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INDIA TEMPLE FIRE KILLS MORE THAN 100

KOLLAM, India: A massive explosion and blaze apparently sparked by a stray firework during an unauthorized display killed over 100 people and injured scores more at a temple in southern India yesterday. Thousands had packed overnight into the Hindu temple complex in Kerala state where the firework is thought to have landed on a stockpile of others, triggering a huge blast that tore through concrete buildings.

"It came like a storm, throwing everyone to the ground. There were bodies all over the place and the injured were writhing in pain," said Anish Kumar, who had gone with his friends to see the display at the Puttingal Devi temple in Kollam district. "I was horrified to see hundreds of men and women on the ground lifeless," said Kumar, who lost one of his friends in the disaster. Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the accident as "heart-rending and shocking beyond words" and toured the complex and met the injured in a hospital.

"The incident is so grave that it is very difficult to describe in words. People who were 200 metres away were also hurt," Modi said. "And right now the doctor was telling me that some of the blasts were such that some peoples' bodies were blown apart." A team of specialist doctors were deployed from New Delhi amid reports of horrific burn injuries.

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PARAVUR, India: Indian officials and bystanders gather beside a collapsed building as they try and rescue survivors after an explosion and fire at the Puttingal Devi Temple early yesterday. — AFP

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry Youssef Al-Ali yesterday issued a total freeze on consumer prices to prevent any "artificial" hikes as the Assembly prepares to approve raising power charges and the government plans to raise petrol prices. The preemptive ministry move seeks to ensure that prices of consumer goods remain unchanged after the increase in power and petrol prices, which is expected to take place this year.

To ensure prices are not hiked, the ministry plans to activate price control centers and increase the number of staff and working hours, the minister said. Ali however said that merchants can raise the prices of their goods only after presenting their cases to the ministry and getting approval.

The National Assembly is scheduled to debate a draft law tomorrow to raise electricity charges but the plan is facing stiff opposition from lawmakers, mostly to prevent any raises for citizens. An ever-increasing number of MPs are seeking to prevent any tariff increases for Kuwaiti citizens but allowing the hike for foreigners and commercial activities.

Although the Assembly's financial affairs committee rejected the government bill which stipulated high increases and set the first 6,000 kilowatts without any rate increase for private houses, or Kuwaiti citizens, MPs are preparing to reject any increase for citizens but allow the hikes for apartments, or foreigners, and commercial activities.

Continued on Page 13



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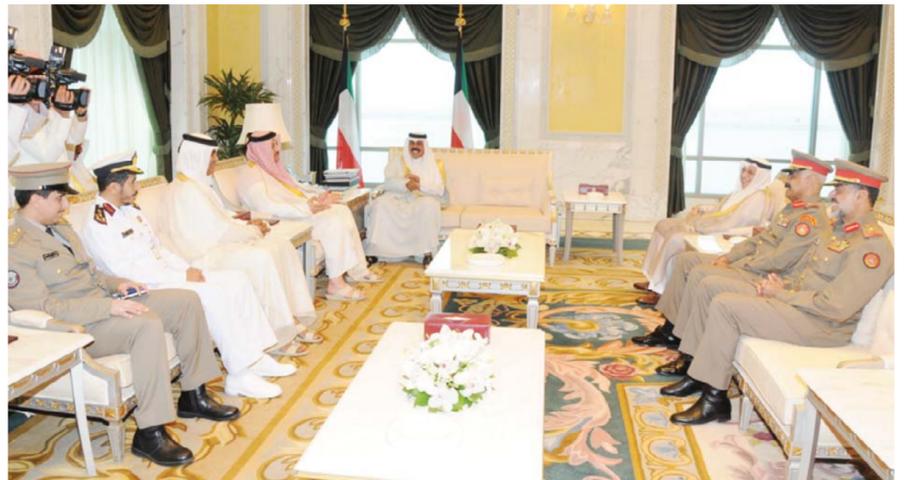
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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Qatar's Defense Minister Dr Khaled bin Mohammad Al-Attiyah.—Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah with Qatar's Defense Minister Dr Khaled Bin Mohammad Al-Attiyah.

AMIR, CROWN PRINCE MEET QATARI DEFENSE MINISTER

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Seif Palace yesterday Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah accompanied by Minister of State for Defense Affairs in Qatar Dr Khaled bin Mohammad Al-Attiyah on the occasion of his visit to the country. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Earlier, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Acting Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Acting Speaker of the National Assembly Mubarak Al-Khurainej.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah accompanied by the visiting Qatari Defense Minister. The meeting was attended by the Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Khaled Al-Kheder, Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Sheikh Abdullah Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and Ambassador of Qatar to Kuwait Hamad Bin Ali Al-Henzab.

Also, His Highness the Crown Prince received Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Khurainej, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Khaled Al-Saleh.



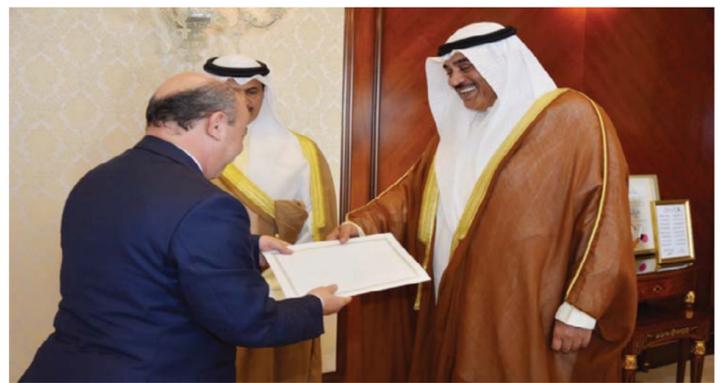
Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Qatar's Defense Minister Dr Khaled Bin Mohammad Al-Attiyah.

His Highness also received Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Bilateral ties

Later yesterday, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled met with the visiting Qatari Minister, in attendance of Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah. The two sides lauded bilateral ties between Kuwait and Qatar. The meeting was attend-

ed by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah, Lieutenant General Khadher Lieutenant General Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nawaf, Assistant Foreign Minister at the Foreign Minister's office Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for the GCC affairs Ambassador Nasser Haji Al-Mezyen, and a number of officials from the Foreign and Defense Ministries. Furthermore, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah met with his Qatari counterpart, and they discussed issues of common interest.



Acting Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives the credentials of the newly-appointed Algerian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulhamid Abdawi.

The meeting also shed light on boosting cooperation on the military front, the Defense Ministry's moral guidance directorate and public relations said. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also received the credentials of the newly-appointed Algerian Ambassador to Kuwait Abdulhamid Abdawi. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled wished the envoy success in carrying out his duties.

Jarallah attends summit

In other news, Jarallah leaves for

Turkey today to attend a preparatory ministerial meeting for the 13th edition of the Islamic Summit Conference. Jarallah is chairing the Kuwaiti delegation at the conference; his delegation consists of Assistant Foreign Minister at the Deputy Foreign Minister's Office Ambassador Ayham Al-Omar, Assistant Deputy Foreign Minister for International Organizations Nasser Al-Hain. The Islamic Summit will be held in the capital Istanbul from April 14-15.—KUNA



KUWAIT: Faisal Al-Musawi, chairman of the event's organizing committee (center) and Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Head of the Public Authority for Youth (left) are pictured with Sheikhha Sheikhha Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, Honorary Chairperson of the Kuwait Disabled Sport Club.—Photos by Joseph Shagra

'MOVE TO IMPROVE' DISPLAYS DISABLED PEOPLE'S TALENTS

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: After its success last year, the team of 'Move to Improve,' considered the biggest event to display the talents of people with disabilities, organized a forum again on Saturday at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa. Faisal Al-Musawi, chairman of the organizing committee, said the main goal of this event is to apply the principle of social integration of the disabled. "During the activities of this forum, we aim to deliver our message through practical application onstage, where the disabled will participate with normal people in theatrical and sports performances," he said during the opening ceremony.

"This event is not limited to a particular field. It is an educational, social, entertainment and sports event. This is the second year to hold it and we aim to apply the integration of the disabled in the community. We also aim to spread positivity instead of negativity," stressed Musawi.

Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Head of the Public Authority for Youth (PAY), noted that

this is an awareness event that focuses on talented disabled people. "It aims to highlight the capabilities of people with disabilities and show their abilities to the community, especially those who suffer from social isolation, and to contribute to the discovery of themselves," he pointed out.

"The government aims to bring efforts together to achieve development. The government also, through PAY, invests in the energy of youth to build a generation that's able to carry out their responsibilities. We also make the youth the source for our plans and we work on integrating them in the community without any discrimination," added Mutairi. Popular actors presented a theatrical show, and then repeated it but acting like they have disabilities, to show activities seem much harder when people are disabled. Also, a street fighting Kajukenbo team performed onstage with disabled participants to show that the disabled are able to practice sports as well. The forum also witnessed a competition between people with disabilities and others without disabilities.



A street fighting Kajukenbo team performs onstage.

GHANEM URGES INT'L PARLIAMENTARY ACTION AGAINST 'ISRAELI ARROGANCE'

AIPU CHIEF UPBEAT ABOUT YEMEN TALKS IN KUWAIT

CAIRO: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday that Arab parliaments should seek an organized international parliamentary move to put an end to what he described as the 'Israeli arrogance.' "I urge Arab parliaments to contribute to an international parliamentary move involving the member states of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)...a move that reactivates the role of Arab parliamentary diplomacy towards critical issues, primarily the Palestinian cause," Ghanem addressed the 23th conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU) held at the Cairo-based Arab League.

He voiced confidence that all Arab parliaments can take effective steps in this regard, capitalizing on their broad regional and international relations. In this context, he pointed to the spirit of relentless cooperation and responsibility that was reflected by all Arab parliaments and all practices of altruism and sacrifice during his chairmanship of the AIPU. The Kuwaiti parliament speaker stressed that the Palestinian issue is of paramount significance to the entire Arab world, noting that the AIPU had paid much attention to this issue.

"We have focused during our AIPU presidency on our main issue (Palestine) as we reject defeat from within. Even if we lose our political, military and psychological battles, our defeat at the Arab psychological level is a serious and disastrous matter," Ghanem argued. Therefore, he urged the new AIPU presidency to continue setting top priority to the Palestinian cause, and to give much support to the struggle of the Palestinian people.

The 23th conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), which kicked off at the Arab League yesterday, revolves around the role that can be played by Arab parliaments to address the region's current risks and challenges and to overhaul legislations and laws in the Arab world.

Yemen dialogue

Meanwhile, AIPU President and Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri hoped that the Yemeni dialogue meeting due in Kuwait on April 18 would be successful. Speaking at the conference, Berri said the choosing of Kuwait for hosting



CAIRO: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem (right) and Secretary-General of the Arab League Nabil Al-Araby attend the 23th conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU).—KUNA

the UN-sponsored event reflected the international community's confidence in His Highness the Amir, government and people of Kuwait. Kuwait is set to host the gathering in the hope of resolving the ongoing crisis in Yemen and stopping bloodshed there, with UN representatives attending. Berri called for creating an Arab parliamentary committee led by Ghanem with the goal of providing effective support to the central Palestinian issue.

Secretary-General of the Arab League Nabil Al-Araby meanwhile called on Arab parliaments to exert more efforts to help governments in response to the current crises and problems that pose a threat to Arab national security and stability. Addressing the AIPU conference, Araby underscored the significant role by Arab parliaments towards reform and development plans in Arab countries with a view to fulfilling the expectations and hopes of their people.

He also called for adopting a uniform parliamentary strategy to move internationally so as to throw weight behind the current Arab issues, chiefly the Palestinian cause. The chief of the Arab League further emphasized that more concerted Arab efforts need to be exerted in order to find effective and immediate solutions to the crises of Syria, Yemen, Libya and Iraq.

Serious challenges

Earlier, Egyptian Parliament Speaker Ali Abdull sounded the alarm about the serious challenges the Arab region is facing, chiefly terrorism which he termed as a "cancer that threatens the present and future of Arab countries."

"The spirit of Arab solidarity should be restored in order to address challenges and crises haunting common Arab action amid very critical developments at both regional and international levels," Abdull addressed the conference. He said such challenges and developments, mainly terrorism and terrorist groups, are seriously impacting on all Arab countries.

He added that the conference came amid very complicated circumstances regionally and internationally, cautioning against growing extremist groups that sought to capitalize on unstable conditions in several Arab countries.

Therefore, the Egyptian parliament speaker maintained, anti-terrorism Arab agreements and protocols should be put in place with a view to drying out the financial sources of terrorism and hunting terror criminals.

He also stressed the significance of creating a strong political will to find effective solutions to the crises of Syria, Yemen and Libya, reiterating Egypt's call for maintaining the territorial integrity of these countries and fulfilling the expectations and hopes of their people.

Ghanem honored

In other news, Berri honored Kuwaiti Ghanem in appreciation for his efforts during his three-year term of AIPU presidency. A ceremony was held to award Ghanem on the sidelines of the conference, with attendance of Araby. Kuwaiti MP Faisal Al-Shaya was also honored during the ceremony in recognition of his efforts in supporting and reactivating the AIPU.

Meanwhile, Ghanem, the outgoing AIPU president, was awarded by Palestinian National Council Speaker Salim Al-Zanoun thanks to his significant role in the promotion of the Palestinian issue internationally. Shaya, a member of the AIPU executive committee, was also honored by the Palestinian member of parliament.—KUNA



Palestinian National Council Speaker Salim Al-Zanoun honors Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem.

Correction

Kuwait Times would like to apologize. We incorrectly stated in an article published 8 April 2016, 'Mad World' after 'Man's World', that Artist Shurooq Amin has three children. The correct number of children is four.



KUWAIT: MP Dr Yousef Al-Zalzal (right) attends seminar, themed 'Kuwait present challenges and future horizons.' — KUNA

GOVT, PARLIAMENT DRAFTING LAWS TO SHORE UP ECONOMY: LAWMAKER

KUWAIT: The Government and the National Assembly are currently working out a set of legislations intended to remedy economic issues, MP Dr Yousef Al-Zalzal affirmed yesterday. "We are seeking to accomplish them in proper time for sake of salvaging the economic conditions that have been deteriorating since years ago," said Dr Zalzal, addressing a seminar, themed 'Kuwait present challenges and future horizons,' organized by the Primary Education Faculty.

Dr Al-Zalzal mentioned some "hurdles and challenges" hindering this approach, namely the State dependence solely on oil revenues, over many years in the past, and multiple changes of governments and parliaments. However, the parliament due to the political stability, witnessed in the past three years, managed to endorse a package of legislations, as the Government succeeded in accomplishing many development ventures. He also noted in this respect that the government moved ahead on that path after placing the right man at the right post and grilling complacent and slack officials.

As to effects of declining oil prices, he cited an affirmation by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah that they would not affect the State development schemes. The parliamentary priorities committee is playing a crucial and primary role in following up on the projects, staying in

touch with officials in charge of each of the ventures. Now, the parliament compels the Government to reveal number of the ventures, cost of each one, ahead of adopting the State Budget, he explained.

Meanwhile, Dr Mohammad Al-Rumeihi, the former dean of the Sociology Faculty, called on the State to craft "a clear roadmap for cementing the national belonging, fomenting the rule of law and ensuring citizens equality."

The gathering, attended by MPs, academics and experts, addressed national accomplishments after Kuwait was designated by the UN as the 'Humanitarian Center,' as well as its celebration as the Kuwait Capital of Islamic Culture for 2016, in addition to its quest to be transformed into a regional financial hub.

Conferees are also debating various issues on development, citizenship, economic and financial conditions and media impact on development. At the gathering inauguration, Dr Issa Al-Meshaiee, Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), addressed a statement on behalf of the Director General, hailing His Highness the Amir for protecting Kuwait in face of external crises.

His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, had been designated the 'Humanitarian Leader' due to his leading role in aiding people in need worldwide. — KUNA



KFH CONSIDERS SOCIAL DIMENSION IN FINANCING SMES: CEO AL-NAHEDH

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) CEO Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh received delegates of "Youth Empowerment" at KFH headquarters where he applauded their concrete efforts in hosting a number of global experts who reveal their experiences and success story for the youth at the youth empowerment symposium held annually.

He confirmed that development can be achieved by empowering the Kuwaiti youth who make up the largest category and are the key pillars of making progress and sustainability, indicating that the investment in the youth is the best buy for the present and the future.

Nahedh called on further support to the youth in efforts to pave the way for them for further contributions in the development of their country. This grants them the opportunity to play greater role in boosting the economy and achieving the comprehensive development. He

appreciated the great efforts exerted by the "Youth Empowerment" project "Tamkeen" and the recognition it receives from the official authorities. Nahedh affirmed KFH's continuing efforts to offer the financing to the small and medium enterprises SMEs in collaboration with the concerned authorities in accordance with the terms and conditions. KFH is keen on maintaining its pioneering position in financing the SMEs segment taking into account the social and development dimensions. This segment is very important and it contributes in reducing the unemployment rates and diversifying the income resources.

Meanwhile, Tamkeen delegation praised the significant role of KFH in energizing the market and supporting the national youth. They continued "KFH has a long track record in supporting the youth's initiatives and offering them job opportunities that suit their qualifications."



NCCAL TO PROMOTE TOLERANCE MODERATION DURING REGIONAL EVENT

KUWAIT AS CAPITAL OF ISLAMIC CULTURE IN 2016

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) held a press conference yesterday at its premises to announce the upcoming 'Kuwait: Capital of Islamic Culture in 2016.' The National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature (NCCAL) will take advantage of Kuwait being the Capital of Islamic Culture in 2016 to improve the image of Islam and Muslims, which have been linked to terrorism," said Mohammed Al-Asousi, Assistant Secretary-General of NCCAL.

During his speech, Asousi said that the most important priorities of this honor will be to highlight the issue of tolerance and moderation as well as focus on the idea of humanitarian work. He added that Kuwait was chosen for humanitarian action and naming His Highness the Amir a leader of humanitarian



KUWAIT: Mohammed Al-Asousi, Assistant Secretary-General of NCCAL speaks during the press conference. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

work by the United Nations to highlight Kuwait's role in communicating with the people all over the world, regardless of religion or nationality. He explained that this celebration

is an opportunity to highlight the civilized side of Kuwait and diverse cultural contributions. Pointing out that the NCCAL is planning on a joint coordination between the council, governmental institutions and private firms to organize the national event.

"The activities for the next three months include events and workshops covering all cultural aspects, including art, children's movies, books, lectures, music and exhibitions on Arab and Islamic heritage," Asousi added.

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) chose Kuwait as 'the Capital of Islamic Culture for 2016' to be one of the three celebrated cities as the capital of Islamic culture of the year along with Maldives and Sierra Leone. ISESCO was established in 1981 and is concerned the fields of education, science, culture and communication in the Islamic countries.



BADRAN AMONG BEST 100 CEOs IN REGION

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced that its CEO Engineer Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran made the list of the Best 100 Chief Executive Officers (CEO) in the region for 2015.

Out of the 800 publicly listed companies on the regional stock exchange, Badran was ranked 57th in the annual 100 best influential personality list. The announcement was made during the TOP CEO Awards ceremony held recently in Dubai city, that was jointly organized by INSEAD Business School and Trends magazine.

Badran was recognized for his inspiring vision and outstanding leadership as the CEO of the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait, and reaping achievements based on four pillars: growth, profitability, sustainability and transparency.

VIVA's CEO, Engineer Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran expressed his gratification with this achievement and credited it to the tremendous efforts made by the company's employees and the trust of its clients and shareholders. He stated: "The success of any CEO depends on having a strong team to support him in his work. I am deeply honored by this recognition and proud to made the BEST 100 CEOs in the Gulf region. One person cannot accomplish everything alone. This would not have been possible without the devotion, commitment and loyalty of the VIVA family while performing their work and facilitating the services offered by VIVA and made it the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait."

Badran concluded: "We are looking forward to our future as one team, reaffirming our commitment to offering the best customer service, and devoting our wide experience and knowledge in the local market to our clients while building on our leading capabilities and track record of success."



KUWAIT ENERGY AND IRAQ SIGN EXPORT SALES DEAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait Energy announced yesterday the signing of Iraq's Block 9 Export Oil Sales Agreement. The agreement was signed between a consortium led by Kuwait Energy and the State Oil Marketing Company (SOMO). SOMO is an Iraqi national company responsible for marketing Iraq's oil, Kuwait Energy said in a statement. It added that the agreement puts in place the mechanism by which Kuwait Energy will be paid for services in Block 9, Iraq.

The signing ceremony took place in SOMOs Baghdad Head Quarters and was attended by Majid Al-Hilfi representing SOMO, Sara Akbar, CEO, Kuwait Energy, Ibrahim Fathy, Assistant Deputy CEO for Development and Reservoir Production Department, Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation and Asri Mousa, representing Dragon Oil Holdings Ltd from the partners side. The agreement will enable allocation of crude cargoes to be sold in compensation for the services the consortium is rendering in

Block-9. Kuwait Energy is expected to be allocated its first cargo of oil entitlement for Kuwait Energy's working interest share from Fahaa-1 well covering the production of oil from October 2015 to March 2016.

"Today marks an important milestone in Kuwait Energy's history and its Iraq operations in particular, as this agreement will facilitate receiving revenue from our Iraq operations after five years of Kuwait Energy's work and investment in Iraq," said Sara Akbar.

"It wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the excellent relationship and cooperation between the consortium, Iraq's Ministry of Oil and the South Oil Company, which maintained focus and discipline allowing production start-up from this important asset in one year from the discovery."

In 2013, Kuwait Energy was awarded the Block 9 Exploration, Development Production Service Contract (EDPSC) in southern Iraq as

operator and currently holds a 60 percent participating interest.

First exploration well in Block 9 was spud in March 2014 which led to significant oil discoveries in September and December of the same year. Oil production commenced from the block in October 2015, only a year after the first discovery was made.

Kuwait Energy is an independent oil and gas company actively engaged in the exploration, appraisal, development and production of hydrocarbons. Kuwait Energy's MENA portfolio consists of 10 exploration, development and production assets across Egypt, Iraq, Yemen and Oman of which it operates seven assets. Its working interest reserves are 671 mmboe as at 31 December 2014 and 2015 average daily working interest production was 25.0 kboepd. With a main office in Kuwait, Kuwait Energy has area offices in Cairo, Sanaa, Baghdad and Basra. — KUNA

DATABASE FOR KUWAITIS WISHING TO WORK IN PRIVATE SECTOR

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: In an unprecedented step in Kuwait and the Middle East, Secretary General of the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) Fauzi Al-Majdali announced launching a project to establish a national expertise guide through which information about all citizens who managed to achieve their aspirations in both the public and the private sector could be documented. Majdali added that the project would

help provide a database about Kuwaitis wishing to work in the private sector through filling special forms and applications so that they could be guided to proper job opportunities. Majdali added the guidebook would be divided according to qualifications and field of business, industry or IT. He added that the project is also accessible online through the MGRP website, where Kuwaiti applicants could find the conditions needed to register for the program as well as ads about vacancies.

CALLS FOR TIMETABLE TO CURB UNEMPLOYMENT

CAIRO: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Subaih Al-Subaih called for setting a timetable to overcome unemployment in the Arab World. This came in a statement the minister yesterday on the sidelines of the 43rd Conference of the ILO held in Cairo under the theme 'development challenges and ALO expectations.'

Subaih emphasized the momentousness of the ALO session, April 10-17, coming at a time of accelerating Arab, regional and international changes that dictate huge challenges on the region, political, social and economic. Unemployment is a major issue on the agenda of the ALO conference, the minister said reiterating necessity of joining Arab efforts to counter the problem. Subaih said that the Gulf markets are open for all 'Arab brothers.' — KUNA



KUWAIT: Health ministry officials attend the opening ceremony.

'BEAT DIABETES' HIGHLIGHTS WORLD HEALTH DAY CELEBRATIONS '40,000 DIABETICS IN KUWAIT'

By Abdellatif Al-Sharaa

KUWAIT: Diabetes is one of the fastest spreading diseases worldwide, as World Health Organization (WHO) statistics show diabetics around the world number more than 350 million, and expected to double in 20 years. This was stated by Health Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Affairs Dr Majida Al-Qattan after she launched the ministry's celebration of World Health Day yesterday. This year's event adopted the slogan 'Beat Diabetes' to spread awareness about the disease, which has become known as 'the era's epidemic.'

Qattan said diabetes is also one of the causes of early death in most countries due to higher risks of getting cardiovascular diseases, bearing in mind that it caused 1.5 million deaths in 2012, and WHO expects it to be in seventh place among the main causes of death in 2030. Qattan said diabetes does not only cause a large number of deaths, but its complications are considered a hindrance for development and production, because of blindness, amputations and renal failure.

Spread rate

Qattan said Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are considered among the highest in the spread rate of the disease and the region's countries occupy top places in the rate of new diabetes cases. As for Kuwait, the International

Diabetes Federation (IDF) estimated the number of adults who have diabetes at 40,000 in 2015, and Kuwait occupies third place in Type 1 cases among children and adolescents under 15 years of age, as the number of new cases is estimated at 37.1 for every 100,000, while IDF estimates the number of undiagnosed cases in Kuwait at 140,000.

Qattan said deaths due to diabetes made up 4 percent of deaths in Kuwait in 2014, and besides the human loss, the cost of treating diabetes patients in Kuwait is \$563 per individual annually, which constitutes a heavy burden on the state's budget due to the number of those who have the disease.

Dr Qattan said despite those terrifying numbers, the 'Beat Diabetes' slogan is a goal that can be reached, as Type 2 diabetes, which represents 90 percent of cases, can be prevented by adopting a healthy diet and regular physical exercise, while maintaining a healthy weight and avoiding smoking. She said it was noticed that there is a high number of cases of Type 2 diabetes among children, as this condition represents half of the diagnosed cases among children in some countries because of obesity and idleness. She said as for those with diabetes, defeating it by living with it and preventing its complications by early detection.

Epidemic

Meanwhile, Director of the Nursing Institute Wael Hamad said that diabetes has become an

epidemic in countries of middle and low income. She added that out of the Nursing Institute's interest in following all what is new in medical research, officials decided to hold the activity in cooperation with the health ministry, which has vast experience in dealing with such diseases. He said the activity deals with everything related to this disease through various lectures and workshops by an elite group of specialists on means of preventing diabetes, in addition on how to manage means of its treatment to prevent its complications. Hamada said all those efforts contribute to reaching a higher goal, which calls for reducing the number of early deaths as a result of non-infectious diseases by one third by 2030.

Major cause

Head of the Health Ministry Information Office Dr Ghaliya Al-Mutairi said diabetes is a major cause of death in Kuwait, as it represents four percent of deaths, and caused the deaths of 330 persons aged 30-69 in 2015, and the deaths of 500 persons over 70, and that males represent 62 percent of these deaths. Mutairi asked citizens and expats to take responsibility in defeating diabetes by adopting healthy lifestyles that inhibit the disease, most important of which is having a healthy diet and exercise of a minimum of 30 minutes a day, five days a week, monitor body weight and refrain from smoking. She also asked diabetics to carry out periodic tests as recommended by doctors.



Al-Sanabel Al-Thahabiya is recognized for their contribution.



Sebamed's booth at the celebration of World Health Day.



Sebamed staff demonstrate products to visitors.



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CONFERENCE TO SHOW HOW STRUGGLE LEADS TO SUCCESS: SHEIKHA INTISAR

KUWAIT: 'Think, Work, Live Positive' is a conference for everyone's struggle, said Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah, Head of Al-Nowair Initiative. This year's 'Think, Work, Live Positive' seminar and workshops will be held on the 23rd and 24th of April at the Gulf University of Science and Technology (GUST). The conference is designed to help attendees discover that struggle leads us to success and not to frustration and negativity as widely believed. After all, struggle was the motive behind the success of many successful people.

Struggle is inevitable

"Struggle is inevitable," added Sheikha Intisar. "No one can deny that struggles occur in everyone's lives. But the difference between people who are making a difference in the community is that they see where the opportunities are, and are always learning to gain life and practical experiences. On the other side, complainers see a harsh and gray life when conflict arises in work or life and they decide to give up. New scientific studies have proved that struggle is one of the biggest factors affecting successes in our lives. At 'Think, Work, Live Positive,' one will discover tools how we can use struggle to further and improve our personal lives, our relationships, and humanity in general."

Specialized experts

Sheikha Intisar also pointed out that the lectures and workshops will be offered on the span of two days by a distinguished group of experts in positive psychology like Dr Adam Fraser. A famous author, teacher and researcher in human performance. He has conducted many researches



Sheikha Intisar Al-Sabah

on how to use positive psychology to improve the performance of the workplace. He will be joined by for the first time in Kuwait and the Arab world at large Darren Hill, author of the bestseller "Tough Stuff" who is also one of the most in demand strategist. Attendees will gain tools and solutions that will help them in how to cope and benefit from struggle from leading experts in the field of positive psychology.

Life experiences

Sheikha Intisar also revealed that this year the conference will feature a discussion panel entitled 'the development of mental toughness and pursuing dreams' from three Kuwaiti personalities where we will learn how to increase the strength of the mind to achieve more success in our lives.

The discussion will include the struggles, successes and experiences of the mountaineer Zeid Rifai; Noor Al-Qatami founder and partner of Saveco and its subsidiaries.; Shamlan Al Bahr one of the mentors for many students and businessmen who will share his Journey towards founding The Protégés a program dedicated to the care of young talent in the country.

The positive struggle

Gaya Kruchlik from Al-Nowair Initiative said: "Struggle and how to face it and change it to a positive experience is a subject on which new studies from around the world are starting to emerge. The conference is the first of its kind in the Arab world and the GCC to feature an in depth look at this topic through the experience of world renowned experts on positive psychology. Al-Nowair's mission is to spread a more positive environment, and through this conference we want to create awareness on how we can learn to embrace and love our struggles."

KIB TAKES PART IN 'MY AMBITION DEFEATS MY DISABILITY' EXHIBITION

KUWAIT: Driven by its leading CSR program and aim to participate in the various events that serve the society, especially those activities relating to persons with disabilities, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced its participation in the 'My Ambition Defeats My Disability' exhibition that was held on Wednesday April 13th under the auspices of Minister of Health Dr Ali Al-Obaidi.

On this occasion, the Head of Corporate Communications at KIB, Nawaf Najia stated that the bank has supported numerous CSR initiatives addressed to persons with special needs who are considered key players in the community and are known for their strong will to achieve and excel, and for their vital presence locally and internationally. Therefore, they keep on raising Kuwait's flag high in the Arab world and even on a global scale, in addition to breaking records in various competitions, be it

sports, scientific or art. He added that KIB exerts a great effort to support them financially and morally on one hand, while making sure to accom-



Nawaf Najia

modate people with disabilities into the society and increase social awareness about the positive impact

of their participation in every aspect of the community.

He said that the bank will continue its series of initiatives that serve the society in general, and people with disabilities in particular, which in return will encourage them to defeat their disability and achieve their goals in life. He stressed on the important role of each segment of the society to support persons with special needs to stand up for their rights and well-being at all levels as per the world's best practices, whether advancement, education, technology, healthcare, or social.

Najia praised the key role of the bank's CSR program by carrying out and supporting many CSR initiatives that covered various sectors and activities such as religious, humanitarian, social, charity, sports, health, medical, national, cultural, educational and many more.

Legales

FIRED, THEN REHIRED WITH LOWER SALARY/LESS BENEFITS

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Lower oil prices have had a considerable impact on Kuwait. Therefore it is no surprise that Kuwaiti oil companies are trying to reduce their spending budgets, cutting costs left and right. This is also true for other sectors in Kuwait, where cuts are directly affecting employees and their families. Some employees have faced layoffs and redundancies. Others may see their benefits cut or taken away entirely. This has raised many legal questions and I hope my answers help our readers to better know their rights.

Bankruptcy and termination

Question: My boss recently came to us and told us that because of bankruptcy/restructuring, a few hundred of us will be terminated on the spot without any notice. I do not know what that means. Can we be laid off because the company is losing money? And if so, so we still get our termination indemnity and other benefits?

Fajer: Although private companies have the right to terminate because of bankruptcy, bankruptcy should be a final verdict issued by the Kuwaiti courts as stated in Article 50 (a) of Kuwait labor law 6/2010:

"Article (50) The employment contract shall be deemed terminated in the following events:

- a- If a final verdict was issued declaring bankruptcy of the employer;
- b- If the establishment was permanently closed.

In the event where the establishment is sold, merged with another establishment or transferred by inheritance, donation or other legal action, the work contract shall remain valid under the same conditions and the obligations and rights of the original employer towards the workers shall be transferred to the employer who has taken his place."

Now it is important to state that for those that have a contract with a fixed term (and not renewable, or only renewable with written approval), then a contract could end with the end of its term easily, with no consequences for either party. If the contract has a specified term, then the employer may terminate the employer but must pay him/her three months' salary or have him/her work for another three months.

Rehired by contractor

Question: My boss said that he is going to lay us off and then we shall be rehired by a contractor and therefore lose our benefits. Is this legal?

Fajer: This is a very tough question to be honest with you and I think lawyers (depending on which side they are representing) have different thoughts on the issue. Some (and I personally believe so) say that you are still technically working for the same employer and therefore this seems deceiving to the law, that aims to protect the employee.

Employers are towards this way because they cannot legally reduce an employee's salary as stated in Article 28 of Kuwait Labor Law 5/2010, "Regardless of whether the work contract is for a specific of indefinite term, the remuneration of the worker may not be reduced during the contract validity period. Any agreement to the contrary, whether made before or after the effective date of the contract, shall be deemed null and void because this matter is related to the general order." Employers also cannot take away an employee's benefits that are either agreed upon in the employment contract or are constantly given to the employee. I will give an example. If you have been receiving every year a ticket, then a ticket is obligatory. If you have been receiving a bonus only on the years that the company is profiting, then your bonus is not obligatory.

Other lawyers say that if both parties have agreed to the termination and 'rehiring' by the contractor, and there was consent from both parties then it is legal. I have my doubts on whether the above argument will hold up in court, but to be completely honest with my readers, I do not have experience with a situation that is similar. Regardless, the employee should be paid ALL of his/her benefits, rights, and termination indemnity when the contract is ended and before the employee is "rehired" by the contractor! I also plead to employers to think about the consequences of such behavior and to be compassionate towards their employees, to treat them as humans and not as just another number. I know that companies are commercial entities and that in order to survive, the economy cuts have to be made, but let them be done with compassion, with thought. Let them be done with a thank you. I apologize to my readers that some of my information is being repeated, but I find it vital, in these times to repeat to my readers their rights.

For any legal questions or queries, email ask@fajerthelawyer.com.



KUWAIT: Six people arrested with possession of homebrewed liquor during crackdowns in Farwaniya and Jahra.



People lined up inside a police station to have their IDs checked.

EGYPTIAN INTERPOL HANDS OVER FUGITIVE TO KUWAIT

SCORES ARRESTED IN FARWANIYA, JAHRA CRACKDOWNS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Media Department announced that the Interpol department received a fugitive from its Egyptian counterpart. It said that due to coordination and communications between the interior ministries of Kuwait and

Egypt, Mohammad Al-Mutairi, Saudi, was arrested as he is wanted by Kuwait courts for issuing dud cheques and swindling.

Security campaigns

Farwaniya and Jahra security directorates carried out several campaigns resulting in the arrest of 94 persons. Police also issued 117 citations, confiscated 370 liquor bottles and busted a prostitution gang consisting of two men and three women. Two persons wanted over debts and two others involved in drugs were also arrested. Twenty two residency violators, three with expired residency permits and one drunken person were arrested too.

Traffic campaign

Ahmadi traffic department carried out a campaign that resulted in impounding several vehicles in order to stop traffic violations and eradicate reckless driving by some motorists.

Environment law

The environment supervision and inspection department of the Interior Ministry's environment police division



A policeman inspects the contents of a vehicle's trunk during the campaign.



Drivers stop at a security checkpoint set up during the campaign.

arrested the driver of an industrial leftover tanker while emptying the tanker's load in an open yard in industrial Sulaibiya in violation of the environment law. Patrol officers spotted the driver and arrested him, and samples of the material that were being unloaded were sent to the Environment Public Authority (EPA) for testing.

Violating ads

The Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality announced that the

stores and advertisements supervision department carried out a field tour of the coastal strip of Hawally governorate, resulting in the removal of 32 violating ads, and issued 17 citations. Director of Supervision and Services follow up of the Hawally governorate branch Faleh Saad Al-Otaibi asked citizens and expats to contact the department to ask about conditions and fees with regards to ads, or through the municipality's website, before placing an ad to avoid any legal action.

UNSTABLE WEATHER UNTIL THURSDAY

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait's weather is currently affected by a general state of instability over the Arabian Peninsula and predicted scattered rainfall from tomorrow, Meteorologist Essa Ramadan said. Ramadan also expected unstable weather to prevail until Thursday, noting that rain would mainly fall on the northern borders and Abdaly farms amidst high temperature and humidity till the weekend.

Fake degrees

Minister of Education Bader Al-Essa said a special committee formed by the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) to examine 'fake degrees' was about to conclude its work. Essa expected that a large number of public employees held such fake degrees but hoped his

predictions would be proven wrong. On a different concern, Essa strongly denied referring some of his undersecretaries to compulsory retirement and stressed that those reports were nothing but rumors.

Laborers' cities

A subdivision in the cabinet urged Kuwait Municipality to speed up the process of establishing cities to house expatriate labor forces in order to help eliminate the housing of laborers in private housing areas. The Ministry of Municipality Affairs has been assigned to coordinate with the Partnership Technical Bureau in order to take necessary measures as soon as possible to build the laborers' cities, Fawaz Al-Fadhel, Assistant Secretary General at the Cabinet's preparations and follow-up secretariat, said in a letter sent recently to minister Essa Al-Kandari.

EXPAT WORKERS AT JUSTICE PALACE PROTEST UNPAID WAGES

By Meshal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A number of expatriate laborers working at the Palace of Justice (the courts' complex) went on strike yesterday in protest over not receiving their monthly salaries for three months. Accordingly, a number of lawyers and employees urged the minister to act to resolve the problem, especially since some of them have residency visas that expired two years ago. "How can injustice prevail at the courts' complex?" wondered some lawyers.

Courts' roundup

The criminal court yesterday abstained from

punishing former MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and released him on a KD 5,000 bail and one-year good conduct pledge in a state security case in which he had been accused of promoting false news about the post of His Highness the Crown Prince. Meanwhile, the court of appeal yesterday annulled an earlier verdict sentencing a man accused of smuggling diesel to prison and fined him KD 4,000. Notably, the defendant had been sentenced to prison and a KD 43,000 fine. In another case, the administrative court yesterday annulled the minister of social affairs' decision on dissolving the Yarmouk Co-op's board of directors and returned all the board members to their positions.



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Al-Anbaa

A GOOD START

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

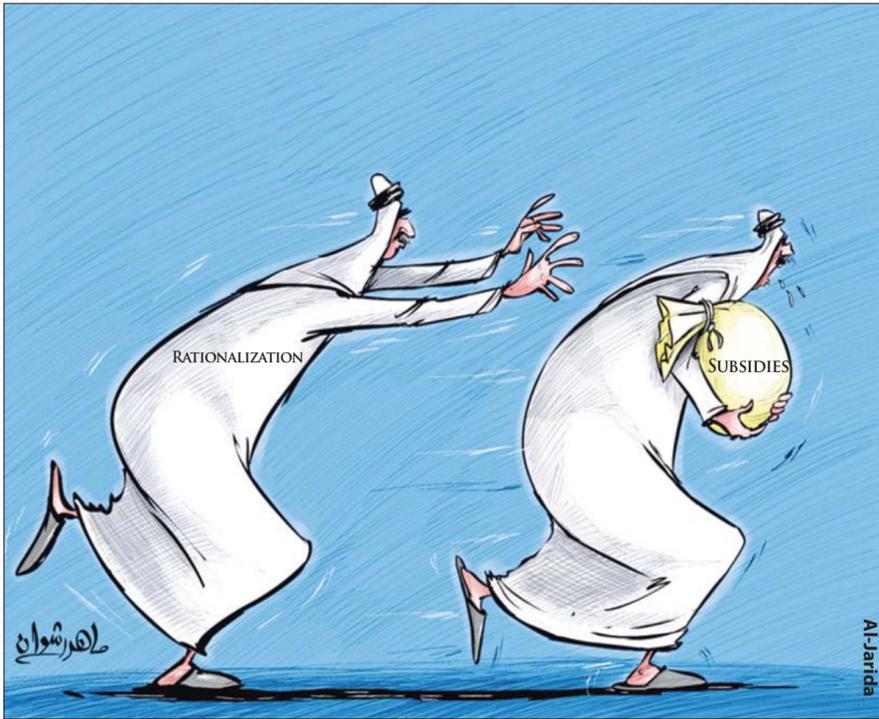
A decision by the Cabinet at the start of April was issued to transfer authority and administration of public libraries from the education ministry with all its employees, buildings, systems and books to the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL). This decision was 100 percent right in my view, and away of what will be transferred and change of plans to revive reading once again, the Secretary General of NCCAL Ali Al-Youha began the process, and this is considered a good start.

At the end of last week, as the decision was issued but not yet announced in the official gazette, I, along with my students, visited the council to look for references on theaters for their graduation papers. We went to the secretary general's office and asked to meet him without prior appointment. He came out of his office to meet us with a smile and hope clear on his face, and I did not know the secret behind this optimism when he welcomed the students and discussed with them the references they wanted.

He called the person responsible for this matter and ordered that all means of research be given to the students and gave them an opportunity to look at all what NCCAL contains, from references and plays that students may find helpful in their research. We went with the official to the concerned department to look into matters, and sure enough, my students found much of what they needed for their research. In fact, new horizons opened up for them when they looked at what Kuwait has in the form of cultural treasures they did not know existed before.

The visit, that was a success, ended, and I excused myself after being sure that they had gathered enough data and resources that will help them in their research, got in my car, and just before leaving, I received a text on my phone that the decision to move the libraries to NCCAL was issued, and then I realized why the happiness the secretary general expressed - that he found the hope he was looking for through the eyes of students. He became happier when he saw those who are seeking to read. I concluded from that happiness that our visit to the NCCAL secretary general is a starting point for what he is planning in order to develop reading and attract the society to libraries, and so, at this point, we must tell the NCCAL secretary general - "good start!"

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Qabas

SHEIKH SALMAN... GOOD JOB!

By Qais Al-Usta

Few ministers make you comfortable, and these are headed by Information Minister and State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. He issued a decision a few days ago to form the Youth Authority's board of directors through a picture of him with the new board.

The good thing, as confirmed by sources, is that most new members of the board of both genders are of ages that do not exceed 35 years, which is something practical as they are closer to understanding what the youth need, as they themselves are youths. They are qualified to prepare suitable plans to protect youth from the waves of extremism and are more able to go along with small businesses the youth need, especially since social media is now full of small businesses by the youth, and supporting those projects and contributing to spreading them needs media and administrative effort by the youth themselves in the Youth Authority's board of directors.

Many politicians used the youth card and demanded their rights and to meet their needs, bearing in mind

that some of them reached 70 and even 80 in some cases. The new formation of the Youth Authority's board of directors with wide-ranging authority may return things to the right track.

We return to the minister to thank him for this selection, especially that it comes after one of his colleagues nominated elderly persons to a point that the Civil Service Commission rejected them. We also thank him for his philosophy to honor dignitaries while still alive, and the naming of Salmiya theater after superstar Abdelhusein Abdelredha is witness of what we are saying. We hope that Sheikh Salman crowns this principle by naming another theater after another giant - Saad Al-Furaj.

Thank you Sheikh Salman for the clear efforts. Thanks also to Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah for contributing to lowering sugar and cholesterol levels after some of your minister's colleagues rose them sky-high.

So, was the message delivered? I hope so.

Translated by Kuwait Times



350,000 LANDMINES STILL IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: On the sidelines of Kuwait's participation in the International Mine Awareness Day, Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt Gen Suleiman Al-Fahd said Kuwait managed to remove 1.65 million landmines out of a total of 2 million mines that had been placed in its territories and national waters during the Iraqi invasion in 1990. However, Fahd stressed that 350,000 mines were still to be removed that those mines posed a direct threat to civilians. Accordingly, Fahd urged all citizens and expats to contribute in removing those mines by reporting any strange objects in the desert or national waters. — Al-Jarida

POLICEMEN REWARDED FOR DISCOVERING NATIONALITY FORGERIES

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khalid Al-Sabah approved a request by Assistant Undersecretary for Nationality and Passports Affairs Major General Mazen Al-Jarrah to pay KD 5,000 to officers and KD 3,000 to policemen as reward for those who participated in discovering nationality forgeries, sources said. Jarrah lauded the efforts of the nationality department represented by its leaders and detectives and their efforts in exposing nationality forgers.

Jarrah denied that a list was submitted to the higher nationality committee of the Cabinet to revoke citizenships of several MPs or leaders or dual nationality holders, adding that there are no MPs or dignitaries among the forgers and that he did not give a statement on this at all.



Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled



Maj Gen Mazen Al-Jarrah

Informed sources said the discovery of nationality forgeries the assistant undersecretary announced were not by accident, rather it was after more than two years of search and

investigation that revealed forgeries and manipulation in the nationality and passports sector, although it is among the sensitive departments in the ministry. — Al-Qabas

Crime

Report

Plumber accused of theft

KUWAIT: A woman accused an Egyptian plumber of stealing KD 700 and a gold bracelet from her flat after getting the key to make repairs in her kitchen. The Filipina woman went to Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh police station and told them she gave the suspect the key, and when she returned from work, she discovered the money was missing as well as the bracelet which were in the bedroom. Detectives are investigating.

Fight in Jahra

A fight between two citizens in Jahra left one of them with a stab wound on his shoulder, while the other sustained a cut on his forehead. The two had earlier agreed to meet and talk over earlier differences. The two were arrested and are being questioned for further legal action.

Liquor smuggler arrested

Kuwait International Airport customs officers foiled a passenger's attempt to smuggle 124 plastic containers with liquor inside. The Indian man was arrested and sent to the Drugs Control General Department.

Hidden money at airport

A Jordanian man was arrested at Kuwait International Airport while attempting to leave the country with KD 32,000 in cash without notifying officers. He was sent to criminal detectives for questioning, and to find out why he hid the money. Transferring large amounts of cash without notifying relevant authorities is a violation of anti-money laundering laws in Kuwait.

Drugs and a fight

Police received an emergency call about a fight between two persons in industrial Sulaibiya. Policemen brought the two under control and found out that the fight started when a citizen, who was under the influence of drugs, stopped a bedoon following a traffic dispute and they exchanged blows. Policemen found 26 illicit tablets with the citizen, who was first taken to Sulaibiya police station, charged then transferred to the Drugs Control General Department.

Deliveryman robbed

A thief committed a robbery when he stole a meal from a deliveryman who did not have any money on him. The deliveryman called Jahra police and told them what happened. Investigation are underway.

Harasser questioned

An Egyptian woman sought the help of police against a man, also Egyptian, who was harassing her and filed a complaint against him, yet he claimed that hers are malicious accusations. A security source said the Egyptian woman told Salmiya police that she called the man to borrow money from him. He agreed, but asked her to come to his apartment to receive the money. She refused at first, but agreed when he told her he could not leave his apartment. When she went to the apartment, the man harassed her so she left immediately, according to her statements to police. The man denied her claims and called them malicious, so both were sent to the public prosecution for further action. — KUNA

ASSISTED BY POLICE, MINISTRY EVACUATES RENTED SCHOOL

KUWAIT: Education Ministry Undersecretary Haitham Al-Athari finally put an end to practices of some investors who had been renting government buildings for small sums and using them as private schools. "Assisted by police forces, the ministry recently managed to evacuate a public school building that had been used as a private school after the owner refused eviction despite court orders," he explained.

Athari added that a special committee had been formed to set the regulations and rules of renting government buildings to the private sector. He also stressed that the ministry had no vacant buildings at the time being and that all investors' applications in this regard would have to be put on a waiting list. Athari said that the ministry was currently reviewing the government buildings rented to the private sector in terms of licenses, especially since that of the evicted school had expired on June 30, 2014 and was temporarily extended for one year ending on March 31, 2015. — Al-Rai



ABK GRADUATES 18TH GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS FROM 'ABK ACADEMY'

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced the graduation of its ABK Academy's 18th group of students. The bank honored a total of 22 interns who successfully completed the three-week intensive course, during a ceremony held on 7 April, 2016 at ABK's Learning and Development Unit in the bank's Hawally branch. The training covered multiple areas in the banking profession, with a focus on customer service.

Hamza Enki, General Manager of Human Resources at ABK commented: "We are committed to supporting youth who are

interested in starting a career in the banking industry. Through the ABK Academy, we are able to develop students' skills and provide them with the proper guidance, training and best practice tools to ensure a smooth and successful transition into the Bank. We look forward to having them on the ABK team and hope to see more interest in Banking from Kuwait's youth when it comes to choosing a career."

The ABK Academy was launched in 2009 as an educational platform that focuses on training students and individuals seeking a job opportunity in the banking sector. By engaging

with these students, the Bank is able to build on existing potential and talent, and better identify the areas in the bank, in which they could put this positive ener-

gy to work and excel. ABK will continue to play an active role through the ABK Academy and through opportunities that arise in the future.

UNIFYING 'CASSATION' PRINCIPLES

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Supreme Judicial Council, head of the constitutional court and the head of the court of cassation Chanceller Yousef Al-Mutawa said that he had asked the technical office at the court of cassation to study a number of contradicting verdicts and report about them to the department of unifying judicial principles. Mutawa added that this department was present and that it had never stopped operating. "The law states that in case a court decides to question any of the judicial principles, it may refer them to this department to have its 11 chancellors discuss the principle that needs to be unified," he explained. — Al-Jarida

PETROL PRICES TO BE PROBABLY HIKED BY MAY

KUWAIT: Petrol prices are most likely to be increased before the end of May as part of a series of steps and measures to be made to avoid reducing Kuwait's sovereign rating, well-informed sources said. Increasing gasoline prices is a practical solution so that the government could avoid downgrading, especially since hiking petrol prices do not need a special law like electricity prices, the sources added.

Further, the sources said that the parliament would discuss the government's bill on electricity and the amendments suggested by the parliamentary financial and economic affairs committee on Tuesday pending passing it as soon

as possible to be put into practice one year later. Moreover, the sources added that increasing petrol prices simultaneously with those of electricity would confirm that Kuwait had already started actual economic reforms through reducing the cost of subsidies, especially since fuel subsidies alone have been costing the state budget around KD 1 million a year (71 percent of total subsidies). The sources added that according to international advisor Ernst & Young, reducing electricity subsidies and the finance ministry's reform measures would help weaken Moody's justifications to cut Kuwait credit rating. — Al-Rai



MINISTRY TO BEEF UP SECURITY AROUND REFINERIES

KUWAIT: The oil ministry told the parliament's petitions and complaints committee that it decided to terminate the contract of the company responsible for the security system of oil refineries by the end of 2016. The committee report said the ministry admitted that there is dereliction by the company over several security aspects, and it was fined heavily. The report said the ministry relied on the complaint of the lone technical representative of Kuwait

National Petroleum Company (KNPC) in which it was confirmed loopholes that compromise the security and safety of people do exist. The report said that according to the complaint, the use of sniffer dogs was found to be 'not good enough' following several tests by the interior ministry, adding that the ministry will use modern equipment for the purpose instead of the company when its contract expires. — Al-Qabas



Prince William, wife Kate begin royal tour of India

SYRIANS STRUGGLE TO FIND PLACE TO BURY THEIR KIN



CAIRO: A handout picture released by the Egyptian Presidency on April 9, 2016 shows Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (C-R) and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz (C-L) attending a signing ceremony for bilateral agreements at the Abdeen Palace in the capital. — AFP

SAUDI KING ADDRESSES EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENT KING SALMAN CALLS FOR JOINT FIGHT AGAINST 'TERRORISM'

CAIRO: Saudi King Salman called yesterday for a joint fight against "terrorism" in the Middle East at a time when Riyadh is engaged in several conflicts the region. The 80-year-old monarch is on a rare five-day visit to Egypt, a trip seen as a clear show of support for Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, the former military chief who toppled his Islamist predecessor Mohamed Morsi in 2013.

The two leaders have already signed a slew of multi-billion-dollar investment deals, and on Saturday Egypt agreed to demarcate its maritime borders with Saudi Arabia by officially placing two islands in the Straits of Tiran in Saudi territory. The Egyptian government says the two uninhabited islands - Tiran and Sanafir at the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba - are Saudi but have been in Egypt's custody for protection since 1950.

Any agreement on the two islands must be ratified by the Egyptian parliament, a 596-seat chamber packed with Sisi supporters. However, news of the agreement has kicked off a storm on social media networks, with activists arguing that handing over the two islands to the Saudis was tantamount to a sell-off to the kingdom. Many of the critics cited an agreement reached between Egypt and the Ottoman Empire in 1906 that awarded sovereignty over the islands to Egypt. Others posted video clips of nationalist President Gamal Abdel-Nasser, who ruled Egypt in the 1950s and 1960s, asserting Egypt's ownership of Tiran.

"The other mission that we should work on together is the fight against extremism and the fight against terrorism,"

King Salman said in an address to the Egyptian parliament broadcast live on state television. Egyptian lawmakers received Salman with deafening applause and a standing ovation. Some lawmakers waved the kingdom's green flag, while others chanted "all of Egypt greets you" or "welcome!"

After the speech, two lawmakers recited poems in praise of the monarch. The king later left the chamber, holding hands with the speaker, Ali Abdel-Al. That a Saudi king was invited to address the Egyptian parliament is evidence of how close relations are between the two nations, despite differences over policies on Syria and relations with Turkey and Qatar, two Saudi allies accused by Cairo of supporting militant Islamic groups.

In December, Saudi Arabia announced the creation of an "anti-terrorism" coalition whose members it said would share intelligence, counter violent ideology and deploy troops if necessary to combat extremists. The kingdom is part of the US-led coalition bombing the jihadist Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. Riyadh is also leading an Arab coalition, of which Egypt is a member, that has been bombing Iran-backed Houthi Shiite rebels in Yemen.

Saudi Arabia has been a key backer of Sisi since the overthrow of Morsi, whose Muslim Brotherhood movement was viewed by Riyadh with suspicion. It has since pumped billions of dollars in aid and investment into Egypt. On Saturday, King Salman and Sisi agreed to set up a \$16 billion investment fund, and also settled the long-standing maritime dispute. — Agencies



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3.	Merchandiser Job Code: KDD/03	Must have Baladia Health Card, Kuwait Driving License & own a car. Below 35 years. Must read, write & speak Arabic. Minimum 2 years' experience.
4.	Salesman Job Code: KDD/04	Must have Kuwait Heavy Driving License. Knowledge of all routes. Must have valid Baladia Health Card. Must read, write & speak Arabic. Age below 40 yrs. Minimum 2 years' experience.
5.	Sales Helper Job Code: KDD/05	Must have valid Baladia Health Card. Age below 35 yrs. Must read, write & speak Arabic. Minimum 1 year experience.
6.	Drivers Job Code: KDD/06	Must have Kuwait Heavy Driving License. Age below 35 yrs. Knowledge of all routes. Minimum 2 years' experience.
7.	Labours Job Code: KDD/07	Age below 35 yrs. Must be physically strong. Minimum 1 year experience.

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CRUZ SWEEPS COLORADO, SANDERS WINS WYOMING

WASHINGTON: Democrat Bernie Sanders and Republican Ted Cruz both scored weekend victories against their front-running rivals in a tightening race as the two major parties prepare to pick their White House nominee.

Cruz, the Texas Senator, chipped away at fellow Republican Donald Trump's lead by taking all 13 Colorado delegates at stake in a state Republican convention Saturday, his fourth win in a row against the bombastic billionaire. That was in addition to another 21 delegates Cruz won in the state through a series of county elections, for a total of 34.

Colorado will send a total of 37 delegates to the Republican National Convention in July, including three unpledged delegates who are the party's top leaders in the state. "Today was another resounding victory for conservatives, Republicans, and Americans who care about the future of our country," Cruz said in a statement. "Utah, North Dakota, Wisconsin, and tonight's incredible results in Colorado have proven this: Republicans are uniting behind our campaign because they want a leader with real solutions who will bring back jobs, freedom and security."

Sanders meanwhile pulled off a surprise win over rival Hillary Clinton in the Wyoming caucuses, his eighth victory in the last nine contests. Despite the Democratic Senator's 10-point lead over Clinton (55.7 percent to 44.3 percent), both candidates scored seven delegates each due to party rules in the overwhelmingly Republican state.

That means Sanders barely put a dent in Clinton's more than 200-delegate lead. But it gives the self-described democratic socialist another morale boost ahead of the crucial New York primary on April 19. Clinton remains the clear frontrunner for the Democratic party presidential ticket for November's election, but Sanders has the momentum and has enjoyed a string of successes at the polls in recent weeks.

Speaking to supporters in New York, Sanders broke into his speech to say to cheers: "All right. News bulletin. We just



COLORADO: Republican presidential candidate, Sen Ted Cruz, R-Texas, speaks at the Colorado Republican State Convention in Colorado Springs. — AP

won Wyoming." Sanders—who locked horns with his rival Clinton over trade and the "Panama Papers" scandal this week-later said he continued to confound the doubters. "I think it's fair to say that when we began this campaign we were considered to be a fringe candidate," said the 74-year-old. "I think that it is very fair to say that we were way, way behind during the first half of this contest, but we are having-to say the least-a very strong second half, and we are closing very fast."

However, it will still take a remarkable turnaround for Sanders to win the nomination over Clinton, a former secretary of state and first lady who goes into the New York primary as heavy favorite to extend her lead in the overall race. New York, America's largest city and one of its most diverse, has demographics that play well to Clinton's support base among the wealthy and minorities. — AFP

SYRIAN RIVALS RACE TO RETAKE TERRITORY FROM EXTREMISTS

BEIRUT: The Islamic State group is under growing pressure on several fronts in Syria as rival forces battle to wrest territory from the jihadists, who are excluded from a six-week-old ceasefire. The scramble by the regime, anti-government rebels and Kurdish militia to recapture areas from IS has been given added urgency by the prospect of a possible federal system. "The three sides are racing to grab as much of the pie as possible, not just at the expense of the Islamic State group but also ... from other key players," said Thomas Pierret, a Syria expert at the University of Edinburgh.

The jihadists have suffered a series of setbacks in Syria in recent weeks, losing the ancient city of Palmyra and the IS bastion of Al-Qaryatayn, both in the central province of Homs, to Russian-backed government forces. In the northern

province of Aleppo, US- and Turkish-backed rebels have seized the town of Al-Rai, the jihadist group's main entry point from Turkey.

In the south, meanwhile, rival jihadists from the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Nusra Front and their rebel allies have captured three towns from IS. And in the northeast, the mainly Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces are pressing an advance towards the oil-rich province of Deir Ezzor, which the regime also has its sights set on.

Sharing the pie

With a new round of peace talks due to get under way in Geneva on April 13, experts say the scramble for territory has taken on increasing importance. When the regime recaptured Palmyra, "it understood the diplomatic advantage it

would gain in negotiations" with the opposition, Pierret said.

Rebels trying to advance along the Turkish border meanwhile have twin aims pushing back IS and preventing Kurdish militias from expanding their territory, he said. "For the moment, the pie is big enough for everyone" fighting IS, Pierret added. "The coming stages will be more complicated: to the east of Aleppo, there are areas that the regime, the Kurds and the rebels are interested in controlling."

It is easy to see the allure of IS-held turf which covers about 40 percent of Syria, and is rich in oil, gas and agricultural wealth. But with every victory over IS, there is a growing risk of renewed confrontation between non-jihadist rebels and the regime, who have observed a fragile ceasefire since

February 27. "I don't think the Russians and the Americans will be able to stop their allies from fighting each other forever," said Romain Caillet, a French expert on jihadist movements. The truce brokered by Washington and Moscow has brought a lull in clashes between the regime and non-jihadist rebels.

In the unlikely event that the jihadists' enemies continue to refrain from fighting each other, the recapture of IS territory "will see the organization return to totally clandestine activity," Caillet said.

Raqa, the prize

Syria's regime and opposition categorically rejected a Kurdish declaration in March of a federal region in areas under their control in the country's north. But their backers Russia and the United States are not opposed to such a

plan, according to Fabrice Balance, a visiting fellow at the Washington Institute.

"The United States and Russia seem to agree on federalism for Syria," the Syria expert said. "One way to weaken Assad is to agree on the distribution of zones of influence." With IS on the defensive, the big question now is: who will be the first to recapture IS's de facto Syrian capital Raqa? A diplomat from a European nation participating in the US-led anti-IS coalition said there would be consequences for the opposition and its Western supporters if Russian-backed regime forces seize the jihadist stronghold. "If the Russians and the regime do take Raqa, we do consider it will be a critical step. It will prove that they have won the war, to be frank, and that the opposition is only a small pocket in the north," the diplomat said. — AFP

SYRIANS STRUGGLE TO FIND PLACE TO BURY THEIR KIN IN LEBANON

BAR ELIAS: When Saada Khalaf, a Syrian refugee in Lebanon, lost her husband to a long illness earlier this year, she could not find a place to bury him in the eastern Lebanese town where the couple had lived since they fled the civil war back home. The nearest cemetery where she and her relatives were allowed to bury him was in the village of Dalhamiyeh, about 10 miles from the town of Bar Elias.

Some 1.5 million Syrian refugees who fled their country's conflict are believed to be living in Lebanon, equal to about a third of the Mediterranean country's population of 4.5 million people. With many cemeteries almost full, Syrians are facing difficulties finding places where they can bury their loved ones who die in Lebanon. Most are not able to take them back for burial in Syria because of the dangers and closed roads - just some of the results of the five-year civil war that has killed more than a quarter million people and displaced half the country's pre-war population.

"Syrians have become a burden whether they are alive or dead," said Riad Rashid, a refugee from the Syrian city of Homs. Khalaf, who fled from Homs after Syria's crisis began in 2011, only remembers that her husband, Ali Jomaa, died on a Monday morning a few months ago. She says she is illiterate and does not know exact dates. She and their neighbors had brought him to a clinic that morning, suffering from asthma-related breathing problems, and he died shortly afterward.

Prayers and burials

During the funeral in Dalhamiyeh, she did not attend the funeral - as a woman and in accordance with Muslim tradition - while male members of the family took the body for prayers and burial. Later, when she first went back to the cemetery, she could not find his grave. Two weeks ago, she went again with her brother and an Associated

Press crew and the brother pointed out a burial place, at the edge of the cemetery.

Khalaf burst into tears. The grave, which she said cost her \$100, had no marker on it like those of Lebanese who were buried at the cemetery. She walked toward the grave and started touching the red sand on it. "My heart is burning. He went and left me alone," said the 45-year-old woman, who has no children, as she wiped her tears with her brown headscarf. "May God give him mercy. He was good to me. He never upset me."

Many Syrians say they increasingly face prejudice from the Lebanese, who claim the refugees have drained Lebanon's resources and put so much pressure on the country's infrastructure that even burying their loved ones is becoming a problem.

Back in Bar Elias, the town's Mayor Mohammed Al-Jammal said his people have nothing against the Syrians, adding that the main cemetery is full and cannot take any more people from outside the town. He said each family in the town has its own block of land reserved at the cemetery. Al-Jammal said more than 35,000 Lebanese live in the town, as well as about 60,000 Syrians who are spread among 51 illegal camp settlements in Bar Elias. "We are not against Syrians being buried here," Al-Jammal said, speaking at his office in the busy town center.

As for Ali Jomaa, he added: "I am not against burying him here but I don't have a place to bury him." Rashid, who lives with his family in two tents in one of Bar Elias' unofficial refugee camps, said there is almost a death in the camp every day, people just die of natural causes. "We suffer every time a Syrian dies," said the 45-year-old father of six girls and seven boys whose ages range between four months and 24 years. "What we wish most of all is to go back to our country and die in our country," Rashid added. — AP



MARIB: Young Yemeni fighters loyal to exiled President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi stand next to a burnt tank in the Sirwah area. — AFP

SPORADIC FIGHTING IN YEMEN AHEAD OF MIDNIGHT CEASEFIRE

GROUNDWORK BEING LAID FOR UPCOMING PEACE TALKS

MARIB: Sporadic fighting gripped parts of Yemen yesterday, just hours before an UN-brokered ceasefire aimed at laying groundwork for upcoming peace talks was due to take effect. Chaos has ruled Yemen since Iran-backed Houthi rebels overran the capital in September 2014 and advanced to other regions, prompting a Saudi-led military campaign in support of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi in March last year.

It is hoped that the new ceasefire, which enters into effect at midnight (2100 GMT) yesterday, will serve as the cornerstone of a long-lasting peace deal which will be negotiated between Yemeni warring parties on April 18 in Kuwait. Fighting raged on Sunday in regions surrounding Sanaa, while the rebel-held capital itself, which has been regularly bombed by coalition warplanes, was quiet. Houthi rebels and their allies exchanged mortar and artillery fire with pro-Hadi forces in the Sarwah region of Marib province, east of Sanaa, an AFP correspondent said. Coalition warplanes carried out fresh air strikes to stop rebels seeking to take back a military base that pro-government forces had recaptured in late 2015, military sources said. Clashes also went on further north in Nihm, around 40 kilometers from Sanaa, witnesses said.

Quiet night

Residents of Sanaa spent a quiet night without the sound of coalition aircraft, which have intensified raids in recent weeks, according to an AFP photographer in the capital. The planned truce was only agreed by the warring sides after months of shuttle diplomacy by UN envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. The rebels and Hadi's government said this week that they have submitted their remarks to the UN mediator on the terms of the ceasefire, which will test their willingness to negotiate a peace deal at the Kuwait talks. "We will go to the consultations (in Kuwait) to achieve peace," Hadi reiterated on Saturday, insisting however that the rebels must commit to UN Security Council Resolution 2216 which calls for their withdrawal from seized territories and disarmament. Previous UN-sponsored negotiations between the rebels and the government failed to make any headway, and a ceasefire in December was repeatedly violated and eventually abandoned by the Saudi-led Arab coalition on January 2. But analysts are more optimistic this time after mediation efforts have largely silenced guns along Yemen's border with Saudi Arabia, while a Houthi delegation visited Riyadh for talks. The Houthis and Saudi Arabia exchanged prisoners in March after unprecedented talks mediated by tribes along the frontier, where dozens have been killed in cross-border shelling. "For the first time, the groups that can end major military operations, particularly the Saudis and the Houthis, appear to be more willing to do so," said April Longley Alley, a Yemen specialist at the International Crisis Group. But "even if major combat ends, the road to peace in Yemen will be long and difficult and internal conflict is likely to continue for some time," she said.

Residents doubtful

Yemenis appear to have learned not to get their hopes up after previous ceasefires failed. "I

do not expect the truce to succeed," says Zayed Al-Qaisi, a resident of Marib. "The Houthis have not honored their commitments during the wars against the state since 2004." The Houthis fought six wars with the central government between 2004 and 2010 that killed thousands. Their main foe then, veteran president Ali Abdullah Saleh who was ousted in 2012, is now their ally fighting the government.

"Even the government cannot force us to respect a ceasefire as we have not liberated our territories" seized by the rebels, said Qaisi, armed with a Kalashnikov rifle like most tribesmen in

Yemen. Others in Sanaa voiced doubts that Saudi Arabia would commit to the truce.

"Saudi Arabia is just procrastinating and being deceptive," said 50-year-old Sanaa resident Ali Mohsen. Umm Mohammed, waiting for her children outside a school in central Sanaa, agreed that the truce is "a deception. We tried it unsuccessfully before." "I want a real end to the war," she added. More than 6,300 people have been killed in the year-long fighting in impoverished Yemen, with about half of the victims being civilians, while 30,000 have been wounded, according to the United Nations. — AFP



BEKAA VALLEY: In this Tuesday, March 29, 2016 photo, Syrian refugee Saada Khalaf, 45, who fled from the city of Homs, Syria, cries near the grave of her husband Ali Jomaa, in the eastern village of Dalhamiyeh. — AP

ITALIAN EMISSARY QUILTS EGYPT OVER STUDENT MURDER PROBE

CAIRO: Italy's ambassador to Egypt left Cairo yesterday after Rome recalled him over a lack of progress in the probe into the murder of an Italian student, an airport official and a diplomatic source said. Italy, a key ally of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's regime, recalled Maurizio Massari after last week's inconclusive meetings between Italian investigators and an Egyptian team that visited Rome to present their findings into Giulio Regeni's murder.

Regeni, a 28-year-old Cambridge University PhD student, had been researching labour unions when he disappeared on January 25 from central Cairo. His badly mutilated body was found more than a week later by the side of a road on the outskirts of the Egyptian capital.

During the meetings in Rome, Italy had demanded thousands of phone records to investigate the murder, which Egypt's assistant state prosecutor Mostafa Suleiman said was a demand that "violates the Egyptian constitution". Suleiman, who headed the Egyptian team that visited Rome, said the Italian investigators "conditioned further judicial cooperation on this demand" which his team flatly refused.

Suleiman said the Italian investigators also demanded CCTV footage of the area from where Regeni had disappeared. He said the footage had been automatically deleted by then. Yesterday, Massari left for

Rome after Italy recalled him for consultations, an Italian diplomatic source told AFP. An airport official also confirmed he had departed Cairo. Italian officials have greeted Egypt's explanations concerning Regeni's murder with outright scepticism. They suspect he was killed by elements in the Egyptian security services, an accusation which Cairo has steadfastly denied. Regeni's murder has troubled Cairo-Rome diplomatic ties given that Prime Minister Matteo Renzi shares a close relationship with Sisi, helping in turn to generate hugely valuable business contracts for Italian companies in Egypt.

In terms of action, Italy's options are limited. Moves under consideration include a warning to its citizens against travel to Egypt, but the Regeni case has already caused a slump in visitor numbers from Italy. Rome is also considering asking for support from its European Union partners to try to put pressure on the Egyptian government over the case.

Media coverage of the Regeni case has served as a focus for other disappearances and rights abuses in Egypt. Since ousting his Islamist predecessor Mohamed Morsi in 2013, Sisi has overseen a blistering crackdown targeting all forms of dissent. Hundreds of Morsi supporters have been killed, tens of thousands jailed and hundreds more including Morsi sentenced to death or lengthy jail terms. — AFP

MUSLIM BODY TO FOCUS ON TERROR AT TURKEY SUMMIT

ISTANBUL: The world's Islamic countries began their annual meeting yesterday in Istanbul, where they are set to focus on the Palestinian cause, conflicts in member states and combating terrorism. The meeting of the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) comes once again at a time of turmoil in many Muslim nations, with conflicts in Syria and Yemen dragging on, and several states including Turkey, bloodied by militant attacks.

The 13th annual OIC conference began with senior officials adopting the agenda and will be followed by a foreign ministers meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday. Over 30 heads of state and government will attend the summit hosted by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday and Friday.

With guests set to include Saudi King Salman, the event is taking place under the highest security, with police stationed all around the venue in central Istanbul. The OIC said the summit was to issue a resolution on the Palestinian issue and support for international efforts to relaunch a "collective political process". The gathering comes at a time of rising Islamophobia in many western nations in response to a spate of attacks by the Islamic State group. Islamic leaders will also "consider

the situation of Muslim communities in non-OIC member states and the issue of combating terrorism." Turkey has also been a victim of several bloody IS attacks, and the Istanbul summit comes a day after the US warned of a "credible threat" of attacks in the city.

Under Erdogan, who has made Islam one of central themes of his politics, Turkey has upped its economic and political influence throughout the Islamic world, particularly in lands in the Middle East once part of the Ottoman Empire.

However this policy has not always met with success and frosty relations with several Muslim states, including Egypt, have led some analysts to conclude its aim of "zero problems with neighbors" ended up having exactly the opposite effect. In a speech on Saturday, Erdogan hailed the role Turkey has played by hosting nearly three million refugees from neighboring Syria.

"In the world, there is no state, no country that is capable of assuming such a burden. The events this year that targeted us will not deflect us from this path," he said. A big question mark hangs over the level of representation from Egypt, which has had strained ties with Turkey since the ousting of Ankara ally Mohamed Morsi in 2013. — AFP



ANKARA: A woman lays red carnations as people hold a banner with pictures of victims of October 10 bombings during a memorial ceremony. — AFP

OBAMA SAYS DEMOCRATS ARE GOOD FOR AMERICAN GOVT

SAN FRANCISCO: President Barack Obama praised Democratic lawmakers for having his back through some politically tough votes and encouraged supporters to help elect more of them in November. "A Democratic Congress is good for America," he said Friday.

Obama also criticized Senate Republicans for refusing to consider his Supreme Court nominee and said GOP presidential candidates Donald Trump and Ted Cruz aren't "outliers" but are simply parroting what some congressional Republicans have said for years.

Obama didn't mention that votes taken by House Democrats, led by then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California, to muscle his economic recovery plan and health care law through Congress early in his first term ended up souring the public and costing Democrats the House majority.

Political convenience

"I've done a lot of tough stuff since I've been president," Obama told about 100 supporters who rose to their feet and chanted his "Yes We Can" campaign slogan as he entered a high-ceilinged room at the Pacific Heights home of businessman and philanthropist Gordon Getty. "But I couldn't do it unless I had outstanding legislators who had my back, even when it was

n't politically convenient," he said, praising Pelosi for possessing a combination of "idealism and just tough as nails conviction and savvy" that he said the country has benefited from during his presidency.

"I could not have had a better partner than Nancy Pelosi." The California Democrat holds the fundraiser annually at the Getty home. Couples paid \$33,400. Turning to the presidential race, Obama said Republicans shouldn't feel embarrassed by the comments from Trump and Cruz, the Texas senator. He said the GOP rivals are saying what some Republican members of Congress have said about immigration and other issues for years. "In fact, that's where Trump got it," Obama said. "He said, 'You know what, I can deliver this message with more flair.'" Obama said he wants a Republican Party that is "rational and well-functioning, but that's not what we have right now. And that's why this election is so important."

He noted that he will no longer be president in 10 months. "But in 10 months I will, contrary to Mr Trump's opinion, still be a citizen of the United States," Obama said, recalling Trump's past attempts to cast doubt on Obama's citizenship because the president's father was Kenyan. Obama also praised House Democrats at a fundraiser late Thursday in Los Angeles. — AP



NEW YORK CITY: Democratic presidential candidate, Sen Bernie Sanders, I-Vt, is joined by Erica Garner as he speaks during a campaign event at the Apollo Theatre, Saturday, April 9, 2016, in the Harlem neighborhood of Manhattan. — AP

2016 CANDIDATES SCOOP UP DELEGATES, BID FOR NY LOVE

RIVALS JOSTLE FOR MOMENTUM AS BIG PRIMARY NEARS

WASHINGTON: Bernie Sanders is pointing to his growing string of statewide wins and Hillary Clinton to her still-commanding lead in the delegate hunt as the Democratic rivals jostle for momentum heading into New York's big primary later this month. The Republicans, too, are trying to scoop up delegates out West while bidding for some New York love.

With his win Saturday in Wyoming, Sanders has now won seven of the last eight state contests. But his latest victory did nothing to help him in the delegate chase: He and Clinton each got seven delegates. "Now that we are in the second half of this campaign, we are going to state after state which I think have a more progressive outlook," Sanders said. "We are in this race to win."

Clinton, looking right past the Wyoming results, told a crowd in Brooklyn that she needs a big win in New York on April 19 to help her quickly lock up the Democratic nomination. She added that the sooner the nomination fight ends, "the sooner we can go after the Republicans full time."

Trying to claim a cloak of inevitability for his candidate, Clinton campaign manager Robby Mook said in a statement that she "has a nearly

insurmountable lead in pledged delegates that will become harder and harder to overcome after each contest."

'New York values'

On the Republicans side, Texas Sen Ted Cruz completed his sweep of Colorado's 34 delegates by locking up the remaining 13 at the party's state convention in Colorado Springs. He already had collected 21 delegates and visited the state to try to pad his numbers there.

Trump organized late in Colorado and left the state convention up to his organizers, and spent about a half-hour on Saturday touring the National Sept 11 Memorial and Museum in lower Manhattan. He and Clinton found a rare point of agreement in poking back at Cruz for his earlier criticism of "New York values."

Trump's campaign said in a statement after his museum visit that the site was "symbolic of the strength of our country, and in particular New Yorkers, who have done such an incredible job rebuilding that devastated section of our city. This is what 'New York values' are really all about."

Clinton, for her part, told a Latino crowd in Brooklyn, that "I actually think New York values

are really good for America." Her agreement with Trump ended right there, as she launched into an argument for electing Democrats to protect the US economy. "It's a fact that our economy does better when we have a Democrat in the White House," she said.

Clinton has 1,287 delegates based on primaries and caucuses to Sanders' 1,037. When including superdelegates, or party officials who can back any candidate, Clinton has 1,756, or 74 percent of the number needed to clinch the nomination. Sanders has 1,068.

Trump still has a narrow path to clinching the Republican nomination by the end of the primaries on June 7, but he has little room for error. He would need to win nearly 60 percent of all the remaining delegates to clinch the nomination before the convention. So far, he's winning about 45 percent.

Following Cruz's sweep of Colorado's remaining delegates on Saturday, the Associated Press count stands at Trump 743, Cruz 545, and John Kasich 143. Marco Rubio, who suspended his campaign, has 171 delegates. To clinch the nomination by the end of the primaries, a candidate needs 1,237 delegates. — AP

HALTING LGBT RULES, N CAROLINA LAWMAKERS AGAIN REBUFF CITIES

RALEIGH: The decision by the North Carolina legislature and Gov Pat McCrory to overturn Charlotte's anti-discrimination ordinance for LGBT citizens isn't simply another skirmish in the decades-old culture war between conservatives and progressives.

It's the latest muscle-flexing by leaders in Republican-controlled states to rebuff local governments - often large cities run by Democrats - implementing policies they disagree with or haven't sanctioned. "You see the most liberal city councils and mayors over-regulating," said North Carolina House Majority Leader Mike Hager, from small-town Rutherfordton. He added that the state can't become a patchwork of key commerce and employment rules, depending on the city.

"By law we have that responsibility to make sure that the cities and counties do what they're supposed to be doing." Over the past year, Alabama legislators voided Birmingham's decision to increase the minimum wage, while Missouri lawmakers blocked similar pay increases by all cities and counties. They also barred local governments from banning plastic bags used by retailers. Tennessee and Arkansas legislators also have passed laws overturning municipal gay rights ordinances.

"We're increasingly seeing that the policy battleground is between the states and the localities," said John Dinan, a Wake Forest University professor and expert in state constitutions and relationships between levels of government. There are few states where the fissure is more noticeable than North Carolina. Municipalities once considered a powerful lobbying force within the General Assembly have been in retreat since Republicans took over the legislature in 2011 for the first time in 140 years. Current top House and Senate leaders live outside urban centers like Charlotte and Raleigh, which generally skew Democratic.

"They've really been putting their fingers into quite a few local issues," said Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan. She is a Democrat, though the City Council is officially nonpartisan. The legislature last year reconfigured Greensboro's city council districts over the city's objections and stopped the city's practice of accepting identification cards created by a local nonprofit for immigrants unlawfully in the country. "We have a conservative legislature and we have progressive urban centers, and I think it's the natural rubbing of the two different philosophies." — AP

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EU SLAMS UKRAINE VIOLENCE AFTER MONITORS ATTACKED

KIEV: The European Union yesterday criticized the "unprecedented level of violence" in eastern Ukraine after international monitors came under fire despite a truce between government forces and pro-Russian separatists. "The significant increase of ceasefire violations in the Donetsk region represents an unprecedented level of violence" since the latest truce agreement in 2015, the office of EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said in a statement.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said late on Saturday that a team of its

monitors carrying out an observation mandate in eastern Ukraine had come under fire 50 kilometers south of rebel hub Donetsk. A patrol in government-held territory on Saturday first heard an explosion 100-200 meters away from their car, after which there was gunfire from the same direction, with "at least three-four bullets flying one-two meters above their heads," the mission said.

There was no damage to the vehicle or people, and the patrol left the area immediately, it said. The OSCE also said it had observed a "significantly higher

number of ceasefire violations" in the Donetsk region. In a separate incident on Thursday, a patrol of monitors in rebel territory observed a bullet hole in their vehicle, but it was not clear precisely when the car was hit.

On the same day, another monitor was threatened at gunpoint by a rebel, forcing the patrol to leave a checkpoint they intended to pass. The incidents of targeting monitors are "unacceptable," the EU statement said, adding that "a sustainable ceasefire is urgently needed."

More than 9,200 people have been killed since the Moscow-backed insurgency erupted in eastern Ukraine in April 2014, a month after Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula, with the rebels now controlling parts of Ukraine's Donetsk and Lugansk regions in the east of the country bordering Russia. A series of periodic truce deals in 2015 have abated some of the violence, which Kiev and its Western allies accuse Moscow of stirring, but casualties around the line of contact continue to be reported on a regular basis. — AFP



GENT: People take part in a march "Gent against terrorism" organized by three Turkish organizations. — AFP

JIHADISTS 'SWITCHED ATTACK TO BRUSSELS FROM FRANCE'

'MAN IN THE HAT' CHARGED WITH 'TERRORIST MURDERS'

BRUSSELS: The Brussels-based Islamic State jihadists behind the Paris attacks planned a fresh strike in France but targeted the Belgian capital instead as police closed in, the federal prosecutor said yesterday. The prosecutor also announced that the so-called "man in the hat" Mohamed Abrini had been charged with "terrorist murders" over the attacks in Brussels last month.

Suicide bombers claimed 32 lives when they blew themselves up at Brussels airport and at a metro station on March 22 but left a trail for police leading directly to the November Paris attacks which killed 130 people.

"Numerous elements in the investigation have shown that the terrorist group initially had the intention to strike in France again," the Belgian federal prosecutor's office said in a statement. "Surprised by the speed of the progress in the ongoing investigation, they urgently took the decision to strike in Brussels." The prosecutor gave no further details but the Brussels onslaught followed the March 18 arrest of top Paris attacks suspect Salah Abdeslam after four months on the run.

The prosecutor also gave no details of the planned attack in France but late last month, French police arrested Reda Kriket near Paris, finding weapons and explosives in a flat he had used to suggest he was planning an attack of "extreme violence." Belgium has arrested two suspects, identified as Abderrahmane A. and Rabah M, in connection with the Kriket case and on Thursday both were remanded in custody, along with three other suspects held in connection with the November Paris attacks.

Shortly after Kriket's arrest, French prosecutor Francois Molins had said that "while no specific target has been identified, nonetheless everything leads us to believe that the discovery of this cache (of weapons) has allowed us to prevent an action of extreme violence by a terrorist network."

'Man in the hat'

In yesterday's statement, the Belgian prosecutor said Abrini, the man seen in CCTV footage with the two suicide bombers at Brussels airport, had been charged with "terrorist murders." "The investigating judge specialised in terrorism cases has put Mohamed Abrini in detention in connection with the investigation into the Brussels and Zaventem (airport) attacks," the statement said.

"He is charged with participation in the activities of a terrorist group, terrorist murders and attempts to commit terrorist murders." On Saturday, the judge leading the Belgian investigation into the Paris carnage laid the same charges against Abrini, who was arrested Friday.

The 31-year-old Belgian of Moroccan origin confessed to being "the man in the hat" who calmly walked away from the devastated departure hall, the prosecutor said Saturday. He then returned on foot to central Brussels, discarding his hat and coat on the way before disappearing into thin air as the police launched a fresh appeal to the public for help.

Authorities criticized

Abrini was a long-time petty criminal who grew up with Abdeslam in Belgium's troubled Molenbeek area, home to several other suspects

who all share a similar story of getting on the wrong side of the law and becoming radicalized. The Belgian authorities have faced intense criticism over their handling of the Brussels attacks and the investigation, especially as it has emerged that many of the suspects were known to the police.

Critics say the government has not done enough to prevent extremists targeting Muslim youth in areas such as Molenbeek, with Belgium proportionately the biggest source of foreign fighters going to join the Islamic State group in Syria. Abdeslam, whose brother Ibrahim blew himself up in Paris, was seen driving to the French capital with Abrini shortly before the attacks but he apparently balked at the same mission and fled back to Brussels.

Police finally arrested him not far from the family home in Molenbeek after apparently stumbling upon another jihadist safe house in the Forest area of the city. There has been much recrimination in Belgium about how he and the others were able to remain free for so long, with two ministers offering to resign. Buoyed by Abdeslam's arrest, the police launched an increasing series of raids, mainly in Brussels, resulting in more detentions as they closed the net.

Abdeslam is now awaiting extradition to France. "That is justice... he who does something must pay the price," Abdeslam's father, who has lived in Belgium for 40 years, told French radio Europe 1 on Tuesday. "I hope everyone will speak now... we were there, we were happy, we had enough, we went out, had fun but now, we cannot even leave our house," he said. — AFP

CHAD VOTES AS STRONGMAN SEEKS FIFTH TERM IN OFFICE

N'DJAMENA: Six million Chadians began voting yesterday in an election likely to see President Idriss Deby extend his 26-year rule in a country increasingly on the frontline of the global war on terror. Deby, the warrior president who took office in a 1990 military coup, faces 12 challengers but is widely expected to win a fifth term after consolidating his grip on power in this central African nation.

Polling stations opened shortly after 7:00 am (0600 GMT) and were to close at 6:00 pm (1700 GMT). Early votes were cast on Saturday by soldiers, nomads and refugees. Official provisional results may not be released for two weeks.

At a polling station in the capital N'Djamena, men and women waited patiently in separate queues to cast their ballots, many with their biometric voting card in hand, an AFP correspondent said. Security forces were out en masse for the election, which is taking place in a country which has been hit by a series of suicide attacks.

The voters, who work from dawn just to gain enough to survive, look set to hand another mandate to Deby, whose resources far exceed those of his challengers in a nation classified by the UN as one of the five poorest countries in the world. Under his leadership, the once unstable country has become both an oil producer and key player on the global anti-jihadist frontline, winning new strategic influence.

Yet, despite a wealth of new oil resources since 2003, half of the population of 13 million lives below the poverty line and seven out of 10 people cannot read or write. The 63-year-old is facing unprecedented dissent at home.

Anger at the government has run high in recent months, prompting the authorities to crack down on protests and throw activist leaders in jail. Just three days before the election, police fired live rounds and tear gas to disperse several hundred protesters angered by plans to hand six-month jail terms to five anti-government activist leaders.

Over 100 dialects

Chad is also facing an unprecedented security threat. It was hit by two jihadist attacks in the capital last year, while facing a constant threat of suicide attacks and raids. To address the threats, Deby has tightened security while maintaining a strong presence in a regional force fighting the Nigeria-based Boko Haram Islamist group.

The country has scores of ethnic groups that speak more than 100 languages, and some of its conflicts have been blamed on divisions between Muslims, who make up 53 percent of the population, and Christians and animists.

Those tensions have also been fuelled by Deby handing top jobs to members of his Zaghawa ethnic group, whose members also largely head Chad's feared army. Ethnic resentment may be behind protests that erupted in February over the gang rape of a young woman by the sons of several leading army commanders and officials, including that of the foreign minister. Two youngsters were killed when security forces cracked down on the demonstrations.

One of Deby's challengers, Mahamat Yesko Ibrahim the father of the rape victim, stood down in favour of the president at the last minute. He was not immediately available to comment on the decision. The most prominent of Deby's challengers is Saleh Kebzabo, a Muslim from the southwest Mayo Kebbi province who first stood against him in 1996 and who heads the National Union for Development and Renewal (UNDR).

Another high-profile is former premier Joseph Djimrangar Dagnadj, a Christian from Mandoul in the south and one-time Deby ally. "In the face of these accumulating challenges, Chadian authorities must avoid the politics of religious or geographic exclusion," the International Crisis Group said in March. "The greatest threat to stability in Chad in the long-term... (is) a national political crisis." — AFP



N'DJAMENA: Saleh Kebzaboh, Chad's opposition candidate for the presidential election prepares to cast his vote at the polling station. — AFP

NIGERIA BLAMES BIAFRA GROUP AFTER DOZENS FOUND IN SHALLOW GRAVES

LAGOS: Nigerian secret police have accused a Biafra separatist group of killing 55 people after discovering their bodies in shallow graves in a thick forest in the country's southeast. The Department of State Service (DSS), Nigeria's domestic spy agency, said the graves were found in Umuanyi forest in Abia state, home to the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) movement.

It issued a statement late Saturday accusing IPOB members of playing a "heinous role" in the abduction of five Hausa-Fulani residents, although the claims were dismissed by another Biafran group. "The abducted men were later discovered at the Umuanyi forest, Abia state, where they were suspected to have been killed by their abductors and buried in shallow graves, amidst 50 other shallow graves of unidentified persons," spokesman Tony Opuji said in the statement.

"Arrests and investigation conducted so far revealed that elements within the IPOB carried out this dastardly action," he said. IPOB was founded by Nnamdi Kanu, who is currently on trial for treason in a high-profile case in Abuja. He was arrested in October for operating pirate Radio Biafra where he was alleged to be broad-

casting "seditious messages" against Nigeria.

Kanu has emerged as the new face of the campaign for a separate Biafran State, nearly 50 years after a previous unilateral declaration of independence sparked a brutal civil war. The conflict from 1967 to 1970 left about one million people dead, many from starvation and disease, as Nigerian troops blockaded the fledgling Republic of Biafra.

IPOB supporters have staged a series of protests across the country in recent months to demand his release and call for a breakaway state for the Igbo people, one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa. The leader of the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), another pro-Biafra group defended the IPOB against the latest charges.

"The DSS allegation against the pro-Biafra agitators lacks merit and evidence because MASSOB and IPOB are non-violent organizations," Uchenna Madu told AFP. "They want to blackmail us as violent or terrorist group in order to get evidence against Nnamdi Kanu," he said. He vowed that action by pro-Biafran groups would continue until their objective of a separate homeland for the Igbo people is achieved. — AFP

MIGRANTS STUCK IN LIMBO AS BALKAN ROUTE CLOSSES

PRINCIPOVAC: Walking a winding path inside a thick oak forest at the border between Serbia and Croatia, Jijan Ali cannot believe his misfortune: He barely made it to Europe across rough seas and rugged mountains, only to be abruptly halted just meters away from his dream destination - the European Union.

The 20-year-old Kurd from Rojava, Syria, has been stuck on the Serbian side of the frontier together with some 200 of his fellow refugees since early March when Balkan countries suddenly shut their borders for migrants escaping wars and poverty in their home countries. Now there is no legal way for the group to move forward to the heart of Europe,

or backward toward Greece or Turkey, and they are stuck living in a rundown former psychiatric hospital in a country that cannot offer them work or other opportunities they desperately seek.

As officials focus on the EU-Turkey deal to return migrants from Greece to Turkey and on the tens of thousands stuck near Greece's border with Macedonia, Ali and some 1,000 other Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis stranded in Serbia feel abandoned by the international community.

'We are forgotten'

"We are forgotten," Ali said while making his daily routine with a few of his

refugee friends. The routine involves walking toward the border on a narrow dirt path to an old and rusty wire fence that marks the no-man's land between the two former Yugoslav republics, and to have some fun by jumping with one foot inside what they believe is Serbia and the other inside Croatia, an EU member state.

"Balkans, Europe, Balkans, Europe," Ali and his friends chuckle, with their laughter echoing inside the dense forest with blossoming spring leaves and wild flowers. No border guards were seen on Friday on either side of the border, which in the 1990s was a heavily mined frontier between the two Balkan wartime foes.

"I sometimes think, this is Balkans, this is Europe. I only need a few steps to cross," Ali said. "I don't know how smart it is to make that step, but maybe it is better to use the smugglers to make it there." With their hope, patience and money running out, the migrants stuck in Serbia are increasingly turning to people smugglers to try to get out of the impasse.

Local aid workers say that some 100 people try daily to cross from Serbia to Croatia or further north to Hungary, but most of them get caught. Also, some 130 new migrants arrive daily in Serbia, mostly through Bulgaria, using clandestine crossings, officials say. "I am here for two and half months," said Amir Eskandari, a 17-year-old from Afghanistan who is traveling alone and wants to get to Germany. "I tried three times to Hungary, two times to Croatia.

Police caught me every time. I'll keep on trying."

Over a million people have used the Balkan route to reach further into Europe since last year, mostly heading for Germany or other wealthy EU states. Ehsan Rahmatjan, 20, from Herat, Afghanistan, says he has had enough of waiting for the borders to reopen. He just wants to go back home. "I think I will decide to go back because I came up to here by smugglers... I had lots of bad experiences, dangerous things. So, I don't want to try by smugglers again, it's dangerous, it's very hard. I don't know, maybe I go back."

Clash at Greek border

Meanwhile, Migrants clashed with Macedonian police yesterday after trying to scale the fence separating Greece from Macedonia in the border town of Idomeni. Macedonian police used tear gas, stun grenades, plastic bullets and later a water cannon in attempts to keep the migrants at bay and they responded by throwing rocks at the police. Twice, migrants tried to breach the fence but were pushed back. Greek police were standing by, not interfering.

Clashes continued into the afternoon, and the wind brought tear gas fumes into a nearby makeshift camp on the Greek side of the border holding over 11,000 stranded migrants. Many people, including small children, who were not involved in the clashes, were suffering from respiratory problems. — Agencies



IDOMENI: Refugees and migrants clash with Macedonian soldiers as they protest to reopen the border near their makeshift camp in the northern Greek border village. — AFP

BANGLADESH POWER PLANT PROTESTERS HALT ACTIVITIES

DHAKA: Protesters opposing the construction of a Chinese-backed, coal-fired power plant in Bangladesh agreed yesterday to halt their activities for 15 days, defusing tensions after four demonstrators were killed last week. Villagers for and against the \$2.4 billion power plant in the coastal district of Chittagong clashed last week before riot police fired their weapons after coming under attack. Four protesters died in the violence.

S Alam Group, a Bangladeshi conglomerate which signed a deal on April 4 with China's SEP-COIII Electric Power Construction Corp to build the 1,320 megawatt plant, suspended work because of safety concerns, a company official said last week. Liakot Ali, the leader of the demonstrators, said they had made a number of demands to the authorities. He said a leader of Bangladesh's ruling Awami League had asked for two weeks to settle the issues.

"We have demanded the release of all 17 people who have been arrested, the withdrawal

of cases against villagers who demonstrated against this plant ... and the treatment of those injured during the demonstration," he said. Abdullah Kabir Liton, a senior Awami League official in Chittagong district said he had met with local people to try to convince them to stop their movement.

"We need a few days to breathe," Liton told Reuters. The plant, located 265 km southeast of the capital Dhaka, is a major source of foreign investment into Bangladesh, and one of a series of plans Beijing is pushing to cultivate closer ties with Dhaka. The protesters say villagers around the plant will lose their homes, it will disturb the graveyards of relatives and cause environmental damage. "They started works without the approval from the ministry of environment," Liakot said. Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, an adviser to the prime minister responsible for power and energy told Reuters the project would use modern technology and would not be harmful for environment. — Reuters

6.6-MAGNITUDE QUAKE ROCKS NE AFGHANISTAN

KABUL: A 6.6-magnitude quake struck northeast Afghanistan yesterday, the US Geological Survey said, with tremors also felt in Pakistan and India. The quake at a depth of 210 kilometers occurred at 2:58 pm (1028 GMT), 282 km northeast of the capital Kabul. There were no immediate reports of injuries and the USGS said there was a low likelihood of casualties or damage. The quake was felt for a few seconds in Kabul and in Pakistan's capital Islamabad, where some residents evacuated apartment blocks after tremors shook ceiling fans and furniture.

The quake was also felt in the Indian capital New Delhi, where buildings in the centre swayed and the metro train system was halted temporarily as a precaution. People rushed out of their homes in the northern region of Kashmir. "People are on the streets now and we don't know whether to go back inside," said an AFP reporter in Kashmir's main city of Srinagar. Last October a 7.5-magnitude quake ripped across Pakistan and Afghanistan, killing almost 400 people and flattening buildings in rugged terrain that impeded relief efforts. — AFP



MUMBAI: Former Indian cricketers Dilip Vengsarkar (left) and Sachin Tendulkar (second right) looks on as Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge (center) and an unseen Britain's Prince William, Duke of Cambridge play a game of cricket with Indian children who are beneficiaries of NGOs at The Oval Maidan. — AFP

PRINCE WILLIAM, WIFE KATE BEGIN ROYAL TOUR OF INDIA

A DAY OF CRICKET, BOLLYWOOD AND MEMORIALS

MUMBAI: The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge paid their respects at one of the sites of the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks yesterday as they began a weeklong visit to India, their first royal tour in two years. Prince William and his wife, the former Kate Middleton, began their first engagement in India by laying a wreath at a memorial at Mumbai's iconic Taj Mahal Palace hotel, where 31 people were killed in the 2008 attacks. A total of 166 people were killed when 10 gunmen targeted multiple locations in Mumbai.

Crowds of onlookers gathered to catch a glimpse of the couple as they got out of their

car and entered the hotel, where employees welcomed them with garlands of roses. William and Kate, who will also visit India's neighbor Bhutan, are traveling without their two children - 2-1/2-year-old Prince George and 11-month-old Princess Charlotte. They had taken George to Australia with them in 2014 on their last royal tour.

Later yesterday, the royal couple was to meet children from a Mumbai slum and take in a round of cricket at a local cricket academy. Their first evening in India ends at a charity ball, where they'll meet with Bollywood celebrities and prominent business leaders.

During their trip, William and Kate will sit down for lunch with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. In a nod to William's conservation efforts, they'll also visit Assam state's Kaziranga National Park, home to two-thirds of the world's Indian one-horned rhinos. They'll take a one-day trip to Bhutan at the invitation of the Himalayan kingdom's King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck and Queen Jetsun Pema. William and Kate will then head back to India, where they'll wind up their tour with a visit to the Taj Mahal, retracing the steps of a visit to the monument of love by William's mother, the late Princess Diana. — AP

SINGAPORE PM FEUDS IN PUBLIC WITH SISTER

SINGAPORE: Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong yesterday denied abusing his power and attempting to establish a dynasty as a family feud went public after the first anniversary of the death of his father Lee Kuan Yew.

Reacting to attacks from his younger sister Lee Wei Ling, the prime minister said in a Facebook post that he was "deeply saddened" by the claims and called them "completely untrue".

Singapore on March 23 marked the first anniversary of the death of Lee Kuan Yew, the country's authoritarian first prime minister who ruled from 1959 to 1990. His death at age 91 sparked a massive outpouring of grief among Singaporeans, many of whom credit the family patriarch with turning Singapore from a poor former British colony into one of the world's wealthiest and most stable societies.

Over 100 different activities were held to mark the first anniversary last month. But the prime minister's sister Lee Wei Ling, a physician who serves as senior adviser to the National Neuroscience Institute, went public on Facebook with her criticism of the commemorations which she suggested may be part of dynasty-building after a column she submitted to the country's leading daily The Straits Times was rejected for publication.

Yesterday she made public an email exchange with a Straits Times editor in which she accused her brother of having "no qualms abusing his power" in order to stage a commemoration just a year after their father's death. Lee Wei Ling said this was part of efforts by "the power that be" to "establish a dynasty" and vowed that she would not allow her father's name to be "sullied". In an earlier Facebook post she said that Lee Kuan Yew "would have cringed at the hero worship just one year after his death".

The prime minister said the activities were mostly planned by citizens who wanted to show respect for the former leader. "The idea that I should wish to establish a dynasty makes even less sense. Meritocracy is a fundamental value of our society, and neither I, the PAP (the ruling People's Action Party), nor the Singapore public would tol-

erate any such attempt," Lee wrote. Lee, 64, became Singapore's third prime minister in 2004. He also has a younger brother, corporate leader Lee Hsien Yang. Despite his major

achievements Lee Kuan Yew was criticised locally and abroad for restricting political freedom, including muzzling the press, jailing political opponents and suing critics for defamation. — AFP

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- 10 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
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DRUGGED BEGGAR BABIES FOR RENT IN INDONESIA

JAKARTA: At rush hour every weekday, women with babies slung across their arms line the traffic-choked streets of the Indonesian capital, flagging down drivers looking to game Jakarta's carpooling laws by hiring a few extra passengers. But revelations some of the infants used in this years-old streetside business have been rented out by criminal syndicates, and even drugged to keep them quiet, has outraged Jakartans and prompted a crack-down by city authorities.

Motorists know at rush hour they need at least two passengers to enter main roads by law, so rely on "jockeys": These are often poor young women with a child, who act as passengers-for-hire in exchange for a small fee. Children tug on heartstrings and help attract drivers, said Risma, a jockey hailing cars near a major roadway in South Jakarta with her three-year-old son.

"People sympathize easily with you if you've got a baby," she told AFP, stressing she only took her child because she had no other choice. The strategy has existed openly for years, but as outrage mounted over this unfolding child exploitation scandal, the government has now suspended the carpooling rule, putting jockeys out of work.

Last month, police confirmed many of

the child jockeys lining Jakarta's streets had been rented out by their families to criminal syndicates. After a months-long investigation, police in South Jakarta swooped on four adults they believed were renting out children as beggars or child jockeys for 200,000 rupiah (USD\$15) per day. Two children-aged seven and five years old — and a baby, aged just six months, were taken into protective care.

Children drugged

The baby was "unresponsive" when they found him-drugged with Clonazepam, a strong sedative used to treat anxiety conditions in adults, Audie Latuheru, the head of criminal investigation at the police department, told AFP. Latuheru said the infant had been given the tranquilizer, acquired from a pharmacy without prescription, to make it calm and compliant during the long hours waiting on the roadside and ferrying about in strangers' cars.

"Nobody wants to have a crying baby in the car," he said. Deputy head of South Jakarta police Surawan, who like many Indonesians goes by one name, said information from one of those arrested, steered police to three women accused of running an "entire syndicate" selling children for exploitation, who are also now in custody.

The allegations of drugging and exploitation rackets-conducted right under the noses of unsuspecting motorists-has surprised and outraged Jakartans, though police admit they've known about it for some time but struggled to prosecute cases.

"We have always known that many of those street kids, beggars and child jockeys might have been rented or sold, but it's hard for us to prove," explained Surawan. "What can we do? Conduct a DNA test every time we see a beggar or a jockey with a baby?" he added.

Asking for identification is of little help in Indonesia, where many people and children are not officially registered in any government system. There is a push for those involved in such exploitation to be charged with human trafficking, but for those at the coalface, the priority has to be the victim's wellbeing.

"Our focus here is to give these children their rights to education, recreation and to be loved, not to solve cases," Sulisty Ariadi, a social worker at a government child protection agency, told AFP. But police and social services doubt suspending the so-called '3-in-1' carpooling rule will do anything for the 4.1 million street children in Indonesia.

According to government figures,



JAKARTA: This picture taken on March 31, 2016 shows "jockeys", a women with a child who act as passengers-for-hire in exchange for a small fee, along a street during rush hour. — AFP

around 35,000 young people face exploitation from prostitution to begging scams. As motorists fret that the city's traffic will only worsen with jockeys out of business, police and social services say

doing away with carpooling laws will do little for vulnerable children. Surawan said: "They may not be jockeys anymore, but the perpetrators will find a way around." — AFP



MINDANAO: Philippines Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin (2nd right) and military chief General Hernando Iriberry (right) visit one of the 53 wounded soldiers at a military hospital on the southern Philippine island of Mindanao on April 10, 2016, a day after soldiers clashed with the extremist Abu Sayyaf group. — AFP

ISLAMIC MILITANTS KILL 18 PHILIPPINE SOLDIERS IN YEARS' WORST CLASHES

AT LEAST FOUR SOLDIERS BEHEADED IN THE FIGHTING

ZAMBOANGA: A Philippine offensive against the extremist Abu Sayyaf group after a spate of kidnappings has left 18 soldiers and five fighters dead in the worst violence in the troubled south this year, authorities said yesterday.

Saturday's clashes on the strife-torn island of Basilan came after an April 8 ransom deadline set by Abu Sayyaf, who had threatened to behead some of their foreign hostages. At least four soldiers were beheaded in the fighting, which involved about a hundred Abu Sayyaf rebels, regional military spokesman Major Filemon Tan said.

Military chief General Hernando Iriberry, who flew to the southern command base in Zamboanga city, 44 kilometers from the violence, said the fighting lasted almost 10 hours. "The whole armed forces is grieving," he told reporters. He said a Moroccan national who was with the gunmen was killed in the clashes, identifying him as Mohammad Khattab, an instructor in making improvised explosive devices as well as an "Islamic jihadist preacher."

"He wanted to unify, organize all kidnap-for-ransom groups to be affiliated with an international terrorist organization," the general said. He would not identify the international group the Moroccan was

allegedly working for. Iriberry said operations were continuing, adding that "even as we speak, there is an encounter going on in the same place."

Military spokesman Colonel Noel Detoyato told GMA television in Manila that "our standing order... is no let-up in our combat operations so we expect in the next few days, there will be many more encounters." The military spokesman for the unit involved in the battle said the soldiers were on their way to attack an Abu Sayyaf hideout when they were hit.

"Our group was heading to attack them. On the way, they were ambushed," Colonel Benedict Maniquis told radio station DZRH. "The enemy had the high ground so no matter where our soldiers fled to seek cover, they could still be hit by the heavy firepower and improvised explosive devices of the members of the Abu Sayyaf group." Major Tan said that 53 soldiers and about 20 Abu Sayyaf had also been wounded in the violence.

Slain soldiers' remains

A live screening of Filipino boxing legend Manny Pacquiao's last fight taking place in the United States, which was scheduled to show at a military gym in Zamboanga, was called off as the facility prepared to

receive the bodies of the slain soldiers. The clash came shortly after a retired Italian priest being held hostage by Abu Sayyaf was freed on Friday.

The militant group had also threatened to kill a Norwegian and two Canadian hostages and a Filipina they kidnapped in September if a ransom was not paid by Friday. The military said there has been no word on the hostages' fate since the deadline passed. Eighteen other foreign hostages are being held in the Philippines, most or all of them thought to be in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf. The Abu Sayyaf, a small group of militants known for kidnapping foreigners and demanding huge ransoms, was established in the early 1990s with seed money from Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network. It has been blamed for the country's worst terror attacks, including a 2004 Manila Bay ferry bombing that claimed 116 lives.

Its leaders have in recent years pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group that controls vast swathes of Iraq and Syria. They are based in the southern islands of Basilan and Jolo, which both have large Muslim populations. Various Muslim separatist insurgencies in the southern third of the largely-Christian Philippines have claimed more than 100,000 lives since the 1970s. — AFP

'THREE-NO GENERATION' SEEKS VOICE IN SOUTH KOREA VOTE

SEOUL: This week's general election in South Korea is expected to feature a new breed of "angry young voter", — millennials frustrated with record-high unemployment and widening inequality in career prospects. The April 13 ballot for the 300-seat national assembly has been touted as a referendum on the economic policies of the ruling conservative Saenuri Party, and President Park Geun-Hye who has less than two years left of her single five-year term.

Polls suggest the Saenuri, popular with older voters, will retain the simple parliamentary majority it won in 2012, especially with rifts between opposition parties threatening to split the liberal vote. But surveys also point to a possible new variable made up of members of what has become known as the "three-no generation"—no job, no home and no marriage prospects.

Growth in Asia's fourth-largest economy has stuttered in recent years, in line with a global slowdown and increasing competition in key export markets. As cash-strapped businesses have scaled down or stopped hiring altogether, the jobless rate for those under 30 has reached a record high of 12.5 percent — compared to a national average of 4.9 percent. "There is so much anger in us right now," said Kim Min-Jun, a 24-year-old college senior in Seoul.

'Automatically jobless'

Kim said most of his friends at the elite Sogang University had become "automatically jobless" upon graduation, with many applying for 40-50 jobs with no success. For those lucky enough to find work, buying a home in the capital Seoul—where most of the decent jobs are—is largely a pipe dream given the surge in property prices in recent years.

With interest rates at a record low, household debt on a national level now stands at an unprecedented \$1.0 trillion. "For now, voting seems to be the only way left to draw politicians' attention to this grim reality," said Kim. "Many say the April 13 should be a judgment day (for the ruling party) for making our society and our lives so miserable," he added. A recent poll by Gallup Korea showed that 17 percent of voters under 30 supported Saenuri, with nearly 40 percent for the different liberal opposition parties.

Others have yet to decide, but there is a new determination to cast ballots among an age segment that is not particularly known for turning out on polling day. In 2012, only about 40 per-

cent of young people voted, well below the national average of 54 percent and the 68 percent turnout among those aged over 60. But answering a recent official election committee survey, more than 55 percent of young voters said they would "definitely" vote in Wednesday's election, compared to 36 percent a year ago.

'Hard work' not enough

Lee Chung-Hee, a politics professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, said the frustration among millennials reflected a major socio-economic shift. "South Koreans used to have this strong belief that no matter how bleak the situation, you could get a good job and prosper by working hard enough and trying hard enough," Lee said.

"Now, young people realize that trying hard on your own is simply not good enough," Lee added. South Korea's extraordinary transformation from war-torn backwater to economic powerhouse through the 1970s and 90s brought new levels of prosperity that were initially shared quite equally.

But income inequality has widened dramatically in the last decade and a half, and there is growing anger—especially among those in their twenties—that scarce, high-paying jobs are all too often grabbed by children of well-connected, well-heeled parents. The top 10 percent of earners account for nearly a half of overall income the highest ratio in Asia—according to a study by the International Monetary Fund published last month.

'Dirt spoon'

That disparity has given rise to terms like "dirt spoon" for those stuck in low-paid jobs with bleak prospects, compared to someone with inherited wealth and a fast track to gainful employment who grew up with a "golden spoon" in the mouth.

The problem facing the angry young voters who want to register their grievances at the ballot box is just who to vote for. While Park and her Saenuri party have been criticized for their handling of the economy, the opposition parties are not seen as having much to offer in the way of alternatives.

"We often joke that if we combine all the jobs the political parties promised to create for the youth, it would be far more than South Korea's entire population," said Kim Min-Su, a Seoul labor activist running a campaign to improve youth turnout. — AFP

TAIWANESE RALLY FOR DEATH PENALTY AFTER CHILD MURDER

TAIPEI: Hundreds of Taiwanese rallied yesterday to show support for retaining the death penalty, after the beheading of a child in a street attack shocked the island. Demonstrators dressed in black and held white roses in mourning for the four-year-old girl murdered on March 28 near a Taipei metro station. Many wore stickers reading "Death penalty is necessary."

The girl's mother tried to stop the attacker but was pushed away. Several bystanders were also unable to stop the man, who decapitated the child with a kitchen knife. Police said the 33-year-old had previously been arrested for drug-related crimes and had sought treatment for mental illness. He was attacked by an angry mob while in custody.

The killing came less than a year after the throat of an eight-year-old girl was slit in her school restroom in Taipei. It sparked widespread public anger and fresh debate about capital punishment. Taiwan resumed capital punishment in 2010 after a five-year hiatus. But executions are

reserved for the most serious crimes such as aggravated murder and kidnapping.

Some politicians and rights groups have called for its abolition, but various opinion surveys show majority support for the death penalty. "Taiwan is not safe, so death sentences are needed to deter crimes and they should be carried out. I hope this will make our society safer for all children," said office worker Chen Peichi, who took her sons aged three and six to the Taipei rally.

"I am really sad and angry that these random murders of children keep happening. All child-killers should be sentenced to death for hurting defenceless children and destroying their families, as losing a child is unbearable," said housewife Wu Chiu-mei, who has a three-year-old grandson. In 2012 the murder of a 10-year-old boy in a playground reignited debate over the death penalty, after the suspect reportedly said he was anticipating free board and lodging in jail and would get a life sentence at most even if he were to kill two or three people. — AFP

KERRY IN LANDMARK HIROSHIMA STOPOVER

HIROSHIMA: G7 foreign ministers yesterday began two days of talks in Hiroshima, with John Kerry's visit to the atom-bombed city—the first-ever by a US secretary of state—overshadowing the broader agenda.

Kerry's landmark trip is seen as possibly paving the way for Barack Obama to become the first serving US president to journey to the thriving metropolis next month, when he visits Japan for the Group of Seven summit. The Hiroshima meeting also includes top diplomats from nuclear-armed Britain and France, as well as Canada, Germany, Italy, host Japan and the European Union. It is part of the run-up to the G7's rotating annual summit, scheduled this year from May 26-27 in the Ise-Shima region between Tokyo and Osaka. Kerry arrived earlier yesterday at a US military base west of Hiroshima.

He flew from Afghanistan after earlier stops in Iraq and Bahrain. The US secretary of state, Britain's Philip Hammond, France's Jean-Marc Ayrault and other ministers were discussing issues including the Middle East, the refugee crisis, the conflict in Ukraine and global terrorism. Host Japan also hopes to highlight other concerns, such as rising territorial tensions in the South China Sea where China and some Southeast Asian nations have clashed, and North Korea's nuclear sabre-rattling. But what has captured the imagination of the Japanese public is the location.

They hope it will promote greater understanding of Japan's staunch anti-nuclear stance as the only country to suffer atomic attack. Japanese foreign minister Fumio Kishida, who represents Hiroshima in parliament, also hopes to issue a

"Hiroshima Declaration" at the meeting to promote nuclear disarmament. "On this occasion, I want to send a strong message for peace and to realise a world free of nuclear weapons," Kishida said at a welcome reception. — AFP



HIROSHIMA: US Secretary of State John Kerry (third right) is the first to step out of line at the end of a family photo session with other G7 foreign ministers at the Itsukushima Shrine as they take a cultural break from their G7 foreign ministers meetings in nearby Hiroshima to visit Miyajima Island. — AP



WASHINGTON: This photo taken yesterday shows a woman reading an online version of a mockup of what a front page might look like should Republican frontrunner Donald Trump win the presidency, as it condemned his "deeply disturbing" and "profoundly un-American" vision. — AFP

DOURI SEEKS TO RESHAPE IRAQ SUNNI INSURGENCY

BAGHDAD: A rallying cry to Iraqi Sunnis from former President Saddam Hussein's top surviving aide aims to bolster the old ruling Baath party's appeal with Sunni Muslims fearing new reprisals by Shiite militias, experts said. They said the video released on Thursday could also contain a message to Iraq's Shiite-led government that former party members might help it fight Islamic State if the Shiite militias are kept out of the battle.

The broadcast purportedly featuring Ezzat Al-Douri coincided with the anniversary of the fall of Saddam's Sunni-led rule when US troops stormed Baghdad in 2003. Reuters could not authenticate it but analysts said it seemed genuine judging by his appearance and speech. Douri, a wiry man with a ginger moustache, evaded capture during the 2003-11 US occupation and Iraqi and US officials accused him of organising an insurgency by minority Sunnis against US troops and the new Shiite-led authorities in 2005-7.

The latest message follows major gains by the government and its US-led backers against Islamic State and coincides with a push to drive it from Mosul, the largest city in its self-proclaimed caliphate. "Douri and the Baath have no military importance now, but as Daesh (Islamic State) is weakening, the Baath appears to see a role as part of the Saudi-led alliance against Iran," said Hisham Al-Hashimi, a Baghdad-based security analyst.

The US invasion effectively handed power to Iran's allies in Iraq's Shiite majority community, and Tehran's influence became predominant when the American troops pulled out in 2011, leaving the Sunni community feeling marginalized. That marginalization and revenge attacks by Shiite militias were seen as contributing to the rise of Islamic State. A Shiite militia has declared it will join the fight to drive Islamic State from Mosul, which has stalled: Iraq's top Sunni official has urged the government not to allow militia to join and Hashimi said Douri appeared to be doing the same.

"The Saudi-led alliance is against Iran and also against Daesh (Islamic State) and by aligning the Baath with the Saudis he is adopting the same position; Douri seems to be saying 'My men will be willing to fight Daesh on condition that you keep Iran's militias out of Mosul'," Hashimi said. — Reuters

RIOTS, DEPORTATIONS HEADLINE 'PRESIDENT TRUMP' FRONT PAGE

WASHINGTON: Mass deportations, riots and a looming trade war: the Boston Globe yesterday ran a fake front page imagining the state of America under a Donald Trump presidency - and denouncing his "deeply disturbing" vision. Posted on the US newspaper's editorial page under the headline "The GOP must stop Trump," the mockup appeared three months before the Republican Party convention confirms its White House nominee. "Deportations to begin," read the Globe's fake headline, dated April 9, 2017, above a spoof article about Trump's push to expel more than 11 million undocumented immigrants - sparking nationwide riots and curfews. "This is Donald Trump's America," reads a note from the Globe's editor at the foot of the page. "What you read on this page is what might happen if the GOP frontrunner can put his ideas into practice, his words into action."

One article features US soldiers refusing to obey orders to kill the families of Islamic State fighters, another has a Republican-controlled Congress passing a libel law targeting "absolute scum" in the press - both riffs on campaign pronouncements by Trump. "Markets sink as trade war looms," reads the headline of a piece detailing the meltdown of US commercial relations with both China and Mexico.

A separate story reports how Trump prompted a diplomatic crisis with China after naming his dog, a Shar-Pei, after Chinese First Lady Peng Liyuan. "I don't know why she's so offended, I love cute puppies and I love women! It's not like I tweeted out a photo of a Rottweiler named (German Chancellor Angela) Merkel," he was quoted as saying.

Although Trump leads the Republican primary race,

he is projected to lose in a landslide in a general election matchup against the likely Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. But the paper's editorial warned that the prospect - however slim - of the billionaire real estate mogul winning the highest office in the land "demands an active and engaged opposition."

'Dangerous Deal'

"Donald J Trump's vision for the future of our nation is as deeply disturbing as it is profoundly un-American," it said, warning that Trump could be one of the world's next "demagogic strongmen". The satirical front page "is an exercise in taking a man at his word. And his vision of America promises to be as appalling in real life as it is in black and white on the page," the editorial said. "It requires an opposition as focused on denying Trump the White House as the candidate is flippant and reckless about securing it."

The Globe's editors pointed to Trump's "winks and nods at political violence at his rallies," among other controversies. "If Trump were a politician running such a campaign in a foreign country right now, the US State Department would probably be condemning him," it added. "For now, Republicans ought to focus on doing the right thing: putting up every legitimate roadblock to Trump that they can."

The Globe's editorial urged Republican leaders to pick an alternative nominee, such as House Speaker Paul Ryan or businessman and former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, should Trump fail to secure a majority of delegates before the convention in July. "It is better to lose with principle than to accept a dangerous deal from a demagogue," it said. — AFP



Palestinian Ahmed Issawi, 20, a cyclist living in Lebanon, jumps over four young people as he performs a stunt on the Mediterranean Sea waterfront promenade in Beirut yesterday. — AP

COMMERCE MINISTRY FREEZES PRICES...

Continued from Page 1

The committee accepted the government's plan for hiking tariffs for apartments to be 5 fils per kilowatt for the first 1,000 kW, 10 fils per kilowatt for between 1,000 and 2,000 kW and 15 fils per kilowatt for consumption above 2,000 kW. MP Saleh Ashour however said he will propose to delay power tariff increases for all categories since the government is not planning to impose the hikes before two years on private houses.

Ashour said that both the government and finance committee bills stipulate at least a 100 percent increase in charges and therefore should be rejected. He said that the law should be delayed until after the electricity ministry installs the so-called smart meters and is ready for the hike. MP Abdullah Al-Turajji said that private houses represent a red line for him and that no increase will be accepted on them, adding that people will not pay for the failure of the current and previous governments.

In another development, the Assembly's legal and legislative affairs committee yesterday agreed to lift the

parliamentary immunity of MP Abdulhameed Dashti to face interrogation by the public prosecution on a new case. Dashti is facing several cases in court for insulting Bahrain and Saudi Arabia and others. The Assembly has already agreed to lift his immunity several times and the public prosecution has issued a number of warrants to arrest him. Dashti left the country over a month ago and has not returned.

Head of the committee MP Mubarak Al-Harees said the lawmaker has failed to attend three Assembly sessions and his membership will be revoked if he fails to come for two more sessions. Two weeks ago, the Assembly rejected Dashti's reasons to stay away from Assembly sessions.

The Assembly's interior and defense committee meanwhile approved a draft law allowing the government to naturalize a maximum of 4,000 people a year, a majority of whom are stateless people or bedoons. Similar laws were passed in previous years to naturalize some of the 110,000 bedoons, but the government did not implement them.

INDIA TEMPLE FIRE KILLS MORE THAN 100

Continued from Page 1

The navy and air force also sent helicopters to evacuate the most critically injured, officials said. "Total death total is 106 with 75 of those identified and 31 unknown," a spokesman for Kerala Chief Minister Oommen Chandy told AFP. Firefighters and police had battled at the temple in the coastal town of Paravur to douse the fire and rescue those trapped at the complex. But residents said some victims were charred beyond recognition. Video footage showed a series of explosions and fireworks erupting about 3 am (2130 GMT Saturday) along with huge plumes of smoke. Local residents carried the bloodied and injured victims in their arms from the scene. They told of the force of the explosion sending concrete slabs and other building parts slamming into the crowd.

Chandy and other officials said the temple had gone ahead with the fireworks display despite being refused permission. "I had denied permission for this fireworks because they had asked permission for conducting it on a competition basis," Kollam district collector A. Shainomal told the NDTV network. The Kerala government ordered a judicial inquiry into the cause of the disaster and Chandy's spokesman told AFP that police have registered a criminal case against temple authorities.

Local lawmaker N K Premachandran said a fireworks competition traditionally held every year between different groups had occurred at the temple, drawing thou-

sands to watch. One firework landed on a building that was storing the rest of the pyrotechnic material, triggering the explosion, he said. Fires and stampedes are not uncommon at temples and during religious occasions, often because of poor security arrangements and lax safety standards.

Emergency room doctor Rajesh Kumar said those who poured into his hospital were suffering from head injuries and burn wounds, and several had needed amputations. "Seven people had partial amputations in the blast and we had to amputate surgically. Most of the injured had head, torso and internal injuries, a few had burn injuries," he told AFP at a hospital in the state capital Thiruvananthapuram. Modi announced 200,000 rupees (\$3,005) in compensation for the families of those killed and 50,000 rupees for those injured.

Messages of condolence poured in from around the world, with Pope Francis's office saying the pontiff was "praying for all affected by this tragedy". Britain's Prince William and wife Kate said through a spokesman that they were "saddened by the news" after arriving in India yesterday for an official tour. Navy spokesman D K Sharma said helicopters would transport the injured to larger hospitals in Thiruvananthapuram and also to Kochi city. The fire comes as Kerala - governed by the Congress party, which is in opposition at the national level - heads to the polls in one of five state elections being held in India this month and next. — AFP

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Issues

DESPITE GENDER QUOTA,
STILL FEW WOMEN IN
GERMAN BOARDROOMS

By Romain Fonsegrives

Germany at the start of the year introduced a corporate "women's quota" obliging its 100 biggest companies to fill at least 30 percent of their supervisory board seats with females. But for many, including several of the women executives themselves, the new legislation has so far proved something of a "paper tiger". "The law is addressing the tip of the iceberg and we need to make sure that we change more than that," said Belen Garijo, board member at pharmaceuticals specialist Merck KGaA.

The 55-year-old Spaniard is the first woman to hold such a position at the world's oldest pharmaceuticals maker, based in Darmstadt. But for her, what counts are the competence and skills required for the job rather than quotas like the one Germany introduced on Jan 1. "If someone were to tell me, 'you sit on the board because you're a female,' that would reduce me to tears," she said.

Claudia Nemat, a board member at Deutsche Telekom, also said that such "legislation makes no real difference". "Companies must understand that diversity - both on the executive and supervisory boards - gives them a competitive advantage," she said. "We need men and women with international experience, both young and old." The German drugs and telecoms giants can be viewed as pioneers in a country where the glass ceiling for women is still very much a reality.

Both groups have female executive board members and more women on their supervisory boards than the 30-percent minimum required by the new law, which came at the insistence of the junior partner in the ruling coalition, the Social Democrats. Under the law, if women cannot be found to fill 30 percent of supervisory board seats, then those seats must remain empty.

'Snail's Pace'

By fixing a quota, Germany is following in the footsteps of Norway, a pioneer in gender equality, and European neighbors such as France, Spain and the Netherlands. Big companies, and 3,500 small and medium-sized enterprises, must also fix their own voluntary goals for women on their management boards and provide regular updates on the progress they make. The new legislation "marks some progress, but let's hope things aren't going to proceed at the same snail's pace" as in the past, said Elke Holst, research chief at the economic think tank DIW.

The institute has been monitoring the number of female top executives in Germany's 200 biggest companies for more than 10 years, and the results aren't good. At the end of 2015, just six percent of the firms had female executive board members, and just under 20 percent had women on their supervisory boards. "The situation has improved slightly, but not very much with regard to the executive board positions," Holst said.

There were no women at all on the management boards of groups such as Volkswagen, Commerzbank or Beiersdorf, maker of Nivea products. On Germany's current trends, gender parity won't be attained before 2040 on supervisory boards, and not until next century on executive boards, the expert has calculated.

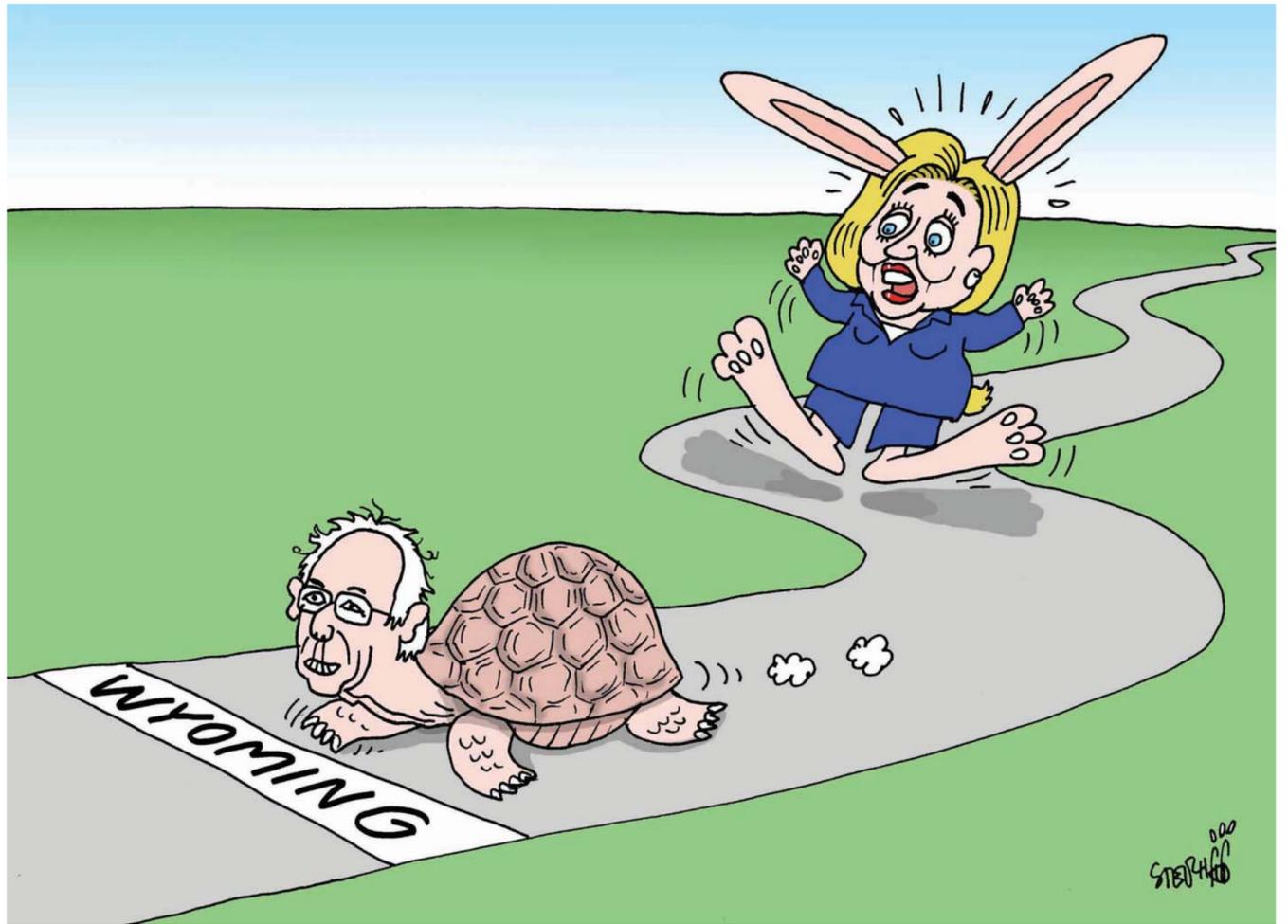
'Change and Awareness'

Holst said that without real sanctions for corporate laggards, the new legislation would remain a "paper tiger". Yet many women executives fear that penalizing companies that don't promote enough females to board positions could be counter-productive. "I don't believe in sanctions. I don't think sanctions get you the right behavior," said Bayer's first female board member, Erica Mann. "My view is that people need to willingly do things, and I think education is more important than sanctions."

Mann said she grew up in South Africa where in the 1980s she saw "quotas to get more black people and more women into jobs". She said such quotas "force a good change and awareness" but can also be problematic for those who benefit because "you want to feel that you got that job fair and square, not because you're (part of) a quota".

Garijo at Merck said that companies that "would keep saying they don't find women to occupy senior roles, they have a big problem". "Either the management process they may have is not really efficient or effective, or they are using this probably as an excuse." Holst at DIW pointed out that German companies accepted voluntary quotas back in 2001, "but that simply didn't work". She urged government fiscal and family policy measures to make it easier for women to have careers, pointing to a conservative culture still prevalent in parts of western Germany that expects women to stay at home. "Reality has changed," she said, "but things haven't necessarily changed at the same pace in people's heads." —AFP

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US BETWEEN IRAN AND A HARD PLACE

By Matthew Lee

The Obama administration is in a bind. Between Iran and a hard place. As it seeks to implement, preserve and strengthen the landmark nuclear deal it negotiated with Iran, the administration is being buffeted by criticism from all sides: Iran, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, not to mention members of Congress, including some who supported the agreement. Eager that a successful deal and a new era in the US-Iran relationship be part of President Barack Obama's legacy, his administration finds itself encouraging foreign trade with Iran even as it forbids most American commerce with the Islamic Republic. Those efforts are complicated by the fact that the United States continues to condemn and try to punish Iranian actions in non-nuclear arenas such as Tehran's support of terrorist groups and belligerence toward Israel.

Under the nuclear deal that took effect in January, Iran curtailed its nuclear program in exchange for billions of dollars in sanctions relief. Iran has complied with its obligations to date. But

Iran says the economic boon isn't enough because of remaining US economic penalties for its other behavior, and some officials have threatened to walk away from one of Obama's chief foreign policy achievements - the other is the rapprochement with Cuba.

Asian and European government and companies, primarily banks, are balking at doing now-legal business with Iran, because of uncertainty over those remaining sanctions. They want written clarification about what current US laws and financial regulations allow them to do. Essentially, they want a promise that the US will not prosecute or punish them for transactions that involve Iran. Adding to their unease is the 2016 US presidential election, in which the top Republican prospects have pledged to rip up the nuclear deal.

Dangerous

At the same time, Israel, its supporters and Arab nations are crying foul over Iran's continued testing of ballistic missiles as well as its ongoing support for Lebanon's Hezbollah movement, Syrian President Bashar Assad's government

and Yemen's Houthi rebels. They say Iran is as dangerous as ever. Many members of Congress agree and are demanding new sanctions. While the administration says it remains vehemently opposed to Iran's missile tests and destabilizing activities throughout the Middle East, it insists the nuclear deal has made Iran less of a threat. The cost of walking away from the deal, US officials maintain, will be even more destabilization and a graver threat.

Thus, the US has been thrust into a role of defending Iran on its nuclear deal compliance and condemning its other actions as it simultaneously promotes business with Iran in the context of the new leeway afforded by sanctions relief. Obama and his national security aides have ruled out allowing Iran access to the US financial system or direct access to US dollars - still prohibited by US law. But they are considering whether, and how, to respond to the Iranian complaints and the European and Asian demands for clarity on the financial rules.

The administration has sent State Department and Treasury officials to try to explain the regulations, but questions

remain. Some European leaders, notably French President Francois Hollande, have personally raised the matter with Obama, diplomats say. Treasury Secretary Jack Lew and Secretary of State John Kerry, who negotiated the nuclear deal, argue that the administration must live up to the "letter and spirit" of the sanctions relief. They say Iran has complied and must get the benefits of the agreement even if Tehran continues other objectionable activities. They have left the door open to further sanctions relief, primarily as it concerns foreign businesses trading with Iran.

US lawmakers, many of whom opposed the nuclear deal on principle, have moved to prevent what they say is an administration overreach: a proposal to ease rules relating to the use of the dollar in third-party foreign currency exchanges in support of deals with Iran. Administration officials say such an easing is unnecessary because those transactions are allowed. Still, the suggestion of a change has Capitol Hill on edge. Despite the uncertainty, the administration has refused so far to say what, if anything, it will do to clear the air. —AP

CLINTON AND TRUMP: FRIENDS, FOES OR FRENEMIES?

By Brigitte Dusseau

On the campaign trail, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are arch rivals flinging dirt at each other. But in real life, they were acquaintances, even friends - far from daggers drawn. When Clinton was New York senator from 2001 to 2009, Trump was the flamboyant real estate tycoon and reality TV star who built his fortune in Manhattan: they moved in the same elite circles that mixed business, politics and celebrity. Trump saw qualities in Clinton and donated to her campaign. She was a guest at his third marriage in Palm Beach, Florida in January 2005.

Bill Clinton, who had fascinated Trump for years, was also at the sumptuous reception for 400 guests at Mar-a-Lago, the billionaire's glittering home where Michael Jackson spent his honeymoon with Lisa Marie Presley. Trump's ties to the Clintons go back to Bill's presidency from 1993 to 2001. The pres-

idential library is set this week to release around 500 pages of documents on Trump, including "birthday notes" sent from Clinton to Trump and details about Trump invitations to the White House, according to the National Archives.

In 2001, when the Clintons left the White House, Trump suggested that they set up home in one of the Trump skyscrapers in Manhattan, although the Clintons had bought a home in Chappaqua some years before. In 2007, Trump also said that he hoped Hillary Clinton would be the Democratic nominee for president. In July 2008, photos emerged showing the former president playing golf with Trump, and former New York mayors Michael Bloomberg and Rudy Giuliani on a course owned by Trump near the Clinton home in Chappaqua, upstate New York.

Terrific Woman

In 2012 Trump praised Hillary Clinton as "a terrific woman". "I am biased because I have known her for years. I live in New York. She lives in New York. I really like her and her husband both a lot," he said on Fox News. But the 2016 campaign has turned them into enemies. Trump routinely slams Clinton as "the worst secretary of state in the history of the United States". Clinton has called him a "racist" and a "misogynist" and accuses him of dividing the country. If the Clintons were at Trump's wedding, it was because he asked them to attend after donating to the Clinton Foundation, he told the first televised Republican debate last August.

"With Hillary Clinton I said 'be at my wedding' and she came to my wedding," he said. "You know why? She had no choice because I gave," he added. "I was a businessman. I give to everybody. When they call, I give. And you know what? When I need something from them, two years later, three years later, I call them, and they are there for me." In the 2000s, Trump donated \$4,100 to Clinton's campaign for the Senate, according to Politifact. He also gave more than \$100,000 to the Clinton Foundation.

Clinton has lost no time distancing herself from the man who has insulted Mexicans, women and called for a ban on Muslims entering the United States. "I didn't know him that well," she said in August. "I thought it would be fun to go to his wedding because it's always entertaining. Now that he's running for president, it's a little more troubling," she added. "He was basically a Democrat before he was a Republican," she said in January in Iowa. "He was supportive of Democrats and

supportive of a lot of causes I care about and people I knew cared about."

But Clinton-Trump relations went beyond the realm of purely business and politics. Their daughters, Chelsea and Ivanka, 36 and 34 years old respectively have also been friends. They were introduced by their husbands and live close to each other in Manhattan. They are both young mothers and again move in similar circles. In the September edition of People magazine, Chelsea praised Ivanka. "I do believe that friendship is more important than politics," she said. "I'm really grateful that Ivanka's my friend." But in a campaign where personal attacks have become the norm, the young women - who have both stumped with their parents - have reportedly kept a distance.

Clinton meanwhile insists she was never friends with the brash billionaire. "We were not friends," she told People magazine. "We knew each other, obviously, in New York. I knew a lot of people." —AFP



WOLFSBURG COACH EXPECTS REAL BACKLASH IN MADRID

BERLIN: Wolfsburg coach Dieter Hecking says he expects his side to face a backlash at Real Madrid in tomorrow's Champions League quarter-final return match after the Germans' stunning 2-0 first-leg victory. "If it was the case that Real had underestimated us in the first leg, they definitely won't do that again," said Hecking. "We did a good job of selling ourselves well in the first leg, but we are going to have to give everything we have in order to pull off a huge sensation." Real have a huge job on their hands at the Santiago Bernabeu if they are to go through to a sixth consecutive Champions League semi-final after succumbing to a Ricardo Rodriguez penalty and a Maximilian Arnold goal. Wolfsburg suffered something of a Champions League hangover on Saturday as they were held to a 1-1 draw in the Bundesliga at home to Mainz, although Hecking rested four of the side which beat Real. However, last season's German Cup winners, who are in the Champions League knockout stages for the first time, have tended to struggle immediately after European games this season, picking up just 10 league points from a possible 27. —AFP

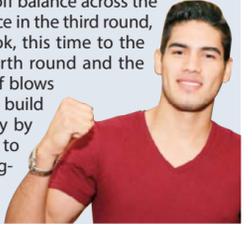


NEW JAPAN COACH WANTS PLAYERS TO RETURN HOME

TOKYO: Incoming Japan head coach Jamie Joseph wants more Brave Blossom internationals to return home and play for the fledgling Super Rugby outfit the Sunwolves ahead of the 2019 World Cup. The Sunwolves are the only side without a win in Super Rugby after problems forming a roster, with nine of the squad who performed so well for Japan at last year's World Cup playing around the world for other clubs. Joseph will step down as head coach of current champions the Otago Highlanders at the end of the season to take charge of Japan and was hopeful more Japanese will follow him with an eye on a competitive showing at their home 2019 World Cup. "Next year one of my goals is to attract all the Japanese national players around the world back home and play for the Sunwolves," he told Kyodo News. "I think it is important for our preparation for the World Cup. If we have a Sunwolves team and we don't have the majority of the national team playing for them, it doesn't really serve a purpose for our preparation. So that's a big challenge for us.—Reuters

RAMIREZ DOWNS ABRAHAM TO TAKE WBO CROWN

LAS VEGAS: Gilberto Ramirez became the first Mexican fighter ever to hold a super middleweight world title here Saturday after dominating champion Arthur Abraham of Germany to claim a unanimous points victory. Ramirez was awarded the win by emphatic margins of 120-108 on all three judges' cards to take the World Boxing Organization title at the MGM Grand Garden Arena. The undefeated 24-year-old from Mazatlan used his superior reach and mobility to attack Abraham from all angles, scoring freely in the early rounds with a series of stinging jabs. Ramirez rocked Abraham in the second with a thunderous right hook that sent the German careering off balance across the ring. The skilful Mexican continued his dominance in the third round, tagging Abraham with another solid right hook, this time to the body. Abraham rallied briefly towards the fourth round and the two fighters engaged in a frenzied exchange of blows as the bell sounded. But Abraham struggled to build on that momentum and was again kept at bay by his more mobile opponent, who was content to duck in and out of range landing blows seemingly at will. —AFP



MARQUEZ AGAIN TOPS AUSTIN QUALIFYING

LOS ANGELES: Marc Marquez's run of dominance in Austin continued Saturday as the red-hot Spaniard put his Honda on pole for the MotoGP Grand Prix of the Americas.

Marquez, fresh off a victory in Argentina, will be hoping to win from pole for the fourth straight year at the Circuit of the Americas in the hills outside the Texas capital. He topped qualifying with a time of 2min 3.188sec. Yamaha riders Jorge Lorenzo and Valentino Rossi, who have had their struggles in Austin since the event began three years ago, grabbed the other two front-row starting spots.

"Maybe I didn't do the perfect lap in qualifying and both Yamahas are closer, but we'll try to manage as best as possible tomorrow," Marquez said.

"I'm happy with how the weekend is going in general, I feel a little better with the bike every time I go out on track and our pace for the race seems competitive.

"The tires are working quite well, but of course, as always here at Austin, making the right choice for the front will be crucial."

Reigning world champion Lorenzo, also of Spain, was second-fastest in qualifying with a time of 2:03.257 and Italy's Rossi, a nine-time world champion, clocked 2:03.644.

Lorenzo set the early pace with a lap of 2:03.613 — fastest of the weekend and his first under 2:04.

Marquez promptly answered with his pole-grabbing lap, and after their first runs were complete Lorenzo was the only rider within a second of his compatriot.

Lorenzo then produced his 2:03.257 — but could not improve from there. Marquez-whose 2013 victory in Austin at the age of 20 made him the youngest rider to win a MotoGP race—claimed the 60th

pole of his career. Lorenzo, who is fourth in the early world championship standings, was delighted to give his rival something to think about. But it remains to be seen if the Yamaha challenge will hold up over the length of the race.

FRONT ROW 'CRUCIAL'

Rossi, who was 0.456sec off Marquez's pace, said the front-row spot is a good start. "This result is crucial for the race tomorrow and it's also a good result for the work that we've done today," said Rossi, who trails points leader Marquez by eight going into today's race.

"From this morning we've improved the bike a lot and this afternoon in the free practice with the race tire I was quite strong. I started qualifying quite confident and I did some good laps," added Rossi, who hadn't put together back-to-back front-row starts since the Malaysian and Australian Grands Prix back in 2013.

"The front row is always a very good target, especially when I have to fight with Marquez and Lorenzo when they are quite strong." Fourth-fastest and leading the Ducati charge was Andrea Iannone, but the Italian will start from seventh place on the grid as a result of his attempted last-lap pass in Argentina. Maverick Vinales on a Suzuki was fifth-fastest but will start from fourth because of Iannone's penalty.

Vinales has tasted success before at Circuit of the Americas, where he won his first MotoGP race in 2014.

Sixth in qualifying and the leading independent team rider, Cal Crutchlow (LCR Honda) will move to fifth on the grid. After two tough opening rounds at Qatar and Argentina, the Briton is out to score his first points of 2016. —AFP



LONDON: British boxer Anthony Joshua celebrates beating US boxer Charles Martin (not pictured) following their IBF World Heavyweight title boxing match at the O2 arena in London on Saturday. — AFP

OOREDOO CONTINUES TO SPONSOR KUWAITI TRIATHLETE AL-RASHED

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of international Ooredoo Group, is proud to announce that it will sponsor Kuwaiti youth triathlete Abdulaziz Al-Rashed, for another season. The young triathlete won third place in Sharm El-Sheikh ALAMEDA 2016 Triathlon which took place between on 1st and 2nd of April 2016.

Triathlon include the three sports of swimming, cycling, and running. This is Ooredoo Kuwait's second consecutive year in sponsoring Al-Rashed.

Congratulating Kuwait's champion on behalf of the company, Mijbil Alayoub, Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "Congratulations to our young athlete Abdulaziz Al-Rashed,

who just won the third position in such a prestigious championship, where key players from Africa and Pan Arab gathered to compete on different levels. I would like to wish him best of luck in competitions and tournaments he takes part and in his future as an athlete in general"

Sharm El-Sheikh ALAMEDA Triathlon represents the pinnacle of triathlon competitions in Egypt, providing recreational triathletes with a once in a lifetime opportunity to compete on the same course as Africa's and Arabs' known champions. The tournament attracted hundreds of audiences to watch both the amateurs and the professionals including Africa's best players.



RUTHLESS JOSHUA CLAIMS IBF HEAVYWEIGHT CROWN

LONDON: Anthony Joshua became Britain's second reigning world heavyweight champion when he knocked out Charles Martin in the second round at the O2 Arena on Saturday. Joshua, the 2012 Olympic gold medallist, captured his first world title in only his 16th professional fight by flattening American Martin to lift the International Boxing Federation (IBF) belt.

Martin, who was making a first defence, was floored twice in the second round by right hands and failed to beat the count the second time. Joshua, who turned professional in October 2013, is the fifth quickest heavyweight to win a version of the world title and is Britain's second reigning world heavyweight champion along with Tyson Fury, who holds the World Boxing Association (WBA) and World Boxing Organisation (WBO) belts.

A future clash between Joshua, 26, and Fury will become a possibility if Fury can beat Ukrainian Wladimir Klitschko in a rematch on July 9. Joshua's title triumph improved his record to 16 wins from as many fights while Martin suffered his first defeat in 25 fights, with one draw.

Joshua's muscular frame looks like it has been cut from stone and his power was too much for Martin. All 16 of the Briton's opponents in the paid ranks have been stopped and only one has survived past the third round. Joshua hardly broke sweat in sweeping aside Martin, but insisted after he still needed to improve. "I'm not getting carried away because still got a lot of work to do," said the new champion. "I've got David Haye and Tyson Fury calling me out. Trust me, when they step in the ring with me I will be ready. "I come to knock people out. The power is always there. I'm just tucked away in the gym, you'll only see me in (superstores) Ikea or ASDA."

BEST PUNCH

Joshua might not be quick on feet but the 6ft 6in boxer does not have any problems in quickly hunting down opponents. Martin sprang from obscurity to be IBF champion in January when he won the vacant belt after Ukrainian Vyacheslav Glazkov injured a knee

in the third round. The belt only became available because Fury was stripped of it for agreeing to face Klitschko in a rematch. Both made a cautious start with Joshua landing the best punch in the opening round when he broke through Martin's guard with a right.

Martin, 29, was put on the back foot in the second round and was sent crashing backwards to the canvas when he was caught flush on the chin by a right.

When Martin got up after a count Joshua immediately planted another right flush on the jaw to send him back to the canvas.

Martin complained when the fight was waved off but Joshua was bouncing him off the canvas like a basketball. The American

failed to beat referee Jeane Pierre Van Immschoot's second count.

Two other Britons were successful in world title fights on the undercard. Lee Selby retained his world featherweight title with a unanimous points win after surviving an early scare against American Eric Hunter on Saturday. The Welshman made a second defence of the IBF belt after recovering from a second round knockdown and then dominating with his slick boxing to earn two scores of 116-110 and 115-111.

England's Jamie McDonnell made a fourth defence of his WBA world bantamweight title with a ninth round stoppage of Mexican Fernando Vargas. —AFP

KUWAIT DISABLED SPORTS CLUB TO HOLD MEETING

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait Disabled Sports Club will hold a meeting with representative of private establishments that care for the disabled to discuss progress made in implementing law 5/2010 that is concerned with caring for the handicapped.

Club chairman of the Board Shafi Al-Hajiri said the meeting will discuss the government's implementation of the law, and difficulties the disabled are facing in getting their rights that is approved by law, which is considered the most outstanding law issued for the care of the disabled.

He said the club is keen on carrying out its social role by following up its members' affairs besides its sports and youth role. Al-Hajiri hoped the meeting comes out with results that contribute to making things easy for the disabled and solve their lingering problems in all fields.

Al-Hajiri said all Kuwait disabled are proud because they are receiving a fatherly care from HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown



Shafi Al-Hajiri

Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as this will contribute to removing all obstacles they face.

KYLE BUSCH WINS AT TEXAS TO COMPLETE ANOTHER NASCAR SWEEP

FORT WORTH: Kyle Busch took the lead after the final restart Saturday night at Texas to complete his second NASCAR weekend sweep in a row. Busch ended Jimmie Johnson's three-race winning streak at Texas, getting his 36th Sprint Cup victory a week after also winning at Martinsville.

Busch also won the Xfinity race at Texas on Friday night, his 80th win in that series that was coming off a two-week break. At Martinsville, he also got his 45th Camping World Truck Series victory. That's four consecutive NASCAR Series wins in a span of eight days.

"It's pretty darn good, I'll tell you that," Busch said when asked what it's like to

be him right now. "I've got a great wife, a great son and I'm having a blast, living the dream."

On the first lap after the final restart, lap 302 of 334, Busch went on the outside of Turn 4 to shoot around Martin Truex Jr. for the lead. Busch led the rest of the way in his No. 18 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota, winning by nearly 4 seconds over Dale Earnhardt Jr. with Joey Logano third.

"The restart was going to be key. If I could just get out in front of him, I knew I could protect the rest of the race," Busch said. "They had a good restart, but we got a better one." It was Busch's second Sprint Cup victory at Texas, where in

2013 he also swept both spring races at the high-banked, 1 1/2-mile track.

FIRST NIGHT RACE

NASCAR's first night race of the season actually went into the next morning, ending a few minutes after midnight Texas time after the start was delayed for 1 hour, 50 minutes while drying the track after a couple of light rain showers during the afternoon.

Johnson, who had won five of the previous seven Texas races, finished fourth. When the Sprint Cup Series returns to Texas in November, he will be trying to win the fall race there for the fifth year in a row.

Chase Elliott, the rookie teammate of Earnhardt and Johnson at Hendrick Motorsports, finished fifth. Elliott has qualified fourth, but had to start at the back of the 40-car field after a transmission change in the No. 24 Chevrolet. The four Hendrick drivers finished in the top eight, with Kasey Kahne eighth.

All four Gibbs drivers finished in the top 12, with polesitter Carl Edwards seventh, Matt Kenseth 11th and Denny Hamlin 12th. Edwards led 124 laps and was running second on a restart with 113 laps to go after pitting during a caution. Within a few laps after that, he had to go back in the pits because of a loose front right wheel and dropped

all the way to 19th. He has won three Cup races at Texas, the last when sweeping the 2008 races. Truex led six times for 141 laps.

The last restart followed an incident that involved 13 cars on the backstretch. Austin Dillon, on older tires, got loose with 40 laps to go when Hamlin came under him going on the backstretch. Johnson was coming up behind him and tried to avoid contact before tapping into the back of Dillon's No. 3 that then spun. Truex, who was not involved in the incident, and Dillon had stayed on the track running first and second when everyone else pitted during a caution five laps earlier. —AP

SPIETH STUMBLES BUT KEEPS MASTERS LEAD

AUGUSTA: One round away from another green jacket, Jordan Spieth couldn't help but look back. A victory in the Masters was starting to look inevitable Saturday when Spieth stood on the 17th tee with a four-shot lead. The wind that caused so much havoc had subsided. Rory McIlroy was out of the picture. Spieth had just made five big putts in a row, three of them for birdie.

Two holes later, he found himself explaining what went wrong. Sure, he had the lead for the seventh straight round at Augusta National, but just barely. Two wild tee shots, two poor wedges and five putts at the end of an already wild ride left Spieth with only a one-shot lead. And it left the Masters up for grabs.

"It was a really tough finish to go from holding a four-shot lead ... to where all of the sudden, now it's anyone's game," Spieth said. "So it's tough to swallow that."

His biggest challenge?

"Understand this is the position I wanted to be in after 54 holes," he said, "and not think about the finish to today's round."

A bogey and a double bogey gave Spieth a 1-over 73, one shot ahead of Masters rookie Smylie Kaufman. It also gave plenty of hope to a cast of challengers that include 58-year-old Bernhard Langer and Hideki Matsuyama of Japan, who were two shots behind.

Looming three shots behind - that's nothing at Augusta National - were world No. 1 Jason Day and Dustin Johnson. Eleven players were within five shots of the lead, and that even includes McIlroy, who didn't make a birdie in his round of 77.

"To be honest with you, I would be feeling a lot worse about myself if I hadn't have just seen what Jordan did the last two holes," McIlroy said. "I sort of take a bit of heart from that, that I'm still in this golf tournament."

THAT'S WHAT GNAWED AT SPIETH

He led by four shots after the third round a year ago and was able to protect the lead. With a forecast for less wind Sunday, it could be a sprint to the green jacket filled with birdies, eagles and those Augusta National roars that have been largely swept away by three straight days of 25-mph gusts.

"I know I have to shoot a significant under-par round tomorrow in order to win this tournament, when I could have played

a different style of golf, like I did on Sunday last year," he said. Kaufman, who qualified for the Masters by shooting 61 in the final round to win in Las Vegas, used to spend his summers playing junior golf against Spieth. He kept the stress to a minimum and rallied with three birdies over his last six holes for a 69.

No one has won a green jacket on his first try since Fuzzy Zoeller in 1979. Maybe there's one waiting for a 24-year-old named Smylie.

"This place fits my eye pretty well," Kaufman said. "I just enjoy playing, coming out every day. It's Augusta National. It's hard not to have some fun out there."

The biggest surprise was Langer, who won his second Masters in 1993 about three months before Spieth was born. Playing alongside Day - and usually playing from some 60 yards behind him - Langer plodded his way around in the wind and ran off three birdies for a 70.

On the 30-year anniversary of Jack Nicklaus becoming the oldest Masters champion at 46, Langer now has a chance to become the oldest winner of any major by 10 years. Julius Boros won the 1968 PGA Championship when he was 48.

CAN HE REALLY WIN?

"I believe I can," Langer said. Matsuyama, who won the Phoenix Open earlier this year, had a brief chance to tie Spieth until missing a birdie chance on the par-5 15th. Just like Spieth, he let the last few holes get away from him with bogeys on the 16th and 17th for a 72. He still was only two shots behind.

Day (70) and Johnson (72) were at even-par 216, along with Danny Willett, the Englishman who wasn't sure he was going to be able to play in his first Masters because his wife was pregnant. She gave birth last week.

Almost as surprising as Langer being two shots behind is McIlroy still even having a chance. Starting the round one shot out of the lead, he fell apart after the turn with a bogey from the tees on No. 10 and a double bogey in the water on the 11th.

Spieth also made double bogey at No. 11, but was able to recover. The lead was down to one shot, until he made an 18-foot birdie on the par-3 12th, then holed fast, sliding birdie putts on the 14th and 15th to restore his margin. And three holes later, it was gone. — AP



AUGUSTA: Jordan Spieth hits out of the rough off the 17th fairway during the third round of the Masters golf tournament Saturday, in Augusta. — AP



SAN FRANCISCO: Corey Seager #5 of the Los Angeles Dodgers hits a double against the San Francisco Giants during the tenth inning at AT&T Park on Saturday in San Francisco, California. The Los Angeles Dodgers defeated the San Francisco Giants 3-2 in 10 innings. —AFP

DODGERS COMPLETE LATE RALLY TO SECURE WIN OVER GIANTS

LOS ANGELES: Charlie Culberson doubled with one out in the 10th inning to score Corey Seager as the Los Angeles Dodgers completed a late rally to secure a 3-2 victory over the San Francisco Giants in a rain-delayed game. The second consecutive extra-inning affair between the National League West rivals didn't have the dramatics of Friday's no-hit bid by LA rookie Ross Stripling, but it ended better for the Dodgers, who won in San Francisco for just the third time in their last 13 visits. After the Dodgers scored in the top of the ninth to tie the score at 2 and force extra innings, Seager lined a one-out double against the sixth Giants pitcher, right-hander George Kontos (0-1), to trigger the winning uprising in the 10th.

YANKEES 8, TIGERS 4

Carlos Beltran and Alex Rodriguez hit home runs while CC Sabathia crafted his way through six-plus innings Saturday to help the New York Yankees beat Detroit 8-4, ending the Tigers' season-starting winning streak at three games. Sabathia (1-0) allowed three runs and four hits in six-plus innings in his first start since missing the post-season last year while undergoing alcohol rehabilitation. Sabathia left the bases loaded in his one dangerous inning, the fourth, and was removed from freezing weather after giving up a leadoff single in the seventh. Rodriguez gave the Yankees a 1-0 lead in the first with his 688th career home run and Beltran hit a two-run homer in the fifth.

RED SOX 8, BLUE JAYS 4

Dustin Pedroia and Hanley Ramirez each had two RBIs as Boston defeated Toronto. Jose Bautista hit his first two homers of the season and had four RBIs but it was not enough for the Blue Jays, who have lost four in a row. The homers accounted for all four runs scored against right-hander Rick Porcello (1-0), who allowed seven hits and one walk while striking out seven over six innings in his season debut. Toronto right-hander R.A. Dickey (1-1) allowed seven runs (six earned) in five innings on eight hits and two walks. The knuckleballer struck out nine.

REDS 5, PIRATES 1

Eugenio Suarez hit a two-run homer and Raisel Iglesias allowed a run in five innings as Cincinnati beat Pittsburgh. The Pirates went 2-

for-10 with runners in scoring position with a chance to improve to 5-0 for the first time since 1983. Iglesias (1-0) earned his first victory of the season in his second start, allowing eight hits over 5-2/3 innings but managing to prevent any extended Pittsburgh rallies.

WHITE SOX 7, INDIANS 3

Avisail Garcia went 2-for-4 with a home run and three RBIs, and Chicago rallied for a win over Cleveland. Jose Abreu added a home run and reached base four times for the White Sox, who scored five runs in the seventh inning to erase a 3-2 deficit. Mike Napoli went 1-for-4 with a home run and two RBIs to lead the Indians.

PHILLIES 1, METS 0

Right-hander Vince Velasquez struck out a career-high nine batters in his Philadelphia Phillies' debut and Ryan Howard blasted an opposite-field home run to provide the game's only offense as the Phillies earned their first win of the season. Velasquez, who was acquired from the Houston Astros in a seven-player deal Dec. 12, earned his second big-league win after allowing three hits and three walks over six innings. He retired 15 of the

final 19 batters he faced - a span in which he collected all of his strikeouts - following a laborious 26-pitch first inning.

ASTROS 6, BREWERS 4

Colby Rasmus hit two home runs and Tyler White added a third as the Houston Astros beat the Milwaukee Brewers. White, the Astros' rookie first baseman, continued his record-setting start to the season, finishing with a walk and two RBIs. Through his first five career games, White has driven in nine runs and is 10-for-14 at the plate.

ROYALS 7, TWINS 0

Mike Moustakas, Lorenzo Cain and Kendrys Morales homered, while Ian Kennedy pitched 6-2/3 scoreless innings as the Kansas City Royals topped the Minnesota Twins. All three home runs were solo shots and the Royals' first homers of the season. Morales homered off Casey Fien, the second of four Minnesota pitchers, in the Royals' three-run sixth, which also included Alcides Escobar run-producing triple. Kennedy gave up five hits, walked one and struck out seven before being replaced by Danny Duffy with two out in the seventh after allowing singles to Byung Ho Park and Eduardo Escobar. — Reuters

MLB Results/Standings

Boston 8, Toronto 4; NY Yankees 8, Detroit 4; Cincinnati 5, Pittsburgh 1; Chicago White Sox 7, Cleveland 3; LA Dodgers 3, San Francisco 2 (10 innings); Houston 6, Milwaukee 4; Philadelphia 1, NY Mets 0; St. Louis 12, Atlanta 2; Kansas City 7, Minnesota 0; Chicago Cubs 4, Arizona 2.

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division					
W	L	PCT	GB	W	L	PCT	GB		
Baltimore	4	0	1.000	-	Washington	2	1	.667	-
Boston	3	1	.750	1	NY Mets	2	2	.500	0.5
NY Yankees	3	2	.600	1.5	Miami	1	2	.333	1
Tampa Bay	2	3	.400	2.5	Philadelphia	1	4	.200	2
Toronto	2	4	.333	3	Atlanta	0	4	0	2.5
Central Division				Central Division					
Detroit	3	1	.750	-	Chicago Cubs	4	1	.800	-
Kansas City	3	1	.750	-	Cincinnati	4	1	.800	-
Chicago White Sox	4	2	.667	-	Pittsburgh	4	1	.800	-
Cleveland	2	2	.500	1	Milwaukee	2	3	.400	2
Minnesota	0	5	0	3.5	St. Louis	2	3	.400	2
Western Division				Western Division					
Oakland	3	3	.500	-	LA Dodgers	4	2	.667	-
Texas	3	3	.500	-	San Francisco	4	2	.667	-
Houston	2	3	.400	0.5	Colorado	2	3	.400	1.5
Seattle	2	3	.400	0.5	San Diego	2	3	.400	1.5
LA Angels	1	4	.200	1.5	Arizona	2	4	.333	2

JAPAN'S GREAT KITAJIMA RETIRES WITH 'NO REGRETS'

TOKYO: Japanese swim king Kosuke Kitajima formally announced his retirement from competition yesterday, content with his legacy as Japan's greatest-ever swimmer.

Arguably the greatest breaststroker of all-time, the 33-year-old insisted there would be no flip-flopping on his decision, made 48 hours earlier after failing to qualify for his fifth Olympics in Rio this summer. "To be honest I'm sad to be retiring," said Kitajima, who scooped double gold in the men's 100 and 200 metres breaststroke at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics. "But I knew sooner or later the day was coming. I've been lucky enough to compete for a long time and have a happy career. There will probably be a hole in my heart

where swimming once was but I've got no regrets. "It's disappointing not to be able to go to Rio," added Kitajima on the final day of the national championships, which doubled as Japanese Olympic trials.

"It's my own fault I couldn't get there. I'm deeply sorry to let down everyone who believed in me and supported me." Kitajima finished fifth in Friday's 200m, having already missed out in the 100m earlier in the week, as heir apparent Yasuhiro Koseki and 19-year-old Ipppei Watanabe booked their spots in Rio to mark a changing of the guard. "This competition has shown me I'm no longer at that level where I can take on the world," he said. "I wish the 2020 Tokyo Olympics had come a lit-

tle earlier for me but I hope the new generation of swimmers can carry the flag."

ILLUSTRIOUS CAREER

Kitajima, a three-times world champion who smashed several world records during his illustrious career, had flirted with retirement after his stunning performance at Beijing in 2008 when he retained his Olympic titles, an unprecedented achievement in his event. But after moving to California the Tokyo native was coaxed back into the pool and returned to claim a silver medal in the 4x100m relay at the London Olympics four years ago. Asked to pick a career highlight, Kitajima suggested his 100m gold in Beijing

where he set a world record to beat Norway's Alexander Dale Oen. "He was so strong," recalled Kitajima. "To be able to swim that race despite not being 100 percent confident of winning was very satisfying. But I even remember the races I lost when I was at elementary school." Japan's most decorated swimmer and a huge celebrity in his home country, Kitajima served notice of his talent as a 17-year-old with a fourth-place finish in the 100m final at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. But he shot to global fame at the 2004 Athens Games, when he twice beat fierce rival Brendan Hansen and memorably celebrated by pointing at the American and whooping: "I kicked his butt!" — AFP



TOKYO: Japanese three-time world champion swimmer and former world record holder Kosuke Kitajima smiles as he listens to questions during a press conference in Tokyo yesterday. Kitajima formally announced his retirement from competition, saying he was "happy" with his legacy as Japan's greatest-ever swimmer. — AFP

SIMON AMOR HAVE FINGERS CROSSED FOR OLYMPICS

HONG KONG: Great Britain coach Simon Amor said he was hopeful of making a strong showing at the Olympics despite a tough build-up with the squad still undecided and only coming together in May. Amor, speaking at the Hong Kong Sevens, said the situation was "complex" for Great Britain, which can only get its players together after the sevens world series. Officials are also still negotiating the release of top 15-a-side players, meaning the make-up of the eventual team remains very much up in the air.

Hong Kong quarter-finals, gave a bitter laugh when asked if he would have liked to have had a longer build-up. "I'm sorry, I thought you were doing that as a bit of a joke," he told reporters. "Of course it would, the longer you can get guys together, the better."

"But that's the difficulty that we face, it's a complex situation. But what's amazing is the desire from all the unions to really give it our best." Great Britain will be made up of players from England, Wales and Scotland, who are all competing on the 10-stop sevens world series

which wraps up in London in May.

The expanded Olympic squad will gather the following week, with the final group of players not expected to be named until mid-July-about three weeks before the Games.

Wales coach Gareth Williams, who will be Amor's assistant for the British team, said he was unconcerned despite the challenges ahead. "It is a challenge, it is different from what each and every other nation have the opportunity to do but we've got a number of tournaments which we'll use to develop the group," he

said. "I think it's bothering other people more than it's bothering us at the moment. "To be honest, it's going to be exciting to get into a totally brand new environment, something that's never been done on the world series or within sevens, and we'll see where we go with it." Amor said he had his "fingers crossed" that some of Britain's 15-a-side specialists would be available, although negotiations are still ongoing. Other teams such as New Zealand, South Africa and Australia have already started integrating 15s players, a difficult process

because of sevens' fitness and technical demands.

"It's a combination of guys we'll be looking at right through the season, from the England, Scotland and Wales sevens specific teams," Amor said.

"And we're also trying to get some of the 15-a-side guys that have really ripped it up for their international teams and their clubs over the last season.

"It'll be an exciting blend, it'll be a challenging one but an intense programme gives us a good opportunity to give it our very best." —AFP

FIJI BLOW AWAY KIWIS TO STAKE OLYMPIC CLAIM

HONG KONG: Reigning world series champions Fiji fired a clear Olympic warning as they blitzed rivals New Zealand 21-7 to win the Hong Kong Sevens in convincing fashion yesterday. Fiji, the form team at the Olympics' unofficial dress rehearsal, outscored New Zealand three tries to one to stretch their championship lead to five points over the Kiwis.

The clinical victory will further raise hopes of Fiji's first-ever Olympic gold medals in August in Rio, where rugby will feature at the Summer Games for the first time in 92 years. "We made no bones about it, we said this was a mini-peak (before the Olympics)," said Fiji's coach Ben Ryan. "We wanted to do well, we wanted to put the pressure on."

"It's another three-day tournament, Rio's a three-day tournament. The last four three-day tournaments, Fiji have won every single one of them." In a tense start to the final, New Zealand's Pita Akhi opened the scoring with a searing run down the right, in which he outstripped one Fijian defender and sidestepped another.

Fiji hit back and made it 7-7 at half-time when Jerry Tuwai took a quick penalty near the line and dived over before the New Zealanders could react. Substitute Kitione Taliga put Fiji 14-7 ahead in the second half when he sold a dummy and accelerated through the slimmest of gaps in the Kiwi defence. And Semi Kunatani scored beneath the posts after Fiji out-muscled New Zealand in a ruck and passed their way through a scattered defensive line.

PRIZE MONEY SURPRISE

New Zealand coach Gordon Tietjens was

encouraged by a much-improved display by All Blacks star Sonny Bill Williams, who finally looked on the pace and produced a string of trademark offloads.

But the Kiwis were always second favourites after being taken to double extra-time by South Africa in their thrilling 12-7 semi-final win. "Our goal like all the other teams is the Olympics at the end. So you learn from these losses and we were beaten by a very good Fijian team today that played better than us," Tietjens said.

Earlier South Africa claimed third place with a narrow 14-12 play-off win over Australia, who missed a do-or-die, post-hooter penalty kick. England, still sentimental favourites in the ex-British colony, lifted the plate trophy with a 19-0 win over the United States, after they lost 14-5 to Australia in the Cup quarter-finals.

And Japan booked a place at next year's event when they beat hosts Hong Kong 24-14 in the final of the concurrent qualifying tournament. Fiji's players, who mostly come from the Pacific country's impoverished villages, have an unpleasant surprise in store after organisers scrapped prize money this year—a fact that Ryan said they were not yet aware of. "The boys don't play for prize money, but they also don't come from very wealthy backgrounds so it would have made a big difference," said the coach. "But I'm sure (the tournament organisers have) got good reasons for doing it."

Hong Kong is the biggest and most high-profile event on the 10-stop sevens world series, making it a vital part of teams' preparations for the Rio Olympics. —AFP



NEW YORK: Jimmy Howard #35 and Niklas Kronwall #55 of the Detroit Red Wings defend against Kevin Hayes #13 of the New York Rangers at Madison Square Garden on Saturday in New York City. The Rangers defeated the Red Wings 3-2. — AFP

RED WINGS STILL REACH PLAYOFFS DESPITE 3-2 LOSS TO RANGERS

NEW YORK: Despite ending the NHL regular season with consecutive losses, the Detroit Red Wings found a way on Saturday to make the playoffs for a remarkable 25th consecutive season. The Red Wings lost to the New York Rangers 3-2, but they advanced to the postseason when the Ottawa Senators beat the Boston Bruins 6-1. Detroit clinched third place in the Atlantic Division and will play the Tampa Bay Lightning in the first round. Antti Raanta, starting in goal for Henrik Lundqvist, made 31 saves for the Rangers, who finished the regular season with 101 points and still don't know who they will meet in the playoffs, which start on Wednesday. The Rangers have a chance to finish in third place in the Metropolitan Division, in which case they would play the Pittsburgh Penguins. If they remain the first wild card in the Eastern Conference, they would play the Florida Panthers. Either playoff series would start on the road. The Bruins lost starting goalie Tuukka Rask 90 minutes before the faceoff to illness, and said goodbye to their best chance at making the playoffs midway through the game. With Rask out sick for the Bruins' last-gasp run at the postseason, backup Jonas Gustavsson allowed four goals in the second period and the Senators went on to win the regular-season finale easily. The loss left Boston tied with Detroit on points and trailing the Red Wings in the tiebreaker. The Bruins could still make the playoffs if the Philadelphia Flyers got no more than one point in their last two games, including one late Saturday against Pittsburgh.

SENATORS 6, BRUINS 1

Ottawa made four goals on nine shots past backup goaltender Jonas Gustavsson—playing because Tuukka Rask was sick—in an 8:18 span of the second period that left Boston dangling for a playoff berth. Failing to make the postseason playoffs would seemingly leave coach Claude Julien's job status shaky, after a 42-31-9 season—just 17-18-6 at home.

FLYERS 3, PENGUINS 1

When the puck dropped, the Philadelphia Flyers knew that if they beat their cross-state rival Pittsburgh Penguins, they would lock-up a playoff berth. And thanks to Wayne Simmonds, they did just that. Simmonds scored two goals for the Flyers and goalie Steve Mason made 18 saves as the Flyers defeated the Penguins 3-1 and clinched the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

DUCKS 5, AVALANCHE 3

Jakob Silfverberg scored twice, John Gibson had 29 saves and the Anaheim Ducks beat the Colorado Avalanche 5-3 to keep their Pacific Division title hopes alive. Ryan Getzlaf, Ryan Garbutt and Cam Fowler also scored, and Corey Perry had three assists for Anaheim. The Ducks (45-25-11) temporarily moved into a first-place tie with Los Angeles with 101 points.

FLAMES 2, WILD 1

Goals less than a minute apart late in the third period by Calgary's Brandon Bollig and Patrick Sieloff erased a one-goal Minnesota lead and lifted the Flames to a 2-1 win over the Wild in the final regular-season game for both teams. With Minnesota clinging to a 1-0 lead despite more than 30 shots on goal, Bollig received a Drew Shore pass in the left circle and beat Wild goalie Darcy Kuemper high to tie the score. Just 31 seconds later, Sieloff, who was playing his first NHL game, threw a backhand shot toward the Minnesota net from the right circle that bounced over Kuemper's glove and just inside the near-side post.

PANTHERS 5, HURRICANES 2

The Florida Panthers completed the best regular season in franchise history, preparing for next week's playoffs with a 5-2 win over the Carolina Hurricanes. Florida (47-26-9), which set franchise records for wins and points (103), won the Atlantic Division title and will play host to the New York

Rangers or New York Islanders in its playoff opener on Thursday. Panthers goalie Roberto Luongo earned his 35th win, tying the franchise record he set in 2005-2006. Luongo is one win from tying Jacques Plante (437) for sixth place on the NHL career win list.

DEVILS 5, MAPLE LEAFS 1

Adam Henrique scored two goals to lead the New Jersey Devils to a 5-1 win over the Toronto Maple Leafs. New Jersey also received goals from Patrik Elias, Kyle Palmieri and Devante Smith-Pelly. Henrique and Palmieri each finished with 30 goals to lead the Devils. It was the 408th career goal for Elias. Pierre-Alexandre Parenteau scored for the Maple Leafs.

CANADIENS 5, LIGHTNING 2

Alex Galchenyuk scored twice and added an assist to lift the Montreal Canadiens to a 5-2 win over the Tampa Bay Lightning. Max Pacioretty scored two goals and Tomas Plekanec had one for the Canadiens, who closed out a disappointing season with a 38-38-6 record. Ondrej Palat and Jonathan Drouin scored for Tampa Bay (46-31-5), which lost Tyler Johnson in the first period after he fell into the boards following a hit by Canadiens defenseman Greg Pateryn.

BLUE JACKETS 5, BLACKHAWKS 4 (OT)

Scott Hartnell scored on the power play with 2:32 left in overtime to give the Columbus Blue Jackets a 5-4 win over the Chicago Blackhawks in the regular season finale for both teams. Cam Atkinson's shot ricocheted off Hartnell past Chicago goalie Corey Crawford, who could not grab the puck out of midair. Hartnell had two goals and two assists while Patrick Kane and Artemi Panarin had two goals and one assist each for the Blackhawks. Columbus scored four goals in a row after falling behind 3-0 in the first period, but Kane tied the game at four with a goal at the 10:11 mark of the third period.

SABRES 4, ISLANDERS 3

John Tavares assured the Islanders of at least a point by getting the tying goal with 6:26 left in the third period and the Islanders kept their chances of finishing third in the Metropolitan Division alive despite a 4-3 loss to the Buffalo Sabres. Brian Gionta scored the game-winner with 2:14 remaining in overtime on a wrist shot from the low slot but the goal was of little consequence to the Islanders after Tavares scored.

CAPITALS 5, BLUES 1

Alex Ovechkin reached the 50-goal mark for the seventh time with his 15th career hat trick and helped Braden Holtby tie the NHL record for most

wins in a single season as the Washington Capitals defeated the St. Louis Blues. In his third try, Holtby earned his 48th win to match the record set by New Jersey's Martin Brodeur in 2006-07. The Capitals play their final game of the regular season Sunday, but Holtby (48-9-7) is not expected to play. Ovechkin completed his second hat trick of the season 10:35 into the final period. All three of his goals were assisted by Nicklas Backstrom, giving him 50 assists for the season.

STARS 3, PREDATORS 2

Jason Spezza scored his seventh career hat trick and Antti Niemi stopped 28 of 30 shots for the Dallas Stars in a 3-2 win over the Nashville Predators. Dallas (50-23-9), which has won nine of its last 11 games (9-2-0), clinched the top spot in the Western Conference and the Central Division title. It is the Stars' first time finishing atop the West since 2002-03 and first division title since 2005-06 when they won the Pacific Division. The Stars will open the playoffs on Thursday in Dallas.

SHARKS 1, COYOTES 0

Joe Pavelski scored his 38th goal of the season to account for all of the scoring as the Sharks beat the Coyotes 1-0 in both teams' regular-season finales. San Jose moves on to the Stanley Cup playoffs for the 11th time in 12 seasons after having missed last spring. Despite a 22-point improvement over last season, Arizona will miss out on the playoffs for a fourth straight year. Pavelski scored 55 seconds into a 5-on-3 Sharks' power play. Joe Thornton provided the primary assist to give the veteran center 82 points in 82 games.

JETS 4, KINGS 3 (SO)

Mark Scheifele scored the lone goal in a shootout, allowing the Winnipeg Jets to rally from a three-goal deficit for a stunning 4-3 victory over Los Angeles. The loss prevented the Kings (48-28-6) from clinching the Pacific title and their first-division crown since winning the Smythe in 1990-91. They need a loss by Anaheim in Washington on Sunday to claim the Pacific. Blake Wheeler's goal—his 26th of the season—at 3:21 of the third knotted the score 3-3 and wiped a commanding advantage by the Kings.

CANUCKS 4, OILERS 3 (SO)

Emerson Etem scored two goals, including the shootout winner, as the Vancouver Canucks beat the Edmonton Oilers. The Canucks finished the season with a 31-38-13 mark, while Edmonton posted a 31-43-8 mark. Vancouver (75) finished with its lowest point total since earning 83 in 1999. Both teams were eliminated from the playoffs weeks ago. —Reuters



HONG KONG: Fiji rugby team celebrates after winning the final match against New Zealand at the Hong Kong Sevens rugby tournament in Hong Kong, yesterday. Fiji won 21-7. — AP

LEE WINS MALAYSIAN OPEN

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's badminton star Lee Chong Wei won his 11th Malaysian Open title yesterday, a much-needed boost for his pursuit of a still-elusive Olympic gold medal.

Lee cruised to victory with a flurry of devastating smashes against world number one Chen Long from China, beating him 21-13, 21-8 in a match that lasted 42 minutes. The world number four shuttler was in fine form for the Malaysian competition after suffering early exits in the All England Championships and India Open in March.

"Many critics have said that I should retire after some poor performances. But I know within myself that I am capable of still producing the goods at the highest level and this win was the proof of that," said Lee, 33.

"I am happy to win another title here and this triumph certainly boosts my spirits ahead of the Olympics." Chen called Lee a role model for young Malaysian shuttlers and said he was happy to have qualified for the final.

"It is not easy for a player at his age to

maintain a high-level performance year-in, year-out and you can see the crowd really appreciated that," said Chen.

"I felt I played well, but it was my first time playing in this court and perhaps the drift was too strong."

Lee had missed last year's edition because of a suspension after testing positive for a banned anti-inflammatory substance at the world championships in Copenhagen in 2014.

But in April last year the Badminton World Federation said the former long-time world number one had "accidentally" ingested the substance and handed him an eight-month backdated ban, which effectively allowed him to resume his career.

Lee, one of Malaysia's most popular sports stars, has repeatedly fallen short in his pursuit of the sport's top prizes—the world and Olympic titles—despite reaching three world championship finals and two Olympic deciders. But he has set his sights firmly on crowning his career by winning his first Olympic title in Rio de Janeiro. — AFP



SHAH ALAM: Winner Lee Chong Wei, right, of Malaysia and second placer Chen Long of China pose with their trophies after their men's final match at the Malaysia Open Badminton Superseries in Shah Alam, Malaysia, yesterday. — AP

NHL results/standings

Ottawa 6, Boston 1; NY Rangers 3, Detroit 2; Philadelphia 3, Pittsburgh 1; Anaheim 5, Colorado 3; Montreal 5, Tampa Bay 2; Florida 5, Carolina 2; New Jersey 5, Toronto 1; Columbus 5, Chicago 4 (OT); Calgary 2, Minnesota 1; Buffalo 4, NY Islanders 3 (OT); Washington 5, St. Louis 1; Dallas 3, Nashville 2; Vancouver 4, Edmonton 3 (SO); Winnipeg 4, Los Angeles 3 (SO); San Jose 1, Arizona 0.

Western Conference						Eastern Conference							
Central Division						Atlantic Division							
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS							
Dallas	50	23	9	267	230	109	Florida	47	26	9	239	203	103
St. Louis	49	24	9	224	201	107	Tampa Bay	46	31	5	227	201	97
Chicago	47	26	9	235	209	103	Detroit	41	30	11	211	224	93
Nashville	41	27	14	228	215	96	Boston	42	31	9	240	230	93
Minnesota	38	33	11	216	206	87	Ottawa	38	35	9	236	247	85
Colorado	39	39	4	216	240	82	Montreal	38	38	6	221	236	82
Winnipeg	35	39	8	215	239	78	Buffalo	35	36	11	201	222	81
							Toronto	29	42	11	198	246	69
Pacific Division						Metropolitan Division							
Los Angeles	48	28	6	225	195	102	Washington	56	17	8	252	191	120
Anaheim	45	25	11	216	192	101	Pittsburgh	48	26	8	245	203	104
San Jose	46	30	6	241	210	98	NY Rangers	46	27	9	236	217	101
Arizona	35	39	8	209	245	78	NY Islanders	45	26	10	230	211	100
Calgary	35	40	7	231	260	77	Philadelphia	40	27	14	209	216	94
Vancouver	31	38	13	191	243	75	Carolina	35	31	16	198	226	86
Edmonton	31	43	8	203	245	70	New Jersey	38	36	8	184	208	84
							Columbus	34	40	8	219	252	76

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L).

MODEST HOPES FOR FEDERER AHEAD OF INJURY COMEBACK

MONTE CARLO: Roger Federer was giving absolutely no guarantees about his form yesterday, as the four-time finalist prepared for his first ATP start in more than two months at the Monte Carlo Masters. The 17-time Grand Slam winner will be starting afresh in the second round on the Monte Carlo Country Club clay after his early February knee operation.

After hitting for nearly a week at the seaside venue overlooking the Mediterranean, the Swiss said that next week will be key for deciding his further

schedule ahead of the French Open - the second major of the season.

"I feel more rust than rest, but I am rested, mentally and physically," the 34-year-old said. "I don't think about the Roland Garros title," the 2009 Paris champion added. "I believe I can do it; every event at the Grand Slam gives me another opportunity to do that. 'I've been training super hard on clay, I'll be able to decide better about playing any of the Masters 1000 tournaments which come later (Madrid and Rome next month) -

one, two or even none. 'Everything is flexible, you are automatically entered in Masters 1000 events, there is nothing I can do about that. Everyone thinks I've entered Madrid and Rome.

"It's bad spin when you pull out and people think you've let the tournament down. But I know I can always add a Madrid or a Rome to my calendar." As he prepares for the second round against either Brazilian Thomaz Bellucci and Spaniard Guillermo Garcia-Lopez, Federer will be organising his comeback

strategy on the fly. "If I win the tournament, that changes everything. If I lose 0-0 in the first match, that changes everything. 'I'll know more in two weeks and I can decide the week before Madrid if I will go there or not."

Federer is seeded third behind Andy Murray and world number one Novak Djokovic, whose confidence and spirits could not be any higher after winning his fourth title of the season a week ago in Miami. "I've always wanted to be where I am at the moment," said the

Monaco-based Serb. "I'm doing something that is worth it. I've put myself in the position to fight for biggest trophies in sport. 'Thankfully I've not lost too many matches in the last couple of years, I'm playing the best tennis of my life. That comes after years of dedication, evolution and growth and understanding myself as a player. In a first-round result, France's Jeremy Chardy advanced to the delight of the local crowd, beating Russia's Andrej Kuznetsov 7-6 (7/3), 7-5. — AFP

DJOKOVIC'S FRENCH OPEN BID BEGINS WITH MONTE CARLO

MONACO: Novak Djokovic's bid to finally master clay and win the elusive French Open title starts with his title defense at the Monte Carlo Masters, where Rafael Nadal once crushed the competition.

The top-ranked Serb has won 11 Grand Slams but the French Open continues to elude him, having lost the final to Stan Wawrinka at Roland Garros last year and twice to Nadal. "I don't like the word 'obsession' because it doesn't come from the right emotion," Djokovic told reporters Sunday. "But of course being the only Grand Slam I haven't won gives me even more incentive to give my best there this year."

Few would bet against Djokovic winning in Paris given his red-hot form but part of his renowned discipline involves stopping from looking that far ahead. "When you need to operate as a human machine, you need to do that only in the present moment and the present time," said Djokovic, who sets aside time to perfect his inner balance. "Not Buddhism, specifically, but mindfulness, this holistic approach that allows me to maximize my being from every aspect. Not just physical but mental, emotional, spiritual. I try to be disciplined with all these different exercises that I do on a daily level."

Nadal, who lost to Djokovic in the Monte Carlo semifinals last year, won eight straight titles here from 2005-12 until Djokovic ended the Spaniard's run in the 2013 final. Winning Monte Carlo was always the springboard that led to victory in Paris, and he thinks it will be tough to stop Djokovic doing the same. Since beating Djokovic in the 2013 US Open final, Nadal has lost 10 of their 11 meetings - the only win in that time coming when he beat Djokovic in the French Open final two years ago. "He's going to be the favorite for every tournament (until) somebody shows something different," Nadal said Sunday with an air of inevitability. "He is (playing) with an unbelievable dynamic." Since 2015, Djokovic has reached 19 finals in 21 tournaments, winning 15 and losing four finals.

In late February, he lost to Spaniard

Feliciano Lopez in the Dubai quarterfinals - where Djokovic retired with of an eye infection after losing the first set.

EXCEPTIONAL

That leaves big-serving Croat Ivo Karlovic as the only other to beat him outside of a final in that time, winning a hard-fought quarterfinal on outdoor hard courts in Doha, Qatar, in January 2015.

Djokovic's recent win at the Miami Masters was a record 28th in Masters - one more than Nadal - and saw him equal Andre Agassi's six titles in Miami as well as clinching the Indian Wells-Miami double for a third successive year.

"From one side, yes, I am pleasantly surprised with what I have achieved in last two years," Djokovic said. "From the other side, I've always expected myself to be at this level. Everybody peaks at different stages of their careers and for me it's right now."

Nadal has been swept away by the meteoric ascension of Djokovic, who is closing in on \$100 million in career prize money. The 28-year-old Djokovic, a year younger than Nadal, has 63 career titles. He is only four behind Nadal, who has yet to win one this year and won just three last year compared with 10 in 2013.

Djokovic leads Nadal 25-23 in their career head-to-heads; has a 23-22 lead over Roger Federer and a dominant 22-9 record against two-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray.

Djokovic did not drop a set in Miami and only dropped one set on his way to a second Monte Carlo success last year, against Czech Tomas Berdych in the final. "What he's achieving right now is just exceptional. It's just the same as when Roger was at his peak," Berdych said. "One season I think (Federer) lost three or four matches so it's quite similar to Novak last year and like Nadal did one year. Within 10 years each of them took three years of that domination." Djokovic is in the same half of the draw as Federer here and has a bye to the second round - where he faces Czech Jiri Vesely or Russian Teymuraz Gabashvili. — AP



MEMPHIS: Draymond Green #23 of the Golden State Warriors takes a shot against the Memphis Grizzlies during the second half at FedExForum on Saturday in Memphis, Tennessee. —AFP

WARRIORS EDGE GRIZZLIES TO KEEP RECORD QUEST ALIVE

MEMPHIS: The Golden State Warriors' quest for NBA history remains alive ... barely. Golden State, seeking to become the first team in league history to win 73 games during the regular season, was nearly denied the opportunity by the slumping injury depleted Memphis Grizzlies. Memphis, which had lost 11 of its past 14, led most of the final quarter before falling to the Warriors 100-99 on Saturday. Golden State is 71-9 with games remaining at San Antonio on Sunday and at home against the Grizzlies on Wednesday. The Warriors are attempting to surpass the 1995-96 Michael Jordan-led Chicago Bulls, who finished 72-10. Steph Curry and Klay Thompson struggled from long range going a combined 5 for 24, but Draymond Green rescued Golden State with 23 points, including the game-winning tip-in with a minute to go. He also had 11 rebounds. Thompson added 20 points and Curry finished with 17, although he went three of 14 from beyond the arc. Matt Barnes led Memphis with 24 points and 15 rebounds.

HAWKS 118, CELTICS 107

Paul Millsap scored 31 points, grabbed 16 rebounds and sparked a furious second-half as Atlanta rallied to beat Boston in the regular-season home finale at Philips Arena. With two games remaining, the Hawks (48-32) have a one-game lead on the Celtics (47-33) for the third seed and 1-1/2-game lead over the Miami Heat and Charlotte Hornets. Atlanta finishes the regular season on the road, starting Monday at Cleveland and concluding Wednesday in Washington. Boston, which got 19 points off the bench from Marcus Smart, wraps up the regular season at home against Charlotte on Monday and Miami on Wednesday. Atlanta won three of four against the Celtics and own the tiebreaker should the teams finish with the same record.

BULLS 105, CAVALIERS 102

Jimmy Butler scored 21 points and Cristiano Felicio had 16 off the bench as Chicago staved off playoff elimination with a victory over Cleveland. Nikola Mirotic scored 13 points and Pau Gasol and Derrick Rose each finished with 10 for the Bulls (40-40), who would have been eliminated from playoff contention with a loss. Chicago needs to win its remaining two games and have Indiana lose all three of its remaining games to clinch a postseason berth. LeBron James scored 33 points and J.R. Smith finished with 24 for the Cavaliers (57-23), who entered the night in need of a victory to clinch the best record in the Eastern Conference for the third time in franchise history.

SUNS 121, PELICANS 100

Archie Goodwin had 24 points and Mirza Teletovic scored nine of his 22 in the third quarter to lift Phoenix over New Orleans. Goodwin, who totaled 33 points in his previous five games, nailed three 3-pointers before leaving in the final minute because a twisted ankle. Teletovic entered the game leading the NBA in 3-point shooting off the bench, and he made 4-of-8 from long range against the Pelicans. The Suns (22-58) won their second consecutive

game after losing seven straight. Toney Douglas scored 23 points for New Orleans (30-50).

KINGS 114, THUNDER 112

Rudy Gay made two free throws with one second remaining, capping a 22-point night and adding his name to Sleep Train Arena lore as the Sacramento Kings bid farewell to their home with a 114-112 victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder. Gay, whose missed free throw with 11 seconds left opened the door for Russell Westbrook to make three free throws to tie the game with 7 seconds left, drove the key and was fouled with only a tick to go. His free throws lifted the Kings to a final

18-23 home mark in its 27-year-old building. Darren Collison, getting only his 15th start with NBA assists leader Rajon Rondo out to rest, scored 27 points to pace the Kings.

TIMBERWOLVES 106, TRAIL BLAZERS 105

Karl-Anthony Towns' jump hook with 1.8 seconds left propelled the Minnesota Timberwolves to a 106-105 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers. Damian Lillard's four-point play had given the Trail Blazers a 105-104 lead with 3.5 seconds left. After a timeout, Minnesota inbounded the ball to Towns on the post, who scored over Portland's Al-Farouq Aminu. — Reuters

NBA Results/Standings

Phoenix 121, New Orleans 100; Atlanta 118, Boston 107; Golden State 100, Memphis 99; Chicago 105, Cleveland 102; Minnesota 106, Portland 105; Sacramento 114, Oklahoma City 112.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference			
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division			
W	L	PCT	GB	Oklahoma City	54	26	.675
Toronto	53	26	.671	Portland	43	38	.531
Boston	47	33	.588	Utah	39	40	.494
NY Knicks	32	48	.400	Denver	33	47	.413
Brooklyn	21	58	.266	Minnesota	28	52	.350
Philadelphia	10	69	.127				
Central Division				Pacific Division			
Cleveland	56	24	.700	Golden State	71	9	.888
Detroit	43	37	.538	LA Clippers	51	28	.646
Indiana	42	37	.532	Sacramento	32	48	.400
Chicago	40	40	.500	Phoenix	22	58	.275
Milwaukee	32	47	.405	LA Lakers	16	63	.203
Southeast Division				Southwest Division			
Atlanta	48	32	.600	San Antonio	65	14	.823
Miami	46	33	.582	Memphis	42	38	.525
Charlotte	46	33	.582	Dallas	41	38	.519
Washington	38	41	.481	Houston	38	41	.481
Orlando	34	45	.430	New Orleans	30	50	.375



HOUSTON: Jack Sock of the United States returns a shot against fellow American John Isner in the semifinals of the US Men's Clay Court Championship tennis tournament Saturday, in Houston. — AP

HIDDINK DEFENDS MOVE TO BENCH COURTOIS

SWANSEA: Guus Hiddink defended his decision to rest goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois after a 1-0 loss at Swansea condemned Chelsea to a first Premier League defeat under their interim manager. Hiddink left Belgium international Courtois on the bench at the Liberty Stadium on Saturday, preferring to name Bosnia's Asmir Begovic in his starting line-up.

Begovic did little wrong as Gylfi Sigurdsson's 25th minute goal effectively sealed Swansea's Premier League survival and left Chelsea mired in mid-table obscurity. Hiddink insisted leaving out Courtois made sense because he wanted to give Begovic a chance to impress at a time when Chelsea are already preparing for incoming manager Antonio Conte's arrival after Euro 2016. "It is disappointing, but we gave some younger players the opportunity to play and that means there is a risk of losing games," Hiddink said. "However, I prefer to give these players the chance. And that is not just about a new manager. "At a club like this, you have to show what you are capable of. 'The players have to be internally motivated, that is a key condition of being at a club like Chelsea. 'Begovic is a good keeper and he has proven that. He has done his job as a professional very well.

"He is 100 per cent committed in every training session and that is why I rewarded

him with the chance to play." Hiddink was adamant the announcement this week that Conte will take over in the close-season on a three year contract had no bearing on Chelsea's lacklustre display in south Wales.

"I don't think so. What we did in the second half was good. I don't think they had it in mind to look to next season," Hiddink said. "We expected a tough game because they needed three points and we were safe. 'We created some chances in the first 20 minutes, but we were sloppy in taking those opportunities. 'We thought it would come, but if you don't take those chances you get into trouble and we got into trouble going 1-0 down."

SLOPPY DEFENDING

Former South Korea boss Hiddink was also quick to defend his decision to replace young American defender Matt Miazga at half-time. "We had some half chances that we did not take and then we went 1-0 down due to some sloppy defensive work," Hiddink said. "Also, he got a yellow card, and I did not want him to get another one." Meanwhile, Swansea manager Francesco Guidolin believes his side are now safe from the possibility of relegation to the Championship. "I am very happy with the performance and I think we are safe now," he said.—AFP



CHARLESTON: Caroline Garcia, right, holds up the championship trophy with playing partner Kristina Mladenovic, both from France, after they defeated Bethanie Mattek-Sands and Lucie Safarova, of the Czech Republic, during their doubles finals tennis match at the Volvo Car Open in Charleston, yesterday. Garcia and Mladenovic won 6-2, 7-5. — AP

VALENCIA SALVAGE 2-1 WIN OVER SEVILLA

MADRID: Substitute striker Alvaro Negredo scored in second-half injury time to give Valencia a dramatic 2-1 win over Sevilla in the Spanish league yesterday, helping his team move farther away from the relegation zone.

Negredo's winner came five minutes after Sevilla striker Kevin Gameiro equalized at Mestalla Stadium to offset midfielder Dani Parejo's opening goal for the hosts from a free kick in the 41st minute.

The result snapped Valencia's four-game losing streak and moved the team

to 13th place, provisionally nine points from the relegation zone.

Barcelona's lead continued to dwindle after a 1-0 loss Saturday at Real Sociedad. Second-place Atletico Madrid got to within three points with a 3-1 win at Espanyol while third-place Real Madrid moved four points behind with an easy 4-0 home win over Eibar on Saturday. "It was a very important victory. It was vital for us," Negredo said. "These three points are very important. If we keep playing like this, giving every-

thing we have, we won't have any problems going forward." It was the first win for Valencia since coach Pako Ayestaran replaced the fired Gary Neville last month. The former assistant had lost his debut game at Las Palmas last week.

Sevilla has lost three in a row, dropping to seventh in the standings with 48 points. Unai Emery's team has been focused on the quarterfinals of the Europa League - it hosts Athletic Bilbao on Thursday to try to defend a 2-1 first-leg win. Sevilla is also in the Copa del

Rey final against Barcelona, a game that will be played in Madrid on May 22.

"It wasn't nice to lose, but at this point it's a positive thing to have finished the game without any injured players," Emery said.

Valencia was cruising to victory when Gameiro frustrated the crowd of nearly 42,000 at Mestalla with a strike from inside the area in the 86th. When many fans were already headed to the exits, Negredo came through after a free kick into the area. The ball bounced off a few

players before dropping in front of Negredo for a right-footed shot into the back of the net. Emery and Sevilla players complained of the foul that started Valencia's winner. Valencia hadn't won in the league since a 2-1 win at Malaga in early March. It was the team's fifth straight home-win against Sevilla. Earlier Sunday, fifth-place Celta Vigo won 1-0 at struggling Sporting Gijon with a 64th-minute goal by striker Manuel "Nolito" Agudo. The result kept Sporting in the relegation zone. — AP

English Premier League results/table

Liverpool 4 (Moreno 8, Sturridge 32, Origi 50, 65) Stoke 1 (Krkic 22); Sunderland 0 Leicester 2 (Vardy 66, 90+5); Tottenham 3 (Alli 70, Alderweireld 74, Lamela 76) Manchester United 0.

English Premier League table after yesterday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Leicester	33	21	9	3	57	31	72	West Brom	32	10	10	12	31	39	40
Tottenham	33	18	11	4	60	25	65	Everton	31	9	12	10	52	43	39
Arsenal	32	17	8	7	55	33	59	Watford	32	10	8	14	31	37	38
Man City	32	17	6	9	58	33	57	Crystal Palace	32	10	7	15	35	42	37
Man Utd	32	15	8	9	39	30	53	Norwich	33	8	7	18	35	57	31
West Ham	32	13	13	6	52	40	52	Sunderland	32	6	9	17	36	57	27
Southampton	33	14	8	11	44	34	50	Newcastle	32	6	7	19	32	61	25
Liverpool	31	13	9	9	50	42	48	Aston Villa	33	3	7	23	23	64	16
Stoke	33	13	8	12	37	43	47	Note: Top four teams qualify for Champions League; teams finishing 5th-6th qualify for Europa League; bottom three teams relegated to Championship.							
Chelsea	32	11	11	10	49	42	44								
Bournemouth	33	11	8	14	40	55	41								
Swansea	33	10	10	13	34	42	40								

NAPOLI BOUNCE BACK TO BEAT VERONA 3-0

MILAN: Napoli bounced back from a week of turmoil to beat 10-man Hellas Verona 3-0 in Serie A match play to restore some much-needed confidence to the team. A shock 3-1 defeat at Udinese last weekend saw Napoli fall six points behind league leader Juventus and left it without coach Maurizio Sarri and star striker Gonzalo Higuain for Sunday's match as the pair sat out bans.

Sarri will return to the bench next week while Higuain is awaiting the outcome of an appeal against his four-match ban. Napoli canceled Sarri's pre-match press conference Saturday and continued its media blackout to avoid creating more controversy ahead of the appeal hearing.

Higuain's replacement, Manolo Gabbiadini, opened the scoring and Lorenzo Insigne doubled Napoli's lead from the penalty spot after Samuel Souprayen was sent off in first-half stoppage time. Both also hit the post early. Jose Callejon sealed the win for Napoli.

Earlier, Fiorentina lost 2-0 at Empoli to damage its hopes of qualifying for the Champions League. It's seven points behind third-place Roma, which hosts Bologna on Monday. Six rounds remain.

Reports have linked Fiorentina coach Paolo Sousa with Zenit St. Petersburg and the Russian club's sporting director as in the stands.

"It's normal, there are always sporting directors at the stadium," Sousa said. "But the rumors of the past few days haven't distracted us. I'm more concerned about the results, the club has told me they want to continue with me. Now we want to return to winning ways like we did in the first half of the season."

Elsewhere, Udinese lost 2-0 at

Sampdoria while Torino beat Atalanta 2-1. Relegation-threatened Palermo hosts Lazio later. Last-place Verona had a surprise 1-0 victory at Bologna last weekend and was desperately looking for more points.

Napoli hit the woodwork twice within the first 15 minutes as Insigne's free kick came off the left upright before an effort from Gabbiadini smacked the same post.

Verona goalkeeper Pierluigi Gollini denied Gabbiadini twice with good saves and Callejon also had a goal ruled out for offside shortly before the half-hour.

Gabbiadini finally beat Gollini in the 33rd minute, heading in the rebound after the Verona keeper parried Callejon's strike from another delightful pass from Marek Hamsik.

Napoli doubled its tally with almost the last kick of the half after Callejon was brought down when he was through on goal by a clumsy challenge by Souprayen.

Gollini guessed right but couldn't prevent Insigne's penalty from going into the left side of the net. Callejon scored Napoli's third in the 70th, tapping in from seven yards after substitute Omar El

Kaddouri - who had just replaced Gabbiadini - cut the ball back from the byline. Empoli hadn't won the Tuscan derby in nearly 19 years but took the lead four minutes from halftime when Manuel Pucciarelli collected a poor clearance from Facundo Roncaglia and drew Gonzalo Rodriguez to him before slotting past Ciprian Tatarusanu.

Nikola Kalinic had an equalizer disallowed for offside before Piotr Zielinski sealed the match two minutes from time, firing home the rebound after Tatarusanu had denied Pucciarelli. — AP



ANFIELD: Liverpool's Kolo Toure, left, looks on as Stoke City's Peter Crouch reaches for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match at Anfield, Liverpool, England, yesterday. — AP

SUPERSUB ORIGI AT THE DOUBLE AS LIVERPOOL BEAT STOKE



LIVERPOOL: Divock Origi came off the bench to score twice as Liverpool beat Stoke City 4-1 at Anfield yesterday for their biggest home win this season. Victory saw the Reds leapfrog the Potters into eighth place in the Premier League table. Origi had been on the pitch less than five minutes after replacing Sheyi Ojo at half-time when he scored his second goal in as many games, nodding home James Milner's cross in front of the Kop.

The Belgian got a fortuitous second goal, his cross going directly into the net as Jurgen Klopp's side recorded only their second league win on home turf in 2016, good preparation for the second leg of their Europa League tie against Borussia Dortmund on Thursday.

Defeat left Stoke still searching for their first league win at Anfield since 1959. Origi's double gave the scoreline a sheen that was not there in the first half, with both teams guilty of some sloppy play with misaligned passes allied to a lack of composure. But Liverpool were by far the better team after the break. Nothing of note had happened before Liverpool took the lead in the eighth minute when Alberto Moreno capitalised on Stoke disorganisation to fire home.

Stoke levelled in the 22nd minute when Bojan Krkic headed in Xherdan Shaqiri's left-wing cross for the Potters' first league goal at Anfield in 33 years.

The Reds regained the lead 10 minutes later when Daniel Sturridge nodded home a cross from Ojo, who was making his first Premier League start, before Origi's double intervention.

While Liverpool's cup form has been impressive, both domestically and in Europe, their league campaign has been patchy, especially at home with just five wins all season before Sunday's match.

WHOLESALE CHANGES

With Emre Can starting a two-match suspension, and little time to recover from the midweek 1-1 draw in Dortmund against his former club, Klopp made wholesale changes. Kevin Stewart came into central midfield to also make his first Premier League start, alongside Joe Allen who replaced Jordan Henderson, whose season was ended by a knee ligament injury in Dortmund.

After an uneventful opening, the Reds went ahead. With the Potters disputing the award of a free-kick, Milner slid the ball to Moreno in space outside the box and he had time to steady himself, look up and fire a left-footed drive across Jakob Haugaard and into the net for his first goal in 65 matches. Peter Crouch thought he had equalised but his header was correctly ruled out for offside. Stoke though drew level in the 22nd minute when Shaqiri, back from injury, floated in a free-kick which was met by Bojan, who had got in front of the defence, and he glanced home his seventh goal of the campaign.

Sturridge then restored the lead from Ojo's cross when he nodded home at the far post, but Liverpool continued to make life hard for them-

selves in defence and they could only watch as Ryan Shawcross headed the ball wide from Shaqiri's left-wing cross with Simon Mignolet rooted to the spot, the keeper then beating out Gianelli Imbula's drive.

Origi replaced Ojo at half-time and quickly gave the hosts a cushion with a simple header

from Milner's cross. Mignolet tipped over Geoff Cameron's effort and Haugaard had to be quick to get down to his left to beat away Roberto Firmino's low shot, before Liverpool's Martin Skrtel headed wide as the game opened up.

Origi then got his second goal after 64 minutes to put the game out of Stoke's reach. — AFP

DORTMUND'S DRAW AT SCHALKE PUTS BAYERN ON VERGE OF TITLE

BERLIN: Shinji Kagawa's superb chip was not enough to prevent Borussia Dortmund drawing 2-2 at Schalke yesterday, edging Bayern Munich towards a historic fourth straight Bundesliga title. The draw in Gelsenkirchen leaves Pep Guardiola's Bayern seven points clear of second-placed Dortmund in Germany's top flight with five games left. The Bavarians are hoping to become the first club to win the Bundesliga title four years in a row.

Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel gambled by resting star forwards Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Marco Reus and Henrikh Mkhitaryan from his starting line-up.

Borussia play Liverpool away on Thursday in the Europa League quarter-final return leg at Anfield, after the first match ended in a 1-1 draw. The game at Schalke's Veltins-Arena burst into life after a goalless first half when Japan midfielder Kagawa put Dortmund ahead with a perfectly-timed chip over Schalke goalkeeper Ralf Faehrmann on 49 minutes. It sparked Schalke into life as they equalised two minutes later when German junior international Leroy Sane, who has been linked with Manchester City, smashed home his shot.

Sloppy defending allowed Dortmund to go back in front when Schalke's Roman Neustaedter was out-jumped by Matthias

Ginter from a free-kick and the defender headed home on 56 minutes.

There was plenty of bite in the derby between the neighbouring clubs, who are only 50kms apart. Dortmund defender Sokratis brought down Schalke striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar in the area on 66 minutes and the Dutch striker nailed the spot kick. Denmark midfielder Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg, on loan to Schalke from Bayern, was lucky to escape with only a yellow card when he hacked down Mkhitaryan in the 71st minute.

Schalke replacement Max Meyer had the chance to win the game in added time when he fired over the bar with the goal at his mercy. The draw leaves Schalke seventh, just outside the European places for next season, while Dortmund's 68 points from 29 league games is a club record for this stage of the season, although Bayern have 75. In 49 of the last 52 Bundesliga seasons, their tally would have been enough to win the title outright with a month still left.

Bayern are bidding to repeat their 2013 treble of Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup titles in Guardiola's swansong before taking over as Manchester City manager. The Bavarians play Benfica away in the Champions League quarter-final return leg on Wednesday, holding a slender 1-0 lead from the first match in Munich. — AFP



GELSENKIRCHEN: Schalke's Leroy Sane, right, and Dortmund's Mats Hummels challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Schalke 04 and Borussia Dortmund in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, yesterday. — AP



NAPLES: Napoli's Spanish midfielder David Lopez (R) heads the ball next to Verona's French defender Samuel Souprayen during the Italian Serie A football match between SSC Napoli and Hellas Verona FC yesterday at San Paolo stadium in Naples. — AFP

Sports

Japan's great Kitajima retires with 'no regrets'



Supersub Origi at the double as Liverpool beat Stoke



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WARRIORS EDGE GRIZZLIES TO KEEP RECORD QUEST ALIVE Page 18



LAS VEGAS: Manny Pacquiao (R) lands a left to the chin of Timothy Bradley Jr. during their welterweight championship fight on Saturday at MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada. (Inset) Manny Pacquiao gestures to fans as he celebrates after defeating Bradley Jr. — AFP

VINTAGE PACQUIAO WINS FAREWELL FIGHT

LAS VEGAS: Manny Pacquiao crowned his 21-year professional career with an emphatic victory over Tim Bradley here Saturday, delivering a vintage performance before saying a farewell to boxing.

Pacquiao-fighting for the first time since his defeat to Floyd Mayweather last May in the "Fight of the Century"-knocked down Bradley twice on his way to a unanimous decision. The judges' scorecards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena told the story of Pacquiao's dominance in the non-title welterweight duel, with the 37-year-old eight-division world champion winning by identical margins of 116-110 on all three cards. Pacquiao had insisted Saturday's bout—the 66th of his career—will be his final fight before he focuses on his political career in the Philippines, where he is seeking election to the Senate next month. Many ring-watchers, however, are sceptical, believing he may well be tempted to extend a career which has seen him earn more than \$500 million.

Yet asked afterwards if he planned to stay retired, Pacquiao replied: "I think so. I've made a commitment to my family that I'm going to retire after this. "Maybe I enjoy being a retired man, serving the people, helping the people," added, before giving a farewell message to his fans. "Thank you to all the fans in boxing, especially the Filipino people. I've really appreciated all your help and support."

Pacquiao had promised an explosive performance and was as good as his word for long periods, uncorking some trademark combinations to overwhelm Bradley. "Bradley is a good boxer, he's a champion, he's a man. It was not easy tonight," Pacquiao said, shortly before a warm embrace in the ring which concluded with the two fighters arranging to meet for breakfast.

'A SPECIAL MAN'

Bradley meanwhile paid tribute to his opponent. "I fought really good tonight but I don't know what was

going on," Bradley said. "He always seemed to be in the right spot. He was a step ahead of me when I was supposed to be a step ahead of him. "He used his experience against me, his ability and he won the fight tonight...I'm in there with a special man, Manny Pacquiao." A cagey opening round had the feel of a tactical battle, with Bradley carefully keeping his distance as he circled the marginally more aggressive Pacquiao, who threw 33 punches to Bradley's 19.

The next three rounds followed a similar pattern, with Pacquiao looking the more menacing fighter, relentlessly stalking Bradley around the canvas, cutting off angles, and connecting with more meaningful blows. Bradley landed occasionally but it was Pacquiao who did the most damage, landing a straight left that caught his American rival flush on the chin in the second round. Bradley started confidently in the fifth round but again his good work was undone by Pacquiao in the final minute when the Filipino

uncorked a series of combinations to score heavily.

A weary Bradley returned to his corner to be admonished by his trainer Teddy Atlas, who yelled "Are you kidding me?" at the 32-year-old as he attempted to raise his fighter for the later rounds. But the template had been set for the next round, with Pacquiao producing flurries of counter-punching to take the round. In the seventh, Pacquiao stretched his lead further, scoring a knockdown with a right hook to the chin that sent Bradley falling to the canvas. Bradley responded bravely in the eighth however, wobbling Pacquiao with a left hook and backing up the Filipino relentlessly. Yet Pacquiao's response in the ninth was emphatic, luring in Bradley and then tagging him with a left hook to wobble the American. A further left hook sent Bradley down for the second time leaving Pacquiao with a commanding lead heading into the final three rounds. Bradley attempted to pressure Pacquiao but the Filipino finished the stronger to coast home. — AFP

LEICESTER QUALIFY FOR CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



SUNDERLAND: Leicester qualified for the Champions League for the first time yesterday and moved closer to the Premier League title with a 2-0 win at struggling Sunderland.

Jamie Vardy scored both goals to take his tally for the season to 21 goals, ending a five-game drought. The goals kept Leicester seven points clear of Tottenham, which beat Manchester United 3-0, and guaranteed a top-four finish for the central England team.

Although fourth place only secures a place in the Champions League playoff round, it is highly unlikely Leicester will even be displaced from top spot. Sunderland, though, is four points from safety with six games remaining - experiencing a relegation battle Leicester was embroiled in last season.

The hosts held off the leaders until the 66th minute when Vardy met Danny Drinkwater's high ball. The England striker tapped in his second in stoppage time after rounding goalkeeper Vito Mannone. It might have been very different at Sunderland had Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel not managed to react quickly to keep out Fabio Borini's deflected shot as the first half drew to a close.

But now it appears little can stop Leicester

completing its amazing transformation from a team fighting relegation a year ago to lifting the league trophy in May. "We've got a few games left. It's a step but a very big one," Drinkwater said. "Coming off the Sunderland fans were clapping us as well which is brilliant. It was a great game, we knew it would be tough but managed to grind it out."

Leicester started on the front foot as Sunderland defender Younes Kaboul found himself under intense pressure from Vardy and Shinji Okazaki. Vardy headed wastefully wide after meeting Danny Simpson's inviting 12th-minute cross.

Leicester captain Wes Morgan was equally profligate after being picked out from a corner by Christian Fuchs, but as the home side settled, it was they who started to make an impact. Borini fired into the side-netting after taking a poor first touch from Jan Kirchhoff's throughball, and Kaboul powered a header over from the influential Wahbi Khazri's cross.

Both teams had penalty appeals waved away - Sunderland after Patrick van Aanholt's cross struck Robert Huth's arm as he slid in and Leicester after Riyad Mahrez's shot thumped into Kaboul's elbow.

Sam Allardyce's Sunderland nearly snatched the lead two minutes into first-half stoppage time. Borini found space on the right side of the penalty area and drilled in a shot that momentarily wrong-footed Schmeichel after clipping Morgan, but the goalkeeper did well to block with his legs. Leicester took the lead after Kaboul lost Vardy as the striker set off in pursuit of Drinkwater's long ball, and his finish was unerring. Substitute Jack Rodwell passed up a glorious



SUNDERLAND: Leicester City's English striker Jamie Vardy (L) vies with Sunderland's Dutch defender Patrick van Aanholt during the English Premier League football match between Sunderland and Leicester City yesterday. — AFP

opportunity to level with eight minutes remaining after Van Aanholt's shot had been blocked into his path 10 yards out.

Although Vardy missed one chance to wrap up the win late on from Drinkwater's pull-back, he did so deep into stoppage time as he out-muscled Van Aanholt and rounded Mannone before steering the ball into the empty net. — AP

SPURS END 15-YEAR WAIT TO BEAT MAN UTD AT HOME



LONDON: Dele Alli, Toby Alderweireld and Erik Lamela struck in six second-half minutes as Tottenham Hotspur swamped Manchester United 3-0 yesterday to keep Premier League leaders Leicester City in sight. A game delayed half an hour by United's late arrival due to traffic congestion burst to life in the 70th minute with three rapid-fire goals that allowed Spurs to trim Leicester's advantage back to seven points.

Leicester, 2-0 winners at Sunderland earlier in the day, remain overwhelming favourites for the title, but Spurs' display showed that Mauricio Pochettino's side will not give up without a fight.

Pochettino had not beaten United in six previous attempts, first with Southampton and then Tottenham, and Spurs had not scored against them in three games under him. Both trends were reversed in stunning fashion. The result, Spurs' first home league win over United in 15 years, had the additional effect of securing Leicester's place in the Champions League and United's hopes of joining the Foxes at Europe's top table are fading.

Louis van Gaal's side finished the weekend four points below fourth-place Manchester City in fifth place, raising the stakes ahead of Wednesday's FA Cup quarter-final replay at West Ham United.

United's late arrival prevented them from warming up fully and there was ironic applause

when they finally trotted out for the warm-up, five minutes after the scheduled kick-off time.

But with Leicester's earlier win contributing to a flat atmosphere—United's fans mockingly chanting "You nearly won the league!"—it was initially the hosts who looked like they had got ready in a hurry.

Tottenham, who recalled centre-back Jan Vertonghen after over two months out with a knee injury, had trouble getting out of their own half in the early stages, with right-back Timothy Fosu-Mensah seeing a shot deflected wide and Chris Smalling hoisting an effort onto the roof of the net.

Spurs' first chance, a close-range effort from Harry Kane that David de Gea blocked, would not have stood anyway due to offside, but the momentary excitement seemed to enliven both crowd and team.

Christian Eriksen curled narrowly wide from wide on the left and then made a gilt-edged chance for Lamela with a flighted left-foot cross, only for the stooping Argentine to head wide from six yards.

Moments later Kyle Walker turned Marcos Rojo inside-out on the Spurs right, but 18-year-old Fosu-Mensah, preferred to Matteo Darmian, slid across brilliantly to block the England right-back's cross.

Van Gaal made a change at half-time, sending on Ashley Young for Marcus Rashford, but rather than move Anthony Martial up front, he tasked Young, who habitually plays on the wing or at full-back, to lead the line. Young spent most of the second half as a spectator as Spurs began to impose themselves, with De Gea repelling a succession of potshots from Eriksen, Eric Dier and Kane. But despite remaining out on the left, Martial began to exert an influence, teeing up Jesse Lingard to shoot wide and then cutting in from the left, leaving three opponents in his slipstream, and stinging Hugo Lloris's palms with a crisp drive. — AFP

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DOLLAR DROPS ON BACK OF DOVISH FOMC MINUTES

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DUBAI: Visitors look at a to-scale model of a new tower the real estate giant Dubai Emaar Properties plans to build that will break the record and be taller than the Burj Khalifa, currently the world's tallest tower, during an exposition in Dubai yesterday. (Inset) Spanish-Swiss architect Santiago Calatrava Valls (right) and with Emaar Properties Chairman Mohamed Alabbar (left) speak during a press conference in Dubai yesterday.— AFP / AP

DUBAI TO BUILD TOWER TALLER THAN BURJ KHALIFA

BUILDER INSPIRED BY MYTHICAL HANGING GARDENS OF BABYLON

DUBAI: Dubai is reaching for the sky once again, with the developer of the world's tallest building vowing yesterday to build an even taller tower bedecked with rotating balconies and elevated landscaping inspired by the mythical hanging gardens of Babylon.

The government-backed company behind the project, Emaar Properties, hopes the new tower will entice a fresh wave of view-seeking homeowners even as it raises numerous other promised skyscrapers and repairs a prominent one gutted by fire on New Year's Eve.

Company Chairman Mohamed Alabbar said the new observation tower would be "a notch" taller than the 2,717-foot (828-meter) Burj Khalifa. Just how much taller he wouldn't say.

Unlike the Burj Khalifa, the new \$1 billion tower will not be a traditional skyscraper but more of a cable-supported spire containing "garden" observation decks graced with trees and

other greenery. Emaar says it will also contain a boutique hotel, restaurants and glass balconies that rotate outside the wall of the tower. The structure's design means it is unlikely to be widely recognized as a taller "building" than the Burj Khalifa even if it surpasses it in height. The Chicago-based Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat, for example, says at least 50 percent of a structure's height must contain usable floor area for it to be considered in its ranking of the world's tallest buildings. That typically disqualifies telecommunications and observation towers that have only a small number of floors.

It and the Burj Khalifa could also be surpassed by a skyscraper being built in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, that promises to rise more than 1 kilometer (3,281 feet) high. The new Dubai tower will be the centerpiece of a new 6 square-kilometer (2.3 square-mile) development on the edge of the Dubai Creek, near a protected wildlife sanctuary that regu-

larly attracts flamingoes and other water birds. Alabbar likened the structure, designed by Spanish-Swiss architect Santiago Calatrava Valls, to a 21st-century Eiffel Tower that can act as a magnet not just for tourists but also for property buyers willing to pay a premium for nearby apartments with a view. It is due to open by the time Dubai hosts the World Expo in 2020.

"Many ... of our customers would like to have that view. And if you ask me what is the financial model, that is the financial model," he said.

Similar strategy

Emaar followed a similar strategy when it raised the Burj Khalifa, which opened in 2010. The silvery skyscraper is flanked by fancy low and high-rise apartment complexes, some of which are still being built, as well as hotels, restaurants and one of the world's biggest shopping malls.

The area is also home to The Address Downtown, a 63-story luxury hotel built by Emaar that went up in flames on New Year's Eve. Dubai police have blamed exposed wiring for sparking the blaze. Outside experts say the type of cladding used to sheath the building was likely a factor in fueling that fire and several others that have engulfed skyscrapers in the United Arab Emirates.

Emirati authorities have ordered a nationwide safety survey of existing buildings and promised to tighten regulations in the wake of the fire. Asked about fire risks Sunday, Alabbar said it was important to learn from the accidents but suggested there are limits to how much builders can do.

"Safety rules are good, but can you really eliminate all risk? I don't think human beings are able to eliminate all risk," he told reporters. "Risks are there as long as we are progressing ... These things do happen, and you have to go and fix them and make sure if they happen, they happen to a minimum." — AP

FOOD SECTOR, FIRMER OIL PRICE LIFT SAUDI INDEX

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Food companies buoyed the Saudi stock market yesterday after better than expected results from the region's largest dairy food producer while a visit by the king of Saudi Arabia to Egypt failed to lift the Cairo bourse. The Saudi index advanced 1.4 percent after dairy producer Almarai reported a slight rise in first-quarter net profit in a challenging market. Almarai's shares rose by 3.6 percent, helping the food sector to a 4.2 percent gain.

Savola, which has a 36.5 percent stake in Almarai, jumped 6 percent to 44.10 riyals and is Riyadh-based NCB Capital's top pick in the sector. Shares in Jarir Marketing, one of the kingdom's largest retailers by market value, shrugged off a 29.5 percent drop in first-quarter net profit and gained 2.4 percent to 117.75 riyals.

Riyad Capital rates Jarir a "buy", with a target price of 189 riyals, citing its attractive dividend yield as a factor in its rating. Construction and engineering contractor Alkhodari edged up 0.4 percent after it booked a 15 million riyal (\$4 million) profit from the sale of some of its equipment last week. The revenue will be reflected in the second quarter.

The petrochemical sector was another strong performer, spurred by Friday's rebound in oil prices, with Saudi Basic Industries (SABIC) climbing 2 percent. In Cairo, Egypt's main index fell 1 percent, with investor caution prevailing despite the visit by Saudi King Salman.

"There are no direct indications yet of grants, aid or cen-

tral bank deposits by the Saudis to Egypt," said Allen Sandeep, head of research at Cairo's Naeem Brokerage, adding that the market resumed the correction that began after Egypt's mid-March currency devaluation.

Bourse data showed that local and foreign traders were net sellers yesterday, while non-Egyptian Arab investors were net buyers. Orascom Telecom and investment company Qalaa Holding each fell by 2.6 percent.

UAE GAINS

Dubai's index added 1.4 percent to a five-month high of 3,434 points, with trades mainly concentrated in mid-cap stocks. Builders Arabtec and Drake and Scull, which accounted for 40 percent of total volumes, added 4.1 percent and 1 percent respectively.

Arabtec, which has yet to report earnings, closed at 1.80 dirhams and is now considered overvalued by analysts. The average target price in a Reuters poll of eight analysts was 1.10 dirhams.

Real estate-related stocks helped to propel the Abu Dhabi index 0.7 percent higher ahead of this week's Cityscape exhibition, at which a number of developers are expected to announce new projects. Eshraq Properties jumped by 8.9 percent. Energy stocks also performed well. Dana Gas and Abu Dhabi National Energy (TAQA) surged by 11.1 percent and 3.9 percent respectively. — Reuters

FUEL QUEUES BACK WITH A VENGEANCE IN NIGERIA

LAGOS: Nigeria's financial capital Lagos is running on fumes again. A fuel scarcity reached a climax this week with cars in lengthy queues clogging traffic, stoking tempers and dampening investor confidence in a top oil producing country. Things got violent. Local newspapers reported paramilitary officers shooting dead gas sellers on the black market, as the Lagos state governor announced a ban on "indiscriminate queues", a Kafkaesque attempt to get traffic flowing.

Hoping to beat the crowds, some spent the night in their vehicles waiting in the queue outside a filling station. "I slept in the car, in the back seat. I need fuel," Kenny Giwa, a 26-year-old taxi driver, told AFP. Giwa's determination paid off. Just after dawn on Wednesday, his battered blue Volkswagen Golf was first at the gate of a station selling petrol for 86.50 naira (43 US cents, 38 euro cents) per litre. But his victory will be short-lived. "If I buy today it will last two days, then I'll queue again," Giwa said with a sigh. "The price of the black market fuel is too much."

Nearby, black market fuel hawkers stand holding pieces of hose and yellow jerry cans waiting for richer-or more desperate drivers willing to fork over twice the amount of cash per litre to avoid the mind-numbing wait.

"We're the largest oil producing country in Africa, this is poor management, greed and corruption," said Muyiwa Oke, a pharmaceutical researcher buying black market gas for 250 naira per litre. "The traffic is crazy. At half a tank I start looking. I don't want to get stuck." Nigeria is no stranger to fuel scarcity. Despite its massive oil wealth, years of mismanagement have left state-owned refineries working at a fraction of their 445,000 barrels per day capacity, according to Bloomberg News. Yet this latest round is particularly bad, a situation analysts attribute to the crash in global oil prices and President Muhammadu Buhari's stubborn



LAGOS: People queuing to buy fuel with jerry cans at a filling station in Lagos. Nigeria's financial capital Lagos is running on fumes again. A fuel scarcity reached a climax this week with cars in lengthy queues clogging traffic, stoking tempers and dampening investor confidence in a top oil producing country. —AFP

insistence on pegging the naira at 197 to 199 to the dollar through capital controls and import restrictions. "The downstream marketers are probably in genuine financial distress right now," Alan Cameron, a London-based economist at frontier markets firm Exotix, said. With dollars in short supply, fuel importers are forced to go to the black market, where the naira is hovering around 220 per dollar. In the end, the importers end up paying the difference without any compensation. In response to the fuel crisis, Nigeria's Petroleum Minister of State Emmanuel Kachikwu wrangled a deal with international energy companies working in the country to provide about \$200 million to help fund fuel imports. — AFP

SCAM-TAINTED GUPTA BROTHERS LEAVE S AFRICA

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's wealthy Gupta family, accused of exerting undue influence over President Jacob Zuma, have left country for Dubai, a newspaper reported yesterday.

"The whole family is in the process of leaving," family spokesman Nazeem Howa told the City Press weekly. The paper said that Ajay and Atul Gupta, two brothers from the family of wealthy Indian immigrants who own a vast business empire with interests in mining, media, technology and engineering, were seen on Thursday evening at a Johannesburg airport boarding their private jet for Dubai.

One of their wives was with them as well as five assistants, with the party boarding the plane "with

enough luggage for 20 people," a witness told the paper.

On Friday, the family released a statement saying they were stepping down from the leadership of Oakbay Investments, a holding company with interests ranging from mining to media, in a move linked to the closure of the firm's accounts by two major banks.

"It is with deep regret that, following a period of sustained political attack on the Gupta family and our businesses... we have come to the conclusion that it is time for the Gupta family to step down from all executive and non-executive positions," the letter said.

"This follows the unexplained decisions by sev-

eral of our banking partners and our auditors to cease working with us, and the continued press coverage of false allegations."

The closure of the bank accounts had made it "virtually impossible to continue to do business in South Africa," said the letter, which was signed by Howa, Oakbay's chief executive. In recent weeks, this family, who moved to South Africa in the 1990s, has come under fire for wielding immense power behind the scenes over Zuma and ministers in his government.

Persistent rumours of the family's excessive influence over the president took concrete form in March when evidence emerged that they allegedly offered key government jobs to those who

might help their business interests. Zuma, whose second presidential term ends in 2019, has also faced scathing criticism over his friendship with the Gupta family, with their relationship providing ammunition for the government's fiercest critics.

The Guptas arrived in South Africa in 1993 as white-minority apartheid rule crumbled and a year before Nelson Mandela won the country's first democratic elections. As the country opened up to foreign investment, the Guptas-previously small-scale businessmen in India-began to build their sprawling empire. They also developed close links with the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party, and particularly with Zuma, well before he became president in 2009. — AFP

KUWAIT EXPERT SEES EFFORTS TO STABILIZE OIL MARKET

SAUDI SAMREF OIL REFINERY AT FULL CAPACITY

KUWAIT: Oil producing countries plan to stabilize the crude output, and probably trim it, in case the prices failed to "balance" in the markets, according to a Kuwaiti expert.

Affirming that the collectively desired price is in the range of \$ 50-60 per barrel, Mohammad Al-Shatti told Kuwaiti News Agency (KUNA) that a number of these countries, during their upcoming meeting in Doha, Qatar, would first seek to firm the production for months, and in case the balance could not be restored, they would slash it.

Oil prices have already recovered, amid various factors related to the world economy and supply and demand, he said, adding that positive reports by the US Federal Reserve diminished concerns about the American and Chinese

economies. On demand, Al-Shatti said indications show continuing restoration of the demand in the industrial and developing nations, thus boosting prospects that the glut would be absorbed. As to supplies, those from Iraq are far less than the forecast.

Elaborating, Al-Shatti said overall US output is falling in a steady fashion, though less than predictions, coinciding with decrease of a number of drilling rigs in the US. Moreover, the production in several countries has declined, as compared to 2015.

He was alluding to Canada, Columbia, Brazil, the North Sea, Vietnam, Malaysia and Venezuela. He affirmed that some of the participants in the April 17th meeting in Doha have made positive remarks respect of their serious desire to restore

balance to the market in terms of pricing and production.

They tend, he noted, to stabilize the production for several months, as a preliminary step, and if they find that the balance cannot be restored, they will trim the output, noting that the desired price ranges between \$50-60 pb. Aspired balance is forecast to be seen in second half of 2016, along with expected further decline of the American output, start of withdrawing from the reserves, as well as the predicted hike of demand. However, a solid restoration of the market balance cannot be expected before 2017, he cautioned.

Saudi refinery

Saudi Arabia's Samref oil refinery said yesterday all its units were fully

operational without exceptions, denying a Reuters report that one unit was down. "Regrettably, this news is totally incorrect and the refinery is fully operating including all its units without exceptions," Samref said in an emailed statement.

Trading sources told Reuters on Friday that a 155,000 barrel per day (bpd) vacuum distillation unit (VDU) was down, triggering a tender issuance to export residual fuels from the port of Yanbu. VDUs are used to produce petroleum products from the heavier oils left over from distillation in oil refineries. Samref on Saudi Arabia's west coast is a 400,000 barrel per day joint refinery between Saudi state-owned Aramco and US oil major Exxon Mobil. — Agencies

News

in brief

US dollar firm against Kuwait dinar at 0.301

KUWAIT: The US dollar steadied against the Kuwaiti dinar yesterday exchanging at KD 0.301, the same case with the euro which stood at KD 0.343, compared to Thursday's rates. The Central Bank of Kuwait said the sterling pound was stable at KD 0.425, the Swiss Franc rose to KD 0.316 and the Japanese yen remained unchanged at KD 0.002.

Jarir Marketing Q1 net profit down 29.5%

DUBAI: Jarir Marketing, one of Saudi Arabia's largest retailers by market value, posted a 29.5 percent fall in first-quarter net profit yesterday, below analysts' estimates, as sales fell, especially of smart phones and other electronics. It made a net profit of 174.1 million riyals (\$46.4 million) in the three months to Mar. 31, down from 247 million riyals in the same period a year earlier, it said in a bourse statement. Five analysts polled by Reuters had on average forecast Jarir would make a quarterly net profit of 195.3 million riyals. The company said the earnings decrease was partly due to lower sales of most goods, especially of electronics, smart phones, computers and computer supplies.

Khodari makes 15.08m riyal profit from equipment sale

DUBAI: Saudi Arabian contractor Abdullah Abdul Mohsin Al-Khodari and Sons made a gross profit of 15.08 million riyals (\$4.02 million) from the sale by public auction of equipment, it said in a bourse filing yesterday. The financial impact of the auction will be reflected in the company's second-quarter results, the statement added.

Doha Bank seeks nod for \$5bn in instruments

DUBAI: Qatar's Doha Bank said yesterday it would seek shareholder approval to raise funds through up to \$5 billion worth of short term instruments. The lender is asking for approval to issue up to \$3 billion through certificate of deposits (CDs), it said in a bourse statement. The bank also said in the statement it would ask for shareholder approval to issue euro commercial paper worth \$2 billion, with a maximum tenor of up to 1 year. Both the instruments can be issued in Qatari riyals or in various major currencies. The duration of the CDs was not mentioned by the lender.

SAUDI ALMARAI POSTS SLIGHT PROFIT RISE

DUBAI: Higher sales helped Saudi Arabia's Almarai to post a marginal rise in first-quarter net profit yesterday, though the Gulf's largest dairy company warned of challenging market conditions in the face of the region's economic slowdown. Saudi companies are grappling with a protracted slump in oil prices that is putting government and consumer spending under pressure. One indicator of the latter is cash withdrawals from automated teller machines sinking 13 percent year on year in February, according to official data.

Almarai made a profit of 308.5 million riyals (\$82.3 million) in the three months to March 31, up from 306.5 million riyals in the same period last year, against an average forecast of 302 million riyals from five analysts polled by Reuters. "Given the very competitive market conditions driven by the economic slowdown, the performance of the company has been relatively strong in its core segments," the company said.

In another sign of the challenges facing the Saudi retail sector, Jarir Marketing, one of the kingdom's largest retailers by market value, posted a 29.5 percent drop in first-quarter net profit on falling sales, particularly for smartphones and other electronics.

For Almarai, sales remained strong, with a 13.6 percent increase on the back of growth for its dairy and juice, bakery and poultry segments helping to maintain profit levels.

But the company said that the cost of sales rose faster than sales. It said in January that the government's utility price increases and new crop-growing restrictions would increase costs by 500 million riyals in 2016. — Reuters



ADEN: Yemenis shop at a market yesterday in the southern city of Aden. Sporadic fighting raged in parts of Yemen, hours before a UN-brokered ceasefire is due to take effect at midnight in hope that it would lay the groundwork for upcoming peace talks. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.740
Indian Rupees	4.566
Pakistani Rupees	2.888
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.094
Nepali Rupees	2.860
Singapore Dollar	224.000
Hongkong Dollar	38.989
Bangladesh Taka	3.855
Philippine Peso	6.553
Thai Baht	8.585
GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	80.683
Qatari Riyal	83.111
Omani Riyal	785.863
Bahraini Dinar	803.510
UAE Dirham	823.750
ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	33.925
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	34.444
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.412
Tunisian Dinar	151.580
Jordanian Dinar	426.110
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.016
Syrian Lira	2.156
Morocco Dirham	31.899
EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	302.400
Euro	345.190
Sterling Pound	429.110
Canadian dollar	231.020
Turkish lira	107.620
Swiss Franc	317.150
Australian Dollar	229.820
US Dollar Buying	301.200

GOLD	
20 Gram	247.880
10 Gram	126.860
5 Gram	64.270

UAE EXCHANGE CENTRE WLL

CURRENCIES	TELEX TRANSFER PER 1000
Australian Dollar	201.91
Canadian Dollar	219.82
Swiss Franc	306.95
Euro	336.85
US Dollar	299.90
Sterling Pound	431.04
Japanese Yen	2.67
Bangladesh Taka	3.817
Indian Rupee	4.375
Sri Lankan Rupee	2.083
Nepali Rupee	2.732
Pakistani Rupee	2.860
UAE Dirhams	0.08161
Bahraini Dinar	0.7970
Egyptian Pound	0.03819
Jordanian Dinar	0.4265
Omani Riyal	0.7788
Qatari Riyal	0.08269
Saudi Riyal	0.07994

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.250
Canadian Dollar	230.325
Sterling Pound	429.535
Euro	339.765
Swiss Franc	297.075
Bahrain Dinar	802.260
UAE Dirhams	82.805
Qatari Riyals	84.020

Saudi Riyals	81.545
Jordanian Dinar	427.185
Egyptian Pound	34.053
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.063
Indian Rupees	4.538
Pakistani Rupees	2.891
Bangladesh Taka	3.857
Philippines Peso	6.540
Cyprus pound	577.595
Kenyan Shilling	3.675
Syrian Pound	2.375
Nepalese Rupees	3.835
Malaysian Ringgit	76.000
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	46.930
Thai Bhat	9.565
Turkish Lira	105.085

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.421084	0.430084
Czech Korune	0.004749	0.016749
Danish Krone	0.042257	0.047257
Euro	0.0339500	0.0347500
Norwegian Krone	0.032797	0.037997
Romanian Leu	0.086659	0.086659
Slovakia	0.008993	0.018993
Swedish Krona	0.033089	0.038089
Swiss Franc	0.310930	0.321130
Turkish Lira	0.100702	0.111002
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.220311	0.231811
New Zealand Dollar	0.199856	0.209356
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.227382	0.235882
US Dollars	0.298000	0.302500

US Dollars Mint	0.298500	0.302500
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003433	0.004007
Chinese Yuan	0.045156	0.048656
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036878	0.039628
Indian Rupee	0.004311	0.004701
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002709	0.002889
Kenyan Shilling	0.003098	0.003098
Korean Won	0.000251	0.000266
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073680	0.079680
Nepalese Rupee	0.002864	0.003034
Pakistan Rupee	0.002663	0.002943
Philippine Peso	0.006461	0.006741
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.220989	0.226989
South African Rand	0.014213	0.022713
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001692	0.002272
Taiwan	0.009240	0.009420
Thai Baht	0.008273	0.008823
Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.794757	0.802757
Egyptian Pound	0.030630	0.035748
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000191	0.000251
Jordanian Dinar	0.422084	0.429584
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020584	0.044584
Nigerian Naira	0.001245	0.001880
Omani Riyal	0.778255	0.783935
Qatar Riyal	0.082268	0.083481
Saudi Riyal	0.079673	0.080623
Syrian Pound	0.001280	0.001500
Tunisian Dinar	0.146648	0.154648
Turkish Lira	0.100702	0.111002
UAE Dirhams	0.081269	0.082418
Yemeni Riyal	0.001365	0.001445

NAPCO REVENUE SURGES 28% IN 2015 WITH EARNINGS OF OMR 24.8 MILLION

MUSCAT: National Aluminium Products Company SAOG (NAPCO), one of the leading extruders of aluminium profiles in the GCC, has registered a remarkable performance for 2015, achieving robust growth volume in the local market as well as exports. It earned revenues of OMR 24.8 million, compared to OMR 19.4 million in 2014, representing an increase of 28 per cent. In addition, NAPCO has gained a net profit of OMR 0.78 million in comparison to OMR 0.70 million in the previous year, recoding an increase of 11 per cent.

Despite a challenging business environment for the aluminium extrusion industry, NAPCO has managed to increase the capacity utilization of its existing plant, widen its product offerings, improve client services, and increase its focus on market initiatives, penetrating deep into domestic sectors to capture a wider market share.

Moreover, the management implemented dynamic strategies throughout the year to enhance cost efficiencies in the future.

Robert Holtkamp, CEO, NAPCO, said: "The rock-bottom prices of crude oil have impacted the construction sector, which in turn has affected the aluminium extrusion industry. Nevertheless, we are optimistic about the government projects in the region, especially in infrastructure development and building construction, boosting our volume orders in Oman and the rest of the GCC in 2016. In the near-term, NAPCO is bullish about the growth opportunities in established and new markets by offering improved services and products. Supported by a strong team, the management will continue to pursue its strategy of creating long-term value for all stakeholders while ensuring sustainability in operations to

attain operational excellence."

To complement its growth plans, NAPCO has installed two additional extrusion presses in a phased manner and a vertical powder coating plant which will commence commercial production by end of April 2016. The estimated cost of the expansion is OMR 7 million, including related civil construction of a new factory.

NAPCO has been part of several landmark projects in Oman and the rest of the region. Its current portfolio in Dubai includes Citywalk, an upcoming retail destination on the junction of Al Wasl and Safa Roads; Onyx Tower, a 3-tower commercial project close to Emaar Business Park on Sheikh Zayed Road; and Dubai Design District (d3), an ambitious and innovative purpose-built destination for creatives. In addition, it is working on Abu Dhabi Plaza, a mixed-use development underway in Astana,



Robert Holtkamp, CEO, NAPCO

Kazakhstan. NAPCO's long list of developments comprise the Supreme Court in Muscat, Salalah Airport, the Dubai International Airport Expansion (UAE), the Burj Khalifa (UAE), and the Al Rayyan Complex (UAE), to name a few.

CENTRAL BANKS ARE CREATING A BUBBLE IN BOND MARKET

By Hayder Tawfik

Whenever there is a frenzy and hysteria in the financial markets it always ends up in a burst followed by a meltdown. The action of the Federal Reserve, bank of Japan and the European central bank is not delivering what they are hoping for instead it is creating an all mighty bubble in the global bond markets. Financial meltdown is always created under similar conditions that we are experiencing now. A frenzied demand for a certain security or commodity that most of the time in short supply driven by an unrealistic belief that unique circumstances a new paradigm justify the unstoppable increase in its value.

Now, there is a huge panic among all sort of investors specifically investment managers that they're missing out on the new gold rush and that they might miss or they get fired by their clients if they don't get into the frenzy buying of those bonds. I personally don't like to get into a debate about if market price of a certain item is right or wrong. Buyers and sellers decide what is the right price for any item that is on offer in the market. Whenever the market start bidding up and up for any item without taking into account the fundamental value of such item then you know that there is a bubble. Obviously government and corporate bonds are not in short supply. Investors should be aware.

The current debate over whether bonds have entered into bubble territory mirrors situations investors have seen twice in the past two decades when bubbles inflated and burst, leaving a wide path of devastation in their wake.

By the end of 1990s investors went on buying frenzy of Internet startups with little concern for fundamentals such as earnings or even having an actual profitable business model. The global economy according to dotcom dreamers at the time had entered a new era in

which technology would be the name of the game and will fix all our problems. When the dot-com bubble burst in 2000 and 2001, it wiped out thousands of jobs and billions of dollars from the mislead investors who had placed all of their eggs in one basket. Then came the housing bubble that ended up with a global meltdown the results of which are still around.

After the housing bubble burst in the US, central banks around the world tried and are still trying to shield their economies but with not much luck. Now, a combination of low interest rates and cheap liquidity created by global central banks, combined with growing demand for a limited supply of government debt and lately corporate bonds has led to concerns that bonds are depending on one's perspective already in or rapidly approaching bubble territory. Japanese government bonds plus 7 Eurozone countries are already offering negative yields for short dated maturity bonds. This means that investors are lending those countries for negative returns. I believe there is already a bubble in government and corporate bonds and the question is how big they are and whether the global financial system is prepared to deal with them. Until we get back to a scenario where interest rates are determined by real economic forces and the ability of some of those governments to repay back their borrowings and at the same time reflect economic reality, there are going to be asset bubbles. May be the recent volatility in the financial markets is an indication of such bubbles and it is about to burst. The big test is can governments and central banks manage another global financial burst. — Rasameel



CAMERON RELEASES TAX RECORDS TO CALM PANAMA PAPERS STORM

PM TO ADDRESS PARLIAMENT ON TAX TODAY

LONDON: British Prime Minister David Cameron took the unusual step yesterday of publishing his tax records to try to end days of questions about his personal wealth raised by the mention of his late father's offshore fund in the Panama Papers. Cameron's initial reluctance to admit that he had benefited from the fund caused a furore, compounding his problems when he faces a huge political fight to persuade Britons to vote to stay in the European Union in a June 23 referendum.

The EU issue has split his Conservative Party, while the government has also been going through a tough patch over a senior minister's resignation, a U-turn on welfare cuts and accusations it is failing to protect Britain's steel industry. After saying on Saturday that he could have handled the fallout from the Panama disclosures better, Cameron released a summary of his tax records for the past six years.

But any hope that this would draw a line under the row was short-lived, as the main Sunday newspapers zeroed in on a gift of 200,000 pounds (\$282,500) Cameron received from his mother in 2011, suggesting it may be a way of avoiding inheritance tax.

A source at Cameron's Downing Street office said the suggestion was inaccurate, the gift had been declared and this was about a mother making a gift to her son in the same legal way that hundreds of thousands of Britons do every year.

Cameron will make a statement about tax policy to parliament today, but is likely to face a bar-

rage of questions about his personal finances from opposition lawmakers. Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn has accused him of misleading the public by issuing what Corbyn described as four "weasel-worded" statements in as many days before finally admitting that he had benefited from his father's fund.

Some politicians who are campaigning for Britain to vote to stay in the EU in June's referendum are concerned that the damage to Cameron is bad for their side, as he has previously been considered the best advocate for an "In" vote. "The scandals over David Cameron's finances ... may tip the decision further towards 'Leave,'" said former Scottish National Party leader Gordon Wilson in a statement yesterday.

"MORALLY WRONG"

Cameron is not accused of having done anything illegal, and the fact that he is a wealthy man is nothing new. But the past week has been damaging because the drip-drip of carefully worded statements before the fuller disclosure created the impression he may have had something to hide.

"He's not behaved improperly in any way and he's gone further than any prime minister previously in publishing these tax returns," Conservative minister Dominic Raab told Sky News television, accusing Cameron's Labour critics of "unsavoury" personal attacks and comparing them to "hyenas".

Bookmakers William Hill said they had cut their odds on Cameron resigning as prime minister this

year to 2/1 compared with 16/1 when he won the last general election last May. Cameron said on Thursday his father's investment trust was not set up to avoid tax but to invest in dollar-denominated shares. He said he had paid all taxes due on his own investment, which was worth about 30,000 pounds when he sold it in 2010.

However, Cameron stands accused of hypocrisy after portraying his government as being in the forefront of global efforts to crack down on offshore tax havens. A comment he made in 2012 about a famous comedian's legal tax avoidance scheme being "morally wrong" has been widely quoted by media. Scores of politicians and business figures have been implicated in the Panama Papers, including the prime minister of Iceland who has since stepped down. The 11.5 million documents leaked from the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca detail the creation of more than 200,000 companies in offshore tax havens.

The documents disclosed by Downing Street on Sunday, from RNS Chartered Accountants, show Cameron paid tax of 75,898 pounds on income of 200,307 pounds in the 2014-2015 financial year, the most recent one included. Seeking to regain the initiative, Cameron announced a new taskforce, jointly led by Britain's tax authority and National Crime Agency, to tackle money laundering and tax evasion.

But Labour's finance policy chief, John McDonnell, said this was inadequate and called for a full public inquiry. — Reuters

GULF BANK WINS 2 PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS FROM INTERNATIONAL FINANCE MAGAZINE

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank announced yesterday that it has been awarded the 'Best Retail Bank in Kuwait' and the 'Best Retail Customer Service Bank in Kuwait' awards from International Finance Magazine (IFM), one of the world's leading financial publications with a readership in over 200 countries.

Cesar Gonzalez-Bueno said: "We are proud to receive these two prestigious awards. This is the third year in a row for Gulf Bank to win the 'Best Retail Bank in Kuwait' from International Finance Magazine, and it is also the second consecutive year we have received the 'Best Retail Customer Service Bank in Kuwait'. These awards underline both the Bank's commitment to delivering the most innovative financial products and easy-to-use products. It also reflects the dedication of the Gulf Bank team in delivering excellent customer service."

Gonzalez-Bueno continued: "To have won these awards for consecu-

five years demonstrates Gulf Bank's strength and its commitment to its valued customers. I would like to thank International Finance Magazine and its panel of distinguished international judges and I would also like to extend my gratitude to all the staff at Gulf Bank for their hard work and dedication in providing our customers with the most efficient and best available banking services."

Using a combination of reader nominations and expert analysis the IFM awards work to ensure there is a fair process that is not influenced by reputation or newsworthiness. After meticulous research and analysis by the internal team, the process is transitioned to an external research



agency who provide their inputs. Then, the finalists are chosen by a panel of industry experts drawn from international ratings agencies and some of the world's leading financial centers. They undergo extensive scrutiny on the basis of innovation, growth, sustainability, and their contribution to society among the key factors before the final Award winners are announced. The IFM Awards exist to recognize

and honor individuals and organizations that make a significant difference and add value, and while delivering the highest standards of innovation and performance.

The IFM Awards celebrates excellence by encouraging the highest standards of innovation and performance. It recognizes and honors individuals and organizations in the international financial industry that make a significant difference and contribute to raising the bar through activities of note.

To learn more about any of Gulf Bank's awards, products and services, visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805, or log on to www.e-gulfbank.com, Gulf Bank's bilingual website.

AUSTRALIA'S MAJOR BANKS WANDER DEEPER INTO REGULATORY QUAGMIRE

SYDNEY: Australian banks famously rode out the 2008 financial crisis with barely a scratch, but no longer are they the exemplar of success, as a commodity rout ravages the economy and a growing storm of accusations over misconduct threatens to tar their name.

Last week, Westpac Banking Corp became the second Australian lender after ANZ Banking Group to be dragged to court by regulators over suspected rigging of benchmark interest rates. Both have denied any wrongdoing, saying they would vigorously defend themselves.

While increased regulatory scrutiny will eventually promote greater compliance, banks could face medium-term financial penalties, denting earnings and shareholder returns in a sector battling stricter capital rules and higher loan losses. The industry has already been unsettled by probes into wealth mismanagement and insurance scams, and public pressure is piling on Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to order a sector-wide inquiry into bank conduct as he campaigns for a federal election in July.

In a speech at Westpac's 199th birthday lunch last week, Turnbull accused banks of sometimes taking advantage of customers but stopped short of seeking a high-level inquiry. In contrast, Australia's main opposition Labour Party on Friday promised a Royal Commission into the financial sector if it wins July's election. "We are not denying there have been problems, we are not denying there has to be ongoing scrutiny of the industry," Australian Bankers' Association CEO Steven M, nchenberg said on Friday. "The question is do we need a Royal Commission to do that? No, we do not."

National Australia Bank's CEO Andrew Thorburn said a Royal Commission would be a "serious distraction". ANZ Chief Executive Shayne Elliott said such an inquiry could damage Australia's standing among global investors.

"The more immediate impact would be banks suffering some reputational damage," Fitch ratings said last week in a note on Australia's banks. The Big Four -

NAB, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Westpac and ANZ - are among the worst performers on the benchmark S&P/ASX200 index this year, down between 14 percent and 19 percent.

END OF GOLDEN ERA

Until last year, the banks had boasted a decade of uninterrupted growth and delighted investors with generous dividends. When the 2008 global crisis hit, the banks sailed through with little damage, backed by a resources boom at home. But as the commodities super-cycle plumbs new lows, the focus is falling on bank loans to Australia's beleaguered agricultural and mining sectors.

The sectors have shed jobs by the thousands, weighing on individual borrowers' ability to pay their mortgages in an already cooling housing market.

Charles Littrell, a senior executive at the Australian Prudential and Regulation Authority, told local media that the concentration of lending by the Big Four in property is a "perpetual concern".

Last year, APRA demanded the banks keep aside a bigger buffer against mortgages, forcing them to raise over A\$20 billion (\$15.1 billion). The regulator is set to announce further measures to increase capital, eroding banks' bottom line.

Profit growth is set to ease to low single-digits this financial year, a far cry from the doubling of profits over the past five years. Net interest margins are expected to fall to record lows on stifling competition and higher cost of funds, while loan-loss provisions may hit their highest in five years by the next financial year, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S estimates.

"Credit quality is by far the biggest risk that faces the banks. It can affect earnings, dividends," said Andrew Martin, portfolio manager at Aliphinity Investment Management, which holds stakes in the major banks. "The second one is regulations, and the reason is, ultimately over time, the more regulation there is the more it will pressure returns." — Reuters

US STOCK BUYBACKS REMAIN POPULAR DESPITE CRITICISM

NEW YORK: Confronted with a sluggish global economy, US companies have settled on a controversial tool that rewards shareholders and executives: share buybacks.

First permitted by the US Securities and Exchange Commission in 1982, the use of share buybacks has spread rapidly over the last five years due in part to pressure from activist investors for a quick payoff. When companies buy back shares, the shares remaining on the market rise in value due the tighter supply, an immediate boon to shareholders. Executives also benefit when their compensation is tied to the share price, often through rich stock options.

But critics point out that companies spending billions of dollars of shareholder funds on buybacks means the funds are not being invested in new plants, higher salaries and other areas that boost the company and the broader economy. Over the past two years, at least 20 percent of S&P 500 companies have trimmed their share count by at least four percent, said Howard Silverblatt, analyst

at S&P Dow Jones Indices.

The net effect is to increase the companies' earnings-per-share by at least four percent. But as a study by University of Chicago professors Daniel Bens, Franco Wong and Douglas Skinner, that gain "cannot be attributed to improved firm performance."

The surge in spending on buybacks has been huge. In 2009, the 500 biggest publicly-traded companies in the US spent 27.5 percent of their \$500 billion in operating profits on buybacks, according to S&P Indices. By 2015, they spent 64.7 percent of \$885.3 billion in earnings on buybacks.

Apple led the way with last year putting \$37 billion in buybacks, followed by Microsoft with \$17.9 billion and Qualcomm with \$11.6 billion. Making that possible has been the companies' lofty cash holdings, which stood at \$1.3 trillion at the end of 2015 among the S&P 500, according to Silverblatt.

They "have to do something with their cash," said Silverblatt. But some also take advantage of low interest rates to borrow money to fund buy-

backs. Apple in February announced a debt offering of \$12 billion to finance buybacks and share dividends, even as it holds more than \$200 billion in cash, much of it overseas.

The market has taken a kind view of buybacks. Shares of 100 companies that undertook buybacks in 2014 outperformed competitors who used funds to build factories or hire employees, according to a study by Barclays.

And buybacks have accounted for about 21 percent of the rise of the S&P 500 since 2009, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices.

'Manipulating stocks'

But not everyone is sold. For one, critics point out that frequently buybacks mask poor performance: a buyback can increase a company's earnings per share even as overall earnings fall.

William Lazonick, an economist at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, said buybacks also do not ensure companies stay prosperous by investing in their businesses.

"You are manipulating the stock

prices," he said. "And then you are not creating value. You are extracting value that workers and taxpayers and others created."

"The only logic is that the people who are making those decisions want to get stock prices up so they can sell the stock and enrich themselves."

Politicians, too, have taken up the issue. Hillary Clinton, the favorite to win the Democratic nomination for president, said last year that she supports reforms to ensure that buybacks aren't used just to boost share prices.

Elizabeth Warren, the progressive Democratic Senator from Massachusetts, also favors reining in the "sugar high" from buybacks. Critics say there is also a link between runaway buybacks and the rising gap between rich and poor. "If the US is to achieve economic growth with an equitable income distribution and stable employment opportunities, government rule-makers and business decision-makers must take steps to bring both executive pay and stock buybacks under control," Lazonick wrote in an April 2014 paper. — AFP

INFLATION TESTS AHEAD, CBS SOUND MORE CAUTIOUS

GLOBAL ECONOMY WEEKAHEAD

LONDON: With the world economy entering a more uncertain phase and the top central banks sounding ever more cautious, attention may turn in the coming week to signs of whether years of aggressive stimulus have yielded any significant rise in inflation. The US Federal Reserve, the Bank of England and the European Central Bank all have been disappointed to varying degrees about how little inflation has picked up, or indeed how it has spent too much time going the opposite way.

The Bank of Japan, which has been trying to ward off deflation going on two decades, has now been hit with a counterproductive surge in the yen after a contested decision last month to adopt a tiny negative interest rate. Even in China, where it is difficult to fathom the sheer magnitude of fiscal and monetary stimulus Beijing has piled on since the financial crisis, consumer price inflation is remarkably tame and likely to remain so.

For developed economies, the worry is whether

a slowdown in growth over the past several months will get in the way of what many central banks are hoping for: pressure on inflation through wages as labor increasingly becomes more scarce.

Already there are signs the dramatic fall in unemployment in the United States and Britain, and to a lesser extent the euro zone, is starting to slow, which is normal this far into an economic expansion, albeit an uneven and lacklustre one. "The US merits special attention," writes David

Hensley, a director of global research at JP Morgan.

"If the US unemployment rate were to stabilize at 5 percent, the Fed would have much less incentive to hike rates unless this level of unemployment turns out to be low enough to generate a sustained rise in wage and price inflation, something Chair Yellen has expressed considerable skepticism about."

So far, measures of underlying price pressures that strip out volatile energy and food prices have risen to close to or even above where the Fed likes them to be. But they have shown little sign of climbing beyond that, hence the caution on rates.

US inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is expected to rise to 1.2 percent on a year ago, and steady around 2.3 percent on a core basis, according to a preliminary Reuters poll of economists for data due on Thursday.

EUROPE

In Britain, where the central bank has left its key interest rate at a record low for seven years and shows no sign of moving for at least another, inflation is even weaker. The UK CPI is forecast to rise by just 0.4 percent on a year ago and 1.3 percent on a core basis, in data due Tuesday, a few days before the Bank of England sets policy. No dissent on an unanimously-forecast decision to leave rates steady is expected. The UK jobless rate has stabilised at 5.1 percent over the last few months. That has followed a recent softening in wage inflation as well as a slowdown in economic growth and investment plans ahead of a June 23 referendum on whether Britain should

remain in or leave the European Union. In the eurozone, where the European Central Bank just delivered an unexpectedly large dose of extra stimulus, growth has been holding up relatively well, but progress in getting the unemployment rate down has also slowed. Eurozone inflation is expected to be confirmed at -0.1 percent, well short of its goal of just under 2 percent.

If that itself weren't enough of a worry, the euro, like the yen, is stubbornly rallying just when central bank policymakers have delivered stimulus with the hope of spurring on export performance and importing inflation from abroad.

This suggests to many observers that central banks are near or at the end of their policy reach. The start of the US company earnings season is also set to kick off, with hopes about that a reprieve from the dollar's climb may improve the outlook after one of the most volatile starts to the year ever for Wall Street.

The worry, again, is that a tamer dollar will hurt performance at companies based in Europe, Japan and elsewhere, underscoring the reasons behind the Fed's caution about the international backdrop behind its policy stance. What might end up grabbing even more attention before the World Bank and IMF meetings at the end of the week could hit the root of much of the Fed's caution since it began contemplating its first rate rise in nearly a decade last year. Optimism, not pessimism, about China appears to be on the rise, with most forecasters broadly looking for stabilization across swathes of key economic indicators. —Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report									
Sunday 10 April 2016									
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low				
Price index	▲ 20.67	5,251.11	5,230.44	5,251.46	5,230.44				
Weighted Index	▲ 1.10	362.14	361.04	362.65	360.22				
KXS 15	▲ 2.33	855.20	852.87	857.82	848.94				
Global									
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change		
MARIN	108	102	2324	246	5	104	▲ 0.0		
IKARUS	83	80	3,600	288	3	83	▲ 0.0		
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	320	▲ 0.0		
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	730	▲ 0.0		
ENERGY	45.0	42.5	6,017	257	3	45.0	▲ 0.0		
GPI	41.5	39.0	11,099,422	477,005	218	41.5	▲ 2.5		
ARAR	104	104	100	10	1	104	▲ 2.0		
Oil & Gas			11,711,463	470,407	230	002.69	▲ 6.44		
KFOUC	194	188	318,884	60,501	15	194	▲ 6.0		
DFCC	520	510	230,350	117,782	11	510	▲ 10.0		
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	610	▲ 0.0		
ALQURAIN	190	194	434,935	85,218	14	196	▲ 0.0		
Basic Materials			984,169	263,502	40	953.68	▲ 14.11		
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	375	▲ 0.0		
REFRI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	305	▲ 0.0		
CABLE	360	355	46,500	16,690	14	360	▲ 5.0		
SHIP	144	142	10,000	1,422	2	144	▲ 4.0		
PCEM	1,020	1,020	215	219	2	1,020	▲ 0.0		
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	410	▲ 0.0		
MRC	64	64	10,000	640	1	64	▼ -3.0		
ACICO	280	280	2,000	560	1	280	▲ 0.0		
GGMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450	▲ 0.0		
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	134	▲ 0.0		
KPAK	285	285	23,249	6,626	2	285	▼ -25.0		
KBMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	▲ 0.0		
NICBM	236	236	911	215	1	236	▲ 0.0		
EQUIPMENT	58	52	6,512,120	367,207	125	56	▲ 3.0		
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	▲ 0.0		
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	▲ 0.0		
SALDOOKHI	69	69	56,847	3,922	12	69	▲ 1.0		
AGLTY	475	465	2,435,800	1,139,699	48	465	▼ -5.0		
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0.0		
CLEANING	39.5	38.5	171,260	6,657	6	39.0	▼ -0.5		
CITYGROUP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	530	▲ 0.0		
KGL	49.0	48.0	192,000	9,307	9	48.0	▼ -1.0		
KPC	214	200	11,449	2,304	4	200	▼ -4.0		
HUMANSOFT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	560	▲ 0.0		
NAFAIS	154	154	200	31	2	154	▲ 10.0		
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	270	▲ 0.0		
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	33.5	▲ 0.0		
MAYADEEN	24.5	23.0	10,431,017	245,003	117	23.5	▲ 0.5		
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	790	▲ 0.0		
MTC	81	80	526,200	42,587	10	81	▲ 0.0		
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	720	▲ 0.0		
ALAFCCO	210	210	17,000	3,570	1	210	▼ -2.0		
MUBARRAD	61	59	763,800	45,551	20	61	▲ 1.0		
LOGISTICS	73	72	1,028,370	75,041	29	73	▲ 1.0		
SCEM	86	86	39,000	3,354	1	86	▲ 0.0		
GCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	79	▲ 0.0		
QCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	66	▲ 0.0		
FCEM	75	73	85,900	6,289	6	73	▼ -1.0		
RKWC	94	94	500	47	1	94	▼ -2.0		
SPEC	79	72	210	16	3	78	▲ 1.0		
Industrials			22,364,548	1,976,967	417	967.65	▼ -0.49		
KGI	166	166	14,334	2,379	2	166	▲ 10.0		
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	▲ 0.0		
PAPCO	110	108	6,100	550	3	108	▲ 2.0		
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	132	▲ 0.0		
DANAH	70	68	1,789,010	123,032	79	69	▼ -2.0		
POULT	176	176	10,000	1,760	1	176	▲ 0.0		
FOOD	2,580	2,520	37,676	97,184	13	2,560	▲ 0.0		
Consumer Goods			1,856,120	224,910	98	1073.64	▲ 5.99		
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0.0		
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	▲ 0.0		
YIACO	170	170	2,000	340	2	170	▲ 10		
Health Care			2,000	340	2	934.26	▲ 7.18		
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	990	▲ 0.0		
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210	▲ 0.0		
SULTAN	64	63	3,854	243	2	64	▲ 2		
CABLETV	28.5	28.5	2,100	60	2	28.5	▲ 2		
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	▲ 0.0		
IFAHR	186	186	300	56	1	186	▲ 0.0		
QULAFJEL	116	112	42,881	4,881	9	116	▲ 4		
MUNTAZAHAT	83	83	200,000	16,000	5	83	▲ 0.0		
JAZEERA	900	880	61,135	53,919	12	890	▲ 0.0		
SOOR	116	112	95,879	10,932	17	114	▲ 0.0		
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	110	▲ 0.0		
ALNAWADI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	75	▲ 0.0		
ALRAI	146	146	5,500	803	2	146	▲ 0.0		
ZIMAH	46.0	43.0	8,575,236	378,530	233	44.0	▼ -2		
UFIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	▲ 0.0		
Mezzan	1,160	1,160	161,000	186,760	6	1,160	▲ 0.0		
Consumer Services			9,147,565	652,703	289	925.36	▲ 3.02		
ZAIN	350	350	1,430,122	505,882	60	350	▲ 0.0		
QOORDOO	1,140	1,060	22,447	23,795	9	1,140	▲ 80		
HITSTELEC	33.0	31.5	14,864,746	478,418	123	32.0	▲ 1		
VIVA	1,050	1,040	44,315	46,128	48	1,040	▲ 0.0		
Telecommunications			16,361,630	1,054,223	240	627.17	▲ 9.88		
NBK	670	660	1,640,802	1,086,188	46	670	▲ 10		
GBK	238	234	1,577,530	372,764	44	236	▲ 2		
CDK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	435	▲ 0.0		
ABK	335	330	35,330	11,664	2	335	▲ 0.0		
ALMUTAHED	440	440	57,000	25,080	4	440	▼ -5		
KIB	194	192	177,400	34,406	9	194	▲ 0.0		
BURG	345	335	427,970	145,583	12	335	▼ -10		
KFIN	485	480	745,648	350,245	62	485	▲ 0.0		
BOUBRYAN	400	395	1,509,857	599,294	46	395	▼ -5		
AUB	186	184	537,557	99,544	14	184	▼ -2		
ITHMR	40.0	38.0	11,034,550	431,859	128	40.0	▲ 2		
WARBANK	176	172	438,525	76,298	45	174	▲ 0.0		
Banks			18,182,259	3,241,896	402	818.16	▲ 0.06		
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	285	▲ 0.0		
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	670	▲ 0.0		
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	485	▲ 0.0		
WINS	104	102	19,068	1,981	2	104	▼ -2.0		
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	▲ 0.0		
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80	▲ 0.0		
WETHAQ	38.0	34.0	2,400	86	5	38.0	▲ 2.5		
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0		
Insurance			21,468	2,068	7	1049.79	▲ 8.64		
SOKOUK	34.5	34.0	1553509	52,825	41	34.5	▲ 0.5		
KRE	48.5	48.0	1,298,896	62,972	22	48.5	▲ 0.5		
URC									

DOLLAR DROPS ON BACK OF DOVISH FOMC MINUTES

KUWAIT: The FOMC minutes revealed a dovish Fed as expected. This time the message was fairly clear as the Fed cannot ignore the asymmetry of policy risks any longer. The minutes suggested those advocating caution outnumbered those seeking action, supporting market perceptions that the Fed will not move until its June meeting at the earliest.

Yellen explained in her press conference following the meeting that interest rates had to rise more slowly to offset the "somewhat softer pace" of economic expansion outside the US.

Moreover, Yellen was dovish on Thursday at the meeting of the four Fed Chairs and she said that the global economy has seen relatively weak growth despite positive signs in the US. In Europe, the ECB Monetary Policy Meeting Accounts confirmed that more easing is likely on the way later in the year. However, Draghi implied at the last meeting this is unlikely to take the form of more rate cuts.

On the foreign exchange side, the Euro opened the week at 1.1390 and managed to reach a short lived high at 1.1453. The currency slowly weakened after European Central Bank President Mario insisted that "the ECB does not surrender to excessively low inflation", a message that suggests willingness to act. The statement brought down the Euro to a low of 1.1335. The currency closed the week at 1.1400.

The Sterling Pound quickly weakened last week as concerns regarding the likelihood of a 'Brexit' scenario would still hurt the currency. After opening the week at 1.4218 and reaching a high of 1.4321 amid good Services PMI data on Monday, the currency fell to a low of 1.4004 and closed the week at 1.4129 against the dollar.

The Japanese yen remains a haven on the forex market, continuing to rise higher. The outperformance of the yen continues to pressure Japanese equity markets. The currency rallied after Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said in an interview that countries should avoid weakening their currencies with "arbitrary intervention." The yen's gains have fueled speculation over how much higher the currency can climb before Japanese officials act to weaken it.

The yen managed to reach a high of 107.67 against US dollar on Thursday. However, Minister Taro Aso responded early on Friday by warning rapid currency moves were "undesirable," that the yen's were "one-sided" and that Japan would take steps as needed. That is the language that Tokyo has used in the past to flag intervention, and the yen's run to 17-month highs against the dollar has

required investors to believe that it would hold fire at least until after next week's G20 meetings in Washington. The pair closed the week at 108.08.

On the commodities side, oil prices climbed last week, on renewed hopes major producers would reach an agreement to freeze output on April 17. Kuwait's OPEC governor said on Tuesday that a meeting of oil-producing countries in Doha will deliver an agreement to hold output at January highs despite the absence of some countries. Moreover, Crude futures extended gains on Wednesday after the US government reported a surprise decrease in crude inventories last week against market expectations for a new record high in inventories. US commercial crude stockpiles dropped by 4.9 million barrels to a total of 529.9 million barrels in the previous week, the Energy Information Administration said.

On the precious metals front, gold remains well supported this week. The dovish FOMC minutes and Fed chair Yellen's tone have increased the demand for Gold. Gold prices managed to reach a high of 1243.50.

FOMC meeting minutes

The minutes from the latest FOMC meeting were released last Wednesday showing a deeply divided FOMC debating how soon to increase interest rates. The minutes of the central bank's March meeting revealed that some members advocated a move as soon as April while others warned this would show unwarranted urgency. The minutes suggested those supporting caution outnumbered those seeking action, supporting market perceptions that the Fed will not move until its June meeting at the earliest.

In the meeting, the Fed lowered its 2016 dot plot to two quarter-point rises, falling closer into line with market expectations as it flagged up risks to the US outlook from financial markets and weaker growth abroad.

Fed chair Yellen speaks

Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen on Thursday praised the strength of the United States economy, refusing political rhetoric suggesting a bubble was ready to burst. Yellen's comments come soon after Republican presidential candidate argued that an economic bubble could burst. Yellen added that the global economy has seen relatively weak growth despite positive signs in the US. The Fed has taken a cautious approach on raising interest rates this year after hiking its target in December for the first time in nearly a decade. The bank's policy committee now projects two rate hikes this year. Yellen said she did not consider the December decision a mistake, as indicators at the time

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

showed "substantial" progress toward the Fed's labor market and inflation goals. Moving forward, she noted the Fed would "watch very carefully what is happening in the economy." We remain on a reasonable path and I don't think that December was a mistake," she said.

recorded in February. An expanding service sector signals that the economy is still growing at a moderate pace despite weakness in the energy patch, soft exports and lackluster business investment.

The trade deficit widened more than expected in February as a recov-

continued disinflationary forces. And we face questions about the direction of Europe and its resilience to new shocks," he wrote. Draghi's downbeat tone was similar to that of policymakers at the Federal Reserve, minutes of whose mid-March policy meeting, released on last Wednesday, said "participants generally saw global economic and financial developments as continuing to pose risks".

in March, up from 53.0 in February and below the flash estimate of 53.7. The downward revision of the index between the flash estimate and final reading was mainly driven by France and Italy. These nations combined explained 0.5 points out of the 0.6 point downshift.

On a different front, the seasonally adjusted volume of retail trade increased by 0.2 percent in the Euro area for February 2016, compared with January. Compared with February 2015, the February 2016 calendar adjusted retail sales index rose by 2.4 percent.

UK construction and services PMI climb

The seasonally adjusted Construction Purchasing Managers' Index came at 54.2, beating the estimate of 54.00. Housebuilding activity in the UK grew at its slowest pace in over three years last month, as caution and hesitancy continued to move the construction sector. On the other hand, UK Services PMI showed services growth picked up slightly in March but the quarterly output was the weakest since Q1 2013. The Business Activity Index climbed to 53.7 in March, from February's 35-month low of 52.7. Global economic uncertainty and the upcoming EU membership referendum were commonly reported to be factors undermining the service sector business expectations during the month.

Chinese Caixin Services PMI

Chinese data came back upbeat, pulling Asian markets up after yesterday's poor performance. China Purchasing Managers' Composite Index came in at 51.3 in March, the highest reading in 11 months. It was 49.4 in February. The services PMI was 52.2, up from 51.2. Last week the Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index came in at 49.7 in March, ahead of the 48.3 market expectations.

The Reserve Bank of Australia left the official interest rate unchanged at 2 percent. The Board believed that there were reasonable forecasts for continued growth in the economy with inflation close to target. Therefore, the RBA decided that the current setting of monetary policy remained appropriate. As for the currency, the RBA mentioned "the Australian dollar has appreciated somewhat recently. In part, this reflects some increase in commodity prices, but monetary developments elsewhere in the world have also played a role".

*Kuwait
Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30125
The USD/KWD opened at 0.30125 yesterday morning.*



Unemployment claims fell

The number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits dropped more than estimated last week, suggesting that the labor market continued to strengthen despite tepid economic growth. Initial claims for state unemployment benefits fell 9,000 to a seasonally adjusted 267,000 for the week ended April 2.

This marks 57 consecutive weeks of initial claims below 300,000, the longest streak since 1973. With the strengthening labor market drawing in discouraged and new job seekers, which is likely to keep wage growth moderate, it is unlikely the Federal Reserve will shift from its policy of gradually raising interest rates.

US ISM non-manufacturing PMI

Companies in the US service sector such as health care providers and retailers grew in March at the fastest pace since December. On Tuesday, the US ISM non-manufacturing index came out at 54.2 better than the 53.4

ery in exports was offset by an increase in imports. It is the latest indication that economic growth weakened further in the first quarter. However, the growth picture should brighten in the months ahead with other data showing sustained strength in the labor market and boosted March activity in the services sector as new orders rose strongly. The trade deficit increased 2.6% to \$47.1 billion in February, worse than economists' forecasts of \$46.2 billion.

Europe & UK

Top European Central Bank officials drew the boundaries of future action on Thursday, saying that the bank had no plan to transfer "helicopter" money directly to Europeans but remained willing to take smaller steps to counter global slowdown.

Draghi wrote on Thursday in the ECB's annual report that the year ahead would be a challenging one. "We face uncertainty about the outlook for the global economy. We face

Draghi insisted that "the ECB does not surrender to excessively low inflation", a message that suggests willingness to act. In an effort to recover the 19-member currency bloc's fortunes, the ECB has rolled out ever more ambitious money-printing schemes to buy bonds and other assets and it will soon start to even pay banks to borrow its money so long as they increase lending.

The eurozone seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 10.3 percent in February 2016, down from 10.4 percent in January 2016, and from 11.2 percent in February 2015. This is the lowest rate recorded in the euro area since August 2011. Moreover in Spain, the number of unemployed registered at the offices of the Public Employment Services declined in March by 58,216 persons in relation to the previous month.

Services PMI inched up

The final Markit eurozone PMI Composite Output Index posted 53.1

HONG KONG EMERGES AS HUB FOR CREATING OFFSHORE COMPANIES

HONG KONG: In 2009, Jasmine Li, whose grandfather was the fourth most powerful politician in China at the time, donned a floral Carolina Herrera gown and debuted at a ball in Paris. That same year, a British Virgin Islands company she would later come to own for \$1 was born in an aging building in a red light district of Hong Kong, just one example of the city's key role in helping the world's elite shuttle their wealth offshore.

The information about Li, who has not been accused of wrongdoing, comes from a tremendous cache of documents leaked from the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca and published by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. Those records highlight the central role Hong Kong has come to play in designing offshore financial vehicles. Hong Kong brims with people expert at packaging and protecting wealth. The back pages of newspapers teem with advertisements for corporate formation companies, one-stop shops promising fast bank account opening, corporate compliance, tax and accountancy services. Offshore vehicles are used to minimize tax, mitigate political risk, and circumvent onerous regulations in China. And they are completely legal.

But Hong Kong's offshore financial machinery works so well, and so discreetly, that it can be abused by those seeking to hide illicit assets or evade taxes. As traditional havens, like Switzerland, cave to years of grinding pressure from European and American tax authorities, unsavory money is drawn to Hong Kong, which despite reforms, retains its reputation for secrecy, non-cooperation, and a light regulatory touch, watchdog groups and lawyers say.

Stability matters

"Hong Kong attracts this type of hot money from across the region and globally, partly because of its perceived stability," said Iain Willis, a partner at Latymer Partners, a corporate intelligence advisory firm in London. "Light-touch" financial regulation, easy rules on company incorporation and limited transparency" add to its appeal, he said. Hong Kong was Mossack Fonseca's go-to spot for financial intermediaries like P&P Secretarial Management, home to 2,212 accountants, banks and other middlemen Mossack Fonseca used to set up 37,675 offshore companies for its global clients between 1977 and 2015 - more than any other place in the world, according to ICIJ's analysis. China's Foreign Ministry dismissed ICIJ's reports as "groundless," and the government has aggressively censored discussion of them. Hong Kong tax authorities said in an email Friday that they would "take necessary actions" based on the offshore leaks, and work to "enhance the efficiency and effectiveness" of enforcement as required.

Mossack Fonseca tapped P&P Secretarial Management - which is run by an accountant named



HONG KONG: A man uses his smartphone in Central, a business district of Hong Kong. Hong Kong has emerged as a major design center for offshore vehicles, a place brimming with people expert at packaging and protecting wealth. — AP

Wai-hon Chiu, according to corporate filings - to register Harvest Sun Trading in the British Virgin Islands. P&P Secretarial is not listed in the telephone directory, and its contact details are not easy to find on the Internet. Its name is not among the three businesses listed at the entrance to the second-floor office it now occupies in Hong Kong's Wan Chai district. The front door opens onto a lone ivy plant stuck in a corner of two blank white walls. There is no receptionist, and unannounced visitors are not welcome.

"The boss is away. He will be back next week," said a woman in a dark dress, who confirmed that P&P Secretarial did indeed have a presence in the office which did not bear its name. She refused to give her name. Great fortunes run through small offices like this, and not just from clients of Mossack Fonseca, which derived nearly a third of its business from Hong Kong and China, according to ICIJ.

"It's quite natural that Hong Kong would grow to play a significant role in the plumbing infrastructure of globalization," said Martin Kenney, an asset recovery lawyer in the British Virgin Islands. "They are the architects, designers and engineers of the structures."

Mainland links

In part, the prominence of offshore vehicles in Hong Kong has to do with its special relationship with mainland China. Many investors set up offshore vehicles so they can sell mainland assets without being subjected to layers of government approval. Others have used, and sometimes abused, offshore structures to take advantage of China's tax breaks for foreign companies. More foreign direct investment to China between 1979 and 2014 ostensibly came from the British Virgin Islands than from anywhere else,

aside from Hong Kong, according to the US Congressional Research Service. Hong Kong does not tax income that originates abroad, a policy that supports the proliferation of foreign-registered companies. Hong Kong's independent legal system and effective escape route from mainland China's currency controls - it's easier to move money between mainland China and Hong Kong than elsewhere - also add to its appeal, lawyers say.

The kind of political uncertainty that drove investors offshore before Hong Kong's 1997 handover persists today. The Basic Law, a mini-constitution that enshrines China's "one country, two systems" policy toward Hong Kong, expires in 2047. "We are on borrowed time," said David Webb, a former investment banker and Hong Kong shareholder activist.

Offshore vehicles have become so commonplace that 75 percent of Hong Kong-listed companies are actually domiciled in Bermuda or the Cayman Islands, according to an analysis by Webb.

But there are other, more controversial uses of Hong Kong's offshore machinery. The Panama Papers, together with past leaks published by ICIJ, show how China's own political and economic elite use Hong Kong intermediaries to get their money out of China. While the leaks contain no allegations of wrongdoing, they are a sore spot for China's top leadership, which has been trumpeting nationalism and moral virtue as it tries to slow capital flight and fight corruption. Much of the wealth that runs through Hong Kong comes from mainland China, which is widely seen as a growth market in the offshore industry. The top source of funds that Mossack Fonseca helped move offshore was China, according to an analysis of ICIJ data by the Guardian newspaper. — AP

POVERTY LINE SPLITS PERU IN PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

LIMA: Many Peruvians voting yesterday want a new president who will stop the country's economic growth from slipping away. But millions never felt that growth in the first place. Along a hillside ridge in southeastern Lima runs what locals call the "wall of shame." Topped with loops of barbed wire, it divides the posh Las Casuarinas neighborhood from the hard-scrabble district of Pamplona Alta.

The six-mile wall went up five years ago to keep crime away from the big houses, swimming pools and green lawns of Las Casuarinas. For 7,500 residents on the other side, in dusty shacks without electricity or running water, it just keeps in place the social divisions that fuel crime.

"I was sad when they built the wall. I am not here because I like living in squalor, but because I need a job," said one resident, Amelia Gomer. She migrated from the north of the country to seek her fortune in the city.

"With that wall, they just remind me that I am poor." Locals say none of the candidates running for president has been around here meeting voters. Residents have used the wooden campaign signs with candidates' faces to build walls for their huts. "Inequality is a critical issue that needs to be resolved in order to return to economic growth," said Armando Mendoza, a researcher for the development charity Oxfam. "That is something politicians do not understand."

Silver and gold

A fall in commodity prices has hurt the economies of mineral-rich Latin American countries. Peru has been hit less hard than some. Foreign companies are busy mining its copper, silver and gold, as they have for centuries.

The country enjoyed a boom of six percent annual growth on average from 2006 to 2013. Growth slowed in 2014 to 2.4 percent then ticked up to 3.26 percent last year-not enough for some voters, who complain that outgoing President Ollanta Humala has not done enough.

"In the short term, a new president has to achieve growth of four to five percent to regain confidence," said economist Jorge Gonzalez. "And to meet all of people's expectations, it has to grow sev-

en percent in the long term with structural reforms."

Small companies, estimated by the International Labor Organization to employ 80 percent of Peru's workers, are struggling, particularly in Peru's key textile industry.

Shopping centers sell cheaper clothes made in China. "Sales have fallen by half. Factories employing 200 people have shut down," says Susana Saldana, owner of a clothing workshop in Lima. The official unemployment rate is 7.2 percent but that does not measure the situation in rural areas.

When solid growth was the norm, Peru was able to reduce its poverty rate sharply in less than a decade, to 22.7 percent in 2014. But four in 10 Peruvians are still at risk of falling into poverty, according to Oxfam. Mendoza says this nation of 30 million people-stretching from coastal desert plains over the soaring Andes to Amazon basin lowlands beyond-has grown over-reliant on its mineral wealth.

"That generated false confidence. It put the country on autopilot," he said. "Inequality must not continue to be treated as a secondary issue as if it will solve itself."

Promising a 'decent life'

Candidates wooing Peru's 23 million voters have promised to improve their fortunes. Conservative front-runner Keiko Fujimori, daughter of disgraced ex-president Alberto Fujimori, vowed to "step on the accelerator of growth." She has promised tax breaks for small-time businesses.

"We will build a network of basic services to give people a decent life," she belatedly at her closing campaign rally. Polls indicate she will win a third of the vote yesterday, sending her to a run-off against the second-place candidate.

One of the two vying for that place is Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, a former Wall Street banker and ex-minister. He has vowed to create three million jobs by boosting business and growth. The other contender is left-wing lawmaker Veronika Mendoza. Closing her campaign, Mendoza vowed "to improve the economic situation for Peruvian families with cheap energy and wages at a level that they deserve." — AFP

KFH NAMES 7 WINNERS OF BANKING CARDS CAMPAIGN'S 12TH DRAW

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) named 7 winners of the twelfth draw of the new banking cards promotional campaign themed "Shop and Win Back Up to KD 50,000 with KFH Cards" that had been launched in an attempt to encourage clients to use KFH credit, prepaid and debit cards while making purchases in Kuwait and overseas.

For every KD 10 spent on their KFH cards, clients will get a chance to enter a draw and win back up to KD 500 of their daily spends for 100 days ending April

19th 2016. KFH Credit and Prepaid cards used in domestic and international retail spends and KFH Debit cards used in international retail spends are eligible for the daily draw.

The winners are: Sarah Al-Sultan, Bader Alhouthi, Latifa Aladwani, Adel Alazmi, Mohammad Alajmi, Saqr Ali and Faye Mohammad. KFH strives to continuously offer its clients new promotions and discounts in order to distinguish them among peers, not to mention to further bolster bank's leading position in

the field of banking cards.

KFH marketing campaigns play a significant role in underlining KFH's principles that include boosting sales, and benefitting clients and merchants. This new campaign is part of KFH's efforts to reward its clients and grant them additional value; thus achieving customer satisfaction and boosting their confidence. The campaign also aims at enhancing the bank's presence especially that it dominates the largest market share in the field of banking cards.

It is worth noting that KFH has won several awards in the field of banking cards which reiterates its success and efficiency in banking cards market. KFH enjoys high confidence and leadership in the market in addition to high quality products which have enabled it to achieve growth in cards market and increase the number of customers. KFH occupies the leading position as the issuer of banking cards and one of leading banks at the GCC level.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977

and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange.

KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 446 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan, and Dubai.

ETIHAD AIRWAYS INCREASES WEEKLY FLIGHTS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA, UAE

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways, the national carrier of the United Arab Emirates, is introducing three additional passenger flights per week between Johannesburg and Abu Dhabi during the months of July until September (inclusive) to cater for the increased demand on this busy route over the summer.

Complementing the airline's existing daily service between the two cities, the new flights will be operated by a combination of Airbus A330-200 and Boeing 777 aircraft, offering a total of 2,200 additional seats in Business Class and 21,500 additional seats in Economy Class over the three-month period. "These additional flights offer greater flexibility for the large numbers of guests travelling between the UAE and the GCC region, and South Africa over the summer period," said John Friel, Etihad Airways' General Manager, South Africa. "They also provide our guests travelling from South Africa with greater access to a large number of popular holiday destinations across our global network, in Asia, the Indian Sub-continent, Australia and the USA."

Etihad Airways began operations in 2003, and in 2015 carried 17.4 million passengers. From its Abu Dhabi base, Etihad Airways flies to, or has announced plans to serve, 116 passenger and cargo destinations in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas. The airline has a fleet of 120 Airbus and Boeing aircraft, with 204 aircraft on firm order, including 71 Boeing 787s, 25 Boeing 777Xs, 62 Airbus A350s and 10 Airbus A380s.

Etihad Airways holds equity investments in airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Alitalia, Jet Airways, Virgin Australia, and Swiss-based Darwin Airline, trading as Etihad Regional. Etihad Airways, along with airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Alitalia, Etihad Regional, Jet Airways and NIKI, also participate in Etihad Airways Partners, a brand that brings together partner airlines to offer customers more choice through improved networks and schedules and enhanced frequent flyer benefits.

ALASKA LEADERS TRY TO AGREE ON BUDGET PLAN; OIL PRICES HURT

JUNEAU, Alaska: The collapse in oil prices has left oil-reliant Alaska with a multibillion-dollar budget deficit and few palatable options for digging its way out.

With just days left in the legislative session, state political leaders are struggling to get on the same page, with legislators split on options like taxes, the depth of budget cuts and tinkering with the annual dividend most Alaskans receive for living here. Gov. Bill Walker sees a mix of all three as necessary.

Economics professor Gunnar Knapp has told lawmakers that Alaska is probably facing a recession and no matter what they do, the economy will take a hit. He urged significant steps toward reducing the deficit this year. The state has been using savings stashed away when oil prices were high to help cover costs. But without a plan and barring a dramatic rebound in oil prices, Walker says major reserve accounts could be gone within a matter of years along with the decades-old dividend program.

Credit rating

Alaska also could see further hits to its credit rating, which has already been downgraded. Walker has warned that legislators could face a special session if they don't come up with a fiscal plan before the regular session ends April 17.

Senate President Kevin Meyer, R-Anchorage, said he thinks legislators have the right attitude - "that we need to do something and we need to do something major." What that ends up being remains unclear. Among the big pieces in play: Bills that would allow for structured annual draws from the earnings of the Alaska Permanent Fund to help pay for state government. Changes to the Medicaid and oil and gas tax credit programs, which have become major budget items. Bills to reinstitute a personal state income tax for the first time since 1980 and proposals from Walker to raise taxes on motor fuels and on various industries, including oil, fishing and mining. State spending plans also need to be finalized.

The major debate at this point appears to be around using earnings from the Alaska Permanent Fund to help pay for state government, what tax bills to pass, if any, and how far to push changes to oil taxes and credits. There's debate, too, over how much needs to be done this year.

Some legislators still see room to cut the budget and don't want to create or raise taxes at this point. Others say everything needs to be discussed, even, possibly, adding triggers to tax bills that would revoke the hike if oil prices hit a certain level. That approach has been taken with legislative rewrites of the proposed increase in the motor fuels tax, which would go away if North Slope oil during the previous calendar year averaged more than \$85 a barrel. Prices recently have hovered at or below \$40 a barrel.

Some want broad changes to oil and gas tax credits, seeing the system as unsustainable. The state estimates that during the coming fiscal year it will owe \$775 million in credits to companies with no tax liability, typically smaller companies developing and exploring on the North Slope and Cook Inlet. That includes newly earned credits and those beyond a cap imposed by Walker for the current year. Others worry about the impact that big changes or a tax increase will have on an industry also reeling from low prices.

The permanent fund piece is significant. The fund is a nest-egg of sorts born of oil wealth and grown through investments, and the earnings reserve is the pot of money from which the annual dividends are derived. While legislators have long been able to take money from the fund's earnings, they've been loath to do so for fear of being accused of raiding it. The fund's principal is constitutionally protected. In years past, voting to touch the permanent fund dividend almost certainly would have been political suicide and it's still a sensitive topic. For lower-income Alaskans and those living in high-cost rural areas, the dividend can be an important source of income. House Minority Leader Chris Tuck, D-Anchorage, says the earnings fund should not be the first or only option legislators go to.

House Speaker Mike Chenault, R-Nikiski, said trying to get agreement on a plan even within his own GOP-led caucus is tough. "The only thing that they've all agreed to is, they want to get out of here on time," he said. — AP



NOW IS THE PERFECT TIME TO INVEST IN BIRMINGHAM REAL ESTATE: EXPERT

BIRMINGHAM: With a population over 3 million, student numbers higher than ever at Birmingham's numerous universities, the imminent arrival of HS2 bringing the Capital to Birmingham - and vis-versa (45minutes) - there has never been a better time to invest your money into the UK's second city's property market, says Adrian Endersby, UK Business Development Manager, Top Real Estate Group.

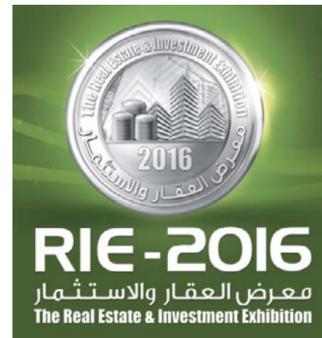
It is a busy cosmopolitan city, home to some of the UK's leading blue chip companies. These conglomerates bring a property surge in their wake. It also seems that investors from all over the world are already looking at the city, after it was named above the likes of London, Milan and Paris in a recent annual European survey of investors. Property values in the city have risen by 8-10 percent in the past two years; this doesn't look set to dip. It is without surprise that Birmingham's property market is buoyant and fortunes are being created, if you're shrewd.

This new wave of city center residential development is being led by Seven Capital who is buying up large areas of the city in a way not seen since before the recession, another key indicator demonstrating Birmingham is on the up. Top Real Estate Group is happy to announce they are working alongside Seven Capital as an exclusive marketing and sales agent for Kuwait and Qatar.

Seven Capital have become the most prolific investors in the city in the past year, developing a huge number of properties amid plans to build 5,000 homes in the center, continuing their long term investment into Birmingham.

Birmingham is thriving as an attractive

residential property investment location being the UK's second largest city after London. Regeneration has been gradual over the last decade as Birmingham has recovered from the steep decline in manufacturing in the 1980s. Prices have already risen quite strongly in most districts and are set to continue. Birmingham is famous for its engineering (cars, machining, and light engineering), manufacturing and distribution. The service sector has increased



substantially in the last decade and there is a very positive feel about the area and general good future economic prospects. One of its main strengths is its central location and huge population within a 2 hour drive. Rail and motorway networks are extensive and the new M6 toll has helped alleviate traffic congestion on the motorways in the West Midlands. Buy to let investors should look at Birmingham and shun London's

bumper rents in favor of high yields, according to research. The income hotspots for property investors have been highlighted in nationwide data that looks at yields, rental income as a percentage of a property's purchase price.

Some city center Birmingham postcodes can earn landlords between 7-10 percent gross rental yields according to data, with large areas of Greater London currently returning an average of less than 3.5 percent. London's low returns come because while rents are high, properties in the capital are very expensive.

Birmingham has much to be proud of as it continues to be known as one of the most thriving cities in the UK and is admired for its great central location. It attracts millions of people each year showing itself as a great city to study, work and live. More and more overseas students and young working professionals are choosing to settle in Birmingham as it offers a vibrant lifestyle along with affordability and exceptional transport links to the rest of the UK and beyond.

Living in the urban city centre is becoming increasingly popular allowing the rental market to thrive, attracting more buy to let investors to Birmingham. The city centre in particular, provides landlords with strong yields and little worry as to whether their property will let.

Birmingham's New Street is the business rail interchange outside of London. It is also the center of the National Express bus network and has its own international airport,



Adrian Endersby

which is served by major airlines such as Emirates, providing connections to New York, Amsterdam, Paris and many more popular destinations.

Birmingham's development schemes are attracting new companies into the city, enabling Birmingham to further build on its reputation as a leading competitor amongst major European cities. The recently opened library of Birmingham (largest in Europe) and the development of Grand Central are providing a solid foundation for Birmingham to become the business center of the future.

Over the next few years Birmingham will see significant investment into infrastructure projects, making it an ideal time to consider Birmingham as an investment potential.

During the Real Estate and Investment Exhibition (11-16th April, Kuwait International Fairs Ground, Mishref, Hall 8) Top Real Estate Group will be showcasing Seven Capitals latest developments. A selection of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom properties will be available across Birmingham, with property prices starting as low as £90,000.

Down payments are 30 percent upon exchange and 70 percent due at completion, with up to 8 percent yields. Projections show as much as 20-25 percent increases in property values during the construction phase, many to be completed in 2017. John Treacy, Global sales manager of Seven Capital, will also be present in Kuwait to answer any questions you have during this time.

OMAN AIR LAUNCHES SECOND DAILY SERVICE TO LONDON HEATHROW

KUWAIT: Oman Air is set to launch a second service between Muscat and London Heathrow from Tuesday 12th April 2016. The new service will complement Oman Air's existing daily, non-stop and direct service between the two capitals.

The service is being launched in response to overwhelming demand from air travellers for flights between Muscat and London, and from London to onward destinations in the Middle East and Asia. Bookings for the new service are now available online at www.omanair.com, or through local travel agents.

Paul Gregorowitsch, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Air, announced the new service, saying:

"We are delighted to be launching a second daily frequency between Muscat and London. The popularity of Muscat as a destination for UK travellers has never been greater. Furthermore, the longstanding links between the UK and Oman ensure that London remains one of the most popular destinations for Omani travellers.

"Oman Air's second daily service between these two great cities will therefore be warmly welcomed in the UK and Oman. In addition, customers flying to and from other destinations within our growing international network will enjoy greater choice and convenience, as well as easier connections at Muscat."

The existing service departs Muscat at 14.00 and arrives at Heathrow Terminal 3 at 18.20. Return flights depart Heathrow Terminal 3 at 20.15 and arrives in Muscat the following morning at 7.35.

The new service will fly through the night, departing Muscat at 01.25 and arriving in London Heathrow Terminal 4 at 06.30. Return flights will depart Heathrow Terminal 4 at 08.30 and arrive in Muscat at



18.55. All timings quoted are local.

Paul Gregorowitsch continued: "Our customers have expressed a strong desire for a second frequency into London and we are very pleased to be meeting that demand with this new service. Whilst our existing service operates from Terminal 3 at Heathrow, the new service will operate from Terminal 4.

"We believe that it is vital to offer our customers this increased choice now and,

in the short term, that means flying out of two terminals in London. However, we are working closely with the airport authorities at Heathrow to accommodate all of Oman Air's operations at Terminal 4 from the earliest possible date. Until those arrangements are agreed, we will provide clear information to our customers about which terminal they are due to fly from."

Oman Air's first service to London was launched in 2007 and was, alongside

Bangkok, one of the airline's first two inter-continental destinations. Regarded as a flagship route, the Muscat to London service has experienced rapid growth and is regularly sold out in each of its three classes. The second frequency will enable many thousands more customers a year to experience Oman Air's award-winning products and services, and its warm Omani hospitality.

The Muscat to London route is operated with Airbus A330-300s, each of which offers outstanding onboard comfort and amenity. Spacious, fully lie-flat seats - each with direct aisle access - are offered in both First Class and Business Class, whilst comfortable, fully adjustable seats are fitted in a 2-4-2 configuration in Economy Class. Mobile phone and WiFi connectivity - pioneered by Oman Air in 2010 on the Muscat-London route - is available throughout each aircraft. In addition, a la carte cuisine is offered in every class, with First Class dining on the Muscat-London service being singled out for praise in the Reader's Choice category of Saveur magazine's Culinary Travel Awards 2014.

Oman Air is currently engaged in a major fleet expansion program, which will see the airline's fleet increase in size to 70 aircraft by 2020. The fleet size currently stands at 40 aircraft, which include Oman Air's first Boeing 787 Dreamliners. These innovative and already-iconic aircraft are likely to be introduced to the London service over the next two years. In parallel with the fleet expansion, a range of exciting new destinations is being introduced to the airline's network, frequencies are being increased on established routes - such as the Muscat to London service, and connections at Muscat International Airport are being improved.

EQUINIX TO ASSIST MENA ORGANIZATIONS CHOOSE THE 'RIGHT' CLOUD

DUBAI: Equinix, the global interconnection and data center company, today announced its participation in the 6th Cloud MENA, the most comprehensive cloud computing event in the Middle East & North Africa (MENA).

During the two-day event slated to take place at The Conrad Dubai on 11th and 12th of April, Equinix will demonstrate how cloud computing can truly drive the digital economies and enter-



Jeroen Schlosser, Managing Director, Equinix MENA

prises in the MENA region to achieve innovation and competitiveness. On day 1 of the event, Michael Winterson, MD Equinix Services, EMEA will deliver a keynote on "Rainmakers - Using the Cloud to Create Business Value" 12 p.m. onwards. The keynote will be followed by an exclusive roundtable organized by Equinix titled "Cloud MENA Vision 20:20". The discussion will see senior executives from the 'buy' side of cloud, i.e., the regional enterprises meet the 'sell' side of cloud, i.e., the cloud and network service providers under one roof to understand the cloud requirements in the region and devise innovative strategies to ensure growth.

The forecast for overall cloud services in the region shows sustained momentum with a projected growth rate of 20.6 percent in 2017, according to a study by Gartner. In addition, in 2019, total public cloud services spending in the MENA region will rise to \$1.42 billion, with the largest growth coming from cloud management and security at 21 percent. According to another IDC study, in MEA, 73% of decision-makers have noted that the cloud offers tangible and preferred benefits.

"Organizations, both globally and in

the MENA region are looking to multiple cloud providers because not all clouds are created equal and certain workloads may run better on one cloud than another. IT organizations have to integrate these multiple external cloud services, however, many IT organizations don't have the processes and/or resources in place internally to manage hybrid cloud computing. This is where Equinix comes in - Equinix's International Business Exchange (IBX(r)) data center in Dubai is the hub of the interconnected cloud and home to more than 30 Cloud Service Providers. Hybrid cloud is the future of cloud computing in the region and Equinix, with its most networked data centers and dense concentrations of media companies, cloud & IT services providers,

financial services and enterprises, is proud to be a key player in materializing this trend," said Jeroen Schlosser, Managing Director, Equinix MENA. "The MENA region is cited to be one of the fastest growth rate for cloud around the globe, with many enterprises already realizing the benefits of the cloud, and having the option to adopt multi-cloud strategies, selecting partners from a growing number of cloud service



Cloud Computing

providers, both local and global. Despite this, the question remains, are MENA organizations choosing the 'right' cloud to truly innovate, understand their future Cloud requirements and change their business models? At the Cloud MENA, we will aim to answer these questions and support the region with some

valuable insights," said Michael Winterson, MD Equinix Services, EMEA.

Equinix experts will be present on 11th and 12th April at the Cloud MENA at The Conrad Hotel Dubai, examining Hybrid Cloud strategies and providing options to book VIP Data Center Tours to Equinix IBX in Dubai.

APPEALS COURT RULES MISSISSIPPI CAN RESUME GOOGLE INQUIRY

JACKSON: Mississippi's attorney general can resume an investigation into whether Google facilitates illegal behavior, an appeals court ruled. The 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday overturned a district judge who had sided with Google. US District Judge Henry T. Wingate ruled last year that the unit of Alphabet Inc. didn't have to answer a subpoena by Mississippi Attorney General Jim Hood.

Hood began complaining in 2012 that Google wasn't doing enough to prevent people from breaking the law. In October 2014, he sent a 79-page subpoena demanding Google produce information about a wide range of subjects, including whether Google helps criminals by allowing its search engine to lead to pirated music, having its auto complete function suggest illegal activities and sharing YouTube ad revenue with the makers of videos promoting illegal drug sales. Instead of complying, Google sued.

The appeals court also dissolved the lower judge's injunction that had barred Hood from bringing any civil or criminal lawsuits against the Mountain View, California-based company, saying that a mere subpoena wasn't enough to rule that Hood was acting in bad faith.

"This injunction covers a fuzzily defined range of enforcement actions that do not appear imminent," Chief Circuit Judge Carl E. Stewart wrote for a three-judge panel. "We cannot on the present record predict what conduct Hood might one day try to prosecute under Mississippi law."

The judges also noted that Hood would have to go to state court to force Google to comply with the administrative subpoena and that Google could challenge Hood's

requests then. The appeals panel ordered Wingate to dismiss Google's entire lawsuit. Google had contended that Hood should be blocked, saying Google and similar companies can't be sued under the federal Communications Decency Act for what others post on the Internet.

The panel said Google might be able to file a federal lawsuit later. Google also claimed Hood's investigation was tainted by a close association with the movie industry. Wingate had ruled Hood's subpoena was retaliation for Google not knuckling under to his demands.

The judges said they weren't ruling whether Hood's subpoena is reasonable or whether Google was immune federal law. Hood spokeswoman Rachael Ring said the attorney general plans to discuss the ruling at a Monday news conference. A number of other attorneys general had asked the appeals court to dissolve the injunction, saying it was a blow to the investigative power of all states.

It's unclear whether Google will appeal. "We're reviewing the implications of the court's decision, which focused on whether our claim was premature rather than on the merits of the case," spokesman William Fitzgerald wrote in an email Saturday.

Google has argued Hood wants to censor the Internet and violate Google's constitutional rights. Leaked documents indicated that the Motion Picture Association of America helped draft the subpoena. The movie industry and Google have been at odds over copyright law, with studios failing to win more restrictive federal laws. Hood has defended his cooperation with the movie industry, saying he's working with victims of crimes. — AP



PHIPPSBURG, MAINE: Dave Cleaveland and his son, Cody, photograph the USS Zumwalt as it passes Fort Popham at the mouth of the Kennebec River as it heads to sea for final builder trials. — AP

HOW STEALTHY IS US NAVY'S NEW DESTROYER? IT NEEDS REFLECTORS

'IT'S PRETTY MAMMOTH'

BATH, Maine: The future USS Zumwalt is so stealthy that it'll go to sea with reflective material that can be hoisted to make it more visible to other ships.

The Navy destroyer is designed to look like a much smaller vessel on radar, and it lived up to its billing during recent builder trials. Lawrence Pye, a lobsterman, told The Associated Press that on his radar screen the 610-foot ship looked like a 40- to 50-foot fishing boat. He watched as the behemoth came within a half-mile while returning to shipbuilder Bath Iron Works.

"It's pretty mammoth when it's that close to you," Pye said. Despite its size, the warship is 50 times harder to detect than current destroyers thanks to its angular shape and other design features, and its stealth could improve even more

once testing equipment is removed, said Capt. James Downey, program manager.

During sea trials last month, the Navy tested Zumwalt's radar signature with and without reflective material hoisted on its halyard, he said. The goal was to get a better idea of exactly how stealthy the ship really is, Downey said from Washington, D.C.

Description

The reflectors, which look like metal cylinders, have been used on other warships and will be standard issue on the Zumwalt and two sister ships for times when stealth becomes a liability and they want to be visible on radar, like times of fog or heavy ship traffic, he said.

The possibility of a collision is remote. The

Zumwalt has sophisticated radar to detect vessels from miles away, allowing plenty of time for evasive action. But there is a concern that civilian mariners might not see it during bad weather or at night, and the reflective material could save them from being startled.

The destroyer is unlike anything ever built for the Navy. Besides a shape designed to deflect enemy radar, it features a wave-piercing "tumble-home" hull, composite deckhouse, electric propulsion and new guns.

More tests will be conducted when the ship returns to sea later this month for final trials before being delivered to the Navy. The warship is due to be commissioned in October in Baltimore, and will undergo more testing before becoming fully operational in 2018. — AP



This NASA TV image shows SpaceX's unmanned Dragon cargo ship docked at the International Space Station yesterday. — AFP

SPACE X CARGO ARRIVES AT CROWDED SPACE STATION

MIAMI: SpaceX's unmanned Dragon cargo ship, carrying lettuce seeds, lab mice and an inflatable pop-up room, arrived yesterday at a crowded International Space Station where six spacecraft are now docked. British astronaut Tim Peake reached out with the station's robotic arm and grappled the Dragon, carrying its nearly 3,175 kg of gear, at 7:23 am (11:23 GMT). "It looks like we've caught a Dragon," said Peake. Four Russian spaceships - two Progress cargo carriers and two Soyuz capsules which ferry astronauts - are docked at the space station, along with Orbital ATK's Cygnus cargo ship and SpaceX's Dragon.

Not since 2011, during the final flight of the space shuttle Discovery, have there been six vehicles parked at the ISS at the same time, NASA said. Included in the Dragon's cargo is an expandable room that will be temporarily attached to the orbiting outpost. Known as the Bigelow Expandable Activity Module (BEAM), the habitat is not scheduled for use until the end of May, but will stay at the ISS for two years so astronauts can test how it stands up to space debris and solar radiation. The module can

expand to about three meters in diameter by four meters long. Astronauts plan to enter the room "for a few hours several times a year to retrieve sensor data and assess conditions," NASA said.

The cargo also contains Chinese cabbage seeds which astronauts will grow in space, and lab mice that will test whether certain drugs can help prevent muscle and bone loss in microgravity. SpaceX's Dragon is currently the only spaceship capable of returning cargo to Earth. It is expected to splash down in the Pacific Ocean on May 11, carrying science experiments including biological samples from astronaut Scott Kelly's one-year mission which ended in March.

The Dragon blasted off on Friday from Cape Canaveral, Florida, atop a Falcon 9 rocket. Minutes after launch, the first stage portion of the Falcon 9 rocket successfully landed on a drone ship in the Atlantic Ocean for the first time. The feat was hailed as a big step forward for SpaceX CEO Elon Musk's mission to make rockets as reusable as airplanes, an innovation that he says will bring down the cost of spaceflight. — AP

BROOKLYN CASE TAKES FRONT SEAT IN APPLE ENCRYPTION FIGHT

NEW YORK: The Justice Department said Friday it will continue trying to force Apple to reveal an iPhone's data in a New York City drug case, putting it at the center of a fight over whether a 227-year-old law gives officials wide authority to force a technology company to help in criminal probes.

The government told US District Judge Margo K. Brodie in Brooklyn that it still wants an order requiring Apple's cooperation in the drug case even though it recently dropped its fight to compel Apple to help it break into an iPhone used by a gunman in a December attack in San Bernardino that killed 14 people. "The government's application is not moot and the government continues to require Apple's assistance in accessing the data that it is authorized to search by warrant," the Justice Department said in a one-paragraph letter to Brodie. Apple expressed disappointment, saying its lawyers will press the question of whether the FBI has tried any other means to get into the phone in the Brooklyn case. Apple had sought to delay the case, saying that the same technique the FBI was using to get information from the phone in California might work with the drug case phone, eliminating the need for additional litigation. Federal prosecutors told Brodie on Friday that they would not modify their March request for her to overturn a February ruling concluding that the centuries-old All Writs Act could not be used to force Apple to help the government extract information from iPhones.

Magistrate Judge James Orenstein made the ruling after inviting Apple to challenge the 1789 law, saying he wanted to know if the government requests had created a burden for the Cupertino, California-based company.

In challenging Orenstein's ruling, the govern-



NEW YORK: Apple CEO Tim Cook responds to a question during a news conference at IBM Watson headquarters. — AP

ment said the jurist had overstepped his powers, creating "an unprecedented limitation on" judicial authority. It said it did not have adequate alternatives to obtaining Apple's assistance in the Brooklyn case, which involves a phone with a different version of operating system than the phone at issue in the California case. In a statement Friday, Justice Department spokeswoman Emily Pierce said the mechanism used to gain access in the San Bernardino case can only be used on a narrow category of phones. "In this case, we still need Apple's help in accessing the data, which they have done with little effort in at least 70 other cases when presented with court orders for comparable phones

running iOS 7 or earlier operating systems," she said.

Apple is due to file a response in the case by Thursday. Meanwhile Friday, court documents unsealed in Boston showed US Magistrate Judge Marianne Bowler ordered Apple on Feb. 1 to help the FBI retrieve information from a locked iPhone that was seized from a suspected gang member.

In that order and an accompanying search warrant, which preceded a February order from a different magistrate in the San Bernardino case, Bowler instructed Apple to offer "reasonable technical assistance," including extracting data from the phone or providing the suspect's personal unlock code. It did not require Apple to attempt decryption of any data. — AP

ANOTHER STUDY SAYS WARMING MAY BE WORSE THAN EXPERTS THINK

WASHINGTON: Most computer simulations of climate change are underestimating by at least one degree how warm the world will get this century, a new study suggests. It all comes down to clouds and how much heat they are trapping. According to the study published Thursday in the journal *Science*, computer model simulations say there is more ice and less liquid water in clouds than a decade of satellite observations show.

The more water and less ice in clouds, the more heat is trapped and less the light is reflected, said study co-author Trude Storelmo, a Yale atmospheric scientist. She said even though it tens of degrees below freezing, the clouds still have lots of liquid water because they don't have enough particles that helps the water turn to ice crystals.

Because as the climate changes, there will be more clouds with far more liquid, and global warming will be higher than previously thought, Storelmo said.

How much warming is predicted for the next 80 or so years depends a lot on if society cuts back on carbon dioxide emissions. In the worst case scenario, with no carbon reduction, the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change sees temperatures rising by about 6.7 degrees by the end of the century and Storelmo said the liquid cloud factor would add another degree or more on top of that.

Uncertainties

While the study is "well-reasoned" and "sobering," there are uncertainties with the satellite observations that raise questions for Chris Bretherton at the University of Washington, who wasn't part of the study. He said if the Yale team is right and there's a bigger cloud feedback, why hasn't warming so far been even higher? That's a legitimate question, Storelmo said, but computer simulations may also be underestimating the cooling effect of aerosols that mask the warming but are diminishing in the atmosphere.

This is just the latest in a series of studies that have found that mainstream science may be too conservative in estimating the pace and effects of warming, including melting ice sheets in Antarctica.

"None of this is good news," Storelmo said. "You always hope that climate isn't as sensitive to carbon dioxide as we fear, same with the ice sheets, but we're calling it as we see it. Several studies have come out and show that we've been too conservative up until now."

Uncertainties in mainstream climate science are more "on the bad side" than on the side of less harm, said climate and glacier scientist Richard Alley of Pennsylvania State University, who wasn't part of the study. "Climate science thus is probably more open to criticism of being too conservative than being too alarmist." —AP



POLAND, MAINE: Storm clouds build prior to the arrival of a thunderstorm as Jeff Warren of Auburn, Maine, heads for shore on his paddleboard on Lower Range Pond. —AP

WATER WITH UNSAFE LEAD AMOUNTS FOUND IN HUNDREDS OF SCHOOLS

FLINT PROBLEM MOVES ONTO OTHER TERRITORIES

TOLEDO, Ohio: Responding to the crisis in Flint, Michigan, school officials across the country are testing classroom sinks and cafeteria faucets for lead, trying to uncover any concealed problems and to reassure anxious parents.

Just a fraction of schools and day care centers nationwide are required to check for lead because most receive their water from municipal systems that test at other locations. State and federal lawmakers have called for wider testing.

"For the cost of that, you might as well build a new school," said Jack Stoskopf, an assistant superintendent. Instead, he said, school officials decided to rip out the drinking fountains more than a decade ago and buy bottled water for students, costing about \$1,000 a month.

The alternative

Buying bottled water for drinking has been the routine at Ava Head Start in Ava, Missouri,

tion that would require testing in all schools. Some members of Congress have called for more money and expanded lead sampling.

In March, some samples from the school district in Newark, New Jersey, came back with high amounts of lead. The district shut off sinks and fountains in 30 buildings and offered to test as many as 17,000 children for lead. The inconsistent testing leaves most schoolchildren in buildings that are unchecked and vulnerable because lead particles can build up in plumbing when water goes unused for long periods.

"In schools, that means almost every weekend," said Virginia Tech professor Marc Edwards, who helped expose the lead problem in Flint's water. His colleague, Yanna Lambrinidou, also notes that under EPA guidelines, schools and day care centers can report that an entire building is safe even if an individual drinking fountain is above the threshold. Last year alone, lead levels exceeded the EPA limit of 15 parts per billion at 64 schools or day care centers that are required to test because they have their own water systems.

Nationwide problem

While no state is immune to the problem, half the high lead readings since the beginning of 2013 were in states along the East Coast. School buildings there are older and more likely to have lead plumbing. Pennsylvania, Maine and New Jersey topped the list.

Nationwide, the average age of school buildings dates to the early 1970s. It was not until 1986 that lead pipes were banned, and it was not until 2014 that brass fixtures were ordered to be virtually lead-free. School leaders in Idaho Falls, Idaho, decided in February to remove two drinking fountains within a week of finding out about a recent high sample and another one from three years ago that the state failed to notify them about.

Idaho's Department of Environmental Quality acknowledged it should have followed up with more testing three years ago. Still, regulators told school officials this year they could keep the two drinking fountains if they just flushed the water each day, said John Pym, safety director with the Bonneville Joint School District in Idaho Falls.

"It made the most sense to get them out of service and make folks feel at ease," he said. Tyler Baum, whose three daughters attend the elementary school, said he was not too concerned because the school acted quickly on its own. "It certainly made me more aware of the water," he said. "We just assume we'll have clean drinking water." This story has been corrected to show that Ava Head Start is in Ava, Missouri. —AP

REFUGEES ESCAPE WAR, BUT FACE NEW THREAT IN EUROPE

AMSTERDAM: Having survived perilous escapes from war zones, refugees find themselves assailed anew in Europe by germs proliferating in crowded, unsanitary camps that could become outbreak hotspots, infectious disease experts have warned.

Their systems weakened by physical exhaustion, a lack of safe food, clean water and medicine, refugees are sitting-duck targets for entirely preventable diseases that can scar, maim, even kill.

Most of these illnesses have long been relegated to Europe's past: Scabies, measles, tuberculosis, cholera and typhoid fever, concerned doctors and academics told a conference in Amsterdam this weekend. But several have now reemerged, wreaking havoc among Europe's bulging migrant settlements, from where they could regain a foothold in the broader population.

"Maybe there is a problem in the future," warned Turkish infectious disease specialist Hakan Leblebicioglu. "Regarding tuberculosis... polio and measles, these should be considered an emerging threat especially for the refugees, the region, and maybe Europe," he told delegates.

More and more refugees will arrive from countries where such illnesses remain widespread. This while a growing anti-vaccine movement in Europe has left "gaps in vaccination coverage," according to Leblebicioglu, and resistance to antibiotics is a growing concern.

Europe has struggled to deal with the influx of refugees from countries in Africa and the Middle East ravaged by war and poverty. According to refugee agencies, more than a million migrants arrived in the EU last year, and almost 180,000 so far this year—many risking life and limb to cross the ocean in shoddy boats for a long shot at a better life. Most spend extended periods in camps ill-equipped to deal with the unprecedented influx.

A major problem has been the lack of a coordinated European policy to screen new arrivals for contagious diseases, treat them, and vaccinate widely, the conference heard. "It's very different in different countries. There's no pan-European standard," infectious diseases lecturer Nicholas Beeching of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine told AFP.

Screening happens randomly, "may not be based on much evidence, and may be a partly political response," he said. Experts presented evidence of disease outbreaks in refugee camps: measles in France and

Turkey, scabies in the Netherlands, salmonella in Germany, and MRSA—a drug-resistant skin infection—in Switzerland. The causes were multifold, explained Leblebicioglu. "They live in unsanitary conditions, crowded populations, there is a problem with garbage accumulation in some countries."

'Risk for themselves'

Cultural and language barriers can divide refugees and health care providers. Many "don't know how to access health care systems even if they have entitlement," said Beeching. Furthermore, Europe's health systems were overburdened, the experts pointed out, calling for more money and a coordinated approach to disease screening and treatment.

It would be expensive, but well worth it, they argued. "If you want to do it starting from zero, because that is where we are now, then you need to consider that the cost will be very considerable," said Italian public health expert Alberto Matteelli.

Only about a third of European governments have a policy on refugee TB screening, he remarked, and fewer than a handful did so consistently. HIV is another concern. Danish researchers reported that migrants not only had higher rates of infection with the virus that causes AIDS, but were also more likely to be diagnosed later.

This had consequences for public health, explained Laura Deen of the Copenhagen University Hospital's immigrant medicine section, "in terms of risk of transmission from individuals unaware of their HIV infection." Speakers stressed the real risk of refugees setting off disease outbreaks among host populations was negligible. "The fact itself that they are marginalized and they do not integrate into the community in Europe is the cause of their disease, and protects the European community from being infected," said Matteelli. "The risk is for themselves. They are a vulnerable population that needs to be protected."

The best course of action was to ensure speedy diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases among refugees, and provide access to the health systems of their host countries.

"If we do that we will get better health for refugees, for healthcare workers and also for hosting communities," said Matteelli. Refugee health was the highlighted topic at a four-day conference of the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases. —AFP



NEWARK: Valerie Wilson, center, school business administrator for the Newark Public Schools system, speaks at a news conference addressing recent finding of lead levels in Newark schools, in Newark, N.J. Standing with Wilson are Christopher Cerf, left, Superintendent of Newark Public Schools, and Anthony Ambrose, acting director of public safety for Newark. —AP

Among schools and day care centers operating their own water systems, Environmental Protection Agency data analyzed by The Associated Press showed that 278 violated federal lead levels at some point during the past three years. Roughly a third of those had lead levels that were at least double the federal limit.

In almost all cases, the problems can be traced to aging buildings with lead pipes, older drinking fountains and water fixtures that have parts made with lead. Riverside Elementary in the northern Wisconsin town of Ringle has lead pipes buried in its concrete foundation that used to leach into the tap water before a filtration system was installed. Replacing the pipes, which were installed when the school was built in the 1970s, is not an option.

even before lead levels spiked after the preschool moved into a new building in 2010. But it was not until February, after another round of high test results, that state regulators told the preschool to use bottled water for cooking and cleaning the toothbrushes for the 59 children, ages 3 and 4.

"The cost is not an option," said Sandra Porter, Ava's cook and water operator. "We're just doing what we have to." Schools required to conduct lead testing represent only about 1 of every 10 schools in the country. Those receiving their water from city-owned systems - an estimated 90,000, according to the EPA - are not required by the federal government to do so.

In recent weeks, state lawmakers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania have proposed legisla-

toric for the architecture," said Robert Bigelow, founder and president of Bigelow Aerospace and owner of Budget Suites of America.

2020

As a precursor to larger systems, Bigelow said BEAM could "change the entire dynamic for human habitation" in space. He hopes to have a pair of private space stations ready for launch by 2020. In the meantime, companies—even countries - are clamoring to put their own experiments inside the empty BEAM, Bigelow said in an interview with The Associated Press on Thursday. If everything goes well, that next commercial step could happen in perhaps six months, he said.

The North Las Vegas-based company won't divulge the material used for BEAM's outer layers - or even how many layers - just that the layers are spread out to absorb and break up any penetrating bits of space junk. Back when NASA was working on the technology in the 1990s, a combination of Nextel, Kevlar, foam and other fabric formed the multilayer shield.

NASA called its project TransHab, for

Transit Habitat. It never flew to space, despite elaborate blueprints and ground mock-ups. Designers envisioned an inflatable, four-level compartment, complete with dining, sleeping and exercising areas for station crews.

Congress canceled TransHab in 2000 and Bigelow Aerospace bought the patent from NASA. The company launched a pair of expandable spacecraft a decade ago from Russia as an experiment. Called Genesis I and II, they're still orbiting.

NASA, meanwhile, paid Bigelow Aerospace \$17.8 million for the upcoming test flight, making the BEAM the most affordable module ever launched to the space station, said Michael Gold, director of operations and business growth for Bigelow Aerospace.

Expandable habitats like BEAM, officials noted, need to be just as strong - or stronger - than the standard metal cylinders that make up the current space station. BEAM has proven to be equal or better against space debris than metal, said NASA project manager Rajib Dasgupta.

Bigelow goes as far as to say: "The aluminum cans are antiquated." Beyond low-

Earth orbit, radiation poses increased health risks to crews living inside aluminum walls. So inflatable spacecraft, he said, are cheaper, bigger, safer and, potentially, longer lasting. Bigelow said BEAM is nothing like a balloon - "it's not going to go bang" - or even a football. Think steel belts in a car tire. "It's pretty novel."

The benefits

The beauty of expandable habitats is their compactness for launch. BEAM will travel in the Dragon capsule's unpressurized compartment; the space station's big robot arm will grab the structure and attach it to a berthing port. BEAM will expand four times in volume when it is inflated in late May or early June, with a little station air at first, then special inflation tanks.

The collapsed BEAM measures about 7 feet long (2 meters) and 8 feet (2 1/2 meters) in diameter. Inflated, it will be about 13 feet long (4 meters) and 10 1/2 feet (3 meters) in diameter, and provide 565 cubic feet (16 cubic meters) of space, about the size of a small bedroom.

BEAM has been bundled up for more than

a year - it should have flown last fall, but was delayed by the SpaceX rocket grounding. Bigelow stressed that the main purpose is testing and engineers don't know how well it will work after being compressed for so long.

The chamber will stay put for two years, providing measurements on radiation, impact resistance and temperature. Astronauts will venture inside four or so times a year to inspect surfaces, collect air and microbial samples, and change out sensors. Otherwise, the hatch will remain sealed. After two years, BEAM will be cut loose, eventually burning up on re-entry. Bigelow Aerospace has plans for a much larger expandable habitat B330, providing 11,654

cubic feet (330 cubic meters) of internal space, the size of a couple of buses. The company hopes to launch two of the B330s around 2020, providing opportunities for companies, schools, countries outside the space mainstream, and NASA, too, if it likes. In an artist's rendering, the two habitats are linked in orbit. Then there's the company's envisioned Olympus, a supersize space station-hotel combo. —AP

SPACE STATION INFLATABLE ROOM, A COSMIC 1ST

CAPE CANAVERAL: Forget blowup air mattresses. Space station astronauts are getting their first inflatable room. It's a technology demo meant to pave the way for moon bases and Mars expeditions, as well as orbiting outposts catering to scientists and tourists in just a few more years. Bigelow Aerospace is behind the experiment, which will get a ride to the International Space Station with another private space company.

An unmanned SpaceX Falcon rocket is set to launch late Friday afternoon, carrying a capsule full of supplies with the pioneering pod in its trunk. It will be SpaceX's first station delivery since a launch accident halted shipments last June.

Once attached to the station, the soft-sided Bigelow compartment will be inflated to the size of a small bedroom. The Bigelow Expandable Activity Module, BEAM for short, will stay there for two years - with astronauts occasionally ducking in. It will be the first time an astronaut steps inside an expandable habitat structure in space.

"It's not just historic for our company, which obviously is the case, but I think it's his-



ROSENDALE, N.Y.: Scott Crocoll holds a dead Indiana bat in an abandoned mine. —AP

SCIENTISTS LOOK AT HANGERS-ON AMID MASS DIE-OFF OF BATS

ALTAMONT, N.Y.: As white-nose syndrome kills millions of bats across North America, there's a glimmer of hope at hibernation spots where it first struck a decade ago: Some bats in some caves are hanging on.

Researchers trying to figure out why winter populations of bats in some hibernation sites appear to have stabilized are studying everything from behavior to cave conditions. Their answers about the persistence of the species known as little brown bats could be critical in dealing with the devastating fungal infection.

"We are hoping that things are turning around and the population may be able to recover over time," said Scott Darling, a biologist with Vermont's Department of Fish and Wildlife. "The caveat, of course, is stabilization is at probably 10 percent of what it was of the population. But still, it's good to know they're not continuing to decline."

Stabilization

The populations of little browns appear to have stabilized in some locations in upstate New York and Vermont, the region where dead bats were found with sugary white smudges around their noses starting in 2006. Afflicted bats rouse in the middle of winter and burn down their fat reserves as they look for food. Hibernation caves were decimated, with die-off rates hitting 90 percent.

White nose eventually spread through the Northeast and then beyond. It was identified last week in the state of Washington, making it a coast-to-coast scourge confirmed in 28 states and five Canadian provinces.

Bats play an important role in controlling the populations of insects that can damage wheat and other crops. Wildlife biologists have openly worried about some

species disappearing. There were predictions that hard-hit little brown bats would disappear from the Northeast by 2026, and the northern long-eared bat was listed as threatened just last year.

The less grim reports about little browns come even as other caves continue to post declines. Jeremy Coleman, the national white-nose coordinator with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, said "it's a mixed bag right now but we're very hopeful what we're seeing at some locations is evidence of persisting populations."

It's possible the fungus has fewer chances to transmit from bat to bat, and higher population numbers in some caves could reflect the movement of surviving bats from other caves. But there is evidence that bats can adapt to the fungus.

Bucknell University researchers analyzing hibernation patterns of infected little brown bats in upstate New York found they roused less frequently than bats during the peak of white nose mortality. That's good news because these bats have a better chance of conserving enough energy for the winter.

"The surviving bats are ignoring that trigger somehow. They're not being triggered to arouse," said Bucknell biology professor Ken Field. Those bats could be behaving differently - perhaps finding a cooler part of the cave where the fungus fares worse. Or there could be some physical trait the bats could pass along to their offspring, Field said.

What scientists believe

Scientists believe that bats in Europe and Asia have co-existed with the white nose fungus for a long time. In fact, the fungus may have made its way to upstate New York a decade ago on the boots or gear of a caver who was overseas. —AP

WASHINGTON: A Medicare proposal to test new ways of paying for chemotherapy and other drugs given in a doctor's office has sparked a furious battle, and cancer doctors are demanding that the Obama administration scrap the experiment. The vehement reaction is raising questions about the government's ability to tackle high drug costs, the top health care concern for the public. At issue are some of the most expensive drugs for treating life-changing diseases. The question isn't whether those drugs are fairly priced, but whether Medicare's current payment policy encourages doctors to prescribe the costliest medications so they can make more money.

Injected and infused drugs for such conditions as macular degeneration, rheumatoid arthritis and Crohn's disease are also affected. Medicare now pays doctors and hospital outpatient clinics the average sales price of a drug, plus a 6 percent add-on, somewhat reduced by federal budget cuts. Naturally, 6 percent of a \$15,000 drug is more than 6 percent of a \$3,000 drug. But does that influence doctors' decisions, raising costs for the government as well as those on Medicare?

Medicare officials seem to think so. The new formula announced last month combines a 2.5 percent add-on with a flat fee for each day the drug is administered. A control group of doctors and hospitals would continue to be paid under the current system.

The experiment could become permanent policy if it lowers costs while maintaining quality. A second wave of experimentation would try to link what Medicare pays for a given drug to how well it works.

Specialist doctors, drugmakers and some patient advocacy groups are trying to compel Medicare to drop the plan. Primary care doctors, consumer groups representing older people, and some economic experts want the experiment to move ahead.

Opponents say if that happens, cancer patients will be forced to go to outpatient hospital clinics instead of their local cancer doctor for the latest and most effective drugs. That's because smaller, doctor-owned clinics may no longer be able to afford the upfront costs of cutting-edge medications. In rural areas, patients may have to travel long distances to get to a hospital clinic, they say.

Supporters call that "Medi-scare," a reference to the timeworn political strategy of exaggerating the impact of proposed Medicare changes to frighten beneficiaries.

The rhetoric has escalated

"It is remarkably insulting that some people today think that cancer physicians in large numbers are saying, 'What's the most expensive way I can treat this patient?'" said Dr. Allen Lichter, CEO of the American Society of Clinical

Oncology, which represents some 20,000 U.S. cancer specialists.

Medicare is making "a dreadful mistake," added Lichter, who says that many cancer drugs don't have a low-cost alternative. "It will severely damage oncology practices across the country, and it will not solve what we have long recognized is a serious problem, that cancer drug prices are skyrocketing."

But Dr. Peter Bach, director of a policy center at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York, believes Medicare is doing the right thing. Doctors, like other human beings, respond to financial incentives, he said, and the

The drugs in the payment experiment are covered through Medicare's outpatient benefit, known as Part B, for which most beneficiaries pay a monthly premium of \$104.90. Part B drugs cost the program about \$20 billion a year. That's a fraction of what Medicare spends overall on prescription drugs.

Opponents are trying to raise the profile of the issue in Congress. Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, a critic of the pharmaceutical industry, said he's already gotten 70 letters from constituents, 59 of them from concerned patients. "The proposal creates different access based on where a Medicare beneficiary lives," said Grassley. "The



WASHINGTON: A sign supporting Medicare is seen on Capitol Hill. —AP

current payment policy sends the wrong signal.

"When drugs are more profitable, both doctors and hospitals tend to use them more," Bach said. Change would mean "getting doctors out of the business of profiting when the drugs they use are more expensive" and instead "prescribing drugs based on what's best for patients," he added.

Doctors are the gatekeepers of the health care system, and their prescribing decisions can determine the fortunes of new medications. That's brought the drug industry deep into the Medicare fight. The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, one of the most powerful lobbying groups in Washington, and the Biotechnology Innovation Organization are in the forefront of opposition.

The cost of cancer treatment can vary dramatically with the type of disease; some medications cost tens of thousands of dollars a month.

Obama administration should abandon the proposal and go back to the drawing board."

Medicare's experiment was designed by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation, a government agency created by President Barack Obama's health care law to find ways to improve quality and contain cost.

Obama has less than a year left in office and isn't facing re-election, so it seems unlikely that his administration would tear up its plan. But the proposal remains open for public comment, and changes may follow.

"If the administration were to pull back, it would be an ominous sign," said Leigh Purvis, a health policy expert for AARP, which supports the experiment. "We've done a lot of talk about prescription drug spending, but we really haven't moved to the action part. This is really the first time we've seen talk translated into action." —AP

CAMBODIA TO REPOPULATE FORESTS WITH TIGERS FROM ABROAD

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia: 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 Wednesday. 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 Mondulkiri province, the WWF conservation group said in a statement.

"Today, there are no longer any breeding popula-

tions 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 Mondulkiri 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 with-

in 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 conservation feat of its kind and would support the conservation efforts of the whole landscape." —AP

DROUGHT THREATENS CALIFORNIA DESPITE EL NINO

LOS ANGELES: Last winter, El Nino-driven storms dumped much-needed snow and rain over California, boosting reservoir levels and fueling hopes the parched state's four-year drought might end.

But despite the brief respite, experts say the record drought is here to stay. The El Nino weather phenomenon-caused when a rise in the Pacific Ocean's temperature triggers intense precipitation-has provided only "a band-aid on a gaping wound," says Julien Emile-Geay, a paleoclimatologist at the University of Southern California.

In fact, restoring the state's water

supplies to their pre-drought levels would require several years of intense rain and snowfall.

The water level barely equaled the average in the state's north this winter. In the south, levels failed to rise enough to fill dried-out rivers and aquifers.

The drought crisis-which has caused wildfires, decimated forests, threatened animal species and deprived thousands of homes of access to clean water-is far from over, and the authorities of this vast West Coast state say its 39 million residents had better get used to the new reality of climate change. —AFP

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COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT HOTEL KUWAIT CONDUCTS A SUCCESSFUL FIRE DRILL

The Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait, in collaboration with the Department of Civil Defense, conducted a successful fire drill involving all hotel employees. The drill was a great opportunity to provide the required knowledge and training for all the associates as well as empower them to handle and face all circumstances that might

arise during emergencies, especially fire. The management team of the Courtyard Hotel Kuwait notified all guests of the routine exercise well in advance, to avoid any kind of inconvenience or disturbance. The fire drill started as soon as the fire alarm bells went off and all hotel employees immediately headed to the designated assembly area.

Inspections and head counts were done, as representatives from Department of Civil Defense along with the hotel's Loss Prevention team ensured everyone's safety. The fire drills are conducted on a quarterly basis to ensure that the hotel is in line with its safety and security goals, and provide guests with a safe and secure environment.

In addition, all guest rooms, meeting rooms, and restaurants at the Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait are equipped with the latest smoke detectors and cutting-edge fire-fighting equipment that are in line with international standards to ensure maximum security. Commenting on this initiative, George

Aoun, Cluster General Manager of Marriott Hotels in Kuwait said, "The safety of our guests and associates is our top priority. Through these regular fire drills, we want to ensure that everyone at the hotel has enough knowledge and well trained on how to handle emergencies before professional help arrives."

BAYT.COM EMPOWERS STUDENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST WITH UNIVERSITY ROADSHOWS AT NO COST

Bayt.com, the Middle East's number one job site, has recently conducted a series of career roadshows in top universities across the Middle East, including the Ahlia University Career Day in Jordan and GUST Career Fair in Kuwait, the Career Development Symposium at Abu Dhabi University, the Employment Fair at the British University in Egypt, the Annual Career Fair at the Caledonian College of Engineering in Oman, the Annual University of Wollongong Career Fair, the School of Business Administration at the American University of Sharjah Career Day, the Annual RIT Dubai Career Fair, and the Annual Careers Day at Heriot-Watt University Campus in Dubai.

Thousands of students attended the free career orientation sessions given by the Bayt.com career experts. The students were provided with essential tips on how to create the perfect CV, how to answer questions during a job interview, and how to create their personal brand online. Presentations given by the Bayt.com experts provided up-to-the-minute job market data and research insights, best-in-class practices in job hunting, and the array of entry-level jobs and internships available on Bayt.com at any given time.

"At Bayt.com, we are continuously working towards empowering students and fresh graduates in the region with the right tools and knowledge to shape their future," said Suhail Masri, VP of Employer Solutions,



Bayt.com. "There are currently more than 10,000 jobs posted on the website on any given day, and by helping students and young professionals with expert advice on CV writing and the job application process in general, we are supporting them with the essential tools they need in their journey towards a successful career. We have long sustained employment growth in the region, and by training students we aim to engage and empower them, so they can build a future for themselves and for the communities they live in."

"The February 2016 Job Index Survey by Bayt.com has revealed that 3 in 10 employers in the Middle East

are looking for junior talent, so this is a good time for students and fresh graduates to hone in on their skills and start competing for top assignments with regional blue chips, as well as local SMEs and conglomerates. Our Bayt.com research has shown that barriers to employment at entry level are seen to be caused by gaps between available skills and the demands and needs of employers. As an active contributor to the region's growth and prosperity, Bayt.com is contributing towards bridging the existing skills gap, by preparing students and young graduates for the current job market, and arming them with the skills and tools they need to grow and succeed,"



Masri concluded.

This year marks 16 years of Bayt.com's University Roadshows, which proves exceptionally relevant today, in light of the current economic conditions across the Middle East and North Africa region. With 76 per cent of students in the region saying that finding a job is the biggest challenge their generation faces, Bayt.com's University Roadshows initiative is as important today as it was 16 years ago in helping students recognize their capabilities and understand how to highlight their skills and make them relevant, as well as assist them in tackling today's job market effectively and successfully.

GUST SPEARHEADS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROJECT

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) will host a public conference about social responsibility entitled THE CAUSE at its campus in Mishref from April 10-14. The conference is culmination of a year-long student-faculty project involving several public events, prominent community speakers, local advertising agencies, and a number of non-profit organizations and partners from across the nation.

The conference will include a special gala ceremony on the evening of April 14 to present the Al-Shakoor Award for Lifetime Achievements in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility. Twenty of Kuwait's most prominent companies with more than a decade of community service are nominated for the honor and an independent judging panel will determine the four winners in the areas of The Environment, Health, Education and Culture, and Social Welfare and Charity.

Lead by the Mass Communication and Media (MCM) Department, THE CAUSE project has also coupled three local children's charities together with three leading advertising and PR companies, as well as selected students and their clubs, in order to "compete for causes" during the month of March 2016. The three charitable teams used a Kuwait-based crowd funding platform, www.jaribha.com, to promote their campaigns, and encourage the general public to make charitable contributions through a dedicated website. Using limited budgets, the teams raised over USD \$62,000.00 (18,800.000 KD) in 31 days.

The children's charities included the Abeer2 Voluntary Group for the Mentally Disabled, the Kuwait Child Rights Society (KCERS), and the Kuwait Association of Learning Differences (KALD). Their campaigns were designed by the agencies Horizon FCB, Blu Lowe Marketing and Advertising and the Senyar Group Marketing and Branding. The campaigns aimed to educate society about these important local charities, as well as the process of crowd funding,

which provides non-profit organizations with alternative means to fundraising outside of the traditional reliance on corporate or government sponsors.

The campaigns launched on March 5 at The Scientific Center in Salmiya with over 1,000 attendees at THE CAUSE Children's Carnival. The event included numerous children's activities, including a live stage performance from the Iftah Ya Simsim television series characters (the Arabized version of Sesame Street).

THE CAUSE is the culmination of an academic year's efforts by students and faculty at the Gulf University for Science and Technology. It is organized jointly with the student-led Media Club and the PR Club, as well as dozens of student volunteers and others enrolled in courses within the MCM Department. For more information, visit <https://thecause.gust.edu.kw>.

The Department uses a hands-on learning approach where students apply their skills and talents outside of the traditional classroom environment in projects involving local industries. Student-faculty teams organize conferences in a three-year sequence, each of which is dedicated to an area of emphasis within the department's Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Mass Communication. These include Visual Communication, Radio and TV Broadcasting, and Public Relations and Advertising.

In the 2013-2014 academic year, the department organized THE SEEN conference, which focused on Visual Communication. The following year it hosted THE SCRIPT conference which celebrated Kuwaiti pioneers in Radio, TV, Film, and Theatre. This year THE CAUSE is dedicated to Public Relations and Advertising with an emphasis on the topic of Social Responsibility.

The Gulf University for Science and Technology began operation in 2002 as the first private university in Kuwait. It is based on an American-style model of higher education and aims to serve the increasing educational demands of Kuwait and the Gulf region. It currently hosts approximately 3,600 full-time students.



WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Mohammed Ahmed Al-Shennawi Al-Rowaini and Dina Mansour recently held their wedding ceremony, which was attended by friends and family. Congratulations.

NSH, AN INTERNATIONAL HOME THROUGH WELFARE MEASURES: VICE PRESIDENT SABU

The multinational construction giant Nasser S Al Hajri Corporation (NSH) has become a home for its employees from across the globe, said the Vice President Sabu, while delivering the chief guest address in the recently held motivational program for the managers. A special energy would make them to pull up their socks and work harder, Sabu quoted, and that NSH through its welfare measures is attracted by employees from far and wide. The long duration of employees' service in NSH stands testimony to the concept of "working out their dream in a professional spirit in NSH," added this NSH veteran.

NSH has been conducting a series of CSR and Employee Welfare programs including sponsoring of UNO's International Day against Drug Abuse. Dr Sreekumar, founder of wellness solutions handled the session on managing stress and preventing health hazards. He gave the finest examples of how the fasting creates re-energy in human body. The participating - long serving - managers acclaimed



the efforts of NSH in bringing them up, especially the timely presence of management through thick and thin, and creating a homely atmosphere.

The project managers PV Santhosh, Dileep Raroth, safety director Mike O Balli, finance manager Manoj were among those present. The HR department made the arrangements.

IWC CELEBRATES MEXICAN CULTURE



IWG members pose with the Mexican dancers. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



The International Women Committee (IWC) recently celebrated its monthly meeting by holding a Mexican Day organized by the Mexican ambassador's spouse, Patricia. The event was part of the activities organized by the spouses of

ambassadors designated to Kuwait and included a cultural, recreational and social program displaying Mexican culture and its colorful richness.

The program included folkloric dances and watching a film about the Mexican people's

The Mexican dancers during their performance.

social, artistic lives and heritage. The program also included the popular game of Loteria, which is a Mexican-styled game of Bingo that is part of social life in Mexico. Finally, IWC presented a special trophy to the Mexican ambassador's spouse.

Patricia Campos de Isidro, wife of the Ambassador of Mexico, Miguel Angel Isidro said: "I was invited to present the day of Mexico for the international women's group. I'm very happy and honored to be hosting such a cultural event. We had a beautiful pro-

gram which varied between Mexican dances, a PowerPoint presentation, a very nice video about the best places to visit in Mexico, a wonderful lunch, and we finished our program playing a very famous ancient Mexican game called Loteria that is similar to Bingo."



Patricia Campos de Isidro, wife of the Ambassador of Mexico.



IWG members pose with the Mexican dancers.



Narjis Al-Shatti gives a farewell gift to the spouse of the Korean ambassador in the presence of Patricia and the spouse of the Liberian ambassador.



Patricia Campos de Isidro and IWG members pose with the dancers.



IWG members at the event.

AMC

00:30 Fear The Walking Dead
01:25 Fear The Walking Dead
02:20 Fear The Walking Dead
03:15 Fear The Walking Dead
04:10 Fear The Walking Dead
05:10 Saved!
06:40 Death Rides A Horse
08:35 The People That Time Forgot
10:05 Geronimo: An American Legend
12:00 Saved!
13:30 Waking Up In Reno
15:05 The Secret Of Santa Vittoria
17:20 Pork Chop Hill
18:55 Big Screen
19:10 Of Mice And Men
21:00 Fear The Walking Dead
22:00 Strange Wilderness
23:25 Love Or Money?

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:45 Gator Boys
01:40 Hunt For The Russian Tiger
02:35 Wildest Indochina
03:25 Bahama Blue
04:15 Wild Iberia
05:02 Return Of The Great White
Serial Killer
05:49 Biggest And Baddest
06:36 Swamp Brothers
07:00 Swamp Brothers
07:25 Your Pet Wants This
08:15 River Monsters
09:10 Treehouse Masters
10:05 Tanked
11:00 Your Pet Wants This, Too!
11:55 Bondi Vet
12:25 Bondi Vet
12:50 River Monsters
13:45 Gator Boys
14:40 Treehouse Masters
15:35 Tanked
16:30 Shamwari: A Wild Life
17:00 Shamwari: A Wild Life
17:25 River Monsters
18:20 From WAGs To Riches
19:15 Tanked
20:10 Killer Ig: Lion vs Hyena
21:05 Treehouse Masters
22:00 From WAGs To Riches
22:55 Gator Boys
23:50 River Monsters

BBC FIRST

00:10 Eastenders
00:40 Silent Witness
03:25 Doctors
03:55 Eastenders
04:25 Doctor Who
05:15 Father Brown
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Doctors
07:00 Eastenders
07:30 Stella
08:20 The Paradise
09:15 Doctor Who
10:05 Doctors
10:35 Eastenders
11:05 Father Brown
11:55 Stella
12:45 The Paradise
13:45 Doctor Who
14:10 Doctors
14:40 Eastenders
15:40 Stella
16:30 The Paradise
17:30 Doctor Who
18:15 Father Brown
19:15 Casualty
20:00 Undercover
21:00 Undercover
22:00 Silent Witness
22:55 Father Brown
23:45 Casualty

Bloomberg TELEVISION

00:30 Studio 1.0
01:00 Bloomberg West
02:00 First Up With Angie Lau
03:00 First Up With Angie Lau
04:00 Trending Business
06:00 Asia Edge
07:00 Bloomberg Best

A BEAUTIFUL MIND

A BEAUTIFUL MIND ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

06:00 Countdown
09:00 Countdown
09:30 On The Move
10:00 On The Move
11:00 The Pulse
12:00 Bloomberg Surveillance
13:00 Bloomberg Surveillance
14:00 Bloomberg Go
17:00 Bloomberg Markets
18:00 Bloomberg Markets: European
Close
19:00 Bloomberg Markets
23:00 What'd You Miss?

18:40 Redesign My Brain
19:30 Storm Chasers 2008
20:20 World's Toughest Jobs
21:00 Don't Drive Here
22:00 Atlas 4D
22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
23:40 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman

ID.
INVESTIGATION
DISCOVERY

00:20 Fast N' Loud
01:10 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
02:00 Manhunt With Joel Lambert
02:50 Killing Fields
03:40 Extreme Collectors
04:05 Storage Wars Canada
04:30 Auction Hunters
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 Fifth Gear
06:00 Outback Truckers
06:50 Wheeler Dealers
07:40 Fast N' Loud
08:30 Extreme Collectors
08:55 Storage Wars Canada
09:20 Auction Hunters
09:45 How Do They Do It?
10:10 Fifth Gear
10:35 Misfit Garage
11:25 Overhaul'n
12:15 Extreme Car Hoarders
13:05 Extreme Collectors
13:30 Storage Wars Canada
13:55 Auction Hunters
14:20 Outback Truckers
15:10 Wheeler Dealers
16:00 Fast N' Loud
16:50 Fifth Gear
17:15 How Do They Do It?

00:05 Art Attack
00:30 Henry Hugglemonster
00:45 Calimero
01:00 Zou
01:15 Loopidoo
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Calimero
02:20 Zou
02:30 Loopidoo
02:45 Art Attack
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03:20 Calimero
03:35 Zou
03:45 Loopidoo
04:00 Art Attack
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04:35 Calimero
04:50 Zou

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

CNBC

00:00 The Edge
00:30 CNBC Conversation: Kyriakos Mitsotakis
01:00 The Rundown
02:00 Asia Squawk Box
05:00 Asia Street Signs
07:00 Capital Connection
08:00 Squawk Box Europe
11:00 Europe Street Signs
12:00 Worldwide Exchange
13:00 U.S. Squawk Box
16:00 Squawk On The Street
18:00 U.S. Squawk Alley
19:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report
20:00 U.S. Power Lunch
22:00 U.S. Closing Bell

crime & investigation network

00:00 Cursed: The Bell Witch
01:00 The Haunting Of...
02:00 Killer Kids
03:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
04:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
05:00 Cursed: The Bell Witch
06:00 The FBI Files
07:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
08:00 Crime Stories
09:00 Surveillance Oz
09:30 Steven Seagal: Lawman
10:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
11:00 After The First 48
12:00 The FBI Files
13:00 Martina Cole's Lady Killers
14:00 Crime Stories
15:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
16:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
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20:00 Crime Stories
21:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
23:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
23:00 Gangsters: America's Most Evil

Discovery CHANNEL HD

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02:10 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
03:00 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
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DISCOVERY SCIENCE

00:20 Space Pioneer
01:08 Invent It Rich
01:55 Da Vinci's Machines
02:42 Building The Biggest
03:29 Building The Biggest
04:16 Building The Biggest
05:03 Food Factory
05:26 Food Factory
05:50 Food Factory
06:12 Food Factory
06:37 How Do They Do It?
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:23 Mythbusters
08:08 Eco-Tech
08:53 Building The Biggest
09:38 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
10:23 Da Vinci's Machines
11:08 Space Pioneer
11:53 Building The Biggest
12:38 Mythbusters
13:23 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
14:10 Eco-Tech
14:57 Secret Space Escapes
15:44 Space Pioneer
16:31 Under New York
17:18 Eco-Tech
18:05 Mythbusters
18:50 You Have Been Warned
19:40 Space Pioneer
20:25 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
21:15 How The Earth Works
22:00 You Have Been Warned
22:45 Space Pioneer
23:35 Mythbusters

Disney CHANNEL

00:00 Violetta
The Hive
00:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Violetta
The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:00 Violetta
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Mouk
06:00 Lollipop
06:25 Sofia The First
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
07:40 Jessie
08:00 Shake It Up
08:30 Shake It Up
08:55 Hannah Montana
09:20 Hannah Montana
09:45 Girl Meets World
10:10 Girl Meets World
10:35 A.N.T. Farm
11:00 A.N.T. Farm
11:25 Jessie
11:50 Jessie
12:15 Handy Manny
12:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
13:00 Sofia The First
13:25 Miles From Tomorrow
13:50 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:10 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
09:35 Doc McStuffins
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Goldie & Bear
10:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
11:25 Special Agent Oso
11:40 The Hive
11:50 Handy Manny
12:15 Jungle Junction
12:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
13:00 Sofia The First
13:25 Miles From Tomorrow
13:50 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
14:15 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
14:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
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16:25 Jungle Cubs
16:50 Aladdin
17:15 Gummi Bears
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21:25 Aladdin
21:50 Gummi Bears
22:20 Lilo And Stitch
22:50 Zou
23:05 Henry Hugglemonster
23:20 Calimero
23:35 Zou
23:50 Loopidoo

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THE BOURNE LEGACY

JEREMY RENNER RACHEL WEISZ EDWARD NORTON

THE BOURNE LEGACY ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

05:00 Loopidoo
05:15 Art Attack
05:35 Henry Hugglemonster
05:50 Calimero
06:00 Zou
06:20 Loopidoo
06:35 Art Attack
08:20 El News
09:15 Giuliana & Bill
10:15 Giuliana & Bill
11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
11:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
12:05 El News
13:05 Fashion Police
14:05 Hollywood Cycle
15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
18:00 El News
19:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
20:00 Botched
21:00 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
22:00 WAGs
23:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry

food network

00:00 Cutthroat Kitchen
01:00 Man V Food
01:30 Man V Food
02:00 Tia Mowry At Home
02:30 Tia Mowry At Home
03:00 Man Finds Food
03:30 Man Finds Food
04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
05:00 Chopped
06:00 Man Fire Food
06:30 Man Fire Food
07:00 Man Fire Food
07:30 Man Fire Food
08:00 Chopped
09:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
09:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
10:00 The Kitchen
11:00 Anna Olson: Bake
11:30 Anna Olson: Bake
12:00 Chopped
13:00 The Pioneer Woman
13:30 The Pioneer Woman
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Man Fire Food
15:30 Man Fire Food
16:00 Chopped
17:00 The Kitchen
18:00 Anna Olson: Bake
18:30 Anna Olson: Bake
19:00 Chopped
20:00 Iron Chef America
21:00 American Diner Revival
21:30 American Diner Revival
22:00 Mystery Diners
22:30 Mystery Diners
23:00 Save My Bakery

food network

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14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:0

CLASSIFIEDS



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (07/04/2016 TO 13/04/2016)

Time	Programme	Time	Programme	Time	Programme
12:15 PM	NO FRI+SAT	11:30 AM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	2:00 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
2:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	1:30 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	4:15 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
2:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	2:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
4:15 PM	SARDAAR GABBAR SINGH - Telugu	6:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:15 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
6:15 PM	SARDAAR GABBAR SINGH - Telugu	10:15 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	6:15 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
8:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:30 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	8:15 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
11:00 PM	OBSERVANCE	6:45 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	10:30 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
12:45 AM	OBSERVANCE	10:00 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	12:45 AM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
12:30 PM	THE BOSS	1:15 AM	AVENUES-1	11:30 AM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
1:30 PM	SARDAAR GABBAR SINGH - Telugu	2:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	1:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
2:30 PM	THE BOSS	3:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
4:30 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	5:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	6:15 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
6:30 PM	THE BOSS	7:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	8:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
8:30 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	9:00 PM	10 CLOVERFIELD LANE	10:45 PM	10 CLOVERFIELD LANE
10:30 PM	THE BOSS	11:00 PM	10 CLOVERFIELD LANE	1:00 AM	10 CLOVERFIELD LANE
12:30 AM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	1:00 AM	AVENUES-2	1:45 PM	MR. RIGHT
1:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:00 PM	MR. RIGHT	4:00 PM	MR. RIGHT
4:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	5:00 PM	MR. RIGHT	5:00 PM	MR. RIGHT
7:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:00 PM	MR. RIGHT	7:15 PM	MR. RIGHT
10:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:00 PM	MR. RIGHT	9:30 PM	MR. RIGHT
1:00 AM	10 CLOVERFIELD LANE	11:00 PM	MR. RIGHT	11:45 PM	MR. RIGHT
1:45 PM	10 CLOVERFIELD LANE	1:00 AM	AVENUES-3	12:15 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
4:00 PM	SARDAAR GABBAR SINGH - Telugu	12:45 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	2:30 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
7:15 PM	SARDAAR GABBAR SINGH - Telugu	2:30 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	4:45 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
10:30 PM	SARDAAR GABBAR SINGH - Telugu	4:45 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	9:15 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
12:15 PM	THE BOSS	6:45 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	11:30 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
2:15 PM	THE BOSS	8:45 PM	JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END)	1:15 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
4:15 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	10:45 PM	JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 (JU-ON: THE BEGINNING OF THE END)	3:30 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
6:15 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	12:45 AM	OBSERVANCE	5:45 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
8:15 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	12:15 PM	OBSERVANCE	8:00 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
10:30 PM	THE BOSS	2:00 PM	THE BOSS	10:15 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
12:30 AM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	4:00 PM	THE BOSS	12:30 AM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)
12:00 PM	OBSERVANCE	6:00 PM	OBSERVANCE	12:30 PM	3000 NIGHTS - Arabic
1:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	8:00 PM	OBSERVANCE	2:45 PM	3000 NIGHTS - Arabic
1:30 PM	SARDAAR GABBAR SINGH - Telugu	10:00 PM	THE BOSS	5:00 PM	3000 NIGHTS - Arabic
4:45 PM	OBSERVANCE	12:05 AM	OBSERVANCE	7:15 PM	3000 NIGHTS - Arabic
6:30 PM	OBSERVANCE	12:30 PM	MR. RIGHT	9:30 PM	3000 NIGHTS - Arabic
8:15 PM	OBSERVANCE	2:30 PM	MR. RIGHT	11:45 PM	3000 NIGHTS - Arabic
10:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
1:00 AM	OBSERVANCE	7:30 PM	MR. RIGHT	3:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
10:15 PM	SARDAAR GABBAR SINGH - Telugu	9:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	5:15 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
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12:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:45 AM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	9:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3

WANTED CIVIL ENGINEERS

Candidates should be bilingual (Arabic & English) with 6 to 7 years of experience in Kuwait.

Please mail your CV on f.khankuwait@gmail.com

Chalet for rent in Khiran

- 6 bedrooms 5 baths
- Large pool and jacuzzi
- Larged garden
- Covered parking
- Facing yacht marina and mall
- Long-term lease, 1600kd monthly - fully furnished (quality furniture)
- Suitable for embassies, companies, or families.

Pls call **9955 4436**

FOR SALE

2008 Suv Audi Q7, black, full option, very good condition. KD 3900. Contact: 90905788. (C 5158)

side tables, with 1 Ikea office chair, curtains, dining table, Arabic majlis, 2 gas cylinders. Contact 69302121. (C 5157) 10-4-2016

Owner leaving Kuwait want to sell household items, Samsung smart TV 40", bedroom furniture, drawing room furniture, 1 Ikea office table with two Contents of a flat (furniture) for sale in Salmiya next to Donbosco School, expat leaving Kuwait. Contact: 97453334. (C 5156) 7-6-2016

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	04:05
Shorook	05:26
Duhr:	11:49
Asr:	15:23
Maghrib:	18:12
Isha:	19:31



Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Monday 11/4/2016			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10
MSC	415	Sohag	00:10
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55
KKK	6506	Istanbul	00:55
DLH	635	Doha	01:00
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:40
RJA	642	Amman	01:45
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15
ETD	919	Abu Dhabi	02:20
CEB	018	Manila	02:20
UAE	853	Dubai	02:25
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05
FDB	067	Dubai	03:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:25
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:30
KAC	544	Cairo	03:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:10
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15
JZR	529	Asyut	06:00
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	06:15
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	06:25
BAW	157	London	06:40
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15
KAC	382	Delhi	07:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50
KAC	354	BLR	08:00
KAC	156	Istanbul	08:00
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20
KAC	362	Colombo	08:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:15
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
UAE	873	Dubai	10:40
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	10:55
MEA	404	Beirut	11:00
JZR	561	Sohag	11:25
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:05
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10
FDB	057	Dubai	14:20
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:20
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30

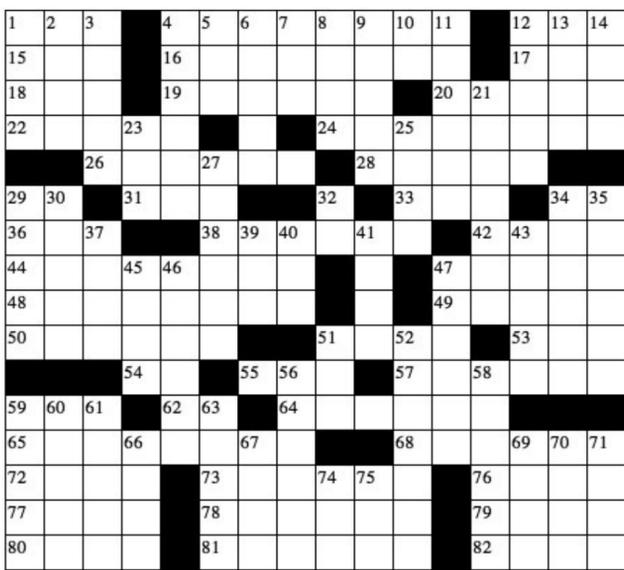
Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

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

Departure Flights on Monday 11/4/2016			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
MSC	502	Alexandria	00:05
BBC	044	Dhaka	00:10
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:25
MSR	615	Cairo	00:30
FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
PIA	206	Lahore	00:40
MSC	404	Asyut	00:55
MSC	416	Sohag	01:05
THY	773	Istanbul	01:40
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
THY	765	Istanbul	02:45
ETH	621	Addis Ababa	02:45
PGT	859	Istanbul	02:55
UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
OMA	644	Muscat	04:00
KKK	6505	Istanbul	04:05
FDB	068	Dubai	04:05
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
MSR	613	Cairo	04:15
ETD	920	Abu Dhabi	04:20
PGT	861	Istanbul	04:30
QTR	1077	Doha	04:35
CEB	019	Manila	04:50
JZR	560	Sohag	05:00
RJA	643	Amman	06:25
QTR	1087	Doha	06:30
THY	771	Istanbul	06:45
GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
FDB	5062	Dubai	07:55
BAW	156	London	08:25
FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	08:50
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:30
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
IRA	666	Esfahan	10:15
FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
QTR	1071	Doha	10:45
KAC	153	Istanbul	11:00
KAC	501	Beirut	11:00
KAC	561	Amman	11:20
KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:25
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
KAC	741	Dammam	11:35
AXB	890	Mangalore	11:55
MEA	405	Beirut	12:00
KAC	541	Cairo	12:05
UAE	874	Dubai	12:10
KAC	103	London	12:10
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:15
KAC	785	Jeddah	13:00
FDB	076	Dubai	13:10
JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

CROSSWORD 1223



ACROSS

- The capital and largest city of Japan.
- Relating to or characteristic of art or artists.
- A device for creating a current of air by movement of a surface or surfaces.
- Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
- Glyptic art consisting of a sunken or depressed engraving or carving on a stone or gem (as opposed to cameo).
- How long something has existed.
- (of securities) Not quoted on a stock exchange.
- Robbery at gunpoint.
- A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
- A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Ghana or its people or language.
- Philippine tree similar to the breadfruit tree bearing edible fruit.
- Jordan's port.
- A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
- An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
- A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
- The 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Mali or its people.
- A mythical Greek hero.
- A program for a race meeting.
- Lacking gonads.
- A woman of refinement.
- A strong paper or thin cardboard with a smooth light brown finish made from e.g. Manila hemp.
- (informal) Of the highest quality.
- A person forced to flee from home or country.
- East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
- A city in western Germany near the Dutch and Belgian borders.
- Electrical conduction through a gas in an applied electric field.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A vast treeless plain in the arctic regions between the ice cap and the tree line.
- A view of the sea.
- A native of ancient Troy.
- The general activity of selling.
- An ancient Greek city on the slopes of Mount Parnassus.
- A quantity of no importance.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- (Greek mythology) Greek god of darkness who dwelt in the underworld.
- (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- Long coarse hair growing from the crest of the animal's neck.
- Oriental moth that produces brownish silk.
- Remove with or as if with a ladle.

DOWN

- A body of poetry that conveys the traditions of a society by treating some epic theme.
- A collection of facts from which conclusions may be drawn.
- English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
- Be compatible or in accordance with.
- The former capital and 2nd largest city of Brazil.
- A sharp hooked claw especially on a bird of prey.
- One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- A projectile that is fired from a gun.
- Reed maces.
- The sciences concerned with gathering and manipulating and storing and retrieving and classifying recorded information.
- Thorny shrub or small tree common in central Argentina having small orange or yellow flowers followed by edible berries.
- A sheet or band of fibrous connective tissue separating or binding together muscles and organs etc.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
- A large fleet.
- God of wealth and love.
- An expression of greeting.
- A large and stately mansion.
- Examination of conscience (as done daily by Jesuits).
- (computer science) A graphic symbol (usually a simple picture) that denotes a program or a command or a data file or a concept in a graphical user interface.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- A lipoprotein that transports cholesterol in the blood.
- The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- (Old Testament) The fourth son of Jacob who was forebear of one of the tribes of Israel.
- A town in north central Oklahoma.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- A member of the Semitic speaking people of northern Ethiopia.
- A Kwa language spoken by the Yoruba people in southwestern Nigeria.
- Offensively discourteous.
- Spider monkeys.
- Of the appetites and passions of the body.
- A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
- A drug (trade names Calan and Isoptin) used as an oral or parenteral calcium blocker in cases of hypertension or congestive heart failure or angina or migraine.
- A military trainee (as at a military academy).
- (used especially of vegetation) Having lost all moisture.
- A republic in western South America.
- An informal term for a father.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- A language unit by which a person or thing is known.
- A solution containing a phosphate buffer.
- The quality of a color as determined by its dominant wavelength.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today is one of those times when you can relax and feel caressably great. Association with groups of people or spiritual retreats can be fun as well as positive. You could receive a healing just from being out-of-doors and away from the usual routine. You can be compassionate toward others who need healing. You have a strong appreciation of art, theater and music and may find you or someone else merging these things into the activities you involve yourself with this day. This could mean you are photographing nature or you are setting out your paints and your easel to take down the beauty on paper. This is a good time to dream big dreams. You promote good communication among family members.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Although this day is not free of stress, you will find it greatly satisfying. Keep in mind that all things have an end. Helping others seems to be the trend for this morning. You may find yourself serving to guide someone younger than you in matters of importance. A big part of this day is for teamwork. After work some form of group sport brings many friends together. The deeper meaning of life has your attention in the form of a new song or poem or story that touches you deeply. Tonight you consider sharing a cooking project with your loved one. You may discover new ideas to make your kitchen more accommodating. Hold your loved one's hand and go for a little walk this evening. Make laughter and smiles be the closure of your day.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Partnerships are highlighted this day. With a partner, best friend, loved one, etc., much is accomplished. You generously want to share your visions, ideals and ideas with other people—they can be spellbound for hours. This may include a lecture, teaching a class, guiding young people or even selling some unique product, etc. You will sometimes encourage people to achieve the goals they thought they could not achieve through new insights. You have a special bond with someone—a type of mentor from your past. You will be thinking of, or contacting this person soon. There is a chance to have a special time with someone you love. You are feeling good and there is a sense of support that makes this a happy time.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This morning you could spend a lot of time in water. This could be just for you or a group swim or perhaps in washing an animal or child. You may be teaching swimming lessons. You could feel like a prune before noon. This afternoon, you could be in the limelight, especially with a family member. You may not have even realized that some act or favor would create a big ripple—others will praise you for your actions this past week. Perhaps you have helped someone without actually realizing you had been helpful—keep on keeping on. There is a kind of romantic longing this evening. Careful—this could mean a longing for a soul mate or a yearning to save the world; it could mean carrying a torch, as well. You enjoy chatting to a friend this evening.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Perhaps the plans for today have you in a good mood. Whatever the case, this day is full of passion and a positive attitude that gets much accomplished. Others will notice your productivity this day. Your inner resources and emotions are accented. Expect a sense of support and goodwill from those around you. Although you are intent on accomplishing a lot, it is good that you have realistic expectations. There are interesting subjects for your evaluation today and a relationship from the past may come to your attention. Find time to relax and commune with nature in order to balance your energies before the evening begins. There are interesting things to pursue regarding a romantic relationship now. Someone may surprise you this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Many different stages in life bring many different experiences. You may find yourself a mentor to another member of your family. A sibling that may have teased you in the past is now looking at you in a different light. Your instinctive orientation at this time is toward getting down to basics and starting over from scratch—healing comes from destroying the roots of a disturbance. Today you may be serving an older member of the family with some sort of mental or physical support. Perhaps you will be able to help financially or in some way make his or her life easier. You will have support when you need it—all you have to do is ask. A social occasion this evening brings out your unique and unusual qualities. There is time to enjoy leisure conversations.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You move through your day checking and rechecking any environmental problem that you and your family might be exposed to and clearing away any future possibilities of spills, falls, etc. Perhaps this is connected to childproofing an area. At times you may be drained by fatigue. Later today you write a proposal to the city that will help to further protect neighborhood or citizens. You may be surprised at how you find the difficulties and work out the changes that need to take place. You work toward a balance in your life and you try to set examples that others will follow. You like to see the living areas neat and safe. You meet a new friend or two this afternoon and there is much talk of prevention and environment and childproofing.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your sense of justice intensifies as you become more sensitive to the needs of others. You will give serious consideration to a legally binding contract and may find ways to enhance or enlarge the benefits that come from this situation. You sell a plan to or negotiate a plan with a group of people and you will happily find that successful decisions are made that make all the participants happy. This could be about some property, time or money matters. At this time, you tend to desire personal freedom and excitement in family and home life. There may be plans to change residence but you will find a way to work in an already planned party so that the only pause is the drawing of a new map. You are in step with changes and find workable solutions at every turn.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

You like to do a variety of things but sometimes you can only cram just so much into one day—it may be difficult to balance the energies. Paying attention to creating a balance in your activities will keep your physical wellbeing in good shape. Some classes are offered that claim to help improve the way the salesperson works with the public or an employee deals with a variety of situations in the workplace. You will be able to collect a variety of information that will make your life more successful and easier to navigate. You work best when you are in a service-oriented type of business. You like to be helpful and you like to teach, guide, make-better, etc. Visiting with old friends this evening, you may discover new ideas on managing your energies.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A new sense of self, a more assertive personal style and a more dynamic approach to life is in the forecast. You may want to recoup your energies for next week—make new plans. This is an excellent time to review past accomplishments and failures relating to your professional life—re-evaluate—but not for too long. Doubts fade into the background and reserve is more and more a thing of the past. Soon, it will be time for action and you will be ready. Your creative spirit is on automatic drive, making you very passionate and expressive. The drive for interaction with loved ones is heightened. After tending to personal business, you may find yourself looking through the papers for a good movie. You may enjoy feeding on the energies of music this evening.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You are in demand today. Whether it be the language, the math, working a new piece of equipment; whatever the case, you have the answers. This would be a good time to just give over your time to teaching—you will be able to get back to your own work faster. You are understanding and helpful. An interest in religion or mysticism is strong at this time. You may be looking to marry someone of a different religion or you are deciding which way to go yourself. Relax; you will be guided to what you need. New personal goals are identified. Set your sights high and dare to dream big. Be as flexible as possible. Later you enjoy some form of poetry or art—you find a great book at the library. Make someone smile this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Confusing messages are possible this morning. It may be best to let the energies smooth out. With some effort you can gain a focus by busying yourself with yard work, hobbies or errands. Be cautious in promise more than you can deliver. There is talk of a social gathering soon and you may enjoy helping to plan this future event. You draw emotional sustenance and a sense of security from ideals, friends and social involvement. This can be an expansive, creative and even romantic phase—a time you will look back on with pride and fondness. You may experience many situations during this time when a new relationship might begin—particularly one of a physical, loving nature. Additionally, this is a time when your powers of creativity are great.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Candy

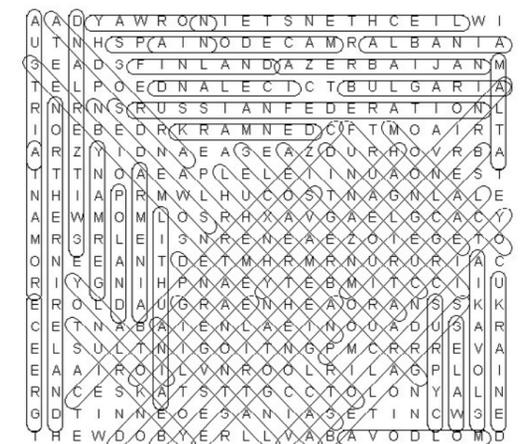
Find and circle all of the Candy treats that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.



- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| ALMOND JOY | CRACKER JACK | LIFESAVERS | RED HOTS |
| BABY RUTH | DOBBLE BUBBLE | LOLLIPOPS | SEN-SEN |
| BAZOOKA GUM | GOBBERS | MILK DUDDS | SLO-POKES |
| BOTTLECAPS | GUMMI BEARS | MILKY WAY | SMARTIES |
| BUBBLE YUM | HERSHEY KISSES | MOUNDS | SOUR BALLS |
| BUTTERFINGERS | HUBBA BUBBA GUM | NECCO WAFERS | SPEARMINT LEAVES |
| CANDY NECKLACE | JAW BREAKERS | OH HENRY | SWEETARTS |
| CHICLETS | JUJUBES | PEPPERMINT PATTY | TOOTSIE ROLLS |
| CHUCKLES | KIT KAT | PEZ | TWIX |
| CLARK BAR | LEMON DROPS | POP ROCKS | TWIZZLERS |
| COFFEE CRISP | LICORICE PIPE | PUMPKIN SEEDS | WAX LIPS |

Yesterday's Solution

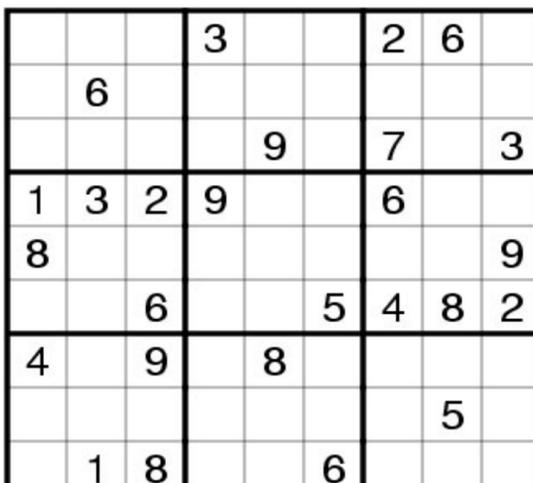
Countries of Europe



- | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ALBANIA | ENGLAND | LITHUANIA | SAN MARINO |
| ANDORRA | ESTONIA | LUXEMBOURG | SCOTLAND |
| ARMENIA | FINLAND | MACEDONIA | SLOVAKIA |
| AUSTRIA | FRANCE | MALTA | SLOVENIA |
| AZERBAIJAN | GERMANY | MOLDOVA | SPAIN |
| BELARUS | GREECE | MONACO | SWEDEN |
| BELGIUM | HUNGARY | NETHERLANDS | SWITZERLAND |
| BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA | ICELAND | NORTHERN IRELAND | TURKEY |
| BULGARIA | IRELAND | NORWAY | UKRAINE |
| CROATIA | ITALY | POLAND | SERBIA/MONTENEGRO |
| CYPRUS | LATVIA | PORTUGAL | VATICAN CITY |
| CZECH REPUBLIC | LIECHTENSTEIN | ROMANIA | WALES |
| DENMARK | | RUSSIAN FEDERATION | |

Hidden sentence: IN RESPECT TO AREA EUROPE IS THE SECOND SMALLEST CONTINENT IN THE WORLD

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



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

Hospitals

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

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

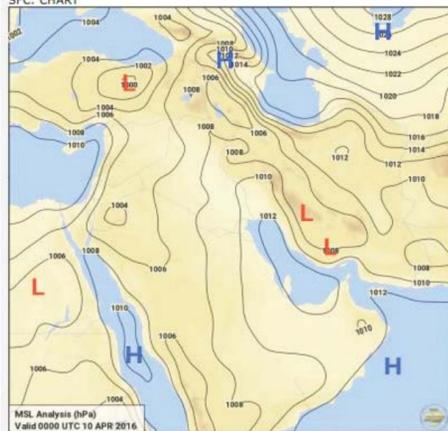
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 10/04/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 36 °C

By Day : Mostly sunny with light to moderate south westerly changing to south easterly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h
By Night : Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly to southerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Expected Weather	pc/cloudy + scattered rain	Cloudy+thunder rain+raising dust.	partly cloudy + raising dust + scattered rain	Cloudy+thunder rain
Min Temp °C	22	22	22	20
Max Temp °C	35	34	32	30
Wind Direction	south westerly changing to south easterly	southerly to south easterly	south easterly	south westerly changing to south easterly
Wind Speed km/h	20 - 45	25 - 50	25 - 50	25 - 50

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

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	25		35	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20		36	
ABDALY	20		35	
BUBYAN	20		34	
JAHRA	22		36	
FAILAKA ISLAND	21		34	
SALMIYAH	24		33	
AHMADI	25		32	
JAL ALIYAH	19		34	
QAROH ISLAND	22		30	
UMM AL-MARADEM	22		29	
NUWAISIB	20		34	
WAFRA	21		35	
MANAGISH	19		34	
SALMY	20		33	
MUTRIBA	18		38	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	34
Min Temp (°C)	18
Max Rel Hum (%)	54
Min Rel Hum (%)	13
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	36 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise

05:26

Sunset

18:11

Prayer Times

Fajr	04:05
Sunrise	05:26
Zuhr	11:49
Asr	15:23
Sunset	18:11
Isha	19:30



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	22636920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
DrAdrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarouf	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gupare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123



Fernandez-Versini cuts ties with estranged husband on social media

Cheryl Fernandez-Versini has cut all ties with her estranged husband Jean-Bernard on social media. The British pop star, 32, who is currently dating One Direction singer Liam Payne, is in the process of finalising her divorce from the Frenchman, but has in the meantime opted to cut links to her husband on sites such as Instagram. A source told the Sunday Mirror newspaper: "[The divorce has] been a lot slower than expected. There's no information coming up as there are confidentiality clauses in place. 'What's clear is it hasn't been as easy as had been hoped.' This comes shortly after it was reported Cheryl has already moved in to her new boyfriend's lavish mansion in Los Angeles. Cheryl has only been dating the One Direction hunk - who is 10 years her junior - for five months but it appears their romance is progressing at a quick pace. A source previously explained: "Cheryl and Liam are getting more serious by the day. They want to make the most of their time with each other before Cheryl has to go back to the UK, so it made sense for her to come and live with him."

Boyle involved in dramatic airport incident



Susan Boyle reportedly left airline passengers shocked when she screamed for assistance in the lounge of Derry Airport. The 55-year-old singer caused a dramatic scene while flying home on her own last week and was subsequently led into a sideroom by airport staff who comforted her. An onlooker said: "There was quite a buzz in the airport when people became aware of her presence. 'To see her running through the airport after she left to board the flight, screaming for help, was the last thing anyone expected to see.'" According to a source close to the singer, she became distressed after rowing with a relative. The unnamed female friend told the Sunday People newspaper: "Susan's trip wasn't what she had hoped it would be. She had travelled to Derry for a birthday celebration and had taken her brother with her but sadly the two of them had a disagreement. 'He decided to leave early on his own which was a problem for Susan, who is not used to travelling alone and felt very vulnerable and upset. 'She became quite distressed and in the end her assistant flew out from Glasgow to collect her and brought her home safely the next day. 'Susan is a lovely woman and an incredible talent but she was really let down by being left on her own. She's home now and is absolutely fine and as with most family squabbles it will all be resolved. 'She's got lots of great things planned for this year and will start recording her seventh album next month. She's in a great place, with people who love and care about her looking out for her back home."

Styles snapped shopping with Jenner

Harry Styles and Kendall Jenner have sparked speculation they have reignited their romance after they were seen shopping together in Los Angeles. The celebrity duo were rumored to have been dating around the turn of the year, after they were together on board a luxury yacht in the Caribbean, and they have now been spotted by a fan in the US city, who suggested it was not the first time the pair

had been seen together in the area. The fan with the Instagram handle irwinhandlemam captioned the image: "Ugh! These fans crashed my lunch again #kendalljenner #harrystyles #Hendallstein." In the picture, Kendall can be seen wearing a denim outfit and clutching a handbag, while the long-haired man - who is said to be the One Direction star - has his back to the camera. However, it was recently reported

that Kendall, 20, has been secretly dating basketball star Jordan Clarkson. A source claimed recently: "They have been secretly dating for months and they are super into each other. 'He is super sweet and a total gentleman and Kendall loves that.' The same insider said Harry was unwilling to commit his future to Kendall. The source said: "She really likes Harry but he's like any other young rockstar and has trouble committing."



Gal Gadot's parenting concerned



Gal Gadot worries she doesn't do enough for her daughter. The 'Batman V Superman: Dawn of Justice' actress - who has daughter Alma, four, with husband Yaron Versano - feels reassured that her mother will always travel with her to help look after her little girl, but "does her best" to be with the youngster as much as she can. She said: "Fame means I have to be very organized. But being a mother means getting up early in the morning even if you're tired because that's your responsibility. 'I worry that I should always be doing more and spend more time with Alma even when I'm working. 'I try to do the best I can. 'My mother and my daughter travel with me, so when I'm on the set, my mother will look after Alma and that

gives me a lot of comfort." Gal adores being a parent and thinks it was better to have her daughter before her career really took off as she wouldn't have as much time for her if she waited until things had "settled" and she had established herself. She explained to Britain's HELLO! magazine: "It's given me a lot of joy. I was thinking about whether I should wait to have children when my acting career was more settled, but then I thought that if you're more successful, you're working even more, so that wouldn't be the best time either. 'I'm very happy being a mother and as soon as you begin raising your child, you feel this incredible love and happiness that is different from anything else you've ever experienced."



Khloe warned Kim not to marry Kris

Khloe Kardashian warned her sister Kim not to marry Kris Humphries. The 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' star has revealed she urged her older sibling not to walk down the aisle with the professional basketball player because he's a "loser". She said: "There's a ton of times that like you know I've told my sister the truth and she didn't believe me... like when she wanted to marry Kris Humphries. I was like, 'He's a loser. Why are you marrying this dog?' But she didn't have to hear me and that's OK. But the fact is I said what I had to say." Meanwhile, the 35-year-old television personality previously revealed she thought her career was "over" when she divorced Kris. She added: "At the time when I was going through the divorce I did say to everyone, 'You guys I think our careers are over. I hope you've saved your money. And now we'll just continue to do our clothing stores and continue to do what we started off doing before the show. I totally thought it was over. 'I was being very paranoid. I just took some time off and the time was really good for me. I cancelled everything. I had a book tour, I had a fragrance launch, I had everything that you could possibly imagine and I just cancelled it all and I took time for me."

Madonna's son photographed outside London home

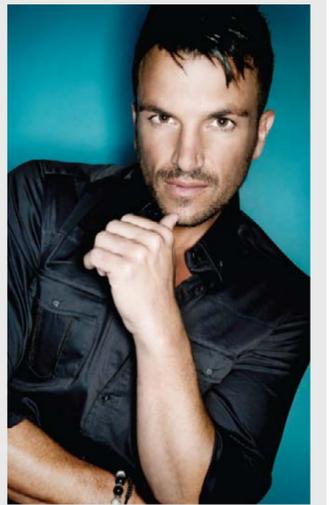
Madonna's son Rocco has been spotted at her London home, suggesting their feud may be coming to an end. Rocco - who has become embroiled in a high-profile battle with his pop star mother in recent months - was seen being dropped off at the property in west London by his movie director father Guy Ritchie and his new wife Jacqui Ainsley. The incident comes shortly after Guy and Madonna were both recently urged by a High Court judge to avoid taking up any more of the 'fast receding days' of their teenage son's childhood with legal action. Rocco has remained in London



with his father since last autumn following a visit to the city, while his mother is keen for the boy to return to live with her in the US. At the hearing in March, Mr Justice MacDonald said: 'I renew, one final time, my plea for both parents to seek and to find an amicable resolution to the dispute between them. 'As I observed during the course of the hearing, summer does not last forever. The boy very quickly becomes the man. 'It would be a very great tragedy for Rocco if any more of the previous and fast receding days of his childhood were to be taken up by this dispute.'

The 'Behind Closed Doors' hitmaker - who chronicled his life on various fly-on-the-wall shows between 2004 and 2013 - thinks his oldest child Junior, 10, will be particularly pleased to have cameras back in the family home because he is such a little showman. Speaking about a recent episode of 'Loose Women' which saw Peter's ex-wife joined on the panel by Junior and their daughter Princess, eight, the singer said: "I missed Junior and Bista when they appeared on 'Loose Women' recently but I heard they were hilarious. 'Viewers praised the kids for being so compassionate, smart and funny. Some also said Junior should get his own TV show. 'How funny because I'm thinking about the possibility of bringing my reality show back for a series and J would love that.' And fans tuning into the show may see a fresher-faced Peter - who also has two-year-old daughter Amelia with wife Emily - as he is considering having more wrinkle-smoothing Botox treatment. He wrote in his column for new! magazine: "Whenever I have it, I go for 'babytox'. This isn't Botox for babies, it just means a small dose so you still have some movement and it looks almost natural. 'Although I'm Botox-free at the moment, I might have some later this year. But I actually think it's good to have some wrinkles on your face because it gives you expression."

Peter Andre is returning to reality TV



Byrne's sleepless nights

Rose Byrne isn't getting much sleep following the birth of her first child. The 'Bridesmaids' actress made her first official red carpet appearance since welcoming two-month-old Rocco with partner Bobby Cannavale and revealed she is "nearly" at her goal weight. She said: "I'm feeling good. I'm not getting that much sleep, but that's alright! It goes with the territory. I'm nearly there. I went to the gym yesterday, which was exciting. I haven't done that for a while!" And Rose's close pal Olivia Wilde was also walking the carpet at the Marimekko for Target launch event, where she revealed Rocco and her 23-month-old son Otis have "no choice but

to be friends". Olivia added to E! News: "Otis has seen videos of Rocco trying to crawl. And Otis is saying, 'Go Rocco go.' They have no choice but to be friends. 'The four of us are going to force them to be friends so they might as well give into this arranged friendship.' Meanwhile, Bobby previously revealed he was "so tired" following the birth of the little one. He said at the time: "You know, I didn't do anything. We [fathers] don't do anything and I'm so tired. I think I've gained 28 pounds since Monday. 'I mean, I'm not kidding you. Like, this jacket fit so well, like, last Thursday. But I've been eating so much." — Bang Showbiz

Chelsea Handler has a 'personality for divorce'

The 41-year-old presenter - who previously dated rapper 50 Cent, hotelier Andre Balazs and TV executive Ted Harbert - doesn't believe relationships last forever and she is glad she never married when she was younger. She said: "If I'd got married in my 30s, I'd be divorced by now because I have a personality for divorce. 'And I don't really want kids. I'm not interested in the myth of 'The One' either. 'Who planted the Prince Charming idea anyway? There is no Prince Charming. 'It's a romantic notion to think there is a lid for every pot. There are a few lids. You are with someone for a period and then you move on. 'I believe, as you get older, you make better decisions and if I were to get married now, I would trust myself more. I'm not so stupid. I don't ignore the flags.' Chelsea admitted she doesn't have contact with her former lovers, which proved problematic for her 'Chelsea On... Marriage' Netflix show. She said: "Netflix wanted me to interview all my exes for the marriage doc. I didn't want to do that. 'To start with, none of my ex-boyfriends are speaking to me.' However, the blonde star made contact with her former boyfriend Peter, and now thinks everyone should meet their significant partner from their early 20s as their



chat was so enlightening. She told Red magazine: "Everyone should go and meet their ex-boyfriend from when they were 20 because it turns out I'm exactly the same. 'Peter was telling me I've always been an exercise maniac, I've always drunk more than the guys then woken up and run six miles."

War photographer and mother, the woman at center of new Spielberg film

Her parents were hairdressers in a small town in Connecticut-so it wasn't exactly written in the stars that Lynsey Addario should become one of the world's best known war photographers. Even after her Italian-American family got her a Nikon camera for her 13th birthday, she thought "photographers were crazy rich kids" with time on their hands. But fate was about to deal Addario the first of many strange hands that would take her to Afghanistan before September 11 turned the world upside down, and then from one war zone to the next.

"I never set out or wanted to cover war," the 42-year-old, who has continued to cover conflicts since becoming a mother five years ago, told AFP. In her book, "It's What I Do", Addario tries to make sense of what got her into one of the world's most dangerous professions. Despite several scrapes with death documenting wars from Iraq to Congo, "I didn't think anyone would read the book," she said. "It felt really uncom-

fortable... egotistical (even). I thought, who would possibly care about my life?" Steven Spielberg for starters. He is about to tell her story in a new film in which she will be played by Hollywood's hottest property, "Hunger Games" star Jennifer Lawrence.

Taken hostage

It will centre on her kidnapping in Libya in March 2011, when she was held with four other New York Times journalists by soldiers loyal to Colonel Kadhafi as large parts of the country rose up against him. That nightmare which included beatings, death threats and Addario being molested by her captors, ended with the journalists being released after a few days. Their driver Mohammed, who had been "frantic" with fear as they lingered amid sniper fire to photograph rebels along the road to the besieged town of Ajdabiya, was not so fortunate.

"I didn't want to be the cowardly photographer or the terrified girl

who prevented the men from doing their work," Addario wrote later, questioning their actions. As they were taken away, Mohammed was shot by the roadside. It was his death, and that of her friends and fellow photographers Tim Hetherington and Chris Hondros who were killed in Kadhafi's hometown Misrata the following month, that pushed Addario to put pen to paper. "After I was released I wanted to do a photo book. I was thinking about the work I had done, and going through my old work, and it was then that I found out that Tim and Chris had been killed," she said.

"I had this sort of moment of reckoning. I wanted to write... to communicate what I went through in Libya after my friends were killed. It just seemed a better way." As she tells it, Addario—who won a Pulitzer prize as part of a New York Times team in 2009—is an accidental war photographer. It all began after she was sent to Afghanistan in 2000 to photograph life for women under the Taliban. The following year, a



This file photo shows US photographer Lynsey Addario posing for a photograph in Paris. — AFP

country which most Americans could not have found on the map, became a national obsession as the hunt began for Osama bin Laden.

"I never set out or wanted to cover war. I started it because I'd been working so much in Afghanistan on the Taliban. It was natural that I went back there. "Then I wanted to

be in Iraq so I started to cover wars regularly, but it was because the stories brought me there, not because of war itself."

Tea with the Al-Zarqawis

It was in Iraq where she met the sisters of the then leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Abu Musab Al-

Zarqawi, out of whose group the Islamic State grew. "I do think it's always been a great advantage being a woman in this job," she told AFP during a visit to Paris, where her book has just been published in French.

"But because I work in the Muslim world I have access to both women and men. I can go into people's houses and interview the mothers and the sisters," she said. "I had tea with Al-Zarqawi's sisters because I was a woman, so I was thrown in with the women!"

Despite having a five-year-old son, Lukas, to whom she dedicated her book, Addario has continued to go work in war zones.

"I want people to see how other people live and to be sort of a messenger, I want to connect the dots, to give people perspective." For her the choice is simple.

"When I'm covering a humanitarian crisis, human rights abuse or war... you have to be out there (for it) to be seen by people from the comfort of their home." — AFP



Models present creations by Pakistani designer Zainab Chottani on the final day of the Fashion Pakistan Week in Karachi. — AFP photos

Pakistan Fashion Week



Models present creations by Pakistani designer Shameel Ansari.



Turn up the summer heat with Bossini



Bossini launches the hottest trends this summer. Men, Women and Kids get to pick their favorites from the new collection that promises effortless style. The women's collection's first trend Summer Dreams is inspired by the golden sunshine. The eyelet woven tops, and lace & stripe blocking knit tops are the must have items that gives texture to the casual collection. Making the collection pop is the bright palette of Yellow, Black and White. Holding on to the cheerful feel of the collection, the Pacific Girls trend expands the previous trend by adding energetic and cheerful elements like colorful sweets, ice cream and desserts print making for the ultimate Bossini woman- fun and vivacious! Adorned with rhinestones and lace trims the festive collection takes you to a secret gar-

den with the leaves prints taking center stage to create a look that is elegance personified.

The men's collection visits the Riviera with its Riviera Chic trend focused on the nautical and relaxed holiday feels. The collection will showcase varied prints ranging from coast, beach house, vintage travel van and denim shirts with trompe l'oeil graphic. Team up a dip dyed pair of denim shorts with perfect horizontal stripes to rock this look.

The Rio Fever is more adventurous with its dominant palm tree, Rio landscape photo and tropical floral prints. Men get to pick some statement pieces this festive season with all-over print, silver/ gold foil paper effect for key items like blazer and party shirts.

The Eco Nature trend for the little



girls take them on a path to appreciate and respect nature. With jungle and animal motifs as the graphic elements, the collection is all about comfort and style. Maxi dresses, wide leg pants will help these frolicking ones enjoy to the fullest.

The boys follow a similar trend with Eco Nature and Summer Sunshine. While the former is all about lightweight materials depicting graphics prints like leaves, animals and jungle motifs the latter trend is beach ready wear with large playful graphics. The oceanic and vibrant hues are a refreshing change from the last season's layers. Bossini is available at all Centrepoint stores and Splash - Avenues Mall and at Al-Salam Mall which is your one stop destination if you want to take on this season with the coolest styling hacks.

'The Force Awakens' wins top honors at MTV Movie Awards



Charlize Theron arrives at the MTV Movie Awards in Burbank, Calif. — AP/AFP photos



Actor Chris Pratt



Actress Tyler Posey



Actress Chrissie Fit



Model Gigi Hadid



Model Kendall Jenner



Actress/model Cara Delevingne

Star Wars: The Force Awakens" took the top prize at the 25th annual MTV Movie Awards. The audience at Warner Bros. Studios waved what looked like red and blue lightsabers as star Daisy Ridley and director JJ Abrams accepted the final golden popcorn trophy at Saturday night's ceremony. The prize capped off the irreverent awards show, which presents fan-voted film awards and touts upcoming releases. Dwayne Johnson and Kevin Hart hosted the show, opening it "Mad Max" style by riding through Warner Bros. Studios strapped to the front of a tricked-out truck. Later, they performed a rap song about the year's films that repeated the refrain "Leo got (expletive) by a bear" in reference to "The Revenant."

Will Smith and Melissa McCarthy each received special honors, and their heartfelt speeches were respites of sincerity in an expletive-laden show that featured more F-bombs than awards. Smith told the audience that he is "dedicated to being a light in this world" when he accepted the show's highest honor, the Generation Award. "I want to help people," Smith said after being introduced by Queen Latifah and Halle Berry. "I want to be a light. I want to display love. I want to play roles that have dignity. I want to help in this world."

McCarthy, who crowd-surfed her way to the stage to claim the Comedic Genius Award, said that while she is the first woman to receive the recognition, "I am certainly, certainly not the first one to deserve it." She thanked everyone who buys tickets to her movies or watches her shows. "You are absolutely the single reason I get to keep doing what I love doing so much," she said. Charlize Theron won the first award of the night: best female performance for "Mad Max: Fury Road." She thanked the film's director, her son, Jackson, and daughter, August.

"The story of 'Fury Road' is in part a story of the power of women and the power to create our own destinies," Theron said as she accepted the award in her daughter's name. "Pitch Perfect 2" co-stars Rebel Wilson and Adam Devine created an intimate destiny for themselves as they claimed the prize for best kiss, pretending to be



'The Wolfpack' Angulo Brothers

overcome with passion and collapsing in an embrace on the stage. Other winners included Chris Pratt (action performance for "Jurassic World"), Amy Poehler ("virtual performance" as Joy in "Inside Out") and "Straight Outta Compton," which won for true story. Ryan Reynolds won two prizes for "Deadpool": comedic performance and best fight, which he shared with Ed Skrein.

Reynolds said he worked for 10 years to get "Deadpool" made, but he added that "it was not all unicorns and cocaine" during production. The MTV Movie Awards serves as a marketing platform for summer movies. Most presenters were

principals from upcoming films, including Keegan-Michael Key and Jordan Peele of "Keanu," out later this month. Theron took the stage with Jessica Chastain and Chris Hemsworth, her co-stars from "The Huntsman: Winter's War." Devine presented alongside Anna Kendrick and Zac Efron - the three star in "Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates."

Other presenters included Seth Rogen, Woody Harrelson, Emilia Clarke, Common, Kendall Jenner and Gigi Hadid. Ariana Grande, Halsey and Salt-N-Pepa provided musical performances. The show also included never-before-

seen footage from "Suicide Squad" and "Captain America: Civil War." Eddie Redmayne unveiled the world premiere of the trailer for "Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them."

Ridley and Abrams accepted the night's top prize from Samuel L. Jackson and Alexander Skarsgard, who co-star in the forthcoming "The Legend of Tarzan."

Skarsgard came onstage wearing a tuxedo jacket and no pants, saying: "You got to give the fans a little skin." The MTV Movie Awards are set to air Sunday on MTV, Comedy Central and other Viacom channels. — AP



Actress Jessica Chastain



(From Left) Actors O'Shea Jackson Jr, Corey Hawkins, Jason Mitchell, Neil Brown Jr, Aldis Hodge, and Common attend the 2016 MTV Movie Awards.



Actress Lizzy Caplan



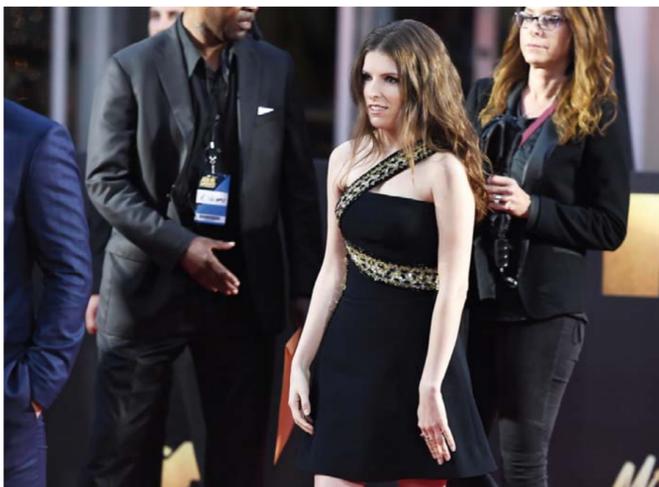
Actress Holland Roden



TV personalities Sabrina Kennedy, Kailah Casillas, Chris Hall, CeeJai Jenkins, Dean Bart-Plange, and Dione Mariani attend the 2016 MTV Movie Awards.



Mike Posner



Model Kendall Jenner

List of winners from the 2016 MTV Movie Awards

Movie of the year: "Star Wars: The Force Awakens"
Female performance: Charlize Theron, "Mad Max: Fury Road"
Male performance: Leonardo DiCaprio, "The Revenant"
Virtual performance: Amy Poehler, "Inside Out"
Action performance: Chris Pratt, "Jurassic World"
True story: "Straight Outta Compton"
Documentary: "Amy"
Comedic performance: Ryan Reynolds, "Deadpool"
Breakthrough performance: Daisy Ridley, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens"
Best kiss: Rebel Wilson and Adam Devine, "Pitch Perfect 2"
Best fight: Ryan Reynolds and Ed Skrein, "Deadpool"
Best hero: Jennifer Lawrence, "The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 2"
Best villain: Adam Driver, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens"
Ensemble cast: "Pitch Perfect 2"
MTV Generation Award: Will Smith
Comedic Genius Award: Melissa McCarthy. — AP



Andy Samberg, from background left, Jorma Taccone and Jason Mitchell.



Adam DeVine and Chloe Bridges



Actor Ed Skrein



Recording artists Cheryl James, Sandra Denton and DJ Spinderella of Salt-n-Pepa.



Emilia Clarke



Actors Jordan Peele (left) and Keegan-Michael.



Actor Seth Rogen



Singer Liam Horne



Internet personality Baddie Winkle



Comedian Milton 'Lil Rel' Howery



TV personality Farrah Abraham



Actress Jillian Rose Reed



A Tale of Two Cultures: Sons of Yusuf shine a light through the fog

Amidst the Islamophobic rhetoric taking the world by storm, some of which is being dispersed by several presidential campaigns in the US, two youngsters from Kuwait are aiming to reveal the truth behind a region misunderstood. Sons of Yusuf are already known to many youth in Kuwait and the Arab World as performers of Western hip-hop music that talks about the great pride in being Kuwaiti, a Gulf citizen, Arab and Muslim.

They've appeared on local TV ads in Ramadan, have performed at Kuwait University and other universities and art venues across Kuwait, the United States, the Gulf and the Arab World and have been interviewed by CNN and Alarabiya. They have been endorsed time and time again by more and more cultural societies and media outlets as their fanbase gets bigger and bigger. Their Youtube video "Hala Hala (We Dem Boyz Arabia Remix)," which is a satire of a song by US rapper Wiz Khalifa with an Arab twist, has reached one million views.

This is plainly due to the fact that Sons of Yusuf are not your typical run-of-the-mill pop group. While it is hard in this day and age to find music that carries a message, they do. "We want them to know what our culture and heritage is about," they told KUNA, fresh from having performed in Washington DC amongst a group of travelling artists from the Arab Gulf.

After the Gulf War, which ended in 1991, two young brothers followed their family to America where they went to school and



had their first interactions with American children. "We saw how they would react to us. All these questions we would get - 'do you ride camels back home? Do you live in a tent?'" This formed their desire to "explain things" to people, and "show people where we come from," Ya'kub, 28, says.

Younger brother Abdul Rahman, 26, who goes by the stage name of 'Humble Abdul', says that the group's music is about "being ourselves. To basically stop chasing the Western world and doing whatever they're

doing." Sons of Yusuf's videos show two guys dressed in attire known to the Gulf as the 'dish-dasha', a white dress-like garment worn by men, and a skull cap known as 'ghafiyah' as well as t-shirts and baseball caps. Women in their videos wear the burqa as well as jeans and t-shirts much like the diverse Gulf society which has witnessed the entry of Western fashions yet still maintains its own. Despite their obvious links to the West, Ya'kub says the brothers haven't forgotten their faith, and "the feeling I got when I visited Makka and wit-



nessed the Kaaba was indescribable."

Through a medium common to many young people around the world, including the Arab region, the group say they aim to remind the younger Gulf Arab generation of their old values and traditions. "We have a responsibility, especially to the youth," Abdul Rahman underlines. And, at a time where media does not do much to highlight the culture and heritage of Kuwaiti and Gulf Arab societies, they have taken it upon themselves to "break through boundaries" and make their culture

known to the West. "Especially at this time, you know, we feel like this is our time to speak up."

It's about time we share our side of the story - not just the media and the news," explains Ya'kub. "We can't change everything, but we want to spark new ideas and inspire others to speak out through art and music." Sons of Yusuf are currently working on an album in Los Angeles, California, entitled "Sheikh The World," with a US Grammy-award winning producer. — KUNA

Judge grants Sheen's ex-fiance temporary restraining order

A judge on Friday granted Charlie Sheen's ex-fiance a temporary restraining order after she cited threats the actor made toward her and two 2014 incidents of alleged domestic violence. Superior Court Judge Alicia Blanco approved the stay-away order Friday based on Scottine Ross' application stating she was fearful of the actor because he purportedly threatened her life on an audio recording obtained by the celebrity website RadarOnline.com.

Ross' filing also stated Sheen kicked her on the ground in January 2014 and choked her to the point she almost lost consciousness a few months later. Emails to Sheen's publicist and lawyer seeking comment were not immediately returned. The order requires Sheen to refrain from contacting Ross; to stay 100 yards from her, her home, workplace and car; and to turn in any guns he may own. The order also allows Ross, who performed in adult films under the name Brett Rossi, to record any conversations she has with the actor.

There are no indications in the filing that Sheen has sought to contact Ross recently. Los Angeles police confirmed Wednesday they're investigating Sheen after receiving a criminal report last week. They haven't identified the alleged victim or the exact nature of the investigation, which is being headed by detectives from a unit that investigates serious stalking and criminal threats cases. RadarOnline has said it was served with a warrant seeking audio that is purportedly of Sheen threatening to bury Ross, whose relationship with the actor ended in 2014. The website has said it believes the warrant is illegal. Ross is suing Sheen, claiming he had sex with her without disclosing he has HIV. That case is being handled in arbitration. A hearing to extend the temporary restraining order has been set for April 28 in Santa Monica. — AP



Nude, singing with wolves? Belarus to test Eurovision limits

Belarusian singer Ivan plans to take next month's Eurovision Song Contest by storm—performing completely naked with a wolf at his side. But his plan may prove too much even for a show known as an annual celebration of weirdness, held this year in Stockholm in May. The act by the lanky 21-year-old with a mane of reddish blond hair was dreamt up by Viktor Drobysch, a well-known Russian producer with a strong Eurovision track record. "It's undoubtedly an experience, a great experience," Ivan, whose real name is Alexander Ivanov, told AFP in an interview at Drobysch's Moscow studio.

"Especially as I have never performed on stage before in my birthday suit and with wild

animals." The problem? It is not clear whether the act will be allowed to go ahead. Eurovision bans animals on stage. And while there is no rule on nudity, spokesman Paul Jordan told AFP this is "not appropriate" for a family show. Drobysch insists the performance is an artistic statement.

'Art, Not Porn'

"It's not about vulgarity or sex at all. 'We want this to be art, not porn,' he said, as the studio staff—with a bit of irony-tinkered with a future track by Ivan with the chorus, "I want sex, sex, sex." "I think the beauty that will be in our performance is comparable to that of Rodin's 'The Thinker,'" Drobysch said, evoking

the French artist's famous nude sculpture. "Can you imagine 'The Thinker' wearing jeans?" Eurovision, now in its 61st year, features acts ranging from the brilliant to the bizarre and pulls in a TV audience from around the world. Its finals are set for May 14.

Ivan will represent Belarus, a small ex-Soviet country not exactly known for its libertarian ways. It is sandwiched between the European Union and Russia, its chief ally. "The final version of the song will be confirmed later," chief spokeswoman for Belarus state television and radio company Svetlana Kraskovskaya told AFP. "What you see is one of the options," she said of a promo video of Ivan singing his contest entry, "Help You Fly", in which he appears naked with a trained shewolf named Shakira by his side.

Eurovision is known for its wacky outfits—from Finland's 2006 winner Lordi in their monster masks to Ukraine's 2007 drag queen contestant Verka Serduchka in her disco-mirrored headdress. But Ivan has been dubbed in some reports as possibly the songfest's weirdest contestant yet, something he takes as a compliment. He says he and Drobysch thought long about possible costumes, but ultimately decided on none at all, to show "nature and man are together". Working with a wolf brought another challenge. "The first rehearsals were very scary, but all the same we made friends," said Ivan, adding the sausages he fed her helped. "She liked my smell and started rubbing up against me."

Spirit of the times

Drobysch is pushing for the act. And as the man behind Russia's Buranovskiye Babushki, a choir of elderly ladies who won second place in 2012 when they charmed the audience



A picture shows Belarus' singer Ivan, whose real name is Alexander Ivanov, playing the guitar during an interview with AFP at Russian producer Viktor Drobysch's studio in Moscow.

with their mix of authentic peasant outfits and disco beat, he's made a name at Eurovision. He said the Belarusian state television company "is working on all the legal questions", although its spokeswoman told AFP that Drobysch himself is in charge of negotiations.

Eurovision "will take a decision" after seeing a "second-by-second outline of the routine," said Drobysch. He admitted there is a less exciting plan B for the performance, which he described as a "lite" version. Belarus has performed at Eurovision 12 times since 1994 and its best result was Dmitry Koldun's sixth place in 2007 with "Work Your Magic". Some online commentators in Belarus have expressed shock at the planned performance. — AFP



A picture shows Belarus' singer Ivan, whose real name is Alexander Ivanov, posing for pictures. — AFP photos