demand and start having an impact from June." Announced in March, with more infrastructure spending due by June, the stimulus comes amid signs that consumers are ready to respond quickly. For instance, same-

store sales picked up in the fourth quarter after the junta moved to cut some taxes to spur end-of-year spending.

In a recent visit to the Aeropostale store in a mall in the popular tourist district Ratchadaphisek, 30-year-old pharmacist Nawarat Kreukheunpetch bagged a pair of sandals and a t-shirt bearing Aeropostale's New York branding. Each item cost about \$14. "I like the design and the prices are reasonable," she said, "and the shop also offers promotion discounts, which makes it easier for me to buy." Before the stimulus package kicks in, prospects for growth in a sector worth \$90 billion in annual sales have been pegged at 3 percent this year by the Thai Retailers Association (TRA), the same as in 2015. Still, retailers hope the growth rate will tick up towards the average of 7-8 percent per year in the past decade.

'Worst is over'

Thailand is expecting a record 32 million tourists this year good news for the country's luxury retailers. In one response, Central Group, a retail to real estate conglomerate, plans to invest 6.5 billion baht (\$183 million) this year to expand its high-end Central Embassy mall in Bangkok. Foreign retailers are also showing growing interest: Japanese department store operator Takashimaya Co will open its first

store in Thailand at a new mixed-use luxury project called Icon Siam in 2017.

Retailers in the north, Bangkok and Thailand's islands are seeing the benefit of the rising numbers of tourists. Hypermarket operator Big C Supercenter Pcl has said it will expand its chain and also add 78 smaller-sized outlets in urban locations, while CP All aims to open 700 new franchised 7-Eleven convenience stores this year. "The worst is over for retail," Chatchai Tuongratnaphan, director of the TRA said. But it won't be plain sailing. Record household debt built up under the free-spending government the junta toppled in May 2014 remains a constraint. "We don't expect to see a strong (short-term) pickup given low-income earners have not fully recovered," Chatchai said.

Any delay in infrastructure spending would also be a risk to a recovery that remains tentative: The central bank on March 23 cut its 2016 growth forecast to 3.1 percent from 3.5 percent. But that would still mean acceleration from 2015's 2.8 percent growth, and the government measures, including new tax rebates, should act as an intermediary spur to boost consumer spending. Citigroup economists said the tax rebates could boost economic growth by 0.1 percent, stoking spending by consumers before investment in infrastructure materializes. — Reuters

CHEVROLET ALGHANIM UNVEILS ITS BIGGEST SPRING, SUMMER OFFERS

UP TO KD 1000 CASHBACK UPON PURCHASING CHEVROLET VEHICLE

KUWAIT: In one of the largest automotive promotions of the season, Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons Automotive, the exclusive distributor of Chevrolet vehicles in Kuwait, surprised its loyal customers by presenting them a valuable offer that transcends the ordinary: Now, throughout the months of April and May, customers get up to KD 1000 cashback upon purchasing any of Chevrolet vehicles, ranging from Tahoe, Silverado, Impala, Malibu, Captiva, Trailblazers, Cruze, and many others.

When it comes to the new Chevrolet Tahoe, customers are bound to be amazed with its completely redesigned look: With its sculpted body panels and an athletic stance that demands attention as well as a quiet interior that surrounds the driver and the passengers with premium amenities and refined functionality?

Technological improvements have also been made inside the new Tahoe. Thanks to the award-winning MyLink Infotainment system, radio, voice and navigation controls are now integrated and operable from the large full-color touch screen on the center console. Enhanced connectivity and convenience are also incorporated into the steering wheel itself, effectively offering easy and intuitive operation of basic functions, thus giving users more ways of staying connected on the road.

The new Tahoe features a V8 power engine that offers 355 horsepower, boasting a better fuel economy than any full-size SUV in the industry. It also incorporates a slew of new safety technologies that contribute to a 360-degree of occupant protection and comfort. Standard and available features include Remote Vehicle Start system, Front and Rear Park Assist with Rear Camera, 6-way power adjustable seats for both driver and front passengers as well as LED headlamps, tail lamps and fog lamps and many more, which all have

Cashback

up to

1000

KD

MyLink Infotainment with Smart Phone Integration technology

Best in Class Standard Features:

- V8 engine, 355 HP
- Remote vehicle start system
- Front and Rear Park Assist with Rear Camera
- 6-way power adjustable seats, driver and front passenger
- LED headlamps and tail lamps, and fog lamps



been designed and developed to meet the needs of drivers and passengers alike.

All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf A. Alghanim & Sons will receive the benefits of the Chevrolet Care, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer

service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance.

RUSSIA, CHINA ARE GREATEST CYBERTHREATS, IRAN IS GROWING

WASHINGTON: Russia and China present the greatest cyber security threat to the US, but Iran is trying to increase and spend more on its capabilities, the Navy admiral in charge of the military's Cyber Command told Congress Tuesday.

Adm. Michael Rogers told the Senate Armed Services Committee that while the US has more overall military power than the three countries, the gaps are narrower when it comes to cyber warfare.

He said U.S. Cyber Command is mak-

ing progress building cyber mission teams, and will have 133 fully operational by September 2018. He said that nearly 100 teams are already conducting cyberspace operations.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter has beefed up the use of offensive cyber warfare in Iraq and Syria and made increasing the department's cyber capabilities a key goal.

As part of that, he is considering elevating Cyber Command to a full, independent military command. Currently

US Cyber Command is a sub-unit of the military's Strategic Command.

During testimony on Tuesday, Rogers told senators that being designated a full command would allow his units to "be faster, which would generate better mission outcomes."

He added that it also would give him more input into the budget process and how to prioritize spending.

A senior U.S. official said Tuesday that Carter believes that making Cyber Command a full command would be

worthwhile. The official said that while discussions with the White House are ongoing, Carter has not yet sent his final recommendation to the president. Congress would also need to approve such a change.

The official was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. During the hearing, Rogers said that his major cybersecurity concerns include attacks against critical infrastructure in the US and the possibility that cyber hackers

may begin breaching networks and changing data, rather than just reading it or stealing it. As a result, he said, officials would no longer be able to "believe what we're seeing," including in data that the military needs for critical operations.

In addition, he said that there are increasing worries that extremist groups and others may begin to view cyber as a weapons system and "want to use it as a vehicle to inflict pain against the United States and others." —AP

HACKERS BROKE INTO HOSPITALS DESPITE SOFTWARE FLAW WARNINGS

WASHINGTON: The hackers who seriously disrupted operations at a large hospital chain recently and held some data hostage broke into a computer server left vulnerable despite urgent public warnings in 2007 and in 2010 that it needed to be fixed with a simple update, The Associated Press has learned.

The hackers exploited design flaws that had persisted on the MedStar Health Inc. network, according to a person familiar with the investigation who spoke on condition of anonymity because this person was not authorized to discuss the findings publicly. The flaws were in a JBoss application server supported by Red Hat Inc. and other organizations, the person said.

The FBI, which is investigating, declined to discuss how the hackers broke in. The JBoss technology is popular because it allows programmers to write custom-built software tools that can be quickly made available across a company, but security researchers discovered it was routinely misconfigured to allow unauthorized outside users to gain control. The US government, Red Hat and others issued urgent warnings about the security problem and a related flaw in February 2007, March 2010 and again earlier this week. The government warned in 2007 the problem could disrupt operations and allow for unauthorized disclosures of confidential information.

Fixing the problem involved installing an available update or manually deleting two lines of software code. It was not immediately clear why the hospital chain, which operates 10 hospitals in Maryland and Washington including the MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, was still vulnerable years after those warnings. The new disclosure doesn't diminish the potential culpability of the hackers responsible for the break-in, but it reveals important details about how the crime unfolded. And it could affect MedStar's civil or administrative exposure under US laws and regulations that require health providers to exercise reasonable diligence to protect their systems.

MedStar's assistant vice president, Ann C. Nickles, said in a statement Tuesday to the AP that the company "maintains constant surveillance of its IT networks in concert with our outside IT partners and cybersecurity experts. We continuously apply patches and other defenses to protect the security and confidentiality of patient and associate information." MedStar said Monday its systems "are almost fully back online," just over a week after the March 28

hacking. The company hired experts from Symantec Corp. to help investigate.

Nickles said Tuesday there was no evidence that patient or employee records were compromised. MedStar said in a statement Friday evening to the AP that it would not provide details about how the attack occurred, and it criticized further media coverage of the case as perpetuating "the infamy of malicious attacks for airtime and publicity" and encouraging copycat hackers.

The MedStar hackers employed virus-like software known as Samsam, or "samsam," that scours the Internet searching for accessible and vulnerable JBoss application servers, especially ones used by hospitals. It's the real-world equivalent of rattling doorknobs in a neighborhood to find unlocked homes. When it finds one, the software breaks in using the old vulnerabilities, then can spread across the company's network by stealing passwords. Along the way, it encrypts scores of digital files and prevents access to them until victims pay the hackers a ransom, usually between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

If a victim hasn't made safe backups of files, there may be little choice except to pay, although MedStar has said it paid nothing. The hospital chain shut down its systems quickly after discovering the attack, limiting its impact to archives, some imaging and lab files and other duplicate records, according to the person with inside knowledge of the attack.

"This old issue is still somehow spread across Internet-facing servers," said Stefano Di Paola and Giorgio Fedon of Minded Security, an Italian security firm, in a joint statement to the AP. They discovered a related vulnerability in the servers in 2010 that Red Hat designated its highest priority to fix.

The FBI issued a flash message to companies days after the MedStar hacking, describing the dangers of Samsam and asking for help detecting it and improving defenses against it. Days later, the Homeland Security Department issued a separate warning about Samsam and another common ransomware strain, Locky, which tricks victims into opening email attachments to infect computers. Cisco Systems Inc., which has studied the attacks, estimated there were about 2.1 million servers around the world vulnerable to Samsam, although some may be additionally protected by other layers of security. It described the ransomware campaign as "proving to be a profitable affair." —AP



SANTANDER: A man works on a supercomputer at the University of Cantabria in the northern Spanish city of Santander on March 16, 2016. —AFP

SPANISH PORT CITY BECOMES GLOBAL 'SMART CITY' LABORATORY

SANTANDER: In Spain's historic port of Santander, parking is no longer a headache, rubbish bins never overflow and grass is watered only when needed since this northern resort became a testing ground for "smart cities" around the world.

Thousands of sensors have transformed the metropolis, known for the grand hotels and high-end casinos lining its beach on Spain's northern Atlantic coast, into a high-tech laboratory. Four hundred alone are buried beneath streets in the city's busy heart to monitor whether parking spots are free or occupied. Light panels at intersections and GPS devices direct drivers to the nearest available parking spaces, reducing traffic congestion. "An app allows you to pay for the parking with your smartphone and when the time runs out, you can extend it directly without having to go down to the street to put more coins in the meter," said Cristina Munoz, a 32-year-old journalist.

When Luis Munoz, an IT professor at the University of Cantabria, pitched the idea of creating a "smart city" to Santander officials back in 2009, he remembers the first thing they told him: "We have a huge problem with parking."

Seven years later, Santander, with some 175,000 residents, is a kind of living laboratory. With funding from the European Commission and a handful of foreign universities, around 20,000 sensors are up, down and all around—under the asphalt, affixed to street lamps and riding on top of city buses.

The devices, about the size of a shoebox with four antennae, collect data on rainfall and road traffic which is sent to a control centre to help the city provide services more efficiently and cheaply. The pilot project has made Santander the most connected city in Europe "in terms of installed infrastructure," said Munoz, and has even peaked foreign curiosity. On a recent day, the professor welcomed a delegation from Singapore that wants to share in the Spanish city's experience.

Other cities such as Boston in the United States and Aarhus in Denmark have also shown interest in working with Santander.

The city is taking part in a dozen international projects whose results are being closely monitored at a time when cities across the world, such as London and Tel Aviv, are deploying IT to deliver services.

INTELLIGENT STREETLIGHTS

Sensors installed in bins for inorganic waste warn when they are full and ready to be collected.

The city receives 180 days of rainfall per year and the sensors ensure the automatic irrigation system in public parks only starts working when the soil is dry.

Santander will soon use sensors to ensure that its elegant wrought-iron streetlights reduce the light they emit when no one is nearby. With a perennial smile, 49-year-old Angel Benito tweaks the display in the window of his shoe shop on one of Santander's main pedestrian thoroughfares.

On the glass is a QR barcode which can be scanned by a smartphone to provide information about the shop along with a link to its online sales page.

Back in 2012, he was the first shopkeeper to display such a code. Now there are 1,500 throughout the city. "Customers can learn about our opening hours, our products, special offers," he said of the system which even allowed him to take an order from a tourist who visited Santander on a Sunday when the shop was closed. A smartphone app allows residents and tourists to find shops, libraries, medical centres and transportation. Another provides residents information about their water consumption in real time and sends an alert to their phone if there is a leak.

RESIDENTS CREATING APPS

Santander Mayor Inigo de la Serna acknowledges that the sensors raise concerns about privacy and the risk of cyber-attacks, but he said the goal is to further develop the system.

"There is a data protection law which we must follow and that is a guarantee," he said. "A smart city is one where if anything happens, all services start to act automatically. For example, if there is a crack in the pavement, a smart city should boost lighting on that street, send an alarm to locals and automatically detour traffic," he said. The University of Cantabria holds regular meetings with local residents to hear their ideas for apps and also helps put them into practice.

It helped a pregnant woman create an app that outlines the easiest route for someone with a baby buggy, for example.

But most of the city's residents are unaware of the extent of the technological innovations in this ancient port. Some only use the app which lets them know when the bus arrives. Others don't even use that. "They have to make it better known, I had no idea, and older people who use buses more also don't know," said Marina Garcia, a 19-year-old student as she waited at a bus stop with her grandmother. —AFP



SANTANDER: A person uses a mobile phone to read a QR code or "smart sticker" on a public bus stop in the northern Spanish city of Santander on March 16, 2016. —AFP

CANON ME OFFICIAL IMAGING PARTNER AT WORLD ART DUBAI

DUBAI: Canon Middle East, a leader in digital imaging solutions, will be the Official Imaging Partner at World Art Dubai, the biggest affordable art fair in the country, to be held till April 9 at the Dubai World Trade Centre on Sheikh Zayed Road.

The event, which brings in 140 local, regional and international galleries and artists, features diverse collection of 3,000 contemporary art workspriced from \$100 to \$10,000, banishing the stigma of art as a luxury exclusively for the rich.

Pravin Punjabi, Event Director, Exhibitions & Events Management, DWTC, said: "Our aim with World Art Dubai is to support artists and educate the public that art can be affordable and not just open to a niche audience. This is a unique chance for visitors to be exposed to a diverse collection of local and international pieces and find and buy art for their own walls, regardless of what their budget might be."

Canon Middle East is the official imaging partner further displaying its commitment to a new generation of digital printing that enables faster, smarter and high quality output, especially for those in creative fields like graphic arts. The company is looking to build new propositions for industrial applications through digital printing in the days ahead.

The Graphic Arts market in the EMEA region is estimated to be worth A40 billion by 2018, presenting a great opportunity for Canon as the industry shifts from analogue to digital printers. Canon is continuing to invest in digital print technologies to be able to cost-effectively print ever-more complex applications on demand.

Over the course of the World Art Dubai event, Canon will present an opportunity for interactive graffiti art, a unique and exciting experience that allows the interactive creation of virtual graffiti. Using a spe-

cially designed spray can users will be able to create virtual images that appear on the screen, generating a vibrant and colourful work of art.

MOSIAC WALL

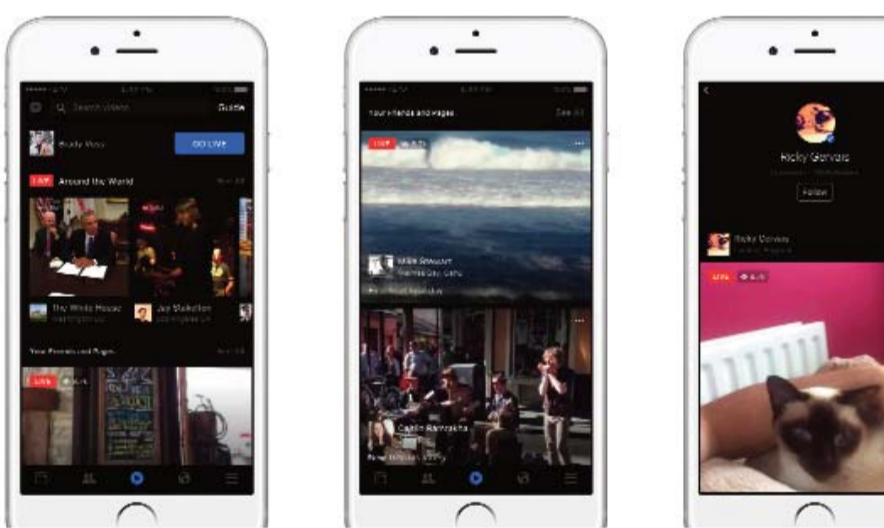
The technology leader is also creating another interactive "mosaic wall" that uses Instagram pictures to make up the pixels of a larger image. Visitors will also be able to express themselves and become artists for the day, whilst colouring in the "Dubai Skyline". Canon Middle East will display its iPF8400 printer stand F8 in Sheikh Saeed Hall and visitors are welcome to print their photographs and experience the quality of Canon's large format printers.

Anurag Agrawal, Managing Director, Canon Middle East said: "Canon supports those in the creative field both as

part of our business as well as our corporate social responsibility. We aim to provide them new insights into the advances in digital technology and thus strengthen their skills. World Art Dubai brings together young and emerging artists and buyers who are passionate about art and it is our privilege to support this event."

World Art Dubai has also entered into partnership with Repton School, one of the leading educational communities in the world. As the official school partner, Repton will assist in running an inter-school art competition for students, 'Urban Dubai', across the city's range of junior and senior schools. The top 10 winners will be given cameras by Canon at World Art Dubai.

The Middle East is one of the most vibrant markets for the sale of contemporary art; the UAE ranks in the top 50 marketplaces, generating annual revenues of over AED 13 million.



This image provided by Facebook shows examples of its live video feature on the smartphones. Facebook is rearranging the notification panel on its mobile apps in an effort to widen the audience watching live video on its social network. —AP

FACEBOOK RAISES PERISCOPE CHALLENGE WITH VIDEO UPGRADES

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook yesterday ramped up its challenge to Twitter-owned Periscope with upgrades to the social network's live video broadcasting feature.

People using the Live streaming feature at Facebook will be able to "broadcast: to groups at the social network or in scheduled "events." Scheduled events can even be used for online question-and-answer sessions. "We hope this new ability to both broadcast and watch live video within Groups and Events enables people to connect more deeply with their closest friends, family and the communities of people who share their interests," Facebook product management director Fidi Simo said in a blog post. Facebook also began letting people replay comments made during live broadcasts or weigh in with reactions such as sad, angry, love, or "wow," that were launched recently in News Feed.

"Live Reactions appear in real time and disappear quickly so broadcasters and other viewers can get a sense of how people are feeling at different points during the live video - it's like hearing the crowd applaud and cheer," Simo said. Data gathered by Facebook showed that people comment 10 times more often on live videos than on regular videos. The social network also added filters that let people personalize the look of broadcasts, and planned to add

the ability to draw or doodle on videos while they are being streamed live, according to Simo. Facebook unveiled a section dedicated to live broadcasts and made it simpler to search for video. People accessing the social network from desktop computers will be able to use a Facebook Live Map providing "a window into what's happening" in the world of broadcasts.

Facebook Live launched in the middle of last year and was initially limited to celebrities but recently opened to a wider audience of broadcasters. The service allows members of the social network in 60 countries to use smartphones to live stream video. The new features were being rolled out to Facebook applications tailored for mobile devices powered by Apple or Android software.

Facebook has been working to tune into the growing trend of online video, an area where Alphabet-owned YouTube has dominated. Celebrities and athletes have used Live to share candid moments and field questions, according to Facebook. Chefs have used Live to provide cooking tips and news agencies have used the service to broadcast breaking stories. "We've been humbled by all the amazing and creative ways that people have used Facebook Live so far," Simo said. Simo saw immersive, 360-degree video as being part of a "natural evolution" at Facebook. —AP

ENGLISH DOCTORS STAGE 4TH STRIKE IN BITTER DISPUTE

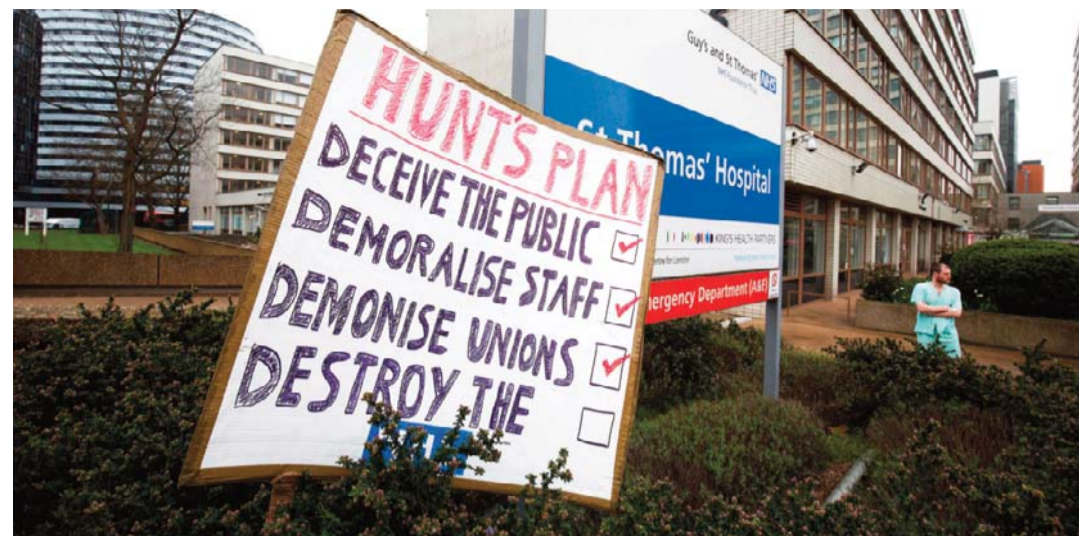
LONDON: Junior doctors in English hospitals went on strike again yesterday, withdrawing all but emergency care in their fourth walk-out in a bitter dispute with the government over working conditions. More than 5,000 procedures and operations in the state-run National Health Service (NHS) have been postponed as a result of the 48-hour action, which began at 0700 GMT. The Department of Health condemned the strike as "irresponsible and disproportionate", noting that almost 25,000 operations have now been cancelled due to walk-outs since January.

Johann Malawana, chairman of the junior doctors committee at the British Medical Association (BMA) union, said it "deeply regrets" the disruption but had "no choice". A new contract imposed by the government "would be bad for the delivery of patient care in the long term", he said, urging ministers to return to the negotiating table. If no agreement is reached, the BMA intends to stage a full strike on April 26 and 27, when junior doctors will refuse to provide even emergency care. The strike action involves recently-qualified doctors, mostly in their twenties and thirties, who are working towards becoming either consultants or community-based general practitioners.

The government has said it would impose new

terms in August to force an end to nearly three years of negotiations intended to provide a more consistent level of care throughout the week. Prime Minister David Cameron's centre-right government has promised to create a "seven-day NHS", where weekend care is similar to that delivered between Monday and Friday. Officials say the new contract will increase doctors' basic pay and limit working long days and nights, but the BMA disputes this and has launched a legal challenge. Opinion polls have shown the majority of the public back the doctors, while the Patient Association advocacy group also offered its tacit support for the latest strike.

"Doctors have a very real concern that the imposed terms will stretch the existing resource too thinly and will threaten the quality of patient care," said Katherine Murphy, chief executive of the association. The dispute comes as the NHS, which provides taxpayer-funded healthcare free at the point of use, faces serious financial challenges. Although the service was protected from government-wide spending cuts, experts warn funding has failed to keep up with increased demand and treatment costs. "The NHS is working at or very close to its limits and patient care will suffer unless more resources are found," the King's Fund health charity warned last month. — AFP



LONDON: A placard sits in a hedge outside St Thomas' Hospital in central London, as junior doctors strike against proposed new conditions and pay rates for working unsociable hours. Thousands of operations and procedures across England have been cancelled as a result of the 48 hour strike which began yesterday morning. — AFP

MILLIONS OF BANGLADESHIS STILL DRINKING ARSENIC-LACED WATER

CONTAMINATED WATER KILLS 43,000 EVERY YEAR

DHAKA: Some 20 million poor Bangladeshis are still drinking water contaminated with arsenic, two decades after the potentially deadly toxin was discovered in the supply, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. A new report from the rights group said Bangladesh had failed to take the basic steps needed to tackle the problem which kills an estimated 43,000 Bangladeshis every year, mostly in poor rural areas. The problem dates back to the 1970s, when the Bangladesh government drilled millions of shallow tube wells to provide villagers with clean water - not realizing that the soil was heavily laced with naturally occurring arsenic.

"Bangladesh isn't taking basic, obvious steps to get arsenic out of the drinking water of millions of its rural poor," HRW researcher Richard Pearhouse said. "The reasons why this huge tragedy has remained so pervasive are due to poor governance." Bangladesh has been building deep tube wells to source water from beneath the arsenic-tainted soil. But HRW said there was no proper government oversight of the scheme, with politicians earmarking the new wells for their own supporters rather than putting them in the worst-affected areas. "It means the situation is almost as bad as 15 years ago," said Pearhouse. The UN's World Health Organization has called Bangladesh's arsenic crisis "the largest mass poisoning of a population in history".

Chronic exposure to arsenic is linked to cancers of the liver, kidney, bladder and skin as well as heart disease, but HRW said many victims in Bangladesh had no access to health care. It warned that millions of Bangladeshis would die unless the government and international donors act to mitigate contamination. Doctors say arsenic-laced water may also cause miscarriages, low birth weights and poor cognitive development in children. "It's a slow poison. You'll be affected with a host of life-threatening diseases before you can even realise," said Tariqul Islam, a University of Chicago researcher who has worked with thousands of affected people.

The government says it has installed around 210,000 deep tube wells over the past 12 years to mitigate the crisis and is testing the water from millions of shallow wells for contamination. There was no immediate response from the government to the latest report. But an official who asked not to be named told AFP that individual lawmakers decided

where 50 percent of the state-funded tube wells should be built. "It's a government-approved policy. The lawmakers have every opportunity to misuse their power and divert the tube wells to their supporters rather than distributing them to the people who are affected by arsenic contamination," he said. — AFP



DHAKA: A Bangladeshi woman collects contaminated water from the polluted Buriganga in Dhaka. Twenty million poor Bangladeshis are still drinking water contaminated with arsenic, two decades after the potentially deadly toxin was discovered in the supply, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. — AFP

NUMBER OF ADULTS WITH DIABETES 'QUADRUPLED'

GENEVA: The number of adults estimated to be living with diabetes has nearly quadrupled over 35 years, the World Health Organization (WHO) said yesterday, urging huge efforts to change eating habits and increase physical activity. "Globally, an estimated 422 million adults were living with diabetes in 2014, compared to 108 million in 1980," the UN health agency said in its first-ever report on the disease, warning that the condition had spread because of worldwide changes "in the way people eat, move and live."

The disease directly caused 1.5 million deaths in 2012 — the latest available global figures-but elevated blood glucose levels linked to diabetes were responsible for an additional 2.2 million deaths that year, the report said. The region worst affected, with 131 million estimated cases in 2014, was the WHO's Western Pacific region, which includes China and Japan. The Southeast Asia region-which includes heavily populated India and Indonesia-was the next most affected, with 96 million cases. Europe and the Americas were third and fourth on the list, with 64 million and 62 million cases respectively.

Lifestyle factors

Diabetes is divided into two types. There is no known way to prevent type one, which occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin. Most people living with diabetes have type 2, which is associated with obesity and other lifestyle factors and emerges in adults and increasingly among children. To curb the intensifying burden of the disease, huge efforts were needed to change "eating and physical activity habits," especially early in life, when key behavioral patterns are formed, WHO said. "There is a critical window for intervention to mitigate the risk of obesi-

ty and type 2 diabetes later in life," the report said. It noted that spreading consumption of sugary drinks and other fattening foods was a key factor, but drew particular attention to high rates of physical inactivity.

According to worldwide 2010 figures, nearly a quarter of people over 18 did not do the minimum recommended amount of physical activity per week, with women recorded as less active than men. The WHO recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity, including things like walking, jogging and gardening, per week. "Physical inactivity is alarmingly common among adolescents," the report added, noting that the excessively sedentary lifestyles were more acute in high-income countries than low income countries.

Economic toll, response

The WHO estimated that the annual global cost of diabetes, including health care needs, exceeds \$827 billion (728 billion euros). Citing a separate study, the agency said the global GDP losses linked to diabetes could reach \$1.7 trillion by 2030, with the damage split roughly evenly between developed and developing nations.

Noting both the health and macroeconomic damage caused by the growing diabetes epidemic, WHO chief Margaret Chan called for a coordinated, holistic response. Like with obesity, WHO has stressed that putting excessive blame on individuals for eating too much or not exercising enough ignored several key factors, including the obstacles to eating healthily in several societies. "Effectively addressing diabetes does not just happen: it is the result of collective consensus and public investment in interventions that are affordable, cost-effective and based on the best available science," Chan said in a statement. — AFP

A HUGE GLOBAL EXERCISE CONTEST SHOWS HEALTHY POTENTIAL: STUDY

CHICAGO: A workplace exercise challenge using pedometers and social media in a global competition shows potential to improve health in a study involving almost 70,000 employees in 64 countries. In the program, office teams compete against each other or with groups at companies in other countries to see who can take the most daily steps during a 100-day challenge. Workers post progress on a special social media website - for motivation and to egg on rival teams.

The study found workers on average increased their daily activity by 3,500 steps, exercised for almost one extra day per week, reduced sitting time by about 45 minutes daily, and lost about three pounds during the contests. Whether the changes were lasting isn't known. The research was presented Sunday in Chicago at the American College of Cardiology's annual meeting and published online in the group's medical journal.

The skinny

Dr Anand Ganesan, a cardiologist at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia led the study. Researchers analyzed 2012-14 data on yearly contests involving the Stepathlon program, created by Stepathlon Lifestyle Pvt. Ltd., a Mumbai, India-based wellness company. Participation was voluntary and increased each year; more than 20,000 blue-collar and white collar workers worldwide were involved in the 2014 challenge.

Not all completed their programs although the number of dropouts isn't known, Ganesan said. Full data were available for almost 37,000 workers, a little over half the enrollees. Workers in developed and developing nations participated, mostly in Asia but including Europe, North and South America, and Africa. Ganesan said that suggests similar programs could have benefits in countries with poor access to preventive health care. "Getting people to be physically active and change their behavior is hugely challenging" worldwide, Ganesan said. He said the results show that

using technology in a clever way has broad appeal and might be able to help fight the world's No 1 killer: Heart disease causes 18 million deaths globally each year.

Another view

Dr Jeffrey Kuvin of Tufts Medical Center, vice chairman of the cardiology meeting, called the program novel and the results tantalizing given that short-term benefits were seen on such a large scale, although he said more follow-up is needed. "If we can increase exercise and decrease sitting ... clearly we are going to make some headway in reducing cardiovascular risk," he said.

A testimonial

Nikita Sharma, 28, a customer service agent for DHL Express in Mumbai participated in her company's Stepathlon challenge last year. In an email message, she said the program motivated her to change her lifestyle. During the program she achieved 12,000 steps and 45 minutes of exercise daily, including brisk walking, jogging and cycling. She has stuck with it and lost almost 8 pounds. "I'm more energetic and have built better stamina as well," Sharma said.

The limitations

The study only looked at short-term results, so it isn't known if the program leads to lasting long-term health benefits. The study also lacked information on any changes in workers with high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol levels and other conditions that can lead to heart disease, although exercise is known to benefit those conditions.

Industry ties

Ganesan said he has no financial ties to Stepathlon. A top company executive is among the study co-authors but Ganesan said Stepathlon wasn't involved in funding or the study analysis. Several other co-authors have received consulting or research fees from makers of pedometers. — AP



SONARGAON: Rashida Begum shows her palms, affected by years of drinking arsenic-laced water, at Sonargaon, on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh. — AP

ZIKA MYSTERY DEEPENS

EVIDENCE OF NERVE CELL INFECTIONS

CHICAGO: Top Zika investigators now believe that the birth defect microcephaly and the paralyzing Guillain-Barre syndrome may be just the most obvious maladies caused by the mosquito-borne virus. Fueling that suspicion are recent discoveries of serious brain and spinal cord infections - including encephalitis, meningitis and myelitis - in people exposed to Zika. Evidence that Zika's damage may be more varied and widespread than initially believed adds pressure on affected countries to control mosquitoes and prepare to provide intensive - and, in some cases, lifelong - care to more patients. The newly suspected disorders can cause paralysis and permanent disability - a clinical outlook that adds urgency to vaccine development efforts.

Scientists are of two minds about why these new maladies have come into view. The first is that, as the virus is spreading through such large populations, it is revealing aspects of Zika that went unnoticed in earlier outbreaks in remote and sparsely populated areas. The second is that the newly detected disorders are more evidence that the virus has evolved. "What we're seeing are the consequences of this virus turning from the African strain to a pandemic strain," said Dr Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine.

The Zika outbreak was first detected in Brazil last year and is spreading through the Americas. It has been linked to thousands of suspected cases of microcephaly, a typically rare birth defect marked by unusually small head size, signaling a problem with brain development. Evidence linking Zika to microcephaly prompted the World Health Organization to declare a global health emergency in February.

The suspicion that Zika acts directly on nerve cells began with autopsies on aborted and stillborn fetuses showing the virus replicating in brain tissues. In addition to microcephaly, researchers reported finding other abnormalities linked with Zika including fetal deaths, placental insufficiency, fetal growth retardation and injury to the central nervous system. Doctors also are worried that Zika exposure in utero may have hidden effects, such as behavioral problems or learning disabilities, that are not apparent at birth.

"If you have a virus that is toxic enough to produce microcephaly in someone, you could be sure that it will produce a whole series of conditions

that we haven't even begun to understand," said Dr. Alberto de la Vega, an obstetrician at San Juan's University Hospital in Puerto Rico. First discovered in the Zika forest of Uganda in 1947, the virus circulated quietly in Africa and Asia, causing rare infections and producing mild symptoms. A 2013 outbreak in French Polynesia, the largest at that time, led researchers to make the Guillain-Barre link. Other neurological effects were noted but scientists made little of them at the time.

A rare and poorly understood condition, Guillain-Barre can weaken muscles and cause temporary paralysis, often requiring patients to need respirators to breathe. An estimated 32,000 people in the French Polynesia Zika outbreak were infected, and 42 patients were confirmed to have Guillain-Barre, a 20-fold increase in incidence over the previous four years, the WHO reported. Another 32 patients had other neurological disorders, including encephalitis, meningoencephalitis, myelitis and facial paralysis.

Guillain-Barre is an autoimmune disorder, in which the body attacks itself in the aftermath of an infection. But the newly discovered brain and spinal cord infections are known to be caused by a different mechanism - a direct attack on nerve cells. That has prompted scientists to consider whether the Zika virus also may infect nerves directly in adults, as they already have suspected in fetuses. In medical journals published last month, doctors described neurological syndromes in two patients that they attributed to Zika. Doctors in Paris diagnosed meningoencephalitis, an infection of both the brain and spinal cord, in an 81-year-old man who was hospitalized after being exposed to Zika on a cruise.

Another French team reported acute myelitis, a paralyzing infection of the spinal cord, in a 15-year-old girl who had been infected with Zika on the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe. In its latest surveillance report, the WHO said the two cases "highlight the need to better understand the range of neurological disorders associated with Zika-virus infection." Other mosquito-borne viruses - including dengue, Japanese encephalitis and West Nile - are known to directly infect nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord. But such viruses are seldom associated with Guillain-Barre, and never with microcephaly, said Baylor's Hotez. — Reuters



HAWAII: The Pacific Disaster Center's app, Disaster Alert, maps hazards like infrastructure damage in disaster zones so that emergency responders can be aware of dangerous situations in Kihei, Hawaii. — AP

CANADA MUST ESTABLISH NEW ARCTIC SHIPPING POLICIES

MONTREAL: The Canadian government needs to establish ecologically and socially sound policies for Arctic Ocean shipping amid an increase in traffic through the fragile area caused by melting sea ice, a new report Tuesday said. The report from The Pew Charitable Trusts proposed a "comprehensive system of tiered shipping routes that will benefit Canada, the shipping industry and northern communities." Maritime traffic through the Canadian Northwest

Passage is up 166 percent since 2004 as shipping companies seek out faster and cheaper routes between Europe and Asia. But the area is also home to Inuit communities, marine life such as beluga and bowhead whales, narwhals, and polar bears and is also part of marine mammal and seabird migration routes, the report said. "Seven key government studies have issued more than 170 individual recommendations for reform. However, the nation lacks a clear,

cohesive vision for Arctic shipping policy, so these recommendations have fallen on agencies with limited resources to carry them out," the report said.

The Pew report called on the Canadian government to build on the 2012 Northern Marine Transportation Corridors Initiative, which established a system of voluntary marine corridors that would allow authorities to better support the shipping traffic passing through. The report's recommendations

include creating a governance structure for Arctic shipping corridors, consulting with Inuit leadership and integrating information including shipping and ice data. It also called for environmentally-sensitive shipping corridors and classifying them according to risk to better ensure investment and management. Pew noted that action is urgently needed because shipping traffic in some parts of the Arctic could double from current levels by 2020.— AFP



PHNOM PENH: Suwanna Gauntlett, foreground, chief Executive Officer from Wildlife Alliance, gestures during a press conference, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia yesterday. Cambodia has unveiled a plan to reintroduce tigers from abroad into the dry forests of the country, where they have become virtually extinct due to poaching.— AP

CAMBODIA UNVEILS PLAN TO REINTRODUCE TIGERS

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia has unveiled a plan to reintroduce tigers from abroad into the dry forests of the country, where the big cat has become virtually extinct thanks to poaching, conservation officials said yesterday. Between 20 and 50 tigers were believed to exist in Cambodia's forests, but years of illegal poaching - of the tigers as well as their prey - led to a dramatic decline in their population.

The last tiger spotted in Cambodia was seen in 2007 by camera trap - a hidden camera that is remotely triggered by the movement of animals - in the forests of eastern Mondulokiri province, the WWF conservation group said in a statement. "Today, there are no longer any breeding populations of tigers left in Cambodia, and they are therefore considered functionally extinct," it said. The statement was released at a joint news conference by representatives of the government, WWF and the Wildlife Alliance, another conservation group.

Keo Omaliss, a government official in charge of wildlife, said Cambodia is considering negotiating with the governments of India, Malaysia and Thailand to bring at least seven to eight tigers to live in the protected forests of Mondulokiri so they can breed and repopulate the forests. "This would be the world's first transnational tiger reintroduction and will be based on best practices developed from successful tiger reintroductions within India," the WWF statement said. The plan was approved by Cambodia's government on March 23.

The plan is to bring in the tigers after two years because Cambodia needs to resolve related issues such as poaching and rebuilding the population of tiger prey, which will be needed to sustain a tiger population, said Chhit Sam Ath, the director of WWF-Cambodia. He said the arrival of the tigers could be pushed back to 2018 if the preservation efforts are not completed by 2017. "Tigers are an iconic species and part of our

natural heritage," he said. "To bring tigers back to Cambodia would be the biggest conversation feat of its kind and would support the conservation efforts of the whole landscape."

The entire plan will cost \$20-50 million, which will come from donor countries. After the Khmer Rouge's brutal rule in the 1970s left Cambodia devastated, poor rural dwellers scoured the forests for wildlife. Much of what was found was sold to traders connected to China, where many wild animals, including tigers, are believed to possess medical and sex-enhancing properties. Tigers have been classified as nearly extinct species worldwide. There are about 3,200 tigers in only 13 countries globally, according to WWF.— AP



MONDULKIRI: This handout photo taken by a camera trap and released by the World Wildlife Fund in Cambodia shows a tiger walking in the forest in Mondulokiri province.— AFP

INDUSTRY THREATENS NEARLY HALF OF NATURAL HERITAGE SITES: WWF

114 SITES THREATENED; SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

PARIS: Mining, oil exploration, illegal logging and other industries threaten almost half the natural World Heritage Sites the UN seeks to preserve for future generations, conservation group WWF said yesterday. The 114 threatened sites provide food, water, shelter and medicine to over 11 million people—more than the population of Portugal, according to a WWF-commissioned report.

"Despite the obvious benefits of these natural areas, we still haven't managed to decouple economic development from environmental degradation," WWF director general Marco Lambertini said in a foreword. "Instead, too often, we grant concessions for exploration of oil, gas or minerals, and plan large-scale industrial projects without considering social and environmental risks." The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) lists 197 "natural" and 32 "mixed" Heritage Sites in 96 countries around the world, alongside 802 cultural sites.

The 229 natural and mixed sites, nominated by governments of the countries in which they are found, include national parks and nature reserves, forests, coral reefs, islands and coastal areas. The report said oil or gas concessions had been granted in 40 of the sites and mining concessions in 42. Twenty-eight sites were at risk from dams or unsustainable water use, 28 from illegal logging, two from overfishing, and 20 from construction of roads or railways. Many sites were threatened in more than one category. Countries are meant to assume responsibility under the World Heritage Convention to protect listed sites within their borders.

'Not anti-development'

"The World Heritage Committee is clear and definitive that extractive activities should not occur in World Heritage sites," WWF global conservation director Deon Nel told AFP by email. "It has consistently maintained a position that oil, gas and mineral exploration and exploitation is 'incompatible with World Heritage status'. Despite this, about a third of natural sites have concessions allocated across them." The WWF urged governments to cancel all such concessions, and also called on companies to refrain from harmful activities in protected areas, and on financial institutions not to fund them.

The report relies in large part on data from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, which monitors UNESCO's natural Heritage Sites, covering 279 million hectares (689 million acres), or half a percent of the Earth's surface. It found that two-thirds of Heritage Sites are important for water provision, more than 90 percent provide jobs in tourism and other sectors, and over half provide flood prevention services and store potentially harmful carbon. "Healthy natural World Heritage sites contribute to poverty reduction, help alleviate food insecurity, combat climate change and restore and promote the sustainable use of ecosystems," said Lambertini.

Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest proportion (71 percent) of its 42 Heritage Sites at risk, followed by South Asia with 58 percent of its 12 registered sites, East Asia and the Pacific with 55 percent of 55 sites and Latin America and the Caribbean with 54 percent of 41 sites. Europe and Central Asia performed best, with 30 percent of 54 registered sites facing some threat. "Protecting natural areas and ecosystems is not anti-development," stressed Lambertini. "It is in the interest of long-term, robust and sustainable development that benefits people and natural systems, including our social stability, economic prosperity, and individual well-being."— AFP

PFIZER SCRAPS \$160BN MERGER WITH ALLERGAN

NEW YORK: US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer said yesterday it was abandoning plans for a \$160 billion merger with Allergan, citing new US rules cracking down on tie ups aimed at saving on taxes. The deal with the Irish-based firm would have created the world's largest pharmaceutical company. Pfizer said in a statement the two companies "terminated by mutual agreement" plans to merge. "Pfizer approached this transaction from a position of strength and viewed the potential combination as an accelerator of existing strategies," said company chairman and CEO Ian Read. Pfizer also agreed to pay Allergan \$150 million to reimburse its expenses linked to the planned merger.

The decision to call off the merger came after the US Treasury Department announced new rules to discourage mergers between US and foreign businesses designed to sharply lower the US company's tax bill. The New York-based pharmaceutical giant said it remains on track to report its 2016 first quarter earnings on May 3. For all of 2015, Pfizer reported earnings of \$7.7 billion, down 15.2 percent from 2014. Revenues dipped 1.5 percent to \$48.9 billion. Allergan CEO Brent Saunders said in a separate statement that while he is "disappointed" that the merger will not proceed, his company is nevertheless "poised to deliver strong, sustainable growth built on a set of powerful attributes."— AFP

STUDY: BROKEN HEARTS AT HIGHER RISK OF FAILING

PARIS: The death of a life partner may trigger an irregular heartbeat, itself potentially life-threatening, said new research yesterday into the risk of dying from a broken heart. A tawdry of data on nearly a million Danes showed an elevated risk, lasting about a year, of developing a heart flutter. Under-60s whose partners died unexpectedly were most in peril. The risk was highest "8-14 days after the loss, after which it gradually declined," said a study published in the online journal Open Heart.

"One year after the loss, the risk was almost the same as in the non-bereaved population." Much research has focused on explaining the observed phenomenon of people dying soon after their life partner. Several studies have shown that grieving spouses have a higher risk of dying, particularly of heart disease and stroke, but the mechanism is unclear. The latest study asked specifically whether bereaved partners were more likely than others to develop atrial fibrillation, the most common type of irregular heartbeat and a risk factor for stroke and heart failure.

Researchers in Denmark used population data collected between 1995 and

2014 to search for a pattern. Of the group, 88,612 people had been newly diagnosed with atrial fibrillation (AF) and 886,120 were healthy. "(T)he risk of developing an irregular heartbeat for the first time was 41 percent higher among those who had been bereaved than it was among those who had not experienced such a loss," said the study. Younger people, those under 60, were more than twice as likely to develop problems, and those whose partners were relatively healthy in the month before death, thus not expected to die, were 57 percent more at risk.

The team cautioned that no conclusions can be drawn about cause and effect, as the study was merely an observational one, looking at correlations in data. Several factors that could throw the findings out of whack, such as the bereaved group's diet, exercise regime, or predisposal to AF, were not known. The loss of a partner is considered one of the most stressful life events. It can lead to mental illness symptoms such as depression, and can cause people to lose sleep and appetite, drink too much and stop exercising—all known health risks.— AFP

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WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY MARKED WITH WALKATHON

Autism Partnership - Kuwait organized a walkathon from the Scientific Center in Salmiya to the Marina Crescent yesterday, to mark the World Autism Awareness Day. The event took place under the patronage of Sheikha

Maimouna Khalifa Al-Athbi Al-Sabah, and participation of a number of companies, banks, civil society institutions and groups in Kuwait. Kuwait Times was one of the sponsors of the event. Sheikha Maimouna highlighted in a speech the

need to invest in human resources as the "most valuable resource that any society possesses, and the key to achieve social development." Meanwhile, Ghossoun Al-Khaled, Founder and Chairperson of Autism Partnership - Kuwait said that the large

number of participation at yesterday's walkathon reflects the event's success in shedding light on the importance of promoting voluntary work in society, and spreading awareness regarding the autism cause.



BURGAN BANK CONCLUDES SPONSORSHIP OF AUTISM WALKATHON

Burgan Bank is proud to have been a sponsor of 'The Autism Walkathon', which took place as a voluntary act towards 'World Autism Day'. The walkathon was on Saturday April 2nd, 2016, started from the Kuwait Scientific Center until Marina Crescent.

The aim of the walkathon was to raise awareness about the seriousness of autism, the importance of its diagnosis and the benefits of early detection. This includes shedding light on the different challenges that autistic

kids face and how to overcome them in order to live a healthy and independent life in an easy manner. The bank's sponsorship comes in line with its commitment to supporting and recognizing autistic children across Kuwait. As a firm believer of the ability and talents of autistic children, Burgan Bank pledges to continue supporting several initiatives as part of its overall social responsibility framework that adds more value to the community.

It is worth mentioning that Burgan Bank's support to this initiative falls

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

KAMCO ORGANIZES ANNUAL BLOOD DONATION CAMPAIGN

KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the region, and winner of the prestigious Kuwait Asset Manager of the Year Award 2015, organized its annual blood drive at Al Shaheed Tower in association with the Kuwait Central Blood Bank. In addition to the drive, the KAMCO Marketing team implemented an internal awareness campaign focusing on the benefits of

donating blood.

The internal awareness campaign attracted donors from KAMCO and several sister companies. The successful turnout added value to the Kuwait Central Blood Bank's goal to provide all those who are in need of blood with a consistent supply. The event reflected the importance of participating in such health related initiatives to give back and support the local community.

Ms Danah Al Jasem, Head of the Marketing Department at KAMCO said, "We would like to recognize the Kuwait Central Blood Bank's cooperative efforts that led to a successful turnout. Donating blood is an essential part of our health-care system and leads to saving lives of those who are in need of blood. This campaign is in line with our corporate and personal goals to support and give back to the public. KAMCO's social responsibility initiative primarily focuses on health, education and the environment."

"We will continue to organize and implement such activities within KAMCO to ensure that we are socially responsible and aware of the current issues that lie in Kuwait and its immediate vicinity. We are proud to have placed a role in the Central Blood Bank's donation program and will continue to seek different opportunities to contribute to the society as a whole," added Ms Al Jasem.



AHLI UNITED BANK EMPLOYEES PARTICIPATE IN AUTISM WALKATHON

Ahli United Bank employees participated in the recent Walkathon along the Arabian Gulf Road, from the Scientific Center to the Marina Crescent. The activity was organized by Autism Partnership Center - Kuwait on Saturday morning, April 2, 2016 under the auspices of Sheikha Doctor Maimouna Al-Sabah, Chairwoman of the Citizenship and Development Society under the title 'Welcome. Join Us. Walk with us. We support our Children,' designated for individuals suffering from Autism. A large number of people participated in the walk which had a great impact in creating awareness with the issue of Autism in Kuwait.

On this occasion, Ahli United Bank issued a statement expressing its pleasure in supporting the successful Walkathon bringing awareness to society about Autism and the impact it has on individuals and their families. The Walkathon coincided with the United Nations Declaration of assigning April 2 of every year as Education Day to shed light on the need to improve the lives of both children and adults who suffer from Autism to help them have a decent life and be integrated with the



society.

The Bank was represented by Richard Groves, CEO, Moataz El-Rafie, Senior Deputy CEO - Banking Business Group, and Ahmed Zulficar, Senior Deputy CEO - Banking Support Group, together with a large number of Bank employees who participated in the procession.

Ahli United Bank's support is in line

with its social responsibility towards society especially the more needy ones who deserve support. This support also conforms to the Bank's concern for individuals with special needs in general and the facilities it accords to its clients with special needs. Ahli United Bank added that it is keen to participate in such events in future which help make a difference to people's lives.

EXPERIENCE BREAKFAST AT AL HAMBRA RESTAURANT BY SHERATON KUWAIT AT AVENUES

Al Hambra International restaurant by Sheraton Kuwait introduces a new breakfast menu exclusively at the Grand Avenue - The Avenues mall featuring the word "international" with diverse choices to further complement ones appetite first thing in the morning. With the new breakfast menu that caters to all tastes and desires, guests will delight in a trendy, savory and sophisticated meal.

Start your day off with a delectable meal such as the "Fitness Breakfast" or the German breakfast including a variety of delicious dishes, or you may enjoy a splendid French breakfast. If you are a fan of Indian food, Al Hambra restaurant provides a scrumptious selection of Indian and vegetarian collection, or if you are a fan of traditional Arabic breakfast, you can indulge and experience the taste of "Oriental breakfast" where freshly baked Arabic bread, labneh, haloumi cheese, tomato & pickles are served, in addition to the hot dishes such as saj bread, falafel with tahina sauce, condiments and much more with an assortment of Arabic sweets and fruits. You will also find diverse choices of delicious sweet treats varying between Eastern and Western desserts.

Al Hambra restaurant opens daily for breakfast from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm, and



to further enhance your shopping experience, Al Hambra International Restaurant also serves delectable lunch buffets from

1:00pm to 4:30pm and splendid dinner buffets from 7:00pm to 10:30pm at the Grand Avenue - The Avenues, or you may

enjoy its breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets at the Sheraton Kuwait hotel providing you the utmost experience of excel-



lence and the outstanding service which has been preserved along the past 50 years.



TSC SUPPORTS WORLD AUTISM DAY WITH A SERIES OF AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

On the occasion of World Autism Awareness, The Sultan Center in collaboration with Autism Partnership Kuwait (APK), and as part of its ongoing commitment to the community conducted a series of activities to spread awareness to the community on the importance of diagnoses and treatment available to children with autism.

On April 2nd, TSC joined hands with APK and took part as a sponsor in the walkathon aimed at raising awareness and supporting those with autism. The event was highly successful with 1,000's of people turning out to join the walk and support the cause.

On April 4th, TSC staff visited APK center for a morning of fun filled activities. The children enthusiastically joined in the celebration making it a memorable day for all those who attended.

Continuing its campaign TSC held an

Austin awareness seminar at TSC Sharq. During the event, Bassam Zantout, Commercial Director at TSC elaborated on the objectives of TSC hosting the event, stating: "As a Kuwaiti company, we are committed to supporting the community, and hosting seminars on health related topics that are both educational and informative and are part of the company's overall commitment to the community."

Eng Ghosson Ghassan Al-Khaled, Founding Principal of APK said: "We appreciate TSC initiative in organizing the Autism awareness seminar, and we do invite other companies to support the cause as part of their social responsibility. "At APK we recognize that autistics need special care and attention; therefore, we exert all efforts in taking care of them by our competent specialists to help them integrate in the society gradually". Al-

Khaled stressed on the importance of early diagnosis for Autism which would facilitate the treatment mechanism.

The seminar shed lights on the autism social perception. On behalf of APK staff Mrs Layla Al Kandari, APK Site Programs Director and Mr Jeremy Leaf, Consulting Team Member lectured about the accurate ways to deal with autism syndromes, the role of the parents and society in encouraging those with autism to get integrated and accepted into the community.

Staff of APK emphasized on the importance of early diagnosis in reducing and controlling the disorder and the importance of having the right treatment. Zantout confirmed that TSC will continue on its efforts to support the community. He stressed on the effective role these campaigns have in spreading awareness on health and social issues.

WELFARE KERALA KUWAIT OFFICIALS VISIT INDIAN AMBASSADOR

In a meeting held at Ambassador's office, assurances were given by HE the ambassador of India Mr Sunil K Jain to the officials of Welfare Kerala Kuwait that he will ask the Governing Body of Indian community school Kuwait to redact the constitution of the School on their web site.

As many complaints were recently raised from different corners against the current school board and administrative body, Welfare Kerala Kuwait Leaders asked HE Ambassador Mr Jain to intervene and do the needful for ensuring the transparency of school activities, to conduct proper auditing of school accounts and to take measures for conducting Board Of Trustees election in a fair and democratic way with the representation of Indian

community, socio-cultural organizations, teachers and parents.

They also asked to limit the term of the Board to 2 years and to bring the activities under the direct purview of the Indian embassy, as numerous complaints were received on the unfair and illegitimate execution of construction works, repair works, uniform and text book distribution etc., without proper tender process and approved procedures.

The Ambassador, HE Sunil Jain has also been entreated to take measures to ensure that the school and its assets continue to remain the property of Indian community and to reduce the fee structure so as it become affordable to the less privileged society of the Indian community working in

Kuwait. Ambassador praised the various charity and humanitarian activities conducted by Welfare Kerala Kuwait members for the Indians in general and Keralite in particular.

The delegation also requested HE the Ambassador for making seamless legal aid available for the common employees and to intervene in drug related cases in which innocent Indians were convicted as they became easy prey to the drug mafia.

President Khaleelul rahman headed the delegation followed by vice presidents Anwar Sayeed, Aniyam Kunjhu, Mini Venugopal; General Secretaries Sanoj and Layik. Secretary Razeena Mohiudeen and Public Relation convener Praveen Ramachandran was also accompanied the delegation.



MUBARAK ELT HOLDS 'ACTIVATE TO CULTIVATE' TRAINING FORUM



Al-Kandery and Amrani with HOD, Asma' Al-Awadhi

By Hassan Abdel Bari

Under the auspices of Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational Area director, Mansour Al-Daihani and in the presence of the area's educational affairs manager, Waleed Al-Saeed and ELT Supervisor General, Suzan Al-Besheeti, Mubarak Al-Kabeer ELT Supervision recently organized a two-day training forum under the title of 'Activate to Cultivate'.

The forum was held at Azda Bint Al-Hareth Intermediate School for girls where school director, Amal Al-Hasawi, Mubarak senior ELT supervisor, Hadeel Al-Kandery and the area ELT supervisors, Mohammed Taha, Habib Rezzouk, Jawad Amrani, Mahmoud Al-Najjar, Mohammed Sallam, Hanan Borezq, Abeer Al-Jeeran and Amal Al-Attar warmly received the guests.

In addition to the area's intermediate education

manager, Mohammed Al-Saeed, the opening ceremony was attended by ELT supervisors, heads of English departments and English teachers from various schools. The ceremony comprised of a well-prepared program of activities and contributions from a number of schools presenting one act plays, songs and dances in addition to a speech about the achievements of HH the Amir, which were all radiantly presented by intermediate stage pupil, Saad Suleiman.

In an exclusive statement to Kuwait Times, Al-Kandery explained that the forum title reflected the significance of ongoing training for all educators. "We need to 'Activate' all educators' potentials and skills in order to sow the right seeds, water and nurture them and then, eventually, reap the right fruits of what we sow", she said stressing that the forum also included nine workshops that started immediately after the opening ceremony and were presented by ELT supervi-

sors and teachers tackling various educational concerns such as curriculums, modern teaching methods and theories in addition to the ideal learning environments. "As educators, and in view of MOE's plans to develop the educational process, we all need to be involved in training and hold workshops in order to exchange expertise", Al-Kandery added noting that, starting with having supervisors hold these workshops, she plans to have HODs and teachers hold further ones.

ELT supervisor, Jawad Amrani said that educators need to activate all skills and use all possible means to create the best learning environment for learners with the ultimate goal of preparing them to acquire the knowledge needed for the 21st century. The opening ceremony was concluded by honoring the area director, ELT supervisor general and the ceremony coordinator; the head of the English department at Azda school, Asma' Al-Awadhi.



ELT Supervisor General, Besheeti with M. Kaber supervisors' team



AMC

- 00:15 Cursed
01:55 Behind Enemy Lines
03:25 Jason's Lyric
05:25 Cannon For Cordoba

- 14:30 Dialogue
15:00 News Update
15:15 China 24
16:00 News Update

- 12:38 Mythbusters
13:23 Through The Wormhole
15:15 With Morgan Freeman



NEIGHBORS



NEIGHBORS ON OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 14:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
15:10 Miles From Tomorrow
15:35 Jake And The Never Land

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:45 Mountain Monsters
01:40 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You

CNBC

- 00:00 Access: Middle East
00:30 Inside China
01:00 U.S. Squawk Alley

Disney

- 00:00 Violetta
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 The Ghost Inside My Child
01:00 The Haunting Of...
02:00 The Haunting Of...

BBC FIRST

- 00:15 Eastenders
00:45 New Tricks
01:40 New Tricks

Discovery CHANNEL HD

- 00:20 Fast N' Loud
01:10 You Have Been Warned
02:00 Troy

Disney JUNIOR

- 00:05 Art Attack
00:30 Henry Hugglemonster
00:45 Calimerio

XD

- 06:00 Boyster
06:10 Super Matrak
06:55 Star vs The Forces Of Evil

food network

- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:50 Chopped

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

- 00:10 Brain Games
01:00 Explorer
02:00 Supercar Megabuild

Bloomberg TELEVISION

- 00:00 Charlie Rose
01:00 Bloomberg West
02:00 First Up With Angie Lau



NON-STOP ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 08:00 Countdown
09:00 Countdown
09:00 On The Move
10:00 On The Move

Discovery science

- 00:20 Through The Wormhole
01:08 Invention Rich
01:55 Space Pioneer

- 02:30 Loopidoo
02:45 Art Attack
03:10 Henry Hugglemonster
03:20 Calimerio

EHD

- 00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
01:25 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons

HISTORY

- 00:20 Aussie Pickers
01:10 Storage Wars: New York
01:35 Storage Wars: New York

itv HD CHOICE

- 00:10 The Chase: Celebrity
01:05 Emmerdale
01:30 Eggheads

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:10 Dream Cruises
01:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces

- 16:30 The Bernie Mac Show
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 Mad Love

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 Bates Motel
01:00 Quantico
02:00 Rosewood

OSN MOVIES HD

- 00:00 In The Blood
02:00 Dying Of The Light
04:00 Breakdown

NAT GEO WILD HD

- 00:20 Deadly Instincts
01:10 Wild 24
02:00 Monster Fish

OSN MOVIES HD

- 00:00 Keith Lemon: The Film
02:00 Raising Helen
04:15 Father Of The Bride

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 01:00 Carrington
03:00 The Man Who Would Be King

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 Parks And Recreation
00:30 Hot In Cleveland
01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:00 St. Vincent
03:00 Cuban Fury
05:00 Stoneheart Asylum

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 Married
02:00 The Big C
03:00 Man Seeking Woman

OSN SPORTS 1 HD

- 00:30 PGA Tour Special
01:30 PGA Tour Highlights
02:30 NHL

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 Parks And Recreation
00:30 Hot In Cleveland
01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore

OSN SPORTS 2 HD

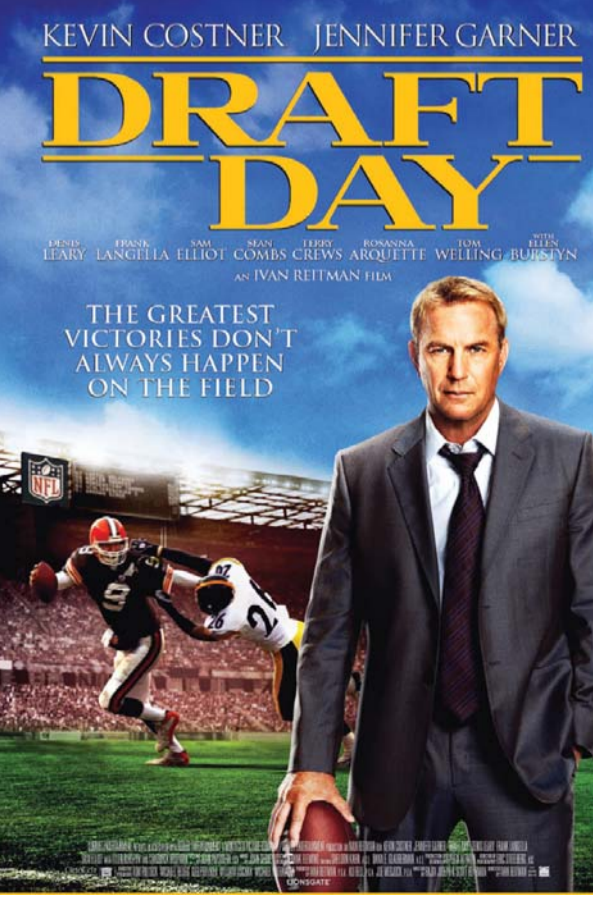
- 02:30 This Week In WWE
03:00 Live WWE Raw
06:30 Top 14 Highlights

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 AFL Premiership Highlights
01:00 Top 14 Highlights
01:30 The World Sailing Show

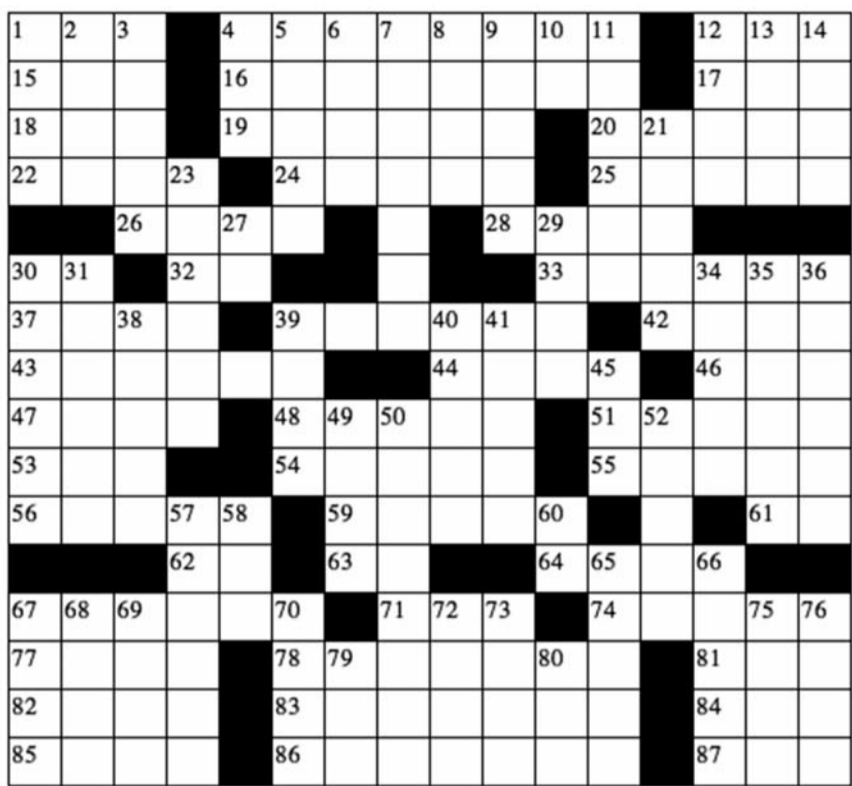
OSN SPORTS 3 HD

- 00:00 AFL Premiership Highlights
01:00 Top 14 Highlights
01:30 The World Sailing Show



DRAFT DAY ON OSN MOVIES HD

CROSSWORD 1219



ACROSS

- Surface layer of ground containing a mat of grass and grass roots.
- A native or inhabitant of Yugoslavia.
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- Any of various primates with short tails or no tail at all.
- Extinct order of jawless vertebrates.
- An overwhelming feeling of wonder or admiration.
- The quantity contained in a keg.
- Someone employed by a gas company.
- Asian rat snakes.
- The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
- A major French river.
- A fertile tract in a desert (where the water table approaches the surface).
- A fraudulent business scheme.
- Material used to daub walls.
- A soft white precious univalent metallic element having the highest electrical and thermal conductivity of any metal.
- A metallic element of the rare earth group.
- American literary critic and historian (1886-1963).
- A Bantu language spoken in southern Zaire.
- A strategically located monarchy on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.
- A full skirt with a gathered waistband.
- Large genus of erect or climbing prickly shrubs including roses.
- A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
- A member of the Siouan people inhabiting the valleys of the Platte and Missouri rivers in Nebraska.
- Long-tailed brilliantly colored parrot of Central and South America.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- An enclosed space.
- The forest trees growing in a country or region.
- A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
- Remove from memory or existence.
- English aristocrat who was the first wife of Prince Charles.
- A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- A hemoprotein composed of globin and heme that gives red blood cells their characteristic color.
- Half the width of an em.
- Set down according to a plan.
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- Nut of any of several trees of the genus Corylus.
- Bottle that has a narrow neck.
- By bad luck.
- Shah of Iran who was deposed in 1979 by Islamic fundamentalists (1919-1980).
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- An investment trust that owns and manages a pool of commercial properties and mortgages and other real estate assets.
- Indicating the most important performer or role.

DOWN

- British writer of short stories (1870-1916).
- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Remove gas from.
- A sharp projection on an edge or surface.
- Take away the weapons from.
- A wound made by cutting.
- Of or relating to osmosis.
- The complete duration of something.
- Bordered by a line of things.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- A visible suspension in the air of particles of some substance.
- The time during which someone's life continues.
- The basic unit of money in China.
- (comparative of 'little' usually used with mass nouns) Quantifier meaning not as great in amount or degree.
- Excluded from use or mention.
- Any isomeric saturated hydrocarbon found in petroleum and used as a fuel and solvent.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- A stringed instrument usually having six strings.
- A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- Someone who snores while sleeping.
- French anthropologist who studied the craniums and brains of different races of people.
- Voluntary contributions to aid the poor.
- An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
- A resident of Iowa.
- An associate degree in applied science.
- An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
- An argument that is conclusive.
- Of or relating to a speaker of the Tamil language or the language itself.
- A member of the Indian people of northern California and southern Oregon.
- A gradual decline (in size or strength or power or number).
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- Lighted up by or as by fire or flame.
- (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
- On or toward the lee.
- The habituation of wild animals.
- (Akkadian) Father of the gods and consort of Tiamat.
- Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- An island in Indonesia east of Java.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- God of love and erotic desire.
- A nucleotide derived from adenosine that occurs in muscle tissue.
- A tube in which a body fluid circulates.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You have lots of work to do today and yet there is a strong impulse to put things off until another time. Allow yourself to socialize with a few of your co-worker friends and then let others know that you will need to concentrate on your work. You will eventually get into the swing of the routine and see progress. There are many interesting things going on to distract you but you are determined to stay on track with the most important matters of today. A family matter improves and a love relationship deepens. This evening you may feel that conditions are satisfactory in all different avenues of your life. Give yourself credit and pat yourself on the back for making a change. Enjoy celebrating this day!



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Probing discussions with co-workers may have you realizing that some changes need to be made in order to reach your goals. You will become absorbed in routine work and performing helpful services the rest of this week. A respected person's opinion represents an important area of change at this time. Conflicts are overcome through compromise. Karmic issues are clearly defined and you can resolve old patterns. An article you read or a scientific report brings you some fresh insight and perhaps a new perspective on some of your ideas. Happiness is a wonderful rebound from hard work and you certainly work hard. You will find that a close friendship has developed now with someone that you met through your work environment.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is a delightfully romantic and social time. Your support system-family, home and those who give you nourishment-are pleasantly, becoming more secure. You are able to dispense with some of the frustrations that have been in your past and you can see the road you want to follow. Things are happening and your career depends upon your own drive which is strong. You are surrounded with good fortune. It is easy for you to make correct decisions and move forward where career and success are concerned. Life's problems seem manageable and easy to solve at this time. Reserve, self-confidence and self-reliance will be your best attitude all month and will encourage success. Enjoy the young people in your family today.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You try very hard to make sure your communicating is to make a sale and not to just pass time today. It is a better time to sell than to buy. This applies to material things, but extends to bonds, and stocks as well. This afternoon you will make the effort to improve the channels of understanding and appreciation between friends. Plans with friends are discussed that might include some humanitarian, scientific or metaphysical goals. This may mean a class in herbal healing or the science of meditation, etc. You may seriously be thinking of taking on new concepts-putting aside the old ideas. It's an ideal time to visit a bookstore or library. Laughter with friends this evening seals relationships and fun times are long remembered.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

When you look at the clock, you are surprised and pleased to see the morning moving along quickly. You could find yourself visiting with a co-worker or just enjoying the noon lunch break under a tree later in the afternoon. Your goals stand in stark contrast to the goals of others-adjustments may be needed. A business decision takes careful analysis this afternoon and a conference call may be in order. There is a need for a new understanding. Take time to think through all the ideas. Small changes can have big effects later. Important financial decisions require more information than you realize. It's important to gather all the facts necessary to give you a realistic idea of what you are getting into. Enjoy a relaxing dinner at home this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Other people tend to encourage you to make decisions prematurely. Do not hesitate to delay decisions until you have had time to give important matters your full attention. Hastily conceived plans might seem attractive in the heat of the moment but might not look so smart when you have checked out the details. This afternoon you have the ability for sustained work that allows you to coordinate and organize as you never have before. You can bring into fruition particular projects or results from some psychological development. Be wise in your urge for independence. You are coming into a time of experimenting with new concepts and putting the old ideas behind. Enjoy the company of young people around you this evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a good day to enjoy. You are doing a good job on developing your personal resourcefulness. Your awareness of psychological processes enables you to relinquish old attachments and make an important transition in your growth. This may mean new growth in your professional life as well as in your personal life. A sense of regeneration gives you enthusiasm for leadership and improved recognition for your creative efforts. All of this concentration on the improvements you are making will show positive results soon. Some may not appreciate your intensity and if you push too much, you may limit yourself. Watch to keep a balance and don't give up-there are wonderful rewards to enjoy soon. Laugh with friends.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Going back to the blackboard, so to speak, this is just what today is all about, particularly this morning. You work at getting things right. This could mean the right poetry to fit the right melody or the right drawing to fit the landscape, etc. Big ideas and grand visions play a leading role today. Mysterious or mystical information fires your imagination. You find ways to express your ideas and you look forward to completing a few ongoing projects. Education is the key to dealing with new technological tools this week-be open to new ways of working-learn, share, discuss! At home this evening-share a positive message with others. Talk about upcoming events and stay out of the financial doghouse for now.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Most of the co-workers around you get the silliness out of the way quickly. A new project is presented this morning and you and your co-workers are glad to get the work moving. Compromising and cooperation brings positive results. Practice caution in personal finances this afternoon; there is a tendency to go overboard. There could be group meetings to plan for this evening-perhaps a neighborhood crime watch or community organization. The planning that is scheduled will go easily. You may be jotting down notes before the meeting, much of this day. A former lover wants to introduce a new mate and whether this is a pleasant experience depends on the expectations. A friend offers a nice compliment this evening.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

There could be some difference of opinion when it comes to a work issue this morning. Someone could be a bit too touchy; careful. Check out the circumstances before giving your thoughts on a problem-solving issue. You have a hair-trigger mind today with quick reaction to outside impressions. It takes diplomacy, tact and patience to negotiate some important issue during an afternoon meeting. Acting on impulse can cause frustrations. Slow down, think about what you want to say and then you will see positive results. Consider making a list to guide you successfully through the day. This afternoon you may find yourself searching for the deeper meaning of life and how it relates to you and your future. This evening is family time.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

A new sense of self, a more assertive personal style, a more dynamic approach to life are the hallmarks of the cycle that begins for you now. Work projects or schoolwork is becoming fun and you may be feeling pleased with your progress. Doubts fade into the background and reserve is more and more a thing of the past. Rather than just accepting that which you have been taught, you will begin to seek answers from many paths of reference. Getting the facts and making sure that people get your message straight can make all the difference in the world. Any shortcomings in these areas can raise hurdles and cause problems. Relaxing with your friends and joking around in positive ways are part of what makes this a good day.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

There could be plans this coming weekend for you to visit with old friends and catch up on the activities of your friends. This may create moments of deep thought and surfacing memories to enjoy with your friends. It may be difficult to hold your work duties in sight. Have your notes handy for this weekend's possible entertainment activities but work to concentrate on the work at hand. Your workday ends quickly and you have plans to develop and people to talk to about party ideas. You are very pleased that so many people are contributing to the reunion. Government issues come to your attention and this evening you research the internet and try to become more informed. There are plenty of e-mails to keep up with as well.

WORD SEARCH

Tools

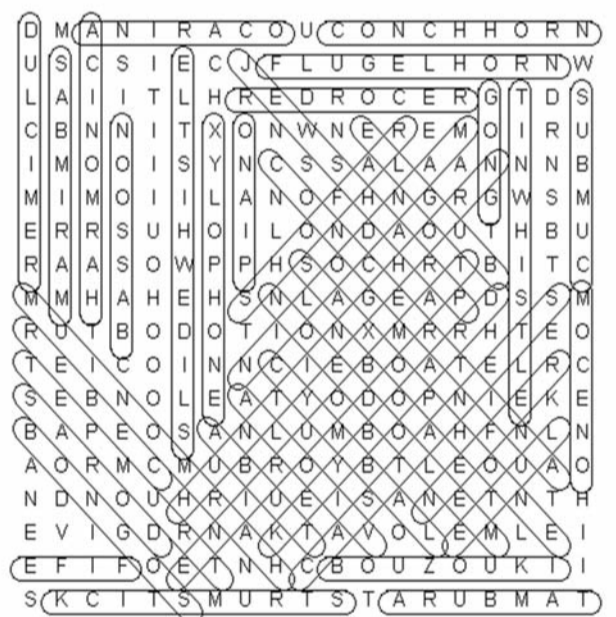
Find and circle all of the Tools that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Henry David Thoreau quotation



- | | | | |
|-------------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| BAND SAW | FILE | POLISHER | SPRAY GUN |
| BOLT CUTTER | GRINDER | PROTRACTOR | SQUARE |
| BRUSH | HAMMER | PRY BAR | STAPLE GUN |
| BUFFER | HAND SAW | PUNCH | STUD FINDER |
| CALIPER | HEX KEY | RASP | TABLE SAW |
| CHALK | JIG SAW | RATCHET | TAPE MEASURE |
| CHISEL | JOINTER | ROUTER | TAPS AND DIES |
| CLAMP | KNIFE | SANDER | TINSNIPS |
| COPING SAW | LATHE | SAWHORSE | WISE |
| CROWBAR | MALLET | SCREWDRIER | WOOD RULE |
| DADO | MITER BOX | SCROLL SAW | WRECKING BAR |
| DIVIDER | PLANE | SOCKETS | WRENCH |
| DRILL PRESS | PLIER | | |

Yesterday Solution

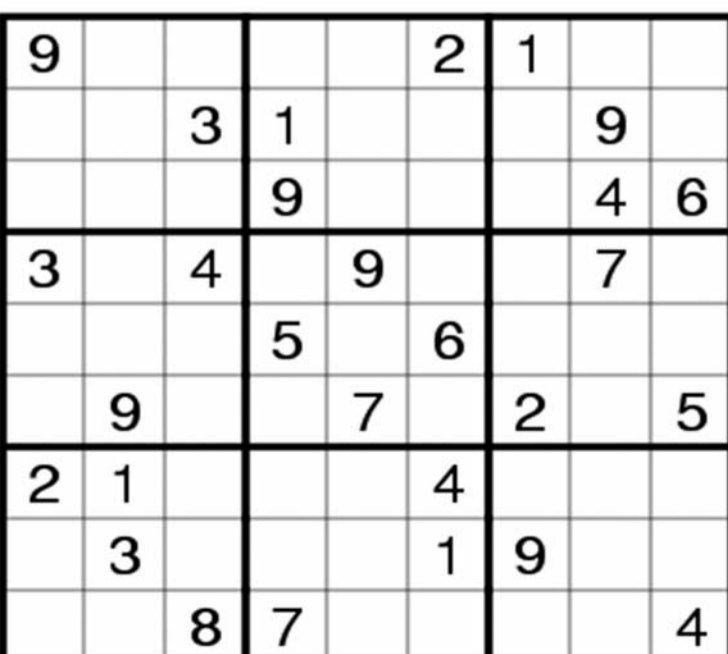
Musical Instruments 2



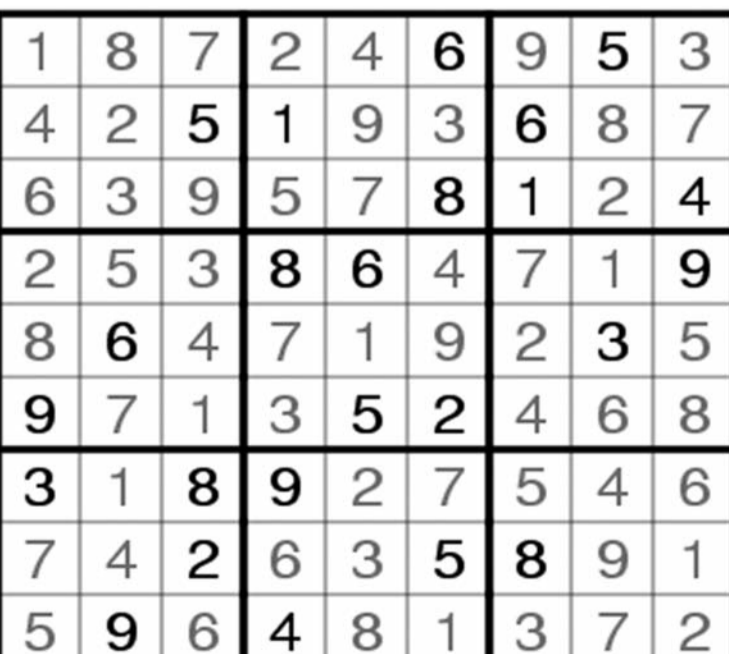
- | | | | |
|------------|--------------|-----------|---------------|
| BASSOON | FIFE | MARIMBAS | SHOFAR |
| BONGOS | FLUGELHORN | MELODEON | SLIDE WHISTLE |
| BOUZOUKI | GONG | MOCENO | STRUMSTICK |
| BUGLE | HARMONICA | NEFFER | TAMBOURINE |
| CASTANETS | HARMONIUM | OCARINA | TAMBURA |
| CONCERTINA | HUNTING HORN | PIANO | TIN WHISTLE |
| CONCH HORN | JEWS' HARP | REBEC | TRUMPET |
| CUMBUS | KEYBOARD | RECORDER | TUBA |
| CYMBAL | LUTE | SAROD | VIOLA |
| DULCIMER | MANDOLIN | SAXOPHONE | XYLOPHONE |

Hidden sentence: MUSIC WITH DINNER IS AN INSULT BOTH TO THE COOK AND THE VIOLINIST

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Table listing various hospitals such as Sabah Hospital, Amiri Hospital, Maternity Hospital, Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital, Chest Hospital, Farwaniya Hospital, Adan Hospital, Ibn Sina Hospital, Al-Razi Hospital, and Physiotherapy Hospital with their respective phone numbers.

Clinics

Table listing various clinics such as Kaizen center, Rawda, Adaliya, Khaldiya, Kaifan, Shamiya, Shuwaikh, Abdullah Salem, Nuzha, Industrial Shuwaikh, Qadsiya, Dasmah, Bneid Al-Gar, Shaab, Qibla, Ayoun Al-Qibla, Mirqab, Sharq, Salmiya, Jabriya, Maidan Hawally, Bayan, Mishref, W Hawally, Sabah, Jahra, New Jahra, West Jahra, South Jahra, North Jahra, North Jleeb, Ardhiya, Firdous, Omariya, N Khaitan, and Fintas with their respective phone numbers.



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

Table listing pharmacies across different governorates (Ahmadi, Jahra, Capital, Farwaniya, Hawally) with their names, addresses, and phone numbers.

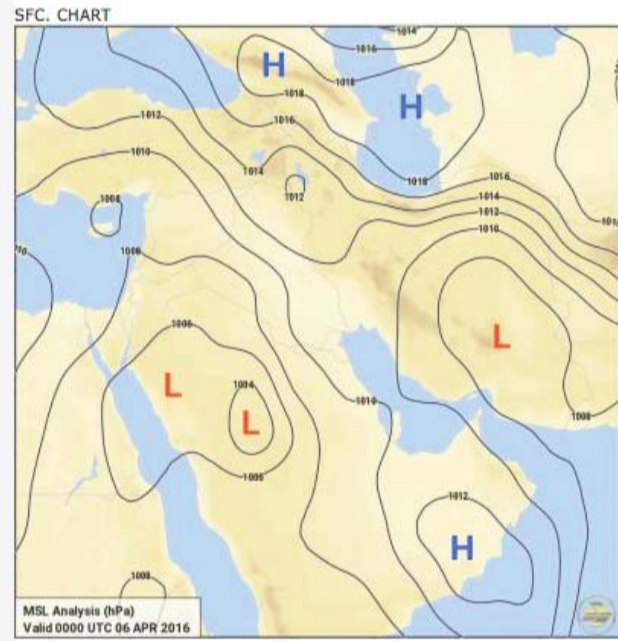
STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Contact information for the meteorological department: Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630 Fax: (+965) 24348714 www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 06/04/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr. Max Temperature 32 °C. Day: Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate freshening gradually at times south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for scattered rain. Night: Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered rain.



Four-Day Forecast table showing weather conditions, temperature ranges, and wind directions for Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Table showing the forecast for various stations in Kuwait, including Kuwait City, Airport, and other locations, with minimum and maximum temperature expectations.

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Table showing recorded weather data for the previous day at the Kuwait Airport, including maximum and minimum temperatures, humidity, and wind speed.

Table showing sunrise and sunset times for the day.

Prayer Times

Table showing the times for Fajr, Sunrise, Zuhr, Asr, Sunset, and Isha.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Large table listing international phone numbers for various countries, including Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Anguilla, Antiga, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bermuda, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Burkina, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Cayman Islands, Central African, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Cyprus (Northern), Czech Republic, Denmark, Diego Garcia, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, England (UK), Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands, Fiji, Finland, France, French Guiana, French Polynesia, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Gibraltar, Greece, Greenland, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guam, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Holland (Netherlands), Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ibiza (Spain), Iceland, India, Indian Ocean, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macao, Macedonia, Madagascar, Maldives, Malaysia, Malawi, Maldive, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Martinique, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montserrat, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar (Burma), Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, Norfolk Island, N. Ireland (UK), North Korea, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Helena, Saint Kitts, Saint Lucia, Saint Pierre, Saint Vincent, Samoa US, Samoa West, San Marino, Sao Tome, Saudi Arabia, Scotland (UK), Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Serbia, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Tokelau, Trinidad, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, USA, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Virgin Islands UK, Virgin Islands US, Wales (UK), Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



PRIVATE CLINICS

Table listing various medical specialists and their contact information, including Ophthalmologists, Plastic Surgeons, Paediatricians, Endocrinologist, Family Doctor, Psychiatrists, Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT), Gynaecologists & Obstetricians, General Practitioners, Internists, Chest & Heart, Urologists, and Neurologists.

Table listing various medical specialists and their contact information, including Plastic Surgeons, Family Doctor, Psychiatrists, Gynaecologists & Obstetricians, General Surgeons, Internists, Chest & Heart, and Urologists.

Table listing various medical specialists and their contact information, including Paediatricians, Endocrinologist, Physiotherapists & VD, Rheumatologists, Internist, Chest & Heart, Consultant Cardiologist, and Gastrologists.

Table listing various medical specialists and their contact information, including Endocrinologist, Physiotherapists & VD, Rheumatologists, Internist, Chest & Heart, Consultant Cardiologist, and Gastrologists.

Janet to postpone tour because she is 'planning a family'



Janet Jackson is postponing her world tour because she is "planning a family". The 49-year-old singer - who is married to Wissam Al-Mana - has been ordered to rest by doctors, but is determined to get back on the road as soon as she can. She said in a video message to fans: "Hey you guys, on August 31 I launched the 'Unbreakable world tour. "First I want to thank all the fans for coming out and seeing the show, you guys made it so enjoyable each and every night. "We are in the second leg of the tour and there's been a sudden change and I thought it was important you be the first to know. "My husband and I are planning a family so I'm going to have to delay the tour. "Please, if you can, try and understand it's important that I do this now, I have to rest up, doctors' orders, but I have not forgotten about you, I will continue the tour as soon as I possibly can." The "Together Again" hitmaker concluded her message with thanks to all those involved in her tour. She added: "I want to thank the dancers, the band, my entire crew, you were so professional, so incredibly talented, so supportive and loving each and every night, and I can't wait to get started again. "I'd like to thank Live Nation for your loyal partnership and

support, you guys are the best at what you do in your field and know that's why I'm with you. "Once again thank you to all your friends for your love, your loyalty, it's truly appreciated. It's been a long journey and you've been there every step of the way and I really do appreciate that, thank you so much. Inshallah, I will see you soon, I love you, bye." Last month, Janet postponed the European leg of the tour just three weeks before it was due to begin. She previously postponed 29 US dates on the tour after being advised to have surgery and rescheduled them for July and August. In announcing the postponement of the US tour, Janet appealed to her fans for prayers. She said on her website: "Hey you guys...Happy Holidays to each and every one of you! I need you to know, I learned today, from my doctors that I must have surgery soon. "It breaks my heart to tell you that I am forced to postpone the 'Unbreakable Tour' until the spring. "Please pray for me, my family and our entire company during this difficult time...There will be no further comment."

Rob Kardashian's romantic proposal

Rob Kardashian used over 500 roses in his proposal to Blac Chyna. The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star is set to wed girlfriend of three months Blac Chyna and pulled out all the stops when he popped the question to make things as romantic as possible. According to TMZ, Rob covered a room in his girlfriend's house with rose petals and candles, and he got down on one knee and asked her to be his wife when they walked into the room with Blac's mother. The make-up artist replied "Of course, baby! You know I love you!" Meanwhile, Rob's family are said to be unconvinced the engagement will last as he has previously professed his undying love for

former girlfriends Rita Ora and Adrienne Bailon, and even told his relatives he had proposed to them, though no engagement announcements were ever made. The 28-year-old star is said to have deliberately kept his family - who flew to Vail on a ski trip hours before he proposed to Blac - in the dark about his engagement plans. A source described the proposal as "aggressively on the QT." While the reclusive sock designer's mother Kris Jenner and famous siblings haven't yet spoken about his happy news, Blac's former boyfriend Tyga - who is dating Kylie Jenner - insists he is happy for the couple.



Macaulay Culkin is 'essentially retired'

The 'Home Alone' star - who shot to fame at the age of 10, six years after beginning his acting career - may only be 35 years old but he no longer works very often and spends his days "whatevering". He said: "I'm a man in his mid-30s who's essentially retired. "I kind of go where the wind takes me a little bit." Macaulay went on to explain he spends most of his days painting, writing in his notebooks, and "whatevering." Despite it being 25 years since 'Home Alone' was released, Macaulay is still recognized "constantly" and divides his time between New York and Paris, initially believing no one knew who he was in France. He told New York magazine: "It turned out that no, they recognized me, they just didn't care. I was like, 'Where have you people been my entire life?'" The actor - who, despite being "retired", can soon be seen in 'Adam Green's

Aladdin' - was stunned recently when he visited a cafe in Paris and asked for the Wi-Fi log-in details. He recalled: "A waitress just gave it to me and walked away-their Wi-Fi code was 'Macaulay Culkin.' When she came back, I said, 'I like your Wi-Fi code.' She goes, 'Thank you,' and I say, 'C'est moi.' She turned white and brought over the owner of the place, who said, 'I knew you'd come here someday.'" When he is back in the US, the 'My Girl' actor lives in the New York apartment he bought when he was 19 and only goes out when he is unlikely to be spotted. He admitted: "I'll take walks at two or four in the morning, because there's nobody out on the streets and it's easy for me to go unnoticed."



Nick would date Jennifer

Nick Jonas wants to date Jennifer Lawrence. The 'Close' hitmaker - who has most recently been romantically linked with Kate Hudson - insists it is so obvious that any guy would want to date the 'Hunger Games' beauty, he needed to give "no explanation" as to why he'd want to go out with her. During an interview with Capital FM, the 23-year-old hunk was asked to join in a game that they play with all of their celebrity guests, titled "to bae or not to bae", where stars have to say whether or not they would date a famous name. When DJ Roman Kemp put forward the 'Joy' star, Nick quickly shot back: "To bae for sure. That needs no explanation. We know why!

What's not to love?" And the 'Jealous' hitmaker also confirmed he would date 'American Idol' judge, Jennifer Lopez, but insisted it would be "weird" to explain his reasons why as they are such good friends. He said of the 'On the Floor' hitmaker: "To bae for sure. She's kind of like the homie, she's my friend so it's kind of weird if I get too specific as to why but just in general. She's a great person and I'm happy to call her a friend." But one person Nick rejected was Gigi Hadid, who is currently romancing Zayn Malik. He admitted: "Not to bae. My brother [Joe Jonas] dated her."



Tomlinson is already a 'great dad', according to his own grandfather

Louis Tomlinson's granddad says the star is "learning very quickly" to be a "great dad". The 24-year-old singer's grandfather Len says the One Direction hunk will be a "better dad" the more he looks after his two-month-old son Freddie - who he has with stylist Briana Jungwirth - and insists his grandson has already picked up plenty of tips since the little one's birth in January. He said: "He's learning very quickly to be a dad. I mean Louis wants to be a great dad and he is a great dad and will be a better dad. But it's all a new learning curve for him. "I see him changing Freddie and feeding Freddie, like we all do and all have done. But it's a new phenomenon for Louis and he's learning very quickly on his feet." Len admitted Louis missed Freddie a lot when he returned to the UK in February to accept the Best British Video prize for 1D's 'Drag Me Down' music video at the BRIT Awards alongside fellow band member Liam Payne, which was the first time he had been away from his Los Angeles-based boy. Louis' granddad said: "I mean the baby's very young, he's only two months old. So there's no real baby stories, apart from agaga agoogoo." Len also insisted One Direction will be back from their self-imposed hiatus at some stage in their careers - even if they only want to make cash from a return. Speaking to ITV Calendar, he added: "They will come back. Even if it's only to make a lot more money."

Naomi Campbell would 'never' have a facelift

The 45-year-old supermodel - who was scouted by Synchro modeling agency at the age of 15 when she was out window shopping in London's Covent Garden - has vowed to never go under the knife to try and stay looking youthful, and uses a bizarre combination of Sellotape and moisturizers to keep her skin taught and fresh. Speaking to Vogue.com about her top beauty tips, she said: "I would never do a facelift. So I use tape." Naomi - who plays Camilla Marks in Fox drama 'Empire' - says her mother Valerie Morris instilled in her a great skin care regime which involves dousing her body and face in cream twice a day. She explained: "I always, always, always use cream. I think I cream my body twice a day ... Something my mother instilled in me when I was a child." The catwalk icon - who has graced the cover of countless magazines during her phenomenal four-decade spanning career and modeled for virtually every major fashion house in the world - also claims that a minimal use of make-up

has protected her skin. She said: "I like to put a little shimmer inside my eyes just to kind of make me look bright and awake and alert. I don't like too much powder on my face in terms of make-up. "And accessories - it's all accessories to make yourself feel better and look good."



Anna Chlumsky is pregnant

The 'Veep' star is expecting her second child with husband Shaun So - who she has two-year-old daughter Penelope with - and admitted the couple are planning to go on holiday before their new addition arrives. Speaking in a Facebook video chat with Travel + Leisure magazine, she said: "Being expecting as I am we're going to take it low-key and try to get a beach vacation in pretty soon. "I really do try to take a good vacation at least once a year. When my husband and I got married we made a promise to ourselves that we would use our passport at least once a year because we just love doing that. "We've kept that up happily even having a toddler. She's got a couple of stamps on her passport already." The 35-year-old actress - who shot to fame as main character Vada Sultenfuss in 1991 movie 'My Girl' alongside Macaulay Culkin - recently admitted she is enjoying motherhood and loves spending time with her daughter and watching the little one growing up. She said: "It's awesome. I love it. She's becoming her own person and it's delicious to watch. "She's really fun and really sweet. And she's

very determined. I love all those things about her. If she wasn't my daughter, I'd want to hang out with her still. She's really good company." Jake Gyllenhaal: Being a child star can be 'dangerous'



Gossip

Judge: Porsche not at fault in crash that killed Paul Walker



A judge has ruled Porsche are not responsible for the death of Paul Walker. The 'Fast & Furious' star and his friend Roger Rodas were killed in November 2013 when the Porsche Carrera GT they were driving in crashed and burst into flames and a court has now rejected Rodas' widow, Kristine Rodas' wrongful death lawsuit, in which she claimed the car lacked crucial safety features that would have prevented the men's deaths. US District Judge Philip S. Gutierrez ruled on Monday that there was no evidence the Porsche's suspension failed before the crash or that the vehicle lacked a "properly functioning crash cage" and "fuel cell." He also denied Kristine's claim that the company failed

to warn drivers about the "substandard side impact protection." The judge ruled Rodas' fatal injuries occurred when he and his passenger collided during the crash, which a crash cage wouldn't prevent, and noted the impact force came from the front of the vehicle. He also declared there was "undisputed evidence" showing that Rodas died from fire resulting from racing fuel. Kristine plans to appeal the decision, while a separate suit filed by Paul's daughter Meadow, 17, will still go ahead. The teenager's attorney, Jeff Milan, said in a statement: "The issues in the cases are very different. The federal case was filed on behalf of Roger Rodas, who was the driver of the Porsche Carrera GT and was killed instantly upon

impact. "Meadow's father, Paul Walker, was a passenger in the car. He survived the crash but was trapped and burned to death because of the vehicle's defects. "Meadow will continue to fight to hold Porsche accountable for selling a defective product that kills." A Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and California Highway Patrol investigation previously concluded that unsafe speed caused the crash as the vehicle was travelling at 94 mph when the posted speed limit was 45 mph.

Paris gets tattoo in memory MJ

Paris Jackson has got a tattoo in memory of her father Michael Jackson. The aspiring singer - who turned 18 on Sunday - is thrilled with her permanent tribute to the late King of Pop, after having the words 'Queen of My Heart', in her father's handwriting, etched onto her left wrist by Justin Lewis at Timeless Tattoo 738 in Los Angeles. Alongside a photograph of her new ink, she wrote on Instagram: "Queen of My Heart" in his handwriting. To everyone else he was the King of Pop. To me, well, he was the king of my heart. Thank you @dermagrapink, you're a legend [austinbrown] (sic) "The tattoo artist was pleased to welcome Paris, who was accompanied by her cousin Austin Brown, into his studio for the "sweet" piece of work. Alongside a picture of himself, Paris and Austin, he captioned a photo on Instagram: "Paris Michael Jackson got her tattoo today, letters from her father, so sweet. #paris-jackson and Austin Brown her cousin. (sic)" Paris - who is the daughter of Debbie Rowe - had long spoken of her desire to have a tattoo tribute to her father, who was born on August 29, 1958. Back in 2011, she tweeted: "I kinda want to get August XXIX tatted on my back." June will mark seven years since the passing of the 'Bad' singer, who died aged 50 of acute Propofol intoxication.



Tyga is happy for Blac and Rob

The rapper's former fiance recently got engaged to her boyfriend of three months and while Tyga and Blac have had an acrimonious relationship since their split, he insisted he only wants her and their son King Cairo, three, to be happy. Tyga, 26, tweeted: "Everybody deserves 2 be happy. What some1 does for their happiness is not my concern, as long as it's not interfering wit my happiness." "It makes me happy to see the mother of my son happy .My only concern in this situation is my son. I want him in happy environments (sic)." Blac, 27, was previously close friends with Rob's sister Kim Kardashian West but fell out with the family after Tyga started dating their younger sister Kylie Jenner, 18. Meanwhile, Blac - who celebrated her engagement with Rob, 29, at a strip club - is excited to become a Kardashian. Her representative told PEOPLE that the model, real name Angela White, is planning to use her given name once she ties the knot, saying: "She was more than excited, she was thrilled, just super happy. She's soon to be Angela Kardashian. She's ecstatic."



Dickinson gets emotional talking breast cancer fight

Janice Dickinson felt "fear" for the first time ever when diagnosed with breast cancer. The 61-year-old model - who disclosed her health condition last week - "lost it" when doctors confirmed a lump in her breast was cancerous because her own mother had died from a form of the disease. Opening up about her shock diagnosis, she said: "It's shocking, everything hit me at once. My mother died of cancer, so I know how bad I felt when I heard about my mother... lately I'm tearful because I felt fear for the first time. And I don't get scared. I kind of lost it." Janice has a common form of breast cancer known as ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) and when she found out, her first thoughts were for her son Nathan, 28, daughter Savannah, 22, and 68-year-old fiancé Robert 'Rocky' Gerner. She added: "My son broke down. Honestly haven't cried in about 30 years... "I want to see my daughter walk down the aisle and I want grandchildren, and I want to get married with Rocky, my fiancé, who's a doctor." But despite her fear, Janice has vowed to "fight" the disease and admitted she went public to warn other women to get their breasts regularly checked. She told TV show 'The Doctors': "I'm a fighter. I'm not the type of woman to fall apart but it's nothing to downplay. I'm doing this for all women, please sisters have regular breast examinations. I can be emotional and happy and sad and afraid but I'm not alone. I now await surgery."

Affleck and Garner's London move

Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner have bought a London home together. Although the former couple split last year after 10 years of marriage, they will live together in the UK with their three children later this year while Ben films 'Justice League: Part One' at Leavesden Studios. A source told The Sun: "Ben and Jennifer are a very strong cohesive unit. "They have created a new normal, which will continue while they are living in London. "Ben wants his family close when he's working, and staying together in a new country will be a great experience, despite himself and Jennifer being no longer a couple." Meanwhile, Ben recently insisted he follows Jennifer's lead when it comes to parenting. The 'Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice' star has nothing but support for his ex-wife and says the most important thing for the pair is keeping things positive for the sake of their three children - Violet, 10, Seraphina, seven and Samuel, four. He explained: "Life doesn't always turn out exactly the way you want. We're doing our very best and we're putting our kids first. That's how we're focusing on our day to day lives. And we don't know what the future's going to hold. "Each step that we take is one where we prioritize our children and everything else comes second. She's just so good at doing that and sets such a good example. And that's a lead that I follow."



Paltrow's book on conscious uncoupling

Gwyneth Paltrow is writing a self-help book to navigate the "perfect divorce". The 'Iron Man 3' actress is keen to pass on the knowledge she gained after splitting from husband Chris Martin - the father of her children Apple and Moses - two years ago, and will pay particular attention to caring for yourself. A source told Grazia magazine: "Gwyneth has told friends that she couldn't have got through the last year without self-help. Now that she's on the other side, she wants to pass on everything she's learned... [The book will focus on] her personal journey navigating the most difficult

period of her life, with emphasis on how to get through hard times by treating your body the right way. There will be recipes, supplement guides and meditation techniques." And 43-year-old Gwyneth - who is now dating TV producer Brad Falchuk - will be honest about intimate matters in the tome. The source added: "She's not pulling any punches and will be going into intimate detail about the healing powers of a healthy sex life." The former couple revealed they had "consciously uncoupled" when announcing their split in 2014, and Gwyneth recently admitted she thinks the "bizarre" phrase is

both "powerful and positive". She said: "It's such a bizarre phrase, but having said that, the idea behind it is so powerful and so positive, ultimately. "At the time, my marriage was over, and I was devastated. I was coping with all of that, and then to have this global media onslaught about it. It was really a hard time...[but] if you can stay a family without being in a couple, then the damage is really mitigated."

Theron had a crush on Hanks

The 'Mad Max: Fury Road' star was sweetly infatuated with the actor during her formative years and often imagined herself as one of his glamorous female co-stars such as Meg Ryan, with whom he starred in a string of hit movies including 1993's 'Sleepless in Seattle' and 1998's 'You've Got Mail'. She said: "I grew up watching the movies of Tom Hanks. He was like a 'boyfriend'. When I was eight, I would walk around like I was one of the girls in a Tom Hanks movie. So I have a restraining order from his wife!" Charlize attended the Academy Awards last month and though she refused to mention her crush to when she bumped into Tom and his spouse Rita Wilson, she was delighted to present the award for Best Original Screenplay with her 'The Huntman: Winter's War' co-star Emily Blunt. Charlize's five-year-old Jackson watched the Oscars ceremony and was confused when she didn't win a golden statuette, but was pleased when his mother showed him the award she won for her performance in 'Monster'. During an appearance on Italian chat show 'Che Tempo Che Fa', Charlize - who also has baby daughter August - said: "I just went to the Oscars this year to present an award with Emily Blunt. My son now has started to understand things better. And he watched the Oscars on TV. He noticed that everybody won an Oscar, so when I came back home, he was like, 'Mum, you didn't win anything!' So I literally told him, 'Come with me'. I took him in the living room and I told him, 'Look at it, you see that? Your mom won.'"



Not even the sky is our limit



We're always running around trying to do the best we can with our time and our job, always pushing ourselves to exceed what we think is our limit, when the truth is, we have no limits. Not even the sky is our limit when we have the entire galaxy to explore. I feel women nowadays have become more powerful, educated, opinionated and extremely hard working, and that's something that I'm really proud of and love, but of course in this estrogen-filled world fierce competition comes with the territory, which isn't always a good thing.

Healthy competition is necessary for you to become more motivated to do well, and better. There's nothing wrong with looking up to another woman as your inspiration, because it's healthy to do so and it also means you are confident enough to recognize other strong and successful women instead of trying to bring them down. However, all of this hard work and commitment will eventually take a toll on you and your well being.

I'm all for being independent and successful, especially when you're a woman (not being sexist) but this is something that I've recently believed in because I feel independent, educated and successful women are better in making decisions in both their personal lives; choosing a partner, deciding on what they deserve and so on, as well as in their career.

All of that aside, this chaotic lifestyle isn't a healthy one, it may be right for a period of time, it may improve your finances, improve your job title and most likely elevate your lifestyle, but it's not something you want to lose yourself within. At some point, many people become overwhelmed with work and responsibilities that they forget that they actually have a life of their own, and I might not be one to talk, but I also lost myself and was drowned with work and what I thought that I was doing right, up until I realized that I did not even have a weekend free of work for the passed year and a half.

I literally saw work as an escape, when the truth is you can never have enough work, never have enough income, you just turn into this hungry person who just eats, but never gains weight. You continuously work, neglect your personal and social life till you find yourself drained, and lonely. Taking a break will do the exact opposite, and you won't be able to take a break until you believe that you actually deserve one, and that just like how this work opportunity occurred, many more are yet to come and that you will always get what is yours in life.

Shutting yourself down for even an hour day to have it to yourself, free of work and anything that would keep you busy is what will keep you sane and will make you feel more ener-

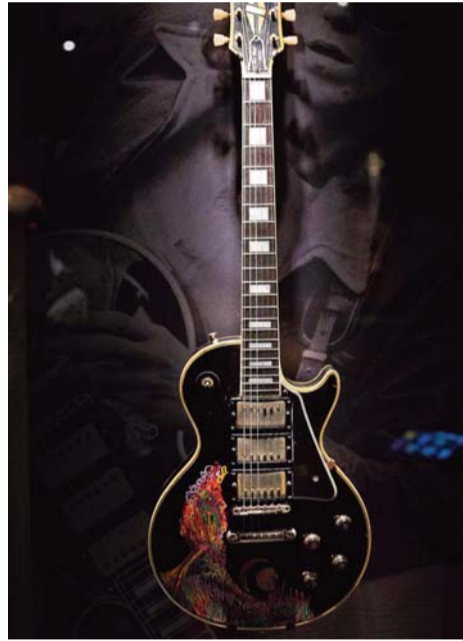
gized and creative with what you do. We all need a break from everything in our lives, space is healthy, but not too much space. Even from our partners, friends, and family, when we spend too much time together arguments seem to break out and causes tension, which you want to avoid.

Love yourself to believe that you deserve to take of yourself, in order to take care of the others around you as well as your job. You can only work for hard for so long then you'll crash if you don't make sure you take some time off, even if it was for an hour every day, or to go off for the weekend every couple of months. It will make you feel better, sleep better, think more clearly and you will always feel more eager to go back to work with so much energy and a more positive mindset.

All the pressure, long hours and stress will leave you overwhelmed and you will start sleeping less, looking and feeling more tired, which I feel shouldn't be the case with anything you do in life, nothing is worth losing your health for, as being healthy is the most important and essential thing for any human being.



Black and white images of the Rolling Stones make form the backdrop of a recreated music studio, as part of Exhibitionism. — AP photos



The hand-painted custom 1957 Gibson guitar of Keith Richards is photographed as part of Exhibitionism.



An image of Mick Jagger forms the backdrop of a recreated music studio as part of Exhibitionism. — AP

Guitars, clothes and grunge at **Rolling Stones** exhibition

From their first apartment through their most recent tours, the Rolling Stones are giving fans a chance to take a deep look into their lives as the "Greatest Rock 'n' Roll Band in the World." Here are some key things to see at "Exhibitionism," the British band's massive exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery that opens Tuesday:

Edith Grove

Shortly after the Stones got together as a band in 1962, founding member Brian Jones moved into an apartment in west London with Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and James Phelge. The apartment, at 102 Edith Grove, was notorious for being a mess, with clothes and dirty dishes strewn about the place. The exhibition has recreated the scene with incredible detail, right down to the old empty beer bottles, a kitchen sink filled with pots and pans, and plenty of old Chuck Berry and Muddy Waters records ready to be heard by an aspiring band that was, at the time, making only a few dollars per gig.

"The milk bottles were just growing this stuff," Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts says through a speaker as visitors walk through. "It was very much like that, the kitchen particularly," Watts said as he arrived for Monday's opening. Jagger and Richards shared the only bedroom with Phelge, a London club-goer who became their roommate and companion. Jones slept in the living room.

It was at Edith Grove that the band started writing their own music, like the Beatles were doing. Although no photos exist of the original Edith Grove apartment, exhibition curator Ileen Gallagher said it was made from the memories of

the current band. "The real Edith Grove was like living in an alien culture," Phelge, now 73, told The Associated Press. "You can't replicate the spirit of the place."

Olympic studios

Behind a wall of glass is a recreation of the studio where the Rolling Stones recorded their first single, "Come On," and many of their hits in the 1960s. There are several instruments scattered around the floor, and a portion of "Sympathy for the Devil" - a 1968 Jean-Luc Godard film that shows the song's creation - plays on a screen in the background. In honor of Ian Stewart, the original piano player kicked out of the band in its infancy because he didn't quite fit the part, there is his personal Ajello and Sons piano. Although Stewart wasn't officially a member, he stayed with the band as a driver, friend, helper and musician until his death in 1985.

Alongside the glass wall, there are several small screens with headphones where visitors can hear about recording methods. "It's come out better than I thought. It's a fun half-hour walk-through," Jagger said of the exhibition. "If you don't like the Rolling Stones, probably not for you."

Clothes

There are lots of clothes, mostly from Jagger, in a room that looks like a museum. There is the famous Omega shirt he wore on the 1969 US tour. There is a replica of the flowing dress-like white shirt he wore when the Stones played a free concert at Hyde Park on July 5, 1969 - two days after the death of Jones. From the 1970s,

there are plenty of jumpsuits. And from the 1980s, you get the sporty look, when Jagger essentially wore a football uniform on tour. "Mick kept his clothes, thank God," Gallagher said.

More recent garments include plenty of long coats and capes, some of them designed by Jagger's late partner L'Wren Scott. The others contributed various articles, but Jagger's costumes are the ones that stand out. "I hope they've been cleaned," Jagger joked.

Guitars

The creators of the exhibition raided the homes of Richards and Wood looking for guitars to display, and they found a few of their most iconic pieces. Among them is the 1957 Gibson Les Paul that was hand-painted by Richards and used during the filming of "Sympathy for the Devil." At the time, the Stones were involved in a drug case that threatened to ruin the band. "Yeah, I painted it," Richards says in the notes accompanying the guitar. "I was bored, waiting to go to jail."

Memorabilia

Another section of the exhibition is dedicated to old posters and records, the walls filled with colorful reminders of how many times the Rolling Stones have circled the globe over the decades. Matt Lee, a 40-year-old marketing professional from London who is one of the world's foremost Stones collectors, loaned more than 50 items to the exhibit, including many of the posters on display.

"As a general rule of thumb the earlier the poster the rarer it is, not just because it is older

and less have survived, but because less were made in the first place," Lee told the AP. "The '60s posters are particularly rare but many of the '70s ones are super tough to find, too, particularly in great condition." Another of the objects he handed over for display is the first contract signed by the band in May 1963.

3-D movie

At the end of the exhibit, visitors walk through a backstage area and into a small theater where they can watch a 3-D movie of the Stones performing "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction."

Filed in 2013 when the Stones returned to Hyde Park for a pair of gigantic shows, the video brings the viewers right into the concert. Richards' guitar neck protrudes from the screen. Jagger appears seemingly out of nowhere and struts right in front of your eyes. "Frame by frame we turned it into 3-D," said Patrick Woodroffe, who has worked with the Stones for years. "It cost a fortune." — AP



In this April 15, 2012 file photo, Guns N' Roses, from left, Matt Sorum, Duff McKagan, Slash and Steven Adler appear on stage at their induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland.



Members of Cheap Trick, from left, Robin Zander, Daxx Nielsen, Rick Nielsen and Tom Peterson pose for a portrait in New York to promote their new album, Bang Zoom Crazy Hello. — AP photos

Peace, love and understanding? Not always at the Rock Hall

All you need is love. Love's often in short supply at the annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction, however. For all the good vibes of a career's crowning achievement, the event can be a display case for long-running feuds, petty jealousies and business disputes. Paul Simon once jokingly suggested the hall create a special wing for musical acts that didn't get along. This year's ceremony, taking place Friday in Brooklyn, has a bumper crop of squabbling inductees.

Current members of Deep Purple have refused to perform with Ritchie Blackmore, guitarist who wrote the signature riff to "Smoke on the Water" and probably the most identifiable person who passed through the band. He left in 1993. So Blackmore told the hall he won't show up this week. A reunion was in the works for Chicago and its former lead singer, Peter Dinklage. But something went awry, and Cetera announced that he'd be staying away, too. Things didn't look good for Cheap Trick, whose longtime drummer Bun E. Carlos hasn't played for them in six years. He explained to Rolling Stone last year that "me and the singer don't get along." After legal wrangling, Carlos is still considered a member for business purposes, but guitarist Rick Nielsen's son Daxx now plays drums. Yet, Carlos is expected to appear Friday and perform with Cheap Trick again for one more night. Maybe love will prevail after all.

Can't buy me love

The Beatles actually set a sour tone early. George Harrison, Ringo Starr and John Lennon's widow, Yoko Ono, appeared for the act's induction in 1988, but Paul McCartney stayed away. McCartney cited business differences between band members and said he would

"feel like a complete hypocrite waving and smiling ... at a fake reunion." That was a bummer, Beach Boys singer Mike Love said that same night in a memorably cranky speech where he took shots at nearly everyone in sight. At one point, he said Mick Jagger was afraid to have the Rolling Stones perform on the same bill with the Beach Boys. "I'd like to thank Mike Love for not mentioning me," Bob Dylan deadpanned when he spoke later that night. McCartney was all smiles when inducted as a solo artist in 1999, five years after Lennon, but his designer daughter Stella didn't hide her feelings that the honor was overdue.

Awkward!

The hall and inductees have months to prepare and smooth over unpleasantness for the ceremony. That's not always enough to avoid awkward moments. Creedence Clearwater Revival members Doug Clifford and Stu Cook were left uncomfortably standing to the side in 1993 when leader John Fogerty stepped to the stage to play Creedence songs with Bruce Springsteen and Robbie Robertson. Fogerty had bitterly split with the other two and his late brother Tom over business issues.

When Blondie re-formed in 1999, they left out members Frank Infante and Nigel Harrison, who sued unsuccessfully to rejoin. They lost again during the band's 2006 induction, when Infante pleaded onstage with singer Deborah Harry to perform one last time. "Debbie, are we allowed?" Infante said. Nope. Elvis Costello still performs with two-thirds of his longtime backing band, the Attractions. But not bass player Bruce Thomas, who didn't help relations by penning a thinly disguised novel about an autocratic band leader. When handed his rock hall trophy in 2003,

Thomas said, "thanks for the memories, that's it," then walked offstage and out of the Waldorf Astoria ballroom. Costello waved goodbye with a lewd gesture.

No shows

Most often, the bad feelings produce emptiness, with musicians fans would love to see on their big night not showing or playing. Three members of the classic Guns N' Roses lineup appeared in 2012, but frontman Axl Rose skipped the event, saying it didn't "appear to be somewhere I'm actually wanted or respected." Eddie Van Halen entered rehab the week before his namesake band was inducted in 2007. His drummer brother Alex also stayed away, and vocalist David Lee Roth was a last-minute pullout because of a dispute over what song he'd perform.

Diana Ross stayed away from the Supremes' 1988 induction, two years after Mary Wilson wrote unflattering things about her in a book. Levon Helm didn't show up in 1994; he didn't get along with Robbie Robertson. Roger Waters' longstanding disputes with his former Pink Floyd members kept him away from their 1996 induction. Kiss members appeared, but refused to perform, in 2014 in a dispute over which members would go into the hall. It wasn't bitterness that kept Jerry Garcia away when the Grateful Dead were inducted in 1994, a year before he died. He didn't believe in the hall as an institution. His fellow members did, and brought along a cardboard cutout of Garcia. Leave it to the Sex Pistols to demur most colorfully. Surviving members posted a note comparing the hall to "urine in wine" and saying they wouldn't come because they were "not your monkeys." — AP



Designer Thao Vu inspecting materials dyed with indigo leaves by Nung ethnic women at Phuc Sen village, in the northern province of Cao Bang. — AFP photos



A Nung ethnic woman weaving on a traditional loom at Phuc Sen village.

Fast fashion to ethical couture: Vietnam's design evolution



A Nung ethnic woman making textile fibre from cotton using traditional methods.



A woman working at a local embroidery workshop in the central city of Hue.



(From left) Designer Thao Vu watching as Nung ethnic women weave textile fibers using traditional methods at Phuc Sen village.

Long a bastion for cheap, fast-fashion manufacturing, a new crop of designers are trying to transform the Made in Vietnam label and save the country's rich ethnic heritage in the process. In the remote hills of Cao Bang, some 300 kilometers north of the capital Hanoi, Vietnamese designer Thao Vu is gleefully dropping swaths of hand-spun cotton into a large bucket of fermented indigo leaves. Her label, Kilomet 109, is at the forefront of Vietnam's new 'ethical fashion' movement—an approach to design that seeks to maximize benefit to communities while minimizing environmental harm.

The 38-year-old designer has been tapping into this growing global trend by working with some of Vietnam's 54 ethnic minority groups, each of which have their own unique textiles and traditional clothing designs. "I learn the techniques from them," Thao told AFP, explaining how she has drawn inspiration from Nung women in Phuc Sec village, who use natural dyes and weave on hand looms. She then adds "a more modern, contemporary touch" to style garments that will appeal to clients in fashion capitals like Berlin and New York. But bridging this divide isn't always easy.

Thao said the Nung women were shocked when she suggested experimenting with colors outside of their traditional dark indigo shade. "They looked at me like 'what'? And they said: 'if you lived here you wouldn't find a husband,'" Thao told AFP, explaining that crafting the perfect dark indigo fabric dye is a prerequisite for marriage in their community. Thao persevered, and now uses traditional roots and leaves to color organic silk, cotton, and hemp, which are also manufactured from scratch, in a range of hues from deep indigo to pale grey, and earthy oranges and browns.

Returning to the roots

Vietnam has in recent decades become a hub for massive garment factories that churn out reams of cheap clothes as quickly as possible for fashion giants like Zara, Mango and H&M. The multi-billion dollar sector has helped drive impressive economic growth but also drawn criticism for weak environmental and labor rights regulations. Yet products made by the country's traditional fabric spinners are inherently eco friendly—made with natural dyes and textiles, not harsh chemicals or synthetic fibers. And there is not a sweat shop in sight.

"At first, I just wanted to keep the traditional techniques alive... but then I realized we need to be concerned about the environmental, ethical side (of fashion) now or it will be too late," said Thao. The designer has already attracted accolades, winning international design awards and selling her wares to high-fashion buyers. The local women who work with her, such as Luong Thi Kim, 40, say they too have benefited from the collaboration. "Before I weaved for personal use but now ... our weaving products can go to other countries. I want to earn money to raise my children," Kim told AFP.

Over in central Hue—the former imperial capital of Vietnam—another label is also helping local artisans market their skills to the global fashion industry. Fashion4Freedom founder LanVy Nguyen, a former refugee who fled post-war Vietnam in a wooden boat and forged a successful Wall Street career, returned to Vietnam in 1998 and decided to use her venture capital acumen to save ancient artisanal techniques.

"We knew these people had generations of skill, we just had to unlock it so the market could appreciate it as we did," LanVy told AFP. Fashion4Freedom stepped in to help, teaching traditional woodworkers, who carve ornate pillars in pagodas or local houses, to learn how to make platform shoes that cost some \$600 a pair. Do Quang Thanh, a carpenter, said the idea of making shoes initially struck him as "strange" but he is glad he gave it a try. "In the past I carved traditional wooden shoes now I carve shoes in a modern style—I love the job," he said.



Nung ethnic women washing dyed materials in a spring at Phuc Sen village.

Foreign buyers keen

Jimmy Lepore Hagen, vice president of strategy for high-end US clothing line Nanette Lapore, said he's considering a collaboration with Fashion4Freedom, which also sells luxury jewelry and apparel. "Taking a brand's idea (and) design aesthetic, and matching that with people who have an incredible culture and history and are trying to build something new and exciting for US market is a real opportunity," he added. The head of Vietnam's handicraft export association, Le Ba Ngoc, sees linking Vietnamese artisans with overseas fashion designers as a chance to embrace more sophisticated designs—what he says is the weak link in the handicraft chain. "It's the major factor holding back foreign and domestic sales," he told AFP. Ensuring consistent quality is also a problem. But his organization is trying to work with ethnic groups to find ways to modernize their techniques—such as developing an indigo powder dye—while still remaining true to their style. — AFP



Nung ethnic women preparing textile fibres for weaving.



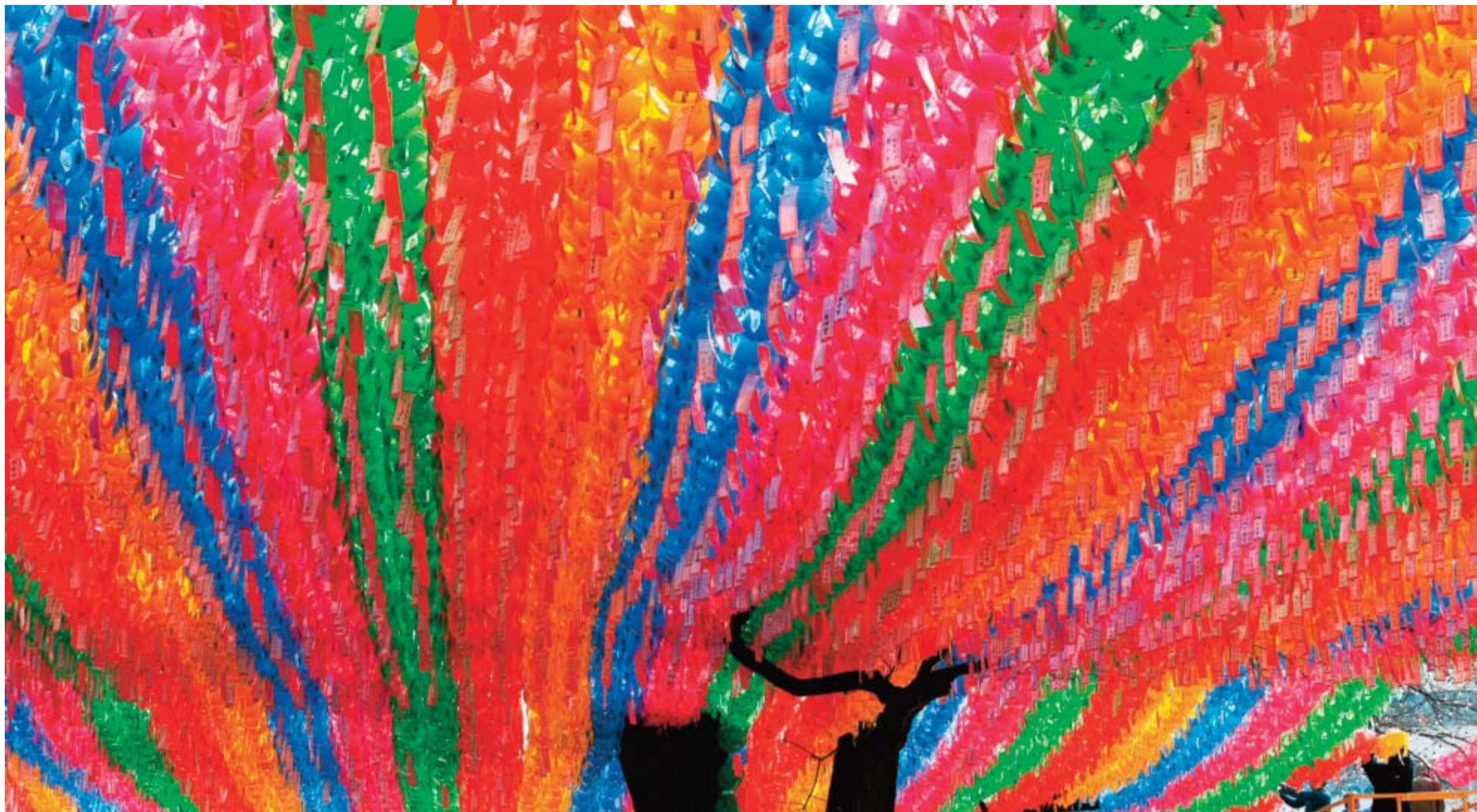
Designer Thao Vu, 38, displaying dried leaves, roots and beans used to dye materials at her home studio.



A model displaying a new creation by designer Thao Vu at her Kilomet 109 studio in Hanoi.



Indigo leaves used to dye materials by Nung ethnic women.



Workers attach the lanterns to prepare for the upcoming celebration of Buddha's birthday on May 14 at the Jogye temple in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday. Many Buddhists visit the temple across the nation to celebrate the birthday and pray with their wishes. — AP

Summer-camp weddings offer nostalgia, outdoor adventure



Bride Bartolone on her wedding day in Conneaut, Ohio.

Hiking boots, bug spray, long underwear - not your typical packing list for a wedding. Unless it's a summer-camp wedding, a hot new twist on the destination wedding. Such nuptials are increasingly popular, wedding planners say, and offer a mix of nostalgia and adventure. "I was never that girl who grew up dreaming about her wedding dress, about her wedding day," said Lorelle Binder, who got married last year at Camp Highlander in Horse Shoe, North Carolina.

Instead of engaging in the quintessential hotel or ballroom revelry, Binder's guests spent the weekend doing traditional camp activities, including a color war. "Everyone there was able to relive their childhood, and that was something we could give to our guests," Binder said. There are many reasons for the summer-camp wedding, but couples often choose it because they love the outdoors. "It's one of the newer trends, and I don't think it's going anywhere," said Tonia Adleta, a Philadelphia wedding planner.

Destination weddings accounted for 1 out of every 4 nuptial ceremonies, according to a 2014 report from The Knot, which studies industry trends. Summer-camp weddings can capture the same appeal as a far-flung destination, but in a low-key and often low-cost way. "What happens is that the wedding weekend turns into a family reunion, or it's a time for the families from both sides to really get to know each other," said Drew Taylor, who co-owns the 120-acre Kingsley Pines Camp in Raymond, Maine. Taylor said the camp has hosted about 10 weddings a year in recent years, and the number has been growing.

Extended families typically "come in on Friday and stay all weekend," she said. "Their meals and activities are provided." David Blacker, who got married in 2009 at a camp

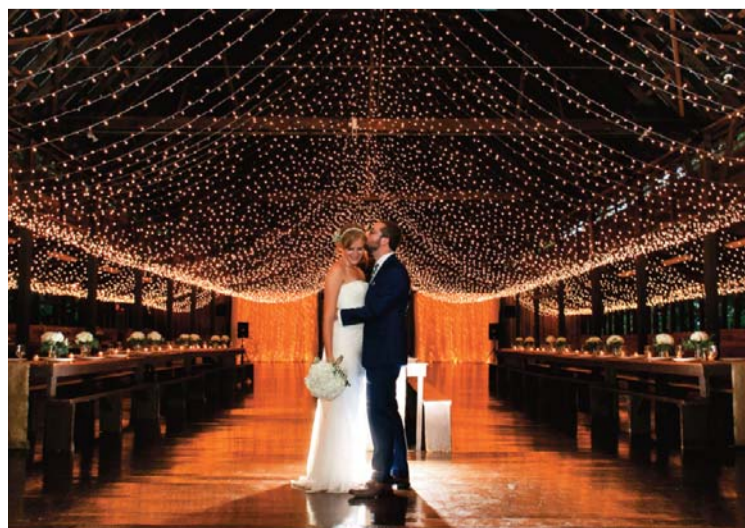
called Club Getaway in Kent, Connecticut, said he saved money: "The cabin was a fraction of the price a hotel would have been." For many couples, a camp wedding simply sounds like fun. "We weren't sure people were going to be game for this - showering in a public shower and all," said Alison Bartolone, who got married at Sheldon Calvary Camp in Conneaut, Ohio, in 2013. But her guests "were enthusiastic and had a lot of fun with it," she said. One group even broke into the camp's costume closet one evening. "It was old-school fun," Bartolone said.

Mandee and Thor Morgan, who now live in Denver, met while working as counselors at Camp Highlander. They got married at the camp for sentimental reasons, and also because it let them incorporate their outdoorsy lifestyle into the big day. "The biggest draw for us was that it wouldn't be a quick night when we wouldn't get to see anyone for more than a couple seconds," Thor Morgan said. "It was a long weekend where people could do activities they had never done before and all in an outdoors setting." A summer camp also can offer some relief from the typical pre-wedding frenzy.

"What camp allowed us to do was to forget about the little tiny details, such as the table settings, signs, lighting, and focus more on our friends, family and the beauty of Maine," said Emily Tong, who married Cory Elowe in 2014 at Camp-O-At-Ka in Sebago, Maine. Of course, camp weddings aren't for everyone. Bad weather can cast a pall, especially if you insist on wearing stiletto heels through the mud. "If you're the type of couple that wants to be at the Ritz or the Four Seasons, a camp wedding is definitely not going to work for you," said Adleta. "It's a completely different animal." —AP



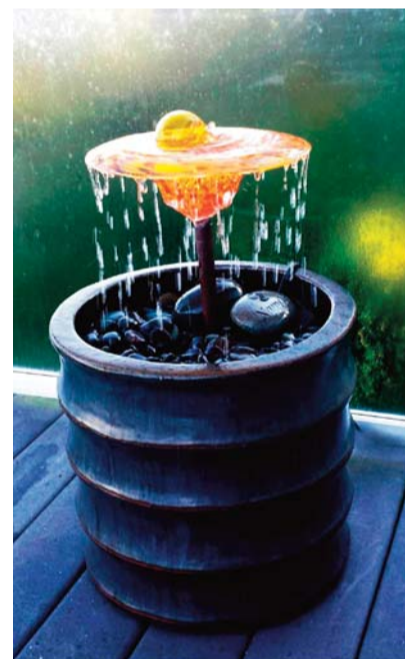
Guests of Mandee and Thor Morgan waiting their turn on a zip line platform during the wedding reception at Camp Highlander in Horse Shoe, NC.



Mandee and Thor Morgan during their wedding reception at Camp Highlander in Horse Shoe, NC. Summer-camp weddings are a hot new twist on the destination wedding. —AP photos



Photo shows a glass flower by Seattle area glass blower Barbara Sanderson, who crafts beautiful flowers, fountains and sculptures that can be placed in gardens and water features. — AP photos



A glass fountain by Seattle area glass blower Barbara Sanderson.

Garden art can bring drama and design to outdoor spaces

If you came across any of Barbara Sanderson's work in a garden, you might think you'd stepped into Alice's Wonderland. The Seattle-based glass blower crafts flowers, arbors, lights and fountains for natural settings, aiming to create a magical, otherworldly tableau. "I love to add another dimension to what already exists," she says. Art created for the outdoors can bring drama and design to a garden or patio. Sheila Jeffrey, a landscape designer from Collingwood, Ontario, suggests thinking of outdoor space as you would a room, with a floor, walls and ceiling.

"As with interior art, consider the overall theme or feel of the space when you're choosing outdoor accents," she says. "Walls or fences are often overlooked and are a great place for an interesting focal point." For wall art, consider vintage objects, such as picture frames, mirrors, cast iron grates, architectural elements or antique signs as outdoor wall art.

Arrange groupings of small vessels like planted terra cotta pots, buckets or paint cans. Put themed vignettes on shelves. "Vintage '60s metal wall sculptures are a favorite of mine," says Jeffrey, "and you can often find them at yard sales. Clear-coat them with a good exterior-grade polyurethane before displaying." Sanderson's inspiration for making outdoor pieces comes from fond memories of visiting her grandfather's English garden as a teenager. "I spent some time gazing into his pond, appreciating the soothing sound that water makes in a garden setting," Sanderson recalls. "I returned home determined to create a water feature for myself. That was the beginning of my focus on gar-

den artwork." She forms glass into colorful, plump little birds that can be placed in a found nest, or in one of Sanderson's spun-glass nests. Pitcher plants in vibrant hues of gold and carmine, mounted on copper rods, catch the rain. There are Seussian fiddlehead ferns and mushrooms, as well as colorful "glaciers" rigged with lights to line a path or poolside.

And for a pond or birdbath, Sanderson has created the "bee preserver," a glass ball studded with glass nubs so that bees have something on which to rest when they're drinking.

Margie Grace, a landscape designer in Santa Monica, California, often incorporates salvaged elements like driftwood, branches and stones into her projects. They can be used to make mosaics and interesting screens. She used an old metal bed as a planter, with flowers as the "pillows" and "quilt." Her fondness for functional art led her to create a "canalito," a canal made from stones that carries away storm water, while winding artfully around trees and beds.

"Art can evoke the very nature of a place," she says, pointing out a kinetic sculpture in a hill-top garden that mimics the pelicans soaring off a nearby bluff. If your balcony or backyard has no view, consider one of Gizaun Art's wooden wall panels. The Portland, Oregon-based studio uses all-weather, ultraviolet, translucent inks to apply photo images of flowers and landscapes onto red cedar boards, ready for hanging. Designs include sunflowers, lighthouses and landscapes. —AP