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ISLAMIC SUMMIT APPRECIATES KUWAIT FOR HOSTING YEMEN TALKS

KUWAIT'S HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO SYRIANS LAUDED

ISTANBUL: The 13th Islamic Summit Conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) that wrapped up meetings yesterday highly appreciated Kuwait that will host negotiations among Yemeni stakeholders on Monday.

The Final Communique of the summit, dubbed the 'Istanbul Declaration', also commended Kuwait's support to the humanitarian situation in Yemen, and to the efforts seeking to restore security and stability in the country, in line with constitutional legitimacy.

In his address to the opening of the two-day session on Thursday, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah called on all Yemeni parties to find a peaceful settlement to their country's ongoing crisis, and a conflict that has been on for years. His Highness the Amir hoped the recently declared cease-fire would pave the way for the upcoming reconciliations talks in Kuwait, April 18th. The Kuwaiti cabinet wished during its meeting last week that the talks in Kuwait would put an end to the conflict in Yemen and stop bloodshed there, urging all Yemeni rivals to abide by the truce.

Pledging Conference

The OIC's meetings also commended Kuwait's sincere efforts backing the humanitarian situation in Syria. The Final Communique highlighted the first, second and third 'International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria,' which Kuwait hosted over the past three years. In the three events, Kuwait offered a total of \$1.3 billion. Pledges by participant states in the three events hit \$7.7 billion.

The Declaration also referred to Kuwait's participation in the fourth conference for Syria donors held in London in February, in partnership with the UK, Germany, Norway and the UN. The London conference came in response to the grave humanitarian repercussions in Syria.

In his address to the opening of the two-day session on Thursday, His Highness the Amir hoped that the ongoing political efforts would end the "unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe" in Syria. "We urge the strife parties not to miss the opportunity and to place their homeland's interests above all priorities and halt the blood shedding," His Highness the Amir told the summit.

A new round of Syria negotiations kicked off in Geneva on Wednesday, in a bid to resolve the crisis that erupted more than five years ago, with a humanitarian disaster, seen as the worst globally. His Highness the Amir announced during the London conference that Kuwait, on the official and popular levels, would provide further \$300 million to support the humanitarian situation of the Syrian people.

The OIC also congratulated His Highness the Amir for having been named by the UN as a 'Humanitarian Leader.' It noted in the final communique that the UN honoring of His Highness the Amir was a recognition of his role as a leader and supporter of the United Nations humanitarian work.

It was on September 9, 2014 that UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon named His Highness the Amir a humanitarian leader and Kuwait a center for humanitarian work at a ceremony held in the Kuwaiti leader's honor at the UN headquarters in NYC. The ceremony

was an apt tribute paid to His Highness the Amir for his leading support to humanitarian causes around the world.

The Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the OIC concluded their summit dubbed 'Unity and Solidarity for Justice and Peace' in Istanbul, Turkey. The Summit Conference was chaired by Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Turkey. The Conference expressed its appreciation to the Arab Republic of Egypt for its competent Chairmanship of the 12th Islamic Summit and wise leadership for the OIC.

Palestine

The Conference emphasized the centrality of the cause of Palestine and Jerusalem for the Muslim nation. It reaffirmed its principled support for the right of the Palestinian people to

personality of the State of Palestine at the international level.

The Conference commended the efforts deployed by His Majesty King Mohamed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee to protect the Islamic and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem in the face of the measures being taken by the Israeli occupation authorities aimed and Judaizing the holy city.

It also lauded the role of the Bayt Mal Al-Quds Agency of the Al-Quds Committee through the execution of development 2 projects and activities for the inhabitants of the holy city and support for their steadfastness. It called on Member States to increase support for the Agency to enable it continue its work.

The Conference also underlined the need for the Ministerial Contact Group on Al-Quds Al-Sharif, under the chairmanship of the

Great hope

Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Iyad Madani said that the peoples of the Muslim world pin great hopes on the 13th Islamic Summit Conference. The two-day summit was attended by heads of states and governments from over 30 countries.

Madani lauded the endorsement of the OIC Ten-Year Program of Action, till 2025. The 5th Extraordinary OIC Summit on Palestine and Jerusalem held in Jakarta, Indonesia in March, brought the Palestinian Cause to the international forefront, Madani said. He welcomed efforts by France that voiced support to an international conference on peace in the Middle East.

The OIC chief urged the Palestinians to overcome their disagreements and speed up work to form a unity government as soon as possible. Madani added that the Muslim world has been the scene of 180 terrorist attacks over the past three months, that killed 3,000 people and injured 4,000 others.

He urged all the member states to sign the OIC agreement against terrorism. Only 21 states out of 57 members have signed it. Madani said he believed that the OIC lacks the collective organization for settling disputes, urging the member states to endorse the Islamic Court of Justice, approved 35 years ago. Only 13 countries have signed it.

In the meantime, the OIC Secretary General expressed support to the UN efforts to dissolve the Syrian crisis. He said that the OIC is working with the Iraqi government to organize Makaan 2 conference for reconciliation in Iraq.

Successful visit

Meanwhile, Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir said that the visit by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to Turkey was successful and resulted in the signing of an agreement for the establishment of a coordination council between the two countries which covers several fields, including diplomatic, media, cultural, political, trade, military and military industrialization, security and others, pointing out that the joint teams from the two sides will begin work on activating the agreement.

Jubeir noted that the speech delivered by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques during the Islamic summit focused on the importance of Islamic solidarity, the importance of closing ranks and confronting extremism and terrorism, as well as finding a solution to the Palestinian cause that leads to the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

The speech also confirmed the importance of adhering to the principles of good neighborliness and non-interference in the affairs of other countries and the risks of interventions in the affairs of other countries. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques stressed, in his speech, the importance of activating the OIC organization to better serve the Islamic nation.

Amir thanks Erdogan

Also Thursday night, His Highness the Amir sent a cable of appreciation to Erdogan for hospitality at the 13th OIC Summit, held in Istanbul. His Highness the Amir lauded decisions and resolutions made during the summit that would be of great interest to Islamic nations. He also praised the level of preparations and efforts exerted by the Turkish Government to host such grand event. — KUNA



ISTANBUL: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attends the 13th Islamic Summit Conference of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Istanbul, Turkey on Thursday. — KUNA

regain their inalienable national rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state on the territory occupied since June 1967, with Jerusalem as its capital. It also reaffirmed the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in accordance with International Law and Resolution 194 (III) adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 11, 1948.

The Conference reaffirmed the need for the early convening of an International Peace Conference to set mechanisms to provide international protection for the Palestinian people and to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967 including East Jerusalem, in implementation of the relevant UN Resolutions and the Arab peace initiative.

Therefore, the Conference called for continued action to seek the adoption of a UN Security Council resolution calling for an end to the Israeli occupation within a timetable for its implementation, and reaffirmed the full support for the efforts of the State of Palestine to accede to international treaties and organizations with a view to consolidating the legal

Kingdom of Morocco whose monarch chairs the Al-Quds Committee to continue its efforts and actions to contact influential international parties and to deliver the OIC message and demands regarding the city of Jerusalem. It, therefore, reiterated the adoption of the Strategic Plan on the Development of Jerusalem, and called on all Member States to provide financial resources necessary for its implementation.

The Conference commended the Republic of Indonesia for hosting the Extraordinary Summit on Palestine in Jakarta on 6-7 March 2016. The Conference reiterated support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to realize an independent State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital as reflected through the adoption of the outcome documents of the Summit, namely the Jakarta Declaration and OIC Resolution Number.

The Conference also thanked the Republic of Senegal for its continued action in favor of the Palestinian cause and reaffirmed its support for all the actions it takes as chair of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.



Kuwaiti inventor Nasser Al-Jimaz

KUWAITI TEEN CONTENDS FOR INT'L AWARD

GENEVA: Nasser Al-Jimaz, a 16-year-old Kuwaiti inventor, is competing for the award of the 44th International Exhibition of Inventions in Geneva, jostling for the prize among 1,000 contenders from 40 countries.

Jimaz is taking part in the Geneva exhibition, sponsored by the World Intellectual Property Organization and the Swiss Government, representing an expedition of the GCC Patent Office. The Kuwaiti citizen is the youngest inventor taking part in the international competition, with his innovation of transforming carbon dioxide (CO₂) into plastic granules.

Jimaz had developed desire for creativity when he was eight of age, joining the Scientific Center, where he discovered his interest in chemistry. At first, he entertained himself with mixing liquids and gases at the laboratory.

Scientific issues

The Kuwaiti innovator told said in an interview that he started to question basic scientific issues as he grew up, such as how to tackle the environment deterioration, and cope with hazards threatening the Earth and the human race.

Huge waste caused by consumption of various edible materials and food, namely bananas, had caught his attention, and he was wondering how to get rid of such waste when it dawned on him that peels contain the material aster which can be transformed into plastic. "I engaged myself in lengthy studies looking for methods how to treat the banana aster with chemical substances," he said.

"I could not sleep at night when I discovered the combination and my family was overwhelmed with joy realizing that my joining of the Scientific Club was not a waste of time." He explained that he succeeded in transforming carbon dioxide into plastic granules; subjecting the gas to chemical interactions before producing the tiny plastic pieces.

Jimaz said that his invention is better than other proposed methods; such as dissipating the carbon dioxide in sea and oceans' waters, "for the Kuwaiti invention could eventually help in creating new jobs." The plastic granules are used in various plastic industries.

Ambitious innovators

Meanwhile, Metleg Al-Baqmi, in charge of supporting innovation at the GCC Patent Office, said that the Council is very much keen on encouraging ambitious innovators in various fields in the member countries.

Current approach in the GCC countries is shifting from consuming to producing societies and that can be attained by supporting the skilled youth in all scientific and intellectual sectors. The GCC bureau holds regular sessions to offer technical and legal consultations to the inventors. — KUNA

IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY FACES CONCERNS OVER ISLAMAPHOBIA

SALMON: Idaho State University's president said on Thursday he had been in talks with Saudi and Kuwaiti education officials seeking to allay concerns about students from those countries facing anti-Muslim harassment in the college town of Pocatello.

The discussions with officials from the two Gulf states, which together account for about 1,000 of the foreign students enrolled at Idaho State, were disclosed as school officials sought to determine the origin of anti-Muslim propaganda being distributed anonymously via DVDs on campus.

Hate-crime investigation

Separately, police in Pocatello have opened a hate-crime investigation into an attack on a man of Middle Eastern descent who was stabbed in the arm earlier this week for no other apparent reason than his appearance, Police Chief

Scott Marchand said. The off-campus assault was reported to police by the hospital where the man, who was not a university student, was taken for treatment, Marchand said.

Idaho State President Arthur Vailas said he was unaware of any individual complaints of anti-Muslim discrimination or harassment other than those cited in recent media accounts, such as a New York Times story last month about campus tensions faced by Saudi and Kuwaiti students.

"I expect all students to bring forth their concerns. The only way we can help is for people to come forward and we can look into the cases," Vailas told Reuters. But Vailas said the university was consulting with higher education officials from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, whose students account for nearly 10 percent of the school's 11,000 undergraduates, to address concerns about Islamaphobia.

Scholarships suspended

The Arabic-language Kuwaiti daily newspaper Al-Qabas and English-language outlet Gulf News reported on Thursday that the two Gulf nations were suspending scholarships earmarked for Idaho State and transferring their respective students at that school to other universities.

Kuwait's higher education minister was quoted as saying some 400 students were facing racial discrimination at the Pocatello campus. Vailas said he had no indication that the 535 Kuwaiti students or 481 Saudi students were being transferred elsewhere.

The US attorney for Idaho planned to meet publicly with international students from predominantly Islamic countries as part of a push announced this week by the US Justice Department to stem discrimination against Muslim, Arab, Sikh and South Asian Americans following militant attacks in Brussels, Paris and San Bernardino, California. — Reuters

REPORT: KUWAIT LUCRATIVE INVESTMENT DESTINATION

BRUSSELS: Favorable developments have placed Kuwait at the forefront as a lucrative investment destination for both local and foreign investments, according to the latest Newsletter of the Arab-Belgium-Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce (ABLCC).

It listed as favorable developments "the openness of the Kuwaiti economy, the strength of its macroeconomic performance, its strategic location as a link between the Gulf and the hinterland, and the predominance of Kuwait well-educated and talented youth."

The publication said that "Kuwait's new Five-Year Development Plan (2015/2016-2019/2020) embedded these favorable developments by focusing on enhancing economic diversification, fostering Kuwait's competitiveness, and adopting an economic policy that allows the private sector to play a leading role in the economy."

ABLCC referred to the Kuwait Investment Forum held in March and commented that this "Forum convened against the background of several positive developments witnessed in the Kuwaiti economy that have caught the attention of investors."

"It distinctly demonstrated the Kuwaiti Government's resolve to attract quality local and foreign investments, by creating the right investment environment, simplifying procedures, enabling a favorable legislative framework for the encouragement and protection of investment, and offering a host of incentives and exemptions, including allowing for a 100% foreign ownership," said the Newsletter. Founded in 1978, the ABLCC plays the role of bridge to develop economic and trade cooperation between Belgium, Luxembourg and the Arab countries. — KUNA



KUWAITI DELEGATION PARTICIPATES IN MARITIME INDIAN SUMMIT 2016

NEW DELHI: A high level Kuwaiti delegation is participating in the three-day Maritime Indian Summit 2016, held in the Indian financial capital of India Mumbai. President of Arab Sea Ports Federation (ASPF) and Director General of Kuwait Ports Authority (KPA) Sheikh Youssef Abdullah Al-Sabah, who is in Mumbai heading a high level Kuwaiti delegation said yesterday that the Kuwaiti delegation, comprising officials from government and private companies, is participating in the three-day event which will help strengthen ties between India and Kuwait in the field of maritime transport and trade.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called upon the participating countries in the event, organized by the Indian Shipping Ministry in cooperation with the South Korean government for the first time, to invest hugely to exploit the 7500-km-long coastline of India. He also underlined comparative Indian advantage made possible by the strategic location of the Indian coasts which are connected to the major maritime routes.

Modi further said: "I must mention that our vast coastline of 7,500 kilometers offers a huge investment opportunity. Apart from the length of the coastline, India's maritime potential also lies in its strategic location on all major shipping highways.

"In addition, we have an expansive and productive hinterland, through which flows a network of mighty rivers. Our maritime agenda will complement this ambitious infrastructure plan for the hinterland which is going on in parallel," he added.

During his inaugural speech on Thursday, the Union Shipping and Ports Minister of India Nitin Gadkari had also said that India is planning to double the ports capacity within 10 years-time. "We have launched an ambitious program 'Project Unnati' to modernise our major ports. The major ports had registered record profits of \$650 Million in 2015-16. The turnaround time in ports has reduced by 20 percent, enabling customers to save over \$200 Million," the Indian minister said. — KUNA

THREE DEAD IN SEPARATE FALLS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Three people fell to their death from high places in separate cases reported Thursday. An Egyptian man died after falling from a house under construction in Hawally, while an Asian man died when he fell from the third floor. Police launched a criminal investigation in the second case after evidence of foul play was found. Another Asian man died when he fell from a Mahboula building. Police are investigating the three cases.

'Drugs' found

A banned substance was discovered hidden under the seat of a bus transporting inmates from and to courts recently. When the bus was searched before entering the central prison area, two pieces containing a substance suspected to be drugs were found, the Interior Ministry's General Department of Relations and Security Information said in a statement, quoting the Directorate General of Correctional Facilities. Investigations are underway.

Theft

A Tunisian man told Fahaheel police that a Sri Lankan maid escaped after stealing with five gold bracelets, \$200 and 300 Saudi Riyals. The name of the suspect was placed on the wanted list.

Hawally crackdown

Police carried out a security campaign Wednesday night in Nugra. The campaign resulted in the arrest of 879 persons who were sent for deportation and to other concerned authorities. It was found out that 189 are in violation of residency law, 46 with expired residencies, 418 did not have an ID, 8 were wanted on felonies, 48 were reported absconding, 32 were wanted on civil cases and 89 were loose laborers.

Red-handed

Vice police arrested a Chinese woman red-handed. The arrest was made after learning about the woman's illegal activities, and the team collected the needed information. The suspect told police she came to Kuwait to carry out illegal activities. She was sent to concerned authorities.



KUWAIT: Major General Khalid Al-Terkait, Deputy Director General for Human Resources Development Affairs at Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) recently honored Dr Adnan Al-Tamimi, Head of the Emergency Management Center at the Gulf Cooperation Council, in recognition of the center's participation in the fourth International Fire and Safety Conference. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun



KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) recently organized a graduation ceremony for heads of departments in the firefighting sector, who participated in training courses held recently as part of KFSD's human resources development program. KFSD officials including Director General Lieutenant General Yousuf Al-Ansari and Deputy Director General for Human Resources Development Affairs Major General Khalid Al-Terkait attended the ceremony. — By Hanan Al-Saadoun

Crime

Report

Teacher accused of beating disabled child, denies charges

KUWAIT: A teacher and the family of a handicapped child exchanged charges. The family claimed the teacher beat the child, while the teacher said the child's mother insulted him. The family of the 14-year-old child said the teacher did not give any consideration to the child's disability and beat him. The incident took place in a Hawally school, when the child asked the teacher to allow him to play football during a break, but the teacher ignored him, though other students were playing. When the student repeated his request, the teacher beat him, causing grazes and bruises on the abdomen area and pain in the knee. The child's mother appealed to authorities to investigate.

Involuntary manslaughter

An Indian man was killed when he fell from a building and landed on a moving car. His body was recovered by the coroner, as the case was recorded as involuntary manslaughter. A police source said that the victim did not have any ID on him, so fingerprints were taken and he was later identified. Investigations are underway.

'Unidentified bag'

Interior Ministry operations received a call about an unidentified bag that was found inside the house of a Gulf ambassador. Police and state security officers went to the house and found a walkie-talkie inside the bag that belonged to a pharmacy. Policemen went to the pharmacy, where the pharmacist told them their security guard lost the device, as someone took the guard's bag. Tapes were reviewed, and the picture of the man who took the bag was shown to the ambassador, who said it was his relative. The relative said he took the bag by mistake.

Sexual assault

A woman accused a citizen of assaulting her sexually. She said she knew the man who offered her a drink in the lobby of a three-star hotel, then lured her to his room. She gave police the suspect's phone number.

Prostitution

Two women were arrested on prostitution charges in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. Investigations revealed that

the two women offered sexual services in an apartment in the area.

Assault

Three Egyptians said a citizen, whom they named, went to their residence and beat them severely using sticks and destroyed the contents of their apartment. They said they do not know the reason behind the attack. Jahra prosecutor ordered the case to be registered as assault and destruction of personal belongings. The three complainants work as barbers.

Chewing gum theft

An Egyptian man was detained at Zahra police station for stealing chewing gum worth KD 81.600. The management of a major supermarket told police that an Indian guard caught the expat while attempting to leave with the chewing gum boxes.

Search for swindler

A citizen told Reqqa police that a woman made him believe she is a businesswoman, so he gave her KD 4,000, only to discover that she is a swindler. He said the woman told him about a property in an Arab country for a special price and said she deals there in real estate.

Reckless driving

A sports car was taken by Taima detectives and the traffic department were asked to identify the owner, following reckless driving calls during the recent rainfall. Patrols went to the scene and asked the driver to stop, but he ran over a policeman and escaped. Three bullets were fired at the car, making the driver to abandon it and escape.

Failed escape

A woman charged with stealing perfumes and cosmetics failed twice in her attempt to escape from Salmiya police station and was twice returned to her holding cell. The woman was caught after stealing goods worth KD 1,000 and leaving without paying. Once at the police station, she said that she left her son in a hotel and started crying, but when they brought her out, she ran away, but was caught. When she was about to be taken to the interrogator, she escaped again and took a taxi, but was caught again. — Al-Anbaa





KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

HELLO ARTISTS...

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

Good luck to you, our young artists.

- Competition is open to ages from (6 - 8) (9 - 11) (12 - 14) and (15 - 17) & Special needs.
- The competition is open for all schools in Kuwait (Government and Private)
- **The competition will start on March 10th and will continue till April 21, 2016.**
- 10 winners from each category will receive valuable prizes.
- All participants will receive a certificate of appreciation.
- All schools participating in the

- competition will receive an appreciation plaque.
- Any school or individual interested to participate in this competition is welcome to visit the office of Kuwait Times and collect the drawing sheets.
- Drawing sheets will be given to schools FREE of charge.
- Only drawing sheets provided by the Kuwait Times will be allowed.
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MASHIKI: A resident walks by a collapsed house in Mashiki, Kumamoto prefecture, southern Japan, yesterday. Aftershocks rattled communities in southern Japan as businesses and residents got a fuller look yesterday at the widespread damage from an unusually strong overnight earthquake. — AP

EMBASSY URGES CITIZENS TO BE CAUTIOUS AFTER JAPAN QUAKE

TOKYO: Kuwaiti residents in Japan are advised to take precautions due to tremors registered in aftermath of the 6.5-degree earthquake that hit southern region of Kumamoto late on Wednesday, the State of Kuwait Embassy said in a statement yesterday. The Kuwaitis should be vigilant and taken necessary precautions to protect themselves against the tremors, caused by the Wednesday's quake, the embassy said. They are also advised to abide by safety instructions, issued by relevant local authorities. Kuwaiti citizens who may need help or find themselves encountering an emergency situation, should call the diplomatic mission in Tokyo on the following telephone numbers: 0361-3455-03, or 0362-3455-03 or 0363-3455-03. — KUNA



KUWAIT NAMES NON-RESIDENT AMBASSADOR TO KOSOVO

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Albania Fayez Meshari Al-Jassim submitted his credentials to Kosovo's President Hashim Thaci as a non-resident ambassador to Kosovo. During the credentials handing-over ceremony, Jassim relayed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the newly-appointed Kosovan President. Meanwhile, the Kosovan leader sent out his greetings to the Kuwaiti leadership and wished the Gulf country prosperity and advancement. During the meeting bilateral ties and cooperation in all domains were discussed. — KUNA

OPERATIONS TO RESTORE STABILITY IN YEMEN: ANALYSTS

RIYADH: A number of Saudi political analysts and media persons have stressed that 'Operation Decisive Storm' and 'Operation Restoration of Hope' are an integrated plan aimed to restore political and economic stability in Yemen. They lauded the Saudi-led Operation Restoration of Hope with its humanitarian aspects, which was launched on April 21, 2015, some 26 days after 'Operation Decisive Storm' achieved its military goals, in accordance with the scheduled plan, without causing casualties or damaging infrastructure and institutions.

Military goals

Head of the Shorouq Center for Economic Studies Dr Abdurrahman Baashan said that the coalition managed to weaken military capabilities of Yemen's Houthis and dominated regional waters and airspace.

He said the operation, which came in response to a request by Yemeni President Abd Rabuhh Mansur Hadi, achieved its military goals in a short period of time, and after that Operation Restoration of Hope began alleviating suffering of Yemenis caused by military operation against Houthis.

The command of the Saudi-led coalition announced on April 21, 2015, the conclusion of Operation Decisive Storm and the start of Operation Restoration of Hope in response to Hadi's request.

The command clarified at a statement at that time that Operation Restoration of Hope included several goals, mainly the resumption of political process in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2,216, the Gulf Initiative and the output of comprehensive national dialogue, as well as continued protection of civilians, the evacuation of foreigners and the provision of humanitarian and medical aid to Yemenis in the conflict-affected areas.

The Operation aimed to confront military operations launched by Houthi militias and their supporters.

Yemenis' suffering

Meanwhile, Abdulaziz Al-Jabri, head of a media institution, said 'Operation Restoration of Hope' reflected interest of Saudi Arabia and GCC countries in Yemenis, and contributed to alleviating their suffering resulted from the con-



LAHEJ: Yemeni loyalist forces checkpoint on a road yesterday in the town of Lahej, 30 kilometers from the port city of Aden. — AFP

flict. He added that all charities and Red Crescent societies in GCC countries, mainly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, sent humanitarian and relief aid to all areas liberated from Houthis as soon as the operation began.

He saw that the King Salman Center for Humanitarian Relief was established upon his great interest in humanitarian action to show a clear message to the world that Saudi Arabia maintains peace and is keen on mitigating suffering of conflict-affected nations and societies, mainly Yemenis.

Mohammad Al-Hammadi, UN Goodwill Ambassador said humanitarian and military operations launched by the Saudi-led Arab coalition in Yemen is carried out in accordance with an integrated plan which has economic, diplomatic and political paths aimed to restore security and stability, and at the same time rebuild areas destroyed by the war.

Prominent achievement

Hammadi, who is a Saudi citizen, added the establishment of the King Salman Center is a prominent achievement made through Operation Restoration of Hope. This briefed the

international community on the sorrowful incidents which claimed lives of innocents, he said, adding that as a result of these incidents, Yemen needs humanitarian and political support from the international community.

He noted that Saudi Arabia's centers provided aid to all brothers in Yemen without sectarian or ethnic discrimination, referring to the key role played by the coalition states that led to the issuance of UN Security Council Resolution 2,216 which gave an international legitimacy to the two operations for achieving security and stability in Yemen. In the same context, Aref Al-Udaila, a senior official at a media and research institution, said the two operations is an integration of political and humanitarian action in Yemen, adding that this war was caused by security necessities which posed a threat not only to Yemen but also to all countries in the region, especially Saudi Arabia.

The two operations are historic and fateful decisions which embodied the Islamic, Arab and Gulf cohesion, and revived hopes of achieving unity in the face of risks threaten the region's stability and security, he pointed out. — KUNA

US, KUWAIT TO BOOST JOINT EXERCISES TO SECURE TERRITORIAL WATERS: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad stressed the importance of promoting security cooperation and conducting more joint naval exercises between the American and Kuwaiti sides in order to secure territorial waters.

Fahad and the US Fifth Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Kevin Donegan agreed to establish an ongoing training on naval security to

raise the skills of the Kuwaiti coastal guards in dealing with terrorism and smuggling, Ministry of Interior said in a statement on Thursday. Fahad pointed out that current security challenges in the region require more precautions and preventative measures to secure territorial waters. Meanwhile, Donegan praised the performance of the Kuwaiti costal guards and how they progressed from few years back.— KUNA



KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad meets with the US Fifth Fleet Commander Vice Admiral Kevin Donegan. — KUNA

International

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2016

Islamic summit condemns Iran over 'terror support'

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Germany allows probe over comedian's Erdogan satire

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Search for survivors after deadly Japan earthquake

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NEW YORK: Democratic presidential candidates Sen Bernie Sanders and Hillary Clinton speak during the CNN Democratic Presidential Primary Debate at the Brooklyn Navy Yard on Thursday. — AP

ROWDY NIGHT OF CAMPAIGNING IN NY CLINTON, SANDERS JOUST IN BROOKLYN BRAWL

NEW YORK: Democrats brawled in Brooklyn while Republicans in black tie threw sharp elbows at a Manhattan gala in a rowdy New York night of politics ahead of the state's Tuesday presidential primary. As protests raged outside a state GOP dinner, Republican frontrunner Donald Trump delivered an impassioned defense of the city he calls home. Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, meanwhile, aggressively challenged each other's judgment to be president at a raucous Democratic debate over Wall Street banks, minimum wage, gun control and foreign policy.

The Democratic fight Thursday night came at a pivotal moment in the party's primary campaign, with Clinton leading in the delegate count but Sanders generating huge enthusiasm for his surprising candidacy. The debate also left no doubt that a rivalry that once centered on wonkish policy disagreements has turned strikingly personal.

The Vermont senator took a biting and often sarcastic tone as he sought to chip away at Clinton's credibility on issue after issue. He went as far as to suggest that her labeling of certain criminals as "superpredators" when she was first lady was "a racist term and everybody knew it was a racist term."

The tone among Republicans was somewhat more subdued. Trump praised the city's response to the nation's deadliest terrorist attacks in remarks designed to jab rival Ted Cruz, a Texas senator who has repeatedly condemned "New York values" in his push to defeat the New York real estate mogul. "In our darkest moments, as a city we showed the world the very, very best in terms of bravery, heart and soul of America," Trump charged.

"These are the values we need to make America great again."

On the sidewalks outside, Trump was the target of rowdy protesters who hung an effigy of the billionaire businessman and chanted, "How do you spell racist? T-R-U-M-P." The scene came shortly after Florida prosecutors dismissed a criminal complaint against Trump's campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, two weeks after local police charged him with grabbing a reporter. Florida state attorney Dave Aronberg declared police were right to charge Lewandowski with misdemeanor battery, but said the burden on prosecutors to prove the case turned out to be weightier.

The Democratic debate was the first for Clinton and Sanders in five weeks, and a lively crowd cheered their candidates loudly and occasionally booed their foes. At one point Clinton said with a smile, "I love Brooklyn". For Clinton, a win in a state that twice elected her senator would blunt Sanders' recent momentum and put his pursuit of the nomination further behind. A Sanders upset over Clinton would shake up the race, raising fresh concerns about her candidacy and breathing new life into the Vermont senator's campaign.

The Democratic primary has been fought for months on familiar terrain. Clinton has cast Sanders' proposals for breaking up banks and offering free tuition at public colleges and universities as unrealistic. Sanders has accused Clinton of being part of a rigged economic and political system, hammering her repeatedly for giving paid speeches to Wall Street banks and refusing to release the transcripts.

Clinton continued to struggle to explain why she has not released the transcripts, saying only that she'll do so when other candidates are required to do the same. She tried to raise questions about Sanders' own openness by noting that he has yet to release his income tax information. The senator pledged to release his most recent tax returns yesterday, and said there would be "no big money from speeches, no major investments" in the disclosures.

The candidates also sparred over raising the federal minimum wage, with Sanders expressing surprise as Clinton voiced support for efforts to set the hourly pay rate at \$15, the level he has long backed. "The secretary has confused a lot of people. I don't know how you're there for the fight for \$15 when you say you want a \$12-an-hour national minimum wage," he said. Clinton clarified that while she does support a \$12-per-hour federal minimum wage, she would sign legislation raising that level to \$15.

Sanders, whose campaign has focused squarely on economic issues, showed more fluency on foreign policy than in previous debates, particularly during an extended exchange on the intractable conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. He urged the US to be "even-handed" in dealing with both sides and said Washington must acknowledge that Israel isn't right all of the time. Clinton highlighted her involvement with Mideast peace efforts as President Barack Obama's secretary of state, saying pointedly, "Describing the problem is a lot easier than trying to solve it." — AP

FAMILY OF ARAB ISRAELI SEEKS ANSWERS

HURA: A year of uncertainty for Hisham Al-Sayed's family finally came to an end this month when a grainy black and white photo appeared on a Hamas-affiliated television channel. Their 27-year-old son had disappeared a year earlier from his home in the Negev desert in Israel. But the image of Sayed's face was the first time the Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip had said they were detaining him. "When I saw him on the video, I felt relieved of course because I knew he was there. Before that I didn't know that he was still alive," his father Shaaban said from the living room of their modest home at the end of a dirt road.

Sayed is a Bedouin Muslim Arab with Israeli citizenship, without any apparent connection to the Israeli authorities, making his case particularly unusual. How he got from his home into Gaza, which is blockaded by Israel, is unclear. The Israeli army declined to comment on the matter, but his family say he could have somehow scaled or cut the heavily guarded fence surrounding the Palestinian territory. The family say Sayed has schizophrenia and has disappeared to Jordan and Egypt multiple times, eventually

being returned by the authorities. In fact, they say, he twice before broke into Gaza in 2010 and 2013, with the authorities eventually returning him after realizing he was unwell. "But this time, I don't why, in April 2015, they (Hamas) kept him and detained him, but didn't say they had him," his father said.

In the months after his disappearance, a police call was put out in Israel, but the family gradually learned he was likely to be in Gaza. Then on April 1 this year, Hamas released a video with photos of four Israeli citizens they claim to be holding. Two of them, Oron Shaul and Hadar Goldin, were soldiers in the 2014 war in Gaza. The Israeli army believes they were killed and Hamas has yet to provide reliable evidence to counter that.

The third is Avraham Mengistu, an Israeli Jew of Ethiopian descent, who Hamas announced they had in 2015 and whose family also say has mental health problems. The fourth face was Sayed, who was accused of being a soldier for the Israeli army. It was the first time Hamas had publicly confirmed holding him. — AFP



HURA: Manal Al-Saayed, mother of Hisham, who disappeared a year beforehand from his home in the Negev desert, shows a photo of her son at their family home in this southern Israeli town on April 13, 2016. — AFP



CAIRO: Egyptians shout slogans against Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi during a protest against the decision to hand over control of two strategic Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia in front of the Press Syndicate yesterday. — AP

PROTESTERS SLAM EGYPT GOVT OVER ISLANDS DEAL

POLICE FIRE TEAR GAS, BREAK UP RALLIES

CAIRO: Thousands of Egyptian protesters angered by President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's decision to hand over two islands to Saudi Arabia called yesterday for the downfall of the government, chanting a powerful slogan used in a 2011 uprising. Sisi, who once enjoyed widespread support, has faced mounting criticism in recent months, including over his management of the economy. "The people want the downfall of the regime," the protesters yelled outside the Cairo press syndicate, using the same phrase heard during the 2011 revolt against president Hosni Mubarak who later stepped down. They also chanted: "Sisi Mubarak", "We don't want you, leave" and "We own the land and you are agents who sold our land." Sisi's government announced last week the signing of a maritime demarcation accord that put the uninhabited Red Sea islands of Tiran and Sanafir, which lie between Saudi Arabia and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, in Saudi waters, prompting an outcry in Egyptian newspapers and on social media.

Saudi and Egyptian officials say the islands belong to the kingdom and were

only under Egyptian control because Saudi Arabia had asked Cairo in 1950 to protect them. In other parts of Cairo, police fired tear gas at protesters, security sources said. A Reuters witness said a crowd was dispersed and riot police had taken control of an area outside a mosque in the Mohandiseen district of the capital. Four people were arrested, the security sources said. Tear gas was also fired in the Giza area outside Cairo, dispersing about 200 people, security sources said. Critics say the government has mishandled a series of crises from an investigation into the torture and killing of an Italian student in Cairo to a bomb that brought down a Russian airliner in the Sinai last October.

Patience with Sisi Fading

Many Egyptians, eager for an end to the turmoil triggered by the 2011 uprising against Mubarak, enthusiastically welcomed Sisi when he seized power from the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013 after mass protests. As military chief, Sisi toppled Egypt's first freely elected leader, and then went on to become president on promises of stability after

launching the fiercest crackdown on dissent in modern Egypt's history. Egyptians turned a blind eye as Islamists and other opponents of the government were rounded up, swelling prisons to about 40,000 political detainees, according to estimates by human rights groups. But a growing number of Egyptians are losing patience over corruption, poverty and unemployment, the same issues which led to Mubarak's downfall, while Sisi has appeared increasingly authoritarian in televised speeches.

"We want the downfall of regime. We have forced disappearances, all the youth are in jail. I just got out of jail a year ago after two years inside," said Abdelrahman Abdellatif, 29, an air conditioning engineer, at the press syndicate demonstration. "The youth of the revolution are still here. We are not gone. We want stability but that doesn't mean sell our land and kill our youth. We are experiencing unprecedented fascism and dictatorship." There were also Sisi supporters, such as a woman with a shirt with an image of the former military intelligence chief on it. — Reuters

YEMENI LOYALIST FORCES SEIZE CITY FROM AL-QAEDA

ADEN: Yemeni forces backed by Apache helicopters from a Saudi-led coalition wrested the city of Houta from Al-Qaeda fighters after a gun battle yesterday morning, a local military official said. Hours later, a car bomb detonated outside the foreign ministry in the southern Yemeni city of Aden, causing no casualties, another local official said. Islamic State claimed responsibility in a posting on its al-Amaq news agency website.

The recapture of Houta, regional capital of southern Lahj province which has been held by the militants since last summer, is one of the embattled Yemeni government's most important inroads yet against Al-Qaeda forces who have taken advantage of more than a year of war to seize territory. Government troops began their attack at daybreak and succeeded after several hours of air strikes and heavy combat, the military official told Reuters.

"The campaign to control Houta has been completed and it has been cleansed of Al-Qaeda and extremist elements," he said. Several people were killed and injured on both sides and 48 militants were captured, he added. Saudi Arabia and its mostly Gulf Arab allies entered Yemen's civil war on March 26 last year in support of Yemen's internationally recognised government after it had been pushed into exile by the Iran-allied Houthi group.

Amid impoverished Yemen's security chaos, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) seized the port city of Mukalla and extended its area of control and influence about 600 km along Yemen's southern coast toward the government seat at Aden. Forces loyal to President Abdu-Rabbu Mansour Hadi have been repeatedly attacked by Al-Qaeda and Islamic State militants as the embattled administration struggles to secure Aden and the southern provinces where the fighters thrive.

A Reuters investigation this month revealed that the group earns up to \$2 million every day by taxing imports of basic goods and fuel. Until the attack on Houta, AQAP has suffered few territorial losses despite a stepped-up American campaign of air strikes and drone attacks on its bases. — Reuters



ADEN: Yemeni onlookers and security forces gather at the site where a car bomb exploded near a building housing the foreign ministry yesterday in the Mansoura residential district of Yemen's second city. — AFP

IRAN DISCUSSES HAJJ SAFETY WITH SAUDIS

TEHRAN: An Iranian delegation has held talks in Saudi Arabia about the safety of pilgrims after a deadly stampede at last year's hajj, an official said yesterday. It is the first dialogue between the rival powers since a diplomatic crisis erupted in January. The head of the Iranian Hajj Organisation, Said Ohadi, told Iranian state television that discussions over the pilgrims' welfare began on Thursday in Makkah. "We asked that... the safety of Iranian pilgrims be ensured and that pilgrims travel to Saudi Arabia only on Iranian aircraft," Ohadi was quoted as saying.

Iran and Saudi Arabia stand on opposing sides in conflicts in Syria and Yemen. The death of more than 2,000 foreign pilgrims, including 464 Iranians, in the stampede at last year's hajj in Saudi Arabia also caused a major spike in tensions. Riyadh severed diplomatic ties with Iran in January after its diplomatic missions in Tehran and Mashhad were stormed and set alight by mobs following the Sunni kingdom's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric.

This year's annual hajj - a pilgrimage to the Saudi city of Makkah that all Muslims are expected to perform at least once in their lifetime - is due to take place in September. So far, the Riyadh government has taken no action to compensate the families of Iranian victims, according to Ohadi. — AFP

OBAMA TO MEET LEADERS IN SAUDI ARABIA, EUROPE

WASHINGTON: US President Barack Obama will strategize with his Middle Eastern and European counterparts on a broad range of issues during a weeklong trip to Saudi Arabia, England and Germany with efforts to rein in the Islamic State group being the common denominator in all three stops. Obama, who begins traveling next week, recently said defeating IS his No. 1 priority. He paid a rare visit to CIA headquarters this week for a national security team meeting focused on countering the group.

The president is scheduled to arrive in the Saudi capital of Riyadh on Wednesday, where he will hold talks with King Salman. Obama will also attend a summit hosted by leaders of six Gulf countries that are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. The summit follows a similar gathering that Obama hosted with the Gulf leaders last year at the Camp David presidential retreat. The White House arranged last year's meeting largely to reassure Gulf leaders who were unnerved by a deal the US and other world powers negotiated with Iran to ease economic sanctions in exchange for limits on its nuclear program.

The Iran deal is now in force, and the meeting next week will focus on defeating the Islamic State militants and Al-Qaeda, as well as regional security issues that include Iran. Obama will spend most of his time in England. He is scheduled to meet again with Queen Elizabeth II over lunch at Windsor Castle on April 22, a visit that coincides with her 90th birthday a day earlier. Obama will also meet with British Prime Minister David Cameron, who is campaigning for his country to continue its membership in the European Union. Britons are scheduled to vote on its EU membership in a June 23 referendum, the first vote ever by a nation on whether to leave the 28-member, post-World War II bloc.

Obama is not expected to announce a position on the referendum, although aides have voiced support for a strong United Kingdom as a member of the EU. "He'll make clear that this is a matter the British people themselves will decide when they head to the polls in June," Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser, said Thursday as he outlined the trip for reporters. Cameron has also been stung by criticism over his investment in an offshore trust run by his late father. The revelation was part of the recent dump of more than 11 million documents from a Panama law firm that is one of the leaders in setting up offshore bank accounts for the rich and powerful.

Obama also plans a town hall-style, question-and-answer session with young adults, which has become a staple of his foreign trips. Additional stops were being planned for London. In Germany, the final stop on Obama's three-country trip, the president will hold talks and a news conference on Sunday with Chancellor Angela Merkel. Merkel's popularity has suffered after she angered Germans by allowing a massive resettlement of refugees from Syria and other war-torn countries. She recently helped broker a deal between the EU and Turkey to stem the refugee flow to Europe. — AP



ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (center) waves during the end of the closing session of 13th Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Summit at the Istanbul Congress Center (ICC) yesterday. — AFP

ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONDEMNNS IRAN OVER 'TERROR SUPPORT'

ERDOGAN WRAPS UP MEET PROMOTING UNITY

ISTANBUL: A major summit aimed at overcoming differences in the Muslim world condemned Iran yesterday for supporting terrorism and meddling in the affairs of other countries. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who had been at the two-day Istanbul conference along with over 30 other heads of state and government from Islamic countries, did not attend the closing meeting in protest at the criticisms. "The (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) Conference deplored Iran's interference in the internal affairs of the states of the region and other member states including Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, and Somalia, and its continued support for terrorism," said the summit's final statement.

It also "condemned Hezbollah for conducting terrorist activities in Syria, Bahrain, Kuwait and Yemen and for supporting terrorist movements and groups undermining the security and stability of OIC member states". The Arab League declared Iran's ally Hezbollah a "terrorist" group in March after Gulf kingdoms did the same earlier in the month over the movement's support for the Damascus regime in Syria's war.

There was a security lockdown around the summit venue in Istanbul, the former capital of the Ottoman Empire from where sultans for centuries ruled Muslims from the Balkans to Arabia. Turkey has been on high alert following attacks claimed by the Islamic State group and increased violence linked to the Kurdish conflict. While the summit marked one of Istanbul's most significant gatherings of heads of state for years, some high profile leaders like Jordan's King Abdullah and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi were notable by their absence.

Turkey's relations with Cairo have still not recovered from the 2013 ousting of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, a close ally of Ankara, while ties with Amman are being tested by differences over Syria. Iran's Rouhani is due to meet Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Ankara today. With Turkey seeing the summit as a chance to shore up its prestige in the Islamic world, Erdogan has made it his mission at the meeting to bring the world's 1.7 billion Muslims closer together. He reaffirmed his call for unity at an official dinner late Thursday in the Dolmabahce Palace by the Bosphorus.

"At this summit, our biggest expectation is for Islamic countries throughout the world to give a message of unity and togetherness to all Muslims," Erdogan told leaders beneath the dome of the vast Muayede Salon, the ceremonial hall where the sultan would receive visitors. "Our aim is to give the whole Islamic family hope in the future. God willing, with this summit, a new era will begin for all of us. Of course the problems in front of us are big. We are going through a tough period. But we should never lose hope," he added.

The meeting has been marked by signs of a strong emerging alliance between Turkey and fellow Sunni Muslim power Saudi Arabia, whose foreign ministers Thursday signed a memorandum on creating a bilateral cooperation council. Both countries, along with the tiny but gas-rich Gulf state of Qatar, back rebels fighting the regime of President Bashar Al-Assad in Syria. This pits them against Iran and also Russia - with whom Turkey is experiencing a crisis in relations after the downing of a Russian warplane - who are the last major remaining allies of Assad. — Agencies

BATTLES AROUND ALEPPO CAST SHADOW OVER PEACE TALKS

BEIRUT: Fierce fighting raged yesterday around Syria's Aleppo as a surge in violence forced tens of thousands more to flee their homes, overshadowing the latest round of peace talks in Geneva. The clashes on several fronts have put a strain on a fragile ceasefire in place since Feb 27, and left more than 200 fighters on all sides of the civil war dead in recent days. The delegation representing President Bashar al-Assad's regime arrived yesterday in Geneva where UN-brokered indirect talks between representatives of the government and opposition were due to be held.

However, the fighting around Syria's second city Aleppo cast a shadow over international efforts to end the five-year war, which has left more than 270,000 people dead and forced millions to flee their homes. Troops and militiamen loyal to Assad's regime have fought Islamic State group fighters to the southeast of Aleppo city this week, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. They also battled jihadists from the Al-Qaeda-affiliated Al-Nusra Front and allied rebels in the flashpoint area of Handarat north of Aleppo city, it said.

Meanwhile IS fought rebels near the Turkish border, the Britain-based monitor added. "What is happening in Aleppo is a major violation of the ceasefire," rebel commander Major Eyad Shamsi told AFP in Geneva, blaming the regime. "A big battle is being fought in Aleppo, and it will lead to a major disaster should the regime succeed" in cutting off the route linking rebel-held parts of Aleppo to the northern countryside, he said. In that case, "a million people will come under siege in (opposition-controlled parts of) Aleppo," he added. — AFP

BATTLE LINES DRAWN AS UK SQUARES UP FOR EU VOTE

'REMAIN' AND 'LEAVE' CAMPS NECK-AND-NECK

LONDON: Activists hit the streets yesterday for the first official day of campaigning over Britain's "Brexit" referendum, firing the starting pistol on a tense 10-week battle over the country's future in Europe. Opinion polls suggest the British public is evenly split ahead of the June 23 vote, which could bring down Prime Minister David Cameron and plunge one of the world's leading economies into uncertainty. The referendum - Britons' first direct say on the divisive issue of Europe in 41 years - is also being nervously watched in Washington and Brussels, where a British exit would add to a long list of EU crises.

"We absolutely think we're going to win it," Peter Reeve, a spokesman for the UK Independence Party (UKIP), told AFP as he campaigned in Peterborough - a market town in eastern England where an influx of East European workers has angered many locals. Charismatic London Mayor Boris Johnson was to lead a "Brexit blitz" with rallies yesterday and today, where he will try to persuade Britons that they could thrive if cut free from European Union red tape. Johnson has compared leaving the 28-country bloc to escaping from prison, saying the referendum was "like the jailer has accidentally left the door of the jail open and people can see the sunlit lands beyond".

'Project Fantasy'

In the "Remain" corner is Cameron, who says Britain has a "special status" within the EU thanks to a renegotiation he sealed in February, and that the country will be richer



LONDON: British Labour Party politician Alistair Darling gestures toward a journalist while giving a speech on the economic arguments for EU membership yesterday. — AFP

and stronger if it stays in. Former finance minister Alistair Darling lashed out at Brexit backers in a speech yesterday, accusing them of "playing with fire" and offering "Project Fantasy". "This is a very, very close vote. No one can predict with any certainty what is likely to happen," he told a Britain Stronger In Europe event in London.

In Covent Garden in the heart of rain-soaked London, anti-Brexit volunteers were handing out leaflets to workers on their

lunch breaks yesterday. "Financially, it would be a disaster if we left the EU," said Gael Simmonds, wearing an "I'M IN" t-shirt. Robin Phelps, 38, added: "There is a narrative saying 'In' voters are not so enthusiastic. I'm not sure that's true because I think when the reality dawns that it can be risky, they'll turn out."

However, John Curtice of Strathclyde University, Britain's leading poll expert, said the evidence available so far consistently points to Leave' voters "being keener to make it to the polls". Overall, the "Remain" and "Leave" camps are neck-and-neck on 50 percent support, according to a poll of polls run by academics at the What UK Thinks project, with around one fifth of voters undecided.

'Straightforward and Candid'

Both camps have planned dozens of events across Britain to launch their campaigns, mobilizing volunteers to hand out leaflets in a bid to win over fellow Britons. "Remain" supporters can also count on the backing of US President Barack Obama, who will head to London next week to join an international chorus of leaders imploring Britain not to leave the EU. His foreign policy adviser Ben Rhodes said the president would be "very straightforward and candid... as to why the US believes that it is good for the UK to remain."

Cameron is confident of winning the poll, despite deep divisions within his Conservative party on Europe. His campaign has the support of the main political parties and some of the country's biggest employers. Global bodies such as the International Monetary Fund have also warned that Brexit could damage Britain. Debate about whether Britain should stay in the EU has been raging for weeks, but the race shifted up a gear this week when election officials named the two official campaigns, unlocking a treasure chest of publicly funded benefits for both sides. After months of infighting, the "Vote Leave" campaign beat the Leave.EU campaign supported by UKIP leader Nigel Farage to be named the official Brexit campaign. — AFP

ITALY INSISTS 'NO INVASION'

ROME: Italy insisted yesterday it was not facing an "invasion" after a spike in migrant boat crossings from Libya exacerbated fears the country is on the verge of becoming the main entry point for people trying to reach Europe. Nearly 6,000 mostly African migrants have landed at southern Italian sports since Tuesday but Prime Minister Matteo Renzi said the overall trend this year was broadly in line with the 2015 pattern. "We are not facing an invasion," the premier told a press conference after the figures were released by the International Organisation for Migration in Geneva.

Fears are running high in Italy that it could pay the price of EU moves to close routes through the Greek Islands and the Balkans. Italian officials are also wary of the possibility of neighbouring EU countries closing their borders, as France did temporarily last year and Austria is threatening to do now. Austria has begun preparing for a possible reintroduction of border controls at the Brenner pass in the Alps, prompting protests from Italy and the European Commission.

Renzi warned yesterday of repercussions if Vienna did close the border. "If the rules are broken we cannot act as if nothing has happened," he said. Italy's interior ministry this week asked local authorities to find 15,000 extra beds to

house asylum-seekers in anticipation of a possible increase in the numbers of people requiring accommodation. "There is a problem that concerns our country but there is not an invasion underway," Renzi said. "We have taken certain initiatives but we are not facing an invasion. It is a big problem but we have clear ideas about how to deal with it."

Renzi said the EU was working on deals with African countries to stem the flow of migrants leaving for Europe and to prevent those who do from being allowed to pass through transit countries. "I do not want to play it down but I do want to send a reassuring message. The numbers of boats are barely a few higher compared to last year."

Few Syrians in Libya

The IOM said that of the 6,021 migrants who have reached Europe by sea since Tuesday, only 174 had landed in Greece, with the balance coming ashore in Italy. IOM spokesman Joel Millman stressed there was no evidence yet to suggest the Italy arrivals were linked to an EU-Turkey deal aimed at stemming the influx of people to the Greek islands. Migrants who spoke to IOM staff in Italy all said they had crossed from Libya, most of them on rubber dinghies loaded with around 130 people. — AFP

CZECHS PICK 'CZECHIA' AS NEW NAME

PRAGUE: The Czech Republic's leaders have chosen "Czechia" as the one-word alternative name of their country to make it easier for companies, politicians and sportsmen to use on products, name tags and jerseys. The choice, agreed on Thursday evening by the president, prime minister, heads of parliament and foreign and defence ministers, must still win cabinet approval before the Foreign Ministry can lodge the name with the United Nations and it becomes the country's official short name.

The Czech Republic emerged, along with Slovakia, from the peaceful breakup of the old Czechoslovakia in 1993. But so far there has been no standardised one-word English name for the Czech Republic, unlike, say, France, the shortened version of the French Republic. That has led to a lot of head-scratching. The largest part of the country is known as Bohemia ("Cechy" in Czech), but there are also other parts, Moravia and Silesia, so one name is needed that does not exclude those historic lands. The Czech Republic's adored ice hockey team has donned "Czech" on their jerseys, as have bottles of the country's premium export beer, Pilsner Urquell. But "Czech" is an adjective and cannot be used as a one-word name for the country. Supporters of "Czechia" say the term in English can be traced back to the 19th century and was codified by the Czech surveying and mapping authority soon after the 1993 split of Czechoslovakia as a possible one-word alternative.

But it never gained traction until now and it may not have an easy start once it gains official status. To some, it sounds ugly. Others, including Regional Development Minister Karla Slechtova, think it is too close to "Chechnya", making it prone to confusion. Slechtova tweeted on Thursday that the Czech Republic had invested more than \$40 million into a tourism promotion campaign using its full name, and should stick to it. In some other languages, including French and German, the Czech Republic is already designated by a single name, but in Czech itself the name 'Cesko' has only made slow progress since 1993 and 'Cechy' - or Bohemia - is still commonly used to mean the whole country. — Reuters

PANAMA PAPERS CLAIM NEW VICTIM IN SPAIN MINISTER

MADRID: The worldwide Panama Papers scandal claimed a fresh political victim yesterday as Spain's industry minister resigned over allegations he had links to offshore companies. Jose Manuel Soria said he had tendered his resignation "in light of the succession of mistakes committed along the past few days, relating to my explanations over my business activities... and considering the obvious harm that this situation is doing to the Spanish government."



Jose Manuel Soria

Soria's troubles began on Monday when Spanish online daily El Confidencial, which has had access to the Panama Papers - millions of files leaked from law firm Mossack Fonseca - said he was an administrator of an offshore firm in 1992. Soria called a news conference to deny any link to the company, but as the week went by, more allegations emerged from other media outlets, revealing further alleged connections to offshore havens. It is unclear as yet whether any of his alleged actions were illegal.

Soria is the latest political victim of the Panama Papers leak, which revealed how the world's wealthy stashed assets in offshore companies and which the law firm blamed on a computer hack. Iceland's Prime Minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson was also forced to resign over the leaks. In his statement, Soria said politics "is an activity that must always be exemplary, also where... explanations are concerned". "When that doesn't happen, one must assume one's responsibilities," he added, in an indication that he was resigning due to how he had handled the revelations, rather than over any irregularities. — AFP

'UNFINISHED BUSINESS' FOR SOUTH AFRICA TRC

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was meant to be the healing balm for a nation traumatized by the horrors of apartheid. But 20 years later, hundreds of political crimes including murder, kidnapping and torture remain unpunished - and many blame the post-apartheid government for the delay. The commission's first public hearing on April 15, 1996 - two years after the end of white minority rule - was a solemn affair, met with both hope and apprehension.

In a packed town hall in the coastal city of East London, TRC chairman and Nobel peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu lit a candle, and the shocking testimony of atrocities committed during apartheid began. Police hit-squads targeting government opponents, torture, gruesome executions, a student thrown from an aircraft: By the second day Tutu dropped his head in his hands and wept.

In exchange for full disclosure before the commission, police officers, soldiers and ministers could be granted amnesty for their political crimes. It was a revolutionary concept, devised to steer a country on the

brink of chaos away from civil war, and it has since been replicated in several other countries. Of the 7,000 amnesty applications received from 1996 to 1998, the TRC granted about 1,000.

More than 300 cases were recommended for prosecution when amnesty was denied. But two decades later, many of those remain untouched. "Less than a handful of these cases have been pursued," said Tutu later, decrying the commission's "unfinished business". "The fact that parents go to the grave without finding out what happened to their loved ones is unforgivable," lawyer Howard Varney told AFP. "The fact that a government that represented the force for liberation and democracy has turned its back on its own people is equally unforgivable."

'Government Betrayal'

Thembi Nkadimeng, whose sister Nokuthula Simelane was abducted and tortured in 1983, calls it a "betrayal by the government". Simelane's body was never found. When her family embarked on a mission to find out the truth behind her death, they hit repeat-

ed dead-ends - including the disappearance of the case file. "It was just one excuse after the next," said Varney. "From the outset when we were pushing for action to be taken, we were told there was an effective moratorium in place on these kinds of cases going forward. When they eventually did start to investigate, it then became a never-ending investigation."

Four former police officers who appeared before the TRC were finally charged with Simelane's murder this year, but only after a high court compelled the national prosecuting authority to make a decision on the matter. The trial is set to begin on July 25 and has sparked new hope among families of other victims, like that of Neil Aggett, a white doctor and trade unionist who died in 1982 after being tortured while in custody in a Johannesburg police station.

His alleged tormentor never applied for amnesty and, despite the TRC findings against him, has never been prosecuted. "What makes me so angry and upset is that 20 years after Neil's death, he was still running an incredibly successful business in Johannesburg," Aggett's sister Jill Burger said. — AFP



BRUSSELS: Belgian Minister of Mobility Jacqueline Galant speaks during a press conference yesterday. — AFP

BELGIAN TRANSPORT MINISTER QUILTS OVER SECURITY FAILINGS

BRUSSELS: Belgium's transport minister resigned yesterday after being accused of ignoring EU reports of security failings at the country's airports that were laid bare by last month's suicide bombings. The resignation of Jacqueline Galant is the first political fallout from the attacks on March 22 that killed 32 people in Brussels, including 16 at the national airport. Belgium, a notoriously complex country divided along linguistic and political lines, has been accused of a lax security apparatus that was also exposed by a foiled attack on the high-speed train connection to Paris last August.

The little-experienced Galant was under fire after the damning reports were leaked to media. This followed the shock resignation of a top transport official on Thursday who accused Galant of incompetence and "Gestapo-like" behavior. "Transport Minister Jacqueline Galant has offered her resignation to the king, which was accepted," Prime Minister Charles Michel said after a cabinet meeting, according to a statement from the royal palace.

Two Islamic State attackers blew themselves up in the departure hall at Brussels airport in a first wave of coordinated attacks that also hit a Brussels metro station near European Union headquarters buildings. The EU reports only pertained to areas of the airport beyond security checks, but they pointed to "serious deficiencies" in security including an inadequate tracing of explosive devices. The latest report from April 2015 said Belgium was still "non-compliant, with serious deficiencies" in five areas based on spot checks at Antwerp airport.

Galant denied she was ever made aware of the reports that date back to 2008 and that also warn of an alarming lack of staff and funding at the airport authority. But a top official said he had clearly notified Galant and her office and even provided separate expertise drawn up in Jan 2015 after the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo satirical magazine in Paris. That report warned that a terrorist attack on Belgium's airports "was no longer hypothetical". — AFP

GERMANY ALLOWS PROBE OVER COMEDIAN'S ERDOGAN SATIRE CASE HAS PUT MERKEL IN TRICKY POSITION

BERLIN: Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday authorized criminal proceedings sought by Turkey against a German TV comedian over a crude satirical poem about President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that has sparked a bitter row over free speech. In a surprise decision that exposed rifts within Merkel's government, she said the German judiciary would now have to decide whether the popular comic, Jan Boehmermann, could be convicted under rarely enforced lese-majeste legislation.

"The government will give its authorization in the case at hand," Merkel told reporters in a hastily arranged statement broadcast live on national television. A probe under section 103 of the criminal code - insulting organs or representatives of foreign states - can only go forward with the approval of the federal government. The offence can carry a punishment of up to three years in prison.

Merkel said the government agreed it would scrap what many labeled an outdated statute by 2018 as a result of the embarrassing affair. Ankara this month filed a formal request for a criminal inquiry to be launched in Germany against Boehmermann, who accused Erdogan of bestiality and paedophilia in the so-called "Defamatory Poem". Boehmermann gleefully admitted he was flouting Germany's legal limits on free expression, but has kept a lower profile since the furore erupted. The comedian was reacting to Ankara's decision last month to summon Germany's ambassador in protest at another satirical song broadcast on German TV which lampooned Erdogan in far tamer language.

Courts Have Last Word

Merkel - who had previously labelled Boehmermann's poem "deliberately insulting" - had pledged Turkey's request would be "very carefully" examined, even as she underlined the German constitution's guarantees of "freedom of expression, academia and of course the arts". On Friday she said her government, after heated internal debate, had concluded that only the judiciary should decide whether Boehmermann had committed a criminal offence. "In a



BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel addresses the press yesterday at the Chancellery in Berlin. Merkel approved a Turkish demand for German TV comedian Jan Boehmermann (inset right) to be prosecuted over a crude satirical poem about President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (inset left). — AFP

state under the rule of law, it is not a matter for the government but rather for state prosecutors and courts to weigh personal rights issues and other concerns affecting press and artistic freedom," she said.

Merkel stressed that Berlin's decision did not amount to a "prejudgement" on his legal culpability and that "prosecutors and courts" would have the last word. German prosecutors last week opened a preliminary probe against Boehmermann, 35, after complaints by dozens of viewers. The case comes at an extremely awkward time as Europe is relying on Ankara to implement a pact spearheaded by Merkel to curb the flow of migrants taking boats headed for the European Union from Turkey's shores. It exposed Merkel to criticism she was compromising basic values to win Erdogan's continued cooperation on the refugee issue.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier had opposed any criminal prosecution of Boehmermann on free speech grounds, and officials from his Social Democrats, junior partners in Merkel's government, slammed yesterday's announce-

ment. "I consider this decision wrong," SPD parliamentary group leader Thomas Oppermann tweeted, adding that prosecution based on lese-majeste did "not fit in a modern democracy".

Sahra Wagenknecht of the far-left opposition Die Linke called it "unbearable kowtowing" to the "Turkish despot Erdogan" at the "expense of press freedom in Germany". German commentators noted the irony that Erdogan - who is accused of becoming increasingly autocratic - has come in for fierce Western criticism over a crackdown on free speech in Turkey.

Turkey's most popular comedian, Cem Yilmaz, went on trial this month accused of insulting a provincial governor and could face two years in prison. US President Barack Obama warned that Turkey's approach towards the media was taking it "down a path that would be very troubling" after two leading opposition journalists were put on trial. In response Erdogan, who has dominated the Turkish political scene since 2003 as prime minister and then president, defiantly declared he would not take "lessons in democracy" from the West. — AFP

BRITISH ROYALS HIKE TO BHUTAN MONASTERY

PARO VALLEY, Bhutan: Britain's Duke and Duchess of Cambridge trekked yesterday to a Buddhist monastery on a mountainside in Bhutan, going one better than the duke's father, Prince Charles, who on a 1998 trip broke off his hike to paint a watercolor. Prince William and wife Kate dressed down for the three-hour expedition to the so-called Tiger's Nest that is perched on a mountainside at 3,000 m.

Kate's outfit featured knee-length boots, olive trousers and a leather waistcoat, while William wore an open-necked shirt and beige slacks. The couple stopped along the way to smile for the cameras before the backdrop of the 17th century Taktsang Palphug Monastery across the Paro valley. "It was amazing," William said after the climb. "Beautiful scenery as you saw and with the mountains like this, the temples at the top - it was just stunning to walk up there," he added in a sentiment echoed by Kate.

William admitted that after an easy start "it was a little bit cheeky on the second part, definitely." Reminded of Prince Charles' visit, he said: "Well, my father did-

n't make it to the top. That's something I'll be reminding him of when I see him."

Air Apparent

Porters were on hand, including one with an oxygen cylinder, but the couple - William is 33, Kate a year older - managed without difficulty as they walked earlier hand-in-hand through sunlit wooded uplands. The royal couple finally got some time to themselves on the sixth day of their hectic tour of India and Bhutan, where they were welcomed on Thursday by the young - and equally glamorous - king and queen of the tiny Himalayan nation.

Today, they return to India to visit the Taj Mahal, which was built in 1632 by Moghul Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his favorite wife. William's mother, the late Princess Diana, visited in 1992 and was memorably photographed sitting alone on a bench on front of the marble mausoleum, in an image that came to symbolize her unhappy marriage.

Indian newspapers have reported that the British High Commission had asked for scaffolding, erected for repair work, to



BHUTAN: Britain's Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, pose for a photograph halfway up the trail leading to a Buddhist monastery referred to as the "Tiger's Nest" on their two-day visit to Bhutan yesterday. — AFP

be removed from the onion-domed Taj Mahal. The Archaeological Survey of India turned down the request. There are also concerns that the site may be overrun by tourists when William and Kate are there, as it only closes for visits by heads of state or government. The British High

Commission in New Delhi did not reply to a request for comment. There has been fierce competition among news organizations trying to secure the best spot on a viewing platform for the most sought after shot of William, second in line to the throne, and Kate. — Reuters



BRASILIA: Lower house members who support the impeachment demonstrate during the lower house session of the Congress yesterday. — AFP

LAWMAKERS OPEN DEBATE ON ROUSSEFF IMPEACHMENT

PRESIDENT SLAMS 'COUP' ATTEMPT

BRASILIA: Brazil's lower house of Congress opened debate yesterday on impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff ahead of a vote this weekend that could seal her fate. Hours earlier, the Supreme Court rejected an 11th hour bid by the increasingly isolated leftist president to have impeachment proceedings suspended. The lower house has power to throw out the impeachment when it votes tomorrow, but if it votes in favor, as seems increasingly likely, Rousseff will be sent to trial in the Senate.

The struggle has transfixed Latin America's biggest country, where the crisis, deep recession and a giant corruption scandal, have overshadowed preparations for the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro this August. House Speaker Eduardo Cunha - who despite facing serious corruption charges has positioned

himself as the architect of the push to remove Rousseff - predicted an intense debate. "It's calm but I don't think it will continue that way until Sunday," he told reporters. "It will go on till Sunday night and probably beyond for people who signed up (to speak). This is a historic process, there's no doubt."

Rousseff, accused of illegal government accounting tricks, is unpopular across the country and reviled by the opposition. A former Marxist guerrilla, Rousseff was imprisoned and tortured under the military dictatorship that ruled Brazil for two decades until 1985. Recalling that bitter experience, she has branded the attempt to remove her from office a coup.

Latest counts of voting intentions in the lower house by major Brazilian newspapers show the pro-impeachment camp

either at, or on the verge of, the necessary two-thirds majority. Folha de Sao Paulo daily put the pro-impeachment count at 338, just under the required 342 votes out of a total 513. Rousseff says she will not go quietly. "The government will fight until the last minute of the second half... to foil this coup attempt," she said Thursday.

She hoped the Supreme Court would be sympathetic to her lawyer's claims that the impeachment proceedings had been turned into an open-ended attack that disregarded legal norms. But in an emergency session that went through the night into Friday morning, justices voted overwhelmingly to turn down the petition for injunction, several pointing out that the Senate trial was the moment where the substance of the case could be argued. — AFP

MEXICAN SOLDIERS DETAINED AS TORTURE VIDEO SURFACES

MEXICO CITY: Authorities have arrested a Mexican army captain and a soldier as a video emerged showing a woman being tortured by troops and a federal police officer, officials said Thursday. The attorney general's office has launched a torture investigation while military authorities have charged the captain and a female soldier with disobeying orders. The jarring clip circulating online shows a female soldier placing the tip of her assault rifle on the woman's head as she sits barefoot on a dirt floor.

A federal police officer then tightly wraps a plastic bag around the woman's head while one of the officials asks her, "Are you going to talk?" The woman, who is sobbing throughout the ordeal, answers: "Who's Maria? I don't know her." It is the latest allegation of abuse committed by the authorities in Mexico.

The defense ministry said the incident took place in Feb 2015 in the town of Ajuchitlan del Progreso, in the southern state of Guerrero, but that it only learned about it in December. The ministry said in a statement that the captain and the female soldier, who is part of the military police, were detained in January on charges of disobeying orders. The attorney general's office issued a separate statement saying that its special torture investigations unit began its inquiry on Jan 7.

The unit is investigating the "probable responsibility of Mexican army members as well as a federal police officer who presumably participated" in the incident, the statement said. The attorney general's office said that "in this, like in every case, it will act with all the rigor that the law permits to prevent impunity in any illegal conduct." The federal police said its internal affairs department launched an investigation and it urged citizens to report any abuse by officers.

History of Abuses

Amnesty International said the video shows that torture remains a technique for authorities to obtain coerced confessions. "Ending the role of the armed forces in police work is urgent," said Perseo Quiroz Rendon, Amnesty's Mexico director, adding that troops lack the training to conduct investigations and interrogations. Police and troops have faced a slew of accusations of torture and other abuses since soldiers were deployed in the streets of Mexico to combat drug trafficking in 2006.

A soldier has been detained in connection with the February disappearance and murder of a civilian in the eastern state of Veracruz. In a separate case in the same region, eight state police officers were charged over the January disappearance of four young men and a 16-year-old girl. And in another high-profile case, a military court in October acquitted seven soldiers who were detained following the killing of 22 alleged drug gang members in the central state of Mexico in June 2014. Authorities had initially reported the deaths as resulting from a shootout, but allegations of extrajudicial killings emerged later. — AFP

SEARCH FOR SURVIVORS AFTER DEADLY JAPAN EARTHQUAKE

AFTERSHOCKS RATTLE SOUTHWESTERN ISLAND

MASHIKI, Japan: Shaken residents of a southern Japanese island rocked by a powerful earthquake that left at least nine dead queued for water in rubble-strewn streets yesterday, with many facing a second night of uncertainty away from their ruined homes. Rescuers continued to search through damaged buildings for possible survivors after the violent quake that also injured hundreds, although officials said the death toll was unlikely to rise significantly.

Tens of thousands of people fled their homes after the 6.5-magnitude quake struck the southwestern island of Kyushu on Thursday night, leaving lumps of concrete strewn in the streets.

Houses collapsed, factories stopped work and a high-speed train was derailed, while the roof of the treasured Kumamoto castle in the southern city of the same name was also damaged. "We tried our best to take all our belongings and go to a shelter

by car," said Haruki Ito, 62, whose house tilted 45 degrees after the quake. "Our dogs got so scared and hid themselves inside the collapsed house," he told AFP, adding he hoped he and his wife could stay in a local shelter with their pets.

Dozens of aftershocks followed the quake, which hit about 9:26 pm (1226 GMT) on Thursday evening, and officials warned the death toll could still rise as rescuers scoured the collapsed structures. As rescue workers toiled through the night hours after the quake struck, an eight-month-old baby girl was pulled from the rubble alive and unharmed. "As far as we can tell from infrared images from a police helicopter, there appears to be a significant number of houses destroyed or half-collapsed," said disaster minister Taro Kono.

Rescuers were concentrating their searches in Mashiki, near the epicentre of the quake where eight of the nine deaths occurred. On the streets, the remains of collapsed Japanese-style houses - many of them aged, wooden structures - could be seen, and damaged roof tiles lay in piles. A rescue team with several search dogs patrolled around half-collapsed houses in the town but no new deaths had been announced for more than 14 hours. Scores of people spent the night huddled in front of Mashiki's town hall, some in tears, while others wrapped themselves in blankets to ward off the night chill. — AFP



MASHIKI, Japan: An aerial view shows construction workers restoring a damaged road beside a graveyard in this town in Kumamoto prefecture yesterday. — AFP

INDIA THREATENS TO REVOKE PASSPORT OF EMBATTLED TYCOON

MUMBAI: India yesterday said it had suspended the diplomatic passport of embattled tycoon and lawmaker Vijay Mallya, who left the country last month amid pressure from lenders to repay about \$1.4 billion in debt owed by his defunct Kingfisher Airlines. Mallya's case takes centre stage at a time when India's government and central bank have begun to crack down on bank loan defaulters, in a drive to clean up ailing state-run banks.



Vijay Mallya

Just days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said no one "looting" money from banks would be spared, India's foreign ministry gave Mallya a week to answer why his passport should not be impounded or revoked. "If he fails to respond within the stipulated time, it will be assumed that he has no response to offer and the foreign ministry will go ahead with the revocation," ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup said in a statement on Twitter. The suspension is effective for four weeks, Swarup said, adding that the ministry acted on a request from the Enforcement Directorate, a government agency investigating financial crime. It was not immediately clear what the suspension means for Mallya, whose lawyer, C S Vaidyanathan, said he was not aware of the government notice and could not comment. A spokesman for Mallya's UB Group did not immediately respond to calls seeking comment.

Mallya, a member of the upper house of India's parliament who co-owns Britain-based motor racing team Force India, has not revealed his whereabouts since his departure on March 2, but has said he was not an absconder. The creditor banks this month rejected an offer of partial repayment by Mallya, who had given a personal guarantee for the Kingfisher loan, and have demanded that the former billionaire attend a hearing in India's Supreme Court. — Reuters

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PENTAGON CHIEF VISITS WARSHIP IN S CHINA SEA

ABOARD THE USS JOHN C STENNIS: US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter visited a warship close to flashpoint waters of the South China Sea yesterday, as Beijing reacted defiantly to an American military build-up in the area. Carter's trip to the USS John C Stennis was the latest effort by the United States to show its commitment to maintaining security in the hotly contested waters, where China has rattled nerves by building artificial islands on islets and reefs claimed by some of its Southeast Asian neighbors. "It is a message to the region that the US intends to continue to play a role in keeping peace and stability in this region," Carter told reporters aboard the warship, a nuclear-powered carrier that can carry about 75 planes and helicopters.

Before flying from Manila to visit the ship, Carter emphasized the United States would support the Philippines and other allies as they faced "coercion and intimidation". "We will continue to stand up for our



QUEZON CITY: US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter (center) links arms with Philippines' Foreign Secretary Jose Almendras (left) and Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin during the closing ceremony of the US-Philippines annual joint military exercise at Camp Aguinaldo in suburban Manila yesterday. — AFP

safety and freedoms, for those of our friends and allies, and for the values, principles, and rules-based order that has benefited so many for so long," Carter said at a closing ceremony for annual US-Philippine war games. The roughly two-hour visit to the Stennis

came after Carter announced on Thursday that the United States had launched joint naval patrols with the Philippines in the sea, as he spoke of growing concern about China's "land reclamation" and "militarization" of the region. He also said the United

States would deploy hundreds of troops, as well as warplanes, to the Philippines. China claims nearly all of the strategically vital sea, even waters close to its Southeast Asian neighbors, and has in recent years created the islands in an effort to assert what it insists are its sovereign rights.

The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have overlapping claims to parts of the sea, which is home to some of the world's most important shipping lanes and is believed to sit atop vast oil reserves. China has constructed the islands on reefs in the Spratly archipelago, which are close to the Philippines and Malaysia, as well as airstrips capable of accommodating military aircraft.

China in 2012 also took control of a rich fishing shoal just 220 km from the main Philippine landmass. The shoal is 650 km from China's nearest major landmass. Carter visited the Stennis after making a short flight to the carrier from a military base on the southwestern Philippine island of Palawan,

which is the closest landmass to the Spratlys. During his time aboard the ship, Carter saw the launching and landing of F/A 18 "Hornet" fighter jets.

Rear Admiral Ron Boxall, commander of the carrier group with responsibility for the Stennis, said one or two Chinese vessels had been following the carrier but there had been no tensions. "They have been operating very professionally," Boxall said.

In Beijing, China reacted defiantly to Thursday's announcement of the joint patrols and US deployments to the Philippines, with its defence ministry warning the military would protect the nation's territory. "US-Philippine joint patrols in the South China Sea promote regional militarization and undermine regional peace and stability," said a Chinese defence ministry statement released late Thursday. "The Chinese military will pay very close attention to related developments, and firmly safeguard China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests". — AFP

RIYADH CONFIRMS 'GENUINE' \$681M DONATION TO NAJIB

KUALA LUMPUR: Saudi Arabia has for the first time publicly confirmed Malaysia's claim that \$681 million in Prime Minister Najib Razak's bank accounts was a donation from the Saudi royal family, countering accusations that the money was siphoned from heavily indebted state investment fund 1MDB. Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Adel Al-Jubeir called the money a "genuine donation" in comments Thursday to Malaysian reporters in Istanbul after a meeting with Najib.

Yesterday, Malaysia's foreign ministry provided a video clip of Jubeir's comments, which Najib's office said vindicate the prime minister, who has faced months of pressure to resign from critics including former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. "It is a genuine donation with nothing expected in return. And we are also fully aware that the attorney general of Malaysia has thoroughly investigated the matter and found no wrongdoing," Jubeir said. "So, as far as we are concerned, the matter is closed." He didn't give details on who donated the money or why.



Najib Razak

When the attorney general cleared Najib in January, he said the \$681 million was a donation from Saudi's royal family and that Najib had returned most of it. The explanation was met with widespread skepticism. "This confirms what the prime minister maintained all along, and what multiple lawful authorities concluded after exhaustive investigations," Tengku Sarifuddin, Najib's press secretary, said in a statement. "This also proves that the wild allegations pushed by Mahathir and his anti-Najib campaign are completely false."

Mahathir Mohamad, who stepped down in 2003 after 21 years in power, has been a fierce critic of Najib, alleging that he was corrupt and should resign. Saudi's confirmation may ease pressure on Najib, but he still grapples with controversy over massive debts in 1MDB, which he started in 2009. A Malaysian parliamentary inquiry this month found massive unexplained payments and called for a police probe of the fund's former head. The inquiry said 1MDB lacked sufficient documentation to explain a payment of at least \$3.5 billion. It said the fund's debts ballooned from 5 billion ringgit (\$1.3 billion) in 2009 to 50 billion ringgit (\$12.8 billion) this January. — AP

NORTH KOREA MISSILE LAUNCH FAILS ON FOUNDER'S BIRTHDAY

US SLAMS 'PROVOCATION'

SEOUL: North Korea tried and failed yesterday to test-fire what appeared to be a medium-range missile on the birthday of founding leader Kim Il-Sung, the United States said, denouncing the move as another needless provocation. The missile disappeared from surveillance radar a few seconds after its launch and is believed to have exploded midair, according to a Seoul intelligence official quoted by Yonhap news agency. There had been widespread intelligence reports in recent days that the North was preparing for the first-ever flight test of its Musudan missile, which is believed to be capable of striking US bases on the Pacific island of Guam.

The US and South Korean militaries both detected and tracked the early morning test. A US defence official said the missile was "presumably" a Musudan. On board a US aircraft carrier in the South China Sea as part of a regional tour, US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter hit out at North Korea for raising tensions. "The North Korean missile launch, which we assessed was unsuccessful, was nevertheless another provocation by North Korea in a region that doesn't need that kind of behavior," Carter told reporters. The April 15 birthday of Kim Il-Sung - the grandfather of current ruler Kim Jong-Un - is a major public holiday in North Korea, where key political anniversaries are often marked with displays of military muscle.

The country is also gearing up for a rare and much-hyped ruling party congress next month, at which Kim Jong-Un is expected to take credit for pushing the country's nuclear weapons program to new heights. Pyongyang has hailed a series of achievements in recent months, including miniaturizing a nuclear warhead to fit on a missile,



PAJU: South Korean conservative activists display banners showing a caricature of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un as police block the activists attempting to launch anti-North Korea balloons in this border city yesterday. — AFP

developing a warhead that can withstand atmospheric re-entry, and building a solid-fuel missile engine. Last week, it said it had successfully tested an engine designed for an inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM) that would "guarantee" an eventual nuclear strike on the US mainland.

Scepticism Abounds

Outside experts have treated a number of the claims with scepticism, while acknowledging that the North's nuclear and ballistic missile programs have both made significant strides. If Friday's failure is confirmed as a Musudan test, it would mark a very unwelcome public failure and fuel doubts about just how far the North has gone in developing a reliable nuclear delivery system. "We are monitoring and continuing to assess the situ-

ation," another US official said, calling on North Korea to "refrain from actions that further raise tensions in the region."

Anxiety has been high on the divided Korean peninsula since Pyongyang conducted its fourth nuclear test in January and a rocket launch a month later that was widely seen as a disguised ballistic missile test. The UN Security Council responded with its toughest sanctions to date, angering the North, which has since made repeated threats of attacks targeting the South and the US. Existing UN resolutions forbid North Korea from the use of any ballistic missile-related technology. But the North has defied the sanctions by test-firing nearly 20 short- or mid-range missiles off its east coast since early March, in a show of force against the South-US joint army drill that kicked off in the same month. — AFP

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JAKARTA: An Indonesian staple food vendor prepares chili peppers for her customers at a traditional market in Jakarta yesterday. World Bank predicts economic growth in East Asia and Pacific to stand at around 6.3 percent in 2016 and 6.2 percent in 2017-2018. — AFP

NO GUARANTEE OF OIL DEAL AT DOHA TALKS EXPERTS SAY SAUDI OUTPUT FREEZE UNLIKELY

KUWAIT: Major oil producers meet this weekend to try to negotiate an output freeze to drain crude oversupply and boost prices, but doubts remain over whether Iran will join any accord.

Analysts are divided on the expected outcome of the meeting of around a dozen oil exporters, including heavyweights Saudi Arabia and Russia, in Doha tomorrow, which could send oil prices rising or crashing again. Prices have rebounded sharply in recent weeks partly on expectations of a deal that could, in theory at least, help to reduce the glut and repair producers' battered public finances.

"The general feeling is that an agreement will be reached in Doha to freeze oil production at January's levels," said Fawad Razaqada, analyst at brokerage firm City Index. That would "likely give prices a further short-term boost." Complicating prospects of a deal, however, OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia has insisted it will not join an output freeze unless its regional rival Iran does so.

Tehran, which is emerging from nuclear-related Western sanctions, will be seeking a waiver until its production reaches its pre-embargo levels. "We don't see Saudi Arabia freezing production and ... accommodating significant production rises by other producers," Fahad Al-Turki, head of research at Saudi Jadwa Investment, told AFP.

If a substantive agreement is struck in Doha, however, that would help to build trust between key producers and pave the way for production cuts in the future, Turki said. Qatar said Thursday that there was an "atmosphere of optimism" that a deal would be struck, adding that the number of countries due to attend had risen. Last month, Qatar said 12 nations including itself would be present at the talks, but it did not confirm if Iran was among them.

The Doha meeting is a follow-up to talks in February between OPEC members Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Venezuela plus Russia in which they first mooted the output freeze.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries warned ahead of the Sunday talks of worsening oversupply. OPEC also trimmed its forecast for global oil demand growth this year and said it might have to lower its projection further.

Oil price rollercoaster

A sharp rise in unconventional oil production, mainly US shale crude, and OPEC's reluctance to cut output triggered a collapse in oil prices from levels above \$100 a barrel in 2014, costing exporters billions of dollars. After hitting 13-year lows of around \$27 a barrel in February, oil prices have since rebounded to above \$40.

On Thursday, the International Energy Agency warned against over-expectation for the Doha talks, saying the meeting would have only a "limited" impact on supplies. Jean-Francois Seznec, an oil expert at Georgetown University, believes that Iran will not be the key problem at the meeting as it is only capable of boosting output by 300,000 barrels per day (bpd) this year. "I think the worry for the producers is not whether Iran freezes or not, but whether Russia would do so," Seznec told AFP. OPEC said Wednesday that Iranian oil production in March was 3.3 million bpd, up from 2.9 million in January, but still short of its pre-embargo level of around 4.0 million.

OPEC said its members pumped 32.25 million bpd in March—with Saudi Arabia accounting for nearly a third—up from an average of 31.85 million bpd in 2015. "The freeze talks between OPEC and non-OPEC will decide how quickly markets could get balanced and by how much oil prices would rise," Abhishek Deshpande, an analyst at Natixis, told AFP.

A freeze agreement, if it includes Iran, could see "markets completely balanced" as early as in the third quarter this year, he added. Oil brokers PVM however said in a comment this week that during the first quarter of this year, daily supply exceeded demand by 2.3 million barrels. This has added millions of extra barrels to global strategic and commercial stocks, which will reach almost 1.5 billion barrels by the summer, it said. "Whatever the outcome of this meeting, the price of oil will not rebound soon with a level sufficient to balance public finances of the majority of producers," said SAXO Bank analyst Christopher Dembik. He warned oil prices could drop back to \$30-33 a barrel if producers fail to strike a deal. One of the main OPEC goals by not cutting production was to drive high-cost supply, mainly US shale

oil, out of the market. US shale production is now sliding but the conventional producers' dilemma is that shale oil can respond quickly when prices increase. — AFP

IRAN OIL MINISTER NOT TO ATTEND DOHA TALKS

TEHRAN: Iran's oil minister will not join an Iranian delegation at a meeting this weekend of major crude producers aimed at negotiating a production freeze, the oil ministry said yesterday. In a statement carried by the Shana news agency, the ministry said Bijan Zanganeh would skip the talks in Doha, adding that "Iran already announced it cannot join the plan to stabilise oil prices" while its output is still below pre-sanction levels. The ministry said Iran's OPEC representative would attend the meeting instead. Tehran is expected to seek a waiver as it increases output after the lifting of nuclear-related Western sanctions.

OPEC kingpin and regional rival Saudi Arabia has vowed not to join an output freeze unless Iran does the same. Oil prices, which hit a 13-year low earlier this year, have rebounded sharply in recent weeks partly on expectation that a deal between OPEC and non-OPEC producers in Qatar could help to reduce a global crude supply glut. OPEC said Wednesday that Iranian oil production in March was 3.3 million barrels per day (bpd), up from 2.9 million in January, but still short of its pre-embargo level of around 4.0 million.

"Iran supports efforts... to stabilize the market and support prices," oil ministry spokesman Akbar Nematollahi was quoted as saying yesterday. "Iran's representative will go to Doha to explain the position of Iran and revive efforts to improve the market situation." — AFP

FORMER OPEC MEMBER GABON WANTS TO REJOIN OIL GROUP

GABON HAD JOINED OPEC IN 1975, LEFT IN 1995

DUBAI/LONDON: The African nation of Gabon wants to rejoin OPEC after more than two decades, two OPEC sources said, becoming the second former member in a year to seek a return to the oil exporters' group just as it is taking the first steps in years to prop up prices. If it returned, Gabon would be the smallest producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and bring its ranks to 14 countries following last

year's return of Indonesia, which had quit in 2008.

"They sent the request to OPEC officially," said one of the sources, an OPEC delegate.

An oil official in Gabon declined to comment. Gabon joined OPEC in 1975 and left in 1995 over the exporter group's refusal to grant its request for reduced annual contributions in line with the country's small production, news reports said at the time.

The move to rejoin comes as key OPEC members and outside producers such as Russia are attempting to support prices through a deal to freeze output which will be discussed this weekend in Doha. The initiative has helped oil prices to start recovering from a 12-year low reached in January.

OPEC in 2014 had abandoned its traditional role of cutting supply to support the market, accelerating a drop in prices which were falling due to oversupply and prompting critics to question its relevance. Gabon produces 200,000 barrels of oil per day (bpd) according to the International Energy Agency, and output is in decline. Last year, the government launched an offshore licensing round in a bid to boost exploration.

Ecuador, which pumps 530,000 bpd, is currently the smallest OPEC producer. The next step, the sources said, would be for OPEC oil ministers to discuss Gabon's request. They hold their next meeting in June. OPEC rules state that a country needs to have "a substantial net export of crude" in order to become a full member. Still, the ministers waived this requirement with the decision to welcome back Indonesia, now a net oil importer.

Whether Gabon's return would be as straightforward is not clear. Indonesia was deemed by OPEC to have "suspended" its membership, while it calls Gabon's departure a "termination" - implying a more formal severing of ties. — Reuters

TUNISIA TO GO TO MARKET WITH 1BN EURO BOND ISSUE

TUNIS: Tunisia will go to the international markets with a 1 billion euro bond issue next week to raise funds to help cover a budget deficit, a government official said yesterday. The North African state's economy is struggling with a drop in tourism revenues after four major militant attacks over the past year, and an outbreak of social unrest over jobs and development at the start of this year.

"Tunisia will start a roadshow in European capitals next Wednesday for the one billion euro bond issue," said the government official who asked not to be named because he was not authorised to speak to the media. Tunisia last went to the inter-

national market a year ago, with a \$1 billion bond.

The International Monetary Fund team has been in talks with Tunisia over a new credit program, tied to measures to strengthen its economy and finances and worth at least \$1.7 billion over four years. Tunisia's parliament this week passed one of those reforms, a law to strengthen the independence of the central bank to protect it from political meddling.

Tunisia's economic progress has fallen behind since the 2011 uprising against autocrat Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali that brought the country to full democracy and triggered "Arab Spring" revolutions across North Africa and the Middle East. — Reuters

DOHA MEETING MIGHT NOT MATTER MUCH FOR PRICES

LONDON: Given the hype which has accompanied the run-up to an oil ministers' meeting in Doha tomorrow, there is a risk prices will fall afterwards it fails to reach an agreement or produces only a weak one. But expectations for the meeting are already pretty low.

"We cannot know the outcome but if there is to be a production freeze, rather than a cut, the impact on physical oil supplies will be limited," according to the International Energy Agency ("Oil Market Report", IEA, Apr 14). Given that almost no one expects ministers to agree on a cut, and a freeze would not remove any actual barrels from the market, the scope for disappointment is perhaps limited.

Some analysts argue prices could fall sharply if the meeting fails to produce a significant agreement because it will puncture the sentiment-driven positive momentum that has been driving prices higher.

In this view, ministers must deliver something significant or risk an abrupt deterioration in market sentiment and prices. But it is also arguable that what has been driving prices higher over the last two months is not just sentiment or expectations about Doha but the prospect of real price-driven rebalancing in the oil market.

The IEA and Goldman Sachs have published commentaries this week entitled respectively "market balance draws near" and "rebalancing gathers pace". If hedge funds and other market participants are focused on the price-driven reduction in supply and increase in demand, the lack of a substantial outcome from Doha might produce only a short-lived decline in prices. At this point, no one really knows how the market will react to a weak deal.

THE PROBLEM OF OIL

"The problem of oil is that there is always too much or too little", Myron Watkins, professor of economics at New York University, wrote almost 80 years ago ("Oil: Stabilization or Conservation?" Watkins, 1939). Extreme volatility is the defining characteristic of all commodity markets but none are more spectacular or have as much impact on the fate of economies and nations as swings in the price of oil.

"The basic feature of the petroleum industry ... is that it is not self-adjusting," according to economist Paul Frankel ("Essentials of Petroleum", Frankel, 1946). The risk associated with finding oil underground; the high cost of exploration and drilling coupled with the low cost of production; high fixed costs in refining, transport and marketing; and a lack of responsiveness in both supply and demand to small changes in price in the short term combine to produce continuous crises, according to Frankel.

Not much has changed in the intervening decades. Watkins and Frankel would recognise the recent panic about peak oil, shale revolution and the subsequent slump in oil prices as another of the extreme cycles that have plagued the modern oil industry since its beginning in 1859.

PRODUCTION PLANNING

Frankel argued the recurrent crises made some sort of "planning" by major oil companies, governments, or both, necessary and inevitable. The only way to tame violent price swings was to employ "eveners" or "adjusters", what would now be called "swing producers", willing and able to balance supply and demand by altering their own production.

"As there is always either too much or too little oil, the industry, not being self-adjusting, has an inherent tendency to extreme crises; this fact has called forth the ingenuity of planners within the trade. As no individual unit can evolve a rational production policy on its own, some sort of communal organization is almost inevitable," Frankel concluded. The history of the oil industry is largely a history of attempts to stabilise production and prices each of which has ended in failure sooner or later.

Efforts have ranged from the Oil Creek Association founded in 1861, the Petroleum Producers Association of Pennsylvania (1869), Standard Oil (1870s-1910s), and the U.S. oil conservation movement (1910s-1930s), to the Achnacarry Agreement (1928), the Texas Railroad Commission (late 1940s-early 1970s) and OPEC (since 1982). There is no reason to believe an agreement between OPEC and non-OPEC producers in Doha would have any more enduring success.

PRICES OR STABILISATION

While Frankel was correct that the oil industry is not self-adjusting in the short term, in the longer term, the price mechanism, rather than stabilization arrangements, has brought supply and demand back to balance. It was high prices which solved the "problem" of peak oil in the mid-2000s, and it is low prices, not OPEC, which are now starting to cure the "problem" of excess oil production in the mid-2010s.

High prices did not lead to the creation of hydraulic fracturing technology but they did enable and finance its rapid scaling up across the oil industry after 2005. High prices also encouraged much more efficient use of refined fuels in all forms of transport, such that oil consumption in the advanced economies fell almost continuously between 2005 and 2014. — Reuters



TUNIS: Trucks arrive in the Tunisian island of Kerkennah escorted by police as they try to reach UK based oil company Petrofac's natural gas facility on Thursday. Petrofac facility on Kerkennah has halted production since sit-in protests by contract workers demanding public sector employment began in January 2016. —AFP

ECB TO PHASE OUT 500 EURO NOTE SLOWLY AFTER GERMAN BACKLASH

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank looks set to stop printing the 500 euro note, arguing it is used to finance crime, although the purple bill will only be phased out gradually due to resistance from Germany, several sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

ECB President Mario Draghi said in February the bank wanted to "make changes" to the 500 euro note due to fears it may be used by terrorists and criminals, leading to speculation the banknote may be scrapped. This prospect triggered a backlash in Germany, where the use of large bills as a means of payment and saving is deeply rooted, leading the ECB to choose a gradual process of withdrawal.

Euro zone central banking sources

told Reuters the ECB's banknote committee has tabled several options and the most likely scenario is that the purple banknote will instead simply stop being printed and distributed at cash points and bank branches in 2018.

"The most likely outcome is a very gradual phasing out," an ECB insider said. People would likely be allowed to exchange their banknotes indefinitely, mirroring the policy adopted by Germany's own central bank when the euro replaced the Deutsche Mark in 2002. A decision is expected at an upcoming non-policy meeting of the ECB's Governing Council and probably as early as May.

The ECB declined to comment. Even this compromise solution was unlikely

to be backed by Germany's central bank, which still fears that any restriction encroaches on citizens' right to cash, one of the sources said. One Bundesbank director, in fact, disputed that scrapping the note would help tackle terrorism and warned that this could instead see a little bit of "freedom" die.

Germany was one of the early champions of the 500 euro note to match the value of its old 1,000 mark note and cater to Germans' traditional preference for cash over electronic money.

THE 'BIN LADEN'

The 500 euro note is worth more than five times the value of the largest US denomination—the \$100 bill—and has

been dubbed the 'Bin Laden' for its alleged links to terrorism and the difficulty of finding it. Nearly a third of the 1 trillion euros circulating last year was stored in 500 euro notes, ECB data showed.

Yet 56 percent of European Union citizens have never seen one, according to a 2011 ECB survey, because the note is mainly used for hoarding cash, rather than paying.

There is no official data about the use of 500 euro notes by criminals. But studies by the European Union police agency Europol, former banking executive Peter Sands and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime link it to crime, mostly citing anecdotal evidence. — Reuters

GREEK PM BLAMES IMF FOR BAILOUT DELAY

ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras yesterday said the IMF should stop tinkering with the country's latest bailout with European creditors, blaming the global lender for causing a delay in talks. The IMF has worked with the EU on two previous Greek bailouts but said it would not participate in the latest plan without credible reforms and an EU agreement to ease Greece's debt burden.

"Greece fails to understand why the IMF insists in changing the design of the reforms in a way that leaves their yield and simplicity intact, but makes the reform significantly less progressive," Tsipras said in an article published in the Financial Times. "Delaying the conclusion of the first review of the ESM (European Stability Mechanism) program by stubbornly insisting to ignore the letter and the spirit of the agreement does not serve the principles on which Europe has been thriving," Tsipras said.

Leftist Tsipras has repeatedly lashed out at the Washington-based global lender, and the current talks have been clouded by allegations that senior IMF officials sought to engineer a Greek default. A WikiLeaks report earlier this month said the IMF was looking for a crisis "event" to push Greece and European negotiators into accepting its fiscal targets, citing an intercepted conversation between senior IMF officials. IMF chief Christine Lagarde later dismissed this notion as "nonsense". Lagarde on Thursday said the IMF had no intention of withdrawing from the program, but hinted its role could change, without going into details. "We will not walk away. Our form of participation may vary, depending on the commitments of Greece and the undertaking of the European partners. But we will not walk away," Lagarde said. — AFP

MARS FOOD TELLS CUSTOMERS TO GO EASY ON THE PASTA SAUCE

LONDON: Mars Food plans to tell customers to eat some of its Dolmio pasta sauces and macaroni cheese only once a week to maintain a balanced diet because of the products' high levels of salt, sugar or fat. The scheme is part of a larger initiative by the privately owned US food company to encourage healthier eating at a time when large food multinationals, or Big Food, are coming under increasing pressure from public health advocates and regulators struggling to fight a growing obesity epidemic.

The plan, however, does not extend to Mars' chocolate or sweets businesses, whose brands include M&M's, Snickers and Starburst. Products that are particularly high in salt, sugar or fat, including Dolmio lasagne meal kits and lasagne sauces, will come with a label advising "occasional" consumption, meaning once a week. Products with lower levels of salt, sugar or fat will be considered "everyday" products.

The company said most of its products in the UK would fall into the latter category. However, only 70 percent of its tomato sauces sold in jars already meet that standard. It did not give details for other countries but plans to introduce the labelling in all markets where those products are sold. Nearly all packaged food makers are reformulating products as they try to keep up with changing tastes of increasingly health-conscious consumers. — Reuters

US INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT FALLS, SIGNALS WEAK Q1 GROWTH

MINING, UTILITIES PRODUCTION FALL SHARPLY

WASHINGTON: US industrial production fell more than expected in March as manufacturing and mining production decreased, the latest indication that economic growth braked sharply in the first quarter. Industrial output declined 0.6 percent last month after a downwardly revised 0.6 percent drop in February, the Federal Reserve said yesterday. Industrial production has fallen in six of the last seven months. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast industrial production slipping only 0.1 percent last month after a previously reported 0.5 percent drop in February.

Industrial production fell at an annual rate of 2.2 percent in the first quarter after decreasing at a 3.3 percent pace in the fourth quarter. The report joined data on retail sales, business spending, trade and wholesale inventories in suggesting that economic growth slowed to crawl at the turn of the year.

Growth estimates for the first quarter are as low as a 0.2 percent annualized rate. The economy grew at a 1.4 percent rate in the fourth quarter. But given a buoyant

labor market, the ebb in growth is likely to be temporary.

US financial markets were little moved by the data. The industrial sector has been undermined by a slowing global economy and robust dollar, which have eroded demand for US manufactured goods. It is also being weighed down by lower oil prices that have undercut capital investment in the energy sector, as well as an inventory correction.

But there are signs the worst of the industrial sector downturn is over, with recent manufacturing surveys turning higher. In addition, the dollar's rally has fizzled and oil prices appear to be stabilizing.

Last month, manufacturing output fell 0.3 percent, the biggest decline since February 2015, after slipping 0.1 percent in February. Manufacturing was dragged down by motor vehicle and parts production, which plunged 1.6 percent after rising 0.8 percent the prior month.

For the first quarter, manufacturing output rose at a 0.6 percent rate. In March, there were also decreases in the output of

electronic equipment, appliances and components. Mining production tumbled 2.9 percent as oil and gas well drilling plummeted 8.5 percent after diving 15.8 percent in February. Last month's drop in mining output was the largest since September 2008, when output was curtailed because of hurricanes. Mining production has declined in each of the last seven months.

A plunge in oil prices since June 2014 has hurt the profits of oil-field companies like Schlumberger and Halliburton, leading to deep cuts in their capital spending budgets. Unseasonably warm weather in March hurt utilities production, which fell 1.2 percent after declining 3.6 percent in February.

With output declining last month, industrial capacity use fell 0.5 percentage point to 74.8 percent, the lowest level since August 2010. Officials at the Fed tend to look at capacity use as a signal of how much "slack" remains in the economy and how much room there is for growth to accelerate before it becomes inflationary. — Reuters



KUALA LUMPUR: Tourists cross a road during sunset in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP



WASHINGTON: German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble, French finance minister Michel Sapin, Spanish Economy Minister Luis de Guindos and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde, at a news conference during the G5 Ministers of Finance meeting during the World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings in Washington on Thursday. — AP

G20 MINISTERS FACE PRESSURE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH, TAX EVASION SPECTER OF BREXIT ALREADY HURTING GROWTH: LAGARDE

WASHINGTON: Finance ministers of the world's top economies face pressure to do more for global growth and crack down on tax evasion when they gather Friday during the spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank. Amid worries that the world economy is at risk of stalling, the G20 ministers face calls to take action to boost job-creating investment and fight off rising protectionist sentiment, including Britain's threatened pullout from the European Union.

They will also be confronted with an ambitious proposal from Europe's top five economies in reaction to the Panama Papers scandal that has exposed the extent of banking secrecy worldwide.

Germany, Britain, France, Spain and Italy released a proposal Thursday calling for an international registry of the beneficial owners of anonymous shell companies to help fight tax evasion and money laundering. The

move was a reaction to the leak of millions of documents on anonymously owned shell companies from Mossack Fonseca, a Panamanian law firm that specialized in setting up such firms.

The trove showed the use of shell companies by prominent politicians including close associates of Russian President Vladimir Putin, family members of Chinese leaders, British Premier David Cameron, and the leaders of Iceland and Argentina.

"The current events show that identifying the ultimate beneficial owner behind corporate structures is key to fighting tax evasion, money laundering and illicit finance effectively," German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said in a news conference.

That could put the countries of the elite group at odds amongst themselves: Some, including the United States, allow company owners to hide their identities in anonymous

companies and trusts.

The concern about tax havens stirred a reaction from Panama, which has been singled out in the wake of the Panama Papers as non-cooperative. "Panama's path to financial transparency is irreversible," Isabel De Saint Malo, Panama's vice president and foreign minister, said in a statement. "To that end, we willingly and actively support diplomatic dialogue and domestic reform to address this global challenge," she said.

Warnings over slow growth

The G20 though will also have to answer to the broad worries voiced by the World Bank and IMF that world growth could slow to "stall speed" if nothing is done. Earlier this week the IMF cut its world growth forecast for the third time in six months, to 3.2 percent, and said there were significant risks of a further slowdown. The two powerful institutions said demand for financial support from struggling governments has risen to levels normally seen during crises. "In the global economy, there are not many bright spots," said World Bank President Jim Yong Kim. "The weakening global economy threatens our progress toward ending extreme poverty by 2030."

The emerging economies of the G24 group said that things have not improved for them. "We continue to face weaker global demand, tighter financial conditions, more volatile capital flows, and heightened security challenges. These headwinds could further weaken our growth outlook and contribution to global growth," the group said.

Brexit and marriage

IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde warned that the specter of Brexit Britain's exit from the European Union was already hurting economic activity in the runup to the June 23 referendum there on whether to stay or go. She said the regional and world economy will be better off if Britain remains in the EU. — AFP

TOP EUROPEAN COUNTRIES CALL TO END SHELL COMPANY SECRECY

WASHINGTON: Europe's five leading economies called Thursday for a crackdown on tax havens, urging the G20 powers to end the secrecy of shell companies that enables tax evasion and money laundering.

In the strongest reaction yet to the leaked "Panama Papers," the finance ministers of Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain also proposed a blacklist of havens like Panama if they do not share corporate registry data. "The recent extensive leaks from Panama show the critical importance of the fight against tax evasion, aggressive tax planning and money laundering," the five EU ministers said in a statement.

The proposal was made as the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund kicked off in Washington, with fighting tax evasion among issues under discussion to help countries strengthen finances and boost growth. World Bank President Jim Yong Kim said the illicit financial activities enabled by tax havens undermined the fight against poverty.

"When taxes are evaded, when state assets are taken and put into these havens, all of these things can have a tremendous negative effect on our mission to end poverty and boost prosperity," he said.

Pressure on Panama

In a letter to the G20 leading economies, meeting simultaneously in Washington, the five EU finance ministers proposed establishing transnational registries that would identify the beneficial owners of companies, trusts, foundations and other entities that had been able to hide from tax administrators and law enforcement.

That would extend the steps already taken under the 2014 "Common Reporting Standard" (CRS) agreement on sharing information about assets and accounts of signatories' nationals.

Corrupt officials and criminals still can exploit cracks and loopholes to hide illicit financial activities despite that pact, the ministers said. "The current events show that identifying the ultimate beneficial owner behind corporate structures is key to fighting tax evasion, money laundering and illicit finance effectively," German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble said in a news conference.

The move was a reaction to the leak of thousands of documents on anonymously-owned shell companies from Mossack Fonseca, a Panamanian law firm that specialized in setting up such firms.

The trove showed the use of shell companies by prominent politicians including close associates of Russian President Vladimir Putin, family members of Chinese leaders, British Premier David Cameron, and the leaders of Iceland and Argentina.

The leak placed Panama in the spotlight as one of the leading havens that have not joined the CRS agreement on sharing information on bank accounts and other assets.

The five threatened to create a blacklist of countries which do not cooperate on sharing data. "We want to have lists which make it possible to place sanctions on countries which don't respect the rules," French Finance Minister Michel Sapin said.

Under pressure, Panama said Thursday it was ready to begin working together with the CRS system.

"Panama's path to financial transparency is irreversible," Vice President Isabel de Saint Malo de Alvarado said in a statement. "We are fully and immediately committed to the implementation of bilateral automatic exchange of information consistent with the goals of the Common Reporting Standards." But the Oxfam anti-poverty group, which released Thursday a paper showing how top US corporations have socked away \$1.4 trillion in profits in tax havens, said the European proposals are still too weak. — AFP

US BUSINESS LOBBY SAYS CHINA'S POLICIES CONFLICT WITH REFORM GOALS

BEIJING: China's national security regulations and industrial policies are at odds with its reform goals, a US business lobby said yesterday, urging Beijing to rein in protectionism and keep the country competitive in the global economy.

The American Chamber of Commerce in China said in its annual China business climate paper that such policies had "led to doubt about the government's intentions to reform and open the economy".

"Our members implore the government to move forward in developing an environment that encourages fair and market-based innovation," chamber chairman James Zimmerman said in the paper. China has repeatedly vowed to open its market more widely to foreign investment, though business groups complain progress has been slow.

Beijing has also put forward so-called Internet Plus and Made in China 2025 strategies, which aim to make Chinese firms world technology leaders and call for progressive increases in domestic components in priority industries such as robotics. Those policies, concerns over antitrust investigations and a series of new and draft security laws and regulations have heightened fears of protectionism.

"If you really do have policies that are going to favour the (domestic) champions at the risk of shutting people out of the market, that's discrimination," Zimmerman told reporters at a briefing on the paper. Zimmerman also said internet restrictions were hampering business and that free flow of information was critical to China's effort to promote innovation. — Reuters



WASHINGTON: Mozambique Minister of Economy and Finance Adriano Afonso Maleiane, right, hands the microphone to Save the Children International CEO Helle Thorning-Schmidt at the Early Childhood Development: A Smart Beginning for Economies on the Rise panel discussion during the World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings on Thursday. — AP

ITALY'S ATLAS FUND STRUGGLES TO STOP SKY FALLING ON BANKS

MILAN: Italy has dubbed its new bank bailout fund Atlas, after the mythical Greek titan, because it is meant to hold up the sky above the nation's lenders. But some of the fund's own investors doubt that it can do the job.

The 5-6 billion euro (\$5.7-6.8 billion) fund was hailed by the government as an industry-led response to concerns in Rome and other European capitals about the euro zone's fourth-biggest banking system. But it was only reluctantly accepted by some of the financial institutions that committed to it, according to seven sources, including four of the institutions that eventually agreed to put money in the fund.

Some bankers involved in the scheme voiced fears the fund would expose their own banks to the self-inflicted problems of a few lenders, the sources said. They also said that the fund may not be big enough to make a real dent in Italy's 360 billion euros in bad debts, a third of the euro zone's total, if it spends most of its money on helping recapitalize weaker banks, according to the sources. Italy's biggest retail bank, Intesa Sanpaolo, and another lender, Banco Popolare, spoke out against Atlas in tense, closed-door meetings leading up to the fund's announcement on Monday, according to two sources who were present.

Some bankers complained they were being asked to sign up to a multi-billion-euro fund without any documentation, the sources said. A person who played a key role in setting up the fund said some of the details were only fine-tuned at midday on Monday, so no paperwork was distributed at the final meeting with bankers in the evening. The plan's first formal draft circulated the following day. Unenthusiastic bankers only agreed to back it after government and central bank officials warned of a crisis of confidence in the sector unless big lenders signed up.

The person who had a key role in setting up the fund said they were told that if a single bank's effort to raise cash on the market failed, it would drag the whole industry down.

Intesa Sanpaolo and Banco Popolare declined to comment on the talks leading up to the fund's creation and on whether they had reservations about the scheme. A Bank of Italy spokeswoman said it supported the initiative by private financial institutions, which the central bank governor has described as a safety net to ensure choppy markets do not impede the necessary recapitalization of some lenders. — Reuters

GOLD SET FOR WEEKLY DROP ON DOLLAR, EQUITIES GAINS

LONDON: Gold edged up yesterday following three days of declines, but was heading for its first weekly drop in three as a stronger dollar and higher equities kept investor interest in check.

Bullion climbed to a three-week high on Tuesday, only to give up gains as world stocks rose to their highest levels since late December on Thursday, boosted by robust Chinese economic data and a surge in oil prices earlier this week. Spot gold was up 0.2 percent at \$1,229.06 an ounce by 0941 GMT, following a drop of 1.3 percent in the previous session. It was heading for a 1 percent loss for the week.

Gold prices have steadied after posting their biggest quarterly rise in nearly 30 years in the three months to March, driven by a reining in of expectations that the US Federal Reserve will push ahead with several rate hikes this year. "We are seeing central banks having separation anxiety with their stimulus policies and so much stimulus tends to devalue currencies and that's the follow through from negative real rates," ETF Securities analyst Martin Arnold said.

"It is a cost for people to hold cash and fixed income and it devalue fiat currencies, so people are still turning to gold." Higher interest rates would lift the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding assets, while boosting the dollar.

Atlanta Federal Reserve Bank President Dennis Lockhart on Thursday said he no longer expects to advocate for a US interest rate hike in April, but added there is still time for two or three rate hikes this year. The Fed will raise interest rates twice this year, most likely in June, but the probability has faded on signs of a weak start to the year, inflation that is still tame and a brittle global backdrop, a Reuters poll showed.

Bullion-backed exchange-traded funds have seen outflows in recent days, weighing on gold prices. Assets in SPDR Gold Trust, the world's largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, fell to 806.82 tons on Thursday, the lowest in a month. Among other precious metals, silver was on track to post a 5 percent weekly gain, its biggest jump in six weeks. It was up 0.3 percent at \$16.19 an ounce, after hitting its highest level since October earlier this week. — Reuters



BEIJING: Laborers work at a construction site in Beijing yesterday. China's economy grew 6.7 percent in the three months of 2016, its slowest quarterly expansion in seven years, the government said, but indicators for March improved. —AFP

CHINA ECONOMY SHOWS SIGNS OF DEBT-FUELED RECOVERY

POLICYMAKERS MAY BE MOVING TO OLD STIMULUS

BEIJING: China posted its slowest economic growth since 2009 but a surge of new debt appears to be fueling a recovery in factory activity, investment and household spending in the world's second largest economy. That's good news in the near-term, economists say, but many worry it marks a return to the old playbook used during the financial crisis, when Beijing hand-cranked its economy out of a slowdown through massive stimulus, rather than structural reform.

Official data yesterday showed China's gross domestic product grew at an annual rate of 6.7 percent in the first quarter of the year, easing slightly from 6.8 percent in the fourth quarter as expected. However, other indicators released showed new loans, retail sales, industrial output and fixed asset investment were all better than forecast. While analysts say the data is evidence of a bottoming out in the economy's slowdown, some warn that the first quarter of 2015 got off to a similarly glowing start before a stock market crash later that year.

"What this shows is a stabilization of the old economy," said Raymond Yeung of ANZ, pointing to recovery in industrial production and fixed asset investment.

"I would still be a bit cautious about headline growth... last year's 6.9 percent figure was underpinned by a massive contribution from financial services, and the strong loan and credit growth recently and the recent resumption of IPO activity suggests

this could still be a big contribution."

The National Bureau of Statistics said in a press conference in Beijing on Friday that while main economic indicators showed positive changes, "downward pressure cannot be underestimated." It did not distribute quarterly GDP figures as it has in the past, saying it needed more time to calculate the figure. Global financial markets took the data in stride, but domestic stocks fell slightly, as analysts said the strong data implied the likelihood of a slower pace of monetary easing. The CSI300 index of the largest listed firms in Shanghai and Shenzhen closed 0.1 percent lower. Forex markets were largely flat with the offshore rate and the onshore rate trading around 6.5 per dollar.

RECOVERING DEMAND

Beijing hopes a recovery - even a credit-fueled one - can be sustained to avoid the need for more aggressive stimulus that could reinflate asset bubbles and make it more difficult to retrain Chinese firms to move up the value chain. Chinese banks extended 1.37 trillion yuan (\$211.23 billion) in net new yuan loans in March, nearly double the previous month's lending of 726.6 billion yuan, suggesting renewed appetite for investment among wary Chinese corporates.

China's retail sales growth quickened to 10.5 percent in March from 10.2 percent, slightly above forecasts, while fixed-asset investment growth rose to 10.7 percent year-on-year in the

first quarter from 10.2 percent, beating market expectations of 10.3 percent.

Industrial output growth leapt up to 6.8 percent from 5.4 percent, surprising analysts who expected a rise of 5.9 percent on an annual basis. The NBS also noted that official unemployment remained low in March, around 5.2 percent, despite moves to cut capacity in bloated industries like coal and steel. Critics, however, point out that many laid-off workers from old-economy sectors have been shifted into lower-paying government jobs, cleaning up offices - good for political stability but bad for wage growth and consumer spending.

At the same time official retail spending figures capture a lot of government purchases; elsewhere in the economy there are signs that ordinary consumption remains weak. March export figures released earlier this week also staged an unexpected recovery, although some economists caution that seasonal effects from last year's late Lunar New Year holiday could be a factor.

"Today's released data ought not to distract from the fact that the structural issues facing China's economy remain unresolved," wrote Economist Intelligence Unit economist Tom Rafferty in a research note. "It has taken considerable monetary and fiscal policy loosening to stabilize economic growth at this level and this effort has distracted from the reform agenda that is fundamental to long-term economic sustainability." — Reuters



TOKYO: A woman walks by an electronic stock board of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. Asian stocks mostly edged lower yesterday as investors assessed a report on Chinese quarterly economic growth while Japanese shares dropped after an earthquake. — AP

GERMANS WORRY ABOUT RETURN OF EURO CRISIS

'A STORM IS BREWING'

BERLIN: The eurozone crisis is back - at least in the minds of many Germans. Since last summer, the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees from the war-torn Middle East has overshadowed all else, dominating the political debate in Berlin and the front pages of German newspapers.

But over the past weeks a shift has taken place. With the tide of arriving migrants slowing to a trickle, angst over Europe's long-suffering currency bloc has returned - with a vengeance. "A storm is brewing," warned an editorial in the left-leaning daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung this week.

"Sometimes the fate of a people is decided in moments where there is not so much drama. That is what is happening now with Europe's currency union." The renewed focus on the euro zone is tied to a series of distinct yet interconnected developments that have deepened the sense of anxiety in Germany's political and media establishment.

These include the shift away from austerity in southern Europe, the loose money policies of the European Central Bank and recent changes in the German political landscape. One month ago, the Alternative for Germany (AfD), a right-wing populist party that had railed against Chancellor Angela Merkel's open-door refugee policies, surged into three state parliaments, stunning the established parties and forcing them into a strategic rethink.

Merkel's conservatives emerged from this discussion convinced that they must do everything in their power to shift the domestic debate away from refugees, officials told Reuters.

Since then, party leaders, led by Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, have stepped up their verbal attacks on the ECB's low interest rate policies. Their fear is that the AfD, founded three years ago as an anti-euro party, could seize on this theme too in the run-up to the next federal election in 2017.

One senior coalition leader described the rates debate as "the next big theme for the AfD". Low rates are an especially sensitive topic in Germany because they are seen as eroding the savings of millions of people who have squirrelled away cash in banks for their retirement. The AfD was quick to jump on ECB President Mario Draghi's comment last month that "helicopter money" - whereby a central bank hands cash directly to eurozone citizens to bolster inflation - was a "very interesting" concept. "It is an opportune time to complain about the ECB right now," a senior official close to Merkel acknowledged this week.

REFORM FATIGUE

The ECB is also coming under fire for another reason: the sense in Germany that its loose policies have diminished the pressure on southern European countries to reform their economies and reduce still-swollen debt piles and deficits. Berlin has watched on in horror this year as one euro zone country after another has signalled a departure from the consolidation path that Merkel and Schäuble insisted upon at the height of the euro crisis.

In Portugal, a new Socialist government backed by far-left allies in parliament announced plans last month to lift

the minimum wage by 20 percent, cut value-added tax for restaurants by a whopping 10 percentage points and reintroduce four public holidays.

Further afield, attempts by the French government to reform the labour market have stalled in the face of protests. And both Italy and Spain have signalled that they have little interest in listening to the European Union about lowering their deficits. Meanwhile, German frustration with Greece is bubbling over again as reform talks between Athens and its creditors drag on. This week the normally reserved German head of the euro zone's rescue fund, Klaus Regling, complained that Greek reform implementation was the worst in all of Europe.

German newspapers have been full of charts showing rising debt levels across the euro zone's southern periphery. Germany and its eurozone partners still hold sway over Greece, which needs funds from its third bailout to pay its bills and avoid bankruptcy.

But Berlin is realising that its influence in other countries, which never received a bailout in the first place or have already exited their programs, is limited. Although still strong at home, Merkel has emerged weakened in Europe from the refugee crisis. And in the eyes of many of her partners, Germany no longer enjoys the moral high ground on economic issues.

At a time when the eurozone is putting pressure on Greece to save on pensions, Merkel's coalition is considering reforms that would funnel more money to the elderly - another measure, it seems, which is designed to thwart the rise of the AfD. — Reuters

FRANCE: UK POST-BREXIT TRADE DEAL WOULD MEAN PAYING TO EU BUDGET

PARIS: France's economy minister, Emmanuel Macron, told those advocating an exit of Britain from the European Union they were wrong if they thought they could clinch a trade deal with the remaining EU without contributing to the bloc's budget.

In a video interview with the Financial Times published online yesterday, Macron said Britain could strike a trade deal similar to the one Norway or Switzerland have, but that it would still have to contribute towards the EU budget and even then would not automatically receive full-fledged access to the single market.

Asked whether the "Leave campaign" was right to argue that Britain would be able to negotiate the same trade deal with the EU if it left than the one it currently enjoys as a member, he said:

"I think that's a big mistake. The best possible trade deal is the one you have and especially the one just renegotiated with the rest of the EU. "So those who pretend that passporting will be preserved exactly following the same rules without any contribution to the budget, are making a big, a big mistake because it's completely wrong," Macron added.

"So for sure, you can renegotiate a trade arrangement, but this trade deal will be less favourable to the UK than being part of the club," he said. He also said Britain would also have to face volatility between the June referendum on Brexit and the time it implements any trade deal, which would take one to two years.

Macron, who has sought to pressure the European Commission and EU members into imposing higher tariffs on cheap Chinese steel imports, said Britain would struggle to stand up to China outside the 28-member union. "Do you think you will be in a situation to protect your steel industry tomorrow if you are alone as the UK economy facing the Chinese one?" he asked. "I do believe it's much more efficient to be part of the EU." — Reuters

GLOBAL STOCK MARKETS STAGE PULLBACK

LONDON: Global equities took a step back yesterday from this week's rally after news that China's powerhouse economy grew at its slowest rate in seven years during the first quarter. Japanese investors were cautious following a powerful 6.5-magnitude earthquake that struck the country overnight, killing least nine people and forcing the closure of the factories of several major manufacturers. The oil market moves centre-stage this weekend, when major crude producers descend on Doha on Sunday to discuss a possible deal to curb output.

"The strong weekly performance in European markets stalled on Friday," said CMC Markets analyst Jasper Lawler. "Data showing the slowest growth in China for seven years and doubts whether oil producers can agree on an output freeze this weekend in Doha are both good reason to take profits."

Shares around the world have piled higher this week as a string of upbeat data from China and a surge in oil prices fuelled hopes for the global economy.

Taking cash off table

However, investors decided to take their cash off the table Friday, sending most stock markets lower.

Frankfurt, London and Paris shed about half a percent in European deals. Hong Kong, Shanghai and Seoul each shed 0.1 percent. Tokyo meanwhile gave up 0.4 percent, with big-name firms including Sony, Toyota and Honda among the key losers. Sony dived 3.2 percent and Honda one percent.

However, the losses around the region were limited, while China released another batch of economic data. Beijing said the Chinese economy, a crucial driver of global growth, expanded 6.7 percent in January-March.

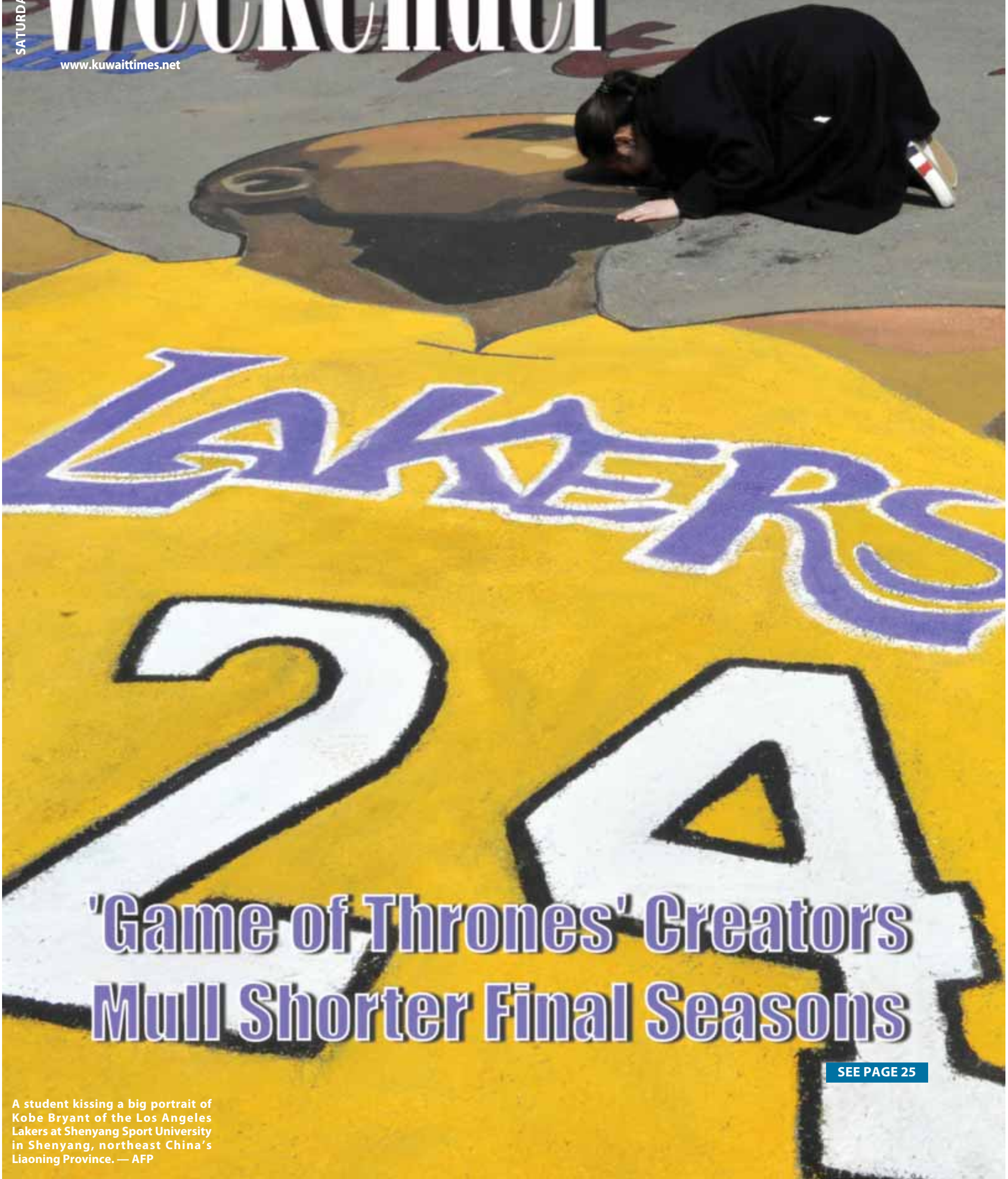
That was the weakest quarterly result since the depths of the financial crisis in 2009, but was in line with expectations. The government also released forecast-beating investment, sales and industrial output figures for last month that reinforced hopes a growth slowdown in the economy may be bottoming out. — AFP

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2016

Kuwait Times

Weekender

www.kuwaittimes.net



'Game of Thrones' Creators Mull Shorter Final Seasons

SEE PAGE 25

A student kissing a big portrait of Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers at Shenyang Sport University in Shenyang, northeast China's Liaoning Province. — AFP



Charlize Theron thinks women's power is in their "sexuality"

The 'Huntsman: Winter's War' actress can't understand why the "beauty world" is focused on younger females as they often don't find their "strength" until they are older and more secure in themselves. She said: "Women find their strength and power in their sexuality, in their sensuality within, through getting older and being secure within that. "It's ironic that we've built the beauty world around 20 year olds when they have no concept about wisdom, what life is about, having a few relationships under their belt and feeling hardships, to grow into their skin and feel confident within themselves and to feel the value of who they are, not because of a man or because of something like that. And I think that's such a beautiful thing." And the 40-year-

old actress can't understand why men are seen as getting "better" as they age but women are seen to "wilt". She added to Psychologies: "That's why I think people say women come into their prime in their 40s. And then for some reason our society just wants to go, 'It's like a dead flower' - it's like we wilt for some reason. "And men are like fine wines - the older they get, the better they get. It's such a misconception, and it's such a lost opportunity because that's when I think women are really in the true moment of their sensuality."

Eddie Redmayne takes a flask of tea wherever he goes

The 'Danish Girl' actor was always happy to offer his beloved beverage to his co-stars on the set of the movie, and won over Matthias Schoenaerts with his "generous and funny" ways.

Matthias said: "During 'The Danish Girl', Eddie carried a tea flask on set - he always had it with him and kept offering me cups of tea. He's very warm and I loved working with him, partly because he's super generous and funny. "He's a very elegant person and that I mean he's very elegant in his spirit and his thoughts."

Belgian actor Matthias also enjoyed working with "badass and brutal" Tom Hardy on 'The Drop', in which they played love rivals. He told Closer magazine: "Tom is a badass actor in the purest sense of the word. He's inspiring to work with. He's very committed, very imaginative, very sensitive and at the same time very brutal. I don't mean that in a violent way, I mean it in the sense that he's very authentic in his expression. "That's what I like about Tom; he's direct, there's no filter. I love that about people because then the energy is electric when you work together. You either vibe with someone or you don't."



Iggy Azalea doesn't know if she's still engaged

The 'Fancy' hit maker has admitted her relationship with her fiancé Nick Young is still up in the air at the moment following allegations he cheated on her because, although she hasn't called things off, she's yet to speak with him.

She explained: "I guess I'm still engaged, I think so. I know I haven't called it off. I have to talk with him and see how the talk goes. We're not unengaged yet." But the 25-year-old rapper - who stopped wearing her ring at the end of last month - is determined to make the basketball player grovel for a while before she'll agree to put her diamond sparkler back on that special finger.

Speaking in a new interview with 103.7 KVIL's Leigh Ann and Courtney Kerr, she said: "He doesn't deserve for me to

be wearing his ring right now. We're not not engaged, but you have to do some work to [see me] put the ring back on."

The status of the couple's engagement has been the hot topic of conversation since a video tape was leaked online of Nick, 30, allegedly telling his Lakers teammate D'Angelo Russell that's he'd been unfaithful with a teenager.

The tape's emergence came just a few weeks after Iggy announced she and Nick had pushed back their wedding. However, she claimed at the time that the change in date was merely down to her globe-trotting work schedule. The couple - who live together in Tarzana, California - began dating at the beginning of 2014 and got engaged last year.

Hulk Hogan's career is on the up since he won his lawsuit against Gawker



The 62-year-old wrestler feels "vindicated" after he was awarded \$140 million in damages after the website published footage of him getting intimate with his friend's then-wife, and though he is currently taking some time out with spouse Jennifer McDaniell, he has been inundated with offers of work. A source told E! News: "He feels vindicated. For him, a verdict meant people believed him. Right now he's spending time with his wife and just taking a breath for a minute. The trial was a big circus and he's just taking a breath." "In terms of work, there's definitely been an uptick. Especially since the trial started in March. People saw the true story and are happy to be in business with him." And the new offers of work come alongside longstanding deals held by Hulk. The source added: "The companies he's been working with for years have not wavered. LoanMart, for example, has stuck by him. He feels good. He feels like the verdict showed that people

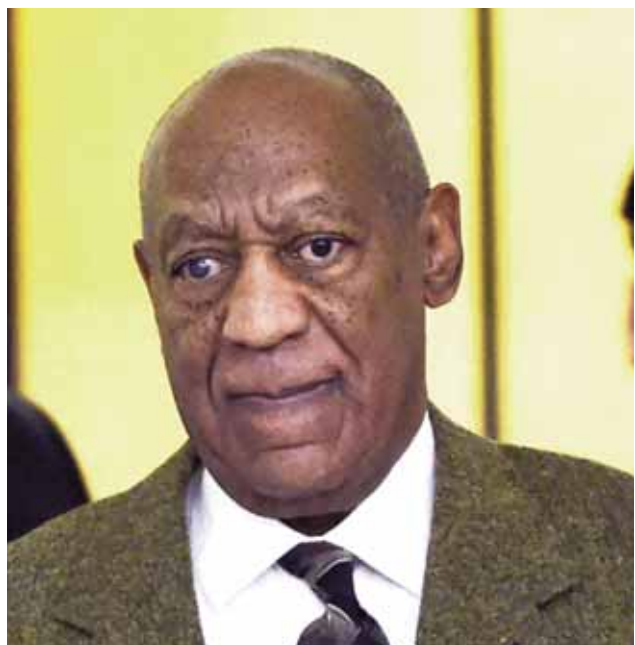
believed him. He feels good about his career and things overall." And as well as commercial support, the wrestler - whose real name is Terry Bollea - has seen his fanbase remain as strong as ever throughout the scandal. The source said: "The amazing thing is the support among the fans and the people he sees everyday on the street has not wavered. "He goes out and he's greeted warmly. People stop him and they want to take pictures and talk to him. There has always been and continues to be support from everyone he meets on the street. That's never stopped." Last July, World Wrestling Entertainment Inc. announced it had terminated Hulk's contract after a transcript of him using racially-charged language was published. The wrestler apologized for his use of "offensive language" and his lawyer insisted he had resigned from the WWE, not been fired.

Cosby accuser asks judge to void 2006 secrecy pact

The accuser in Bill Cosby's criminal sexual assault case in Pennsylvania wants a judge to void the secrecy clause surrounding their 2006 settlement since each side accuses the other of violating the pact.

A hearing yesterday in federal court was set to weigh that issue and the lawsuit Cosby filed against accuser Andrea Constand, her mother and her lawyer. Constand's lawyer Dolores Troiani says Cosby is using the court system to try to intimidate witnesses.

Cosby's lawyers say the Constand camp has violated the secrecy pact by cooperating with officials who reopened her police complaint last year. The judge also is hearing motions in Constand's defamation suit against Bruce Castor, the former suburban Philadelphia prosecutor who declined to arrest Cosby in 2005 and now says Constand enhanced her story when she filed suit.



Eva Mendes is reportedly pregnant with her second child

The 42-year-old actress and her long-term partner Ryan Reynolds only welcomed their daughter Esmeralda into the world 19 months ago but it seems they're wasting no time adding to their brood as they're said to be expecting again.

The brunette beauty - who is known for keeping details on her private life secret from the public - is said to be in her second trimester, according to E! News. The couple, who met on 'The Place Beyond the Pines' in 2011, have opened up slightly on life with a little one but are yet to share a photograph of little Esmeralda.

Ryan, 35, said recently: "My biggest investment is my family. I'm with the person I'm supposed to be with - I'm not looking for anything else beyond Eva - and I feel very lucky that we have a beautiful, healthy daughter, who is an angel."

Meanwhile, although Eva knows roughly what to expect second time round, the 'Hitch' star admitted during her first pregnancy that she was relying on baby forums to help prepare her for the birth of her little girl.

She said at the time: "I try not to Google too many things because it is frightening, but I do go to baby-center.com and read the comment sections from other mothers because I find so much solace in that. Just knowing that I'm not alone out there and that other moms have gone through the same thing can at least get me through the night."



Sesame Street's first Afghan Muppet empowers girls



KABUL: Afghan puppeteer Seema Sultani (R) with her colleague Raziya Nazari work with a muppet named "Zari" for a recording at an Afghan television studio. — AFP

With purple skin and an orange nose, her multi-colored braids wrapped in a headscarf, Zari is Sesame Street's first female, Afghan muppet and she has a message: Girl power.

Producers hope the character, who debuted on the local version of the show this month, will provide a much needed boost to gender equality in a country where girls still trail behind boys across the board.

Dressed in traditional garb Zari, whose name means "shimmering" in Dari and Pashto, is confident and inquisitive. Afghan puppeteer Mansoor Shirzad says she hopes the muppet will become a role model for young girls and send messages of empowerment to kids in the country.

"Our goal is to entertain children and educate them," Shirzad told AFP at the Sesame Street recording studio. She said she hopes six-year-old Zari will "bring new colour to the show and enable us to convey our message", her eyes lighting up as she speaks.

Known in Afghanistan as "Baghch-e-Simsim", or Sesame Garden, the programme debuted in the country in 2011 and is the most popular children's series on television today. Partly funded by the US aid agency, the show features segments catered to local issues, and includes dubbed content from other Sesame Street versions including from Egypt, Bangladesh, Mexico and Russia. For her part, Zari—who debuted on April 7 and has appeared in three episodes so far—has a full agenda this season.

She'll promote the virtues of exercising and playing sports, she'll speak to a female paediatrician about how to become a doctor, and she'll remind Afghanistan's young people to use the traditional Islamic greeting with friends: "Asalaam Alaikum" (peace be upon you).

The idea of a female role model on television-muppet or otherwise may seem prosaic to outsiders, but in a country where millions of

girls were excluded from schools during the 1996-2001 Taliban regime, it remains a daring blow to the status quo.

And though progress has been made on some education fronts, girls still trail boys when it comes to school attendance, and women's literacy continues to trail men's — 24 percent of females can read compared to 52 percent of males, according to UNESCO.

"Being a girl can be very difficult in Afghanistan, you face so many restrictions in your life, and we have chosen girl character for Sesame Street (because) we wanted to show girls can be as good as boy and girls are key factor for promoting education," said Massood Sanjer, director of the TOLO channel, which airs the program.

For puppeteer Shirzad—one of the few women in Afghanistan's male-dominated entertainment industry—playing Zari provides a welcome escape. "When I play Zari I absolutely love it and have great fun," said Shirzad, who is also studying Fine Arts at Kabul University. "I forget any problems I'm going through and just enjoy it."

Now in its fifth season, Sesame Street is hoping to continue captivating young minds in the conflict-torn country, and some say it's likely to do so.

"TV plays a very big part of people's lives and with that you can easily teach kids... Sesame Street has worked throughout the world and definitely worked for the past four seasons in Afghanistan," Sanjer said. The show's creators are silent on whether Zari will be joined by other Afghan Muppets in seasons to come. But for now, children in Afghanistan can enjoy seeing one of their own on the screen for 26 new episodes this season. — AFP

More Western art on shopping list for Chinese tycoon Liu

He first stunned the auction world by snapping up hugely expensive Chinese antiquities, but now taxi driver turned tycoon Liu Yiqian is targeting Western masterpieces, saying it is his "social responsibility" to show them to China's younger generation.

Liu has become China's highest profile art collector, hitting headlines with record-breaking buys and an irreverent approach. His acquisitions have mainly been of Chinese heritage, most famously the tiny Ming Dynasty "Chicken Cup" for which he paid \$36 million in 2014 at Sotheby's before drinking tea from it, causing a social media meltdown.

But in a departure from his Chinese collecting spree, last year Liu splashed out on Modigliani's "Nu Couché" or "Reclining Nude" for more than \$170 million at Christie's, the second highest price ever paid at auction for a work of art.

Liu says he hopes the museum he founded in Shanghai, the Long Museum, where much of his collection is on display across two branches, will increasingly become a showcase for Western art as well as Chinese classics.

The Modigliani is due to go on show at the museum next year. "The world is globalised...our collection is mainly Chinese traditional works of art, (but) we are going to expand into Western and Asian works. I hope in my life time I can collect more from both China and the West," he told AFP in a recent interview at Christie's regional headquarters in Hong Kong.

Liu said he felt a "social responsibility" to enable Chinese youngsters to experience Western masters. "Other than Chinese traditional and contemporary works of art, younger generations in China have developed deeper recognition of Western works," he said, relaxing in an armchair and talking through a haze of cigarette smoke after cutting the ribbon on a preview ahead of Christie's spring sales in May.

"I hope top Western works of art can be exhibited in Shanghai or in our coun-

try. I think it's something someone has to do...it's cultural exchange."

'Being myself'

With a personal wealth of \$1.38 billion according to Forbes magazine, Liu is among the ranks of the new Chinese super-rich. Having made his fortune in real estate and finance in the 1990s, he now runs a huge conglomerate across several industries from chemicals to investments.

Liu's auction buys have not been without controversy—his \$8.2 million purchase of an "ancient" scroll of nine Chinese characters was derided as a fake by a group of respected Chinese experts but he brushed off the skepticism.

He also remains unapologetic over drinking from the valuable porcelain "Chicken Cup", depicting a rooster and hen tending their chicks. "I wasn't showing off," he told AFP, drinking this time from an ordinary tea cup. "I was just being myself."

While he is eyeing Western works, Liu is also still snapping up Chinese pieces. This month he bought a painting by Chinese master Zhang Daqian for \$35.93 million at Sotheby's—a new record for the artist at auction. Liu has said before that his moves to buy up Chinese antiquities are part of a bid to bring heritage back to the mainland. He paid a record \$45 million in 2014 for a 15th-century Tibetan "thangka" tapestry at a Christie's auction.

Beijing has ruled Tibet since 1951, a year after invading, and considers the Himalayan region an integral part of its territory. The Tibetan government in exile and some scholars dispute China's historical claims. "We should not be obsessed with how these things (Chinese antiquities) spread overseas," Liu told AFP. "It doesn't matter where they are. The most important thing is for them to be preserved." — AFP



HONG KONG: China's highest profile art collector Liu Yiqian (C) cuts a ribbon to open the Christies spring season. — AFP

Bravo Renews 'The Real Housewives of Potomac' for Season 2

Bravo has renewed "The Real Housewives of Potomac" for season two, the cable net announced on Thursday. One of the new installments of the long-running "Real Housewives" franchise, "Potomac" has been a big success for Bravo, ranking as the second most popular version of the "Housewives," just behind "Atlanta." Just this week, Bravo also debuted "The Real Housewives of Dallas."

"Potomac's" renewal comes just ahead of the season's final episode, the Reunion Part Two, which airs Sunday, April 17, at 8 p.m.

The first season of "The Real Housewives of Potomac" has performed very well for Bravo, averaging 2.1 million viewers in Nielsen's "live plus-3"

estimates-good enough to become the network's most-watched first season of a series since "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills" in 2010. And among both adults 18-49 (1.2 million) and adults 25-54 (1.3 million), it stands as Bravo's top new series since "Vanderpump Rules" in 2013.

True Entertainment produces "Real Housewives of Potomac." Exec producers are Steven Weinstock, Glenda Hersh, Lauren Eskelin, Lorraine Houghton-Lawson, Bianca Barnes-Williams, Ashley McFarlin Buie and Andy Cohen. Anne Swan co-exec produces. — Reuters

The cast of 'The Real Housewives of Potomac' >



'Game of Thrones' creators mull shorter final seasons



Game of Thrones show runners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss

"Game of Thrones" will premiere its highly anticipated sixth season on April 24, but the executive producers say they are considering an abbreviated end game for the hit HBO series.

In an exclusive interview with Variety, showrunners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss said they are weighing wrapping up the Emmy-winning saga of Westeros and the battle for the Iron Throne with just 13 more episodes once this sixth season is over: seven episodes for season 7; six for the eighth and potential final season.

"I think we're down to our final 13 episodes after this season. We're heading into the final lap," said Benioff. "That's the guess, though nothing is yet set in stone, but that's what we're looking at." Sources later clarified those exact numbers were premature, given that the showrunners are now just beginning to outline their plans, but said that any upcoming seasons may be shorter than the full 10 episodes of seasons past.

HBO programming president Michael Lombardo acknowledged the showrunners' plan to wind down the series with two more years. "That's my understanding from them right now, those have been the conversations we've had," he says. "Because where these narratives go, it feels like another two years to them. As a television executive, as a fan, do I wish they said another six years? I do."

But, he added, "I'm always an optimist, and I do believe we will figure this out." It's long been speculated that the show would end with season eight; HBO signaled back in January that they were in talks with Weiss and Benioff for two more seasons. Fans might have expected that the two additional seasons would run the usual 10-episode-per-season stretch, but the executive producers say the shorter run will enable them to spend more time per episode. "Thrones" is set to go back into production in July.

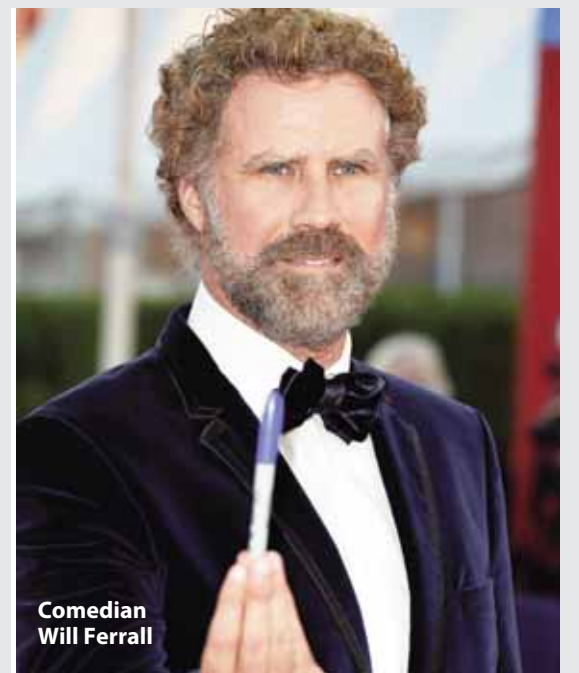
To live up to the standard they've set for themselves and fans-Weiss and Benioff said they can't continue to produce 10 episodes of the show in the show's usual 12- or 14-month time frame. "It's crossing out of a television schedule into more of a mid-range movie schedule," Weiss said.

While the "Game of Thrones" showrunners said the shorter-episode scenario is their hope, HBO executives made it clear there's no deal yet in place. "We're still in conversations," said Lombardo. — Reuters

Universal lands comedy pitch from Will Ferrell

Universal Pictures has acquired from Branden O'Brien an untitled original pitch for Gary Sanchez Productions that will serve as the basis for a Will Ferrell starring vehicle. O'Brien will write the script, which follows an escaped convict who teams up with an unlikely partner to stop his girlfriend from getting married. Ferrell, O'Brien, Adam McKay and Jessica Elbaum will produce under their Gary Sanchez Productions banner. Chris Henchy serves as executive producer. Related Will Ferrell to Star in North Pole Expedition Movie Exec VP of production Erik Baiers will oversee the project on behalf of the studio.

Gary Sanchez recently produced Universal's "The Boss" along with Melissa McCarthy and Ben Falcone's On the Day Productions, which just bowed to a \$23.5 million opening weekend at the domestic box office. O'Brien most recently co-wrote and produced New Line's "The House," starring Ferrell and Amy Poehler, which will be released in June 2017. He also co-wrote and exec produced the hit 2014 Universal film "Neighbors" and the upcoming sequel "Neighbors 2: Sorority Rising." Ferrell was most recently seen alongside Mark Wahlberg in "Daddy's Home." UTA reps Ferrell and O'Brien, and Gary Sanchez is co-repped by UTA and WME. — Reuters



Comedian Will Ferrell

Judge Nixes deposition for **Sumner Redstone** in ex girlfriend's lawsuit

Sumner Redstone will not have to submit to a deposition as part of a lawsuit brought by his former girlfriend, whose litigation has raised questions about the media mogul's competency and ability to govern two media companies.

A Los Angeles Superior Court judge denied the motion after Redstone's attorneys said that they would not call him to testify. Robert Klieger, who represents Redstone, said the Redstone would not provide verbal testimony as he has a "very, very severe speech impediment."

"We cannot put him through that, particularly in an adversarial proceeding," he said. Instead, he raised the prospect of written testimony, but Superior Court Judge David Cowan said he would not allow him "to testify by declaration."

On Wednesday, attorneys for Manuela Herzer filed a petition in Superior Court of the State of California seeking to depose Redstone, who is the biggest shareholder in Viacom Inc. and CBS Corp. Herzer, once romantically involved with the executive, was ousted from Redstone's household last year. Herzer's lawsuit challenged that removal as well as his competency. The litigation was on the verge of being settled last week, but for undisclosed reasons is now set to continue.

Previous motions to depose Redstone have been denied. But Herzer's attorneys argued that circumstances have changed, as counsel "purporting to represent Redstone are now offering him as a trial witness." Klieger told Cowan that what they had done is

reserve the right to call him to testify. But upon questions from Cowan, Klieger said they would not call Redstone.

Pierce O'Donnell of Greenberg Glusker, representing Herzer, said after the brief hearing that although their motion was denied, it was significant that Redstone's attorneys told the court that they would not call him as a witness. "The state of play today was that Sumner Redstone will not be testifying. That dooms their case," he said, arguing that it proves incompetency. In court filings, Herzer's attorneys also contend that recently discovered evidence shows Redstone's counsel had concerns over his capacity as far back as April 2015. O'Donnell said that he was going to New York next week to take a deposition from Redstone's daughter, Shari, on Tuesday. A deposition from Viacom CEO Philippe Dauman is scheduled for April 29, he said.

In a statement, Sumner Redstone attorney Gabrielle Vidal of Loeb & Loeb again questioned Herzer's motive for pursuing the litigation. "We are deeply gratified that the court continues to protect Mr. Redstone's privacy and dignity," Vidal said. "Ms. Herzer's eagerness to subject a 92-year-old man with a severe speech impairment to these intrusive proceedings is offensive. We also find it telling that while Ms. Herzer claims to be acting for Mr. Redstone's benefit, she refers to him in Court as her 'opponent'." — Reuters



Manuela Herzer and Sumner Redstone during better times



Former president of the Lincoln Center, Jed Bernstein

Lincoln Center president exits

The president of Lincoln Center, Jed Bernstein, has suddenly stepped down from the post after about three years in the job. The former head of the Broadway League and a Broadway producer, Bernstein quits in order to get back to creative and producing activities, according to a memo Bernstein sent the Lincoln Center staff. Prior to joining Lincoln Center, Bernstein had produced Broadway shows including "Driving Miss Daisy," and had also served as the impresario who got the Bucks County Playhouse back up and running. "As I have considered my future, I have come to realize that the next step for me should be a return to direct engagement with what makes me happiest: creating and producing," Bernstein said in the memo.

Given his background in for-profit show business, Bernstein was a surprising choice for the lead role at Lincoln Center, the umbrella nonprofit uniting 11 arts organizations including the Metropolitan Opera and Lincoln Center Theater. Past presidents tended to be drawn from public service or city government sectors. Related Lincoln Center Looks to Broadway for New Leadership Bernstein came aboard just as Lincoln Center was wrapping up its \$1.2 billion renovation of the entire campus, but he leaves just in the final phases of fundraising begin on the renovation of what is now David Geffen Hall, the building for which Geffen ponied up \$100 million. That renovation could reportedly cost \$500 million. During Bernstein's brief tenure, he launched a new series of cinemacasts, Lincoln Center at the Movies, inspired by the Metropolitan Opera's successful Live in HD programming, and kicked off the initiation of a performing arts-focused hall of fame.—Reuters

Former SAG pension and health plans exec gets probation for tax fraud

Nader Karimi, former chief information officer for the SAG Pension and Health Plans, has been granted five years of probation after pleading guilty to filing a false tax return in connection with allegedly embezzling over \$700,000.

The federal government had asked US District Court Judge Fernando Olguin to follow sentencing guidelines that called for a jail term of 18 to 24 months, according to Assistant US Attorney Angela Davis. But the jurist sided with the US Probation Office, which had recommended that he serve no jail time.

Karimi's attorney Sara Azari argued that her client had expressed deep remorse for his actions and had lived an "exemplary" life other than the embezzlement. Olguin ordered Karimi to serve eight months of home detention with electronic monitoring, pay \$208,000 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service and make an additional restitution payment of at least \$100,000 to the plans.

Karimi had pleaded guilty on Nov. 12 to filing a false return, admitting that he failed to report income of \$711,316 during 2005 through 2008. During 2005 through 2009, he was chief information officer for the SAG plans, which are operated independently of the union and overseen by a board that's comprised of equal numbers of representatives of employers and of the union. His duties included modernization of the plans' computer information and technology systems.

Karimi was also an officer during that time at Entertainment Technology and Management Solutions and was responsible for causing the plans to enter into contracts and work agreements with ETMS. "Defendant caused these payments to ETMS to be deposited in the ETMS bank account, after which defendant used the sums to pay for personal expenses," the plea agreement said.

Allegations against Karimi emerged in 2011 when fired plan exec Craig E. Simmons filed a complaint with the federal government asserting that he was terminated for acting as a whistleblower about alleged embezzlement at the fund by Karimi. Simmons also filed a wrongful termination suit against the plans, accusing the plans' longtime CEO Bruce Dow of covering up the embezzlement.

Dow retired in 2012. Simmons' suit was settled in arbitration in 2014. The SAG and AFTRA health and pension plans have continued to operate separately, more than four years after members of SAG and AFTRA voted to merge the performers unions. The merger was touted as a way to merge the health and retirement plans, but efforts to do so have not been successful. — Reuters



Nader Karimi and his attorney

Harvey Weinstein on Bernie Sanders: 'We Won't Get Fooled Again'

Weinstein Co. chief Harvey Weinstein criticized the tenants of Bernie Sanders' campaign proposals during his appearance yesterday on "CBS This Morning," saying Sanders' plan to provide free college tuition and health care to all Americans would bankrupt the country.

Weinstein has been an active supporter of Sanders' Democratic rival for the presidential nomination, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. When asked about the crowd of 27,000 that turned out for Sanders on Wednesday night in Washington Square Park, Weinstein cited the Who's 1971 rock anthem "We Won't Get Fooled Again." Polls show Clinton has a comfortable lead against Sanders in New York, which hold its primary on April 19.

"He's got a great idea," Weinstein said facetiously about Sanders' health care and college tuition proposals. "Let's get it to the ones who can't afford health care. It's an easier solution than saying let's give it away and bankrupt the company."

Weinstein noted that his 18-year-old daughter Emma had been a Sanders supporter but changed her mind after Sanders questioned Clinton's qualifications to be president. He also noted that his mother had started out as a Donald Trump supporter but has switched to Clinton. "I can afford to send my kid to school," he said. "Let's concentrate on getting the kids who can't afford it to go to school." Weinstein called Clinton "a strong proven leader," a vital quality for turbulent times. "The world's crazy right now," he said. "We need that strong hand."

Weinstein was on the CBS morning news show to promote Weinstein Co.'s new comedy "Sing Street." Friday marked the last day in the control room for "CBS This Morning" exec producer Chris Licht, who is moving to "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" as showrunner. Weinstein joked that he was the secret to Licht's success in turning the show into CBS' most competitive morning program in decades. "He's been calling me for advice every day," Weinstein said. "When he's in trouble, I have to call (CBS chief) Les Moonves." —Reuters



Weinstein Co. chief Harvey Weinstein



The Colosseum at The Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, Nevada.

'Now You See Me 2' screening evacuated at CinemaCon

Lionsgate hoped to end its presentation to theater owners at CinemaCon with a big bang—a screening of "Now You See Me 2." But roughly 15 minutes into the tale of a team of illusionists, the audience at the Colosseum in Caesars Palace was told to leave the theater, with security personnel citing "technical difficulties." A CinemaCon staffer confirmed that, after the discovery of an unattended backpack, the theater was evacuated.

"Out of caution for the delegates and attendees, a potential threat had to be taken seriously," said John Fithian, head of the National Association of Theatre Owners, the group behind

CinemaCon, in a statement. "By the time we determined it was not a threat it was too late to restart the movie."

A spokesperson with the Las Vegas Police Department said authorities had been called in due to a "suspicious package," but said the situation was determined safe at 3:35 p.m. "Now You See Me 2" stars Jesse Eisenberg, Mark Ruffalo, Woody Harrelson, Dave Franco and Daniel Radcliffe. It hits theaters on June 10, 2016. — Reuters

Italian film industry taking Cannes snub in stride

Italy's film industry is reacting rather nonchalantly to the surprising absence of Italian movies in the Cannes competition for the first time in a decade and taking consolation in the expected presence of a robust contingent of young Italo directors set to screen across the fest's other sections, albeit not the official selection.

"One year you have three films in competition, the other you don't have any. It's normal," says producer Riccardo Tozzi head of Italian motion picture association Anica. "It doesn't mean there aren't good movies; it just means there aren't any that fit the Cannes [competition] mold," he adds.

Of course last year Italy had new works by Cannes regulars Nanni Moretti, Paolo Sorrentino, and Matteo Garrone vying for the Palme d'Or. This year veteran Italo auteur Marco Bellocchio's "Sweet Dreams" didn't make the cut. "Bellocchio is not a Cannes protÈgÈ like Nanni Moretti, or Ken Loach, or Almodovar," Tozzi points out. "His career wasn't born with Cannes, and they are kind of clubby that way," he opined. Truly Bellocchio's first films, starting with "Fists in the Pocket," launched from Venice. Still he's had six films in contending for a Palm, which he's never won. Most recently "Vincere" in 2009.

Tozzi is playing up the fact that Cannes this year will reflect a

new generation of Italian directors who are making genre movies exemplified by neo-noir "Pericles the Black Man," by Stefano Mordini, announced in an Un Certain Regard slot, and by Paolo Virzi's comedy "Like Crazy," which will be in Directors' Fortnight.

"Pericles," which is directed by Stefano Mordini, whose "Steel" was in Venice Days in 2012, stars Riccardo Scamarcio ("My Brother is an Only Child") in the title role as a slave-like hit-man who disengages from the shackles of the mob world after meeting a woman. "Like Crazy" is a Tuscany-set two-hander about two women, played by Valeria Bruni Tedeschi and Micaela Ramazzotti ("The First Beautiful Thing"), who escape from a mental institution where they have been court-ordered.

Also strongly tipped from Italy for Directors' Fortnight is Claudio Giovannesi's juvenile detention center-set romancer "Fiore." And first-timer Alessandro Comodin's "Happy Times Will Come Soon" is widely believed to have landed a berth in Critics' Week. The title encapsulates the Italo industry's current mood despite the Cannes snub. — Reuters



Head of Italian motion picture association and Producer Riccardo Tozzi

Tiger countries agree to preserve big-cat habitats

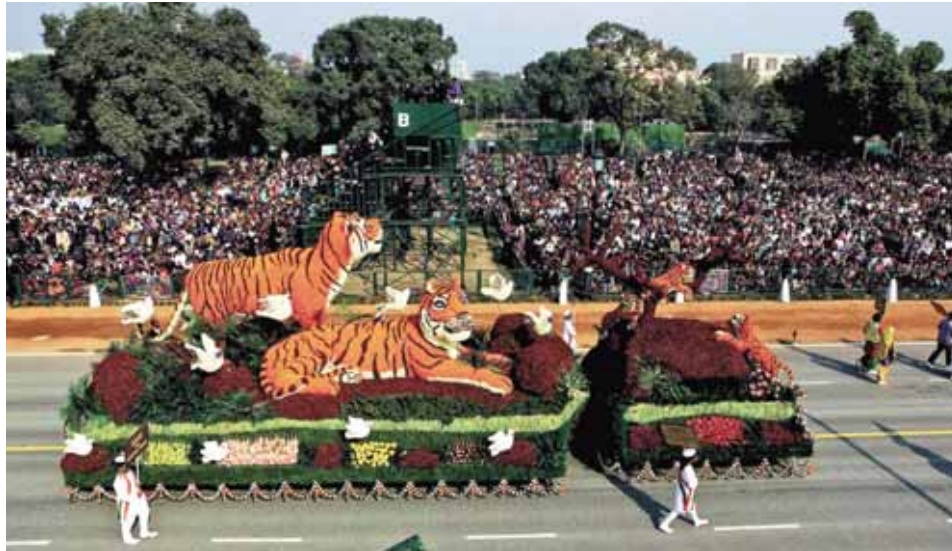
Countries with wild tiger populations have agreed to do more to protect tiger habitats that are shrinking drastically because of deforestation and urban sprawl, conservationists said yesterday.

Representatives from the 13 Asian countries with tigers, meeting this week in New Delhi, issued a resolution acknowledging that the forests in which tigers live are inherently valuable themselves and worthy of protection.

These forests can help preserve economic growth by safeguarding water supplies, improving air quality and providing homes for not only tigers but also birds, frogs and other mammals. "Before, there's always been this conflict of development versus conservation, as if countries had to choose," said Sejal Worah, the program director for World Wildlife Fund in India.

"But in this resolution, it clearly states that natural capital is important to the economy of a country," she said. "Countries understand that preserving tiger habitats does not compromise growth. And that's important. That's new."

The world's tiger countries are all in Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Laos, Nepal, Malaysia, Myanmar, Russia, Thailand and Vietnam. India has the most by far, with about 2,500. None of the others have more than 500 and some have just a few.



A floral tableau by Central Public Works Department depicts the theme "Save Tigers" during the Republic Day parade in New Delhi, India. — AP

The goal

Many of the countries have growing human populations and fast-developing economies. By 2022, they want to double the world's wild tiger population from the all-time low of 3,200 hit in 2010. On Monday, conservation groups

announced that the world's tiger count had gone up to 3,890, according to 2014-15 survey data. That marked the first increase in the wild population census in more than a century. But that did not necessarily mean there were more tigers in the wild. The higher number may just

mean scientists are getting better at counting them, with more sophisticated survey methods including camera traps and DNA analysis of scat.

An actual increase in wild tiger populations would also be hard to reconcile with the fact that their habitat is shrinking so fast. In just the last five years, tigers lost a full 40 percent of their remaining natural habitat, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Cambodia this year declared its tiger population "functionally extinct," meaning it had no breeding tigers left in the wild. While in New Delhi this week, Cambodia's agriculture minister reportedly looked into repopulating the Southeast Asian country with Indian tigers.

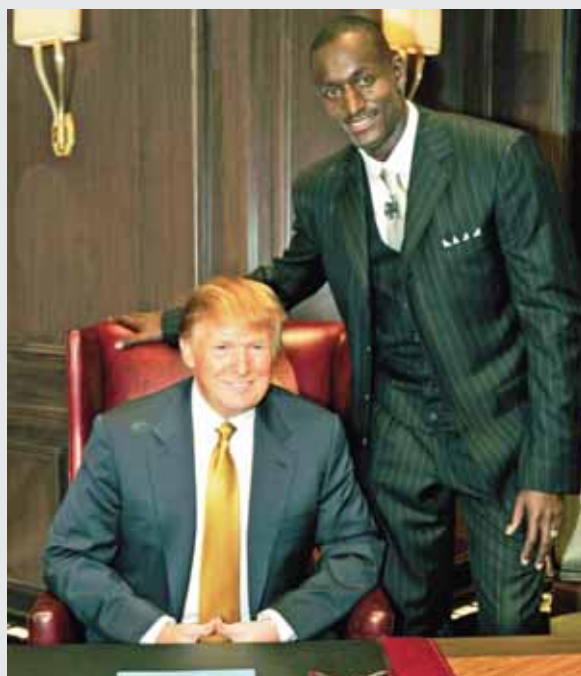
India is ready to help, Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said. "India is willing to cooperate with any country which does not have or has lost its tiger population in the course of history," he said Thursday.

India, home to about two-thirds of the world's wild tigers, also agreed to strengthen controls against cross-border wildlife crimes, including trafficking in animals and animal parts such as tiger skins and bones and rhino horns. — AP

'Apprentice' contestants deplore Trump; he calls them 'wannabes'

A winner of "The Apprentice" and five other former contestants on Donald Trump's reality show are speaking out against the Republican front-runner's presidential campaign. Randall Pinkett, winner of the show's fourth season, says he disagrees with Trump's views and that the ex-contestants are very concerned about the direction of his campaign. Trump has criticized the six as "failing wannabes" and says nobody would know who they are if it weren't for him.

Pinkett and five other contestants held a news conference yesterday morning. They include Kwame Jackson, runner-up from season one; season two's Kevin Allen; Tara Dowdell from season three; Marshawn Evans Daniels from season four; and James Sun from season six. — AP



Randall Pinkett, winner of 'The Apprentice' season four with Donald J. Trump.

AMC Entertainment CEO backpedals: 'No texting allowed'

AMC Entertainment CEO Adam Aron is backpedaling on statements he made to Variety three days ago about being open to allowing texting in some theaters.

Following a social media outcry from moviegoers, the new head of AMC Entertainment said in a statement released to AMC guests on social platforms that there will be no texting allowed in theaters. "Not today, not tomorrow and not in the foreseeable future," he promised.

Aron caused a stir online following the Wednesday remarks, even promoting Alamo Drafthouse CEO Tim League to openly criticize his proposal on Thursday. "I disagree with his statements on texting in a movie theater," League said. "Innovation in this direction could seriously hurt our industry."

Aron, who assumed the reins of the country's second largest theater chain on Jan. 4 following Gerry Lopez's departure, told Variety during CinemaCon, the exhibition trade show which wrapped on Thursday, that he was open to making some theaters texting and mobile device-friendly.

He suggested that the laxer cellphone policy would appeal to millennials who are glued to their phone. "When you tell a 22-year-old to turn off the phone, don't ruin the movie, they hear please cut off your left arm above the elbow," Aron said. You can't tell a 22-year-old to turn off their cellphone. That's not how they live their life."

But Aron made clear that the online furor over the possibility of texting in theaters had led him to rethink that flexibility. "In this age of social media, we get feedback from you almost instantaneously and as such, we are constantly listening," Aron added in his statement. "Accordingly, just as instantaneously, this is an idea that we have relegated to the cutting room floor."

Here's Aron's full statement to AMC guests:

To our AMC guests,

At AMC, we are committed to innovation and to being imaginative in our efforts to deliver you the best. We strive every single day to make your movie going experience at AMC Theatres simply amazing. You love the magic of movies, and we love doing all we can to make them all the more magical for you.

During the past few days, you may have heard media reports about another idea AMC Theatres was considering, testing whether some movie goers might want texting allowed in a small selection of our theatres. Unlike the many AMC advancements that you have applauded, we have heard loud and clear that this is a concept our audience does not want. In this age of social media, we get feedback from you almost instantaneously and as such, we are constantly listening. Accordingly, just as instantaneously, this is an idea that we

have relegated to the cutting room floor.

With your advice in hand, there will be NO TEXTING ALLOWED in any of the auditoriums at AMC Theatres. Not today, not tomorrow and not in the foreseeable future.

Instead, we'll focus on our other ideas to delight and entertain you. In the next few years, we intend to invest more than \$1 billion to continuously enhance our theatres and systems. At AMC, you'll feel our commitment to providing you with the absolute best in sight and sound technology, a significant increase to the number of our large screens, including the incomparable experiences created by IMAX and Dolby Cinema, much more comfortable seating, including our hugely popular recliners, new sumptuous food and beverage offerings, a more engaging AMC Stubs program, as well as dramatically richer content in an enhanced website and more functional smartphone app. These are all in our immediate future - and yours - across the country at AMC.

We'll continue to be as creative as we can to elevate the AMC experience, doing so in partnership with you, our guests, and never in a way that will compromise your love of coming out to the movies.

So, as always, we invite you to join us in sharing the excitement of seeing stories told well. However, when the lights dim, we'll remember your advice that your fellow moviegoers should turn off their phones.

Adam Aron

CEO

AMC Theatres

— Reuters



AMC Entertainment CEO Adam Aron



A poster for the Warner Bros. movie "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice".

'Batman v Superman' flies to \$300 million domestically

With no fanfare, Warner Bros.' "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" has crossed the \$300 million domestic milestone in its 20th day in theaters. The superhero tent pole took in \$1.25 million at 4,102 North American locations on Wednesday, lifting its total to \$301.2 million. "Batman v Superman" became the 58th movie to take in at least \$300 million at the US box office. The movie began impressively with an opening domestic weekend of \$166 million the seventh highest of all time. But amid poor reviews and a middling B Cinemascore, it faded quickly with a 69% plunge in its second weekend, followed by a 55% slide in its third weekend as it finished in second place at \$23.4 million, just behind the opening of Melissa McCarthy's "The Boss."

Disney's "The Jungle Book" is expected to dominate this weekend with about \$70 million in its US opening. "Batman v Superman" will probably decline by another 50% to around \$10 million to \$12 million.

On the international front, Warner Bros. reported Wednesday that its foreign gross had topped the \$500 million mark. China is the top market at \$93.5 million, followed by the UK at \$47.6 million.

It now appears the movie won't be a money-loser. With a massive \$250 million budget plus an extensive marketing push, analysts had projected that "Batman v Superman" would need to gross at least \$800 million worldwide to be profitable. Disney's "Zootopia" will be the next film to reach \$300 million domestically. It has \$298.5 million after six weeks in theaters along with \$556 million internationally. — Reuters

Steven Spielberg to produce 'Voyeur's Motel,' Sam Mendes directing

Steven Spielberg is producing a movie version of Gay Talese's upcoming novel "The Voyeur's Motel" for DreamWorks with Sam Mendes directing. Mendes will produce through his Neal Street Productions company. Mendes, who directed the James Bond movies "Skyfall" and "Spectre," has directed a trio of titles for DreamWorks—his debut on "American Beauty," "The Road to Perdition" and "Revolutionary Road."

DreamWorks won an auction for the rights to Talese's novel. CAA brokered the auction. The story centers on Colorado resident Gerald Foos, who opened a hotel so he could watch guests having sex. Foos had reached out to Talese in 1980 with the following note:

"Dear Mr. Talese: Since learning of your long awaited study of coast-to-coast sex in America, which will be included in your soon to be published book, 'Thy Neighbor's Wife,' I feel I have important information that I could contribute to its contents or to contents of a future book."

An excerpt of "The Voyeur's Motel" ran in the April 11 issue of the New Yorker. The novel will be published July 12 by Grove Press. CAA brokered the deal on behalf of Mendes and Talese. Mendes is also represented by attorney Melanie Cook of Ziffren Brittenham. Talese is represented for publishing by Lynn Nesbit of Janklow & Nesbit. — Reuters



American director, producer and screenwriter Steven Spielberg.

'Jungle Book' roars to robust \$4.2 million on Thursday night

Disney's "The Jungle Book" roared to a robust \$4.2 million on Thursday night. Warner Bros. scored \$735,000 in Thursday night showings of the comedy sequel "Barber Shop: The Next Cut." "The Jungle Book," whose previews began at 7 p.m., is expected to dominate the US box office this weekend, opening in the \$70 million range at 4,028 venues. The live action and CG hybrid, directed by Jon Favreau, has been embraced by critics and carries a 95% Rotten Tomatoes score. Its \$4.2 million preview number matched that of "Maleficent" and was ahead of "Cinderella," "Oz" and "Zootopia." Disney is so confident about the impending success of the family film, which carries a \$175 million budget, that it's already started developing a sequel.

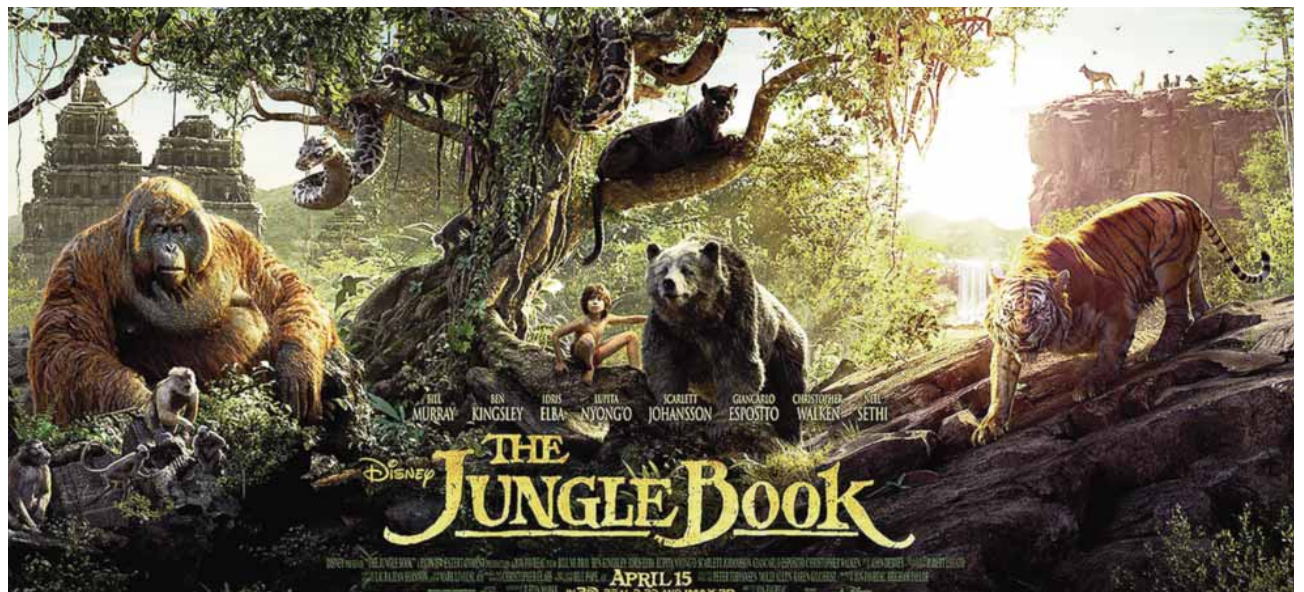
Should "The Jungle Book" hit \$75 million, it would match Disney's animated hit "Zootopia" for the third-best opening of the year after "Batman v Superman" at \$166 million and "Deadpool" at \$132.4 million. It would also become the fourth-best April launch, following last year's "Fast 7" with \$147.1 million, "Captain America: The Winter Soldier" with \$95 million and "Fast Five" with \$86.2 million.

"The Jungle Book" is the latest in Disney's live-action reimagining of classic stories. "Cinderella" took in \$67.9 million on its debut weekend last year en route to a \$201.2 million domestic total and a \$542.7 million global cume. "Maleficent" opened two years ago with \$69.4 million on its way to a \$241.4 million domestic total and \$758.5 million worldwide.

The low end of estimates for "The Jungle Book" is around \$65 million. The movie is based on the Rudyard Kipling story about Mowgli, an abandoned human boy who becomes friends with jungle animals after being raised by wolves. Favreau's film includes Bill Murray voicing Baloo the bear, Ben Kingsley as Bagheera the panther, Scarlett Johansson as Kaa the snake and Lupita Nyong'o as the mother wolf Raksha. Newcomer Neel Sethi stars as Mowgli.

The fourth weekend of "Batman v Superman" and Melissa McCarthy's "The Boss" will battle for third place in the \$11 million to \$13 million range. Warner Bros.' superhero clash topped \$300 million in the US on Wednesday along with the \$500 million mark internationally. It's dropping more than 500 US locations to about 3,500.

MGM-New Line's comedy sequel "Barber Shop: The Next Cut" should also generate solid business in its opening weekend with at least \$25 million at 2,661 sites. Ice Cube, Cedric the Entertainer, Jazmin Lewis, Sean Patrick Thomas and Eve have been in all three films. Common, Regina Hall and Nicki Minaj are joining "The Next Cut." MGM oversaw production and Warner Bros. is handling distribution. Critics have shown strong support with a 91% Rotten Tomatoes score. "Barber Shop" opened in 2002 with \$20 million on its way to \$75 million domestically, followed by 2004's "Barber Shop 2: Back in Business" with a \$24 million launch and a \$65 million total.—Reuters



INDIA'S INFOSYS POSTS 16% RISE IN Q4 PROFIT

BANGALORE: Indian software giant Infosys yesterday reported a 16 percent jump in fourth-quarter net profit, beating expectations after it won new clients for its IT services business.

Net profit in the three months to March 31 came in at 36 billion rupees (\$540 million), compared with 31 billion rupees in the same period last year. It beat analysts' estimates of quarterly profit of 35.2 billion rupees in a survey compiled by Bloomberg.

A strong performance had been expected after the firm in January said it had managed to ride out deadly floods in Chennai at the end of last year that many feared would hurt earnings.

Revenues for the full year rose 17 percent to 624 billion rupees, Infosys said, as it

added 325 new clients. In January, chief operating officer UB Pravin Rao said a "healthy pipeline" of potential deals worth \$3 billion would help the Bangalore-based firm achieve its growth projections.

Shares in Infosys had closed slightly down at 1,172.05 rupees on Wednesday on the Bombay Stock Exchange, with markets closed Thursday and Friday for public holidays. India has become a back office to the world as companies have subcontracted work to firms such as Infosys, taking advantage of the country's skilled English-speaking workforce.

Infosys is listed on stock exchanges in Mumbai and New York and was once seen as the bellwether of India's flagship outsourcing industry and the country's equivalent to Microsoft. — AFP



BANGALORE: Infosys employees leave a pyramid shaped building at their company's headquarters in Bangalore yesterday. — AP



PARIS: The Microsoft logo in Issy-les-Moulineaux, outside Paris, France. Microsoft opened a new front in the battle over digital privacy this week, suing the Justice Department on Thursday over its use of court orders requiring the company to turn over customer files stored in its computer centers often without notifying the customer involved. — AP

MICROSOFT SUIT IS LATEST TECH CLASH WITH US OVER PRIVACY

AUTHORITIES WANT ACCESS TO MESSAGES, PICTURES AND RECORDS

SAN FRANCISCO: As we live more of our lives online, the companies we trust with our digital secrets are increasingly clashing with authorities who want access to the messages, pictures, financial records and other data we accumulate in electronic form.

Microsoft opened a new front in the battle over digital privacy this week, suing the Justice Department over its use of court orders requiring the company to turn over customer files stored in its computer centers - often without notifying the customer involved. It's the latest in a series of legal challenges brought by Microsoft and some of its leading competitors. Apple recently fought a high-profile battle over the FBI's demand for help unlocking an encrypted iPhone in San Bernardino, California, and it's continuing to challenge similar demands in other cases. Other companies, including Google, Facebook and Yahoo, have increased their use of encryption. They've also sued for the right to report how often authorities demand customer information under national security laws, after former National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden leaked details of

government data-gathering efforts.

Privacy advocates have applauded those moves, while authorities complain they could stymie legitimate investigations. But those legal maneuvers may benefit the companies as well as their customers. In the wake of Snowden's revelations and high-profile hacking attacks, tech firms want to reassure customers their information is safe.

"Privacy is an economic good at this point," said Jennifer Daskal, a former Justice Department attorney who now teaches law at American University in Washington, DC. "It's good for business because consumers care about it. So the companies are competing over being privacy protective."

Many tech companies make money directly from customer information, of course, by selling advertising targeted to their users' interests and behavior. While some privacy advocates have criticized those practices, others note that's different from handing over information to authorities who have the power to put people in jail.

In the latest case, Microsoft Corp says the US Justice Department is using a

decades-old law to obtain court orders for customers' data, while in some cases prohibiting the company from notifying the customer. Microsoft says those "non-disclosure" orders violate its constitutional right to free speech, as well as its customers' protection against unreasonable searches.

Microsoft is also fighting a court battle in New York over the government's demand for emails of a non-US citizen that the company has stored in a data center located in Ireland. Microsoft President Brad Smith has argued the case could open the door to other governments demanding information stored in the United States.

As people and businesses store more information on their electronic gadgets, or online in corporate data centers, "these companies are increasingly the intermediary between the government and our own privacy," said Daskal.

One former federal official was critical of Microsoft's latest lawsuit. Daniel "D.J." Rosenthal, a former Justice Department lawyer, said it could lead to warning "child molesters, domestic abusers, violent criminals and terrorists that they're being investigated." — AP

FARM TECHNOLOGY HELPS CLEAN UP NAIROBI'S DRINKING WATER

MURANG'A, Kenya: Samuel Kinuthia knows how to make the most of technology. Using a technique called basin terracing, he has boosted his income at his farm in Murang'a county, and helped provide Kenyans as far away as Nairobi with better access to clean drinking water.

Kinuthia and a group of 300 farmers in Kiaruta village are turning hilly land into more productive farmland through basin terracing. It also reduces soil erosion, which can choke central Kenya's rivers and pollute drinking water. On a sunny morning, Kinuthia and two employees are preparing a fresh strip of land to sow crops on his three-acre farm.

First they dig across a hilly patch to make it into a flat terrace. They then dig square holes to form basins on the strip, where Kinuthia will plant vegetables.

"I used to plant maize and beans but I could not harvest much," he said. "With basin terracing, I can plant fresh produce like tomatoes, kale and onions. Both the harvest and the resulting income improve because there is a ready market." Fred Kihara, water fund manager in Kenya for The Nature Conservancy (TNC), an international environmental organization, explained that the technology reduces the amount of soil being eroded away into rivers.

"It also increases the amount of water that is being retained in the soil," he added. A 2015 study by TNC says the Upper Tana basin - which provides water to an estimated 9 million Kenyans - is a watershed under pressure.

About 65 percent of the farmers questioned by the group said the productivity of their land had declined even though they use more fertilizers than five years ago. Overall, 80 percent reported a decrease in rainfall in recent years. From Kinuthia's farm in the Upper Tana basin, the view is of stretches of hilly terrain that have been stripped bare of trees. The red soil is easily blown away or eroded.

PROTECTING SOURCE WATER

Farming on hilly land has increased the amount of soil ending up in rivers that feed the country's largest water reservoir, the Ndakaini dam, in central Kenya.

In Nairobi alone, 85 percent of water - or 70 million cubic metres - is supplied by the dam, around 80 kilometres away, according to officials from the Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company. More sediment turns the water cloudy, they say. Soil runoff can include manure and fertiliser used on farms, which may pollute drinking water and make people sick, said Philip Muthui, the company's production manager.

He hopes that the use of basin terracing by farmers will reduce erosion into rivers, thus protecting Ndakaini water. Currently, the cost of removing the sediment and treating water at Ndakaini ranges between six and seven Kenyan shillings (\$0.06-\$0.07) per cubic metre, which Muthui says is too high.

"Reducing sediment load into rivers has cut the cost of treating water by about three percent," he added. Efforts to reduce erosion in the Upper Tana basin have been supported by the Nairobi Water Fund, a \$10 million public-private partnership between TNC, the Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company and the Kenyan government, among others. — Reuters

MULTI-DEVICE WITH ENHANCED KIDS PROTECTION KASPERSKY TOTAL SECURITY

DUBAI: Kaspersky Lab has unveiled the latest version of its Kaspersky Total Security - multi-device. Thanks to Kaspersky Safe Kids included, the new product will not only protect privacy and confidential information of users but also allow parents to better monitor children's online activity and physical location, prevent them from going to inappropriate websites, and regulate the amount of time their kids use digital devices.

Children as young as three years old are accessing Internet-enabled devices and many parents are finding it challenging to ensure their children, regardless of age, are safely exploring the digital world. According to a Kaspersky Lab survey, 50 percent of respondents in the UAE believe that the cyber threats their children face online are increasing. Moreover, 59 percent of UAE respondents reported a concern that children have uncontrolled access to inappropriate or explicit content online, 39 percent worry about children communicating with dangerous strangers, and 34 percent fear children are sharing too much

personal information online about themselves.

Kaspersky Safe Kids included into the new Kaspersky Total Security - multi-device, is designed to address these concerns and improve the ability of parents to create new ways for their children to use connected devices and browse the Internet. The new multi-platform software not only protects kids from viewing inappropriate content on websites and apps, but it also helps parents manage the amount of time children spend on their Internet-enabled devices. In addition, with the Safe Location feature, parents can monitor their child's location in real-time, set up safe areas and receive automatic alerts if their child moves outside the agreed perimeter.

"Today's kids are always connected. It's a fact of life. And because that connection is often shielded from parents, it can make a parent feel powerless to understand what's happening while kids are online," says Peter Aleshkin, Head of Consumer Marketing, Emerging Marketing at Kaspersky Lab. "Tools like Safe Kids give parents more options for

protecting and guiding their children by developing an interactive relationship between parent and child to determine what is appropriate for their digital lives. Overall, the most effective and comprehensive protection combines the use of software like Safe Kids with other practical measures, such as keeping computers in family areas and talking to children about potential cyber threats, to help ensure kids stay safe while online," he added.

In addition to enhanced children's protection, the product's new Private Browsing and Webcam Protection technologies help keeping users' privacy inviolate on almost any device, whether it is Windows, Mac, Android, or an iPhone.

Private Browsing prevents websites and web applications from collecting such information as sites visited, the search queries, location and the devices used. The technology literally cuts out this type of personal information from the Internet traffic, ensuring that it never leaves the device. This is what makes Kaspersky Lab's Private Browsing fundamentally different from similar browser-

based tools. Even if a user feels he has nothing to hide, there are downsides to this constant online "surveillance" that are directly linked to financial costs. For example, online prices for various goods and services can vary depending on the location of the user and his device, as well as the history of visits to those goods and services.

Another feature from Kaspersky Lab detects and reports any attempts by free-ware of adding extra extensions to a consumer's device. Change Control allows the user to regulate any attempts to change their browser home page, alter the default search engine, install extra plugins or modify network system configurations without their consent. Once reported, the user can then decide to permit or block the change. Dealing with passwords can be made much easier with Kaspersky Password Manager, which is also part of Kaspersky Total Security - multi-device. Kaspersky Password Manager creates strong passwords, stores them securely, and automatically synchronizes and inserts passwords on all of the user's devices.



TOULOUSE: The new LEAP-1A engine developed by CFM, a joint venture between France's Safran and General Electric, is pictured during its handover ceremony yesterday in Colomiers, outside Toulouse. The LEAP-1A is to be used in the Airbus A320neo jetliner, and Airbus said output was on target and that CFM would produce 100 LEAP engines this year and 500 next year. The engine would be introduced with six airlines this year. — AFP

US ONLINE PUBLISHING SITE MEDIUM BLOCKED IN CHINA

BEIJING: A US-based online publishing platform, Medium, has been blocked in China, according to users and tests by Reuters, the latest service to apparently be affected as Beijing exerts greater control over the Internet. Medium, which allows users, including companies and media outlets, to post blogs that readers can annotate, has been inaccessible since at least early this week, according to Internet users in China and tests by Reuters using tools developed by anti-censorship watchdog GreatFire.org.

It was not immediately apparent why Medium was blocked. China's Internet regulator did not respond to a faxed request for comment. San Francisco-based Medium did not respond to emailed questions outside normal US working hours. Last week, a Medium post about the Panama Papers leak, detailing the offshore wealth of various countries' leaders and their relatives, including China's, was widely shared on Chinese social media. China has moved to limit access to coverage of the matter and has censored online reports about it. Also last week, Medium said more than a dozen media outlets would start publishing on its site, an arrangement that would have allowed publications whose websites are blocked in China to reach users in the country. If confirmed, Medium would join a range of sites already blocked in China, including the blogging platforms WordPress and Google's Blogger. — Reuters

THE SKY IS THE LIMIT AT GENEVA INVENTIONS SHOW

OVER 750 EXHIBITORS FROM 48 COUNTRIES COME TOGETHER

GENEVA: Shoes that can reunite lost toddlers with their parents and a morphing sofa designed for spur of the moment conjugal relations are among the centrepieces at this year's Geneva inventions show. More than 750 exhibitors from 48 countries have come together in Switzerland this week for the world's largest event dedicated to new creations.

The shoe for infants emblazoned with a "QR" barcode containing parent contact details and readable by smartphones in the event the child gets lost is the brainchild of South Korean inventor Lee An Youn. "The QR code shoe is one way of preventing our children getting lost. It's cheap, it's quick and it's easy to use," she said.

Gerard Sermier, press officer for the 44th International Exhibition of Inventions in Geneva, says the annual fair still has something special to offer even though the Internet has made many of the items easily accessible. "But here, in one place, you meet inventors from across the world and you can speak directly to them," he said.

As many as 59,000 visitors are expected to stream through the doors of the vast Palexpo exhibition centre in the grounds of Geneva airport this year. Almost half are there on business.

"There are professionals, investors interested in buying patents or industrialists researching new products," said Sermier. Patent deals worth tens of millions of dollars are sealed at the show every year.

A Romanian team became millionaires after dazzling judges at the 2013 edition with a scanner capable of detecting contraband merchandise or hidden weapons



GENEVA: Adrian Tomoiaga of Romania, a member of a team of inventors, poses with an autonomous robot for the inspection and maintenance of large-sized pipes during the 44th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva. — AFP

on aircraft, winning the show's grand prize. They have since started work on a factory in Saint-Imier, western Switzerland.

Dedicated 'love room'

According to organizers, the show has its best years ahead of it. "Half of the items and technologies that we will be using in 10 years have yet to be invented," they said in a press release. The show has particular cachet in the developing world where many governments subsidise the travel costs of their best and brightest to ensure their countries are well represent-

ed. More than half of exhibitors are from the Middle East and Asia.

European inventors are under-represented, put off by Geneva's sky-high prices aggravated by the strength of the Swiss franc and without the advantage of state subsidies to offset their costs.

Undeterred, a French inventor is this year exhibiting an innovative neck brace for use by mobile hair salons while washing clients' hair in their homes. And for those who hate taking out the rubbish, a Thai inventor has brought the answer to Geneva. — AFP



01:20 Soul Plane
02:45 Phantoms
04:20 Billy Two Hats
06:00 Saved!
07:30 The Beautiful Country
09:30 The Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course
11:00 The Watsons Go To Birmingham
12:30 The Magnificent Seven
14:35 The Apartment
16:40 The Man In The Iron Mask
18:50 Geronimo: An American Legend
20:45 Big Screen
21:00 The Birdcage
23:00 State Of Grace

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

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



00:20 Fast N' Loud
01:10 Salvage Hunters
02:00 Redwood Kings
02:50 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown
03:40 Extreme Collectors
04:05 Storage Wars Canada
04:30 Auction Hunters
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 Fifth Gear
06:00 You Have Been Warned
06:50 Troy
07:40 The Carbonaro Effect
08:05 Superhuman Science
08:30 The Island With Bear Grylls
09:20 Bear Grylls: Mission Survive
10:10 So You Think You'd Survive?
11:00 Salvage Hunters
11:50 Redwood Kings
12:40 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown
13:30 Misfit Garage
14:20 Overhaulin'
15:10 Extreme Car Hoarders
16:00 So You Think You'd Survive?
16:50 So You Think You'd Survive?
17:40 So You Think You'd Survive?
18:30 So You Think You'd Survive?
19:20 So You Think You'd Survive?
20:10 So You Think You'd Survive?
21:00 Misfit Garage
21:50 Overhaulin'
22:40 Extreme Car Hoarders
23:30 Killing Fields

01:08 Secret Space Escapes
01:55 Moon Machines
02:42 How The Earth Works
03:29 Mythbusters
04:16 Secret Space Escapes
05:03 Moon Machines
05:50 Nyc: Inside Out
06:37 How Do They Do It?
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:23 Mythbusters
08:08 How The Earth Works
08:53 Nyc: Inside Out
09:38 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
10:23 Secret Space Escapes
11:08 Moon Machines
11:53 Nyc: Inside Out
12:38 Mythbusters
13:23 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
14:10 How The Earth Works
14:57 Invent It Rich
15:44 Moon Machines
16:31 Future Firepower
17:18 How The Earth Works
18:05 Mythbusters
18:50 Da Vinci's Machines
19:40 Moon Machines
20:25 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
21:15 How The Earth Works
22:00 Da Vinci's Machines
22:45 Moon Machines
23:35 Mythbusters



00:00 Crime Stories
01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
02:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
03:00 My Crazy Ex
04:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
05:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
06:00 I Killed My BFF
07:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
08:00 Crime Stories
09:00 Surveillance Oz
09:30 Private Crimes
10:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
11:00 After The First 48
12:00 The FBI Files
13:00 I Killed My BFF
14:00 Crime Stories
15:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
16:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
17:00 After The First 48
18:00 The FBI Files
19:00 I Killed My BFF
20:00 Crime Stories
21:00 The First 48
22:00 The Killer Speaks
23:00 Nightmare In Suburbia



00:45 I'm Alive
01:40 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
02:35 Tanked
03:25 Animal Cops South Africa
04:15 Gator Boys
05:02 Treehouse Masters
05:49 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
06:36 Swamp Brothers
07:00 Swamp Brothers
07:25 My Cat From Hell
08:15 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
09:10 Treehouse Masters
10:05 Tanked
11:00 My Cat From Hell
11:55 Bondi Vet
12:25 Bondi Vet
12:50 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
13:45 Gator Boys
14:40 Treehouse Masters
15:35 Tanked
16:30 Animal Cops South Africa
17:25 River Monsters
18:20 River Monsters
19:15 Tanked
20:10 Shamwari: A Wild Life
20:40 Shamwari: A Wild Life
21:05 Treehouse Masters
22:00 River Monsters
22:55 Gator Boys
23:50 River Monsters



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



00:00 CNBC Conversation: Felipe Calderon
00:30 CNBC Conversation: Kyriakos Mitsotakis
01:00 U.S. Squawk Alley
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



00:20 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman



00:00 Violetta
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Violetta
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:00 Violetta
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Mouk
06:00 Lolirock
06:25 Sofia The First
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
07:40 Jessie
08:05 Shake It Up
08:30 Shake It Up
08:55 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 Whisker Haven Tales With The Palace Pets
12:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
12:45 Fish Hooks
13:10 Austin & Ally
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:00 Liv And Maddie
14:25 Cars Toons
14:30 Liv And Maddie
14:55 Dog With A Blog
15:20 Dog With A Blog
15:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
16:10 Violetta
17:00 Violetta Recipes
17:10 Invisible Sister
18:40 Best Friends Whenever
19:05 Evermoor Chronicles
19:30 Violetta
20:20 Violetta Recipes
20:30 Wizards Of Waverly Place - The Movie
22:00 Binny And The Ghost
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:10 Hank Zipzer



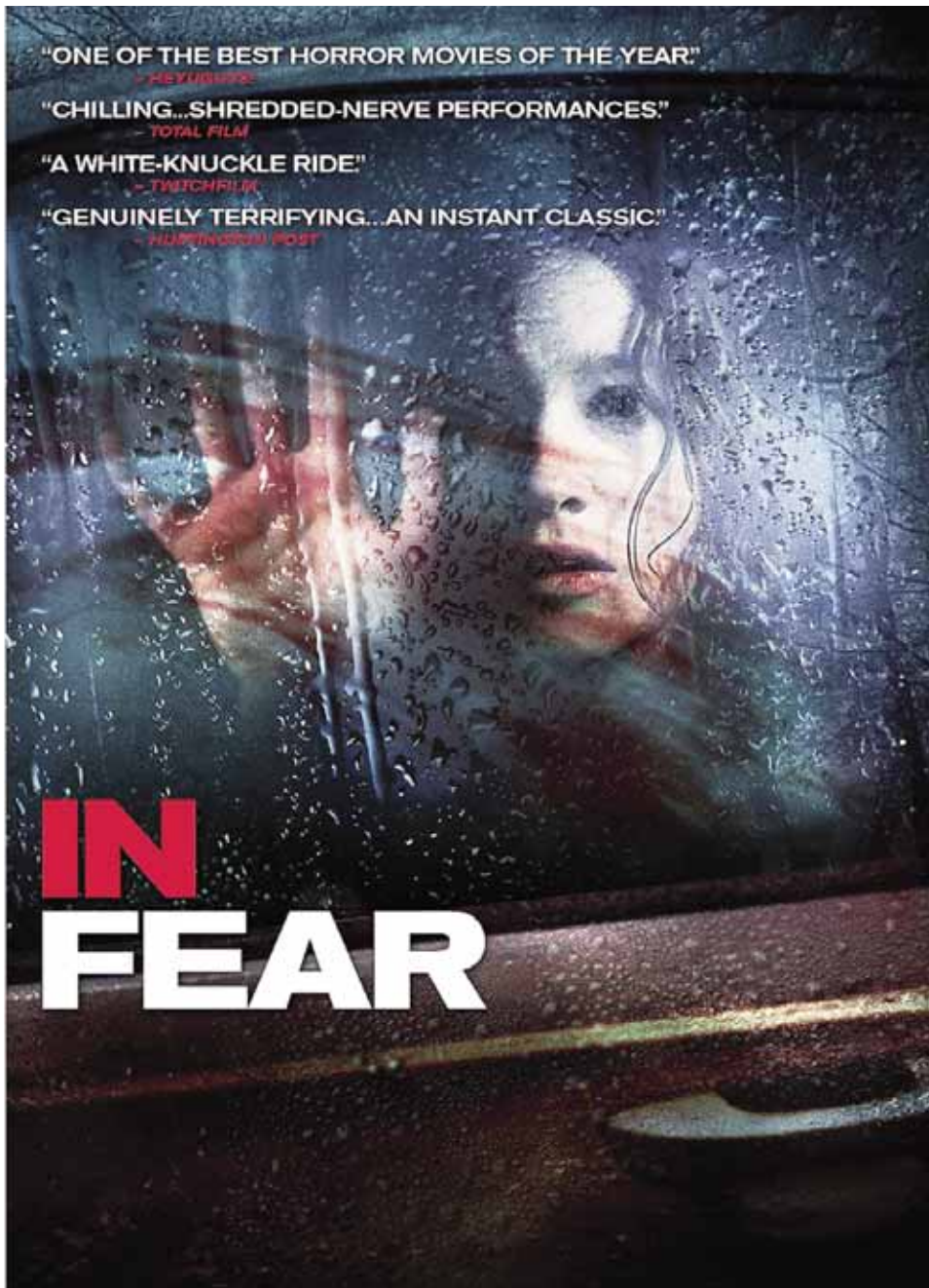
00:05 Art Attack
00:30 Henry Hugglemonster
00:45 Calimero
01:00 Zou
01:15 Loopdidoo
01:30 Art Attack
01:55 Henry Hugglemonster
02:05 Calimero
02:20 Zou
02:30 Loopdidoo
02:45 Art Attack
03:10 Henry Hugglemonster
03:20 Calimero
03:35 Zou
03:45 Loopdidoo
04:00 Art Attack
04:25 Henry Hugglemonster
04:35 Calimero
04:50 Zou
05:00 Loopdidoo
05:15 Art Attack
05:35 Henry Hugglemonster
05:50 Calimero
06:00 Zou
06:20 Loopdidoo
06:35 Art Attack
07:00 The Hive
07:10 Zou
07:25 Loopdidoo
07:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
08:05 Sofia The First
08:30 Goldie & Bear
08:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
09:10 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
09:35 Doc McStuffins
10:00 Sofia The First
10:30 Goldie & Bear
10:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
11:00 Miles From Tomorrow
11:25 Special Agent Oso
11:40 The Hive
11:50 Handy Manny
12:15 Jungle Junction
12:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
13:00 Sofia The First
13:25 Miles From Tomorrow
13:50 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
14:15 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
14:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
15:10 Miles From Tomorrow
15:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
16:00 Sofia The First
16:25 Jungle Cubs
16:50 Aladdin
17:15 Gummi Bears
17:40 Goldie & Bear
18:05 Miles From Tomorrow
18:30 Sofia The First
19:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
19:30 Miles From Tomorrow
20:00 Goldie & Bear
20:30 Sofia The First
21:00 Jungle Cubs
21:25 Aladdin
21:50 Gummi Bears
22:20 Lilo And Stitch
22:50 Zou
23:05 Henry Hugglemonster



00:20 Eastenders
00:50 Holby City
01:50 Stag
02:45 Silent Witness
03:40 Waking The Dead
04:40 Eastenders
05:10 Doctor Who
06:00 Holby City
06:55 Doctors
07:30 Eastenders
08:00 Dickensian
08:50 Death In Paradise
09:45 Doctor Who
10:50 Doctor Who
11:40 Doctor Who
12:35 Doctor Who
13:25 Holby City
14:25 Doctors
14:55 Eastenders
15:25 Death In Paradise
16:20 Death In Paradise
17:15 Death In Paradise
18:15 Doctors
18:45 Doctors
19:20 Father Brown
20:05 Happy Valley
21:00 Happy Valley
22:00 Undercover
23:00 Stag
23:55 Doctors



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



IN FEAR ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

SATURDAY, APRIL 16, 2016

23:20 Calimero
23:35 Zou



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



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



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Private Chef
01:30 Private Chef
02:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
02:30 Valerie's Home Cooking
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
05:00 Iron Chef America
06:00 Chopped



INSURGENT ON OSN MOVIES HD

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 Chopped
22:00 Cutthroat Kitchen
23:00 Kitchen Casino



00:20 Pawn Stars
00:45 Pawn Stars Australia
01:10 Down East Dickering
02:00 Ice Road Truckers
02:50 Ax Men
03:40 American Restoration
04:05 American Restoration
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Grave Trade
06:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
06:50 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
07:40 Hunting Hitler
08:30 American Restoration
08:55 Mountain Men
09:45 Ax Men
10:35 Swamp People
11:25 Fifth Gear
12:15 Counting Cars
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 American Pickers
13:55 Grave Trade
14:45 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
15:35 Hunting Hitler
16:25 Counting Cars
16:50 Shark Wranglers
17:40 Aussie Pickers
18:30 Duck Dynasty
18:55 Duck Dynasty
19:20 Ax Men
20:10 Swamp People
21:00 Storage Wars: New York
21:25 Storage Wars: New York

21:50 Pawn Stars
22:15 Pawn Stars Australia
22:40 Hunting Hitler
23:30 The Curse Of Oak Island



00:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
01:05 Emmerdale
01:30 Eggheads
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Keep It In The Family
03:25 Black Work
04:20 The Jonathan Ross Show
05:15 Prince Philip: The Plot To Make A King
06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
07:00 Eggheads
07:30 Black Work
08:25 The Jonathan Ross Show
09:20 Keep It In The Family
10:15 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
11:05 Eggheads
11:35 Prince Philip: The Plot To Make A King
12:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?
13:25 Emmerdale
13:50 Emmerdale
14:20 Coronation Street
14:45 Keep It In The Family
15:35 Royal Stories
16:05 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
16:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
17:25 Home Fires
18:20 Emmerdale
18:45 Emmerdale
19:10 Coronation Street
19:35 Royal Stories
20:05 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
20:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
21:25 Home Fires
22:20 Coronation Street
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Emmerdale
23:40 Tracey Ullman's Show



00:10 Sara's New Nordic Kitchen
00:35 Tom's Istanbul Delight
01:00 Cesar To The Rescue
01:50 Chefs Run Wild
02:15 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
02:40 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
03:05 Cruise Ship Diaries
03:30 Tales From The Bush Larder
03:55 Street Food Around The World
04:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
04:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of

Australia
05:10 Tales From The Bush Larder
05:35 Tales From The Bush Larder
06:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
06:50 Cesar To The Rescue
07:40 Chefs Run Wild
08:05 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
08:30 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
08:55 Cruise Ship Diaries
09:20 Tales From The Bush Larder
09:45 Street Food Around The World
10:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
10:35 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
11:00 Tales From The Bush Larder
11:25 Tales From The Bush Larder
11:50 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
12:40 Cesar To The Rescue
13:35 Chefs Run Wild
14:00 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
14:30 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
14:55 Cruise Ship Diaries
15:25 Miguel's Feasts
15:50 Street Food Around The World
16:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
16:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
17:15 Tales From The Bush Larder
17:40 Tales From The Bush Larder
18:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
19:05 Cruise Ship Diaries
19:30 Miguel's Feasts
20:00 Street Food Around The World
20:25 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
21:15 Tales From The Bush Larder
21:40 Tales From The Bush Larder
22:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
22:55 Cesar To The Rescue
23:45 Chefs Run Wild



00:30 Hot In Cleveland
01:00 The Tonight Show With Larry Wilmore
01:30 Web Therapy
02:00 The Brink
02:30 You're The Worst
03:00 Mad Love
03:30 Living With Fran
04:00 Two And A Half Men
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 My Name Is Earl
06:00 The Bernie Mac Show
06:30 Community
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers

08:00 Two And A Half Men
08:30 My Name Is Earl
09:00 Mad Love
09:30 Kevin From Work
10:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
10:30 Community
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 The Bernie Mac Show
12:30 Two And A Half Men
13:00 My Name Is Earl
13:30 Community
14:00 Living With Fran
14:30 Kevin From Work
15:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
15:30 Hot In Cleveland
16:00 The Tonight Show With Larry Wilmore
16:30 The Bernie Mac Show
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 Fresh Off The Boat
18:30 Black-ish
19:00 2 Broke Girls
19:30 The Simpsons
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Hot In Cleveland
21:30 The Tonight Show With Larry Wilmore
22:00 Comedians
22:30 The Brink
23:00 You're The Worst
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



00:00 In Fear
01:30 Backdraft
04:00 Hours
06:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
08:00 Betrayed
09:45 X-Men: Days Of Future Past
12:00 Don't Look Back
14:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
16:00 Northmen: A Viking Saga
18:00 X-Men: Days Of Future Past
20:15 The Prince
22:00 R.I.P.D.



00:00 The Starving Games
02:00 The Bounty Hunter
04:00 My Father The Hero
06:00 Mr. Destiny
08:00 Sweet Home Alabama
10:00 My Father The Hero
12:00 The Bounty Hunter
14:00 Bottle Rocket
16:00 Sweet Home Alabama
18:00 The Devil Wears Prada
20:00 I Give It A Year
22:00 American Reunion



01:30 One Last Look
03:00 Foxcatcher
05:15 A Valentine's Date
07:00 1911
09:00 10 Years
11:00 A Valentine's Date
13:00 Atlas Shrugged Part 2: The Strike
15:00 God Help The Girl
17:00 10 Years
19:00 Not Fade Away
21:00 A Walk Among The Tombstones
23:00 By The Gun



01:00 Vanity Fair
03:30 Gattaca
05:30 The Apostle
08:00 Won't Back Down
10:30 Happiness
12:30 What Dreams May Come
14:30 Gattaca
16:30 Won't Back Down
19:00 True Colors
21:00 Jersey Boys
23:15 The People vs Larry Flynt



01:00 Dark Skies
03:00 Big Game
05:00 Streetdance: All Stars
07:00 Still Alice
09:00 Big Game
10:45 Divergent
13:15 Insurgent
15:15 So Undercover
17:00 Drumline: A New Beat
19:00 Pitch Perfect 2
21:00 A Royal Night Out
23:00 The November Man



01:00 Hatching
02:45 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
04:30 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
06:00 Tarzan
08:00 Blackie And Kanuto
10:00 Zarafa
11:30 Marco Macaco
13:00 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
14:45 Snow Queen
16:30 Jungle Shuffle
18:15 Zarafa
20:00 Echo Planet
22:00 Snow Queen
23:45 Jungle Shuffle



00:00 Careful What You Wish For
02:00 Next Goal Wins
04:00 Not Safe For Work
06:00 Marvel's Hulk vs. Thor & Wolverine
08:00 Until She Came Along
10:00 Son Of Batman
12:00 Fast Girls
14:00 Ashes
16:00 Until She Came Along
18:00 High Road
20:00 No Good Deed
22:00 Sleeping Beauty



00:30 Super League
02:30 Inside The PGA Tour
03:00 PGA Tour
06:30 European Tour Weekly
07:00 Golfing World
08:00 World Rugby
08:30 Welsh Open Snooker
10:00 Super Rugby Highlights
10:30 Live Super Rugby
12:40 Live Super Rugby
15:00 World Rugby



KNES YEAR 3 MUSICAL 'GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS'

Year 3 pupils of Kuwait National English School performed Goldilocks and the Three Bears to their proud parents recently. Months in the making, the play was a musical based on one of Roald Dahl's Revolting Rhymes. Audiences who thought they would see another rendition of the story they're familiar with, were wonderfully surprised by the performance. The story of Goldilocks that we watched was of a naughty little girl who was being tried for her crimes of breaking and entering into the poor unsuspecting home of

three bears, and eating their food and breaking their furniture! Innovative, funny, and full of incredible acting and singing talent, the Year 3 pupils had their audiences laughing continuously. Congratulations to the Music Department and the Year 3 teachers for putting together such a spectacular production! Madame Chantal Al-Gharabally, the School Director, commented on how proud she was of the talent amongst the Year three pupils and how well they have been progressing not only academically, but in the performing arts as well.



Freetings



Kuwait English School awarded Layan Abualhuda as 'Player of the Season' in the Under 13 Girls Volleyball 2015/2016 tournament. Congratulations Layan!



IISM KG COMPETITIONS, TALENT SHOW, PLAYING WITH THE SHAPES

The IISM recently witnessed the talent show (UKG) and playing with shapes competition. It was the most awaited event, as it gives immense pleasure to watch the toddlers' talents. The students came forward displaying their natural aptitude. The competition brought an amiable ambience and the judges resounded their applause. It was indeed a mesmerizing event

which would be etched deep in our memories. Accolades to Nilofar Qazi, KG Head and her team of ingenious teachers for organizing the event. Director Malayil Moosa Koya, and F M Basheer Ahmed, Principal of the school were awestruck by the pains taken by the students and their parents. At the end, it was but natural that the competitions ended in fruition.



The safety and security department at Kuwait University (KU) organized a health awareness activity as part of the 'Beat Diabetes' campaign which is held by the Ministry of Health.

INDIA'S SMOG-CHOKED CAPITAL IMPOSES DRIVING RESTRICTIONS

NEW DELHI: New Delhi yesterday imposed driving restrictions that will take around a million cars off its roads for the second time this year, seeking to improve air quality in the world's most polluted capital. The Delhi government first introduced the experiment for two weeks in January as dangerous levels of haze choked the city and authorities said they were bringing it back for another 15 days by popular demand. "Odd-even is back because the people of Delhi wanted it," the city's transport minister Gopal Rai said yesterday, referring to the scheme that restricts cars to alternate days according to whether they carry odd or even-numbered licence plates.

"We have full faith that Delhi's people will follow this odd-even rule from today." A 2014 World Health Organization survey of more than 1,600

cities ranked Delhi as the most polluted, partly because of the nearly 10 million vehicles on its roads. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has said pollution levels fell after restrictions were imposed in January, but many scientists say the scheme is not enough to tackle the problem. "It is exactly like taking out 10 buckets of water from the ocean, the magnitude of the pollution problem is such," said Gufran Beig, the chief scientist at India's state-run System of Air Quality Weather Forecasting and Research.

'Should be permanent'

US embassy data showed PM 2.5 levels at an "unhealthy" 191 yesterday morning, meaning people with heart or respiratory problems, children and the elderly should stay indoors. These fine

particles measuring less than 2.5 micrometers are linked to higher rates of chronic bronchitis, lung cancer and heart disease. By afternoon they had fallen to a "moderate" 91. Pollution levels in Delhi generally rise overnight and fall as the day goes on.

Delhi commuters were broadly positive about the restrictions, with some calling for it to be made permanent though mostly because it freed up traffic on the city's usually clogged roads. "The best part about this (rule) is that I get to sleep more in the morning, knowing that I won't get stuck in traffic for hours to get to work. It's great," said Aniruddha Roy, a 33-year-old web developer. Another resident, Shruti Maheshwari, said, "the kind of joy and mental peace you get when you see hardly any cars on the roads, it really lifts

your mood for the day." "It can be a pain for some, but I think this is an initiative that should be made permanent," said the mother-of-two.

Women travelling alone or with young children and politicians, judges and police are all exempt, as are men taking their children to school. Scores of traffic police and volunteers took to the streets to enforce the scheme, wearing smog masks and holding banners urging drivers to comply. Most drivers appeared to be sticking to the rules yesterday and many took to cycling as an alternative, making Delhi's usually-clogged roads flow relatively freely. However, many offices and schools were shut yesterday, a public holiday in India, and the true test of the scheme will be when they reopen on Monday. — AFP

RELIGION, RIGHTS, POLITICS CLASH OVER SIERRA LEONE ABORTION BILL

UNSAFE ABORTIONS ACCOUNT FOR MATERNAL DEATHS

FREETOWN: When she was 15, long before she became gender adviser to Sierra Leone's president, Naasu Fofanah was raped by her church pastor. With her mother's help, she had an abortion, a decision she does not regret, even though it involved breaking the law. "That is the choice I want other girls and women to be able to make," Fofanah said in an interview. She stopped working for the president last year and now heads an organization combating sexual violence, angry that abortion is still illegal.

Since December, parliament, dominated by President Ernest Bai Koroma's party, has twice passed the "Safe Abortion Bill" which would scrap the current ban, both times with more than the two-thirds majority needed to override a presidential veto. Koroma has refused to sign it into law, however, saying it runs counter to the right to life enshrined in the constitution and should be put to a referendum. His opponents say the move is aimed at currying favor with powerful religious leaders, with some, including opposition politicians, asserting he will seek to stay in power after a constitutional two-term limit runs out next year. His spokesman said the president had made clear he had no such plan.

Almost all of Africa has restrictive abortion laws, and in much of West Africa it is outlawed, often under legislation dating from European rule, although some states allow it in certain circumstances, including if a mother's life is at risk. Supporters of repealing Sierra Leone's colonial-era abortion law say it is largely unenforced in practice. AdvocAid, a legal organization for women and girls, says it has handled just eight cases related to the law in the past eight years. Instead, the consequences of illegal abortion are primarily health-related. While Fofanah said her mother was able to find a doctor for

her abortion, many women have the procedure done by unqualified medics in private homes.

Right to life

Sierra Leone has one of the world's highest maternal mortality rates, with healthcare weakened by a lingering two-year Ebola epidemic and the after-effects of a decade-long civil war that ended in 2002. Some 10 percent of maternal deaths resulted from unsafe abortions, according to a 2013 report by the Ministry of Health and Ipas, an organization that seeks to expand women's access to reproductive health services. The new abortion bill aims to reduce this figure by permitting access to an abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy or until week 24 in cases of rape, incest, or health risk to the foetus or the mother.

It has received endorsements from both the African Union and United Nations but has been denounced by religious leaders who regard the life of the foetus as sacrosanct. "The very title 'Safe Abortion Bill' is a contradiction in terms," Edward Tamba Charles, the Catholic archbishop in Freetown, said. "Whether it is done by a quack or by a professional, there is nothing like safe abortion because somebody's life is lost." Fofanah said some opponents of the law readily cite the right to life but keep silent on the maternal deaths that result from the practice being driven underground. "I also resent the hypocrisy in some of what these people are saying," she said.

Politics

An open letter in January from the Inter Religious Council grouping the country's Muslim, Christian and traditional religious leaders said the bill ran counter to the constitution. Koroma agreed and his office sent a

memorandum to parliament in February arguing that an impending change to the current civil-war-era constitution, also via a referendum, made it an ideal time to run a referendum on the bill. But no date has been set for either public vote and his unusual decision to defy his own parliamentary majority prompted speculation in local media that politics may be playing a role.

Religious leaders hold enormous sway in Sierra Leonean society and many people look to them for guidance on political matters and during elections. "I think it's more about politics than any moral and religious convictions," said Ibrahim Tommy, executive director of the Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law - a Freetown-based independent watchdog group. "It's really about the next elections." Opposition politicians say Koroma, who is due to step down at the end of 2018 in line with a constitutional two-term limit, is preparing to follow in the footsteps of other African leaders and stay on longer.

Some of his supporters say he needs more time to carry out work interrupted by the Ebola epidemic, but his spokesman Abdulai Bayraytay denied he was seeking a third term. "The president's decision not to sign the bill into law has nothing to do with an extension of his mandate. He has made it abundantly clear that he is not interested in an extension or a third term of office," Bayraytay said. Many women's rights activists in Sierra Leone say putting the bill to a referendum may take months or never materialize. However, Aisha Fofana Ibrahim, the president of gender-parity organization 50/50, says Sierra Leoneans would back the bill: "Many people think religious leaders have a lot of influence and many people think that they are speaking for the majority of Sierra Leoneans. I think they are not." — Reuters

CHIMP FLEES JAPAN ZOO, CAUGHT AFTER FALLING FROM POWER POLE

TOKYO: A chimpanzee escaped from a zoo in northern Japan, climbed a tall electricity pole and then plunged from the wires into a blanket held by a dozen workers after being hit with a sedative arrow. Chacha, a male chimp, survived the fall with minor bruises and cuts, a zoo official said yesterday. The chimpanzee was on the loose for nearly two hours Thursday after it disappeared from the Yagiyama Zoological Park in Sendai, the city that's hosting finance ministers from the Group of Seven industrialized nations in May.

TV footage showed Chacha perched atop a pole, agitated and screaming at zoo workers below. A worker in a cherry picker shot the chimpanzee in the back with the arrow, sending it scampering along the wires. Chacha pulled the arrow out, but dangling from an electric line, appeared to lose its grip as the sedative took effect, and suddenly fell head down into the blanket. At 24, or middle age in human terms, the chimpanzee was waking up from the sedative and will be slow for a few days, zoo official Takashi Ito said. The zoo was closed Friday as officials investigated how it escaped. Zoo officials have spotted a hole in the fence, through which the chimpanzee apparently made his breakout. — AP



SENDAI: Chacha, the male chimp, falls off an electric pole, after being hit by a sedative arrow in Sendai, northern Japan. — AP



TOKYO: A mother of a female student at a Tokyo primary school displays a technical manual to guide the gymnastic formation during an interview in Tokyo. — AFP



TOKYO: A female student at a Tokyo primary school, now 13, shows a scar after surgery on her left elbow which she suffered in an accident of gymnastic formation. — AFP

TEAMWORK OR TORTURE? JAPAN'S BONE-BREAKING GYM CLASS

TOKYO: Rushed in for emergency surgery to stop bleeding on the brain, doctors at Matsudo City Hospital said the child was lucky to be alive. Others have come in with spinal fractures, broken ribs, and shattered limbs. Yet they are not young victims of violent crime in Japan, but children injured at school after taking part in kumitaiso (group gymnastics) class, an issue that has prompted angry parents and doctors to campaign for a ban, warning pushy teachers are putting children's lives at risk. Across the nation, more than 8,000 kids annually require medical treatment after taking part in the discipline, which sees students work together to contort their bodies into human pyramids and towers, according to the latest figures from the Japan Sport Council.

The worst cases have resulted in brain damage, spinal injuries and internal bleeding, and on rare occasions, even death. "If you get hurt when you can't assume a defensive position, you can get a serious injury even if the height (of the formation) is low," explained Tomohisa Shoko, head of emergency medical care at Matsudo City Hospital in Chiba, which has seen a stream of serious kumitaiso-

related cases in the past three years.

"Some children have broken ribs and breast-bones-those are rarely seen injuries even in other sports," he added, explaining how one sixth grader needed brain surgery after falling on his head after taking part in the discipline. Recently, he operated on a 15-year-old who had internal bleeding and a broken leg after attempting a human pyramid during sports practice. Shocked by the injuries he has seen, Shoko is now calling on educational establishments to ensure children are better protected. "A doctor alone cannot deal with safety issues," he said.

'Could have died'

Kumitaiso has been a mainstay of annual school sport festivals and is taught as part of the physical education curriculum to encourage teamwork and endurance. But parents and lawmakers argue schools are increasingly putting competition before pupil welfare, claiming a desire to best rival schools by creating dramatic displays has turned tradition into a circus. "There is a tendency to compete over the height of pyramids," said Ryo Uchida, professor

of sociology of education at Nagoya University, noting a recent case of a six-tier pyramid at a kindergarten. In September, six students were injured as they attempted a 10-tier human pyramid, which collapsed during a school sports festival in Yao in western Japan's Osaka prefecture. The incident caused top-selling Yomiuri Shimbun daily to run an editorial warning: "People point out that it is the teachers who get a sense of achievement, but not children." Some parents agree the desire to impress-particularly in the video-sharing age-is making teachers and coaches negligent over safety. "If schools don't do their job, who takes responsibility?" asked the mother of one little girl, who was knocked unconscious after her classmates fell on top of her when the formation they were practising collapsed in 2014.

The child, who can only be identified as M, was just 11 at the time. She was revived and taken to hospital after shattering the bones in her arm. "She could have lost consciousness forever or even died if her head had borne the force of the collapse," her mother said. There have been nine deaths linked to kumitaiso since 1969, when JSC records for school

sports injuries began. "In many cases the risks are being ignored," Uchida said. He has launched a petition, already backed by thousands, calling on education minister Hiroshi Hase to regulate kumitaiso formation size.

'Safety not guaranteed'

It often takes a serious incident before schools or authorities take action. Yao's board of education is considering a ban on kumitaiso, after public outcry over the September accident-which was filmed and posted on videosharing and social networking sites. In M's case, she says teachers ignored a light injury to another child, before she was seriously hurt, and continued to push pupils to take part in the sport, citing its importance for "kizuna" or bonding. The school banned kumitaiso after her accident but neighboring ones continued, resulting in at least 17 injuries in 2015 in Tokyo's Kita ward, according to the local education board. The ward in March decided a ban on kumitaiso, following Tokyo Metropolitan Government's decision to stop it in some 250 schools it directly runs. — AFP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم
Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCP. FAAP. PEM

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



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (14/04/2016 TO 20/04/2016)

SHARQIA-1
BEFORE I WAKE 12:45 PM
CRIMINAL 3:00 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 5:15 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 7:30 PM
CRIMINAL 9:45 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 12:05 AM

SHARQIA-2
THE JUNGLE BOOK 1:00 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 3:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 5:30 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 7:45 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 10:00 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 12:15 AM

SHARQIA-3
FAN- Hindi 12:30 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3 1:30 PM
FAN- Hindi 3:30 PM
FAN- Hindi 6:30 PM
FAN- Hindi 9:30 PM
CRIMINAL 12:30 AM

MUHALAB-1
BEFORE I WAKE 11:30 AM
CRIMINAL 1:30 PM
CRIMINAL 3:45 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 6:00 PM
THE AMERICAN SIDE 8:00 PM
CRIMINAL 10:15 PM
CRIMINAL 12:30 AM

MUHALAB-2
FAN- Hindi 11:30 AM
FAN- Hindi 2:30 PM
FAN- Hindi 5:30 PM
FAN- Hindi 8:30 PM
FAN- Hindi 11:30 PM

MUHALAB-3
THE JUNGLE BOOK 11:45 AM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 2:00 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 4:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 6:30 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 8:45 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 11:00 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 1:00 AM

FANAR-1
BEFORE I WAKE 12:30 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 3:00 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 6:15 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 8:15 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 10:30 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 12:45 AM

FANAR-2
FAN- Hindi 11:45 AM
FAN- Hindi 2:45 PM
FAN- Hindi 5:45 PM
FAN- Hindi 8:45 PM
FAN- Hindi 11:45 PM

FANAR-3
CRIMINAL 12:45 PM
THE AMERICAN SIDE 3:15 PM
CRIMINAL 5:30 PM
OBSERVANCE 7:45 PM
THE AMERICAN SIDE 9:45 PM
CRIMINAL 12:05 AM

FANAR-4
THE JUNGLE BOOK (3D) 1:00 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 3:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK (3D) 5:30 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 7:45 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK (3D) 10:00 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 12:15 AM

FANAR-5
FAN- Hindi 1:15 PM
TOP CAT BEGINS 2:00 PM
TOP CAT BEGINS 4:00 PM
TOP CAT BEGINS 6:00 PM
FAN- Hindi 8:00 PM
FAN- Hindi 11:00 PM

MARINA-1
BEFORE I WAKE 1:00 PM

KUNG FU PANDA 3 3:00 PM
FRI+SAT
BEFORE I WAKE 3:00 PM
NO FRI+SAT
BEFORE I WAKE 5:00 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 7:00 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 10:00 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 12:05 AM

MARINA-2
THE JUNGLE BOOK 11:30 AM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 1:45 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 4:00 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 6:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 8:30 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 10:45 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 1:00 AM

MARINA-3
FAN- Hindi 12:00 PM
FAN- Hindi 3:00 PM
CRIMINAL 6:00 PM
CRIMINAL 8:15 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 10:30 PM
CRIMINAL 12:45 AM

AVENUES-1
KUNG FU PANDA 3 1:15 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3 3:30 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 5:45 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 8:00 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 10:15 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 12:30 AM

AVENUES-3
MR. RIGHT 11:45 AM
OBSERVANCE 2:00 PM
MR. RIGHT 4:30 PM
THERI-TAMIL 6:30 PM
JU ON: THE GRUDGE 3 9:30 PM
OBSERVANCE 11:30 PM
OBSERVANCE 1:15 AM

AVENUES-4
CRIMINAL 11:30 AM
FAN- Hindi 2:15 PM
FAN- Hindi 5:15 PM
NO THU+FRI
Special Show "THE JUNGLE BOOK" 5:15 PM
THU+FRI
FAN- Hindi 8:15 PM
FAN- Hindi 11:15 PM

AVENUES-5
THE JUNGLE BOOK 11:45 AM
THE JUNGLE BOOK -3D 2:00 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 4:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK -3D 6:30 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 8:45 PM
NO THU+SUN
Special Show "THE JUNGLE BOOK" 8:45 PM
THU+SUN
THE JUNGLE BOOK 11:00 PM

AVENUES-6
FAN- Hindi 12:00 PM
FAN- Hindi 3:00 PM
FAN- Hindi 6:00 PM
FAN- Hindi 9:00 PM
FAN- Hindi 12:05 AM

360°- 1
THE JUNGLE BOOK -3D 1:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 3:30 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK -3D 5:45 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 8:00 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 10:15 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 12:30 AM

360°- 2
BEFORE I WAKE 12:45 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 3:00 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 5:15 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 7:30 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 9:45 PM
BEFORE I WAKE 12:05 AM

360°- 3
KUNG FU PANDA 3 12:15 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3 2:30 PM

ACCOMMODATION

Furnished C/AC room available for an executive bachelor near Shara Amman round, Salmiya. Calm and neat with Christian Malayalee family from May 1st. Contact 66418746. **(C 5163) 16-4-2016**

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Irene Elias Sequeira holder of Indian Passport No. G3662883, Sai Kripa Chawl R 2 Tembi Pada Lokmanya Nagar Bhandup W Mumbai, hereby change my name to Aisha. **(C 5162)**

I, Thomas Santano Fernandes holder of Passport No. A8004668 issued at Kuwait on 3/10/1999 resident of (correct address in India) H. No. 97, Seraulim, Banda, Salcete, Goa. Hereby

change my name from Thomas Santano Fernandes to Thomas Fernandes with immediate effect. **(C 5164) 16-4-2016**

SITUATION WANTED

M.Com sixteen years experience in independently handling accounts of medium sized companies upto finalization, familiar with accounting systems, at present working in hospital, seeking suitable position. Mobile: 66019422. **(C 5161) 14-4-2016**

Sri Lankan maid looking for a part time job, our honest, trustworthy and hard working, preferably with a European family. She has been working with us for several years and we can recommend her to everyone. Contact: 55206281. **(C 5159) 12-4-2016**

Prayer timings

Fajr: 03:58
Shorook 05:20
Duhr: 11:48
Asr: 15:22
Maghrib: 16:15
Isha: 19:36



Hospitals

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

Clinics

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



Flight Schedule

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION
 In case you are not travelling, your proper cancellation of bookings will help other passengers use seats

Arrival Flights on Saturday 16/4/2016

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	501	Alexandria	00:05
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
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	01:40
RJA	642	Amman	01:45
JZR	553	Alexandria	01:50
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15
UAE	853	Dubai	02:25
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05
FDB	067	Dubai	03:15
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:15
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15
QTR	1076	Doha	03:25
PGT	860	Istanbul	03:30
KAC	544	Cairo	03:40
KAC	514	Tehran	03:50
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
JZR	503	Luxor	07:25
KAC	382	Delhi	07:30
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	07:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:40
KAC	204	Lahore	07:40
SVA	512	Riyadh	07:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:15
KAC	344	Chennai	08:15
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20
KAC	362	Colombo	08:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
UAE	873	Dubai	10:40
IRM	1188	Mashhad	11:10
JZR	325	Al Najaf	11:20
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:30
IRC	6511	ABD	11:40
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50
IAW	157	Al Najaf	11:55
NIA	151	Cairo	12:20
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25
JZR	241	Amman	12:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
THY	766	Istanbul	13:10
IRC	526	Mashhad	13:35
TBM	6313	Mashhad	13:45
FBA	831	Al Najaf	13:50
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:05
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:10
MSR	575	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:15
FDB	057	Dubai	14:20
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:20
JZR	779	Jeddah	14:25
KAC	512	Mashhad	14:30
KAC	540	Sharm el-Sheikh	14:50
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
KAC	788	Jeddah	15:00
KNE	683	Madinah	15:05
OMA	645	Muscat	15:10
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:10
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
RJA	640	Amman	16:00
KNE	531	Jeddah	16:05
FDB	051	Dubai	16:10
QTR	1072	Doha	16:15
JZR	535	Cairo	16:20
KAC	118	New York	16:30
JZR	787	Riyadh	16:45
NIA	251	Alexandria	16:50
KAC	680	Muscat	16:55
KAC	562	Amman	16:55
IRA	669	Mashhad	17:10
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
JZR	357	Mashhad	17:30
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	177	Dubai	17:45

KAC	792	Madinah	17:45
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:50
QTR	1080	Doha	17:55
SVA	500	Jeddah	17:55
KAC	176	Geneva/Frankfurt	18:20
KAC	774	Riyadh	18:35
KAC	786	Jeddah	18:35
KAC	502	Beirut	18:35
CLX	856	Luxembourg	18:50
KAC	742	Dammam	18:50
KAC	618	Doha	18:55
KAC	542	Cairo	18:55
KAC	104	London	19:00
UAE	875	Dubai	19:05
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:05
KAC	614	Bahrain	19:10
FDB	063	Dubai	19:10
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:15
JAI	572	Mumbai	19:35
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
FDB	059	Dubai	19:50
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:05
KNE	382	Taif	20:10
ABY	121	Sharjah	20:10
MEA	402	Beirut	20:15
OMA	647	Muscat	20:20
JZR	189	Dubai	20:25
MSR	618	Alexandria	20:30
QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
FDB	5053	Dubai	20:55
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:05
UAE	859	Dubai	21:15
ALK	229	Colombo	21:20
KLM	415	Amsterdam	21:25
KAC	676	Dubai	21:35
QTR	1082	Doha	21:55
GFA	219	Bahrain	22:00
KAC	564	Amman	22:05
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:10
JZR	125	Bahrain	22:15
AIC	987	Chennai/Hyderabad	22:25
BBC	050	Dhaka/Dammam	22:40
THY	764	Istanbul	22:55
JZR	185	Dubai	22:55
KNE	533	Jeddah	23:05
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:20
MSR	614	Cairo	23:30
FDB	071	Dubai	23:35
JAD	301	Amman	23:45

Departure Flights on Saturday 16/4/2016

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:25
MSR	615	Cairo	00:30
FDB	072	Dubai	00:30
PIA	240	Sialkot	00:40
KLM	413	Amsterdam	00:55
MSC	502	Alexandria	01:05
MSC	416	Sohag	01:05
JZR	502	Luxor	01:15
THY	773	Istanbul	01:40
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:00
SAI	442	Lahore	02:30
THY	765	Istanbul	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
PGT	861	Istanbul	04:30
QTR	1077	Doha	04:35
RJA	643	Amman	06:25
QTR	1087	Doha	06:30
THY	771	Istanbul	06:45
GFA	212	Bahrain	06:50
JZR	240	Amman	06:55
FDB	070	Dubai	07:05
JZR	164	Dubai	07:15
FDB	5062	Dubai	07:55
JZR	324	Al Najaf	07:55
BAW	156	London	08:25
FDB	054	Dubai	08:30
KAC	511	Mashhad	08:40
SVA	513	Riyadh	08:50
JZR	778	Jeddah	08:50
KAC	539	Sharm el-Sheikh	08:50
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
JZR	534	Cairo	09:25
KAC	787	Jeddah	09:30
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
UAE	856	Dubai	09:50
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:00
KAC	101	London/New York	10:00
FDB	056	Dubai	10:40
QTR	1071	Doha	10:45

KAC	501	Beirut	11:00
KAC	561	Amman	11:20
KAC	679	Muscat	11:25
KAC	165	Rome/Paris	11:25
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:35
JZR	356	Mashhad	11:40
KAC	541	Cairo	12:05
UAE	874	Dubai	12:10
RBG	554	Alexandria	12:10
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:15
IRM	1189	Mashhad	12:20
IRC	6512	ABD	12:40
IAW	158	Al Najaf	12:55
KAC	791	Madinah	13:00
KAC	785	Jeddah	13:00
FDB	076	Dubai	13:10
JZR	176	Dubai	13:10
NIA	152	Cairo	13:20
JZR	786	Riyadh	13:20
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
THY	767	Istanbul	14:10
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
IRC	527	Mashhad	14:35
TBM	6314	Mashhad	14:40
PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	14:45
MSR	576	Sharm el-Sheikh	15:00
KAC	773	Riyadh	15:00
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:05
FDB	058	Dubai	15:05
KAC	673	Dubai	15:05
FBA	832	Al Najaf	15:10
KNE	381	Taif	15:10
QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
KAC	617	Doha	15:15
KAC	741	Dammam	15:30
JZR	189	Dubai	15:50
KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KNE	684	Madinah	16:00
KAC	613	Bahrain	16:00
OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	563	Amman	16:30
RJA	641	Amman	16:55
KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
FDB	052	Dubai	17:00
JZR	266	Beirut	17:10
QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
NIA	252	Alexandria	17:50
IRA	666	Esfahan	18:10
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
JZR	538	Cairo	18:30
JZR	554	Alexandria	18:50
QTR	1081	Doha	19:05
JZR	238	Amman	19:15
JZR	124	Bahrain	19:20
SVA	505	Jeddah	19:25
GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
KAC	361	Colombo	19:55
ABY	124	Sharjah	19:55
CLX	856	Hong Kong	20:20
KAC	283	Dhaka	20:30
FDB	060	Dubai	20:30
UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
JAI	571	Mumbai	20:35
KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:45
DLH	634	Doha	20:50
ABY	122	Sharjah	20:50
KAC	353	BLR	20:55
KAC	351	Kochi	21:00
KAC	543	Cairo	21:00
KNE	234	Riyadh	21:10
MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
OMA	648	Muscat	21:15
MSR	607	Luxor	21:30
QTR	1089	Doha	21:45
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
FDB	5054	Dubai	21:55
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	21:55
ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
KAC	381	Delhi	22:25
UAE	860	Dubai	22:25
KLM	415	Dammam/Amsterdam	22:25
KAC	301	Mumbai	22:30
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	22:55
KAC	205	Islamabad	23:00
GFA	220	Bahrain	23:00
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
KAC	155	Istanbul	23:15
QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
KAC	411	Bangkok/Manila	23:25
KNE	534	Jeddah	23:50

WORDSEARCH PUZZLE

Summer Olympics

Find and circle all of the Summer Olympic events that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

Note: Similarly named events are hidden separately. For example, SWIMMING and SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING do not overlap.

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

- ARCHERY
- ATHLETICS
- BADMINTON
- BASEBALL
- BASKETBALL
- BEACH VOLLEYBALL
- BOXING
- CANOEING
- CYCLING
- DIVING
- EQUESTRIANISM
- FENCING
- FOOTBALL
- GYMNASTICS
- HANDBALL
- HOCKEY
- JUDO
- MODERN PENTATHLON
- RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS
- ROWING
- SHOOTING
- SOFTBALL
- SWIMMING
- SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING
- TABLE TENNIS
- TAEKWONDO
- TENNIS
- TRAMPOLINING
- TRIATHLON
- VOLLEYBALL
- WATER POLO
- WEIGHTLIFTING
- WRESTLING
- YACHTING

Did you enjoy this puzzle? Visit: <http://www.puzzles.ca/wordsearch.html>

Yesterday's Solution

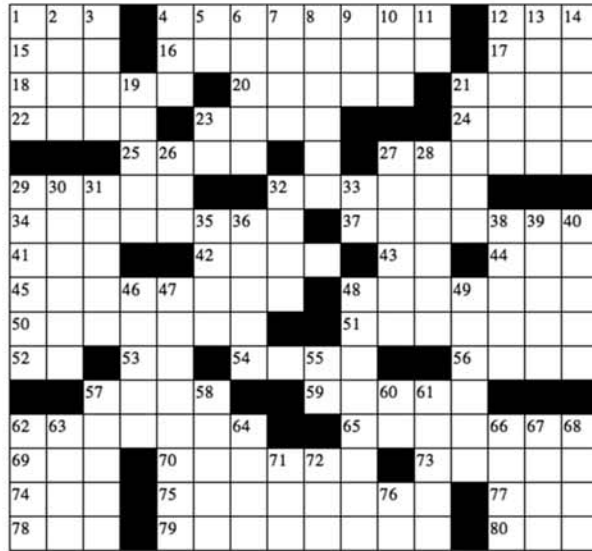
USA State Capitals

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

- ALBANY (New York)
- ANNAPOLIS (Maryland)
- ATLANTA (Georgia)
- AUGUSTA (Maine)
- AUSTIN (Texas)
- BATON ROUGE (Louisiana)
- BISMARCK (North Dakota)
- BOISE (Idaho)
- BOSTON (Massachusetts)
- CARSON CITY (Nevada)
- CHARLESTON (West Virginia)
- CHEYENNE (Wyoming)
- COLUMBIA (South Carolina)
- COLUMBUS (Ohio)
- CONCORD (New Hampshire)
- DENVER (Colorado)
- DES MOINES (Iowa)
- DOVER (Delaware)
- FRANKFORT (Kentucky)
- HARRISBURG (Pennsylvania)
- HARTFORD (Connecticut)
- HELENA (Montana)
- HONOLULU (Hawaii)
- INDIANAPOLIS (Indiana)
- JACKSON (Mississippi)
- JEFFERSON CITY (Missouri)
- JUNEAU (Alaska)
- LANSING (Michigan)
- LINCOLN (Nebraska)
- LITTLE ROCK (Arkansas)
- MADISON (Wisconsin)
- MONTGOMERY (Alabama)
- MONTPELIER (Vermont)
- NASHVILLE (Tennessee)
- OKLAHOMA CITY (Oklahoma)
- OLYMPIA (Washington)
- PHOENIX (Arizona)
- PIERRE (South Dakota)
- PROVIDENCE (Rhode Island)
- RALEIGH (North Carolina)
- RICHMOND (Virginia)
- SACRAMENTO (California)
- SALEM (Oregon)
- SALT LAKE CITY (Utah)
- SANTA FE (New Mexico)
- SPRINGFIELD (Illinois)
- ST. PAUL (Minnesota)
- TALLAHASSEE (Florida)
- TOPEKA (Kansas)
- TRENTON (New Jersey)

The hidden sentence is: A CITIZEN OF AMERICA WILL CROSS THE OCEAN TO FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY, BUT WON'T CROSS THE STREET TO VOTE IN A NATIONAL ELECTION

CROSSWORD 1228



ACROSS

- Goddess of criminal rashness and its punishment.
- An ancient branch of the Semitic languages.
- A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
- An informal term for a father.
- Used of independent armed resistance forces.
- Negation of a word or group of words.
- Jordan's port.
- A city in northwestern Switzerland.
- Fallow deer.
- Predatory black-and-white toothed whale with large dorsal fin.
- Divulge information or secrets.
- English empiricist philosopher who believed that all knowledge is derived from sensory experience (1632-1704).
- The act of contributing to the funds of a church or charity.
- Being or having an unknown or unnamed source.
- Leaf or strip from a leaf of the talipot palm used in India for writing paper.
- American professional baseball player famous for hitting home runs (1895-1948).
- The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
- 100 avos equal 1 pataca.
- Be later in time.
- Following immediately and as a result of what went before.
- Making lively and joyful.
- 1/10 gram.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- The probability of a specified outcome.
- The lean flesh of a fish similar to cod.
- Lower in esteem.
- A professional killer who uses a gun.
- The trait of lacking restraint or control.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- Of or relating to Papua or its people or language.
- The basic unit of money in Nigeria.
- Informal terms for a mother.
- Extinct order of jawless vertebrates.
- Any of various dark heavy viscid substances obtained as a residue.
- Seed of a pea plant.
- A great raja.
- A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.

DOWN

- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- A radioactive transuranic element which has been synthesized.

- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- The state of something that has been unused and neglected.
- Not in good physical or mental health.
- Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- A vicious angry growl.
- A member of the Siouan people of the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- A coffee cake flavored with orange rind and raisins and almonds.
- Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- A serve that strikes the net before falling into the receiver's court.
- Characterized by iniquity.
- A nation in northern North America.
- Of a leaf shape.
- People having the same social or economic status.
- (prefix) In front of or before in space.
- A ductile malleable reddish-brown corrosion-resistant diamagnetic metallic element.
- A theocratic republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
- Money paid out.
- A crime syndicate in the United States.
- A member of the Tungus speaking people of Mongolian race who are a nomadic people widely spread over eastern Siberia.
- An elaborate or deceitful scheme contrived to deceive or evade.
- Any of numerous perennial bulbous herbs having linear or broadly lanceolate leaves and usually a single showy flower.
- A tranquilizer (trade name Valium) used to relieve anxiety and relax muscles.
- Any of various plants of the genus Sesbania having pinnate leaves and large showy pealike flowers.
- (Greek mythology) Goddess of wisdom and useful arts and prudent warfare.
- An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
- Pasture grass of plains of South America and western North America.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- A slender double-reed instrument.
- Large elliptical brightly colored deep-sea fish of Atlantic and Pacific and Mediterranean.
- Evergreen tree of eastern Asia and Philippines having large leathery leaves and small green-white flowers in compact cymes.
- Toward the mouth or oral region.
- An aromatic ointment used in antiquity.
- North America republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- The month following March and preceding May.
- A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

PHILLIES OVERPOWER PADRES 3-0

PHILADELPHIA: Vince Velasquez struck out a career-high 16 in a dominant three-hitter, Ryan Howard homered and the Philadelphia Phillies beat the San Diego Padres 3-0 on Thursday. Velasquez (2-0) had no walks and extended his scoreless streak to 15 innings with his first shutout in nine career starts. The 23-year-old right-hander, acquired in the trade that sent former closer Ken Giles to Houston, had nine strikeouts in six innings in a 1-0 victory at the New York Mets on Saturday. The Padres were shut out for the fifth time in 10 games. They scored one run - with two outs in the ninth on Wednesday - in the last three games. Lefty Drew Pomeranz (1-1) tied his career best with eight strikeouts in six innings, allowing three hits and two runs. Velasquez retired the last 14 batters he faced. He fanned Wil Myers on a 96 mph fastball to end it, threw both arms up in the air and jumped off the mound.

CARDINALS 7, BREWERS 0

Jaime Garcia pitched a one-hitter, allowing only Domingo Santana's lined single into right field with two outs in the sixth inning, in St Louis' victory over Milwaukee. Garcia struck out 13, three more than his previous career high, and caught eight of them looking at third strikes. The left-hander is 4-1 with a 1.44 ERA in his last five starts against the Brewers. Randal Grichuk and Jeremy Hazelbaker hit two-run homers. Grichuk's drive in the third off Wily Peralta (0-3), which boosted the lead to 5-0, barely eluded center fielder Keon Broxton. Hazelbaker hit his team-high third home run of the season in the seventh, against Chris Capuano.

CUBS 8, REDS 1

Jason Hammel pitched six scoreless innings, drove home a run and scored another to lead Chicago past Cincinnati for the Cubs' best start since 1969. The Cubs swept the three-game series and improved to 8-1 for the first time in 47 years. They won 11 of 12 to start the '69 season en route to a second-place finish. Dexter Fowler and Addison Russell had three hits, and Kris Bryant hit his second home run. Hammel (1-0) allowed four hits, walked four and struck out three on 88 pitches in chilly weather. Raisel Iglesias (1-1) allowed three runs on six hits and two walks over five innings.

NATIONALS 6, BRAVES 2

Bryce Harper hit his first grand slam to reach 100 career home runs, launching a shot that smashed a panel on an electronic signboard and sent Washington over Atlanta, dropping the Braves to 0-9. The Braves and Minnesota, which fell to 0-9 hours earlier, are the first major league teams to lose nine in a row to start a season since Detroit in 2003, STATS said. Atlanta moved closer to the team-worst 0-10 beginning in 1988. Harper connected for his slam in the third inning and became the eighth-youngest player to hit 100 homers. The reigning NL MVP is 23 years, 181 days old - Hall of Famer Mel Ott was more than a full year younger when he became the youngest to do it. Stephen Strasburg (2-0) allowed two runs over 7 2/3 innings, a day after he was scratched due to illness. Wilson Ramos had a solo

home run and an RBI double as Washington improved to 7-1, tying the 1974 Montreal Expos for the best eight-game start in franchise history. Julio Teheran (0-2) gave up six runs in seven innings.

WHITE SOX 3, TWINS 1

Minnesota dropped to 0-9, falling to Mat Latos, Avisail Garcia and Chicago. The Twins have scored only 14 runs this season. The White Sox (7-2) won their fourth in a row, extending their best start since an 8-1 run in 1982. They're 6-1 on the road after recording their first sweep at Minnesota since 2012. Latos (2-0) gave up one run and three hits in six innings. Ervin Santana (0-1) allowed three runs in seven innings. Garcia drove a two-out fastball into the open grass behind the center field wall a solo home run in the fourth. He hit a double about as hard leading off the seventh inning and came around on a sacrifice bunt and a sacrifice fly.

DODGERS 5, DIAMONDBACKS 2

Kike Hernandez hit a two-run double during a five-run seventh inning to back another solid outing from rookie Ross Stripling, and Los Angeles beat Arizona. Stripling allowed two runs on five hits but trailed 2-0 when he exited after six innings. He tossed 7 1/3 hitless innings against San Francisco in his major league debut last week. Arizona starter Robbie Ray was charged with the first two runs in the seventh. Randall Delgado (0-1) allowed an RBI single to Justin Turner and then Hernandez's drive to the wall in left-center. Andrew Chafin then gave up RBI singles to Yasiel Puig and Adrian Gonzalez. Ray allowed the two runs on four hits and five walks over 6 1/3 innings. He struck out six. JP Howell (1-0) got the victory with a perfect inning of relief.

BLUE JAYS 4, YANKEES 2

Josh Donaldson hit a three-run home run, Troy Tulowitzki added a solo shot and Toronto beat New York. Marcus Stroman (2-0) allowed two runs and three hits in eight innings to win his seventh consecutive decision. Stroman retired the final 11 batters he faced, and improved to 5-1 with a 2.39 ERA in six career starts against the Yankees. Roberto Osuna finished for his fourth save. Donaldson erased a 2-0 deficit with a second drive to center in the fifth. Tulowitzki snapped a 0-for-10 slump with a first-pitch blast in the sixth. Both homers came off Nathan Eovaldi (0-1).

ROYALS 6, ASTROS 2

Ian Kennedy threw seven strong innings, and Eric Hosmer hit a two-run double during a five-run sixth and Kansas City had a season-high 13 hits to beat Houston. Kennedy (2-0) started with five hitless innings and retired 14 straight before Carlos Gomez's leadoff single to center in the sixth. Kennedy struck out seven and allowed a run on two hits and two walks. Mike Moustakas hit a solo homer in the first and went 2 for 4 with a walk. The defending World Series champs are 7-2 after winning the final three games of the four-game set with the Astros. Wade Davis got two outs for his fourth save. Doug Fister (1-1) was the loser.



LIVERPOOL: This is a Saturday, April 11, 2015 file photo of jockey Leighton Aspell as he smiles after winning the Grand National horse race aboard Many Clouds at Aintree Racecourse Liverpool, England. — AP

RANGERS 6, ORIOLES 3

Rouged Odor had a tiebreaking double in a five-run sixth inning and Texas beat Baltimore, handing the Orioles their second straight loss after a 7-0 start. The Texas rally preserved a career-best nine-game winning streak for ace Cole Hamels, who struggled after retiring the first eight hitters and left facing a 3-1 deficit in the sixth. After Tom Wilhelmson (1-0) kept the Rangers close by getting an inning-ending double play, five straight Texas hitters reached in the sixth against Baltimore starter Chris Tillman (1-1). Mark Trumbo hit his third homer for the Orioles. Texas closer Shawn Tolleson pitched around a two-out single in the ninth for his third save.

TIGERS 7, PIRATES 4

Jordan Zimmermann pitched six shutout innings, Nick Castellanos homered and drove in four runs and Detroit beat Pittsburgh to improve to 4-0 on the road. Zimmermann (2-0), who signed a five-year, \$110 million deal with Detroit last December, gave up six hits and two walks while striking out four. He has yet to give up a run for the Tigers. Castellanos hit a two-run double in the fourth off Gerrit Cole (0-2) and added a two-run

homer in the eighth off Tony Watson. Francisco Rodriguez pitched a perfect ninth for his second save.

INDIANS 6, RAYS 0

Danny Salazar gave up three hits in six innings, Marlon Byrd hit one of Cleveland's three home runs and the Indians beat Tampa Bay. Cleveland took two of three in the series, limiting the Rays to 15 hits. Salazar (2-0) struck out nine and walked three. Zach McAllister, Bryan Shaw and Trevor Bauer completed a five-hitter. Chris Archer (0-3) gave up three runs and seven hits in 5 1/3 innings. He is 0-6 with a 5.83 ERA in nine starts since beating Baltimore on Aug. 31. Jose Ramirez and Rajai Davis also homered.

ROCKIES 11, GIANTS 6

Jorge De La Rosa had two hits, drove in two runs and pitched into the seventh inning to lead Colorado past San Francisco. De La Rosa (1-1) allowed four runs - three earned - struck out seven and walked one in 6 2/3 innings. He was coming off a Saturday outing against San Diego in which he gave up seven runs in four innings. Brandon Belt homered for the second straight game for the Giants. Matt Cain (0-1) took the loss. — AP

DAGG STARS AS CRUSADERS MAUL JAGUARES

WELLINGTON: Israel Dagg made a triumphant return to Super Rugby as the Canterbury Crusaders downed Argentina's Jaguares 32-15 in Christchurch yesterday. The 49-Test fullback scored a brace as the Crusaders ran in five tries to two for a bonus point win that maintains pressure in a tight New Zealand conference. It was the sixth win on the trot for the seven-time champions and Dagg provided the impetus as the Crusaders raced to a 22-3 half-time lead, scoring one try and setting up another. He followed up with a spectacular solo effort after the break to end hopes of a Jaguares revival, brushing off two defenders as he raced to the line.

The 27-year-old, discarded for last year's World Cup

then sidelined with a shoulder injury, is a certain contender for an international recall if he can maintain such blistering form. It was the sixth defeat in a row even though they were nearly at full strength after squad rotations, leaving them with a single win so far in their debut season. "We had a bad game, especially in the first half, but it's part of our learning curve," assistant coach Felipe Contepomi said. "The Crusaders are one of the best teams in the competition and we made a lot of unforced errors. It's disappointing." The Crusaders almost had a try in the first two minutes after stealing the ball in a lineup, with the Jaguares stopping Nemani Nadolo just short of the line.

Andy Ellis made no mistake three minutes later,

touching down after Dagg slipped him a defence-splitting pass. The Crusaders then ran away with the match, notching two tries when Jaguares fullback Joaquin Tuculet was sinbinned for slowing down play. Dagg took advantage of the extra space for his first five-pointer, then Richie Mo'unga stripped the ball from Jeronimo de la Fuente for another to make it 19-3. A Mo'unga penalty then made it 22-3 at half-time. Facundo Isa clawed one back for the Argentines after the restart, darting from the back of a maul then powering past Ellis. The Crusaders restored their dominance with tries to Kieran Read and Dagg, although Santiago Gonzalez Iglesias crossed for a late consolation try to the visitors.— AFP

DONALD, GRACE SHARE LEAD, AHEAD OF DAY AT HERITAGE

LOS ANGELES: Former world number one Luke Donald, stung by his failure to qualify for this month's Masters, was pleased to produce a straightforward 66 on Thursday for a share of the RBC Heritage first-round lead. "It was a pretty simple 66," said England's Donald, who had six birdies and a bogey in a five-under effort that left him tied with South Africa's Branden Grace at Harbour Town Golf Links in Hilton Head, South Carolina. They had a one-shot lead over a quartet of players led by world number one Jason Day of Australia and including Sweden's David Lingmerth and Americans Matt Kuchar and Tony Finau. "I didn't have to scramble very hard and was able to just put it in good positions," added Donald, who rolled in birdie putts of 15 feet, 16 feet, six feet and five feet.

That's a step in the right direction for a player who said attempts to rebuild his swing had ultimately hurt his game, costing him sharpness in his short game and putting. Harbour Town might be just the place for Donald to reverse his fortunes. He owns five runner-up finishes in the Heritage, the most heart-breaking a defeat to Matt Kuchar's chip-in from a bunker two years ago. Grace, playing the Heritage for the second time, also fired six birdies and a bogey to grab his share of the lead in tricky, windy conditions. "It was not the best ball-striking day, but nothing's easy on a day like today with the wind blowing all over the show," Grace said.

Day's five birdies included a 27-footer at the par-four 11th. He fell out of a share of the lead with his only bogey of the day at 18, where he took an unplayable lie in a greenside bunker. "I played some nice golf," Day said. "Obviously that wasn't the finish I wanted. I shouldn't have been in the bunker in the first place. Today was the easiest day and now we got three tough days coming up." Day is coming off a respectable finish where he contended in The Masters, the first of four major championships in 2016. "It is always tough to play the week after a major championship," he said. "I wasn't pleased with how I hit it on Sunday (at Masters). So I came in here Monday to get in a good hitting session." Reigning US Amateur champion Bryson DeChambeau made his pro debut and hit a 70.— AFP



LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles Kings goalie Jonathan Quick blocks a shot by San Jose Sharks right wing Melker Karlsson (left) in the first period in round 1, Game 1 of the NHL hockey Stanley Cup playoffs at Staples Center on Thursday, April 14, 2016. — AP

CAPITALS FRUSTRATE FLYERS

WASHINGTON: John Carlson scored a power-play goal and Braden Holby made 19 saves to help the Washington Capitals beat the Philadelphia Flyers 2-0 in Thursday night in Game 1 of the Eastern Conference first-round series. Washington's penalty kill went for 4 for 4 and frustrated the Flyers. Holtby had seven saves on Philadelphia power plays to pick up his third career shutout in the playoffs. Flyers counterpart Steve Mason stopped 29 shots he faced, giving up Carlson's second-period goal on a shot that deflected in off teammate Chris VandeVelde. Jay Beagle added a late goal. The Flyers lost second-line center Sean Couturier to an upper-body injury in the second period. Game 2 is today's night in Washington.

ISLANDERS 5, PANTHERS 4

John Tavares had a goal and two assists, including one that set up Kyle Okposo's go-ahead goal early in the third period, and New York beat Florida Game 1 of the Eastern Conference series. Thomas Greiss survived a shaky beginning and made 42 saves for the

Islanders in his first playoff start, and Brock Nelson, Frans Nielsen and Ryan Strome added goals for New York. Home-ice advantage in the series now belongs to the Islanders, and they can take a 2-0 lead back to Barclays Center if they prevail when the series resumes in a quick turnaround. Reilly Smith had two goals, Jussi Jokinen had a goal and two assists and Teddy Purcell also scored for the Panthers. Roberto Luongo made 21 saves.

SHARKS 4, KINGS 3

Joe Pavelski broke a tie with his second goal early in the third period, and San Jose opened its playoff return with a victory over Los Angeles. Brent Burns and Tomas Hertl scored for the Sharks in their first postseason game since losing four straight to the Kings in 2014, completing a seven-game flop in the first round. Los Angeles rode the momentum to its second Stanley Cup title, but both California rivals missed the playoffs last year. San Jose's Martin Jones made 19 saves against

his former Los Angeles teammates in his first career playoff start. Trevor Lewis scored a short-handed goal and Jonathan Quick stopped 19 shots for the Kings. Game 2 is today's at Staples Center. Jake Muzzin and Jeff Carter also scored, but Los Angeles struggled to keep up for long stretches of the two-time champs' return to the postseason.

STARS 4, WILD 0

Kari Lehtonen made 22 saves for his second career playoff shutout, Jamie Benn had a goal and two assists and Dallas beat Minnesota in Game 1 of the Western Conference series. Jason Spezza returned to the postseason with a nifty goal and added an assist. Spezza was skating along the right side and initially faked a slap shot with just over 8 minutes left in the second period. After skating a few more feet to near the center of the faceoff circle, he took a wrist shot and sent the puck in the upper right corner to make it 2-0. Patrick Eaves and Radek Faksa also scored. Game 2 is today's night in Dallas.— AP

SHOOTING TOURNAMENT - SHOOTERS BATTLE FOR GOLD



Afrah Adel

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Shooting tournament of the Late Sheikh Faisal Al-Duaij Al-Sabah will come to an end today with a closing ceremony at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting ranges. The tournament began on Thursday as shooters compete in the Olympic Skeet, Trap and Double Trap events for men, women and juniors. The Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Obaid Al-Osaimi lauded the role of the family of the late Sheikh Faisal Al-Duaij Al-Sabah towards the shooting sport and its athletes. He also appreciated the large participation by shooters both from clubs and from the National Guard - a total of 90 shooters. Al-Osaimi thanked the technical and administra-

tive departments for their efforts. The results of the competition are as follows:

Men's Double Trap Event

Jarrah Mohamad Al-Shuwaier won the first place and the gold medal; Ahmad Al-Afasi took the second place (silver medal) while Hamad Mohammad Al-Afasi won third place (bronze medal).

Women's Trap Event

Kuwait's shooter Shahad Al-Hawal won the gold medal; Sarah Al-Hawal won the silver medal while Asmaa Al-Qatami won the bronze medal.

Women's Skeet

Sheikha Al-Rashidi grabbed the first position, followed by Eman Al-Shammaa - and in third place was Fatima Al-Zaabi. Today will see men competing in the trap event.



Obaid Al-Osaimi



Shaha and Sarah Al-Hawal



MURRAY DUMPS INJURED RAONIC

MONTE CARLO: Andy Murray ran down a depleted Milos Raonic 6-2, 6-0 yesterday to power into his third semi-final at the Monte Carlo Masters. The second seed was always in command against the Canadian who has been suffering with the return of a right leg injury which troubled him at the Australian Open two months ago. Murray will await the winner from eight-time champion and fifth seed Rafael Nadal and 2014 Monte Carlo winner Stan Wawrinka, the reigning French Open titleholder. Murray has lost both of his previous semi-finals to Nadal, in 2009 and 2011.

The Scot collected the first two clay titles of his career last season, winning Munich and Madrid. Raonic, playing a quarter-final in the Principality for the third consecutive edition, was never in the match, failing to find a single ace in his 66-minute defeat. Murray said that while his win might not have been pretty, it still gave him confidence after struggling through his first two contests this week. "I've played a lot of tennis, though it has all not been of the highest quality," said the 28-year-old.

"I've been able to learn from my previous matches. Today I served one of my best matches. "Milos was not at his best, he can certainly serve better than today. I'm looking forward to the semi-finals." Murray's win improved his standing against Raonic to 5-3 as he backed up a semi-final win over Raonic in Melbourne. Raonic has managed to put together a solid season despite his physical setbacks, now standing 20-4. — AFP

LEDECKY GRABS GOLD AS FRANKLIN AND PHELPS SETTLE FOR CONSOLATION WINS

LOS ANGELES: Michael Phelps made a low-key start to the Mesa Pro Swim on Thursday, but his win in the 200m freestyle consolation final was a confidence booster in an event he's found tough in his comeback. "I swam that like I used to always swim it," said Phelps, who smashed the 200m free world record at the 2007 world championships before making it one of his eight gold medals at the 2008 Beijing Games in yet another world record. "I kind of just stepped on the gas in the first hundred, and that's when I swim my best 200 free."

Phelps, the 18-time Olympic gold medalist juggling preparations for the Rio Games and plans for the arrival of a baby boy with fiancée Nicole Johnson next month, just missed out on qualifying for the championship final in the event. His winning "B" final time of 1min 48.21sec would have given him bronze in the championship race won by Conor Dwyer in 1:46.61. "I think the biggest thing I had tonight is I was able to get confidence back in that race," Phelps said. "I haven't really swum that race well in a long time." Phelps, always cagey about just what his Olympic program plans are, said he wasn't sure if he'd tackle the 200m free at the US Olympic trials in June.

But he wants to keep improving at least enough to challenge for a spot on the US 4x200m free relay team in Rio. "I'm pleased with it," Phelps said. Dwyer's time

tied him for sixth-fastest in the world this year. Venezuela's Christian Quintero was second in 1:48.10 and Phelps's old foe Ryan Lochte was third in 1:48.85. US freestyle phenomenon Katie Ledecky won the women's 200m free in 1min 55.71sec. Ledecky, who set her latest world record in the 800m free at the Austin Pro Swim in January, showed her preparations for the Rio Games in August remain right on track. Allison Schmitt was second in 1:56.52 and Maya Dirado third in 1:58.64.

Four-time Olympic gold medallist Missy Franklin, like Phelps shut out of her championship final, settled for a victory in the 200m free consolation heat in 1:58.64 — nearly two seconds faster than her qualifying time. Ledecky said she missed racing against Franklin, but she didn't think there was cause for concern about her US team-mate. "Everybody's at different points in their season," Ledecky said. "She had a better swim tonight." Dana Vollmer, who set a 100m butterfly world record en route to Olympic gold in London, then retired to start a family, signaled her comeback bid is gaining pace with a 100m fly win in 56.94sec-fourth-fastest in the world this year. Vollmer, whose son Arlen was one year old in March, was comfortably ahead of runner-up Kelsi Worrell (57.27). — AFP

Live Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
Norwich City V Sunderland	14:45 beIN SPORTS
Everton V Southampton	17:00 beIN SPORTS
Man United V Aston Villa	17:00 beIN SPORTS 2 HD
Newcastle V Swansea	17:00 beIN SPORTS
West Brom V Watford	17:00 beIN SPORTS
Chelsea V Man City	19:30 beIN SPORTS 2 HD
SPANISH LEAGUE	
Getafe V Real Madrid	17:00 beIN SPORTS 3 HD
Las Palmas V Sporting Gijon	19:15 beIN SPORTS
SD Eibar V Real Sociedad	21:30 beIN SPORTS
Celta de Vigo V Real Betis	23:05
ITALIAN LEAGUE	
Bologna V Torino	16:00 beIN SPORTS
Carpi V Genoa CFC	19:00 beIN SPORTS
Internazionale V Napoli	21:45 beIN SPORTS 4 HD
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
Werder Bremen V Wolfsburg	16:30 beIN SPORTS
Bayer 04 V Eintracht	16:30 beIN SPORTS
Augsburg V Stuttgart	16:30 beIN SPORTS
Hoffenheim V Hertha Berlin	16:30 beIN SPORTS
Darmstadt V Ingolstadt 04	16:30 beIN SPORTS
Bayern Munich V Schalke	19:30 beIN SPORTS 5 HD
FRENCH LEAGUE	
PSG V Caen	18:00 beIN SPORTS 6 HD
Lorient V Toulouse	21:00 beIN SPORTS
Girondins V Angers	21:00 beIN SPORTS
Troyes AC V Stade de Reims	21:00 beIN SPORTS
GFC Ajaccio V Lille OSC	21:00 beIN SPORTS
Bastia V Saint Etienne	21:00

MAN CITY SLICKERS AIMING TO BUILD ON EURO MOMENTUM

LONDON: When Manchester City go to Stamford Bridge today on a high as newly-qualified Champions League semi-finalists, opponents Chelsea may well be thinking 'what might have been?'. While Chelsea went out of the Champions League in the last 16 to Paris Saint-Germain to confirm a trophy-less season for the defending Premier League champions, City knocked out the French club in midweek to reach the last four for the first time in their history. And key to City's success was Kevin De Bruyne—a player Chelsea sold in 2014 after barely giving the Belgium international a chance in London.

De Bruyne was signed by Chelsea from Genk in January 2012 but played just three Premier League games under former manager Jose Mourinho before being sold to Wolfsburg two years later following loan spells back at Genk and with Werder Bremen. After starring in the Bundesliga, where he was player of the year in 2014-15, City paid a club record £54 million (\$76 million, 67 million euros) to sign De Bruyne last year and, with the possible exception of Sergio Aguero, he has been their outstanding player so far this season.

Despite spending more than two months out with a knee injury, the 24-year-old has scored 15 goals and created 13 others, with his stunning finish against PSG on Tuesday giving City a 1-0 second-leg win to secure their place in Friday's draw for the Champions League last four. "He is a very good player and a very good person," said City team-mate Fernandinho. "When he was out injured, we missed him a lot because he has a lot of good qualities. "Every game he creates chances to score, as well as scoring goals, and he's very important for us. "I'm very happy for him. He scored a historic goal for the

club. I think he deserved it as he's a great person as well." Had De Bruyne avoided injury, City would certainly have put up a better challenge for the Premier League title, rather than finding themselves in fourth place and 15 points behind leaders Leicester City.

A NEW ERA

Manuel Pellegrini's side therefore need to stay focused on domestic duties before they resume their pursuit of European glory at the end of April. "We are waiting for the draw but now we have to play three games for the Premier League," Pellegrini said. "For me, it is very important to try and qualify for the Champions League for next year." City captain Vincent Kompany is close to a comeback from injury, but winger Raheem Sterling remains out with a groin problem.

For Chelsea, the remaining weeks of the campaign are little more than a countdown to the start of a new era under current Italy coach Antonio Conte next season. Last weekend's defeat at Swansea City ended their 14-game unbeaten league record under Guus Hiddink and the interim manager has made it clear he intends to use the final weeks to give more opportunities to the club's youngsters. They, like everybody else in a squad that has under-achieved so badly this season, must now attempt to catch the eye of Conte, who will take charge after Euro 2016.

And full-back Cesar Azpilicueta insists the pressure to deliver success will be even greater next season after falling short this term. "We have Premier League games to win and our motivation is to finish as high up the table as possible because for Chelsea it's not enough to be fight-

English Premier League table

LONDON: English Premier League table ahead of this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Leicester	33	21	9	3	57	31	72
Tottenham	33	18	11	4	60	25	65
Arsenal	32	17	8	7	55	33	59
Man City	32	17	6	9	58	33	57
Man Utd	32	15	8	9	39	30	53
West Ham	32	13	13	6	52	40	52
Southampton	33	14	8	11	44	34	50
Liverpool	31	13	9	9	50	42	48
Stoke	33	13	8	12	37	43	47
Chelsea	32	11	11	10	49	42	44
Bournemouth	33	11	8	14	40	55	41
Everton	32	9	13	10	52	43	40
Swansea	33	10	10	13	34	42	40
West Brom	32	10	10	12	31	39	40
Watford	32	10	8	14	31	37	38
Crystal Palace	33	10	8	15	35	42	38
Norwich	33	8	7	18	35	57	31
Sunderland	32	6	9	17	36	57	27
Newcastle	32	6	7	19	32	61	25
Aston Villa	33	3	7	23	23	64	16

Note: Top four teams qualify for Champions League; teams finishing 5th-6th qualify for Europa League; bottom three teams relegated to Championship.

ing in mid-table," Azpilicueta said. "We haven't won any trophies this season but we want to win as many games as we can and prepare to lift trophies again next season. "I've been here four seasons. In two sea-

sons, I won trophies and in two I didn't win. So hopefully we will get back to winning trophies again next season. "I think we will improve and for Chelsea the only target is to win." — AFP

UNITED RETURN TO TOP-FOUR CHASE AFTER CUP PROGRESS

MANCHESTER: Fresh from keeping alive their hopes of winning a first trophy since 2013, Manchester United return to their bid to secure a place in next season's Champions League when they host Aston Villa today. United will play Everton in the FA Cup semi-finals at Wembley on April 23 thanks to their 2-1 win at West Ham United in their quarter-final replay in midweek as they look to win the competition for the first time since 2004. As 11-time winners, United will regard that gap as too long and lifting the Cup would bring some comfort to under-pressure manager Louis van Gaal following a difficult second year at Old Trafford.

But playing in the Champions League has to be United's highest priority for the rest of the season and, with a four-point gap to Manchester City in the Premier League's fourth qualification place, they have to keep winning. Van Gaal's side may well have to take maximum points from their final six games to have any chance of catching City, or third-placed Arsenal, and they certainly can't afford to drop any points when bottom club Villa visit Old Trafford. With their relegation set to be confirmed, Villa won't fancy facing United striker Marcus Rashford, whose superb winning goal at West Ham underlined the potential of a player who has been the success story of United's under-achieving season. "It's incredible. It's so good to see young lads come in, do well and take their chance," said United midfielder Michael Carrick of the 18-year-old forward who has scored six goals since making his first-team debut at the end of February. "Not in his wildest dreams could he have predicted the last two or three months that he's had. "He's still got his feet on his ground though. He doesn't change and he works hard and listens. "He's willing to learn and I think he's got a great chance of staying at the top for a long time. "I don't think it's a flash in the pan, in and out. I think he's here to stay."

Low spirits

United captain Wayne Rooney could start after returning from two months out with a knee injury as a substitute against the Hammers on Wednesday. Villa fans will head for Old Trafford in low spirits, knowing their club's inevitable relegation will be confirmed before kick-off if Norwich City avoid defeat to Sunderland in the day's early fixture. A Sunderland victory at Carrow Road would prolong the agony for Villa, whose fate would still be rubber-stamped today unless they then win at Old Trafford—a feat they have achieved just once in 31 visits. — AFP

LEICESTER PROMISE NO LET-UP IN TITLE PURSUIT

LONDON: Leicester's Danny Drinkwater has insisted there will be no change in the club's approach as they eye a remarkable Premier League title success. The Midlands club were 5,000/1 outsiders to be crowned champions of England before the season started. Yet they now lead England's top flight by seven points from second-placed Tottenham Hotspur and head into this weekend's match at home to West Ham needing just three wins from their final five league games this season to complete a stunning title success.

Foxes manager Claudio Ranieri has fostered a strong bond within the squad at the King Power Stadium, but Drinkwater—one of several Leicester players to have gained England

recognition on the back of the club's performances this season—said there was no great mystery to the team's unity. "There isn't a secret to the dressing-room camaraderie, it's just that we're a bunch of lads that get along," said the 26-year-old former Manchester United trainee.

"We're all willing to work hard for each other on the pitch and it shows by how well we graft out results," he added, with Jamie Vardy's late double sealing a 2-0 victory against Sunderland last time out. "We're guaranteed a top-four place and that's massive," the midfielder explained. "A lot of the lads probably didn't realize how close we were to it and it's just another step closer to our ultimate dream.

"People talk about three wins

needed now, but one thing I was taught as a youngster at Manchester United was to keep focused on the job. "We're taking it game by game and I can't see that changing anytime soon." Three Leicester players—Vardy, Riyad Mahrez and N'Golo Kante—made up 50 percent of the six-strong shortlist announced this week for the Professional Footballers' Association Players' Player of the Year award. The trio are all set to be in action against a West Ham side who will be looking to revive their top four ambitions following the disappointment of an FA Cup quarter-final replay defeat by Manchester United at Upton Park in midweek. Tottenham, should Leicester win, could find themselves 10 points adrift by the time they kick-off away to Stoke on Monday. — AFP

Spanish League Preview

BARCELONA SEEK REACTION TO ALARMING SLIDE

MADRID: Barcelona host Valencia tomorrow desperately in need of a win to arrest a slide of three defeats in four games and prevent losing their grip on the La Liga title race. The Catalans still lead Atletico Madrid by three points with six games remaining, but were dumped out of the Champions League by Atletico on Wednesday as their quest to deliver a second consecutive treble was killed off. "It is clear we are not in our best moment of the season," said Barca defender Gerard Pique.

"In the world of football perfect seasons don't exist. "We need to keep going in the two competitions we have still in play." Barca in particular need a reaction from their star front three of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez, who have gone off the boil at the business end of the season. Messi hasn't netted for five games, whilst Neymar has also failed to score from open play as Barca have won just once in their last five matches. "We need to lift ourselves because we still have two very attractive goals to obtain," added Barca coach Luis Enrique.

However, Barca's only change from the 11 that started at the Calderon in midweek is likely to come in goal where Claudio Bravo will replace Marc-Andre ter Stegen. Valencia can also approach the game in a much more relaxed state

Spanish La Liga table

MADRID: Spanish La Liga table before this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Barcelona	32	24	4	4	87	27	76	Valencia	32	9	10	13	36	39	37
Atletico Madrid	32	23	4	5	54	16	73	Espanyol	32	10	6	16	33	60	36
Real Madrid	32	22	6	4	93	29	72	Rayo Vallecano	32	7	10	15	43	64	31
Villarreal	32	17	9	6	41	26	60	Granada	32	7	9	16	33	57	30
Celta Vigo	32	15	7	10	45	52	52	Sporting Gijon	32	7	7	18	32	53	28
Athletic Bilbao	32	15	6	11	50	40	51	Getafe	32	7	7	18	28	56	28
Sevilla	32	13	9	10	45	39	48	Levante	32	6	7	19	28	55	25
Malaga	32	10	11	11	30	29	41								
Real Sociedad	32	11	8	13	40	42	41								
Las Palmas	32	11	6	15	37	44	39								
Eibar	32	10	8	14	43	48	38								
La Coruna	32	7	16	9	41	47	37								
Real Betis	32	9	10	12	29	45	37								

First, second and third place - Automatic Champions League qualification -Fourth place - Champions League playoff- Fifth and sixth place - Europa League qualification 18th, 19th and 20th - Relegated

after Alvaro Negredo's last minute winner against Sevilla last time out moved them nine points clear of the relegation zone in Pako Ayestaran's first home game in charge since replacing the sacked Gary Neville. The visitors also have revenge in mind having been thrashed 7-0 on their last visit to the Camp Nou during Neville's

reign in February. "Barcelona aren't the same as when we played against them and, with our strengths, we will try to get a good result," said defender Jose Luis Gaya.

Favourable run-in

Atletico could even draw level with Barca at

the top of the table before kick-off at the Camp Nou as they host relegation threatened Granada at the Vicente Calderon. Diego Simeone's men have the most favorable run-in with four of their remaining six games at home. However, they still need Barca to drop points in at least two games due to their inferior head-to-head record with the Catalans. Fernando Torres will return to the Atletico line-up after being suspended for the Barcelona return leg after scoring in each of his last three appearances. Real Madrid also booked their place in the last four of the Champions League in midweek thanks to Cristiano Ronaldo's hat-trick to overturn a 2-0 first leg deficit against Wolfsburg. And Zinedine Zidane's men can close to within one point of Barcelona when they travel across the Spanish capital to face struggling Getafe.

Former Argentine international Juan Eduardo Esnaider will take charge of Getafe for the first time as Fran Escriba was sacked on Tuesday after a 12-game winless run saw Los Azules drop into the relegation zone. "The Real Madrid game is fundamental for us. They will arrive here euphoric fancying their chances in La Liga and the Champions League, but I want to take the game to them," said Esnaider. —AFP

German League Preview

'BRING BACK THE FUN', SAMMER TELLS BAYERN

BERLIN: Bayern Munich sporting director Matthias Sammer has called on his players to rediscover their fun-loving side ahead of Saturday's fixture against Schalke 04. The German champions qualified for a fifth consecutive Champions League semi-final this week, and now have the chance to establish a ten point lead at the top of the Bundesliga. Bayern have been grinding out positive results in recent weeks, but have failed to dominate games in the way they are expected to. "I want to see more desire, more ambition and more enjoyment in our play," said Sammer. "The players should be thinking about what they can achieve." Sammer was quick to defend the Bayern players, however, arguing that Bayern are currently in a better position than the likes of Barcelona or Real Madrid. "When you look at the other top clubs in Europe, you see that they are not picking up points. We could be doing some things better, but we are getting results."

After Borussia Dortmund were held to a draw against Schalke last weekend, Bayern now hold a seven-point lead at the top of the table. Victory on Saturday would put them ten points clear for at least one night, with Dortmund set to play Hamburg tomorrow. Dortmund usually fare badly against Hamburg, having picked up just four points from their last seven Bundesliga games against the northern club. Coach Thomas Tuchel is aware that another slip-up would almost certainly spell the end of his team's title chances.

"The most realistic scenario is that Bayern win the title," he said. "I'm not sure if we can pull off a sensational comeback now." With the title race losing steam, the battle for Europe has become

even more significant in the Bundesliga. Only four points separate Hertha Berlin in third and Schalke in seventh. Surprise package Hertha have hit rocky ground in recent weeks. A 5-0

German Bundesliga Table

BERLIN: German Bundesliga table ahead of this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Munich	29	24	3	2	69	14	75
Dortmund	29	21	5	3	67	28	68
Hertha Berlin	29	14	7	8	39	34	49
Leverkusen	29	14	6	9	44	33	48
M'gladbach	29	14	3	12	59	45	45
Mainz 05	29	13	6	10	40	36	45
Schalke 04	29	13	6	10	39	38	45
VfL Wolfsburg	29	10	9	10	40	38	39
Ingolstadt	29	10	9	10	27	31	39
Hamburg	29	9	7	13	35	40	34
Cologne	29	8	10	11	29	37	34
VfB Stuttgart	29	9	6	14	46	59	33
Darmstadt 98	29	7	11	11	32	44	32
Hoffenheim	29	7	10	12	33	44	31
Augsburg	29	7	9	13	37	48	30
Bremen	29	7	7	15	39	59	28
E Frankfurt	29	6	9	14	29	46	27
Hanover 96	29	5	3	21	24	54	18

NB: Top three qualify automatically for Champions League group stage; Fourth goes into Champions League play-offs; Fifth and sixth qualify for Europa League; Bottom two go down with third-bottom going into a two-leg relegation play-off with third place in Bundesliga 2.

thrashing at the hands of Borussia M'chengladbach was followed by a 2-2 draw against bottom of the table Hanover 96. The Berliners face another tricky test on Saturday against a Hoffenheim team unbeaten in their last four. Hertha coach Pal Dardai will also be without star youngster Mitchell Weiser, who is serving a one-game suspension.

Just one point behind Hertha, Bayer Leverkusen are hoping to secure their place in the top four with a win over relegation threatened Frankfurt. Despite a myriad of defensive injuries, Leverkusen have gone four games without conceding a goal, while Frankfurt have the third worst scoring record in the league. Fifth placed Gladbach will be looking to break their poor run of away form in Hanover. The Foals have just one point from their last five games away from home. "If we want to finish in the top four, we have to start getting points away from home as well," said defender Toni Jantschke.

That should be easy against Hanover. With the club nine points adrift at the foot of the table, defeat to Gladbach would see them equal a Bundesliga record of 13 home defeats in one season. Fresh from their Champions League exit at the hands of Real Madrid, Wolfsburg face a Werder Bremen side desperate to haul themselves out of the bottom three. Bremen are hoping to see star striker Claudio Pizarro return to the team after a nearly a month out injured. Today will also see Augsburg host fellow relegation rivals Stuttgart, and Darmstadt welcome Ingolstadt. Tomorrow, Mainz will be looking to keep their Champions League hopes alive against out of form Cologne. —AFP

ALL-MADRID CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL 'POSSIBLE'

LONDON: A repeat of the 2014 Champions League final between Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid is still possible after yesterday's semi-final draw. Real, who won that game 4-1 after extra-time, will play first-time semi-finalists Manchester City, with the first leg in north-west England. Atletico, who beat holders Barcelona in the last eight, host Bayern Munich in their first leg. Bayern manager Pep Guardiola misses what would have been a difficult semi-final for him personally against City, the Premier League side he will take charge of next season. "It's a great tie against the team that has won the competition the most times," Txiki Begiristain, Manchester City's sporting director, told reporters.

"But we have got this far and we want to keep dreaming. "I think that Madrid are the favorites. They have been in the semi-finals 27 times, six in a row. But Paris (St Germain) were also a great team and we were able to knock them out." Real, record 10-times champions, are unbeaten in their last eight games against English clubs. Their only previous tie against City came in 2012 when the Spanish side won 3-2 at home before drawing 1-1 in Manchester. For Cristiano Ronaldo, who scored a hat-trick to win the quarter-final against VfL Wolfsburg, it will be another return to Manchester, where he spent six years with United before moving to Spain in 2009.

The Madrid manager at that time was Manuel Pellegrini, now in charge at City until Guardiola replaces him. The Chilean was sacked by Real after only one season. Emilio Butragueno, Real's head of public relations, said that in Sergio Aguero, David Silva and Kevin de Bruyne, City had players to win a game on their own. "It's their first semi-final and they are anxious to do something big in Europe," he added. "We'll have to be at our best in the two games. Last year also people said we were lucky when we got Juventus and we were knocked out. The two games are going to be very tight." The only time Atletico have met Bayern was in the 1974 final, when the German side won 4-0 in a replay after a 1-1 draw. "A team that eliminates the title holders has to be taken very, very seriously," said Bayern board member Andreas Jung. —Reuters

2016 NBA Playoffs Preview

WARRIORS EYE BACK-TO-BACK TITLES

By Ahmad Jabr

Last Wednesday marked the end of one regular season for the ages in the NBA. Records were broken, teams went to heights that were never thought to be reachable before, and others struggled to keep pace. Legends were born, others faded, and some others went out with a bang. As the 2016 NBA Playoffs are set to start today, we lay out a preview for each series in what is promising to be a very exciting post season:

The Eastern Conference:**Cleveland Cavaliers (1) vs Detroit Pistons (8):**

What makes the Cavs even scarier this year is that not only is the team healthy entering into the post season, but this could be the most well-rested LeBron James that we ever see enter the playoffs. The Cavs are one of six teams to finish in the top ten in offensive and defensive efficiency this year. They understand that anything less than a championship would be considered a bust season. Meanwhile, the Pistons return to the playoffs for the first time since 2009 - when they were swept by James and the Cavaliers in the first round. The Pistons did win the season series against the Cavs 3-1 this year, and coach Stan Van Gundy has many options in his roster to give Cleveland some headaches, yet a limited bench and lack of defensive options to contain James, Kyrie Irving and Kevin Love probably mean that the Pistons' chances of scoring an upset are very slim.

Toronto Raptors (2) vs Indiana Pacers (7):

It has been a season of firsts in Toronto. The Raptors reached the 50-win mark in regular season (56 to be more exact) for the first time in franchise history, en route to winning their third consecutive Atlantic Division title. They finished second in the East for the first time as well. They set new franchise win records at home (32) and on the road (24), and also posted a winning record against the West for the first time. They also look towards having a deep playoffs run and making it to the Eastern Conference Finals for the first time in team history. But to do that they first have to overcome the Pacers. Indiana has a versatile roster that gives coach Frank Vogel the option to play

small-ball or go with his bigs if the situation necessitates so. Obviously his best option is to attack the Raptors from the 3-point line where Toronto still struggles defensively, thus creating space for the wings to cut to the basket and the bigs to be more comfortable in the paint. However, the Raptors' squad that looks to avoid a third consecutive first round post season exit are not an easy opponent to handle. The return of defensive specialist DeMarre Carroll from knee surgery that sidelined him for three months, and the emergence of rookie Norman Powell as a reliable guard on both ends of the floor should solidify the Raptors' perimeter defense and help contain Paul George and the rest of the Pacers' wings. Meanwhile, the Raptors' offense, the fifth best in the league fueled by the team's All-Star backcourt duo Kyle Lowry and DeMar DeRozan, its Center Jonas Valanciunas and a deep bench that has many scoring options could prove too tough for the Pacers' defense to contain.

Miami Heat (3) vs Charlotte Hornets (6):

The Hornets have arguably been the most exciting team to watch in the East. Kimba Walker is having the best season of his career, the addition of Nicolas Batum gave Charlotte a boost in perimeter defense and a reliable scoring option, while Jeremy Lin has provided a much needed spark off the bench. As for the Heat, although it does not seem that Chris Bosh will return for a playoff run, the team is stacked with many scoring options that can prove too difficult for the Hornets to handle. However, the Heat's fate in the playoffs perhaps hangs on the performance of three key players: Dwayne Wade, Goran Dragic and Hassan Whiteside. The first provides leadership and scoring, the second helps with assists and being a second scoring option while the third brings defense and toughness. Overall, there are so many indicators that give this series the potential of ending up being the most competitive and exciting in the first round.

Atlanta Hawks (4) vs Boston Celtics (5):

Perhaps the most hard to predict series in the East is this one. The Hawks are not the same team that finished with 60 wins and on top of the Eastern Conference a year ago, but they were still the second best defensive team in the NBA this



OAKLAND: Golden State Warriors guard Stephen Curry speaks at a news conference after an NBA basketball game against the Memphis Grizzlies in Oakland, California, Wednesday, April 13, 2016. The Warriors won 125-104, and finished the regular season with an all-time NBA record of 73-9. — AP

season, behind the mighty San Antonio. They were second in the NBA in assists and assist ratio, sixth in 3-pointers made, and sixth in effective field goal. Their system relies on tough defense and ball movement - two traits necessary to win in the playoffs. The Celtics meanwhile were fourth in defense and tenth in offensive efficiency. They were fifth in assists, 12th in 3-pointers made and eighth in total field goals made. Both teams also finished with identical records, making it even more difficult to predict the series' outcome.

The Western Conference**Golden State Warriors (1) vs Houston Rockets (8):**

What better way to enter the post season and begin the road for back-to-back championships than by finishing with the most regular season

wins in NBA history? But just as the 1995-96 Chicago Bulls - whose 72-10 record stood for 20 years before the Warriors notched win number 73 in their regular season finale last Wednesday - acknowledged that their record 'does not mean a thing without a ring', Stephen Curry and company understand the importance of what lies ahead, and cannot allow themselves to be distracted. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine that the Rockets, whose defensive rating dropped from seventh last year to 21st this season, could win one match in this series, much less have a chance to accomplish what would be the biggest upset in NBA history.

San Antonio Spurs (2) vs Memphis Grizzlies (7):

The Spurs, owners of the league's best defense and fourth best offense, continue to impress. Their 67 regular season win total is their most in franchise history; and so is their 40-1 home record which also ties the all-time NBA record. The team's core of Tim Duncan, Tony Parker, Kawhi Leonard and LaMarcus Aldridge looks better than ever. Furthermore, playing a heavily depleted Grizzlies' squad perhaps also gives Gregg Popovich the chance to better manage his players' minutes in preparation for a potential showdown with the Oklahoma City Thunder in the next round. Memphis' 'grit and grind' style of basketball that is based on slowing the tempo and suffocating defense can be problematic on paper, but with key injuries to players such as Marc Gasol, Mike Conley and Tony Allen, the Grizzlies simply do not have enough bodies to execute a plan that could contain the Spurs' balanced offense.

Oklahoma City Thunder (3) vs Dallas Mavericks (6):

Oklahoma City's Point Guard Russel Westbrook led the league this season with 18 triple-doubles, putting him into a tie with Magic Johnson (1981-82) for the most in a single season in the past 50 seasons, according to Elias Sports Bureau. Kevin Durant has returned to production levels similar to two years ago before foot injuries plagued him last season. The Thunder, who missed the playoffs last year due to injuries and playing in an ultra-competitive Western Conference, look to show they belong among the elite in the league. Dirk Nowitzki, who led Dallas in scoring at 18.5 per game this season, has helped his team make it into the post season once again this year. But the Mavericks, who ranked 17th in defensive rating this year, will have a hard time especially containing the Thunder's dynamic duo of Durant and Westbrook. The two have led their team into finishing with the second best offensive rating in the league this season, behind the Warriors.

Los Angeles Clippers (4) vs Portland Trail Blazers (5):

Coming into the season, perhaps no one (except for Damian Lillard) thought that the Trail Blazers would be in the position they are in today after losing four starters in free agency. The emergence of CJ McCollum, and him forming with Lillard one of the most dangerous backcourts in the league has helped Portland's offense finish the sixth best in the league this season. But the Blazers will need more than just their offense to beat the Clippers, who eliminated the Spurs last year before losing to Houston in the second round. They need to figure out a way to stop Chris Paul from setting the tone on offense, stopping him from finding Blake Griffin or DeAndre Jordan, and to avoid giving JJ Redick open looks on the perimeter. And even if they could do all those things, the Clippers still have a secret weapon in Paul Pierce, who was the x-factor in the Washington Wizard's first-round series sweep of the Toronto Raptors in last year's playoffs.



OAKLAND: A Golden State Warriors fan holds up a sign during the first half of an NBA basketball game between the Warriors and the Memphis Grizzlies in Oakland, California, Wednesday, April 13, 2016. The Warriors finished the season with 73 wins, breaking the 72-10 record set by the 1995-1996 Chicago Bulls. — AP

LIVERPOOL STUN DORTMUND 4-3

SEVILA, SHAKHTAR DONETSK, VILLARREAL BOOK LAST FOUR

LONDON: Liverpool added another fairytale comeback to the history books as they fought back from 3-1 down against Borussia Dortmund to reach the Europa League semi-finals after Dejan Lovren's towering stoppage-time header secured a 4-3 win on Thursday. Lovren rose at the far post to rifle home his header in the first minute of added time, recalling memories of Liverpool's 2005 Champions League final comeback against AC Milan and propelling them into the last four with a 5-4 aggregate victory.

Liverpool, 2-0 down after nine minutes, will be joined in Friday's draw by holders Sevilla, who needed a penalty shootout to edge past Spanish rivals Athletic Bilbao. Spain will have two sides in the last four after Villarreal beat Sparta Prague 4-2 and 6-3 over the two legs, while Shakhtar Donetsk defeated Braga 4-0 at home to complete a 6-1 aggregate triumph. Liverpool's victory at Anfield was greeted by typically exuberant celebrations from manager Jurgen Klopp, who spent seven years at Dortmund and would have been no stranger to the quick-fire counter attacks that earned the visitors a 2-0 lead.

Liverpool might have felt they had a slight

advantage over Dortmund having snatched an away goal in a 1-1 first-leg draw, but the tables were turned in the blink of an eye after a whirlwind start by the Germans. Liverpool were slapdash in possession, Dortmund ruthless on the counter as they brutally punishing Liverpool's errors with both early goals starting from the hosts gifting them the ball. Dortmund played with the same intensity they did when Klopp led them to two Bundesliga titles and a Champions League final, harrying Liverpool all over the pitch and winning back the ball in dangerous areas.

The first goal arrived after five minutes as a rapid break ended with Simon Mignolet saving brilliantly from Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, only for Henrikh Mkhitaryan to sweep home the rebound. It was soon 2-0 as Marco Reus powered through the Liverpool midfield and fed Aubameyang to rifle his finish into the roof of the net, beating Mignolet at his near post. Having never lost at home to German opposition in 13 games, Liverpool were suddenly facing a mountainous climb back into the encounter, but they were given hope three minutes into the second half when Divock Origi raced through and poked his finish

past Roman Weidenfeller. Their spirits were swiftly dampened, however, when Reus made it 3-1 after 57 minutes, before being partially restored through Philippe Coutinho's curling effort.

Wonderful night

The Anfield roar went into overdrive when Mamadou Sakho leveled with a header from a corner with 12 minutes remaining and the final blow was delivered when Lovren rose to head home James Milner's cross. That sparked euphoric celebrations among the home support and left the visiting contingent holding their heads in disbelief. "It is difficult to explain. A wonderful, wonderful night at Anfield and to be honest the game was strange," an almost disbelieving Klopp said.

Liverpool are no strangers to titanic fightbacks with perhaps the greatest moment in their history coming when they came back from 3-0 down against Milan to win a fifth European title on penalties. Just as on that night 11 years ago, their opponents were left wondering how they had lost control of the match. "It was not logical. It was very emotional. At the end at 3-3 everyone here believed it was meant to be, it was destiny,"

Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel said. "If you have such a strong belief then things can happen."

Sevilla, who have made the competition their own in the last two years, lost 2-1 at home to Bilbao, but edged through on penalties. They fell behind when Aritz Aduriz scored his 10th goal in this season's competition and after equalising through Kevin Gameiro, were behind again when Raul Garcia found the net with a looping header 10 minutes from time. That leveled the tie at 3-3 on aggregate and forced extra time.

With the sides still level after 120 minutes, Sevilla sneaked through after Bilbao's Benat Etxebarria missed their fourth spot-kick and Gameiro scored to secure a 5-4 shootout victory. Shakhtar Donetsk cruised into only their second European semi-final with Darijo Srna opening the scoring from the penalty spot to mark his record-breaking 486th game for the club. Two own goals from Braga centre back Ricardo Ferreira either side of a goal from Viktor Kovalenko rounded off the scoring. Villarreal's Cedric Bakambu struck twice to take his tally in the competition to nine goals as they reached the semi-finals for the third time with a 4-2 win at Sparta Prague. — Reuters

ITALIAN LEAGUE PREVIEW

CRUCIAL INTER VISIT FOR TITLE-CHASING NAPOLI

MILAN: Napoli's Serie A title credentials face the acid test on a trip to Inter Milan today when record-chasing striker Gonzalo Higuain sits out the second of a four-game ban for the visitors. Higuain, whose 30-goal league tally so far leaves him just five short of Gunnar Nordahl's all-time Serie A record for AC Milan, was handed the untimely sanction two weeks ago after a spectacular meltdown at Udinese.

The former Real Madrid striker is only set to return in time for Napoli's final three games of the season, beginning with a home fixture against Atalanta on May 2. By then, the dream of a first scudetto in 26 years could be over for Maurizio Sarri's men, whose shock 3-1 defeat to Udinese two weeks ago left them six points behind leaders Juventus. Juventus are fully expected to stretch their unbeaten run to 23 games against a Palermo side that is in full crisis mode following yet another coaching switch that sees Davide Ballardini return to the Sicilian club.

Defeat for Napoli coupled with a win for Juve would

leave the champions nine points in front with five games to play and virtually secure a fifth consecutive league trophy for the first time since 1935. Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis on Wednesday broke the club's ongoing boycott of the media-following protests at unfair reporting in Italy but only to say: "I haven't received any offers for Higuain." But the mood at the club is said to be defiant ahead of the weekend's top fixture at the San Siro. Inter, in fourth at six points behind third-placed Roma, who hold the final Champions League qualifying spot, have not given up their hopes of reaching Europe's premier club event next season.

'Never easy'

Defender Danilo D'Ambrosio told Mediaset on Thursday: "It'll be a delicate game because they're (Napoli) fighting for top spot and we're aiming for third place. "It's never an easy match-it never has been-but we want to get the result and secure three points." In Higuain's absence, Manolo Gabbiadini hit Napoli's opener in a 3-0 defeat of Verona last week. Ahead of today, they also welcome Senegal defender Kalidou Koulibaly back from injury. While a win for Napoli would keep their faint hopes alive, it could spell the end of Inter's unlikely Champions League bid and give Roma extra incentive for a tough trip to Atalanta.

Roma are unbeaten in 11 games, since a 1-0 defeat to Juventus in late January, but Atalanta-one of Italy's best-supported teams-have won their past two home outings including a shock 2-1 defeat of AC Milan a fortnight ago. A Roma defeat would obviously be welcomed by Inter, but former Roma and Italy defender Vincent Candela believes the capital side can aim even higher and snatch the league's second, automatic Champions League spot from Napoli. "We have to win in Bergamo, no matter what happens with Napoli, and then we'll see what happens," he told RomaTV.

"If Inter win, then it's all down to us. I still believe we can finish second, it would be a great comeback after the difficult start to the campaign." Elsewhere, Cristian Brocchi makes his debut as Milan's new coach following the shock sacking of Sinisa Mihajlovic on Tuesday on a tough trip to Sampdoria. Brocchi, the club's former youth team coach, said he would "do things differently". He may have stolen the idea from Napoli coach Sarri, but he kept to his word by introducing a drone to their training session on Thursday. — AFP



A screen shows the clubs that will be facing each other during the semi-final draw for the UEFA Europa League at the UEFA headquarters in Nyon yesterday. — AFP

LIVERPOOL V VILLARREAL; SEVILLA V SHAKHTAR IN EUROPA SEMIS

NYON: Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool earned a Europa League semi-final against Villarreal from their heroic comeback against his former side Borussia Dortmund. Defending champions Sevilla face Ukraine's Shakhtar Donetsk in the second semi-final drawn yesterday. Liverpool, who hit back from 2-0 and 3-1 down to beat Borussia 4-3 and progress into the semis 5-4 on aggregate, have never played Villarreal before.

Sevilla ousted fellow Spaniards Athletic Bilbao on penalties in Thursday's quarter-final in their bid to win a third consecutive Europa League. The final is set for Basel, Switzerland, on May 18. The winners will get a place in next season's Champions League group stages. Liverpool are the only unbeaten side left in the competition, and goals from centre-backs Mamadou Sakho and Dejan Lovren completed one of the great Anfield comebacks against Dortmund.

The first leg will be played in Villarreal on April 28, with The Yellow Submarine heading to Merseyside for the return leg on May 5. The Spanish

outfit, currently fourth in La Liga, are looking to reach their maiden major European final, after Europa League last-four defeats in 2004 and 2011 and a Champions League semi-final loss in 2006. In stark contrast, Liverpool are attempting to win their ninth major continental trophy, and in the process, draw level with Sevilla as the competition's record four-time winners. Villarreal have not beaten English opposition in 10 matches, with six draws and four defeats, since beating Liverpool's city rivals Everton in qualifying for the 2005-06 Champions League.

But they will be confident that they can see off the Reds after an excellent season so far, in which they have beaten the likes of Real Madrid and Napoli, and drawn with Barcelona. "We'll try and win the home leg, without conceding an away goal to make it easier. Then we know it will be difficult away," said club representative and former mid-fielder Marcos Senna. "We are happy with the draw. We did not want to meet Sevilla, we want to meet them in the final." — AFP

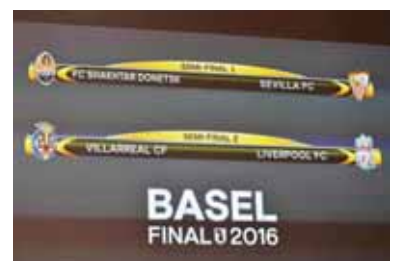
Italian Serie A table

MILAN: Italian Serie A table ahead of weekend fixtures (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Juventus	32	24	4	4	58	17	76
Napoli	32	21	7	4	66	27	70
Roma	32	18	10	4	67	33	64
Inter Milan	32	17	7	8	42	30	58
Fiorentina	32	16	8	8	51	35	56
AC Milan	32	13	10	9	42	35	49
Sassuolo	32	12	12	8	40	35	48
Lazio	32	12	9	11	42	42	45
Chievo	32	12	8	12	38	40	44
Genoa	32	11	7	14	37	37	40
Empoli	32	10	9	13	36	43	39
Torino	32	10	9	13	41	44	39
Bologna	32	10	7	15	31	37	37
Atalanta	32	9	9	14	31	38	36
Sampdoria	32	9	9	14	46	49	36
Udinese	32	9	7	16	29	48	34
Carpi	32	6	10	16	29	50	28
Palermo	32	7	7	18	29	57	28
Frosinone	32	7	6	19	29	60	27
Verona	32	3	13	16	27	54	22

Note: Top two qualify for Champions League, third place into Champions league qualifying, next two into Europa League.

Sports



Liverpool v Villarreal;
Sevilla v Shakhtar in
Europa League semis

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A screen shows the clubs that will be facing each other during the semi-final draw for the UEFA Champions League at the UEFA headquarters in Nyon yesterday. — AFP

MAN CITY, REAL FACE OFF IN CL SEMIS

GUARDIOLA AVOIDS HIS FUTURE EMPLOYERS CITY; ATLETICO V BAYERN

NYON: Pep Guardiola avoided his future employers as Manchester City were yesterday drawn to play Real Madrid in the semi-finals of the Champions League (CL) while Atletico Madrid will face the Spaniard's Bayern Munich. Guardiola takes over as City boss next season after three years at Bayern in which he has steered the Bavarian giants to the last four in Europe on each of his three years in charge. "Spanish teams are always strong in the Champions League and I have seen in the last few years how strong Atletico are in the Spanish league," Guardiola said.

"They have a good mentality under their coach (Diego) Simeone and have good players going forward in (Fernando) Torres and (Antoine) Griezmann. Simeone is one of the best coaches in the world and his team is one of the best in Europe." Atletico, winners over defending champions Barcelona in the quarter-finals, and Bayern have met once before in European action, in the 1974 final. The Bundesliga side ran out 4-0 winners in the replay following an initial 1-1 draw.

Bayern striker Robert Lewandowski said the Bundesliga team would be wary of Atletico. "@Atleti did show the strength in the match with Barcelona. We must maintain

maximum concentration," the Polish international tweeted. Bayern's Spain international Javi Martinez added: "That will be a difficult game against a strong opponent." Clemente Villaverde, Atletico's director of football, called on his team to "maintain that reliability we have shown all season".

Pellegrini returns to Real

For outgoing Manchester City boss Manuel Pellegrini, the semi-final will be a return to the club he managed in 2009-10. City's only games against Real, unbeaten in their last eight games against English clubs and in the semi-finals for a record sixth successive time, were in the 2012-13 group stage. They drew 1-1 at home and lost 3-2 away. City's sporting director Txiki Begiristain said: "It's a great tie against the team that has won the competition the most times. "But we have got this far and we want to keep dreaming." Begiristain added: "They have shown that in the second leg at the Bernabeu they can be unstoppable. "We need to be solid defensively, as we have been in the Champions League recently against Dinamo Kiev and PSG.

"Clearly they (Real) are (favorites), this is their 26th semi-final, their sixth in a row, but we are very capable.

PSG are having a great season and we were able to knock them out. "We are optimistic, but I repeat the key is solidity." Emilio Butragueno, Real's director of institutional relations, said City would be very motivated given they had never made the last-four before. "In the semi-finals any opponent will be a great team and we are speaking about players of the highest quality that can settle a game themselves in (David) Silva, (Kevin) De Bruyne and (Sergio) Aguero," Butragueno told BeIN Sports Spain. "We need to play two games at a very high level if we want to get to the final in Milan."

Asked whether it was the best draw possible for Real, Butragueno said: "I remember being here exactly a year ago and everyone said afterwards we had been very lucky to avoid Bayern and Barca, but Juventus ended up eliminating us. "The two games will be very evenly balanced. We can think playing at the Bernabeu gives us a certain advantage. But this is our sixth consecutive semi-final and in the five previous to this we have played away first three times and never made it to the final." The first leg of the semi-finals will be played on April 26-27, with the second leg scheduled for May 3-4. The final will take place at Milan's San Siro stadium on May 28. — AFP