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NGOS - ESSENTIAL PARTNER IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

KUWAIT: The civil society is an essential partner and its role is crucial for the national efforts to materialize goals of the UN sustainable development agenda of 2030, Kuwaiti civil society advocates concurred. "The civil society organizations are an indispensable partner to governments for achieving goals of the development agenda in various spheres," Lola Saleh Al-Mulla, Kuwait Women Cultural and Social Society chairwoman said on the sidelines of her participation in Kuwait's delegation to Arab conference on civil society organization's role to implement the sustainable development agenda of 2030, kicked off in Doha.

She added that the civil society or the non-government organizations (NGOs) are playing an effective role in defending people's freedom rights, thus unlocking their talents and imagination for production and development. NGOs are also importing in fighting poverty, educating people and defending and empowering marginalized segments in societies, she noted. Al-Mulla pointed out that the Kuwait Women Cultural and Social Society has been launching and contributing to initiatives to support and empower women and children as well as boosting women status to help them be a real partner in state building and society development.

Sustainable development

For his part, Director of Social Affairs at the Gulf Cooperation Council Executive Bureau Dr Saleh Al-Ghodori emphasized that every entity and individual in the society should contribute to the national plans to implement the sustainable development agenda. The government should put forward their development strategies, plans and goals up for discussion with the civil society which develop and contribute to it, he said. President of Kuwait Social Workers Society Abdulrahman Al-Tawheed said that the partnership between government and civil society organizations became desperately urgent for development, particularly in this delicate time which the Arab region undergoes.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Society Chairman Jamal Abdulkhalq Al-Nouri stated that UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has presented a paper during the conference about the role on civil society organizations in sustainable development goals. "The ESCWA's paper provides a new mechanism for partnership between governments, private sector and non-government organizations," Al-Nouri said. He added that governments are invited to introduce legislative reforms to pave the way for NGOs to play their aspired role in development. "The ESCWA mechanism is reasonable and rational and could be effective in helping NGOs in Kuwait and other Arab and Muslim societies to do their part in development," he said.

Promoting education

He pointed out that Abdullah Al-Nouri Society is supporting marginalized and needy people in Kuwait and other parts of the world. The society also focuses on promoting and backing education related projects in many countries. Mohammad Abdulreda Kakoli, a member of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), said that the KCCI is focusing on creating new job opportunities to fight poverty. The KCCI also carries out studies and formulates plans to engage every member in the society in the efforts to achieve sustainable development, Kakoli said. He stressed that the KCCI works for the welfare of all members of the society. It also aims to ensure easy access to high-quality education, promote equality, and buttress national economy.

It is also playing a role in expanding the industrial base, and fostering innovation, he said. The Arab conference on the Role of Civil Society in the sustainable development agenda 2030, is organized by Qatar Social Work Foundation (QSWF) in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The two-day event gathers more than 200 participants representing local and international civil society organizations, in addition to representatives from the private sector and specialists in the development field. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Photo shows one of Kuwait's gigantic projects being implemented within the state development plan. — KUNA

HUMANITARIAN ACTION THE PILLAR OF KUWAIT, GCC POLICIES: KRCS

UN REFUGEE AGENCY PUBLISHES BOOK ON KUWAIT'S AID TO SYRIANS

RIYADH: Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi has described humanitarian action as one of the main pillars of state policy of Kuwait and other Gulf Cooperation Council member states. The record of Kuwait and GCC states in humanitarian domain is enormous and spreads to the four corners of the globe, Al-Hasawi said after the conclusion of the 12th meeting of the heads of GCC Red Crescent societies in Riyadh on Thursday evening.

He pointed out that the conferees have agreed on intensifying efforts to improve the living conditions of Syrian refugees as well as to offer all required aid to war-traumatized Yemeni people. They have also agreed to celebrate GCC Red Crescent Day, to highlight the GCC Red Crescent societies' initiatives, programs and efforts to ease people's suffering worldwide, he said. Al-Hasawi underlined the importance of coordination and cooperation between GCC Red Crescent societies and regional and international humanitarian agencies to upgrade response to regional and global humanitarian crises.

Book on Kuwait's aid

In another development, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi yesterday handed Kuwait's permanent delegate to UN offices and international organizations in Geneva Jamal AL-Ghunaim a special UNHCR's publication on Kuwait's response to Syrian refugee crisis. The book highlights Kuwait's leading role and remarkable contributions to the UNHCR's programs to offer a helping hand to displaced Syrians in six countries and in 10 different domains. "Kuwait is keen on supporting humanitarian action and efforts of the UNHCR chief Grandi," Al-Ghunaim said.

He stressed that Kuwait has a strategic relations with the UNHCR. Al-Ghunaim announced that Grandi would visit Kuwait next month to meet state officials to



Kuwait Red Crescent Society's (KRCS) Deputy Chairman Anwar Al-Hasawi

express the UN agency's appreciation of its great humanitarian action.

Grandi said that the book is published in recognition of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's impressive humanitarian role.

Without this role, the humanitarian situation could have been gravely worsened, he said. He recalled Kuwait's hosting of three international aid pledging conferences for Syria and its contribution to the fourth one which was held in London. — Agencies

OBESE PEOPLE MOST LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED BY RHEUMATOID

KUWAIT: A study carried out by Kuwait Sejel (record) foundation showed that obese people were likely to be affected by Rheumatoid than other persons. The study, which has been conducted recently, showed that 37 percent of rheumatoid patients in Kuwait were obese and only 21 percent have normal body mass index (BMI), Dr Adeeba Al-Herz, founder of Sejel and Rheumatoid Consultant at Amiri Hospital said.

She said the study, conducted in Kuwait over the past two years and a half, included 1,100 rheumatoid patients in four hospitals: Amiri, Farwaniya, Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Al-

Jahra. She said that 83 percent of rheumatoid patients were women with an average age of 53 years. Sixty-one percent of those examined have full control of rheumatoid and were living normal life, explained Al-Herz. She said the study showed that obese people smoke more than less obese, showing how obesity was linked to smoking which might increase possibility of having heart problems.

Obese people, explained Al-Herz, also suffered from inflammations and joints' pain, which would then require them to exert efforts to control their diseases. — KUNA

GCC, US UNDERSCORE 'STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP'

RIYADH: Leaders of GCC member states and US have stressed the extreme importance of the permanent strategic partnership in achieving peace, security and stability in the region. In the final communique of the US-GCC Summit, which was held upon an invitation of Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, the leaders reviewed the tangible progress made since their first summit held at Camp David in 2015, including measures taken to boost cooperation between the two sides and deepen their partnership.

The leaders expressed their commitment to taking further urgent steps aiming to intensify the campaign so as to defeat the so-called Islamic State and Al-Qaeda, de-escalate and seek to resolve regional conflicts; strengthen GCC states' capacity to address external and internal threats; and address Iran's destabilizing activities, while also working to reduce regional and sectarian tensions that fuel instability. They also affirmed their commitment to continuing close coordination on issues of mutual interest and holding annual summits on the level of leaders, it noted. The US welcomed GCC request to open a bureau in Washington to follow up the partnership, vowing to exert all efforts aiming to achieve this goal. On stability in the region, the communique said they discussed a shared vision address the most pressing conflicts in the region, welcoming the important progress achieved since the Camp David summit, while also underscoring the need to solidify gains.

Solidarity with Syrians

The two sides expressed their solidarity with Syrian people, stressing the need to implement the UN Security Council resolution 2,254, to include immediate humanitarian access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas and the release of any arbitrarily detained persons. They also reaffirmed that they are determined to the cessation of hostilities and a peaceful transition away from Bashar Al-Assad that preserves state institutions and sustains renewed focus on the fight against the IS and the Al-Nusra Front, the communique noted. The two sides voiced deep concern for the suffering of refugees and internally displaced persons, and welcomed the US plans to hold a high-level summit in December, 2016 so as to rally further support for Syrian refugees.

They encouraged additional Iraqi progress to reduce sectarian tensions and promote inclusive governance and reconciliation among all Iraqis, including by urgently addressing the legitimate grievances of all components of Iraqi society through the implementation of reforms, it said. The leaders vowed to support Iraqi efforts seeking to defeat the IS, calling for cooperation to restore stability to the areas liberated from IS, and to provide aid to IDP.

Cessation of hostilities

On Yemen, they welcomed the cessation of hostilities in that Arab country, urging all Yemeni parties to abide by it and stressing the importance of making progress in the peace negotiations currently held in Kuwait. They expressed continued strong support for UN envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed's work and emphasized the importance of achieving progress in talks convening in Kuwait. They also

urged all parties to make the difficult decisions necessary to achieve a durable, inclusive political settlement of the conflict, according to the terms of UNSCR 2216 (2015), the GCC Initiative, and Yemen's National Dialogue Outcomes. Acknowledging the tremendous human pain and suffering of the Yemeni people, the GCC leaders pledged to further facilitate the unimpeded, timely delivery of humanitarian assistance, food, medicine, fuel, and commercial goods to all of Yemen, as rapidly as possible, the communique said.

They also undertook to support the long-term reconstruction of Yemen, including through its economic integration



RIYADH: US President Barack Obama (right) speaks with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (left), Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, during the US-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit in Riyadh. Obama met Gulf leaders in Saudi Arabia to push for an intensified campaign against the Islamic State group, despite strains in Gulf ties with Washington.—AFP

with the GCC economies. Regarding Libya, the leaders welcomed the recent seating of the Government of National Accord in Tripoli. They expressed the strong view that all Libyans throughout the country must overcome attempted obstructions by spoilers, respect the Government's authority and legitimacy, and embrace this important opportunity for a peaceful and more prosperous future. The GCC and United States called on the international community to assist the Government of National Accord's work addressing the challenges facing Libya, including the grave threat posed by IS.

Israeli-Palestinian conflict

The GCC countries and United States also underscored the necessity of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of a just, lasting, comprehensive peace agreement that results in a sovereign and contiguous Palestinian state living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel. "Toward that end, the leaders reaffirmed the enduring importance of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative and determined to remain closely coordinated on efforts to encourage the parties to demonstrate - through policies and actions their commitment to a two-state solution," according to the communique.

On the combat against the so-called Islamic State (IS or ISIL) and Al-Qaeda, the

two sides underscored their shared commitment to defeat terrorism in all of its forms, and "welcomed progress reversing ISIL's territorial gains in Iraq and Syria." "The United States welcomed GCC members' participation in and support for the international Counter-ISIL coalition and commended the rigorous efforts by GCC member states to prevent terrorist attacks, including by bolstering information sharing on foreign terrorist fighters, as well as actions by Gulf partners to counter ISIL's hateful ideology and message, and more broadly to counter violent extremism.

"Expressing concern at attempts by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIL to take advantage of the vacuum of

defense early warning system.

"The United States and the GCC stressed the need for broader dialogue to resolve the region's conflicts, as well as their shared interest in reducing sectarian tensions. "GCC countries reaffirmed their willingness to build trust and resolve longstanding differences through engagement with Iran; it being understood that Iran must engage the region according to the principles of good neighborliness, strict non-interference in domestic affairs, and respect for territorial integrity, consistent with international law, including the United Nations Charter," it went on.

As for the efforts of the GCC states to strengthen their capacity to address external and internal threats, the communique said that the United States policy to use all elements of power to secure its core interests in the Gulf region, and to deter and confront external aggression against its allies and partners, as it did during the Gulf War, "is unequivocal." "The United States remains prepared to work jointly with the GCC states to deter and confront an external threat to any GCC state's territorial integrity that is inconsistent with the UN charter.

"The GCC leaders, in turn, committed to strengthening their engagement on US offers of security assistance, cooperation, and training aimed at enhancing the Gulf states' ability to play a larger role in addressing regional challenges. "The leaders were briefed on the April 20 meeting of US and GCC defense ministers. Validating the importance of GCC-US training exercises, they announced that GCC countries and the United States would immediately begin planning for a combined military exercise in March 2017, to showcase the full breath of GCC-US security capabilities.

Special Operations Forces

"The GCC countries endorsed quick implementation of a new initiative to train specially-designated Special Operations Forces (SOF) units from each GCC country, in order to bolster interoperable counterterrorism capabilities. GCC countries also supported expanded cooperation on cyber security, endorsing peacetime cyber norms codified by Saudi Arabia, the United States, and other G-20 countries. "The US expressed its readiness to support GCC efforts to diversify their economies, provide more effective governance, and adapt to economic challenges posed by low oil prices and changing demographics.

"Toward that end, GCC countries endorsed a US proposal to inaugurate a ministerial-level GCC-US economic dialogue in 2016, to supplement the activities undertaken under the GCC-US Framework Agreement on Economic, Trade, Investment and Technical Cooperation of 2012. "In addition to strengthening GCC-US economic and investment ties, this dialogue would seek to assist GCC countries' implementation of economic and energy policies aimed at making available additional resources to meet their development needs. "The leaders reaffirmed the mutual benefits of cooperation on climate issues, and committed to work toward the adoption of an amendment to the Montreal Protocol in 2016 to phasedown hydrofluorocarbons," the communique added. — KUNA

YEMENI RIVALS TALK 'PEACE' IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT FM HAILS TALKS AS 'A HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY'

KUWAIT: Delayed peace talks aimed at ending 13 months of conflict in Yemen resumed yesterday, a day after UN mediators finally managed to get warring sides to the table. The United Nations hopes negotiations-which were originally due to begin on Monday-will put a stop to fighting across Yemen that has killed more than 6,800 people and driven 2.8 million from their homes since March last year. The talks resumed yesterday afternoon, Charbel Raji, spokesman for UN envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed said.

Two delegations, each of seven members, representing the government, and the rebels and their allies, joined Ould Cheikh Ahmed at the meeting, a delegate said. The envoy appealed to both government and rebel delegations to seize the opportunity of the talks in Kuwait, saying Yemen was "closer to peace than any time before". The rebel delegation-consisting of representatives of the Shiite Houthi militia and allied forces loyal to ousted president Ali Abdullah Saleh-arrived in Kuwait late on Thursday after receiving assurances from the UN that a ceasefire-in place since April 11 - would be respected.

Delegates representing the government of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi had threatened to pull out of talks altogether if the rebels were not around the table by Thursday evening. A first session was eventually held and lasted less than two hours, a delegate said. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah hailed the talks as "a historic opportunity" to end the bloodshed. "War will only lead to more devastation, losses and displacement of people," he said. Yemen has been riven by fighting since a Saudi-led coalition launched a military intervention last year against Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who had seized the capital and much of the rest of the country.

The violence has allowed Al-Qaeda and its



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah (left) and United Nations Special Envoy to Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed (center) greet members of Yemeni rebel and government delegations upon their arrival at Bayan palace. — AFP

jihadist rival the Islamic State group to make headway, overrunning swathes of southern Yemen and establishing a toehold around second city Aden-where the Saudi-backed government is based. The conflict has stoked tensions between Sunni heavyweight Saudi Arabia and its Shiite rival Iran, which has been accused of smuggling weapons to the rebels. Previous UN-sponsored peace efforts failed to make any headway, and the last ceasefire in December was repeatedly violated and eventually abandoned by the Arab coalition on January 2.

Honorable life or ruin

But the UN envoy said the latest truce and negotiations offered a unique chance to end the violence. "Today, you have one of two options-a secure nation that guarantees an honorable life or the ruins of a nation," he told delegates. The rebel delegation met Ould Cheikh Ahmed after the opening session, their news agency reported late Thursday, and stressed the "need to secure the ceasefire." The delegation said the "key to reaching a solution is agreeing on a transitional authority," Sabanews.net reported.

Diplomats say the rebels are demanding an end to the coalition's air campaign and naval blockade, as well as its ground operations. They also want UN sanctions against some of their leaders, including Saleh, to be lifted. UN Security Council Resolution 2216, which is seen as a basis for any peace plan, states that the rebels must withdraw from seized territories and disarm before talks can progress. But diplomatic sources have said the rebels are demanding a change to the UN initiative, preferring to first agree on a political leadership for Yemen before making military concessions on the ground.

At the opening session Thursday, Ould Cheikh Ahmed said the UN process "will not necessarily follow a particular sequence." "Instead, discussions will happen in parallel through working committees that will look into implementation mechanisms of each element, for the sake of reaching one comprehensive agreement that paves the way for a peaceful and orderly transition." The Houthis, who had waged an on-off rebellion for a decade, swept from their stronghold in the northern mountains to take Sanaa unopposed in September 2014, before storming south and forcing Hadi into exile in March last year.

With the support of coalition troops and air power, Hadi's loyalists have managed to oust the rebels from Aden and neighboring southern provinces as well as some districts on the Saudi border. But the rebels and their allies remain in control of the capital and much of the northern and central highlands, as well as the Red Sea coast. Despite the nominal ceasefire, fighting has continued, particularly around the battleground third city of Taz, where loyalist forces have been under rebel siege for months, and in Jawf province on the Saudi border, military sources said. — AFP

TRAFFIC INSPECTION CAMPAIGNS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Traffic police conducted several major traffic inspection campaigns on Thursday in various governorates. Ministry of Interior's Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs Major General Abdullah Al-Muhanna said the forces focused on the main roads - using checkpoints and mobile radars. 5371 tickets were issued and 325 vehicles were impounded. Also, 308 drivers were fined for violating towing conditions - in addition to two drivers charged for reckless driving.

Residency law violators

Residency detectives recently arrested an Indian who forged his own residency visa in addition to seven other residency law violators. Also, a fake domestic labor office that had been providing illegal domestic helpers on daily basis was busted.

Deadly fire in Salmiya

A fire broke out on the eighth floor of a Salmiya building. Dozens of expats were trapped by the fire until firemen managed to rescue them and control the flame. Unfortunately, an Asian woman and her baby died of smoke inhalation.

Civil defense course

Under auspices of Mol's Assistant Undersecretary for Operations Affairs Major General Jamal Al-Sayegh and the attendance of the Civil Defense Director Major General Abdullah Ahmed Al-Ali, a training course on civil defense measures on guarding public facilities was recently concluded. The course included a number of lectures and practical demonstrations on individual and group prevention measures.



Kuwaitis rescued

Coastguard Rescue Forces managed to rescue three citizens after a boat mishap in Southern part of Kuwait. Security sources said that the Rescue Forces managed to rescue the three people onboard the boat and pump out the water. No casualties were reported.

KUWAIT CREATIVITY COMPETITION

KUWAIT: Under the auspices of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed and with the attendance of the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih, the Sheikh Fadiah Saad Al-Abdullah Al-Salem 'Kuwait Creativity' (IBTIKAR) competition for high and intermediate school girls (from Kuwait and GCC states) will come to a close today.



Sheikha Fadiah Al-Saad Al-Sabah

The conclusion ceremony will be attended by Shiekha Fadiah Al-Sabah, Hind Al-Sabeeh and top educational officials. A jury committee is reviewing all entries on the exhibition held at Shiekah Latifa Al-Sabah hall. Speaking on the occasion, the Initiative Manager Fatima Al-Hashim said that the current phase was the finals of the competition - pending the announcement on the winners on a special ceremony to be held this evening at Salwa hall. The Initiative's Executive Manager Hessa Al-Ali said that the initiative was launched in 1999.



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OOREDOO 'THE PLATINUM SPONSOR OF LIGHT EXPO'

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of international Ooredoo Group, has recently announced the conclusion of its sponsorship to Light Expo, which was held for the third year in a row, and showcased a wide collection of Ramadan products from different small businesses, owned by Kuwaiti women, including clothing, accessories and food, catering to all segments of society. The exhibition was held at Al Raya Ballroom from 18 to 20 April 2016 and witnessed a turn up of 3000 visitors on daily basis.



Nazem Al-Ghabra - from Ooredoo team

Commenting on the sponsorship, Mijbil Al Ayoub, Director of Corporate Communication, at Ooredoo, said: "Through our sponsorship to Light Expo, we are aiming at supporting Kuwaiti women participating in to showcase their product lines and promoting their small businesses among the targeted audience.

Empowering women forms key element of our CSR strategy and this event is one of the steps we have taken towards fulfilling this goal" During the exhibition, Ooredoo held an awareness



session where Nazem Al-Ghabra Senior Specialist - Corporate Communications, was representing Ooredoo and he spoke about Ooredoo's support to entrepreneurs, small business owners, and women empowerment. Other entrepreneurs were invited to speak to the audience, Rakan Al Fadala, owner of Chocolateness, was among those entrepreneurs, he presented a case study on how he started his busi-

ness, challenges he faced and the success achieved after a long journey. Light Expo aims at providing a platform to support small businesses, in addition to creating an encouraging work environment to all participants.

The exhibition showcased different Ramadan goods such as clothes, accessories, food and other items from different small business owned by Kuwaiti women.



KIB RECEIVES 'MY AMBITION FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY' AWARD

KUWAIT: Head of Corporate Communications at Kuwait International Bank KIB Nawaf Najia has expressed his delight and gratitude for receiving the "My Ambition for Social Responsibility" Award from the organizing committee of the 4th "My Ambition Defeats My Disability" Exhibition that was held recently under the auspices of Minister of Health Dr Ali Al-Obaidi, along with the presence of Assistant Deputy Minister of the Health Sector Services Affairs Dr Muhammed Jasem Al- Khashti.

On this occasion, the Head of Corporate Communications at KIB, Nawaf Najia stated that the bank has supported numerous CSR initiatives addressed to persons with special needs who are considered key players in the community and are known for their strong will to achieve and excel, and for their vital presence locally and internationally.

Therefore, they keep on raising Kuwait's flag high in the Arab world and even on a global scale, in addition to breaking records in various competitions, be it sports, scientific or art.

He added that Al-Dawli exerts a great effort to support them financially and morally on one hand, while making sure to accommodate people with disabilities into the society and increase social awareness about the positive impact of their participation in every aspect of the community.

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

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



Assistant Deputy Minister of Health hands over the Award to Nawaf Najia

KFH, IDF HOLD TALKS

KUWAIT: Chief Strategy Officer at Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Eng Fahad Khaled Al-Mukhaizeem discussed opportunities for cooperation with Dr Shaukat M Sadikot, the president of the International Diabetes Federation IDF. Increasing the awareness of diabetes and the importance of concerted efforts to fight against this disease and preventing its danger was a main topic of conversation between the two sides.

A strategic cooperation agreement was inked between both sides as part of KFH's social responsibility and keenness to support official bodies, and medical institutions and centers.

KFH spares no efforts in organizing and supporting the events that make diabetes prevention a priority. KFH was the first bank to sign an international agreement with International Diabetes Federation IDF that has over 200 associations working under its umbrella in the diabetes field in over 160 countries.



In addition, during the last two years, KFH had sent a number of specialists to international diabetes institutions, including a center that is affiliated with Harvard University, in order to

shed light on the latest efforts and researches in the field of diabetes, not to mention the means of limiting the spread of the disease, and the means to overcome it.

International

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Brussels bomber identified as guard of foreign IS hostages

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Japanese lawmakers, Cabinet minister visit Tokyo war shrine

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Color index for US border security is rejected

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WINDSOR, ENGLAND: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, US President Barack Obama, US First Lady Michelle Obama and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, pose for a photograph in the Oak Room ahead of a private lunch at Windsor Castle. — AFP

OBAMA TO BRITAIN 'DON'T TURN YOUR BACK ON THE EU'

THE PRESIDENT REMINDS BRITAIN OF THE BENEFITS OF BEING IN EU

LONDON: US President Barack Obama appealed directly to British voters yesterday to remain in the European Union, saying membership had magnified Britain's place in the world and made the bloc stronger and more outward looking.

Obama, who opinion polls show is popular in Britain, applauded Britain's EU membership which he said had helped make the world freer, richer and better able to tackle everything from migration to terrorism.

Invoking the interlinked history of the United States and Britain and the tens of thousands of Americans lying in European war graves, Obama implored voters to weigh the benefits of membership ahead of a June 23 referendum. "The European Union doesn't moderate British influence - it magnifies it," Obama wrote in *The Daily Telegraph*, a eurosceptic British newspaper. "As your friend, I tell you that the EU makes Britain even greater," the headline of Obama's article read.

His remarks, which led television news broadcasts in Britain, undercut one of the most passionate arguments of the opponents of EU membership: that Britain could prosper on an equal basis with global powers such as the United States.

A spokeswoman for Prime Minister David Cameron welcomed Obama's intervention, but the president's comments drew scorn from opponents of Britain's EU membership. New York-born London Mayor Boris Johnson, a leader of the "Out" campaign who hints he wants Cameron's job, derided Obama's arguments in a newspaper column that referred to "the part-Kenyian President's ancestral dislike of the British empire".

John McDonnell, the opposition Labor Party's finance policy chief, called Johnson's remarks "dog-whistle racism". The White House declined to comment and a spokesman for Johnson did not respond to requests for comment.

"Stick together"

Obama said Britain's closest ally wanted it to remain in the club it joined in 1973 to bolster trade and strengthen the 28-member bloc, which Washington views as a pillar of stability in the post-World War Two era. The US government, and many US banks and companies, fear a Brexit would cause market turmoil, diminish the clout of Washington's strongest European ally, hurt London's global financial hub status, cripple the EU and weaken Western security. "Now is a time for friends and allies to stick together," Obama said. "Together, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union have turned centuries of war in Europe into decades of peace, and worked as one to make this world a safer, better place."

Opinion polls indicate that British voters are leaning towards the "In" camp but many remain undecided. Younger voters are more likely to support remaining in the EU, but "In" campaigners are worried that older voters may be more likely to turn out to vote. Before talks with Cameron in Downing Street, Obama and his wife Michelle congratulated Queen Elizabeth, who celebrated her 90th birthday on Thursday. Prince Philip, Elizabeth's 94-year-old husband, took the wheel of a Range Rover to drive the Obamas to lunch on the territory of Windsor Castle, a royal resi-

dence that traces its history back over almost 1,000 years to William the Conqueror. Two years ago, ahead of a Scottish vote on independence, Obama said he hoped Britain "remains strong, robust and united", a comment that was welcomed by unionist politicians in London. Scots voted to remain part of the United Kingdom.

"Unwelcome interference"

Citing President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1939 toast to Washington's close alliance with Britain, Obama lauded Britain's contribution to the development of democracy, the rule of law and open markets. "The US and the world need your outsized influence to continue-including within Europe," Obama said. Opponents of the EU have said that membership has shackled Britain to the corpse of a failed German-dominated experiment in European integration, and that Britain, if freed, could prosper as a sole trader. Many of them are also supporters of a close relationship with the United States.

Such opponents caution that while many world leaders like Obama, banks such as Goldman Sachs and big companies such as Ford may want Britain to remain in the EU, the British people do not appreciate being lectured about how to vote.

Nigel Farage, a prominent opponent of membership as leader of Britain's UK Independence Party, called Obama the most anti-British American president to date. "This is an unwelcome interference ... Mercifully, he won't be in office for much longer," Farage said. — Reuters



GENEVA: UN Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura (R) and his deputy Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy. — AFP

SYRIAN PEACE TALKS LIMP ON TO NEXT WEEK WITH OPPOSITION ABSENT

'WE CANNOT LET THIS DROP'

BEIRUT/GENEVA: The UN special envoy for Syria has vowed to take fragile peace talks into next week despite a walkout by the main armed opposition, a breakdown in a truce and signs that both sides are gearing up to escalate the five-year-old civil war.

Staffan de Mistura, who dismissed the opposition's departure as "diplomatic posturing", expected the delegation to return to the negotiating table. The opposition declared a "pause" this week because of a surge in fighting and too little movement from the government side on freeing detainees or allowing in aid.

Asked whether talks would carry on, de Mistura said on Thursday night: "We cannot let this drop. We have to renew the ceasefire, we have to accelerate humanitarian aid and we are going to ask the countries which are the co-sponsors to meet."

The talks at UN headquarters in Geneva aim to halt a conflict that has allowed for the rise of the Islamic State group, sucked in regional and major powers and created the world's worst refugee crisis. In an interview with French-language Radio Television Suisse (RTS), de Mistura said 400,000 people had been killed in the war, far higher than the previous UN toll which has varied from 250,000 to 300,000.

The war was tilted in Assad's favor late last year by Russia's intervention, supported on the ground by members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps who have been bolstered recently by the arrival of members of Iran's regular army.

Washington concerned by Russian moves

The White House has expressed concern that Russia has repositioned artillery near the disputed city of Aleppo. The Russian military moves have sharpened divisions in Washington over whether President Vladimir Putin genuinely backs the UN-led initiative to end the war or is

using the talks to mask renewed military support for Assad.

"The regime is so reliant on external support that it is inconceivable that its allies don't have the leverage to change its approach," Britain's envoy to the Syria peace talks, Gareth Bayley, said on Friday.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday that the decision by the opposition High Negotiations Committee (HNC) to quit Geneva was not a loss for anyone except the HNC itself. "If they want to ensure their participation (in the peace talks) only by putting ultimatums, with which others must agree, it's their problem," Lavrov said, adding:

"For God's sake, we shouldn't be running after them, we must work with those who think not about their career, not about how to please their sponsors abroad, but with those who are ready to think about the destiny of their country." The head of the Syrian delegation, Bashar Ja'afari, confirmed he met de Mistura to discuss humanitarian issues on Friday and would be meeting with him again on Monday.

Moscow and Washington sponsored the fragile cessation of hostilities that went into effect on Feb. 27 to allow talks to take place but has been left in tatters by increased fighting in the past week.

A warplane crashed southwest of Damascus on Friday, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the conflict with a network of sources on the ground. It said the causes of the crash and the fate of the pilot were not clear. The Islamic State group earlier said a Syrian warplane had been shot down. Syrian government officials could not be reached for comment.

In Aleppo, government air strikes in different parts of the city killed at least 10 people and wounded dozens more on Friday, with the death toll expected to rise due to serious injuries, the Observatory said.

Further southwest in Hama province, warplanes targeted rebel-held areas in the strategic Ghab plain that borders Latakia province, Assad's coastal heartland.

Insurgents announced a new battle in Latakia earlier this week which they said was in response to ceasefire violations by the government side, launching fierce assaults there. Fighting raged in the area yesterday, said Observatory.

Assad main issue

Endorsed by the UN Security Council, the Geneva peace talks marked the most serious effort yet to resolve the war, but failed to make progress on political issues, with no sign of compromise over the question of Assad's future.

Government negotiators say Assad's presidency is non-negotiable. Underlining confidence in Damascus, a top Assad aide reiterated its view that local truce agreements and "destroying terrorism" were the way towards a political solution.

The opposition wants a political transition without Assad, and says the government has failed to make goodwill measures such as releasing detainees and allowing enough aid into opposition-held areas besieged by the military.

The HNC, which is backed by Western nations and key Arab states, had this week urged more military support for rebels after declaring the truce was over and said talks would not re-start until the government stopped committing "massacres".

All the main HNC members had left Geneva yesterday, leaving a handful of experts and a point of contact behind. With violence escalating, peace talks might not resume for at least a year if they are abandoned, one senior Western diplomat said.

Syria is now a patchwork of areas controlled by the government, an array of rebel groups, Islamic State, and the well-organized Kurdish YPG militia. — Reuters

SUICIDE BOMBER KILLS EIGHT AT IRAQ SHIITE MOSQUE

BAGHDAD: A suicide bomber targeted Shiite worshippers at a Baghdad mosque after yesterday Friday's prayers, killing at least eight people, security and medical officials said.

The attack in southwest Baghdad also wounded at least 31 people, the officials said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, but the Islamic State jihadist group carries out frequent suicide bombings targeting Shiites, whom it considers heretics.

IS overran swathes of territory north and west of Baghdad in 2014, but Iraqi forces backed by US-led strikes have since regained significant ground. Bombings in Baghdad have decreased since mid-2014, with the jihadists occupied by fighting in other areas.

But IS still controls a large part of the country's west, and is able to carry out frequent bombings in government-held areas. — AFP

ISLAMIC STATE MINES KILL DOZENS OF CIVILIANS RETURNING TO RAMADI

BAGHDAD: Explosives planted by Islamic State have killed dozens of Iraqi civilians who returned to Ramadi despite warnings that much of the western city remains unsafe nearly four months after its recapture from the militants.

Tens of thousands of displaced residents have returned to the Anbar provincial capital in the past two months, mostly from camps east of the city where they took refuge prior to the army's advance late last year. A shortage of experts trained in dismantling the explosives has slowed efforts to restore security, but that has not stopped people from responding to calls from local religious and government leaders to go back home.

The Anbar governor's office, which is overseeing much of the effort to restore Ramadi, declined requests for comment. But the United Nations said it had learned from the authorities that 49 people have been killed and 79 others wounded in Ramadi since the beginning of February. Those figures are "almost certainly an under-estimation," it said.

"The UN is deeply worried about the safety of returning families and the widespread infestation of many neighborhoods with unexploded devices and booby traps," Lise Grande, UN humanitarian coordinator in Iraq, told Reuters. "The responsible thing is to clear these areas as quickly as possible using the most up-to-date, modern and professional methods. Anything else just risks too much."

De-mining is seen as a critical first step in returning civilians to Ramadi, which a UN team said last month suffers from destruction worse than anywhere else in Iraq after months of fighting that saw Islamic State bomb attacks and devastating US-led coalition air strikes.

A US de-mining company was contracted last month to remove explosives and train Iraqis to dismantle the devices planted by Islamic State in Ramadi, 100 km west of Baghdad. Sources in Ramadi said another Western company was expected to help with de-mining efforts and Iraqi companies are also now competing for potentially lucrative government contracts.

Still there is just not enough expertise to keep pace with the return of civilians, said Mohamed Ali, a tribal fighter who helps dismantle explosives. In addition to littering Ramadi's streets with bombs, Islamic State has also planted them in residences, hiding them under rugs and other fixtures or connecting them to the power grid so they detonate when residents attempt to restore electricity. "One house in al-Bakr neighborhood exploded (on Monday), killing its owner," said Ali. "The man returned after explosives had been removed from his house and he started clearing the rubble. While he was moving the cooking gas canister, a bomb stashed under it exploded." — Reuters



RAMADI: Iraqi forensics look at a body after they dug it out of what is believed to be a mass grave. — AFP

CYPRUS DEPORTATION OF EGYPTIAN HIJACKER DELAYED

NICOSIA: Proceedings to extradite a man accused of hijacking an EgyptAir plane and diverting it to Cyprus were delayed yesterday after a court adjourned the hearing for three weeks.

Handcuffed Egyptian Seif al-Din Mohamed Mostafa, 58, arrived at court in Nicosia wearing a white T-shirt with the hand-drawn message "Cici killer" emblazoned on the front in blue. It was not known if the slogan, accompanied by the filled in outline of a hand, was a reference to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi.

Before the suspect entered the courtroom police told him to button up his shirt to cover the message. During the hearing Mostafa stood quietly while the proceedings were translated from Greek to Arabic.

The prosecution asked for more time to present their case as additional documentation is expected from Egypt as part of the extradition process. Cyprus has approved a request from Cairo to extradite Mostafa, who reportedly argues that he faces the death penalty if sent back to Egypt.

However, authorities in Cyprus have said they have written assurances from Cairo that Mostafa will not face the death penalty at a trial in Egypt. His defence lawyer Robertos Vrahimi said Mostafa is claiming asylum. The next hearing will be on May 13, and the defence did not object to Mostafa remaining in custody.

He is accused of using a fake suicide belt to seize the Alexandria-to-Cairo flight on March 29 and force it to land in Larnaca. Mostafa, described by authorities as psychologically unstable, has said he acted out of desperation to see his Cypriot ex-wife and children.

She has been quoted by Cypriot media as describing their five years of marriage as "hell". The hijacking ended peacefully with Mostafa's arrest, and police say he gave a voluntary statement admitting to the offence. Most of the 55 passengers were quickly released, but some escaped just minutes before the six-hour standoff ended. — AFP



NICOSIA: Cypriot security personnel escort Egyptian Seif al-Din Mohamed Mostafa (C), 58, who is accused of hijacking an EgyptAir plane and diverting it to Cyprus on March 29, to a vehicle following a court hearing yesterday. —

GERMAN STATES URGE MEDIA GROUPS TO HAND OVER PANAMA PAPERS TO PROSECUTORS

BERLIN: Germany's federal states appealed to media outlets yesterday to let prosecutors examine the full detail of the Panama Papers that revealed how offshore firms are used to stash the wealth of the world's rich and powerful.

The scandal broke in early April when German newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung said it had received a cache of 11.5 million leaked documents from Panama-based law firm Mossack Fonseca and then shared them with more than 100 other international news outlets and the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

Sueddeutsche Zeitung has said it would not give the documents to officials since this would violate the principles of source protection and freedom of press. The German Bundesrat, the legislative body representing the 16 federal states, on Friday passed a resolution calling on Sueddeutsche Zeitung and the ICIJ to hand over the documents. Tax administration in Germany is handled by the federal states. — Reuters



RIYADH: US secretary of Defense Ashton Carter (2nd L) shakes hands with Oman's Defense Minister Badr bin Saud al-Busaidi (L) as Saudi Deputy Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman (C) and United Arab Emirates' Defense Minister Mohammed al-Bowardi (2nd R) look on, while posing for a group picture during the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Defense Ministerial summit in Riyadh on April 20, 2016. — AFP

US UPS PRESSURE ON IS WITH FIRST B-52 BOMBER STRIKE AN ADDITIONAL 217 US FORCES TO IRAQ

WASHINGTON: The US Air Force for the first time deployed a B-52 bomber against the Islamic State, the Pentagon said Wednesday as it ramps up a 20-month campaign to smash the jihadists.

The bombing mission, in which a hulking B-52 destroyed a weapons storage facility south of Mosul, comes the same week that Defense Secretary Ash Carter visited Baghdad and announced extra US troops, cash and equipment for the anti-IS campaign in Iraq.

In other signs of an increasing tempo, US commandos working with Kurdish troops conducted a raid targeting a senior IS group figure and the Pentagon said it has changed how air strikes risking civilian deaths are approved.

Under the new rules, authority now comes from the commanding three-star US general in Baghdad, instead of going through a four-star at the US Central Command's headquarters in Florida.

Baghdad-based military spokesman Colonel Steve Warren insisted the changes do not lessen oversight standards in determining when civilian losses are an acceptable risk. "This does not translate to more civilian casualties, this translates to a more rapid execution of strikes," Warren said.

The Pentagon has acknowledged 26 civilian deaths due to US-led coalition strikes since the campaign began in August 2014 in Iraq, and credits the use of guided missiles in keeping the number relatively low-though independent observers say the figure is far higher.

More US troops

Carter this week announced an additional 217 US forces would be deployed to Iraq as advisors, pushing the official count past 4,000. The Pentagon has also offered Apache attack helicopters for use in an eventual push on Mosul, Iraq's second city and which is under control of the IS group.

Separately, Danish lawmakers have approved a plan to commit seven F-16 warplanes, a transport aircraft and 400 military personnel to expand its fight against the extremists.

Monday's strike by a B-52 Stratofortress blew up an IS weapons storage facility in the town of Qayyarah, about 60

kilometers south of Mosul. The enormous planes, originally designed in the 1950s, became a symbol of US might during the Cold War and the aircraft was used to conduct carpet bombing in Vietnam.

Warren said the B-52s are only being armed with guided bombs. "There are memories in the collective unconscious of B-52s, decades ago, doing... arguably indiscriminate bombing," Warren said. "Those days are long gone. The B-52 is a precision-strike weapons platform and it will conduct the same type of precision strikes that we have seen for the last 20 months." Several B-52s arrived in Qatar earlier this month to replace a contingent of newer B-1 bombers that had been working in Iraq and Syria for about a year.

Warren also announced that US commandos in northern Iraq had targeted Suleiman Abd Shabib al-Jabouri, "one of ISIL's military emirs and an ISIL war council member." The Kurdish regional security council said Jabouri was killed in the raid, conducted jointly with Kurdish fighters.

Shoving match'

The US military has since 2014 led an international coalition against the IS group in Iraq and Syria after the jihadists captured vast areas of territory across the two countries. Despite major gains, including the recapture of the Iraqi city of Ramadi, the coalition has still not chased IS fighters from Raqqa in Syria or Mosul, as well as several other important towns.

In Syria, vetted Syrian opposition fighters are clashing with IS fighters in the north, especially around the Manbij region, but have recently lost some ground to the jihadists. It "has developed into a shoving match," Warren said. "We will continue to pressure ISIL but we expect them to fight hard to hold their ground."

Additionally, the IS group has tightened the noose on a regime-held enclave in eastern Syria, overrunning part of the city of Deir Ezzor, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Elsewhere in Syria, a Russian- and US-brokered ceasefire grew ever more fragile as violence continued to flare up around Aleppo. IS and other jihadist groups are not party to the February "cessation of hostilities." — AFP

EUROZONE HOPES FOR GREEK REFORM DEAL NEXT THURSDAY

AMSTERDAM: Eurogroup head Jeroen Dijsselbloem said a crucial eurozone ministers meeting to unlock bailout cash and trigger potential debt relief for Greece could take place as early as Thursday.

"If we have the (reform) package we can have a further Eurogroup next Thursday to come to a conclusion on the first review" of Greece's massive 86-billion-euro bailout plan, said Dijsselbloem after the finance ministers of the 19 countries that use the euro currency met in Amsterdam on Friday.

"On Greece, substantial progress has been made and we are very close to agreement," Dijsselbloem said adding, however, that "further work is needed" Eurozone leaders also agreed to accept debate on ways of easing Greece's debt burden once the key

reform pledges were met.

The possibility of debt relief is the only concession granted to Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras in Greece's third bailout in five years, worth 86 billion euros (\$95 billion) and agreed last July.

The 19 ministers met at the same time as crunch talks were underway in Athens between officials from Greece and the EU, the European Central Bank and the IMF to close the long delayed first bailout review. Key for a breakthrough in those talks are Greece delivering an extra set of reforms that would be triggered if Athens misses budget targets in 2018, a key demand by the IMF.

These so-called contingency measures "need to be based on objective measures that need to be measured and legislated," Dijsselbloem said. — AFP



AMSTERDAM: Finnish finance minister Cai-Goran Alexander Stubb, Belgian finance minister John Robert Overtveldt, Eurogroup Chairman Jeroen Dijsselbloem and Spanish finance minister Luis de Guindos Jurado talk during the meeting of the Eurozone finance ministers at the Scheepvaart museum yesterday. — AFP

GREEK AGREEMENT WITH CREDITORS 'GETTING CLOSER' IN HOPES OF REFORMING THE CASH-STRAPPED COUNTRY

AMSTERDAM: Greece's creditors said yesterday they are within touching distance of an agreement over the next batch of reforms the cash-strapped country has to make to unlock further bailout funds and trigger debt-relief discussions.

Following weeks of criticism and delay, Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the top official of the grouping of the 19 euro countries, said a decisive breakthrough could come as soon as next Thursday, when a special meeting of the eurogroup will likely be held in Brussels. At that stage, the ministers and financial leaders could even start discussing how to ease Greece's long-term debt problems.

Dijsselbloem said both sides "are close to an agreement on number of key areas, such as the pension reform, the income tax reform" and privatizations that Athens has to enact. He added that if Greece comes through on its commitments by that time "we stand ready to consider more measures to assure debt sustainability."

The 2015 bailout

All those reforms were part of last summer's bailout between the eurozone and the left-led Greek government. Greece narrowly avoided leaving the eurozone after Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras agreed to further austerity measures in return for the country's third bailout that was potentially worth 86 billion Euros.

A successful review of the reforms demanded in the country's latest bailout program is needed to release more rescue loans for Athens to pay its debts and to kick-start discussions on how to reduce Greece's debt burden. The next big repayment is due to the European Central Bank in July.

Tsipras' government delivered many of the immediate demands from the bailout but it has struggled over many months to convince creditors that its pension reform proposals go far enough or that its overall budget plans follow the path outlined last summer in the bailout agreement.

At Friday's informal eurozone meeting,

the sullen mood of the past months suddenly turned more optimistic. "We are very close," said Dijsselbloem. EU Commissioner Pierre Moscovici said that during negotiations in Athens this week "there really, really was good progress."

On top of that, the EU statistics agency on Thursday produced some better than expected figures on Greece's public finances, specifically on the level of the country's budget surplus after debt repayments are stripped out.

Despite that underlying improvement which has come in the wake of years of austerity, the country's overall debt is still considered too high, especially by the IMF. At the end of 2015, it stood at 176.9 percent of Greece's annual gross domestic product, far more than any other eurozone country.

Since being locked out of international bond markets because investors were reluctant to lend Greece, the country has relied on bailout loans from eurozone partners and the IMF to avoid bankruptcy.

Even though eurozone finance ministers will be looking at Greece's debt sustainability, Dijsselbloem made it clear that "there is no support in the eurogroup on nominal haircuts," referring to outright reduction in Greece's debt. Instead they could look at extending the period of repayment and other reprofiling measures.

Worries over Greece have re-emerged in recent weeks partly because the left-led Greek government has a small parliamentary majority, which makes it more difficult to deliver the reforms required by creditors. The government is also facing growing public opposition to its pension reform plans.

The country also faces a daunting challenge to cope with migrants on its soil, many of whom have escaped war-torn Syria in an attempt to get to central Europe. Because the borders have been closed down by Greece's neighbors, many remain stranded in Greece - at last count, around 54,000. — AP

BRUSSELS BOMBER IDENTIFIED AS GUARD OF FOREIGN IS HOSTAGES

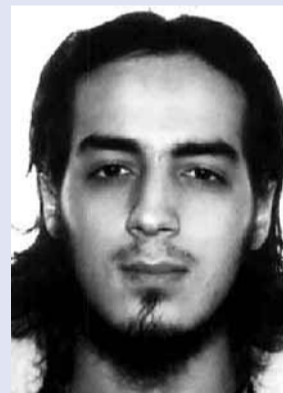
PARIS: Najim Laachraoui, one of the Brussels airport bombers, has been identified by several Frenchmen held hostage by Islamic State in Syria as one of their prison guards, sources close to the investigation said yesterday.

According to one of the sources, four French journalists kidnapped and held in Syria from 2013 to 2014 had identified a guard known as "Abou Idriss". One of the journalists, Nicolas Henin, "has formally identified" Abou Idriss as being Najim Laachraoui, his lawyer Marie-Laure Ingouf said, confirming reports in French newspapers.

Belgian prosecutors have said Laachraoui travelled to Syria in February 2013 to join up with IS forces. There was no further trace of the Belgian national until he was registered under a false name at the border between Austria and Hungary in September 2015. Laachraoui, 24, was one of the two suicide bombers who struck Brussels airport on March 22, while a third attacker blew himself up at on a metro train, with the two attacks killing 31 people. Prosecutors have also linked him to November's attacks in Paris in which 130 people died, saying his DNA was found on a suicide vest and a piece of cloth at the Bataclan concert hall where 90 people were killed.

Police also found his DNA on explosives used at the Stade de France, leading investigators to believe he was the bomb maker in both the French and Belgian attacks. The former French hostages have already identified two Frenchmen as being among their jailers when they were held in Syria.

One, Mehdi Nemmouche, is in custody accused of killing four people in an attack on the Jewish museum in Brussels in 2014. The other is Salim Benghalem, who has been sentenced in absentia in France for recruiting for IS and is listed as a "foreign terrorist combatant" by the United States. — AFP



Najim Laachraoui, one of the suicide bombers involved in the terrorist attacks of Zaventem airport of March 22, in Brussels. — AFP



ATHENS: A demonstrator holds a banner as he participates at a protest against Greece's creditors outside the central Athens hotel where the negotiations between the government and the country's creditors resumed on April 4, 2016. — AP

WOMEN WORK LIKE MACHINES IN INDIA'S TEXTILE MILLS

CHENNAI: Rajaram Paritha is on a mission. The 35-year-old tailor wants to be the voice of every young girl who is lured with the promise of big money to work in textile mills in southern India's Tamil Nadu and then exploited and abused.

Head of the all-women Tamil Nadu Textile and Common Labor Union (TTCU), Paritha uses her experience as a factory worker to challenge forms of exploitation such as debt bondage, long hours and sexual abuse in the garment and textile industry. "Workers have to come together like they did a few days back ... against the government's controversial government pension plan. If they don't, the exploitation will not stop," she said in an interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The scale of the issue Paritha and her organization are trying to address is huge: much of India's \$42 billion-a-year textile and clothing export industry is located in Tamil Nadu, and to boost productivity and increase margins, parts of its lucrative supply chain are built on bonded labor.

A 2014 study into Tamil Nadu's textile industry by the Freedom Fund, a philanthropic initiative dedicated to ending modern slavery, and C&A Foundation, which partners with the Thomson Reuters Foundation on its human trafficking coverage, found workers were often subjected to low wages, excessive and sometimes forced overtime, lack of freedom of movement as well as verbal and sexual abuse.

A conservative estimate suggests there may be at least 100,000 girls and young women being exploited in this way. "I vividly remember the one year I worked at a mill," Paritha said. "The machines would always be running and we were constantly working, just like the machines. Even a restroom break meant ensuring a co-worker manned your position for the few minutes you were away."

A year into the job, Paritha quit because standing for eight to 10 hours was taking a toll on her health. "I learnt tailoring and moved on. But many can't do this due to economic pressures." Working with women and girls in 10 districts of Tamil Nadu, the union, now with nearly 5,000 members, trains its members on their legal rights, lobbying and leadership skills and addresses sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. "We are fighting for justice for a teenager who was found dead in a mill hostel a month back and a young woman who was recently penalized for stopping the machines for a few minutes when her clothes got stuck in it," says Paritha. "Their individual voices are suppressed by mill managements. They cannot do the same with our collective voice."

This week, after thousands of protesters clashed with police in the city of Bengaluru, the government decided to scrap a proposal to change the rule on pension withdrawals - a rollback seen as a victory for workers' unions. —Reuters

MASSIVE LANDSLIDE KILLS 6 PEOPLE IN INDIA'S ARUNACHAL PRADESH

NEW DELHI: At least 16 people were killed while many more others are feared trapped yesterday following a massive landslide caused by incessant rains in the north eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Quoting local government sources, the All India Radio (AIR) said that the deceased were working at a hotel construction site at Famlu village some 4km away from Tawang city. AIR further said that the Army, local security officials and the local residents are in search and rescue operation amid fears that many more people are trapped inside the debris formation following the landslide.

Reports also said that the incessant rains that hit many parts of the state have also caused landslides elsewhere in the state causing disturbances in the power supply. Many rivers are overflowing due to the heavy and incessant rain inundated houses and agricultural fields in different parts of Arunachal Pradesh, which shares border with China.

Authorities are also shifting affected people to safer zones with the help of army. On his part, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief and extended condolences to bereaved families. President of main opposition Congress Sonia Gandhi also expressed grief on the loss of lives caused by a landslide in Arunachal Pradesh. — KUNA



KARACHI, SINDH: Abdul Sattar Edhi, the head of Edhi Foundation, waves as he journeys to his office. — AFP

EDHI, THE OBSTINATELY HUMBLE HERO TO PAKISTAN'S MASSES

'EDHI IS THERE FOR US ROUND THE CLOCK'

KARACHI: He created a charitable empire out of nothing, masterminding Pakistan's largest welfare organization. Today Abdul Sattar Edhi is revered by many as a national hero.

Content with just two sets of clothes, he sleeps in a windowless room of white tiles adjoining the office of his charitable foundation. Sparsely equipped: It has just one bed, a sink and a hotplate.

"He never established a home for his own children," says his wife Bilquis, who manages the foundation's homes for women and children. What he has established is something of a safety net for Pakistan's poor and destitute, mobilizing the nation to donate and help take action-filling a gap left by a lack of welfare state. "Mr Edhi sits here, waiting for your donations," sputters the speaker of an Edhi ambulance parked in an affluent neighborhood of Karachi, the port megalopolis of glaring inequalities.

Passers-by deposit alms or pay their respects to the frail old man, whose white beard and worn karakul-a triangular cap-are known throughout the country and beyond. Edhi has been nominated several times for the Nobel Peace Prize, and appears on the list again this year-put there by Malala Yousafzai, Pakistan's teenage Nobel laureate.

New nation, new hope

Edhi, born to a family of Muslim traders in Gujarat in British India, arrived in Pakistan after its bloody creation in 1947. "He thought that this new Muslim nation would be a social welfare state," says his son Faisal. But, when they got to Pakistan, he found "it was the exact opposite".

The state's failure to help his struggling family care for his mother-paralyzed and suffering from mental health issues-was his painful and decisive turning point towards philanthropy. In the sticky streets in the heart of Karachi, Edhi, full of idealism and hope, opened his first clinic in 1951. "Social welfare was my vocation, I had to free it," he says in his autobiography, "A Mirror To The Blind".

Motivated by a spiritual quest for justice, over the years Edhi and his team have created maternity wards, morgues, orphanages, shelters, and homes for the elderly-all aimed at helping those in society who cannot help themselves. The most prominent symbols of the foundation-its 1,500 ambulances-are deployed with unusual efficiency to the scene of terrorist attacks that tear through Pakistan with devastating regularity.

But its ethos of humanitarianism transcending religious

and ethnic lines while empowering the masses, has made it the target of many ferocious smear campaigns. Hardliners have branded him an infidel and his work un-Islamic.

Edhi's response has been hard work and an obstinate asceticism, a bid to leave his enemies with no ammunition. His work so conquered the esteem of Pakistan's masses that armed groups and bandits were known to spare his ambulances. The annual budget of 1.5 billion rupees (\$15 million), mainly from donations by middle- and working-class Pakistanis, continues to grow, according to Faisal, despite criticism from fundamentalist groups eager to snatch such support for themselves.

Mother Bilquis

Abandoned children and the elderly, battered women, the disabled, drug addicts; Edhi's foundation now houses some 5,700 people in 17 shelters across the country.

It employs around 3,000 people, many of whom were former residents. The project Bilquis Edhi is most proud of is the baby cradles adoption service. In the early days of his work, as Edhi cruised the streets in his ambulance, he was made desperate by the number of infant corpses he came across, many believed abandoned. Now the foundation has before each centre a large cradle bearing the inscription: "Do not kill innocent babies, leave them in our cradle".

The initiative has earned Edhi further attacks by Islamist extremists who accuse him of promoting extra-marital sex in the conservative Muslim country. But Bilquis proudly displays photos of now-grown women who are now graduates of prestigious universities.

Several thousand children-the vast majority of them girls-left in the cradles over the last four decades have been housed by Edhi centers and adopted, she says. Without Edhi, "I would have had no life," says Seher, 16, who grew up in the foundation's decrepit headquarters.

"Bilquis and Edhi are there for us round the clock," smiles the girl. She cares for younger children-including the small daughter of a thief jailed for the burglary of the foundation in 2014, a crime which caused uproar in Pakistan.

Now frail and weak, Edhi says he is unable to manage his kingdom. He appointed his son Faisal as managing trustee in early 2016. "I have done a lot of work. I am satisfied with my life," the patriarch sighs. "He is my hero," says Faisal, adding that stepping into his father's humble but mighty shoes is a "great responsibility." "We still have so much to do." — AFP

US TO PROPOSE OBAMA VISIT HIROSHIMA IN LATE MAY

TOKYO: The United States will propose that President Barack Obama visits Hiroshima, Japan's Nikkei newspaper said on Friday, in what would be the first visit by an incumbent US president to the city devastated by a US nuclear attack 71 years ago.

Citing an unidentified senior US government official, the business daily said Washington planned to propose to Tokyo a visit by the president on May 27, at the end of a Group of Seven (G7) summit hosted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. In Washington, a White House official said no decision has been made.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga denied the visit was being arranged and declined further comment. Diplomatic protocol means any announcement should come from the US side. "It is not true that a visit to Hiroshima by President Obama is being arranged between the United States and Japan," Suga told a regular news conference.

"The schedule of the US president is a matter for the United States to decide. The (Japanese) government will refrain from comment." A US warplane dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, killing thousands of people instantly and about 140,000 by the end of that year. Nagasaki was bombed on Aug. 9, 1945, and Japan surrendered six days later.

A presidential visit would be controversial in the United States if it were seen as an apology. A majority of Americans view the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as justified to end the war and save US lives. The vast majority of Japanese think the bombings were unjustified.

US Secretary of State John Kerry said during a visit to the city this month that Obama wanted to travel there, although he did not know if the president's schedule when he visited Japan for the May 26-27 summit would allow him to. Hiroshima bombing survivors, and other residents, have said they hope for progress in ridding the world of nuclear weapons, rather than an apology, if Obama makes the historic visit. Hopes for Obama's visit to Hiroshima were raised after a speech in April 2009 in Prague when he called for a world without nuclear weapons. He later said he would be honored to visit the two cities that suffered nuclear attack. Kerry, who toured the Hiroshima Peace Memorial and Museum, called its haunting displays "gut-wrenching" and said everyone should visit. The displays include photographs of badly burned victims, the tattered and stained clothes they wore and statues depicting them with flesh melting from their limbs.—Reuters



HIROSHIMA: US Secretary of State John Kerry (L) and British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond (R) offering wreaths at the Memorial Cenotaph for the 1945 atomic bombing victims in the Peace Memorial Park, on the sidelines of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.—AFP



JAPAN: A Shinto priest (R) leads Japanese lawmakers to the altar of Yasukuni Shrine yesterday.—AFP

JAPANESE LAWMAKERS, CABINET MINISTER VISIT TOKYO WAR SHRINE TO HONOR MILLIONS OF DECEASED JAPANESE

TOKYO: Dozens of Japanese lawmakers including a Cabinet minister visited a Tokyo war shrine on yesterday in a ritual sure to anger China and South Korea, where memories of Japan's military and colonial record remain raw. The capital's Yasukuni Shrine honors millions of Japanese dead, including several senior military and political figures convicted of war crimes after World War II.

The leafy central Tokyo shrine to Japan's Shinto religion has for decades been a lightning rod for criticism by countries that suffered under Japan's colonialism and aggression in the first half of the 20th century. Visits to the shrine by senior Japanese politicians, including occasionally prime ministers, routinely draw an angry reaction from China and South Korea, which see it as a symbol of Tokyo's militaristic past.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and other nationalists say the shrine is merely a place to remember fallen soldiers and compare it to burial grounds such as Arlington National Cemetery in the United States.

Who attended

At least 92 lawmakers visited Yasukuni for its annual spring festival, of whom 79 were from Abe's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, according to an official working for upper house of parliament member Toshiei Mizuochi. Internal affairs minister Sanae Takaichi visited the shrine, though separately from the other lawmakers, according to footage shown on public broadcaster NHK. The figure this time compares with the more than 100 lawmakers and three ministers

who visited during last year's spring event. For the shrine's autumn festival six months ago 73 lawmakers and two ministers attended.

And on August 15, 2015 — the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II — two Cabinet ministers went to the shrine along with about 60 lawmakers. Abe's wife, Akie, also visited Yasukuni in December.

Yesterday's visit by the lawmakers came a day after Abe made a ritual offering to the shrine. Abe went in December

2013 to mark his first year in power, a pilgrimage that sparked fury in Beijing and Seoul and earned him a diplomatic rebuke from the United States, which said it was "disappointed" by the action.

He has since refrained from going and reaction by China and South Korea to the latest visit by the parliamentarians is expected to be muted as Japan has taken steps over the past 18 months or so to improve relations with both countries and Abe has held summit meetings with their leaders.—AFP

JAPAN JET SCRAMBLES AGAINST CHINA PLANES DOUBLE IN JAN-MARCH

TOKYO: Japan's fighter jet scrambles against Chinese planes more than doubled in the first three months of the year, underscoring a "tougher security environment", the Defense Ministry said yesterday.

Japanese combat planes scrambled 198 times to prevent possible incursions by Chinese planes, up from 93 times from January to March last year. In the year that ended on March 31, such scrambles rose 23 percent from a year earlier to a record 571. "The numbers of scrambles alone do not tell the whole story, but we should recognize that the increase ... indicates a tougher security environment," Kazuhiko Fukuda, head of public affairs at the Japanese Self-Defense Forces' Joint Staff, told reporters. "China is modernizing its air force and is clearly aiming to improve its air

combat capability in faraway skies ... Concrete activities based on those targets are reflected in these numbers."

Japan's ties with China have been strained by a dispute over a group of tiny East China Sea islands, regional rivalry and the legacy of Japan's World War Two aggression. Patrol ships and fighter jets routinely shadow each other near the uninhabited islets that are controlled by Japan, raising concern that an unintended collision or other accidents could develop into a larger clash.

China also claims almost the entire South China Sea, believed to have huge deposits of oil and gas. Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also have claims to parts of the waters, through which about \$5 trillion in trade is shipped every year.—Reuters

TRUMP CHIEF: 'YOU'LL SEE A REAL DIFFERENT GUY'

AFTER HE GAINS THE PARTY'S PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

HOLLYWOOD, FLORIDA: His general-election appeal in question, Donald Trump's senior team is promising anxious Republicans that voters will see "a real different guy" soon after the GOP front-runner claims his party's presidential nomination.

"When he's out on the stage, when he's talking about the kinds of things he's talking about on the stump, he's projecting an image that's for that purpose," Paul Manafort, who is leading Trump's primary election strategy, told Republican National Committee members in a private briefing late Thursday. The Associated Press obtained a recording of the discussion.

"You'll start to see more depth of the person, the real person. You'll see a real different guy," Manafort said. "He gets it," Manafort said of Trump's need to moderate his brash personality. "The part that he's been playing is evolving into the part that now you've been expecting, but he wasn't ready for, because he had first to complete the first phase. The negatives will come down. The image is going to change."

The message is part of the campaign's intensifying effort to convince party leaders that Trump will help deliver big electoral gains this fall, despite his contentious ways. Yet it also opens him up to questions about his authenticity.

Republican rival Ted Cruz seized on the remarks in a radio interview late Thursday. "I'm actually going to give



HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA: Pennsylvania Capitol Police officer R.L. Evans asks protesters to move to a designated area before a rally for Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump on Thursday. — AP

Trump a little bit of credit here. He's being candid. He's telling us he's lying to us," Cruz told host Mark Levin. "You look at what his campaign manager says, is that this is just an act. This is just a show." The Texas senator continued: "When Donald talks about building a wall, when Donald talks about enforcing immigration laws, when Donald talks about, I guess, anything, that it's all an act, a show."

The Republican National Committee gathered at a seaside resort in south Florida for its annual spring meeting.

While candidates in both parties targeted primary contests in the Northeast, Hollywood's Diplomat Resort & Spa turned into a palm-treed political battleground.

Senior advisers for Trump, Cruz and Ohio Gov. John Kasich courted RNC members in a series of private meetings on the resort's grounds, sometimes sitting at adjacent tables in the marble-floored lobby. Trump's tightening grasp of his party's presidential nomination dominated much of the hallway discussion. — AP

CUBA TO LIFT CRUISE SHIP BAN FOR CITIZENS

HAVANA: Cuba said yesterday it would lift a ban on Cubans and Cuban-Americans entering and leaving the Caribbean island by commercial vessels, opening the way for cruise operator Carnival Corp to set sail for the country next week.

Carnival's May 1 cruise, the first from the United States to the Communist-run country since the 1959 revolution, was thrown into doubt when the company triggered a backlash by refusing Cuban-Americans passage due to a Cold War-era law.

A statement carried by state-run media said that starting April 26, Cuban citizens would be authorized "independently of their migratory status to enter and leave as passengers and crews of cruise ships." "This is a positive outcome and we are extremely pleased. We want to extend our sincere appreciation to Cuba and to our team who worked so hard to help make this happen," Carnival Chief Executive Arnold Donald said in a statement.

Carnival received approval from the United States last year to sail to Cuba, and the green light from Havana a day after US President Barack Obama's historic visit to the country in March. The waters between the two countries have been the scene of mass migration, hijacking and other crimes in the past, leading Cuba to ban Cubans from traveling by boat without special permission, even though restrictions on traveling by air were lifted years ago.

Protests in Miami, where the company is based, a discrimination suit and criticism by Secretary of State John Kerry led Carnival to start accepting bookings from Cuban-Americans earlier this month. The company said it would postpone the cruise if necessary, but also expressed confidence Cuba would rescind the law before its first 'Fathom' adventure, which is expected to begin sailing to three Cuban cities every fortnight from May 1.

Cuban-born Americans are free to enter their homeland by air, with around 300,000 arriving every year. The Cuban statement yesterday said authorities were also reviewing a ban on citizens from boarding recreational vessels such as fishing boats and yachts. — Reuters

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COLOR INDEX FOR US BORDER SECURITY IS REJECTED

'DHS SHOULD LEARN FROM ITS OWN HISTORY'

SAN DIEGO: Five years ago, the US Department of Homeland Security dropped its color-coded terror threat index developed after the 9/11 attacks amid widespread confusion and ridicule. So what did it do when tasked by Secretary Jeh Johnson in 2014 with measuring security along the country's borders?

Agency staff proposed another system of reds, yellows and greens. The Institute for Defense Analyses, a consulting firm, was hired by DHS to review the idea and found the index simplistic and misleading, noting that colors were a "disaster" for communicating terror threats.

"DHS should learn from its own history and avoid repeating this error," the consultants said in its 53-page report. The DHS proposal was never made public, nor was the consulting firm's \$90,000 review. A copy of the report was obtained by The Associated Press and when AP this week asked the agency whether it would move ahead with the index, spokeswoman Gillian Christensen said: "Currently, there are no color-coded border security indexes or metrics being considered by the Department of Homeland Security."

It was one of the latest attempts by the government to come up with a way to measure border security and help the public understand whether the billions of dollars devoted to it each year are being spent wisely. In 2010, Homeland Security ended a five-year experiment measuring miles under "operational control," where the Border Patrol was likely to capture illegal crossers. It reported only about 40 percent controlled in 2010, providing ammunition to those who argue the border is porous.

Then in 2013, Johnson's predecessor, Janet Napolitano, abandoned plans for what was called the Border Conditions Index, which would have relied on various economic, crime and enforcement data. John Sandweg, who was senior counselor to Napolitano, said there was internal consensus about what made up the index but not about how much weight to give each factor.

The value of it

Sandweg, who advised the secretary when the color terror alert system was dropped, said he doesn't see the value of a similar color-coded approach to the border. "It seems to me like an oversimplification of a very complex problem," he said. The consultants hired by Johnson agreed.

"The red/yellow/green formulation, while intuitively attractive and easy to understand, will open the Department to charges that it is manipulating a complex problem in an effort to be seen as responding to public concerns," the report said.

When the report was completed in June, California and New Mexico/West Texas were green (low risk) during the previous quarter, Arizona was yellow (medium risk), and South Texas was red (high risk). The consultants said that reality was more nuanced.

"A new set of metrics should work against this simplistic perception rather than reinforcing it. Instead, the new index does the opposite, by reporting the level of border security in just three large baskets, two of which (red and yellow) are likely to be seen by the public as evidence of a border 'not controlled,'" the report said. The consultants identified other problems. A color index might lead reporters with an appetite for eye-catching headlines to produce misleading stories of an out-of-control border. And DHS relations with Congress could be further strained, with administration officials constantly having to defend their color choices.

For example, a West Texas congressman would demand to know why his district is rated low risk when voters tell him the opposite. A South Texas congressman would want lots more money if the administration acknowledges his district is high risk, the report said.

Now, the most closely-watched public indicator is Border Patrol apprehensions, released annually. The number fell to a 44-year low last year, a figure cited by those who argue the border is relatively secure. But there is broad agreement that the apprehension tally gives an incomplete picture, just as a police department's arrest count doesn't fully reflect how safe a city is.

The color-coded index would have relied on 12 indicators for land borders and seven for maritime borders, each one weighted under a formula that produces reds, yellows and greens. Those indicators ranged from the number of border crossers with known or suspected terrorist ties to marijuana seizures.

The consultants' report speaks favorably about developing a "dashboard" of key numbers, as many police departments do. Homeland Security recently began publishing the percent of illegal border crossers it says are caught or turned back - 80 percent in the 2015 fiscal year - and has developed other measures, including the percent caught who are repeat offenders.—AP



SUNLAND PARK, NEW MEXICO: A US Border Patrol agent drives near the US-Mexico border fence. US Department of Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson has rejected a new proposal of color-coded alerts to measure border security after a consultant called the system simplistic and misleading.—AP

GUNSHOTS ON A NEW ORLEANS BRIDGE, AND THE DECADE-LONG ROAD TO JUSTICE

NEW ORLEANS: Years before Black Lives Matter protesters roiled the streets of Ferguson and Baltimore, police officers in New Orleans killed two residents and maimed four others on a small bridge on the first Sunday after Hurricane Katrina.

In a courtroom in a New Orleans federal court Wednesday, four of the shooters and one of the supervisors admitted their guilt for the first time. The road to that admission was tortuous, for the families, for the city and for the New Orleans Police Department, in a case that stands among the most significant police civil rights abuses in the United States. The victims, all black, all unarmed, were trying to survive the hurricane's wake on Sunday, September 4, 2005, when a pack of officers, believing they were racing to the scene of a police shootout, barreled toward them in a commandeered rental truck. Before the truck screeched to a halt, the driver, an ex-Marine, leaned out the window and pulled the trigger of a handgun. He steered with his right hand, and fired what he later called "warning shots" with his left.

Officers, some black, some white, spilled from the truck and aimed fire at eight residents on the Danziger Bridge. By the time the shooting stopped, Ronald Madison, a 40-year-old with the mental development of a six-year-old, was dead, seven gunshot wounds in his back. On the other side of the bridge, gunshot wounds pierced the slender frame of James Brissette Jr., 17, killing him.

Susan Bartholomew, 38, was trying to crawl on the pavement, her right arm blown apart. Her 17-year-old daughter Leshia, who lay atop her mother to protect

her from the bullets, required her own life-saving surgery. So did her cousin Jose Holmes Jr., 19, wheezing for breath and begging paramedics not to give up on him. Father "Big Leonard" Bartholomew Sr. had a gunshot wound in his head. As son "Little Leonard" Bartholomew, 14, raced from the bridge, an officer aimed his gun at the boy's back and fired twice. He missed.

The cover-up

As paramedics tended to the victims, police began hatching a cover-up. They would plant a gun, invent phony witnesses and craft a fiction portraying the victims as criminals, officers later testified. That morning, as his brother Ronald lay dead, Lance Madison, a onetime NFL wide receiver who stayed back during Katrina to watch over his younger sibling, was handcuffed and charged with attempted murder of police. He spent 25 days in jail on false charges.

This week, 10 years and seven months after the shots on the bridge, officers stood in court and admitted guilt. They were given prison sentences ranging from 3 to 12 years, decades less than the officers had received after they were initially convicted in August 2011. But a bizarre online scandal involving prosecutors in the US Attorney's Office put those convictions in jeopardy, opening the door to a second trial. The families had embraced with relief in 2011. A federal jury convicted the five officers following a trial in which five other officers, in pleading guilty to their own roles, detailed the cover-up. That closure was short lived. After officers were sentenced to prison, one for 65

years, defense lawyers sought a new trial. The attorneys contended that anonymous online comments criticizing police - many written by Sal Perricone, a New Orleans federal prosecutor not involved in the case - impeded their clients' chances for a fair trial.

Girding for a retrial

The bid for a new trial was a long shot, but the presiding federal judge, Kurt Engelhardt Jr., granted it in September 2013, saying the online comments by Perricone and two other federal lawyers impaired justice. The Justice Department acknowledged the comments were improper, but said they had no bearing on the case or the verdict.

Last August, a federal appeals court upheld Engelhardt's order for a new trial by a 2-1 vote. In February, the full appeals court deadlocked 7-7 on the government's request that it reconsider the earlier appeals decision. That ruling left everyone girding for a second trial.

Instead, sparing the victims from having to go through another trial, and sparing themselves decades behind bars, the officers pleaded guilty to three federal charges - deprivation of rights, obstruction of justice and conspiracy to obstruct justice. Their sentences:

Robert Faulcon Jr., 12 years, down from 65 imposed after the jury conviction; Kenneth Bowen, 10 years, down from 40; Robert Gisevius Jr., 10 years, down from 40; Anthony Villavaso II, 7 years, down from 38; Each was given credit for time served since 2010, meaning Villavaso could be released this year and the other three officers in a few years.—Reuters

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ATHENS: A man reads print newspapers headlines in Athens yesterday. Print and digital media journalists are on strike until Sunday against the pension system reforms proposals to be submitted for voting in parliament. —AFP

EUROZONE RAISES PRESSURE FOR GREEK REFORMS

ATHENS HANDED A FINAL HURDLE TO UNLOCK CASH AND DEBT RELIEF

AMSTERDAM: Eurozone finance ministers raised the pressure on Greece to deliver a fresh set of reforms yesterday, handing Athens a final hurdle to unlock cash from its massive bailout and secure debt relief.

Eurogroup head Jeroen Dijsselbloem said a deal to offer dearly needed bailout loans to Greece could happen as early as Thursday as long as Athens delivered on an extra set of reforms. These so-called "contingency measures" would be triggered only if leftist-led Athens failed to meet its budget targets and are a key demand of the International Monetary Fund.

"If we have the package, we can have a further Eurogroup next Thursday to come to a conclusion on the first review" of Greece's bailout plan, said Dijsselbloem after the finance ministers of the 19 countries that use the euro currency met in Amsterdam yesterday.

In return for those reforms, eurozone governments would then embark on talks to offer Greece debt relief, one of the only concessions allowed Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras when he secured the bailout in July.

'Critically important'

Reducing Greece's mountain of public debt is also a condition by the IMF to remain a partner in the rescue of Greece. IMF chief Christine Lagarde, who also attended the talks, said that debt relief was "critically important". But she said that any cancellation of debt, or haircut, was off the table. "I believe that no haircut is needed, and the nominal value of the debt doesn't have to be changed," added Lagarde.

Official EU data on Thursday said that Greece's debt stood at 177 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015 — almost

twice Greece's entire economic output in one year. But the debt question is extremely sensitive in Germany, the eurozone's most powerful member, which believes that Greece's debt load is manageable. "This topic is not the priority and above all, it should not distract us from what still needs to be done," said German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble.

But hardline Germany also considers the IMF a crucial partner in the bailout program, and is forced to concede on debt relief in order to keep the fund on board.

Greece turns corner?

The ministers met in parallel to crunch talks in Athens to close the bailout review between Greece and the institutions handling its bailout: the EU, the European Central Bank and the IMF. Accomplishing

this step will unlock bailout loans, but has been delayed by disagreements over pension cuts and bad loans. Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos and other ministers said most of those problems had been solved and that the negotiations were in the final stretch.

But Tsakalotos said agreeing the deal was "absolutely crucial". It would "give a clear signal to EU (and) Greek citizens, Greek and international investors, that Greece has turned the corner." The Greek government in July faces big repayments to the European Central Bank, amounting to about 2.3 billion euros (\$2.6 billion). "I hope that all this can be concluded soon, because the liquidity situation is becoming tight," warned Klaus Regling, the head of the eurozone bailout fund, the European Stability Mechanism. — AFP

OIL HEADS FOR 3RD WEEK OF GAINS AS SENTIMENT SOARS

GOLDMAN LIFTS VIEW ON ENERGY TO NEUTRAL

LONDON: Oil prices rose yesterday towards \$45 a barrel, heading for a third straight week of gains as market sentiment turned more upbeat despite persistent oversupply. Strong gasoline consumption in the United States and increasing signs of declining production around the world as well as oilfield outages have underpinned a return to investment in the sector, traders said.

But analysts warned that the oil market is still far from balancing supply and demand. "While this recent rally has the potential to run further to the upside ... we believe that it is not yet driven by a sustainable shift in fundamentals," Goldman Sachs said in a note to clients.

International benchmark Brent crude futures were trading at \$44.68 per barrel at 1222 GMT, up 15 cents, or 0.35 per-

cent, from their last settlement. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was up 22 cents, or 0.5 percent, at \$43.40 a barrel. Brent has risen about 3.7 percent so far this week and WTI 7.6 percent as both benchmarks headed for a third consecutive week of gains. Crude is up more than two-thirds since its 2016 lows between January and February.

Goldman said it was "premature to embrace these green shoots", maintaining its view that a sustainable balancing of the market, driven by declines in US shale oil production, would take place in the third quarter of 2016. But the Wall Street bank changed its view on energy to "neutral" from "underweight", citing a reduced likelihood of extreme downside.

Another supportive factor has been producers taking advantage of higher prices by locking in output. "We would expect producers in the U.S. taking every opportunity to aggressively hedge as soon as there is opportunity when oil prices recover for short periods of time," French investment bank Natixis said.

Falling output, especially in the United States, where many producers are shutting down following an up to 70 percent price rout since 2014, is also helping to lift the market. Natixis said it expected US oil production to drop by at least 500,000 to 600,000 barrels per day (bpd) this year, compared with 2015, and by another 500,000 bpd in 2017.

Despite the recent rally, oil markets remain oversupplied as between 1 and 2 million barrels of crude are being pumped out of the ground every day in excess of demand, leaving storage tanks around the world filled to the brim with unsold fuel. — Reuters



VENETIA: Employees at work at the Venetia Diamond mine of Mining giant De Beers. The Venetia Diamond Mine is South Africa's largest producer of diamonds. It is situated close to the South African town of Alldays in the Limpopo province and is located within the 360 km of Venetia Limpopo Nature Reserve. —AFP

SARAS LOOKING TO RESUME IRAN CRUDE TRADE SOON

MILAN: Italian refiner Saras hopes to resume taking shipments of Iranian crude oil in the coming months if not weeks, its managing director Dario Scaffardi said yesterday.

Saras, which is part owned by Russian oil giant Rosneft, used to take a significant part of its crude feedstock from Iran before the U.S.-led embargo on the country. Speaking on the sidelines of a shareholder meeting, Scaffardi said the group had renewed its contract with National Iranian Oil Company but added there were still some hurdles to overcome on the banking payment front.

"I hope these will be resolved soon and we can start in a few months, maybe even weeks," Scaffardi said. Most international sanctions against Iran were lifted in January after a deal with world powers to curb the country's nuclear program.

But the US kept some sanctions

and fear of being caught up in those has deterred most foreign banks from restoring links with Tehran. Saras, controlled by brothers Gian Marco and Massimo Moratti, with a 25 percent stake each, recently visited Iran with an Italian trade delegation led by Prime Minister Matteo Renzi.

Rosneft, the refiner's second largest shareholder after the Moratti family, currently owns 12 percent of the group after selling a 9 percent stake last year.

Saras Chairman Gian Marco Moratti said Rosneft, led by CEO Igor Sechin, did not have plans to sell further stakes in the refiner. "The company told me there was no intention to sell further stakes," Moratti said but added he had not heard from Sechin for some time. The lock-up period on Rosneft's remaining stake, imposed after the stake sale last year, expired last Saturday, Moratti said. — Reuters

KUWAIT OIL PRICE UP TO \$38.65 PB

KUWAIT: Kuwait oil price went up \$2.25 on Thursday reaching \$38.65 per barrel against \$36.40 pb on Wednesday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. In international markets, Brent Blend went down \$1.27 settling at \$44.53 pb, whereas US crude oil also plunged \$1.00, settling at \$43.18 pb.

Meanwhile, the OPEC daily basket price stood at \$40.11 a barrel on Thursday, compared with \$38.46 Wednesday, the organization announced yesterday. The annual average of the OPEC basket price hit \$49.64 pb, it said in a press release.

The new OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Girassol (Angola), Oriente (Ecuador), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basra Light (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Qatar Marine (Qatar), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Merey (Venezuela).

During their recent meeting in Vienna in late 2015, OPEC member countries had decided to maintain their production at 30 million barrels per day (bpd) despite a surplus in the market estimated at over a million barrels.

Exports to China

Kuwait's crude oil exports to China in March hit a three-month high of 1.72 million tons, equivalent to 409,000 barrels per day (bpd), up 30.6 percent from a year earlier, official data showed. The figure was the highest since December 2015, when Kuwait's crude shipments to the world's second-biggest energy consumer reached 1.75 million tons (414,000 bpd), according to the General Administration of Customs. China's overall imports of crude oil in March rose 21.6 percent from a year earlier to 7.71 million bpd. Russia overtook Saudi Arabia to secure the top spot, as its shipments soared 57.7 percent to 1.1 million bpd, while those from Saudi Arabia declined 1.7 percent to 941,000 bpd. Angola became third, up 3.8 percent to 856,000 bpd. Iraq ranked fourth and Iran fifth, respectively. Despite economic slowdown, China remains a major oil importer and consumer. — KUNA

UAE ALLOCATES \$4BN TO EGYPT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND CB

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates has allocated \$4 billion to Egypt, half of it in investment and half as a central bank deposit to support cash reserves, the UAE state news agency WAM reported yesterday. The report appeared to be referring to a previously announced UAE offer to give Egypt \$4 billion, which was made at a conference in Sharm El-Sheikh last year along with pledges from other Gulf Arab states. Egypt has struggled to spur economic growth since its 2011 uprising ushered in political instability that scared off tourists and foreign investors, key sources of foreign currency.

Details of the UAE aid allocation came at the end of a visit of Abu Dhabi's crown prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, to Egypt yesterday. He said the aid, authorised by UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahayan, showed the UAE was firm in its support for Egypt. The money was aimed at promoting development in Egypt, which has a "pivotal role" in the region, WAM quoted Sheikh Mohammed as saying. Earlier this month Egypt and Saudi Arabia signed a pact to set up a 60 billion Saudi riyal (\$16 billion) investment fund. At the Sharm El-Sheikh conference in March 2015, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia each also offered \$4 billion to Egypt. — Reuters



CHENNAI: An Indian onion vendor waits for customers under the shade of an umbrella at a weekend market in Chennai yesterday. — AFP



HANDAN: A worker looking at a cement plant in Handan, in China's northern Hebei province. China's economy expanded at its slowest rate in seven years during the first quarter, the government said on April 15, but forecast-beating readings for March raised hopes a growth slowdown in the Asian giant may be bottoming out. — AFP

EU, US SHOULD SECURE TRADE DEAL THIS YEAR: US NEGOTIATOR

BERLIN: Europe and the United States should wrap up a US-European free trade deal this year or people will start thinking it might never happen, US Trade Representative Michael Froman told a German newspaper. Chancellor Angela Merkel is expected to discuss the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with US President Barack Obama when he visits a trade show in Hanover on Sunday and Monday. The visit comes at a time when support for TTIP has plunged in Germany and the United States.

In an interview published yesterday, Froman told the newspaper Handelsblatt he wanted an agreement on TTIP this year but not at any cost. "We won't agree to a sort of 'TTIP Lite'," he said.

Asked whether it was realistic to conclude talks on TTIP in 2016, Froman said the EU and the US had a "unique opportunity" if both sides had the political will for an agreement. "If we don't get it done, then we create a great deal of uncertainty on whether we will ever get it done," he said.

On Wednesday, German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel said TTIP negotiations were "frozen up" and their success or failure depended on Washington. Merkel defended TTIP yesterday, saying it was an opportunity for the "Mittelstand" - the small and medium-sized companies seen as the backbone of Germany's economy, many of which worry the deal would give too much power to multinationals. Merkel said it would give them advantages on the US market. — Reuters

WOMEN WORK LIKE MACHINES IN INDIA'S TEXTILE MILLS

CHENNAI: Rajaram Paritha is on a mission. The 35-year-old tailor wants to be the voice of every young girl who is lured with the promise of big money to work in textile mills in southern India's Tamil Nadu and then exploited and abused. Head of the all-women Tamil Nadu Textile and Common Labour Union (TTCU), Paritha uses her experience as a factory worker to challenge forms of exploitation such as a debt bondage, long hours and sexual abuse in the garment and textile industry.

"Workers have to come together like they did a few days back ... against the government's controversial government pension plan. If they don't, the exploitation will not stop," she said in an interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The scale of the issue Paritha and her organization are trying to address is huge: much of India's \$42 billion-a-year textile and clothing export industry is located in Tamil Nadu, and to boost productivity and increase margins, parts of its lucrative supply chain are built on bonded labor.

A 2014 study into Tamil Nadu's textile industry by the Freedom Fund, a philanthropic initiative dedicated to ending modern slavery, and C&A Foundation, which partners with the Thomson Reuters Foundation on its human trafficking coverage, found workers were often subjected to low wages, excessive and sometimes forced overtime, lack of freedom of movement as well as verbal and sexual abuse. A conservative estimate suggests there may be at least 100,000 girls and young women being exploited in this way. "I vividly remember the one year I worked at a mill," Paritha said. — Reuters

IN ASIA, FINANCIAL FIRMS WAKE UP TO BREXIT RISKS

SOME FIRMS BASED IN LONDON EYE FRANKFURT, LUXEMBOURG

HONG KONG: The Hong Kong exchange has begun a Brexit impact assessment, and some Asian asset managers are looking to set up new bases in mainland Europe amid growing concerns their operations could be disrupted if Britain votes to leave the European Union in a June referendum.

The central banks of Hong Kong and Singapore told Reuters they were also closely monitoring developments around the June 23 vote. A spokeswoman for the Hong Kong Monetary Authority warned of "significant uncertainties" in the event of an "Out" vote.

The contingency planning highlights concerns that Brexit, as Britain leaving the EU has been called, could have ripple effects in Asia-Pacific by cutting off the UK's Asian finance investors from the EU financial market. Other regions are also making Brexit preparations.

Opinion polls have pointed to a close vote, though the most recent polls show rising support for Britain staying in the EU. "A potential Brexit is an issue no organisation can afford to ignore," said a spokesman for Hong Kong Exchanges & Clearing (HKEx), which took over the London Metal Exchange (LME) and its clearing house in 2012.

"We are carrying out an impact assessment for both the LME and LME Clear and are addressing the short-, medium- and long-term implications for both potential outcomes of the UK referendum."

The bourse declined to elaborate on its impact assessment, though risk management experts said it would likely cover the legal, regulatory and operational implications of Brexit, as well as volatility scenarios and potential market disruptions.

Asian investors using Britain as their European base said they may establish operational bases in Frankfurt or Luxembourg, fearing an "Out" vote would disrupt their ability to offer services and products across the 28-nation EU. "There's lots of uncertainty. If the vote is "Out" would London be a platform for accessing Europe?" asked Sammi Shen, executive director at Shanghai Nord Engine Asset Management Group, a \$3 billion Chinese investment management company which set up a London office only last year. "We would find a European partner or set up an office in Europe: that's our back-up plan," she said, listing Frankfurt and Luxembourg as the preferred locations.

HEDGING BETS

Britain's financial services industry has attracted 100 billion pounds (\$143 billion) in foreign direct investment since 2007, or nearly a third of the total, according to financial services lobby group CityUK.

London has also sold itself to Chinese banks as the biggest yuan currency clearing hub outside Asia.

Leaving the EU could risk unravelling financial services agreements that have helped turn Britain into Europe's financial powerhouse, accounting for a quarter of all EU financial services income, according to the Bank of England. For now, a financial services company with a license or 'passport' to operate in Britain can automatically offer its products and services throughout the EU, reducing compliance and operational costs. An "Out" vote could see Britain lose that critical access - a major concern for Chinese and Hong Kong firms, many of which have recently set up in London.

Asia-Pacific companies spent more

than \$1.7 billion on greenfield UK wholesale financial services investments in 2011-15, with China the largest average investor, according to FT data source fDi Markets, excluding M&A activity. A senior executive of a major Chinese asset manager which uses Britain as its EU base said he was worried his firm may no longer be able to distribute funds across Europe.

"We'll ensure we don't have all our eggs in one basket and will establish a fund management entity and fund platforms outside the UK to hedge our bets," said the executive, who didn't want to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

The executive and Nord Engine's Shen said they would not abandon London as it would remain a major market and offers a deep talent pool. More than two million people work in financial services in the UK and typically have the right under EU rules to work across the bloc without requiring work permits. Brexit could change that. Michel Lowy, CEO of Hong Kong-headquartered fixed income specialist SC Lowy, which has operated in London since 2012, said an "Out" vote was a concern due to potential visa restrictions: "Will people need a working visa overnight?"

If Britain opts out of the EU, London would have two years to renegotiate existing trade and services agreements. "The problem is that there is really no precedent, and traditional free trade agreements don't really cover financial services very well," said Andrew Naylor, Singapore-based executive director at Cicero Group, a consultancy helping Asian financial firms weigh the Brexit risks. "That's a big concern for our Asian financial services clients as many use the UK as their entry point for Europe." — Reuters



BRUSSELS: Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel is pictured at the start of a meeting of the Taskforce, composed of inter-professional federations and catering transport and trade sectors, to discuss which measures should be taken to support companies in a difficult situation after the March 22 Brussels attacks, yesterday, in Brussels. — AFP



TOKYO: A man looks at an electronic stock board of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. Asian stocks fell yesterday after Wall Street broke a three-day winning streak and declined. — AP

JAPAN EYES DOUBLE-BARRELED STIMULUS TO EASE YEN STRAINS

ABE EYES EXTRA FISCAL SPENDING AFTER QUAKE DAMAGE

TOKYO: Japan looks increasingly likely to fire both fiscal and monetary barrels in the coming weeks to help recovery and arrest unwelcome gains in the yen, with direct currency intervention off the table after a cool reception from its US ally.

After the rising yen helped push exports down for a sixth month in March and deadly earthquakes hit southern Japan last week, the Bank of Japan (BOJ) is facing calls from government aides to promptly expand its money-printing stimulus.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is already set to announce a fiscal stimulus plan of up to 10 trillion yen (\$91 billion) extra spending around the time he hosts a Group of Seven summit in late May, which could agree on more government expenditure to boost global growth.

And he could top that up with disaster-relief spending after the quakes, say government and ruling party officials involved in the policy-making. Abe's aides also said the economic impact of the quakes raised the chances he would delay a sales tax hike scheduled for next year and increased the need for more central bank action.

"If output weakens and consumer sentiment cools as a result of the quakes, the conditions justifying additional monetary easing would all fall into place," said a senior government official with direct knowledge of policy-making. The BOJ has been printing up to 80 trillion yen a year to buy bonds since 2013 in a bid to end decades of stagnation and deflation, and sources have told Reuters it is likely to debate further monetary easing when it reviews policy on April 27-28.

Though policymakers hope a combination of fiscal and monetary stimulus measures will head off the yen's rise and restart Japan's stalled economic recovery, some doubt that the weapons available to the central bank and government are powerful enough to make much difference.

Hideo Kumano, chief economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute, said it was "uncertain whether tax revenues will increase enough to fund a big spending package", and the BOJ's most recent gambit - negative interest rates - had failed to trigger the desired market response.

There are also concerns that the BOJ so dominates the market for Japanese government bonds that it is becoming increasingly difficult to satisfy its existing demand, let alone a further increase.

HELICOPTER VIEW

Despite such doubts, looser monetary policy might be the only show in town to cool the yen, after Washington last week emphasised G20 commitments to avoid currency devaluations, apparently brushing off Tokyo's view that the yen's rise was "one-sided".

The dollar hit 17-month lows below 108 yen last week, unsettling policymakers, who see any slide in the currency pair below 105 yen as alarming. It has since rallied a little to around 109 yen.

Though there have been signs of growing tension between Abe and central bank governor Haruhiko Kuroda - each expecting the other to do more to address Japan's economic ills - they appear to see eye to eye on addressing an overly strong yen. Kuroda has also described the yen's rise as excessive and

warned that he could use monetary policy if it jeopardises his target of pushing inflation up to 2 percent, a goal that has already missed one deadline after another.

There are even calls for the BOJ to resort to "helicopter money" - printing fresh cash for direct injection into the economy, instead of its current easing measures, which direct new money to the banks, in the hope that they boost lending to the economy.

Kozo Yamamoto, a senior ruling party lawmaker and key Abe aide, on Thursday urged the government to prepare a spending package of around 20 trillion yen to be funded by the BOJ's money printing. The fiscal package in the works already includes plans to offer payouts to families with children and higher salaries to employees in child-care facilities.

Such spending, aimed at increasing Japan's birth rate and having more women return to the workplace, could add up to around 7 trillion yen over the next few years, internal government estimates show. While the government hasn't produced estimates on the exact damage from the quake, disaster relief could add another 5 trillion yen to the bill, some analysts say.

Kuroda has said he won't resort to helicopter money, but his policies have brought negative yields on government bonds for up to 10 year tenors, which effectively means government borrowing creates a newly printed profit it can spend.

"We're already essentially doing helicopter money," said one of the officials with direct knowledge of policy-making. — Reuters

YEN SINKS ON POTENTIAL FOR BOJ STIMULUS MOVE

LONDON: The yen skidded by more than 1 percent to a 2-1/2-week low against the dollar yesterday after a report said that the Bank of Japan is considering expanding its negative rate policy to bank loans and could cut rates further. The BOJ could consider the new step if policymakers decide to lower the negative 0.1 percent interest rate applied to some bank reserves parked with the central bank, Bloomberg reported on its website.

The yen has gained about 10 percent against the dollar since the BOJ announced that it was adding negative interest rates to its stimulus program at the end of January, a step that would usually be expected to weaken a currency. However, a combination of factors have pushed the yen higher: risk-averse markets stoking demand for safe havens, rising real interest rates in Japan and a fall in the dollar because of a push-back of US rate expectations.

On Friday, though, the yen weakened by as much as 1.2 percent to 110.76 per dollar, heading towards its worst week in 12. The BOJ's next two-day policy review ends on April 28.

"If they (the BOJ) were to have some sort of a subsidy policy for the banks, that would allow greater room for policy rates to go lower," said Alvin Tan, a Societe Generale currency strategist in London.

In the BOJ's separate semi-annual report assessing Japan's financial system, the central bank said its negative interest rate policy will weigh on financial institutions' profits for the time being, though they have the strength to continue taking on risk. The yen also fell more than 1 percent against the euro to a low of 124.93 yen before recovering a little to 124.625 yen, down 0.8 percent on the day.

The euro fell 0.3 percent against the dollar to a one-week low of \$1.1255, with traders citing a worse than expected German purchasing managers' index (PMI) survey. The European single currency had reached as high as \$1.1399 during a European Central Bank news conference on Thursday but then weakened again to more or less where it was before. — Reuters



CATERPILLAR Q1 PROFIT MEETS STREET'S VIEW, SALES FALL

PEORIA, Ill: Caterpillar's first-quarter adjusted profit met Wall Street's view, even as sales declined across various categories while it continues to deal with soft product demand. The mining and construction equipment company lowered its full-year profit forecast.

Shares slipped in premarket trading before the market opened yesterday. For the three months ended March 31, Caterpillar earned \$271 million, or 46 cents per share. A year earlier the company earned \$1.25 billion, or \$2.03 per share.

Removing restructuring costs, earnings were 67 cents per share. This met the expectations of analysts surveyed by Zacks Investment Research. Revenue fell to \$9.46 billion from \$12.7 billion. Caterpillar Inc said yesterday that it foresees a full-year adjusted profit of \$3.70 per share, down from its prior outlook of \$4 per share. Analysts polled by FactSet expect \$3.62 per share.

The company now anticipates 2016 sales and revenues in a range of \$40 billion to \$42 billion. Its previous guidance was for sales and revenues between \$40 billion and \$44 billion. Caterpillar said that it now expects restructuring costs of about \$550 million for the year, up from the \$400 million it had previously predicted. The Peoria, Illinois-based company said the main reason for the increase in costs was because it decided to end production of on-highway vocational trucks. At quarter's end, Caterpillar had 114,300 employees. That compares with 129,400 in the year-ago period. The company said in January that it planned to close five plants, causing a loss of about 670 jobs in Illinois and several other states. The move is part of a broader cost-cutting campaign announced last year that's expected to affect about 10,000 jobs over three years. — AP



MIAMI: Newly built apartments are advertised for rent in downtown Miami. —AP

US HOME RENTS UP IN MARCH, SIGNS SUGGEST AN EASING TREND

WASHINGTON: Americans paid more to rent homes last month, but broader measures suggest that the surging increases of prior years have moderated in much of the country. Real estate data firm Zillow said yesterday that the median US monthly rent rose a seasonally adjusted 2.6 percent in March from a year ago to \$1,389. That was slightly more than the year-over-year increase of 2.5 percent in February. Prices ticked up slightly last month in the Los Angeles, Boston, Phoenix and Portland, Oregon, metro areas. Rents fell in Cleveland, Memphis and Oklahoma City.

After sharp increases in 2014 and much of last year, rents cooled between August and February as stepped-up construction put more apartments on the market. For all of 2015, finished construction of multifamily buildings soared 21 percent, according to the Commerce Department.

Until recently, rents had been steadily rising at more than double the pace of wages. But rental increases are now almost identical to the 2.3 percent yearly increase in average hourly earnings tracked by the Labor Department. But as price growth has slowed, there are signs that builders are pulling back on apartment construction. During the first three months of 2016, permits for new apartment buildings tumbled 5 percent from the same period a year ago, the Commerce Department said this week. Demand for rentals may continue to be strong because relatively few millennial renters have enough savings to buy a home, according to a survey released this week by Apartment List, which helps renters search for housing. Most millennial renters under age 35 say they still expect to buy a home, but 37 percent of them have saved nothing for a down payment. Of those who have saved, the average down payment on hand was under \$6,000. That means they need to delay a purchase, move to another city or take out mortgages with higher debt burdens. —AP

GOLD DIPS AS DOLLAR STRENGTHENS VS YEN

LONDON: Gold slipped yesterday as the dollar advanced versus the yen, but the metal was still looking to post a weekly gain, while silver was set for its biggest weekly increase in 11 months.

The dollar rose as much as one percent against the yen on speculation the Bank of Japan was considering applying negative rates to its lending program for financial institutions, effectively starting to pay banks to borrow its cash. Gold was down 0.2 percent at \$1,247.26 an ounce by 1231 GMT, after hitting a five-week high of \$1,270.10 an ounce on Thursday.

Spot silver rose 1.6 percent to \$17.26 an ounce. It had risen to a 11-month high of \$17.69 in the previous session and was up 6 percent for the week.

"We are seeing people taking some profits after yesterday's sharp gains but we are likely to stay in the \$1,225-\$1,275 range for the time being," MKS SA chief trader Afshin Nabavi said. Gold had posted its best quarter in nearly 30 years in the three months to March on expectations that the Federal Reserve would not be able to raise US interest rates this year due to volatile markets and concerns over the Chinese economy. Recent data from China has showed new debt fuelling a recovery in factory activity, investment and household spending, stoking appetite for metals used in manufacturing.—Reuters

HSBC CHANGES PAY POLICY AS IT FLAGS BREXIT DANGER

HSBC CHANGES PAY POLICY FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

LONDON: HSBC changed its pay policy for executive directors yesterday, bowing to shareholder concerns triggered by a drop in the bank's share price and worries over its dividend.

The overhaul of HSBC's pay, which it said would lower the maximum amount its executive directors could earn by 7 percent, follows investor revolts at BP and Anglo American over remuneration policies. Europe's biggest bank told shareholders at its annual meeting in London on Friday that it would cut the amount of cash given to executive directors in lieu of a pension from 50 percent to 30 percent of their base salary. It will also make long-term incentives subject to a three year forward-looking performance period, in line with other FTSE companies. At the meeting, 96 percent of shareholders who voted approved the new measures which had been proposed earlier.

"We had expected that the Remuneration Policy you approved back

in 2014 would not need to be refreshed until it expired next year," Chairman Douglas Flint told them before the vote.

"However, regulatory changes as well as responding to shareholder feedback have caused us to make some revisions to this," he said. HSBC also said it could be forced to restructure its wholesale operations in the UK if Britain voted to leave the European Union in June's referendum.

"Our own economic research is very clear about the advantages of Britain being at the heart of a reformed EU," Flint said. "We believe that the UK would enter a period of great economic uncertainty in the event of a vote to leave."

US LICENSE

Flint said the bank was doing everything it had promised to do to avoid the loss of its US banking license, following alleged failures to impress a monitor supervising a reboot of its anti-money laundering (AML) compliance program.

In 2012, HSBC was fined \$1.9 billion by the US government, who said it had become a "preferred financial institution" for drug cartels and money launderers and had conducted transactions for customers in several countries subject to US sanctions.

"The DOJ (Department of Justice) in its most recent letter would echo that although HSBC has made significant progress, the bank continues to face significant challenges in implementing AML prevention," Flint said in response to an investor's question at the meeting.

"So we have work to do but at same time, the DOJ said that, overall, HSBC continues to take significant steps." The chairman also sought to play down the bank's links to the "Panama Papers" scandal, which exposed the role played by scores of global banks in helping clients hide wealth in secretive offshore companies. Flint said that less than 5 percent of 2,000 offshore structures it helped to create still existed. — Reuters



NEW YORK: Photo shows the sign on the McDonalds on 42nd Street near Times Square in New York. McDonald's reported financial results yesterday.—AP

MCDONALD'S US SALES RISE FOR THIRD STRAIGHT QUARTER

NEW YORK: McDonald's sales rose 5.4 percent at established US locations in the first quarter, marking the third straight increase as the chain fights to stage a comeback. The world's biggest burger chain attributed the sales jump to the introduction of its all-day breakfast menu last fall, as well as a new "McPick 2" value deal that replaced its long-running Dollar Menu.

CEO Steve Easterbrook said yesterday that he was pleased that the "turn-around is taking hold." McDonald's is trying to win back customers after con-

ceding that it failed to keep up with changing tastes. The company is also looking at stepping up its core menu items. That includes testing a version of its Big Mac with more generous beef patties. Still, the chain is under pressure from intensifying competition. Burger King and Wendy's are also stepping up new offerings and deals, and Starbucks is trying to get into the food game more with breakfast sandwiches and lunch offerings. For the quarter, McDonald's said global sales rose 6.2 percent at established locations. The International

Lead unit, which includes established markets such as the UK and Australia, saw growth of 5.2 percent.

The High Growth unit, which includes China, saw sales increase 3.6 percent. For the quarter ended March 31, McDonald's Corp. earned \$1.1 billion, or \$1.23 per share. That's 7 cents better than analysts had expected for per-share earnings. Revenue was \$5.9 billion, topping the \$5.82 billion that Wall Street had expected. McDonald's shares were up 1.9 percent at \$128.16 in pre-market trading.—AP



BEIJING: Visitors gathering to look at the cars on display during the "Auto China 2014" Beijing International Automotive Exhibition in Beijing. The global car industry gathers for its biggest annual event in China as analysts say the brakes are coming on in the world's number one auto market, with the slowing economy dragging on vehicle demand. — AFP



BEIJING: Workers install a billboard outside the venue for the Beijing Auto Show in Beijing yesterday. The global car industry gathers for its biggest annual event in China as analysts say the brakes are coming on in the world's number one auto market, with the slowing economy dragging on vehicle demand. —AFP

CARMAKERS FOCUS ON CHINA AS SCORCHING MARKET SLOWS STAGE SET FOR BEIJING AUTO SHOW

BEIJING: The global car industry gathers for its biggest annual event in China as analysts say the brakes are coming on in the world's number one auto market, with the slowing economy dragging on vehicle demand. China's auto sales growth is projected to bump along at an average five percent annually over the next five years as a weaker economy takes its toll, consulting firm McKinsey said in a report ahead of the Beijing Auto Show, which opens on Monday.

"After years of double-digit growth, China's auto market is slowing down. A cooling economy is one of the primary factors in the deceleration of what remains the world's largest market for automobiles," McKinsey said.

Domestic and international carmakers face increasingly cutthroat competition for consumers whose preferences have become "more practical", it said. The anti-corruption campaign under President Xi Jinping has reduced the appeal of luxury cars, it added, and "significant numbers" believe they can meet

their transport needs by leasing, co-owning, or renting vehicles.

"There's no sign of momentum," said Michael Dunne, CEO and strategist at Dunne Automotive in Hong Kong. Competition is growing and "the China profit machine is slowing", he said

"Chinese auto sales will be fortunate to grow by five percent this year. It isn't that no one's making profits, but the overall profits per car will be lower in 2016 than they were in 2015."

Passenger vehicle sales in China surged by an average of more than 12 percent annually from 2010 to 2015, but an economic slowdown has reduced the speed, with expansion dropping to 4.7 percent last year. The market is forecast to grow an average five percent a year from 2015 to 2020, according to the McKinsey report.

'Those days are gone'

China's economy grew an annual 6.9 percent last year, the weakest in a quarter of a century, and gross domestic

product slowed further to 6.7 percent in the first quarter.

Still, annual passenger vehicle sales are expected to reach 24 million units in 2020, compared with around 19 million in 2015, McKinsey said. The rise of ride-sharing services such as Uber and dominant local player Didi have introduced new options that reduce the need for new cars, and consumers have become savvier about price-shopping online, putting downward pressure on margins.

So-called "mobility services", like ride-sharing and hailing, could reduce China's annual private vehicle sales by as much as four million by 2030, it said, although that would be offset by two million extra sales of vehicles for such services, it said.

Competition for market share has become more intense as Chinese carmakers have improved their offerings, particularly in the surging SUV segment, where sales leaped by over 50 percent in the first quarter of 2016 as consumers opted for bigger cars on the country's hair-raising roads.

Namrita Chow, principal China analyst at IHS automotive, said that international manufacturers can no longer "overlook the Chinese brands, saying, oh they don't have what it takes to be a competitor. Those days are gone."

But fears of a slowdown are offset to some extent by opportunities created by the rapidly changing industry, analysts said. GM China president Matt Tsien said earlier this year that the global giant "expects the automotive industry to change more over the next five to 10 years than in the past 50 years".

General Motors' president Dan Ammann pointed to "the inevitable march toward autonomous vehicles" as an opportunity, saying: "We think self-driving cars have the ability to significantly make roads safer". More than half of over 3,500 consumers surveyed by McKinsey wanted to upgrade their cars and report co-author Paul Gao told AFP: "The growth is still solid. Five percent out of a big base still makes China a very attractive market." — AFP



BEIJING: A worker adjusts a display on the Buick stand at the venue for the Beijing Auto Show in Beijing yesterday.—AFP

INDIA'S RELIANCE POSTS 16% PROFITS RISE

MUMBAI: India's Reliance Industries yesterday reported a 16 percent rise in quarterly net profit, boosted by improving margins from its key oil refining business.

The Mumbai-based firm owned by Mukesh Ambani, India's wealthiest man, said consolidated net profit for the three months through March climbed to 73.98 billion rupees (\$1.1 billion) from 63.81 billion rupees a year earlier. That marked a rise of 15.9 percent, above the expectations of 15 analysts surveyed by Bloomberg who predicted an increase to 70.1 billion rupees.

"Strong operating performance from the refining and petrochemicals business led to higher operating profits," Reliance said in a statement to the Bombay Stock Exchange.

The company reported that its gross refining margin, the profit earned from each barrel of crude, was at \$10.8 in the just concluded fourth quarter from \$10.1 a year earlier.

"Fiscal year 2015-16 has been a year of outstanding achievement for our downstream hydrocarbon businesses, notwithstanding persisting global economic uncertainty.

"Refining and petrochemicals delivered record operating and financial performances," Ambani added in the statement. Despite the strong refining margins Reliance's revenues came under pressure, slipping almost nine percent to 645.57 billion rupees (\$9.7 billion) from 708.64 billion rupees a year earlier.

Reliance derives most of its earnings from its massive energy operations and is trying to diversify its business. It now owns a supermarket chain and a telecommunications company.

It has already poured billions of dollars into its telecom venture, known as Reliance Jio Infocomm, to buy wireless spectrum and set up infrastructure. Reliance was due to offer 4G mobile services in India from the end of 2015, but so far has limited its operations to the testing stage.

"The commercial roll-out of our Jio services this year will digitally enable a billion Indians and propel growth for India and Reliance," Ambani said in yesterday's statement. — AFP

SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 2016

Kuwait Times Weekender

www.kuwaittimes.net



Music legend Prince dead at 57

SEE PAGE 22



This file photo taken on November 22, 2015 shows musician Prince speaking onstage during the 2015 American Music Awards at Microsoft Theater in Los Angeles, California.

Prince, whose pioneering brand of danceable funk and virtuoso talents made him one of the most influential figures in music, died Thursday at his secluded compound in Minnesota. He was 57. The announcement came just a week after the enigmatic Grammy and Oscar winner-acclaimed for his guitar skills and soaring falsetto—was taken to hospital with a bad bout of influenza, which he made light of after the scare. News of his death prompted a flood of tributes from the worlds of entertainment and politics, from Barack Obama to Mick Jagger, as well as ordinary fans—and even a tweet from NASA of a purple nebula, in Prince's signature color.



This file photo taken on February 09, 2013 shows musician Prince speaks onstage at the 55th Annual GRAMMY Awards at Staples Center on February 10, 2013 in Los Angeles, California.

"It is with profound sadness that I am confirming that the legendary, iconic performer, Prince Rogers Nelson, has died at his Paisley Park residence this morning," said his spokeswoman, Yvette Noel-Schure, without elaborating. The Carver County

Music legend Prince dead at 57



This file photo taken on May 18, 2013 shows musician Prince performing onstage during the 2013 Billboard Music Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, Nevada.

sheriff's office in Minnesota said in a statement that deputies responding to an emergency call had found an "unresponsive" Prince in an elevator. Attempts to resuscitate him failed and he was pronounced dead at 10:07 am (1507 GMT), it said, adding that an investigation had been launched.

Prince became an international sensation in the 1980s, when he popularized the Minneapolis sound, bringing rock and R&B into a readily danceable funk mix. His 1984 album "Purple Rain" is often described as one of the greatest of all time. US President Barack Obama, who seldom comments on



This file photo taken on February 08, 2015 shows Prince presenting an award at the 57th Annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles in this February 8, 2015.

celebrity matters, lamented the loss of a "creative icon." "Few artists have influenced the sound and trajectory of popular music more distinctly, or touched quite so many people with their talent," said Obama, who invited Prince to play a private White House show last year.

"Prince did it all. Funk. R&B. Rock and roll. He was a virtuoso instrumentalist, a brilliant bandleader, and an electrifying performer." The artist—whose huge catalog of hits includes "1999," "Cream" and "Kiss"—lived on the outskirts of Minneapolis, where he kept to himself except when he invited company, often at a moment's notice. He died near his home at his custom-built Paisley Park studio, where he kept his back recordings in vaults and threw the occasional dance party, including one just days ago. He changed his name in the 1990s to an unpronounceable "love symbol" and wrote "slave" on his cheek to protest contractual conditions by his label Warner. He was prolific in his output, recently releasing albums through streaming site Tidal, and had taken to scheduling shows at the last minute to avoid scalpers.

'One of a kind'

"Queen of Soul" Aretha Franklin led an outpouring of tributes from the entertainment industry, describing Prince as "an original and a one of a kind" and insisting his music would live on. "He changed the world!! A true visionary. What a loss. I'm devastated," Madonna, a fellow 1980s icon who recorded with and briefly dated Prince, wrote on Instagram.

Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger tweeted that Prince's "talent was limitless," describing him as "one of the most unique and talented artists of the last 30 years."



This photo taken on May 4, 1994 shows musician Prince performing onstage during the World Music Awards ceremony in Monaco.

Actor Will Smith was among dozens of Hollywood stars who took to social media within an hour of the news breaking, saying he had spoken to Prince the night before and was shocked at the loss of the "beautiful poet" and "true inspiration." Actress Whoopi Goldberg and TV scientist Neil deGrasse Tyson both observed that Prince's death "is what it sounds like When Doves Cry," referring to the lead single from "Purple Rain."

Public Enemy frontman Chuck D lamented that it was like "the Earth is missing a note" while Lenny Kravitz thanked his "musical brother" who had shown him "the possibilities within myself." In Minneapolis, authorities planned to light up a bridge in purple in honor of Prince. First Avenue, the celebrated club where Prince recorded the movie of "Purple Rain," invited fans for a free night to dance to Prince.

Final dance party

Named after his jazz pianist and songwriter father's stage name Prince Rogers, the pop icon was born in Minneapolis, although his family had its roots in Louisiana. The famously private musician has revealed in rare interviews that he suffered from epilepsy as a child but told his mother, jazz singer Mattie Della, that he had been cured by divine intervention. "My mother told me one day I walked in to her and said, 'Mom, I'm not going to be sick anymore,' and she said 'Why?' and I said, 'Because an angel told me so,'" he told PBS in 2009.

"Now, I don't remember saying it, that's just what she told me." Among his many achievements, one of the most frequently cited was a spellbinding guitar solo during a cover of Beatles classic "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" at his induction into the Rock n Roll Hall of Fame in 2004. He was in the middle of a pared-back "Piano and a Microphone" tour when he began experiencing health problems, cancelling a show in Atlanta due to flu. He eventually played a rescheduled show but his private plane made an emergency landing early Friday last week in Illinois as he was returning from Georgia.

The musician invited fans via Twitter to a "dance party" at Paisley Park on Saturday for a token \$10 each in a bid to prove his health problems were behind him, Minnesota's Star Tribune newspaper reported. He played "Chopsticks" on a purple Yamaha piano and a brief instrumental passage, the paper said. "Wait a few days before you waste any prayers," he reportedly told the roughly 200 in attendance. — AFP



This black and white photo taken on June 17, 1987 shows musician Prince performing onstage during his concert at the Bercy venue in Paris.



This photo taken on August 25, 1986 shows musician Prince performing onstage during his concert at the Zenith venue in Paris.



This photo taken on June 16, 1990 shows musician Prince performing onstage during his concert at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris.



This file photo taken on February 4, 2007 shows US musician Prince performing during half-time at Super Bowl XLI at Dolphin Stadium in Miami between the Chicago Bears and the Indianapolis Colts.

Prince and the King of Pop: 1980s rivals



Lorraine Womble reacts during a gathering in Leimert Park in memory of musician Prince on April 21, 2016 in Los Angeles, California.



Candles lit in remembrance to Prince are seen around his star outside the Warner Theatre in Washington, DC.



This file photo taken on June 30, 2011 shows US singer and musician Prince performing on stage at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, outside Paris.

Prince and Michael Jackson were two of the biggest names of the 1980s, musical superstars jostling for supremacy in a golden age of pop. Loyal fans around the world delighted in debating whether Jackson's "Thriller" bested Prince's "1999" and "Purple Rain," and the media liked to play up the idea of a rivalry. Though they denied ever having a beef, tensions between the two men sometimes spilled over into public. One such instance, recorded on grainy videotape, occurred in 1983 during a James Brown concert in Los Angeles.

At one point, the Godfather of Soul sum-

mons Jackson to the stage. He promptly moonwalks across the stage and pulls off some impeccable Brown moves. Then Jackson whispers something to Brown, who demands that Prince join them. The diminutive legend plays a couple of licks on guitar and showed off some deft dance moves, but Jackson notably ignores him. In 1985, Prince was criticized when he pulled out of contributing to Jackson's song "We Are the World," which raised money for famine-stricken Ethiopia. In 1987, Jackson offered Prince a duet on his upcoming album "Bad," but Prince declined. Both born in 1958, the two singers came from very different back-

grounds. Whereas Jackson had been sculpted from his early childhood to become a pop sensation, Prince was a self-made musician from Minneapolis.

The two showmen presented radically different images, with Jackson cutting an iconic figure in his red leather jacket while Prince preferred thongs, ruffled blouses and overcoats. Jackson's pop seemed innocent and clean-cut, in contrast to Prince's lewd lyrics and overtly sexual performances. One anecdote, recounted in the 2015 Jackson biography "MJ: The Genius of Michael Jackson," tells of a time in 2006 when Prince invited Jackson to his show in Las

Vegas, then proceeded to walk into the audience, find Jackson and play "aggressive slap bass" very close to his face.

"Prince has always been a meanie. He's just a big meanie," Jackson supposedly complained afterwards. Prince was the only one of the pair to publicly criticize the other, singing in the 2004 song "Life 'o' The Party" that "My voice is getting higher/And Eye ain't never had my nose done," in a reference to Jackson, who had multiple plastic surgeries. Jackson died in 2009 at age 50 from a lethal overdose of sedatives. Prince died Thursday at his secluded compound in Minnesota. He was 57. — AFP



Christy Bergmon writes a message at a makeshift memorial dedicated to musician Prince at Amoeba Records in Hollywood, California.



A view of the Prince tribute at Times Square Hard Rock Cafe.



People wait to enter a memorial dance party at the First Avenue nightclub.



Guests dance to Prince music as a slide show flashes images of the artist above the stage during a memorial dance party at the First Avenue nightclub.

Ten of Prince's most notable records

Prince produced more than 30 commercially released albums over the course of his career, augmented by an extensive back catalog of work he kept in his vault at Paisley Park. Though he is best known for his records from the 1980s, Prince remained prolific throughout his career, which spanned five decades. Here are some of his landmark releases, in chronological order:

- 1) "For You." 1978. Prince's funk-heavy and ballad-laden debut album showcased the young singer's emerging musical prowess and range.
- 2) "Prince." 1979. Included his first signature tune, "I Wanna Be Your Lover." According to the album credits, Prince played guitar, drums, bass and other instruments.
- 3) "Dirty Mind." 1980. Featuring Prince in a thong and studded overcoat on the cover, the raunchy record highlighted the singer's quirky style and cemented his ascent to pop superstardom.
- 4) "1999." 1982. Included hits "Little Red Corvette" and "Delirious." The album's title track would become an anthem for millennium parties the world over.
- 5) "Purple Rain." 1984. The soundtrack album to a movie of the same name, the record came to be recognized as one of the greatest of all time. The album's main single, "When Doves Cry," went to the top of the US charts.
- 6) "Parade." 1986. Featuring perhaps his most-recognized song ever, "Kiss."
- 7) "Sign o' the Times." 1987. A defining soundtrack to the 1980s, Prince demonstrated his musical scope with a swirling kaleidoscope of sounds.
- 8) "Lovesexy." 1988. Prince sparked controversy by posing nude on the cover of the album, which includes the classic "Alphabet St."
- 9) "3121" 2006. Prince's 31st studio album, debuting at No. 1, marked a major comeback and his first album to hit the top spot since "Batman" in 1989.
- 10) "Plectrumelectrum," 2014. Featuring his backing group 3rdeyegirl, the record showcased Prince's continued hunger to experiment, innovate and entertain, as well as showcase emerging talent. —AFP



Fans light candles outside the Paisley Park residential compound of music legend Prince in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



Los Angeles City Hall is lit up in purple in memory of musician Prince.



Fans pay their respects outside the Paisley Park residential compound of music legend Prince in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Pimp my rickshaw: Indonesian karaoke goes mobile



Rudi Hantoro (yellow shirt) dancing with his clients beside his pedal-powered rickshaw (right), equipped with a powerful karaoke sound system and a small screen that displays videos and lyrics, in the city of Depok on the main island of Java, Indonesia. — AFP photos



Revelers listening as one of them sings beside Rudi Hantoro's pedal-powered rickshaw (behind singer).

An Indonesian rickshaw fitted with a karaoke machine blasts out loud music next to a row of food stalls, as revelers sing and dance enthusiastically nearby. The musical pedicab is among a wave of new innovations helping Indonesians indulge their love of singing wherever they can, from specially equipped trains and buses to services that bring karaoke to your home.

Once considered a morally-questionable pastime that went hand in hand with drinking alcohol and prostitution in the Muslim-majority nation, karaoke has cleaned up its image in recent years and is now a firmly mainstream form of entertainment, as in much of Asia. While the most popular venues for karaoke remain bars, where groups of friends typically sing together in private rooms, the new options are helping crooners belt out tunes in more unlikely settings. Among the new karaoke entrepreneurs is Rudi Hantoro, who has pimped his ped-

al-powered rickshaw, equipping it with a powerful sound system and a small screen that displays videos and lyrics.

"This is karaoke for everyone, bus drivers and housewives, students and taxi drivers," the 65-year-old told AFP, as a tattooed man sang a rock ballad and his friends danced alongside his vehicle. Hantoro operates his "Karaoke Bike" in the city of Depok, on the main island of Java, cycling to people's houses when he receives an order, or setting up on a street corner. One of his regular spots is by food stalls that sit next to a minibus depot and train station, where he has a loyal band of followers, made up of mainly bus drivers.

The cost is reasonable—three songs for 5,000 rupiah (\$0.35) or seven for 10,000 rupiah—and his offerings include Indonesian rock, English-language classics and "dangdut", a type of local pop music famed for its lewd lyrics and raunchy dance moves. "When I have had a fight with my

wife, I sing sad songs here," said Abdul Haris Jamaludin, a 28-year-old minibus driver and regular customer.

'Karaoke whenever, wherever'

Not all the new karaoke innovations are so competitively-priced, however, with some aimed at a growing army of consumers, whose wealth has increased in recent years on the back of strong economic growth.

One such option is train carriages fitted with karaoke systems, which can be rented by groups who want to hold a party on the move for between 20 million and 40 million rupiah (\$1,500 to \$3,000). There is a choice of 20- to 28-seater carriages, which used to be part of a presidential train and are decorated with paraphernalia from the many different cultures found in the archipelago.

Once rented, a carriage is fitted to a train making an already scheduled journey across

Java, and there are several routes to choose from. In Jakarta, a party bus, "Royale VIP", is available for hire and boasts a karaoke machine, two poles for dancing and laser lights, so revelers can party as they battle through the capital's notorious traffic. For those wishing to enjoy a spot of crooning without leaving the comfort of their homes, there are several offerings in the capital, including "Splash Mobile Karaoke".

With the catchline "Karaoke whenever, wherever, you choose the place, we get everything ready", the service was set up two years ago and business is now booming, according to founder Benny Navaro.

He provides music for a range of events, including weddings, birthdays, farewell parties and family reunions. "Indonesians can be shy at live-music events, but when they are given a big screen with lyrics, they push aside their worries about sounding out of tune and get down to singing," Navaro said. — AFP

Robert Downey Jr to appear in 'Spider-Man: Homecoming'

Robert Downey Jr will appear in Sony's "Spider-Man: Homecoming" as Tony Stark. Following the great chemistry Downey and "Spider-Man" star Tom Holland had in "Captain America: Civil War", Sony and Marvel knew they had to work hard to get these two back together for the "Spider-Man" reboot. Sources say the size of the role is unknown at this time. Sony and Marvel had no comment.



Jon Watts is directing "Homecoming" from a script by John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein. Kevin Feige and former Sony exec Amy Pascal are producing the movie, which focuses on a teenage Peter Parker's high school days. Plot details are still being heavily guarded. Holland's

Spider-Man will first make an appearance in the upcoming "Captain America: Civil War" before his standalone pic. Production on "Homecoming" is expected to start this summer. The pic opens on July 7, 2017 with Tony Revolori and Laura Harrier also on board. Michael Keaton had been tapped as the villains but sources now say his deal may not work and the search may be on yet again for a new antagonist. Downey is repped by CAA and "Captain America: Civil War" opens on May 7. — Reuters

Anderson joins Johnson's 'Baywatch' movie

She's back. Pamela Anderson will appear in the "Baywatch" film revival. The actress and model became a household name starring as CJ Parker on the original iconic television series. Anderson's casting news was announced via Dwayne Johnson's Instagram late Thursday night. "She introduced the world to 'CJ Parker' and became one of the most iconic characters of a generation - for the most successful TV show of all time," Johnson posted on his Instagram, along with a photo that appeared to be snapped on set. "A pleasure to welcome (as gorgeous as ever) Pamela Anderson to our #Baywatch cast. We couldn't have made this movie without you. Welcome home. Thrilled you had a blast with us!"

Related 'Baywatch' Movie Casts Model Kelly Rohrbach in Pamela Anderson's Role Anderson played the role of CJ Parker on the original 1989 show from 1992 to 1997. However, in the movie, she won't be reprising the same role, as model Kelly Rohrbach is portraying Parker in the reboot. Anderson's role is unknown. Aside from Rohrbach, Johnson and Zac Efron, the



Dwayne Johnson and Pamela Anderson

Paramount flick stars "Quantico's" Priyanka Chopra, supermodel Charlotte McKinney, Alexandra Daddario, Hannibal Buress and Ilfenesh Hadera as Johnson's love interest.

In addition to starring, Johnson will produce the movie with his Seven Bucks Productions partner Dany Garcia. Beau Flynn and Ivan Reitman are also producing with Michael Berk, Douglas Schwartz and Greg Bonann. Damian Shannon and Mark Swift wrote the latest draft of the script. Seth Gordon is directing. Plot details on the "Baywatch" film adapta-

tion are being kept under wraps, though first footage from the movie was recently shown at CinemaCon, teasing many four-letter words and racy comedy bits.

The "Baywatch" movie hits theaters on May 19, 2017. She introduced the world to "CJ Parker" and became one of the most iconic characters of a generation - for the most successful TV show of all time. A pleasure to welcome (as gorgeous as ever) Pamela Anderson to our #BAYWATCH cast. We couldn't have made this movie without you. Welcome home. Thrilled you had a blast with us!

Armenians confront Hollywood with 'forgotten genocide'

As the world prepares to mark the Armenian genocide, filmmakers and musicians are attempting to raise awareness among an American public largely ignorant of one of modern history's darkest episodes. It is 101 years on Sunday since Turkey's Ottoman government began arresting minority community leaders and setting in motion a campaign of systematic slaughter that had left 1.5 million Christian Armenians dead by the early 1920s. Turned out of their homes and sent on death marches through the Mesopotamian desert, they were stripped naked and forced to walk until they died of thirst or collapsed and were shot dead.

At the same time, the ruling "Young Turks" created death squads to drown countless thousands in rivers, throw them off cliffs, crucify them and burn them alive, raping women and forcing them to join harems or serve as slaves. The collective trauma has been transferred from the original victims to every subsequent generation of Armenians who have carried the unresolved suffering of their ancestors to their new homes across Europe and the United States. On Sunday thousands of Armenians are expected to rally in Los Angeles-home to the largest diaspora community in the world-to demand that the Turkish government finally recognize the massacres as a genocide. Yet there is frustration among the campaigners that ordinary Californians may not have even heard of the events they refer to as "Medz Yeghern"-or "The Great Crime." French-Armenian filmmaker Robert Guediguian's "Don't Don't Tell Me The Boy Was Mad," which gets its US premiere yesterday at COLCOA, the world's largest festival of French film, staged annually in LA, aims to change that.

'Unaware'

"I don't think the rest of America is conscious of what happened. But it's not only America, it's also Europe and a lot of Western countries. They are ignorant of the story. They are not aware," he told AFP. "It's only in places where there is a big Armenian community where people have their voices heard about this subject... Cinema can absolutely educate people and make them aware of what is happening in the world." "Don't Tell Me The Boy Was Mad" is set around the Armenian diaspora in 1970s and 80s Marseille, France and follows a wave of bombings and assassinations perpetrated by Armenian radicals against Turkish targets across Europe in response to the genocide.

Guediguian based his story on "The Bomb," an autobiographical novel by Jose Antonio Gurriaran, who was semi-paralyzed by an Armenian terrorist attack in Madrid but became a leading advocate for international recognition of what he called "the forgotten genocide." Despite a history of support for laws formally recognizing the Armenian genocide, US President Barack Obama-accused of kowtowing to Turkish sensitivities-hasn't used the term to refer to the killings while in office.

"Barack Obama took the stand that most people in politics do. They come to the community and say 'we will absolutely recognize that your community or people have been in a genocide.' But then once they are elected and become president they don't," said Guediguian. Many of the stories of abuse related by characters in the film are derived from the 62-year-old's own family history, passed down from his grandparents' generation. "In the movie Anoush tells the story of her mother who had been raped several times before she made it to France. This story really happened, to my great aunt," Guediguian told AFP.

Victims forever

The director, who describes reaction to his movie as "very warm," is looking for a US distributor while in Los Angeles for the nine-day COLCOA. Meanwhile a second film about the genocide, "Armenia, My Love," had its premiere in Pasadena, California last week, also opening at several Los Angeles locations including Glendale, home to around 80,000 of the 200,000-plus Armenians in Los Angeles. Written and directed by Romanian American Diana Angelson, who also stars, the film tells the story of a family living in the occupied territory of the Armenian homeland, now eastern Turkey, in 1915. —AFP



(From left) Harvey Keitel, Michael Phillips, Paul Schrader, Cybill Shepherd, Jodie Foster, Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese attend the "Taxi Driver" 40th anniversary screening during the 2016 Tribeca Film Festival at Beacon Theatre on April 21, 2016 in New York City. — AFP

Documentary turns Disney-loving autistic man into a star

Owen Suskind had largely retreated into silence in the years after his autism began to manifest, around age 3. Three painfully mute years later, and after countless rapt hours spent watching Disney animated movies, a word broke through. "Juicervose!" His parents, Ron (a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist) and Cornelia, initially thought he was asking for juice. But he wasn't. He was repeating back a line from "The Little Mermaid," a scene he often rewound to watch again, where Ursula the sea witch sings "Poor Unfortunate Souls." She sings, "It won't cost you much, just your voice!" ("juicervose")

It was just the first phrase from a Disney film that Owen would go on to mimic, but it was the first hint of his rediscovery of language. For the Suskinds, it was a life line back to their son. A few weeks later, Ron picked up a puppet of Iago, the parrot from "Aladdin," and had his first conversation with his son in years - albeit one doing his best Gilbert Gottfried impression. Roger Ross Williams' documentary "Life Animated," playing this week at the Tribeca Film Festival, chronicles Owen's remarkable growth, aided by the colorful, underdog sidekicks of Disney movies. The film, inspired by Ron Suskind's book "Life Animated: A Story of Sidekicks, Heroes and Autism," is both about Owen's impressive maturity and the power of movies, of stories, to connect.

Cheering crowds

The film, which will open in theaters July 8, has been a hit on the festival circuit where 19-year-old Owen has bounded down theater aisles, high-fiving cheering crowds. Williams won the directing award at the Sundance Film Festival, and the film picked up the audience award at the Full

Frame Documentary Film Festival. Owen, the most ardent of movie lovers, is now a star himself. "I've never experienced anything like I'm experiencing with this film," says Williams. "What I hope is that it not only gives parents hope, but it inspires everyone to realize the potential of people living with autism. There are all these gifts they have to offer to the world." Speaking

crossroads: He's graduating from school, moving out of his parent's house, finding (and losing) a girlfriend and getting a job at (where else?) a movie theater. He speaks knowingly about why Disney films so resonate for him. "I live in these characters and they live in me," he says. "It speaks to me. It helps me with my own life, to find my place in the world, to touch a lot of people."



This image released by the Tribeca Film Festival shows Owen Suskind in a scene from the documentary, "Life, Animated," being shown at the Tribeca Film Festival. — AP

by phone from Los Angeles, Owen cheerfully greeted this reporter. (In Los Angeles, Owen visited the Disney Animation studios and met animators whose credits he knows thoroughly.)

"Hi Jake," said Owen. "That's also the name of the hilarious, awesome, cool, wisecracking kangaroo rat from Disney's 'The Rescuers Down Under.'" Owen had what's called "regressive autism," which only reveals itself once a child is a toddler. "Life Animated" captures Owen at a universal

At Tribeca, "Life Animated" has particular meaning. This year's festival has been partly defined by the backlash provoked by its programming of an anti-vaccination documentary, "Vaxxed," by a discredited British doctor who maintains that vaccinations can cause autism. (Among others, the Centers for Disease Control emphatically state that there's no link between the two.) "Life Animated" is a joyful antidote to that episode, which culminated in Tribeca pulling "Vaxxed." —AP

Polish experts return to Syria's Palmyra to restore famed lion statue

When two Polish heritage experts first restored the famed lion statue in Syria's Palmyra in 2005, they never imagined they would see it smashed to pieces only a decade later. "We did new restoration, new presentation of this lion, the Lion of Al-Lat. And after, I thought, I'm doing this (to last) for over 200 years or 300 years, maybe more," archeologist Bartosz Markowski told AFP.

"But it appears it was only 10 years." Markowski spoke to AFP at the entrance of Palmyra's museum, where the striking 15-tonne Lion of Al-Lat lay in large, jagged pieces. It was smashed by the Islamic State group, which overran Palmyra known as the "Pearl of the Desert" in May 2015.

During their ten-month rule over the city, the jihadists executed hundreds of civilians and blew up some of Palmyra's most beautiful temples and funerary towers in the old city.



Bartosz Markowski, from the University of Warsaw's archeology institute, inspects a broken statue at Palmyra museum.

Palmyra's museum lies in the residential parts of the city. The destroyed Lion of al-Lat at the museum's entrance serves as a harbinger for the destruction inside: statues lay in pieces blanketed in dust and debris. Syria's government forces recaptured the city on March 27, and experts immediately set to work assessing the damage to the city's historic ruins. Markowski, from the University of Warsaw's archeology institute, was the first foreign archeologist to enter Palmyra after the regime win. He arrived in Palmyra with his colleague Robert Zukowski, from the Polish Academy of Sciences, in mid-April for a one-week mission to evaluate the damage.

Polish 'heroes'

The three-metre-tall Lion of al-Lat dated back to the 1st century BC. It was first discovered in 1977 by a Polish archeological mission at the temple of Al-Lat, a pre-Islamic Arabian goddess. Nearly four decades later, his hair and clothes covered in dust, Markowski patiently catalogued the broken pieces of the limestone monument. "This lion is like our baby. We have had a sentimental relationship with this statue ever since we came in 2005 to help restore Palmyra," Markowski said. As soon as he and Zukowski heard IS was pushed out of Palmyra, "we decided to return at the invitation of the Directorate of Antiquities and Museums of Syria," he added.

Maamun Abdulkarim, the head of Syria's antiquities department, says the two Polish workers are "heroes." Markowski said he felt he "had to come back as soon as possible." "We were excited because we had not seen any photos since one year, or almost one year, since Daesh came here," he said, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "The first pictures that we saw (were from) one week ago. And we saw that there is something to do here." He told his wife he was travelling to Egypt, "because she would not have let me leave if she knew I was coming to Palmyra." More than 270,000 people have been killed and millions have been forced to flee their homes since the conflict erupted in March 2011.

After being catalogued by Markowski, each piece was carefully carried by Zukowski and a Syrian colleague into large boxes. The containers will head to Damascus, where restoration can begin. His hands covered in blisters, Zukowski took a photograph of each broken slab of rock. — AFP



This file photo shows Vespa's scooters of different colors. — AFP photos

Italy says happy 70th birthday to iconic scooter

Design classic and symbol of the "dolce vita", the Vespa turns 70 this weekend and Italy's most celebrated scooter is buzzing along nicely after tripling sales in the last decade. It was on a Vespa that Gregory Peck pursued Audrey Hepburn in "Roman Holiday", the 1953 film that helped make the marque synonymous internationally with the Roman capital. But it was actually in Florence that the wasp-shaped two-wheeler was born, Enrico Piaggio having registered the patent in the Tuscan capital on April 23, 1946.

Seventy years later, more than 18 million models have been sold and Piaggio's objective of reinventing the family aeronautical company has been realized and then some. With the company still dealing with the damage done to its production facilities by World War II bombing, Piaggio asked one of his engineers, Corradino d'Ascanio, to create a motorcycle that would be both easy to produce from the materials at hand and inexpensive for consumers.

The simple brief proved inspired, as did the choice of d'Ascanio, who never made any secret of the fact that he found the motorbikes of the time uncomfortable, cumbersome and dirty. The engineer addressed each issue one by one and the result was a scooter with a revolutionary design that remain barely untouched to this day. It was an instant success. From sales of 2,284 in 1946, annual production increased to nearly 20,000 within two years, and to 60,000 in 1950. By the mid-50s sales had tripled again and Vespas were being manufactured in 13 countries.

Retro style

"The Vespa was better than a motor bike: it had a body with a front apron that protected riders from dust, the mud

and the rain," said Patrice Verges, a historian of the automobile industry. "It had small wheels which made it possible to carry a spare with you at a time when punctures were a regular hazard because of nails dropping off horse-shoes. "And people liked the design and the distinctive noise, which was like that of a wasp." People also liked the price. "In the 1950s and 1960s, you bought a Vespa because you could not afford a car," added Verges. As the Italian econo-

170,000 last year and the allure of the Vespa brand means Piaggio can command higher prices than rivals. "The Vespa is still a legend," is how Marco Lambri, the current design director, puts it. "It represents the best of Italian design and the (engineering) genius that allowed aeronautical technology to be applied to the creation of a scooter that has revolutionized our way of getting around."

Marketing manager Davide Zanoli



A model sitting on a Vespa Liberty S scooter at the Indian Auto Expo 2016 in Greater Noida.

my began to boom in the 1980s, life got tougher for the manufacturer. Obligatory helmets made the riding experience safer but less romantic and families were able to opt for cars as their main means of getting about.

Since 2004 however the brand has been undergoing a worldwide revival thanks to a combination of enthusiasm for the Vespa's retro style and its utility for moving quickly around increasingly congested cities. From 58,000 units in 2004, production, now concentrated in Italy, Vietnam and India, reached nearly

adds: "It is not just a vehicle, it is an icon of Italian style, elegant and irreverent at the same time." To celebrate the 70th birthday hundreds of Vespa aficionados will gather this weekend at Pontedera near Pisa, where the scooter has been produced continuously since 1946. Among them will be Carlo Bozzetti, president of the Vespa Club of Milan and proud owner of six different models from different eras. "I use one every day, for work, holidays and leisure," said the 59-year-old. "The Vespa has been part of my life for 40 years." — AFP



Chinese artist Liu Xiaodong poses during the media preview of his exhibition "Migration".

Liu Xiaodong, the acclaimed Chinese contemporary artist, has put Europe's migrant crisis at the center of an exhibition of new work which started on show yesterday in Florence. Entitled "Migrazioni" (Migrations), the collection features a total of 182 multi-themed works including paintings, photography, photo-painting, explanatory text and a video documentary. It is being billed by its sponsors, Florence's innovative Palazzo Strozzi Foundation, as one of the art world's most significant responses to date to the unprecedented wave of refugees arriving on Europe's southern shores. The exhibition is due to run until June 19 in the Tuscan capital's Palazzo Strozzi, just a short bus ride away from Prato, the Florence suburb that is now home to one of the biggest Chinese communities in Europe.

What began as an invitation to Liu to spend time in the region examining the relationship between Prato's Chinese population and broader Tuscan society evolved into something much larger when the artist decided to see for himself the journeys being made by Syrian refugees trying to reach northern Europe via Turkey, Greece and the Balkans. The result is a thought-provoking collection that is partly an illustrated diary of the artist's trips from Florence to the frontline of the migrant crisis, and partly a reflection on the nature of migration itself, seen through the twin optics of Prato's Chinatown and the timeless beauty of Tuscany's undulating, cypress-dotted countryside. "There are two extremes of migration

converging in Europe at the moment," Liu told AFP in an interview on the eve of the exhibition's opening. "In Prato there is this very quiet, not very visible presence. And then there is this immigration, that we hear about every day, of people fleeing from war. And I wanted to bring these two ideas together in one exhibition."

The promised land

Among the most striking works in the collection is a huge painting of a classic Tuscan landscape seen from the edge of a swimming pool tastefully cut into the hillside. In the foreground, two hunting dogs look on languidly, perhaps a little curious but not that interested, as a partly deflated piece of a black rubber dinghy bobs incongruously in the water, like the last remnant of a migrant boat sinking. "For people in so many parts of the world, Europe is like a promised land," Liu explains. "Even though migration has been an integral part of the history of humanity, this huge wave, this influx of refugees has definitely caused some problems for European society."

"And this image of the deflating dinghy was a way of injecting the problems and the unresolved questions that migration brings into a paradisiacal, idyllic setting." Liu said his visits to Prato had left him surprised by the slow pace of its Chinese community's integration into Italian life. "They have been there mostly for at least a couple of generations and still they are very closed off. They have their own customs and traditions and are still very separate from the local population. This model of migration is also problematic."

The Palazzo Strozzi's director general Arturo Galansino said Liu's work was a long overdue attempt by the art world to make sense of the profound changes brought about by migration without seeking to take sides in the day-to-day political battles over whether Europe should close its frontiers or open its gates. "The exhibition shows how the artist's eye moved from the local to the international. He wanted to capture what is happening from every possible perspective—in the streets of Prato, at the main train station in Vienna, in a port in Turkey—it is all part of one bigger picture. "He does not make a judgment, he just presents the reality. And that shows us how art can help us to understand something very complex in a new way."—AFP

A Chinese eye delivers new perspectives on Europe's migrant crisis



A woman looks at "Chinatown 4" oil canvas painting by Chinese artist Liu Xiaodong.



A man looks at "Chinatown 1" oil canvas painting by Chinese artist Liu Xiaodong.



A man walks by "Chinatown 2" and "Refugees 2" (right) oil canvas paintings by Chinese artist Liu Xiaodong.



A woman looks at "Chinatown 4" oil canvas painting by Chinese artist Liu Xiaodong.



Photos shows two pairs of children's shoes on display inside the "Birth Room" at Shakespeare's Birthplace.



Shakespeare's Birthplace exterior, a restored 16th century home in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, where it's believed William Shakespeare was born in 1564.—AP photos

Stratford-upon-Avon marks 400 years since Shakespeare died

"All the world's a stage," wrote William Shakespeare, who died 400 years ago this week. But he played out much of his life in one small English market town: Stratford-upon-Avon. "It's the home of one of the greatest writers who's ever lived, whose works are translated into all the world languages ... and it's therefore a magnet to come to understand a little bit about what made William Shakespeare, what formed him, to find out about the history of his time, and to celebrate his on-going legacy," said Dr Paul Edmondson, head of research at Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

Shakespeare was born here in 1564 in a half-timbered house in Henley Street. The home has been restored to look as it would have when Shakespeare was 10. His father John, who was appointed mayor of the town in 1568, had a glove-making workshop that's been recreated downstairs, while the room where Shakespeare was believed to have been born is upstairs. "Childbirth is always difficult, but even worse 400 years ago and baby Shakespeare was lucky to survive, because there was plague in the town the year he was born and the parish register is rammed full with burials for that year," said Edmondson. Some 2 million tourists visit the town annually but it's not just Shakespeare's Birthplace that they come to see.

Fame and fortune

Around 5.5 kilometers (3 miles) away in the village of Wilmcote, tourists travel back in time to experience the sights, sounds and smells of a 16th century Tudor farm. It was here that Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, grew up. It's thought Shakespeare would have spent some of his childhood helping with tasks around the farm. Literary experts believe Wilmcote makes an appearance as "Wincot" in Shakespeare's comedy "The Taming of the Shrew".

"He was always in some way a country lad at heart. He loved this town, he perhaps hated this town a little bit, obviously forging his career in London with the professional theaters," said Edmondson. During the late 1580s and early 1590s, Shakespeare left Stratford to seek fame and fortune in London. In 1597, he gained enough success to purchase a new family home in Stratford-upon-Avon called

"New Place," where he's believed to have written many of his famous plays.

This year is an important one for Stratford-upon-Avon and its 26,000 residents. The town is marking 400 years since Shakespeare's death on April 23 with new exhibitions, theater performances and a colorful parade through its busy streets. "The buzz around this has been incredible, even greater than we had for the 450th anniversary of his birth which was literally only two years ago," said Helen Peters, chief executive of Shakespeare's England.

Human experiences

Much attention will be focused on Stratford-upon-Avon's Holy Trinity Church, a parish church on the banks of the River Avon. Church records show he was baptized there on April 26, 1564 and buried there on April 25, 1616, two days after his death. Rev Patrick Taylor, the vicar, says visitors initially behold "a beautiful medieval parish church ... But once they've made their way up here into the chancel, then they can see Shakespeare's grave on the floor just in front of the high altar, then his bust up on the wall there which put in by his relatives, shortly after his burial." Above Shakespeare's grave, a warning is inscribed on his gravestone: "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear, To dig the dust enclosed here. Blessed be the man that spares these stones, And cursed be he that moves my bones."

Shakespeare is buried flanked by his wife, Anne Hathaway, who died in 1623, and Thomas Nash, the first husband of his granddaughter Elizabeth. "There's a lot of interest in this place, the final resting place of Shakespeare," Taylor said. "People seem to have a connection with this playwright who wrote about human emotions and human experiences that people over the world relate to." Mark Kimmons, visiting with his family from Anchorage, Alaska, says he grew up being taught Shakespeare's plays and sonnets. "I was thinking that he was famous in his day," Kimmons said, "but not nearly as famous as he is now, so many years after his death."—AP



A bust of William Shakespeare which sits above the famous British playwright's grave at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.



Photo shows William Shakespeare's grave at Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon, England.

CHINESE TAKEOVER TARGET OPERA SOFTWARE EMBEDS BROWSER SECURITY TOOL

BEIJING/OSLO: Norwegian online browser and advertising firm Opera Software, the takeover target of a Chinese consortium of Internet firms, has embedded a tool in its latest desktop app that can be used to circumvent censorship.

Opera said on its blog on Thursday that the newest version of its desktop Internet browser, which is targeted at developers, includes a free built-in Virtual Private Network (VPN), which can be used for getting round online censorship. "Regarding China we already have

servers in China and are running this through a Chinese IT company which is in compliance with Chinese laws," Opera CEO Lars Boilesen told Reuters. "China is not a huge market for us on desktop. So this launch has nothing to do with China," he said.

Chinese Internet companies are required to censor any content the ruling Communist Party deems unlawful, a sweeping power which has been used to block content that clashes with the official party line.

China frequently upgrades its

Internet censorship mechanism, which is widely considered the world's most sophisticated and known as the Great Firewall. This has often rendered VPNs impotent in China.

Opera is the subject of a \$1.28 billion acquisition by a consortium of Chinese firms, including web search and security firm Qihoo 360 Technology Co Ltd and Beijing Kunlun Tech Co.

Last week the group said it had received acceptances on its offer for 72.19 percent of the shares in Opera, below the required level of over 90 per-

cent, and had extended the deadline for acceptances to May 24. The deal also needs to be approved by the Chinese and US authorities.

Qihoo 360 and Kunlun declined to comment when contacted by Reuters on Thursday about whether Opera's new VPN tool might affect its bid. Asked whether installing a built-in VPN in its browser could be a problem for the deal, Opera's Boilesen said it would be "completely unproblematic", given it was running it through a Chinese IT company already. — Reuters

HAWK-EYE GURU WANTS UMPIRES TO EDGE IN FRONT

LONDON: The inventor of the Hawk-Eye ball-tracking system is behind a new device he hopes will end the bitterness caused in club games by batsmen who refuse to 'walk'. Paul Hawkins has developed a sensor capable of detecting the slightest nick and hopes to make it available to amateur players at all levels. The size of a small coin, the device can be fixed easily to a bat and linked to an app on the umpire's smartphone.

Umpires then attach the smartphone to their coats and record each ball using the phone's camera, giving them access to instant replays and, in the case of lbw (leg before wicket) appeals, showing where the ball had pitched and whether it would have hit the stumps.

Hawkins told Thursday's Times he was close to making this system available for public use. Although the sensors cost £25 (\$36, 32 euros) he hoped they could be sold more cheaply.

The Hawk-Eye tracking system, unveiled in 2000 and based on missile guidance technology, predicts the path of the ball after it has hit the batsman's pad and it now forms part of international cricket's Decision Review System (DRS). DRS also includes expensive aids such as 'Hotspot' or 'Snicko', which are designed to determine whether a batsman has in fact edged the ball.

In amateur club cricket, where members of the batting side are often called upon to umpire whilst their team-mates are batting, few things can cause as much rancour as disputed caught behind and lbw decisions.

Many English clubs encourage batsmen to 'walk'—that is leave the pitch if they know they have hit the ball and been caught without waiting for the umpire's decision.

However, there have always been batsmen who've insisted on standing their ground and Hawkins's resolve to come up with a new system was strengthened by his experience of playing in a club league match in Hampshire, southern England, last year. —AFP

FBI PAID OVER \$1MN FOR IPHONE HACK

WASHINGTON: The Federal Bureau of Investigation paid hackers more than \$1 million to break into the iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino attackers, director James Comey said Thursday. Asked at the Aspen Security Forum in London how much the US agency paid for help to get into the phone, Comey replied, "A lot."

"More than I will make in the remainder of this job, which is seven years and four months, for sure. But it was, in my view, worth it," Comey said. Based on Comey's salary, listed at about \$14,900 a month, that comes to more than \$1.3 million for the hack, the results of which have still not been divulged.

A video of Comey's talk was streamed on the Aspen Security Institute website. Apple and the FBI were headed for a court showdown setting national security needs against privacy principles after the agency took the smartphone maker to court to force it to break into the encryption-protected iPhone 5C.

The phone had been used by Syed Farook, who along with his wife Tashfeen Malik slaughtered 14 people at a party in San Bernardino, California on December 2 before dying in a firefight with police.

Apple, backed by a broad coalition of technology giants like Google and Facebook, was fiercely opposed to assisting the government in unlocking the phone on grounds it would have wide-reaching implications on digital security and privacy.

Comey said the litigation in the case



had inspired a "marketplace around the world" for people to break into an Apple 5C running iOS 9, the phone Farook used.

"Somebody approached us from outside of the government and said, 'We think we've come up with a solution.' And we tested and tested and tested it, and then we purchased it."

He acknowledged the fundamental principles in conflict in the case and said

he was glad that, at least in this instance, a way outside the court was found. "Litigation is not a great place to resolve hard values questions that implicate all kinds of things that all of us care about," he said. "We have a problem where all of us share a set of values that are in conflict. We have to figure out how to resolve privacy and security on the Internet and on our devices with public safety." — AFP

GOOGLE/ALPHABET PROFIT FALLS SHORT OF FORECASTS

SAN FRANCISCO: Google parent Alphabet on Thursday reported profit climbed 20 percent, but the rise fell short of investor expectations, sending shares sharply lower. Alphabet said that net income hit \$4.2 billion in the first three months of this year, but shares sank five percent to \$721.89 in after-market trades that followed release of the report.

Revenue in the quarter rose to nearly \$20.3 billion compared to \$17.26 billion in the same period a year earlier. The results "represent a tremendous start to the year," said Alphabet chief financial officer Ruth Porat.

"We're thoughtfully pursuing big bets and building exciting new technologies, in Google and our Other Bets, that position us well for

long-term growth."

In the financial report, Alphabet separates its money-making engine Google from "other bets," a category that covers the California-based company's investments in diversifying into areas such as self-driving cars, high-speed Internet and smart homes.

Revenue from Other Bets more than doubled in the recently ended quarter to \$166 million, but an overall loss of \$802 million was booked, according to the earnings report.

The earnings came a day after the European Union opened a new antitrust battle with Google, charging the US tech giant with abusing the dominance of its Android mobile phone operating system.

The charges, a year after Brussels took on Google over its search engine, come as a huge blow to one of the company's most strategic businesses and could change the face of the global smartphone sector.

EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said Google had used practices such as making manufacturers pre-install its market-leading search engine as the default in phones.

Google said it would work with the EU to show that consumers benefitted from Android.

Alphabet earlier this year briefly vaulted past Apple as the world's most valuable company, but on Thursday the iPhone maker was

well ahead of its Silicon Valley rival in market capitalization.

The reorganization last year under Alphabet was aimed at providing more transparency to investors as the company moved into new sectors which may not deliver profits, and led to expectations that some of these "moonshot" operations could be discontinued or spun off.

Alphabet subsidiaries include Google, Nest Labs, and Google X labs devoted to big-vision new technologies such as self-driving cars, along with such projects as smart "Google Glass" spectacles, drones, health care and Google TV — none of which has become a major source of income. — AFP

UBER DRIVERS REMAIN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS AS LAWSUIT SETTLED

SAN FRANCISCO: Uber has agreed to pay up to \$100 million to settle a class-action lawsuit which resolves a major challenge to its business model by allowing the ride-hailing service to keep its California and Massachusetts drivers as independent contractors.

The lawsuit had claimed that Uber drivers are employees and thus entitled to reimbursement of expenses. The case against Uber had been closely watched in Silicon Valley, as other companies in the on-demand tech economy share Uber's reliance on independent contractors. The class action had been scheduled for a trial in San Francisco federal court in June.

"We realize that some will be disappointed not to see this case go to trial," said Shannon Liss-Riordan, an attorney for drivers. However, Liss-Riordan said the plaintiff drivers faced significant risks of losing if the case moved forward, particularly because a federal appeals court had recently agreed to review an order allowing Uber drivers to sue as a group. Nothing about the settlement prevents a future court, or U.S. labor authorities, from deeming Uber drivers as employees, she said in a statement.

DRIVER DEACTIVATION

Out of the \$100 million proposed payment, \$84 million is guaranteed to drivers. Uber could also pay an additional \$16 million, but only if the company's valuation grows by 150 percent above its December 2015 financing round within a year after any initial public offering.

Uber was valued at \$62.5 billion in that December funding round. Uber agreed to some changes in its business practices, including the institution of a policy for deactivation of drivers, chief executive Travis Kalanick said in a blog post about the settlement. Some drivers had long complained that Uber arbitrarily terminated users from its platform. Uber is "pleased" that the deal "recognizes that drivers should remain as independent contractors, not employees," Kalanick said in the post.

The company also agreed to help create a drivers' association in both states. Liss-Riordan said that while such groups are not officially a union, they can act like a union in bringing grievances to management's attention. The settlement is similar to a separate agreement announced with Lyft drivers earlier this year, though the Uber agreement is much larger given that Uber has many more drivers. Over 450,000 US drivers currently use the app each month, Kalanick said in the blog post. The Uber deal must be approved by U.S. District Judge Edward Chen in San Francisco. — Reuters

TWO APPLE SERVICES BLOCKED IN CHINA

BEIJING: Apple Inc's online book and film services have gone dark in China, after Beijing introduced regulations in March imposing strict curbs on online publishing, particularly for foreign firms.

Attempts by Reuters yesterday to access Apple's iBooks Store and iTunes Movies services were met with a message in Chinese saying they were "unusable".

China's media regulator, the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, demanded Apple halt the service, the New York Times reported, citing two unnamed people. The regulator did not respond to a faxed request from Reuters for comment. "We hope to make books and movies available again to our customers in China as soon as possible," said a Beijing-based Apple spokeswoman, who declined to provide further comment.

This is not the first time an Apple service has been made unavailable in China. The company's News app, launched last year, can be used in many countries by people who downloaded the app from the U.S., United Kingdom or Australia App Stores. But those people trying to access the service on the mainland are shown the message "News isn't supported in your current region".

The Apple spokeswoman in Beijing said News had only launched in the U.S., United Kingdom and Australia, but declined to comment on how the app could still be used in places like South Korea and Hong Kong but was blocked in mainland China.

Apple's second-largest market by revenue is Greater China, which includes Taiwan and Hong Kong, driven by the iPhone's popularity in the world's biggest smartphone market.

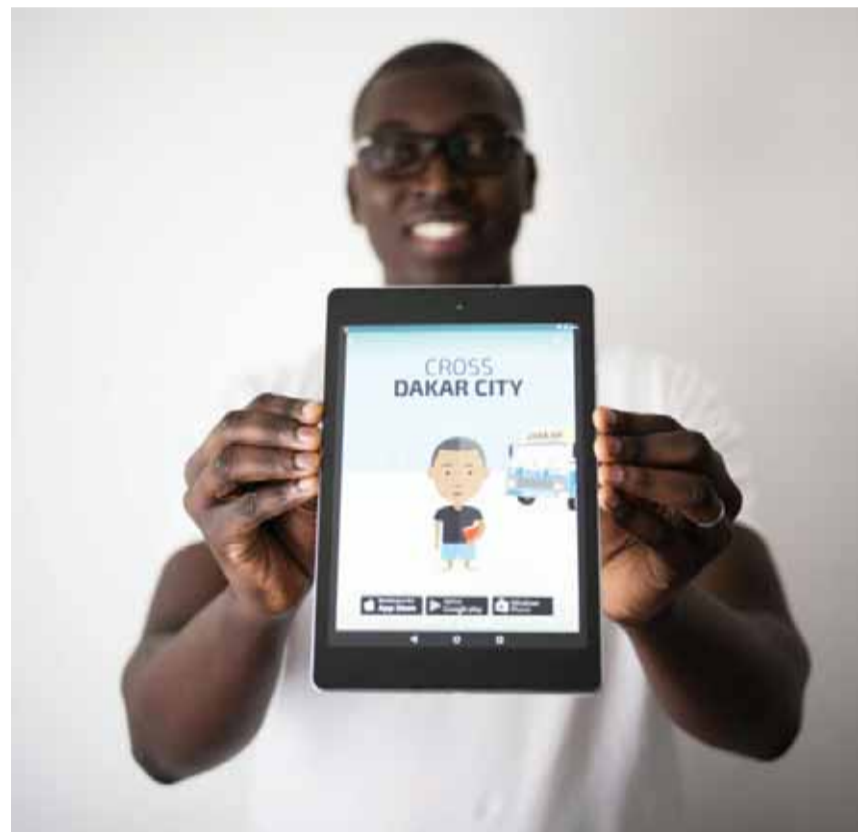
But the company has at times met with official resistance from Beijing, with state media once branding the U.S. tech behemoth's iPhone a danger to national

security. In March, regulations came into effect that prohibit foreign ownership and joint ventures in online publishing and stipulate that all content be stored on servers in China. The move sparked fear of greater curbs on foreign businesses.

In an effort to shape public opinion, President Xi Jinping's government has implemented an unprecedented tightening of internet and media controls and sought to codify the policy within the law, a campaign that critics say

ignores human rights and is a burden for business. Earlier this month, the U.S. labelled China's internet censorship a trade barrier in a report for the first time since 2013, saying worsening online restrictions are damaging the business of U.S. companies.

Officials say internet restrictions are needed to ensure security in the face of rising threats such as terrorism and foreign ideology that could destabilise China. — Reuters



ARGENTEUIL: Senegalese software programmer Ousseynou Khadim Beye poses yesterday, North of Paris. — AFP

AS MICROSOFT SOARS ON CLOUD, PC PARTNER INTEL SEEKS LIFT OFF

SAN FRANCISCO: Microsoft Corp and Intel Corp's financial results this week brought into sharp relief the onetime PC partners' attempts to gear up for cloud computing, where Microsoft is soaring and Intel has not quite taken off. Chipmaker Intel has seen its share price drop 2 percent over the last year, as software maker Microsoft's stock has risen 30 percent. Microsoft's market capitalization of around \$439.68 billion is almost three times Intel's at \$150.96 billion, compared to about double five years ago.

"Wintel" computers running Windows on Intel chips dominated the personal-computing era, which is slowly ending as more people turn to mobile phones for computing needs and corporations deemphasize desktops. Both Intel and Microsoft, run by relatively new CEOs Brian Krzanich and Satya Nadella, are betting their businesses on the cloud.

Microsoft's cloud business, a combination of services and software catering to corporations moving computing functions to remote data centers run by outside providers, is growing strongly, although analysts want more clarity. A category it calls "intelligent cloud," which includes traditional server software, grew 3 percent over the last year to \$9.46 billion.



At Intel, in a quarter where the company announced plans to cut 12,000 jobs as it shifts away from the PC, data-center business revenue rose 9 percent to \$4 billion. That segment includes the chips powering cloud data centers, where the company says it is doing well.

"There's this perception that Microsoft is

more on the cusp and benefiting from this (cloud) trend," said Dan Morgan, a fund manager at Synovus Trust Co who holds both companies in his portfolio. "Intel is still more drowned out," meaning not as high-profile. Microsoft's best-known play in the cloud is Azure, a set of services for computing and storage as well as tools for

software developers. Azure is gaining ground on Amazon's AWS unit, the industry heavyweight in cloud computing services.

Azure commands about 10 percent of the \$23 billion market, estimates Synergy Research, compared with AWS's 31 percent. Intel has done well in its category, dominating the market for processor chips that are the brains of data center computers, but the business faces major pressures.

Much of the difference in the companies' fortunes boils down to Microsoft's fundamental business as a software company versus Intel's as a hardware company, argues Nick Sturiale, a venture capitalist at Ignition Partners.

Clients are spending an ever-larger part of their technology budget on software, according to research firm Gartner. And Intel's customer base for data-center chips is consolidating into a few big companies, including Facebook, Google, Amazon and Microsoft itself, from a much wider group. "The cloud vendors are brutal price negotiators and have more power over Intel," said Sturiale. Average prices of data center chips fell 3 percent in the last quarter, although Intel said that reflected the fact that cheaper chips were gaining ground the fastest. —Reuters

OSN FIRST +2

- 00:00 Survivor: Kaoh Rong
- 01:00 Sleepy Hollow
- 02:00 Defiance
- 03:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 04:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 05:00 Sleepy Hollow
- 06:00 Good Morning America
- 08:00 The Fosters
- 09:00 24
- 10:00 Prison Break
- 11:00 Minority Report
- 12:00 Shark Tank
- 13:00 24
- 14:00 Prison Break
- 15:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 16:00 24
- 17:00 Live Good Morning America
- 18:00 Survivor: Kaoh Rong
- 19:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 20:00 Prison Break
- 21:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 22:00 Unforgettable
- 23:00 Criminal Minds

- 03:30 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia
- 04:00 The Big C
- 04:30 Web Therapy
- 05:00 Fresh Off The Boat
- 05:30 Black-Ish
- 06:00 \$#! My Dad Says
- 06:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 07:30 Suburgatory
- 08:00 The Bernie Mac Show
- 08:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
- 09:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 10:00 \$#! My Dad Says
- 10:30 Suburgatory
- 11:00 Fresh Off The Boat
- 11:30 2 Broke Girls
- 12:00 The Simpsons
- 12:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
- 13:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 14:00 The Bernie Mac Show
- 14:30 \$#! My Dad Says
- 15:00 Suburgatory
- 15:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
- 16:00 Black-Ish
- 16:30 2 Broke Girls
- 17:00 The Simpsons
- 17:30 My Big Fat Greek Life
- 18:00 Breaking In
- 18:30 The Bernie Mac Show
- 19:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 20:00 Weird Loners
- 20:30 Dr. Ken
- 21:00 Last Man Standing
- 21:30 Life In Pieces
- 22:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 23:00 The Muppets
- 23:30 Breaking In

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

- 00:30 My Big Fat Greek Life
- 01:00 Breaking In
- 01:30 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia
- 02:00 The Big C
- 02:30 Web Therapy
- 03:00 Fresh Off The Boat
- 03:30 Black-Ish
- 04:00 \$#! My Dad Says
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 Suburgatory
- 06:00 The Bernie Mac Show
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- 14:00 Black-Ish
- 14:30 2 Broke Girls
- 15:00 The Simpsons
- 15:30 My Big Fat Greek Life
- 16:00 Breaking In
- 16:30 The Bernie Mac Show
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 Weird Loners

OSN FIRST COMEDY+2

- 00:00 It's Always Sunny In Philadelphia
- 00:30 The Big C
- 01:00 Web Therapy
- 01:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 02:30 My Big Fat Greek Life
- 03:00 Breaking In

- 18:30 Dr. Ken
- 19:00 Last Man Standing
- 19:30 Life In Pieces
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 The Muppets
- 21:30 Breaking In
- 22:00 Saturday Night Live
- 23:00 Web Therapy
- 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

OSN FIRST HD

- 00:00 Defiance
- 01:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 02:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 03:00 Sleepy Hollow
- 04:00 Good Morning America
- 06:00 The Fosters
- 07:00 24
- 08:00 Prison Break
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- 10:00 Shark Tank
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- 12:00 Prison Break
- 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
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- 15:00 Live Good Morning America
- 16:00 Survivor: Kaoh Rong
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 Prison Break
- 19:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 20:00 Unforgettable
- 21:00 Criminal Minds
- 22:00 The Blacklist
- 23:00 Mad Dogs

OSN MOVIES ACTION +2

- 00:15 Lucy
- 02:00 Wolf Creek 2
- 04:00 X-Men Origins: Wolverine
- 06:00 Age Of Dinosaurs
- 08:00 Transformers: Age Of Extinction
- 10:45 The Hulk
- 13:15 Transit
- 15:00 X-Men Origins: Wolverine
- 17:00 Transformers: Age Of Extinction
- 19:45 Turbulence
- 21:45 The Bourne Legacy

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:00 Wolf Creek 2
- 02:00 X-Men Origins: Wolverine
- 04:00 Age Of Dinosaurs
- 06:00 Transformers: Age Of Extinction
- 08:45 The Hulk
- 11:15 Transit
- 13:00 X-Men Origins: Wolverine
- 15:00 Transformers: Age Of Extinction
- 17:45 Turbulence
- 19:45 The Bourne Legacy
- 22:00 Deja Vu

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 Wanderlust
- 02:00 At Middleton
- 03:45 The Other Sister
- 06:00 Green Card
- 08:00 50 First Dates
- 09:45 The Other Sister
- 12:00 At Middleton
- 14:00 Romy And Michelle's High School Reunion
- 16:00 50 First Dates
- 18:00 Mystery Men
- 20:00 The First Time
- 22:00 Neighbors

OSN MOVIES DRAMA+2

- 01:00 Before Midnight
- 03:00 A Valentine's Date
- 05:00 As Cool As I Am
- 07:00 Snitch
- 09:00 The Giver
- 11:00 Memorial Day (2011)
- 13:00 Snitch
- 15:00 United Passions
- 17:00 Half Of A Yellow Sun
- 19:00 Memorial Day (2011)
- 21:00 The Reluctant Fundamentalist
- 23:15 Scenic Route

OSN MOVIES DRAMA

- 01:00 A Valentine's Date
- 03:00 As Cool As I Am
- 05:00 Snitch
- 07:00 The Giver
- 09:00 Memorial Day (2011)
- 11:00 Snitch
- 13:00 United Passions
- 15:00 Half Of A Yellow Sun
- 17:00 Memorial Day (2011)
- 19:00 The Reluctant Fundamentalist
- 21:15 Scenic Route
- 23:00 Cold In July

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 00:00 Home
- 02:00 Pirates Of The Caribbean: At World's End
- 05:00 Bedtime Stories
- 07:00 The Lego Movie
- 09:00 Alice In Wonderland
- 11:00 Herbie Fully Loaded
- 12:45 Big Hero 6
- 14:45 The Rookie
- 17:00 Oz The Great And Powerful
- 19:15 Pirates Of The Caribbean: On Stranger Tides
- 21:30 The Pacifier
- 23:15 The Rookie

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 01:30 Les Miserables
- 04:30 Low Down
- 06:30 The Alamo
- 09:00 The Citizen
- 11:00 Manny
- 13:00 Grand Central
- 15:00 Tea With Mussolini
- 17:00 The Citizen
- 19:00 The Double
- 20:45 Ed Wood
- 23:00 End Of Watch

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:00 Out Of The Dark
- 03:00 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I
- 05:15 Bears
- 07:00 Taken 3
- 09:00 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies
- 11:30 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I
- 13:30 The Age Of Adaline
- 15:30 The Book Of Life
- 17:15 The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
- 19:15 Little Accidents
- 21:00 She's Funny That Way
- 23:00 This Is Where I Leave You

OSN MOVIES HD +2

- 01:00 Wild
- 03:00 Out Of The Dark
- 05:00 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I
- 07:15 Bears
- 09:00 Taken 3
- 11:00 The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies
- 13:30 The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part I
- 15:30 The Age Of Adaline
- 17:30 The Book Of Life
- 19:15 The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
- 21:15 Little Accidents
- 23:00 She's Funny That Way

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- 01:00 Bolts And Blip
- 02:30 Space Warriors
- 04:15 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
- 06:00 The Unbeatables
- 07:45 Miffy The Movie
- 09:15 Baby Geniuses And The Treasures Of Egypt
- 11:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 12:30 Space Warriors
- 14:15 K-9 Adventures: Legend Of The Lost Gold

- 16:00 The Flintstones & WWE: Stone Age Smackdown
- 17:00 Miffy The Movie
- 18:15 Baby Geniuses And The Treasures Of Egypt
- 20:00 Pixies
- 22:00 K-9 Adventures: Legend Of The Lost Gold
- 23:45 The Flintstones & WWE: Stone Age Smackdown

OSN MOVIES PREMIERE +2

- 00:30 The Canal
- 02:15 Playing It Cool
- 04:00 Kon-Tiki
- 06:00 Foodfight!
- 07:45 Salinger
- 10:00 The Two Faces Of January
- 12:00 Make Your Move
- 14:00 The Last 5 Years
- 16:00 The Hundred-Foot Journey
- 18:15 The Two Faces Of January
- 20:00 The Last Of Robin Hood
- 22:00 What If

OSN MOVIES HD PREMIERE

- 00:15 Playing It Cool
- 02:00 Kon-Tiki
- 04:00 Foodfight!
- 05:45 Salinger
- 08:00 The Two Faces Of January
- 10:00 Make Your Move
- 12:00 The Last 5 Years
- 14:00 The Hundred-Foot Journey
- 16:15 The Two Faces Of January
- 18:00 The Last Of Robin Hood
- 20:00 What If
- 22:00 Ride

OSN ON DEMAND HD

- 01:00 Grey's Anatomy
- 02:10 Grey's Anatomy
- 03:20 The Age Of Adaline
- 05:30 American Sniper
- 08:00 Empire
- 09:00 2 Broke Girls
- 09:45 Mr. Robot
- 10:45 Vinyl
- 12:05 The Flash
- 13:10 2 Broke Girls
- 13:50 Grey's Anatomy
- 15:00 The Age Of Adaline
- 17:10 Grey's Anatomy
- 18:20 Star Wars: The Force Awakens
- 20:55 Saturday Night Live Bil Arabi
- 22:20 Saturday Night Live
- 23:40 The Blacklist

OSN SPORTS 1 HD

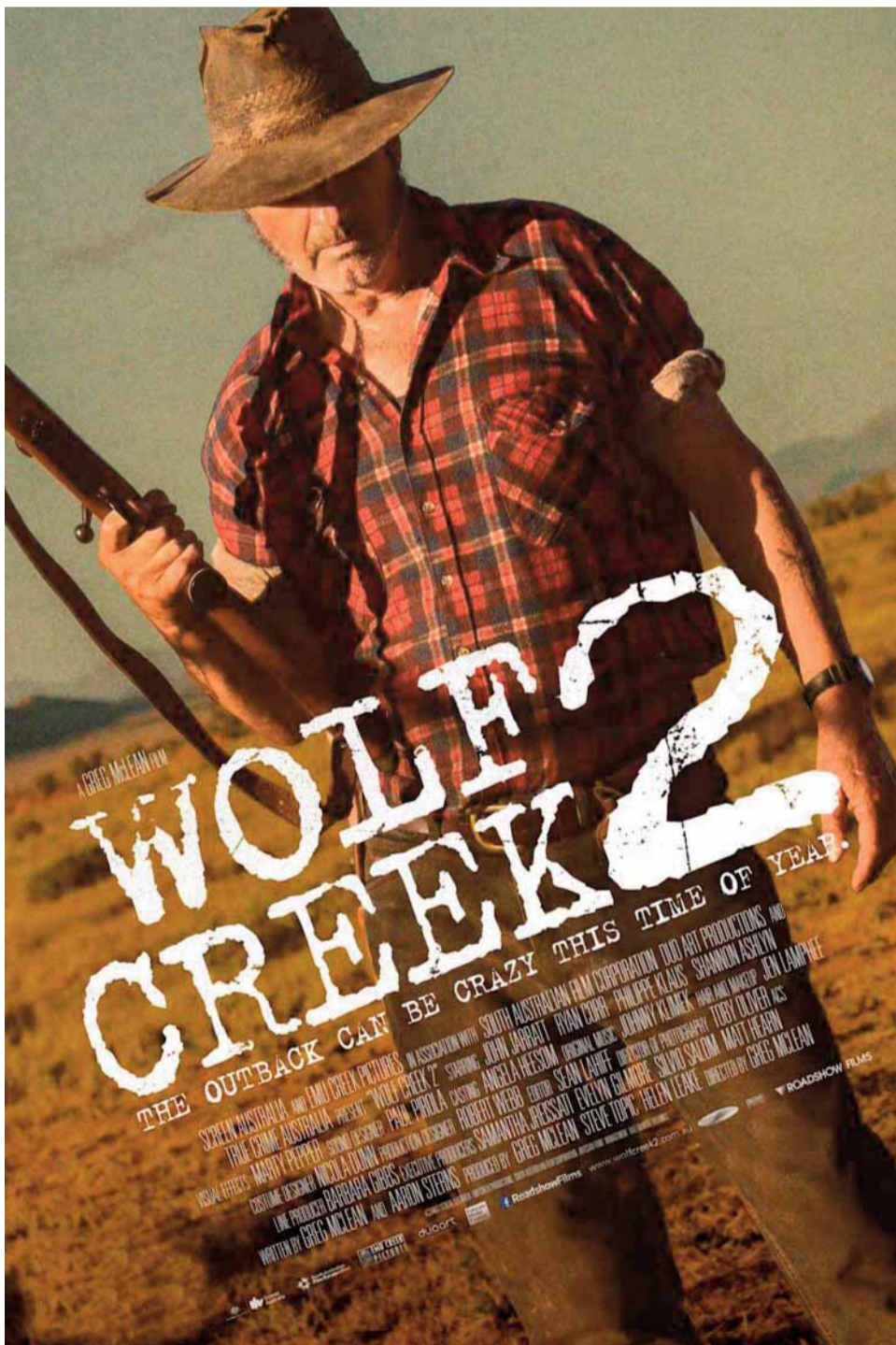
- 01:00 Super Rugby Highlights
- 01:30 Super Rugby Highlights
- 02:00 Live NHL
- 05:00 NRL Premiership
- 07:00 Super Rugby Highlights
- 07:30 Super Rugby Highlights
- 08:10 Live Super Rugby
- 10:30 Live Super Rugby
- 12:40 Live Super Rugby
- 15:00 Super Rugby Highlights
- 15:30 Super Rugby Highlights
- 15:55 Live Super Rugby
- 18:05 Live Super Rugby
- 20:00 Super Rugby Highlights
- 20:30 Super Rugby Highlights
- 21:00 Live Snooker World Championship

OSN SPORTS 2 HD

- 01:00 NRL Premiership
- 03:00 Live Bellator MMA 153 - Koshkov v Henderson
- 06:00 Live Bellator Kickboxing : Torinho
- 08:00 Live PGA European Tour
- 12:00 Live Snooker World Championship
- 16:00 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Highlights
- 16:30 Live Snooker World Championship
- 20:00 Live PGA Tour

OSN SPORTS 3 HD

- 00:00 Super Rugby Highlights
- 00:30 Super Rugby Highlights
- 01:00 Inside Sailing
- 01:30 PGA European Tour
- 07:00 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Highlights



WOLF CREEK 2 ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

07:25 NRL Full Time
 07:55 Live NRL Premiership
 09:55 NRL Full Time
 10:25 Live NRL Premiership
 12:25 Live NRL Premiership
 14:30 The PGA Tour Champions
 16:30 NHL
 18:30 Mobil 1 The Grid
 19:00 Gillette World Sport
 19:30 Inside The PGA Tour
 20:00 Trans World Sport
 21:00 HSBC World Rugby Sevens Highlights
 21:30 Super Rugby Highlights
 22:00 Live NHL



00:00 WWE Superstars
 01:00 WWE Main Event
 02:00 Formula-E Championship
 Sound Of The Future
 02:30 Monster Jam
 03:30 Monster Jam
 04:30 FIH Hockey World
 05:00 Mass Participation France
 06:00 Mobil 1 The Grid
 06:30 Live AFL Premiership
 09:30 Formula-E Championship
 10:25 Mobil 1 The Grid
 10:55 Formula-E Championship
 Sound Of The Future
 11:25 Live Formula-E Championship
 12:10 Formula-E Championship
 Sound Of The Future
 12:45 Live Formula-E Championship
 14:10 WWE NXT
 15:00 WWE Superstars
 16:00 Formula-E Championship
 Sound Of The Future
 16:30 Live Formula-E Championship
 18:30 Formula-E Championship
 Sound Of The Future
 19:00 FIH Hockey World
 19:30 Mobil 1 The Grid
 20:00 Bellator MMA 153 - Koshkov
 v Henderson
 23:00 Live Monster Energy AMA
 Supercross



00:35 River's Edge
 02:15 Go Tell The Spartans
 04:15 The Sharkfighters
 05:30 The Night They Raided
 Minsky's
 07:10 One More Kiss
 08:50 The Adventures Of Gerard
 10:20 Peggy Sue Got Married
 12:05 Death Rides A Horse
 14:00 Apache
 15:30 The Beautiful Country
 17:30 The Apartment
 19:35 Puckoon
 21:00 Fear The Walking Dead
 22:00 Talking Dead: Fear Edition
 23:00 Fear The Walking Dead



00:45 Human Prey
 01:40 River Monsters
 02:35 Tanked
 03:25 Shamwari: A Wild Life
 03:50 Shamwari: A Wild Life
 04:15 Gator Boys
 05:02 Treehouse Masters
 05:49 River Monsters
 06:36 Swamp Brothers
 07:00 Swamp Brothers
 07:25 Treehouse Masters
 08:15 Treehouse Masters
 09:10 Treehouse Masters
 10:05 Treehouse Masters
 11:00 Dog TV
 11:55 Ten Deadliest Snakes With
 Nigel Marvin
 12:50 Man, Cheetah, Wild
 13:45 Man, Cheetah, Wild
 14:40 Mutant Planet
 15:35 Animal Cops South Africa
 16:30 Shamwari: A Wild Life
 17:00 Shamwari: A Wild Life
 17:25 Man, Cheetah, Wild
 18:20 Rugged Justice
 19:15 Gator Boys
 20:10 Australia Doesn't Just Want
 To Kill You
 21:05 Ten Deadliest Snakes With
 Nigel Marvin
 22:00 Rugged Justice
 22:55 Ten Deadliest Snakes With
 Nigel Marvin
 23:50 Gator Boys



X-MEN ORIGINS- WOLVERINE ON OSN MOVIES ATION HD



00:25 Doctors
 01:00 Father Brown
 01:45 Happy Valley
 02:40 Happy Valley
 03:35 Stag
 04:30 Doctors
 08:30 Eastenders
 10:30 Death In Paradise
 11:25 New Tricks
 12:20 New Tricks
 13:15 Casualty
 14:10 Doctors
 14:40 Doctors
 15:10 The Musketeers
 16:05 The Musketeers
 17:00 The Musketeers
 18:00 Doctors
 18:30 Eastenders
 19:00 Moone Boy
 19:20 Father Brown
 20:10 Dickensian
 21:00 Dickensian
 21:50 Happy Valley
 22:45 Ripper Street
 23:40 Doctors



04:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
 05:00 The Last Goodbye
 05:30 The Last Goodbye
 06:00 I Killed My BFF
 07:00 The FBI Files
 09:00 Homicide Hunter
 10:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder
 Casebook
 11:00 The First 48
 12:00 The First 48
 13:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
 14:00 I Love You But I Lied
 15:00 Frenemies
 15:30 Frenemies
 16:00 Frenemies
 17:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder
 Casebook
 18:00 I Love You But I Lied
 19:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
 20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
 22:00 Killer Kids
 23:00 Homicide Hunter



00:30 Storm Chasers
 01:20 Dynamo: Magician
 Impossible
 02:10 Man vs Expert
 03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
 03:25 Destroyed In Seconds
 03:50 World's Top 5
 04:40 Storm Chasers
 05:30 Through The Wormhole With
 Morgan Freeman
 06:20 Mythbusters
 07:00 Doki
 07:25 Doki
 07:50 Kids vs Film
 08:40 Dogs 101

12:50 Storm Chasers
 17:00 World's Toughest Jobs
 17:50 World's Top 5
 18:40 Wildest Africa
 19:30 Dynamo: Magician
 Impossible
 20:20 The Willis Family
 21:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
 22:00 Destroyed In Seconds



00:20 Kidnap And Rescue
 01:10 Misfit Garage
 02:00 Overhaulin'
 02:50 Street Outlaws
 03:40 How Do They Do It?
 06:00 Fast N' Loud
 10:10 Gold Rush
 11:00 Curse Of The Frozen Gold
 11:50 Alaska: Battle On The Bay
 12:40 Storage Wars Canada
 14:45 Auction Hunters
 16:50 Edge Of Alaska
 17:40 Ice Lake Rebels
 18:30 You Have Been Warned
 19:20 Troy
 20:10 Superhuman Science
 21:00 Edge Of Alaska
 21:50 Ice Lake Rebels
 22:40 Railroad Alaska
 23:30 Wheels That Fail



00:20 Through The Wormhole With
 Morgan Freeman

01:08 Da Vinci's Machines
 01:55 Moon Machines
 02:42 Racing Extinction
 04:16 Da Vinci's Machines
 05:03 Moon Machines
 05:50 Engineering Earthquakes
 06:37 How Do They Do It?
 07:23 How It's Made
 11:08 How Do They Do It?
 11:53 Food Factory
 14:57 Mythbusters
 18:05 Moon Machines
 21:15 Secret Space Escapes
 22:00 Racing Extinction
 23:35 How The Earth Works



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
 08:55 Hannah Montana
 09:45 H2O: Just Add Water
 10:35 Wendy Wu: Homecoming
 Warrior
 12:00 Violetta Recipes
 12:15 Whisker Haven Tales With
 The Palace Pets
 12:20 Jessie
 12:45 Jessie
 13:10 Austin & Ally
 13:35 Best Friends Whenever
 14:00 Gravity Falls
 14:25 Descendants Wicked World
 14:30 Alex And Co
 14:55 Dog With A Blog
 15:20 Gravity Falls
 17:50 Violetta Recipes
 18:00 Princess Protection
 Programme
 19:30 Gravity Falls
 19:55 Evermoor Chronicles
 20:45 Good Luck Charlie
 21:35 H2O
 22:00 Binny And The Ghost
 22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage
 Witch
 22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage
 Witch
 23:10 Hank Zipzer
 23:35 Binny And The Ghost

20:10 Fifth Gear
 21:00 Alone
 21:50 Forged In Fire
 22:40 Lost Worlds
 23:30 Mankind The Story Of All Of
 Us



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 01:00 Chopped
 02:00 Cutthroat Kitchen
 03:00 Man Fire Food
 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
 06:00 Chopped
 07:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 07:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 08:00 Chopped
 09:00 Amazing Wedding Cakes
 10:00 The Pioneer Woman
 10:30 The Pioneer Woman
 11:00 Siba's Table
 11:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
 12:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To
 Basics
 12:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To
 Basics
 13:00 Chopped
 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 17:00 Chopped
 18:00 Siba's Table
 19:00 Private Chef
 20:00 Chopped
 21:00 Cutthroat Kitchen
 22:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 22:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 23:00 Chopped



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



01:15 My Daughter Must Live
 03:00 Teaching Mrs. Tingle
 04:45 Shanghai Noon
 06:45 One Day
 08:45 The Good Shepherd
 11:15 Fright Night
 13:15 The Ladykillers
 15:00 Starsky & Hutch
 16:45 Father Of The Bride II
 18:30 My Daughter Must Live
 20:00 My Week With Marilyn
 21:45 A Heartbeat Away
 23:15 Death At A Funeral



00:00 Private Practice
 01:00 Da Vinci's Demons
 02:00 The Listener
 04:00 KCON
 05:00 Happy Endings
 06:00 Cougar Town
 07:00 Making Mr. Right
 08:00 Grey's Anatomy
 09:00 Grey's Anatomy
 10:00 The Listener
 11:00 The Listener
 12:00 KCON
 13:00 Happy Endings
 13:30 Cougar Town



IISM 'LEFT FOOT PRINTS ON THE SAND'

India International School, Mangaf volunteered to be part of the beach cleaning project organized by American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) Kuwait. The school takes special care in providing the students with any opportunity to get practical knowledge about skills such as volunteering, public cleanliness and social commitment. Students

of XI standard along with their teachers attended the campaign as a part of their work experience.

The activity taught them the concept of preserving the environment and promoting positive cooperation among the society's segments to keep our environment clean and free of waste or pollutants. Being expatriates,

they also learnt that preserving the environment is a common responsibility that must be shared by all individuals whether they are natives or foreigners.

The officials of ASSE guided the students throughout the activity which was held at Mahboula Beach, and congratulated the school for taking effort in cultivating such

human values among the young generation. They appreciated the students' whole hearted participation in a well-disciplined manner. At the conclusion of the program, mouthwatering snacks and participation certificates were distributed. As the volunteers boarded the bus, they left nothing but their foot prints at the spotlessly clean beach.



Happy birthday



It was a rosy moment at the Fintas Hall on Thursday as family, friends and well-wishers gather to celebrate Joy's birthday. "May God guide and protect you (Joy) as you continue to be a blessing to your family Amen." Greetings from husband Tim, son, sister, friends and well-wishers.



NBK 'I DREAM TO BE' INITIATIVE CONTINUES TO GRANT WISHES FOR CHILDREN IN KUWAIT

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues its first-of-a-kind initiative "I dream to be" that aims at granting wishes for children in hospital and special needs around Kuwait and gives them the chance to live their dream to become any one they want to be. This initiative is a part of NBK's corporate social responsibility program. NBK's PR team organized a special day for Lujain Ahmad Ali, who's currently undergoing treatment. Lujain's wish was to spend a day with Hello Kitty character with couple of her cousins and friends. Lujain enjoyed her time crafting cakes and pizzas and dining with her friends.

NBK works closely with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospitals (KACCH), Bayt Abdullah for

the Care of Children in Hospice (BACCH) and several other special needs organizations to maximize its reach all the children in numerous hospitals and schools. "NBK gives top priority to children through its commitment to corporate social responsibility," said Joanne Al Abdul Jaleel, NBK Public Relations Officer. The "I dream to be" initiative is a lifetime experience for children not only with life-threatening conditions but children with special needs as well. It's a great way to spread joy and show that there's always a positive side to a difficult situation. We ask children what they want to be and try to fulfill that for them.

"To see Lujain happy and doing something she always wanted to do was extraordinary. We are proud to be

a part of the children's happiness and expand our support to them as much as possible," added Al Abdul Jaleel. NBK has been at the forefront of supporting Kuwait's community through a range of initiatives towards education, health, sports and social responsibilities. The establishment of NBK's Children Hospital for Oncology and Hematology at Al Sabah Medical Area stands as one of many ongoing corporate social initiatives towards health and children. "I dream to be..." aims at focusing and supporting NBK's efforts towards children and addressing their needs as much as possible.

KFH TAKES PART IN JOB FAIR AT AUM

Kuwait Finance House (KFH) took part in the job fair at the American University of the Middle East in Kuwait (AUM), stemming from its efforts to bolster and improve competencies of Kuwaiti human resources, and qualifying them to create high caliber Kuwaiti workforce. KFH's participation confirms the priority bank puts on enhancing its role, in collaboration with the concerned authorities, to reinforce efforts toward providing job opportunities for Kuwaitis, qualifying them, and honing their skills in accordance with international standards.

A Human Resources and PR team was present at KFH's booth at the job fair in order to answer job seekers' queries and educate them on KFH's sectors and departments' nature of work. KFH's booth was heavily visited by university students who wanted to explore their potential in joining KFH and the banking sector in general. They applauded the modus operandi of KFH and the distinguished financial services and products, affirming that KFH is amongst the largest and most important banks in the world which is a source of pride to Kuwaitis and the private sector.





TRIPOLI: Libyan women take part in a seaside yoga session at a secluded beach in the Libyan capital Tripoli. — AFP

TRIPOLI WOMEN LEAN TOWARDS YOGA TO ESCAPE LIBYA TENSIONS

'HERE I CAN ESCAPE REALITY, HERE I FEEL FREE'

TRIPOLI: Mats rolled tightly under their arms, a group of women walk to a secluded Tripoli beach for a seaside yoga session to escape tensions in conflict-stricken Libya. Under the watch of a solitary police car, each Thursday the 25 aspiring yogis begin limbering up, their bright gym attire outlined against the crumbling concrete security compound that forms the backdrop to their open-air studio. "Yoga releases the pressure we live under. Here I can escape reality," one participant, Mawadda, tells AFP before the afternoon class. "Here I feel free."

Tripoli residents have endured near-constant unrest since a NATO-backed uprising toppled longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi in 2011. Libya has since been thrown into disarray, with warring armed groups and rival political factions vying for control and the Islamic State group establishing a bastion in the oil-rich North African country. Thousands of Libyans have fled the unrest but for those left behind, daily life has been significantly curtailed and frequent clashes in the capital mean it is often too dangerous to exercise outside.

And with a conservative Muslim society implicitly imposing restrictions on how one should dress and behave, Libyan

women are especially short of viable pastimes. Abir Ben Yushah, who operates an exercise studio at her family-owned gym, struck upon the idea of yoga classes after talking to other women. "We understood that women need hobbies and a change after the war," she tells AFP. "After Zumba courses, Arabic and Indian dance classes, and fitness programs, we decided to start yoga on the beach." Eyes narrowed in concentration, the students—hair covered with headscarves, sun hats or baseball caps—closely mimic the poses held by Abir.

Four women sit on nearby rocks, observing and commenting on the class. A few meters away, the luxurious villas of the Ragata compound once used by Libya's expatriate oil worker community sit abandoned, some vandalized, like those of Gadhafi's sons.

'Try before you judge'

For many Libyan women who enjoy Italian fashion and like listening to music, practicing yoga was nothing new. The novelty, however, was to do it on a beach in broad daylight without upsetting conservative members of the society. "To be honest, I was a bit scared about the reputation of our club and that people would reproach us for being more free and open

than necessary," Abir says. "I do worry about the reactions of husbands and fathers but at the same time people need new things and new activities just like the rest of the world."

Libyan women, like many others in conservative Arab countries, have respect for religious and societal codes but this has not kept them from adopting the latest trends. They also enrol in universities, work alongside male colleagues, drive themselves and travel abroad if they can afford it.

"Practicing yoga on the beach is, for us, proof that we want to change our lifestyle," says Mawadda. Abir admits that attendance at her first class was low. "Women came to see how the session went and to make sure it was safe," she said, adding that they felt reassured when they saw the police car, the absence of men and that the place was secluded.

Iman is one of those who has been won over by the yoga class, which she sees as less about breaking social boundaries than keeping body and mind in shape. "Why should I be worried? Will commandos arrive by sea?" she chuckles. "Let them come! We are all here!" Abir admits that not everyone will agree, but to those still reluctant she says: "Try before you judge." — AFP

COCKTAIL OF UV, VITAMIN B ZAPS MALARIA IN BLOOD

PARIS: Blood donated by unknowing malaria carriers can be made safer with UV radiation and Vitamin B, said a study yesterday which may "revolutionize" transfusion safety in Africa. The technology, not yet commercially available, also holds promise for killing other blood-borne germs such as HIV, Ebola and Zika. The technique was previously shown in lab experiments to kill the malaria parasite—as well as HIV and hepatitis viruses—in blood in petri dishes. It has now been proven effective in live humans, a team reported in The Lancet medical journal.

In a trial with transfusion recipients in Ghana, treating the blood to be transfused "severely reduced" the risk of malaria transmission, though it did not eliminate it. Sixty-five patients who tested negative for the mosquito-borne parasite *Plasmodium* before transfusion, were chosen to take part in the clinical trial. Some were given blood treated with UV light and vitamin B2, also known as riboflavin, while the rest received untreated blood. As would be the case in any ordinary hospital, neither the doctors nor the patients knew whether the donated blood contained the malaria parasite. "Twenty-two percent of patients (8/37) who received untreated blood later tested positive for malaria parasite, compared to four percent (1/28) of patients who received treated blood," said a statement from The Lancet.

438,000 deaths last year

According to the World Health Organization, there were 214 million malaria infections last year, and 438,000 deaths — 90 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. It is not known what percentage is contracted via blood transfusion. "In many countries in sub-Saharan Africa where malaria is endemic, a high proportion of the population carry the parasite but do not show any clinical symptoms," said study author Jean-Pierre Allain of the University of Cambridge. "This is particularly problematic when it comes to donated blood transfusions, as it puts the recipients at high risk of infection if no blood treatment procedure is provided."

Testing for *Plasmodium* in donated blood is expensive, and there has been no means of treating infected "whole blood"—the type mainly used in transfusions in Africa. In Europe, blood platelets or plasma are normally used rather than "whole blood". These constituent parts are exhaustively tested and treated. In Ghana, about half of blood donors carry the parasite, and some 30 percent of recipients who test negative for *Plasmodium* before a transfusion test positive thereafter.

In the new technique, scientists added Vitamin B to the blood before exposing it to UV light for about 45 minutes while vigorously stirring. "The technology is currently in the testing phase, and the authors add that further studies, in larger population groups, and in particular at risk populations such as young children and pregnant mothers, are now needed," said the statement.

Blood safety 'revolution'

Commenting on the study, Sheila O'Brien of the Canadian Blood Services, said pathogen reduction technology also held promise for other pathogens—having been shown to work in the lab on HIV, hepatitis C and hepatitis B. In developed countries, she wrote, the technology would further reduce the already low risk of transmitting infections. "It would also address concerns from emerging pathogens such as... West Nile virus, chikungunya virus, and Zika virus," she said. And if it can be used on donated "whole blood", O'Brien wrote, the technology could "revolutionize transfusion safety in Africa, where it is most needed." —AFP

WHY YOU DON'T SLEEP WELL ON A STRANGE BED

NEW YORK: Over the course of three experiments on 35 young, healthy volunteers, researchers measured brain activity during two consecutive nights of slumber. They consistently found that part of the left side of the brain remained more active than the right side only on the first night, specifically during a deep sleep phase known as slow-wave sleep. "When you sleep in a new place for the first time, a part of one side of the brain seems to stay awake for surveillance purposes, so you could wake up faster if

necessary," said senior study author Yuka Sasaki of Brown University.

While this may be bad news for business travelers who regularly make brief overnight trips, it may not be as troublesome for people who go away for longer periods of time, Sasaki added by email. "Frequent travel may lead to unrestful sleep," Sasaki said. "But if you stay for a few days at the same place, your sleep might catch up."

To see how being in a strange place impacts sleep, Sasaki and colleagues per-

formed a series of lab tests on their subjects. When they stimulated the left hemisphere with irregular beeping sounds in the right ear during deep sleep on the first night, that prompted significantly greater likelihood of waking and faster action upon waking, than if sounds were played in the left ear to stimulate the right hemisphere.

In other sleep phases during the first night, and with other tests, there wasn't any difference in alertness or activity between the two hemispheres of the

brain, the researchers report in the journal *Current Biology*. On the second night, there wasn't any difference in reactions to tests between the left and right hemispheres, even during deep sleep. This suggests that there is a first-night-only effect specifically in one hemisphere of the brain during deep sleep, the authors conclude. The way participants responded to the sleep lab tests points to the potential for the brain to be on high alert for danger during the first night in unfamiliar surroundings. — Reuters

MEXICO PROPOSES LEGAL MEDICAL MARIJUANA IN MAJOR SHIFT

MEXICO CITY: Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto proposed Thursday legalizing medical marijuana and easing restrictions on recreational use, a major policy shift for a government embroiled in an ultra-violent drug war. Peña Nieto's decision to send landmark legislation to Congress was the result of a national debate on cannabis laws and comes amid a growing debate about drug policy across the Americas. "Society and the scientific community have spoken. There was a clear consensus that there are limits to the current focus in which Mexico has dealt with the marijuana issue," Peña Nieto said.

The bill sent to Congress would allow the use of medications made with marijuana or its active ingredients, and it would also increase the amount of the drug that can legally be possessed for personal consumption from five to 28 grams (one ounce). But his proposal falls short of a full legalization of marijuana as demanded by activists who won a landmark case last year at the Supreme Court, which authorized four individuals to grow and smoke pot.

Peña Nieto said his legislation aims to fix "two types of injustices": The inability of patients to access marijuana-based medicine and the "disproportional" prison sentences against people arrested on pot-related charges. "Mexicans know very well the scope and limits of the prohibitionist and punitive scheme, and of the so-called war on drugs, which has prevailed for over 40

years at the international level," he said in a speech. Mexico, a major supplier and transport hub for drug trafficking to the United States, has endured a horrific explosion in cartel violence over the past decade.

More than 100,000 people have been killed or disappeared since Mexican authorities deployed troops to combat drug trafficking in 2006. "Fortunately, a new global consensus is gradually emerging in favor of a reform of the international drug regime," he said "With this reform proposal, we take firm steps toward a new paradigm that looks at drugs from the perspective of prevention, health and human rights." The medical marijuana initiative would allow imports of medicine containing marijuana and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the plant's main psychoactive ingredient. Such medicine would be subject to strict health controls by the authorities, just as any other legal drug. The increase in the amount of pot that a person can possess for personal use would be "in line with international standards," Peña Nieto said.

'It changed our lives'

Mexico's move follows policy shifts across the region. Canada's health minister said Thursday that his government would introduce legislation next year to legalize marijuana, while Uruguay in 2013 became the first country in the world to fully legalize marijuana. In December, the president of Colombia, another country beset by

drug violence, signed a decree legalizing medical marijuana. In the United States—the biggest consumer of drugs from Mexico — 23 states have legalized medical marijuana use while four states plus the US capital city have legalized its recreational use.

Peña Nieto decided to hold a series of five public forums on the country's tough marijuana laws after last year's Supreme Court decision. The ruling was limited in scope, giving permission to just four individuals, but activists hopes that either the government would loosen its laws or that the court would issue other similar rulings to set a legal precedent. Juan Francisco Torres, an attorney who was of the foursome that took its case to the top court, said the president's proposal "falls short."

"They increase the number of grams but there's still a problem in the background, there's nothing that says that supply is legal," he told Milenio television. But Peña Nieto's initiative was welcomed by another pioneer in Mexico's marijuana debate, Raul Elizalde, who won a lower court battle to get authorization to give his young epileptic daughter medical cannabis last year. Elizalde, who spoke at Peña Nieto's event, said the quality of life of his daughter, Grace, had improved since she began taking cannabidiol (CBD), a therapeutic oil. "My daughter is a different person. She has improved with the treatment. It has changed our lives," he said. — AFP



TOKYO: This file picture taken on February 23, 2012 shows Japanese youths fondling cats at a 'cat cafe' in Tokyo. — AFP

TOKYO CAT CAFE SHUT DOWN FOR ANIMAL NEGLECT

TOKYO: A Tokyo "cat cafe" has been raided by health inspectors and ordered to close its doors due to animal neglect after complaints about nasty smells coming from the premises. The "Neko no Te" (cat's paw) cafe—one of many in Tokyo where guests can stroke the fluffy felines while sipping on a cappuccino—was visited by authorities after the cooped-up kitties bred rapidly and began showing signs of illness, Tokyo officials said yesterday.

A spokeswoman from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's Bureau of Social Welfare and Public Health told AFP the cafe had received several warnings over hygiene standards, before the patience of authorities snapped and they revoked its license for 30 days. "We issued repeated requests but there was no improvement," said Yuriko Iwamoto. "The property wasn't being cleaned properly and it was beginning to smell very bad," she added.

"In line with animal welfare laws we were therefore forced to order them to cease business." Inspectors who went to the cafe in Tokyo's Sumida ward found more than 60 cats crammed into a confined space of just 30 square meters (320 square feet) despite it having applied to keep just 10 of the animals—after they bred due to a lack of cages.

"There were more cats than cages," added Iwamoto. "The cages they did have were not properly controlled so they just multiplied." The inspectors also discovered more than 40 cats displaying cold symptoms and pointed out there was insufficient space or opportunity for them to exercise. As of last year, Tokyo had 58 registered cat cafes, which have also done a roaring trade across Japan, other parts of Asia and have even begun sprouting up in Europe. Similar theme cafes are big business in Japan, where animal-loving guests can also share a relaxing drink with rabbits, goats and even owls. — AFP

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PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (21/04/2016 TO 27/04/2016)

SHARQIA-1			
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	12:30 PM	THE ONES BELOW	2:15 PM
CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	2:45 PM	DEMOLITION	4:00 PM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	4:15 PM	THE ONES BELOW	6:15 PM
THE ONES BELOW	6:30 PM	DEMOLITION	8:00 PM
CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	8:30 PM	THE ONES BELOW	10:15 PM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	10:00 PM	DEMOLITION	12:15 AM
THE ONES BELOW	12:15 AM		
SHARQIA-2		FANAR-4	
THE JUNGLE BOOK	12:45 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	12:15 PM
SARRAINODU - Telugu	2:00 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	2:30 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK	3:00 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	4:45 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK	5:15 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK -3D	7:00 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK	7:30 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	9:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK	10:00 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	11:30 PM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	12:15 AM		
SHARQIA-3		FANAR-5	
CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	12:00 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	1:30 PM
CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	1:30 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	3:45 PM
CRIMINAL	3:00 PM	CRIMINAL	6:00 PM
CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	5:15 PM	FAN- Hindi	8:15 PM
FAN- Hindi	6:45 PM	FAN- Hindi	11:15 PM
FAN- Hindi	9:45 PM		
SARRAINODU - Telugu	3:30 PM	MARINA-1	
SARRAINODU - Telugu	6:45 PM	THE ONES BELOW	12:30 PM
SARRAINODU - Telugu	9:45 PM	FAN- Hindi	2:30 PM
CRIMINAL	12:45 AM	CHOCOLAT	5:15 PM
		THE ONES BELOW	7:45 PM
		CHOCOLAT	9:30 PM
		THE ONES BELOW	12:05 AM
MUHALAB-1		MARINA-2	
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	12:30 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	11:30 AM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	2:45 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	1:45 PM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	5:00 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	4:00 PM
CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	7:15 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	6:15 PM
CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	8:45 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	8:30 PM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	10:30 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	10:45 PM
NO FRI+MON		THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	1:00 AM
SARRAINODU - Telugu	10:30 PM		
MUHALAB-2		MARINA-3	
FAN- Hindi	12:30 PM	THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	12:00 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	1:30 PM	THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	2:15 PM
FAN- Hindi	3:30 PM	CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	4:30 PM
FAN- Hindi	6:30 PM	THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	6:00 PM
FAN- Hindi	9:30 PM	CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	8:15 PM
SARRAINODU - Telugu	3:30 PM	THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	9:45 PM
SARRAINODU - Telugu	6:30 PM	THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	12:05 AM
SARRAINODU - Telugu	9:30 PM		
FAN- Hindi	12:30 AM	AVENUES-1	
MUHALAB-3		THE JUNGLE BOOK	1:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK	1:00 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	3:30 PM
SARRAINODU - Telugu	1:30 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	5:45 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK	3:30 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	8:00 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK	5:45 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	10:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK	8:00 PM	MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film)	12:30 AM
THE JUNGLE BOOK	10:15 PM		
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	12:30 AM	AVENUES-3	
FANAR-1		DEMOLITION	11:45 AM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	12:30 PM	CHOCOLAT	2:00 PM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	2:45 PM	DEMOLITION	4:30 PM
CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	5:00 PM	CHOCOLAT	6:45 PM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	6:45 PM	DEMOLITION	9:15 PM
CRISTIANO RONALDO: WORLD AT HIS FEET	9:00 PM	CHOCOLAT	11:30 PM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	10:30 PM	SARRAINODU - Telugu	2:00 PM
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	12:45 AM	SARRAINODU - Telugu	5:00 PM
		SARRAINODU - Telugu	8:00 PM
		SARRAINODU - Telugu	11:00 PM
FANAR-2		AVENUES-4	
FAN- Hindi	12:30 PM	FAN- Hindi	12:30 PM
FAN- Hindi	3:30 PM	FAN- Hindi	3:30 PM
FAN- Hindi	6:30 PM	FAN- Hindi	6:30 PM
FAN- Hindi	9:30 PM	FAN- Hindi	9:30 PM
SARRAINODU - Telugu	3:30 PM	FAN- Hindi	12:30 AM
SARRAINODU - Telugu	6:30 PM		
SARRAINODU - Telugu	9:30 PM	AVENUES-5	
CRIMINAL	12:30 AM	THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR	1:00 PM
FANAR-3		THE JUNGLE BOOK -3D	3:15 PM
DEMOLITION	12:00 PM	THE JUNGLE BOOK	5:30 PM
		THE JUNGLE BOOK	7:45 PM
		NO TUE	

REQUIRED FOR A NATIONAL FACTORY TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS

- Having at least secondary school certificate or equal qualification.
- Those interested should be having a transferable residence permitt.

hr_ada801@yahoo.com

ACCOMMODATION

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EMERGENCY



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FOR SALE COFFEE SHOP

fully furnished including license with an excellent location in Kuwait City.

Tel: 66225465

Prayer timings

Fajr:	03:50
Shorook	05:14
Duhr:	11:46
Asr:	15:22
Maghrib:	16:19
Isha:	19:41



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 23/4/2016

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 23/4/2016

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

Trees

Find and circle all of the Trees that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Greek Proverb.

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

- APPLE
- APRICOT
- ASH
- ASPEN
- ARBORVITAE
- BALD CYPRESS
- BEECH
- BIRCH
- BOXWOOD
- BUCKEYE
- BUTTERNUT
- CATALPA
- CEDAR
- CHERRY
- CHESTNUT
- COTTONWOOD
- ELM
- FIR
- GINKGO
- GOLDENRAIN
- HAZELNUT
- HEMLOCK
- HICKORY
- LARCH
- LINDEN
- LONDON PLANE
- MAPLE
- NECTARINE
- OAK
- PALM
- PEACH
- PEAR
- PECAN
- PLUM
- PINE
- POPLAR
- REDBUD
- RUBBER TREE
- SEQUOIA
- SPRUCE
- SYCAMORE
- TULIPTREE
- WALNUT
- WITCHHAZEL
- WILLOW
- YELLOWWOOD

CROSSWORD 1 2 3 5

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15			16								17		
18			19								20		
21			22					23			24		
				25			26		27	28			
29	30	31		32		33		34		35		36	37
38					39					40			
41				42					43			44	
45				46			47		48		49		
50			51				52					53	
				54			55	56		57		58	59
60	61	62				63		64		65			
66						67		68	69		70	71	72
73				74	75					76		77	
78			79		80							81	
82					83								84

ACROSS

- An inflammatory disease of connective tissue with variable features including fever and weakness and fatigability and joint pains and skin lesions on the face or neck or arms.
- The absence of mental stress or anxiety.
- Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
- A pass between mountain peaks.
- A periodic paperback publication.
- A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- Cause annoyance in.
- Gum resin used especially in treating skin irritation.
- A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A Hindu prince or king in India.
- A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
- A brittle aromatic resin used in varnishes.
- Relating to the deepest parts of the ocean (below 6000 meters).
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A Tibetan or Mongolian priest of Lamaism.
- An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- Before noon.
- Wild and domestic cattle.
- Type genus of the family Arcidae.
- Apathy and inactivity in the practice of virtue (personified as one of the deadly sins).
- A genus of Platalea.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- A metric unit of volume equal to one tenth of a liter.
- Fallow deer.
- (law) A defense by an accused person purporting to show that he or she could not have committed the crime in question.
- The sound made by a gentle blow.
- A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- An iconic mental representation.
- (military) Signal to turn the lights out.
- French writer whose novels described the sordid side of city life (1804-1857).
- Widespread genus or herbs or soft-wooded arborescent shrubs cultivated for their showy flowers.
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
- Extremely evil or cruel.
- A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
- (nontechnical usage) A tiny piece of anything.
- The Israeli unicameral parliament.
- Tag the base runner to get him out.

- (anatomy) A somewhat rounded subdivision of a bodily organ or part.
- A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
- Type genus of the Amiidae.
- Covered with paving material.
- Roman general who was governor of Britain and extended Roman rule north to the Firth of Forth (37-93).
- Water falling in drops from vapor condensed in the atmosphere.
- An antiviral drug used in the treatment of AIDS.
- A city of central China.
- (prefix) Between or among or in the midst of.
- The seat within a bishop's diocese where his cathedral is located adv.
- A Dravidian language spoken in southern India.
- English essayist (1775-1834).
- A bachelor's degree in library science.
- A holy war by Muslims against unbelievers.
- Slightly open.
- A winged often one-seed indehiscent fruit as of the ash or elm or maple.
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- Red Bordeaux wine from the Medoc district of southwestern France.
- Lower in esteem.
- A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- Evergreen Indian shrub with vivid yellow flowers whose bark is used in tanning.
- The 11th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- The cry made by sheep.
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- Relating to or located near a tibia.
- Rare (usually fatal) brain disease (usually in middle age) caused by an unidentified slow virus.
- Egyptian statesman who (as President of Egypt) negotiated a peace treaty with Menachem Begin of Israel (1918-1981).
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- Tranquilizer (trade name Ativan) used to treat anxiety and tension and insomnia.
- Having branches.
- A port city in southwestern Iran.
- A mountain peak in the Andes in Argentina (20,997 feet high).
- Not elegant or graceful in expression.
- Reddish long-tailed monkey of west Africa.
- Family based on male descent.
- A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
- (obstetrics) The number of live-born children a woman has delivered.
- Block consisting of a thick piece of something.
- Inquire about.
- A legal document codifying the result of deliberations of a committee or society or legislative body.
- A toxic nonmetallic element related to sulfur and tellurium.

Yesterday's Solution

Stephen King Movies

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

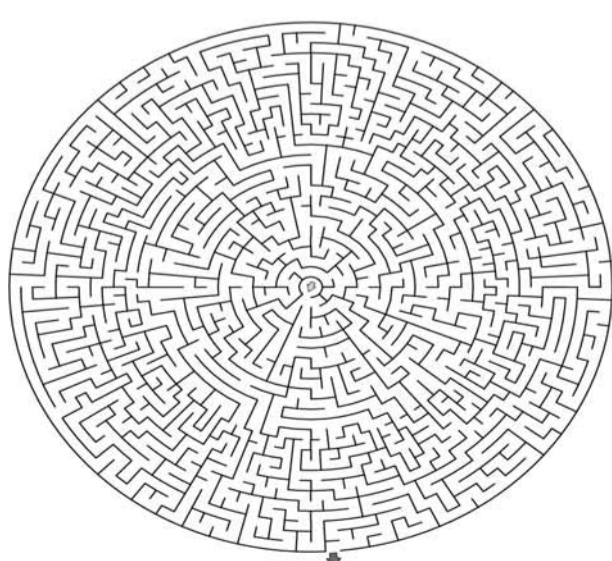
- APT PUPIL
- CARRIE
- CAT'S EYE
- CHILDREN OF THE CORN
- CHRISTINE
- CREEPSHOW I
- CREEPSHOW II
- CUJO
- DARK HALF
- DEAD ZONE
- DOLORES CLAIBORNE
- DREAMCATCHER
- FIRESTARTER
- GRAVEYARD SHIFT
- GREEN MILE
- HEARTS IN ATLANTIS
- LANGOLIERS
- MANGLER
- MAXIMUM OVERDRIVE
- MISERY
- NEEDFUL THINGS
- NIGHT FLIER
- PET SEMATARY
- QUICKSILVER HIGHWAY
- ROSE RED
- RUNNING MAN
- SALEM'S LOT
- SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION
- SHINING
- SILVER BULLET
- SLEEPWALKERS
- STAND BY ME
- THE STAND
- THINNER
- TOMMYKNOCKERS
- TRUCKS

The hidden sentence is: IN NINETEEN SEVENTY FOUR DOUBLEDAY RELEASED CARRIE WHICH WAS STEPHEN KING'S FIRST PUBLISHED NOVEL

Yesterday's Solution

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

CHALLENGING MAZE



Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

ICHIHARA TAKES SURPRISE LEAD IN JAPAN

TOKYO: Japan's Kodai Ichihara produced a sparkling six-under-par 65 yesterday to take a surprise one-stroke lead into the weekend at the Panasonic Open.

The 33-year-old, who has battled injury and the dreaded 'yips' in a chequered career, carded seven birdies against a lone bogey to finish the second round one clear of

India's Shiv Kapur (67) at the \$1.25 million event in Chiba, southeast of Tokyo.

Fellow Japanese Azuma Yano fired a 69 to finish two off the halfway pace at the tournament co-sanctioned by the Asian and Japanese tours. "I created a lot of birdie chances and took them," Ichihara told reporters after reaching

the clubhouse at eight-under 134.

"My confidence was high after shooting a good score (69) in windy conditions yesterday," added Ichihara, looking to regain the Asian Tour card he lost in 2013 with a strong result this week.

"I want to get back on the Asian Tour so I have to eliminate silly mistakes from my game." Overnight

leader Ryutaro Nagano, who is hoping to give his hometown of Kumamoto a lift after last week's deadly earthquake, slipped back to four-under after a 73.

South Korea youngster Wang Jeung-Hun, fast gaining a reputation for his attacking style, sits five strokes adrift to set up a tantalising weekend's golf. — AFP

STEELE SURGING AT RAIN-HIT SAN ANTONIO

LOS ANGELES: Brendan Steele's push for the first round lead in the rain-hit Valero Texas Open was halted by darkness on Thursday, leaving Charley Hoffman with the clubhouse lead.

On a day that saw inclement weather halt play for about three and a half hours, Hoffman made it safely into the clubhouse with a six-under par-66.

Steele, the 2011 winner, had surged past Hoffman to the top of the leaderboard with eight birdies in 13 holes without a bogey before darkness fell.

Steele will be one of 72 golfers returning to complete the first round on Friday morning before teeing off for the second round.

Hoffman had seven birdies and a bogey. He hit 14 of 18 greens in regulation despite finding the fairway on only eight of his drives and needed only 26 putts.

Two of Hoffman's birdie putts were from inside five feet, the longest from 22 feet.

"Six under par is always good on this golf course, or any golf course," Hoffman said. "I tend to play well here, and hopefully I can keep it going and have a chance on Sunday.

Hoffman is looking for a fourth PGA Tour title, and his first since the OHL Classic at Mayakoba last year.

He led after the second round of the Shell Houston Open three weeks ago, but faded to a tie for 33rd after playing the last two rounds in six-over.

"I've been close the last month or so, and I've got to put four good rounds together instead of three," Hoffman said. "You don't win golf tournaments with three good rounds."

Steele teed off on 10 on the Oaks course at TPC San Antonio and birdied his first three holes. After another birdie at 14, he strung together four birdies in a row at 18, one, two and three.

Stuart Appleby of Australia and Peter Malnati shared third place, both in the clubhouse on five-under 67.

Steve Flesch signed for a four-under 68 while Patrick Reed and Freddy Jacobson of Sweden were both four-under on the back nine when play was halted.

Two-time winner Zach Johnson, seeking his first victory since last year's Open Championship, was among a group of players at three-under 69. Defending champion Jimmy Walker struggled to a three-over 75. — AFP



SAN ANTONIO: Brendan Steele takes his second shot on the 17th hole during the first round of the Valero Texas Open at TPC San Antonio AT&T Oaks Course on Thursday in San Antonio, Texas. — AFP

LEE TAKES THREE-SHOT LEAD AT STORM-HIT SHENZHEN

BEIJING: Soomin Lee shot 65 to take a three-shot lead on day two of the storm-suspended Shenzhen International yesterday with 89 players still to complete their rounds.

Heavy rain made for a disjointed day in Guangdong. Thunderstorms and the threat of lightning in the area meant that five hours and 55 minutes of play were lost over two separate stoppages

Lee made the most of the bad weather as he recorded seven birdies in a second consecutive blemish-free round to get to 13 under par. "Today I felt so excited because I made many putts, and then good shots and straight ball, everything was perfect," said 22-year-old Lee.

"I feel this course is good for me because of the soft greens and then

heavy rough. I like heavy rough so that's good for me," he added.

Joost Luiten leads the chasing pack of those who made it to the clubhouse before play was suspended.

The Dutchman is in excellent form, with five top tens in his first eight events of the season, and he holed out for eagle from the fairway on the 11th before play was delayed for the first time.

He was eight under for his round after 13 holes and held a share of the lead at Genzon Golf Club but two late bogeys stalled his momentum.

Despite the disjointed day in China, Luiten refused to use that as an excuse after a round which eventually took almost 11 hours. "I'm happy, but felt like I left a couple of shots out there after the last break," he said.

"I missed three short putts on my last five holes, and so you come off the course with a little bit of an annoying feeling." Ireland's Paul Dunne was tied for third with Brandon Stone six shots behind the leader after making three birdies and two bogeys on the front nine before an eagle on 13th saw him sign for a 69.

Stone's day featured 17 pars and an eagle in a second round of 70. The South African is in the hunt for a second title of the season after his victory in the South African Open, and admitted to some frustration on the greens. "Quite disappointed with 70," he said.

"I played good golf. I had 32 putts today for two under par, so it shows you that the putter was a little bit cold. Hit it great but hopefully I'm just saving them for the weekend." — AFP



SAN FRANCISCO: Minjee Lee of Australia tees off on the 12th hole during round one of the Swinging Skirts LPGA Classic at Lake Merced Golf Club on Thursday in San Francisco, California. — AFP

FOUR-TIME OLYMPIAN AZEVEDO BELIEVES RIO UP TO CHALLENGE

LOS ANGELES: Two seasons playing in Brazil have convinced US water polo team veteran Tony Azevedo that ordinary Brazilians are the key to what he is sure will be a successful Rio de Janeiro Olympics in August.

"As far as living there, it has been a great opportunity to really see what's going on and what the actual situation is like," said Azevedo, who was born in Rio but moved as a child with his family to the United States.

A veteran of four previous Games, Azevedo has been playing for SESI Water Polo in Sao Paulo in a pro league established to boost the sport

in the build-up to the Games. "One of the great things about the Brazilians is they really love throwing a good party," Azevedo told reporters on a conference call organized by the US Olympic Committee on Thursday—the same day that the Olympic flame was lit in a temple at Ancient Olympia to begin its journey to Rio.

The Olympic cauldron will be lit during the opening ceremony on August 5. "I was down there for the World Cup and there was a lot of speculation then as to how possibly this is going to be a failure. All the stadiums were having problems, but people

ended up really loving the World Cup." Brazil's Olympic preparations have been overshadowed by potential impeachment proceedings against President Dilma Rousseff, who is accused of falsifying budget figures. Rousseff denies acting improperly, but the case has been sent to the Senate as the country grapples with a crippling recession and a corruption scandal centered on state oil company Petrobras.

Azevedo said he believes that the upheaval could be a sign of needed change. "I think this Olympics could go down for them as a changing

point in the history of Brazil," he said. Economic and political turmoil aren't the only challenges for Games organizers, who also face continuing concerns over the Zika virus and the water quality in the Rio bay that will host yachting and open-water swimming. "This is my fifth Olympics and I remember going into Athens there were so many things that were going to go wrong, it was going to be a terrible Olympics and in the end it really worked out to be a great one," Azevedo said. "I have a feeling that the Brazilians are going to do the same." —AFP

ADAMS GIVEN CHANCE TO SECURE OLYMPIC HAT-TRICK IN RIO

AUCKLAND: Shot putter Valerie Adams will have the opportunity to become the first woman to win the event at three successive Olympics after she was named in New Zealand's initial athletics squad for this year's Rio de Janeiro Games yesterday. Adams, whose injury-hit 2015 season was ended by knee surgery, won gold in Beijing and London and should challenge for the title again in Rio, as she hopes to move clear of Tamara Press of the former Soviet Union as the only women to have won the title twice.

The 31-year-old, who was awarded the gold in London after Belarus' Nadzeya Ostapchuk tested positive for performance enhancing drugs, took bronze at the world indoor championships in Portland last month. Nick Willis, the Beijing 1,500 metres silver medallist, joins Adams at their fourth Games. Willis also won bronze in Portland.

World indoor shot put champion Tom Walsh, who threw a season-leading 21.78 to clinch gold in Oregon and has three of the five leading throws outdoors this year, has also been named to compete at his first Olympics.

The 24-year-old Walsh, who finished fourth at last year's world championships in Beijing, will be joined in the event by two-time world junior champion Jacko Gill, who was ninth in Portland.

"Our team is an exciting mix of multi-medal winning Olympic and world champions and new emerging talent selected for their first Games, across a broad spread of event disciplines from shot put to 10,000m," Athletics New Zealand chief executive Linda Hamersley said.

"Since the London Olympics in 2012, we have seen tremendous growth in the depth and breadth of our new athletic talent which we look to continue through to Tokyo (in 2020) and 2024." A further selection announcement is to be made in July. Initial squad: Valerie Adams (shot put), Stuart Farquhar (javelin), Jacko Gill (shot put), Nikki Hamblin (1,500m), Eliza McCartney (pole vault), Angie Petty (800m), Quentin Rew (50km walk), Zane Robertson (10,000m), Tom Walsh (shot put), Nick Willis (1,500m). — Reuters



PARIS: Member of the French national sailing team competing in the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, bottom row (L to R) Jonathan Lobert, Mathilde de Kerangat, Jean-Baptiste Bernaz, Charlene Picon, Pierre Le Coq, Camille Lecointre et Helene Defrance take part in a press conference in Paris on Thursday. —AFP



BEIJING: A woman walks into the building of the China Anti-Doping Agency in Beijing yesterday. China's national anti-doping laboratory failed to identify two positive samples in a test by the World Anti-Doping Agency last year, it admitted after WADA suspended its accreditation just months before the Olympics. —AFP

WADA SUSPENDS BEIJING ANTI-DOPING LABORATORY

MONTREAL: The World Anti-Doping Agency suspended the accreditation of China's national anti-doping laboratory on Thursday, just months out from the Olympics and weeks after a drugs controversy in Chinese swimming.

The suspension for a maximum of four months means China's National Anti-Doping Laboratory is barred from carrying out WADA-related tests such as blood and urine analysis.

"During the period of suspension, samples are required to be transported securely to another WADA-accredited laboratory," Montreal-based WADA said in a statement.

China has become a leading Olympic power, topping the medals table at the Beijing 2008 Games and finishing second behind the United States in 2004 and 2012.

China was also second in the swimming events at London 2012 after distance specialist Sun Yang—who secretly served a brief drugs ban in 2014 — and medley sensation Ye Shiwen led them to five gold medals. WADA said China can

appeal the suspension and can also apply for reinstatement if it takes five unspecified "remedial steps" and addresses its "non-conformities".

No one from the Chinese Anti-Doping Agency (CHINADA) was available to comment when contacted by AFP on Friday. An official at China's General Administration of Sport said it also had no reaction yet. The battle against doping has intensified in the run-up to Rio, with Kenya threatened with being barred from the Games after a string of failed tests. Russia is also fighting to overturn a ban on its track and field athletes after a WADA independent commission found evidence of state-sponsored doping. Last Friday, WADA revoked the accreditation of the Moscow anti-doping laboratory, which was suspended in November after an independent investigation found its director had ordered nearly 1,500 samples to be destroyed.

CHEQUERED HISTORY

The Beijing laboratory is the only

WADA-accredited facility in China, according to WADA's website.

Its suspension, less than four months from the start of the Olympics in Rio, comes after three Chinese swimmers tested positive for clenbuterol, with two, neither of them well known, let off with warnings in late March. China's national swimming body also said three other unidentified swimmers had tested positive for a banned diuretic and were awaiting hearings. That announcement came after whistleblowers told Britain's The Times newspaper that five positive drug tests had been covered up by Chinese authorities.

Chinese sport has periodically been embroiled in controversy, with coach Ma Junren notoriously attributing the stunning performances of his women distance runners in the 1990s to turtle blood. Chinese swimming has an especially chequered history, with a rash of cases throughout the 1990s. Seven Chinese swimmers tested positive for steroids at the 1994 Asian Games in Hiroshima.—AFP

INDIA DROPS \$42M CLAIM OVER ABORTED WINDIES TOUR

NEW DELHI: India's cricket board has dropped a \$42 million damages claim against the West Indies over an abandoned tour in 2014 after the new World Twenty20 champions agreed to return next year, a report said yesterday.

The huge damages claim lodged by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) had threatened to cripple its cash-strapped West Indies counterpart which has long been at loggerheads with its own players.

But BCCI president Shashank Manohar

told Cricinfo the decision to waive the claim, filed by his predecessor Narayanaswami Srinivasan's regime, had been made after the West Indies agreed to fulfil their original commitments and the schedule for the tour should be finalised next month.

"That is now sorted out because they are going to come back and play here next year," said Manohar.

"They have to complete those (unfinished) games. That was a claim raised by

the board. (We) would be satisfied by them coming and playing here." The West Indies players flew home from India in October 2014 when a long-running pay dispute came to a head in the middle of the tour.

The two teams had been due to play five ODIs, three Test matches and a T20 international, but the tourists refused to play on after the first four ODIs with captain Dwayne Bravo leading a revolt by the players.

Bravo was subsequently sacked as skip-

per and has since been an outspoken critic of the West Indies board. After captaining the West Indies to victory in the final of the World Twenty20 in Kolkata earlier this month, Darren Sammy took a swipe at the governing body over what he said was a lack of support for the players. The board slapped Sammy down but also announced plans for talks with senior players, many of whom have not played Test cricket since 2014, turning out instead in lucrative domestic T20 tournaments. — AFP

INDIA PLANS TO HOST FIRST DAY/NIGHT TEST

NEW DELHI: India is planning to host its first day/night Test match later this year as cricket's global powerhouse seeks to reverse a decline in attendances, according to senior officials. Anurag Thakur, the secretary of the Indian board, said that matches in the domestic Duleep Trophy would be played in the evening as a trial run and administrators would then decide which ground should host the day/night Test against New Zealand.

"We have decided that we will play one day-night Test match with the pink ball against New Zealand later this year," Thakur said in comments quoted in Indian newspapers and confirmed by his office.

"Before that, the Duleep Trophy will

act as a dress rehearsal for the day-night Test match."

New Zealand is slated to tour India in October to play three Tests and five ODIs and Thakur said that "there are a number of factors that need to be taken into account" before the board makes a final decision. "We have not zeroed in on the venue. Things like dew factor, how the spinners bowl with the pink kookaburra ball in Indian pitches, we will get an idea during the Duleep Trophy," said Thakur.

New Zealand also played in the first-and so far only day/night Test which was staged by Australia in November last year. Lindsay Crocker, the New Zealand board's head of operations, stopped short of confirming an agreement on the match but said the idea was

exciting. "India are quite definitive, which is quite exciting because they seem quite committed to the idea. We hadn't considered that it would be an option so there is a bit of water to go under the bridge from our side," Crocker told the Stuff.co.nz website.

While India usually draws full houses for ODI and Twenty20s, Test matches are often played out in front of half-full stadiums. If India were to regular stage day/night Test, the BCCI—which is already the wealthiest board in world cricket—could expect to jack up the price for broadcasting rights.

Its domestic T20 tournament, the Indian Premier League (IPL), attracts big television audiences for matches which are nearly all played at night. — AFP



Chris Gayle during an interview

GAYLE RAISES EYEBROWS WITH 'BLUSH' BABY NAME

NEW DELHI: West Indies batsman Chris Gayle has raised eyebrows by saying he named his baby daughter "Blush", a nod to an infamous sexism scandal which engulfed him in January.

The self-proclaimed "Universe Boss" left many people wondering whether the name was genuine after his partner Natasha Berridge gave birth this week.

Gayle was pilloried over his remark, "Don't blush, baby" when he asked an irate Australian TV presenter for a date live on air during the Big Bash League.

The 36-year-old was fined \$10,000 by his club Melbourne Renegades and later made an apology of sorts, describing his comments as "a simple joke". But on Thursday he posted on Instagram: "We would like to welcome the arrival of our beautiful daughter 'Blush' to this world 2 hours ago". He later said on Twitter: "Thank you all for the sweet and kind messages.

Blush won't Blush, my baby." The destructive left-handed batsman received a number of congratulatory messages from fans and the cricketing fraternity. Gayle missed a game for his Indian Premier League franchise, Royal Challengers Bangalore, but he may be back in action as early as Sunday. The big-hitting Jamaican is yet to fire for the Virat Kohli-led side and has scored just a single run from his two outings so far. — AFP



PUNE: Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli (L) plays a shot during the 2016 Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket match between Royal Challengers Bangalore and Rising Pune Supergiants at The MCA International Cricket Stadium in Pune yesterday. — AFP

ENGLAND'S WOOD HAS MORE ANKLE SURGERY

LONDON: England seamer Mark Wood has undergone a second operation in five months on his troublesome left ankle, it was announced yesterday, but officials hope he will be able to return to action later in the English season.

"Durham and England pace bowler Mark Wood has undergone surgery on his left ankle," said a statement issued by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

"Following successful surgery to the front of his left ankle in November, a further procedure was undertaken yesterday to address ongoing issues at the back of the ankle.

"Wood will now undertake a period of rehabilitation and begin a back-to-bowling programme before returning to competitive cricket later this summer."

The 26-year-old Wood had to leave England's tour of the United Arab Emirates before Christmas, because of the same ankle problem. His operation means he is now set to miss England's home series with Sri Lanka in May and June.

But he could be available when Pakistan arrive in the second half of the English season. Wood had to scrap an intended comeback with Durham's 2nd XI after feeling pain again in his ankle. The Durham paceman made his international debut last year when he helped England regain the Ashes on home soil and has so far played eight Tests and eight limited overs matches for his country. — AFP

ROSTOV FACE CHALLENGE FROM CHAMPIONS ZENIT

MOSCOW: Russian Premier League surprise leaders Rostov face a stern test to their title ambitions when they take on reigning champions Zenit St Petersburg at the weekend.

Rostov, who beat Kuban Krasnodar a week ago to take top spot, are just one point ahead of second-placed CSKA Moscow. Zenit, who thrashed Spartak Moscow 5-2 to extend their winning streak to five matches, sit third, one point further back. Rostov manager Kurban Berdyev said he was pleased with his men's performance under the circumstances adding he expected a tough match tomorrow.

"My team live under tough psychologi-

cal pressure since we've battled into the leading group," Berdyev, who led Rubin Kazan to their back-to-back Russian titles in 2008-09, told his club's official site.

"But under these circumstances my men did well. "The meeting with Zenit will be a tough clash as they're on the rise after winning their last five league matches."

Zenit, who have battled into the national cup final with a 4-3 penalty shootout win following a 1-1 draw after extra time at Amkar Perm on Wednesday, will try to extend their winning series to boost their hopes of retaining the title.

Their manager Andre Villas-Boas said he was confident that his team were capa-

ble of winning the league.

"We've won five tough games, against top teams on tough pitches," the former Porto, Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur manager told Zenit's official site.

"We were nine points behind CSKA (during the season) and now we're two points behind Rostov, these have been some amazing performances. "We will continue with our spirit and our emotion and our aim is to win the league and we are going the right way."

CSKA, who beat FC Krasnodar 3-1 to advance into the Russian Cup final, will face city rivals Dynamo, who have struggled since the Premier League resumed

from the winter break.

CSKA look clear favourites on paper as Dynamo have lost their last five league matches but their head coach Leonid Slutsky warned his men against underestimating their rivals, who need points to avoid the relegation play-offs.

"I'm satisfied with the result and the quality of our play," Slutsky said after the match with Krasnodar.

"But every new match is an individual case. And every Moscow derby is a tough clash regardless of the teams' positions in the table. "It will be a big mistake to take for granted our chances to earn three points." — AFP

CUBS JAKE ARRIETA PITCHES SECOND NO-HITTER OF CAREER

LOS ANGELES: Jake Arrieta tossed the second no-hitter of his career and the 15th in Chicago Cubs history in a 16-0 victory over the Cincinnati Reds on Thursday. Arrieta got Eugenio Suarez to fly out to right fielder Jason Heyward for the final out, and the celebration was on around the mound. Arrieta, who threw a no-hitter at Dodger Stadium on Aug. 30 last season, was greeted with hugs, high-fives and a Gatorade shower before exiting the field. Thursday's result was never in doubt as Kris Bryant hit two of five Cubs home runs, including a grand slam. Bryant tied a career high with six RBIs.

ROYALS 4, TIGERS 0

Edinson Volquez threw seven scoreless innings and Mike Moustakas homered as Kansas City blanked Detroit. Volquez (3-0) allowed five hits, walked one and struck out five, lowering his ERA to 1.46. He pitched out of a bases-loaded jam in the fourth. Kelvin Herrera and Danny Duffy retired the final six batters to preserve the shutout.

ORIOLES 3, BLUE JAYS 2

Manny Machado continued his early hot streak with two hits, the second a tiebreaking bloop double in the eighth inning that gave Baltimore a victory over Toronto. Darren O'Day (1-0) got the win after throwing a scoreless eighth in which he struck out the side, and Zach Britton closed it for his fourth save. Baltimore had come back from an early two-run deficit, missing several scoring opportunities before finally tying the game at

2-2 on a J.J. Hardy sacrifice fly in the seventh.

A'S 7, YANKEES 3

Rich Hill struck out 10 in six innings and Oakland hit four home runs and to complete a three-game sweep of New York. Hill (2-2) allowed two runs (one earned) and three hits but constantly kept the Yankees off-balance with his curveball and fastball. He turned in his 10th career double-digit strikeout game and second this season. Mark Canha, Khris Davis and Coco Crisp hit solo homers for the A's, and Chris Coghlan added a two-run shot.

MARINERS 10, INDIANS 7 (10 INNINGS)

Robinson Cano hit a two-out, three-run homer in the 10th inning to lift Seattle over Cleveland. Cano hit the first pitch thrown to him by Cody Allen over the wall in center field for his sixth home run of the season.

MARLINS 5, NATIONALS 1

Marcell Ozuna's three-run homer overshadowed another impressive performance by Bryce Harper as Miami defeated Washington to split a four-game series. Harper extended his RBI streak to eight games by hitting a solo home run to center field in the first inning. It was his ninth career hit off Marlins right-hander Tom Koehler and six of them have been homers. Harper leads the major leagues with 22 RBIs.

TWINS 8, BREWERS 1

Miguel Sano had three hits and three RBI and Ricky Nolasco went seven innings as



CINCINNATI: Ben Zobrist #18 of the Chicago Cubs throws to first base to complete a double play after forcing out Jordan Pacheco #15 of the Cincinnati Reds in the sixth inning at Great American Ball Park on Thursday in Cincinnati, Ohio. — AFP

Minnesota posted its first road victory of the season.

RAYS 12, RED SOX 8

Tampa Bay hammered former team mate David Price, blew a three-run lead and then rallied past Boston. Steven Souza Jr snapped an 8-8 tie with an RBI double in the eighth inning and the Rays protected that latest lead to win the rubber game of the three-game series.

DODGERS 2, BRAVES 1

Yasmani Grandal delivered an RBI double in the 10th inning to lift Los Angeles past Atlanta after a 10-inning win the previous night. Enrique Hernandez singled with one out and Grandal, who entered the game as a pinch hitter in the eighth, followed with a two-base hit to the fence in left-center field off Alexi Ogando.

ANGELS 3, WHITE SOX 2

Mike Trout's offensive revival continued with a two-run homer as Los Angeles salvaged a series split with Chicago. Trout, now 5-for-6 in his last two games, broke a scoreless tie in the fifth inning of the series finale. He finished the game 2-for-2, scored once, walked twice and two RBI.

DIAMONDBACKS 6, GIANTS 2

Paul Goldschmidt had two hits and two RBIs, Yasmani Tomas hit his third home run of the season and reliever Tyler Wagner pitched five scoreless innings for his first career win as Arizona beat San Francisco. The Diamondbacks have won five straight and seven of eight after completing a four-game sweep of the Giants to move one game above .500 for the first time this year.

RANGERS 7, ASTROS 4

Texas completed a three-game sweep of Houston, earning its fourth straight win overall. Ian Desmond hit a three-run homer off Dallas Keuchel to put the Rangers up for good at 3-1. Texas tacked on another run in the second on an RBI grounder from Delino DeShields and then pushed the lead to 5-1 on an Elvis Andrus triple in the third. Houston got a run back in the fourth against A.J. Griffin on a homer from Colby Rasmus, but the Rangers kept scoring against Keuchel.

PIRATES 11, PADRES 1

Gerrit Cole tossed six scoreless innings to lead Pittsburgh past San Diego. Cole (1-2) allowed four hits, did not walk a batter and struck out seven as he dominated the Padres to avert a three-game sweep. — Reuters

MLB results/standings

LA Dodgers 2, Atlanta 1 (10 innings); Seattle 10, Cleveland 7 (10 innings); Miami 5, Washington 1; Tampa Bay 12, Boston 8; Minnesota 8, Milwaukee 1; LA Angels 3, Chicago White Sox 2; Arizona 6, San Francisco 2; Oakland 7, NY Yankees 3; Baltimore 3, Toronto 2; Chicago Cubs 16, Cincinnati 0; Kansas City 4, Detroit 0; Texas 7, Houston 4; Pittsburgh 11, San Diego 1.

American League					National League				
Eastern Division					Eastern Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Baltimore	10	4	.714	-	Washington	11	4	.733	-
Toronto	8	9	.471	3.5	NY Mets	7	7	.500	3.5
Boston	7	8	.467	3.5	Philadelphia	7	9	.438	4.5
Tampa Bay	7	8	.467	3.5	Miami	5	9	.357	5.5
NY Yankees	5	9	.357	5	Atlanta	4	11	.267	7
Central Division					Central Division				
Kansas City	10	5	.667	-	Chicago Cubs	12	4	.750	-
Chicago White Sox	10	6	.625	0.5	St. Louis	8	7	.533	3.5
Detroit	8	6	.571	1.5	Cincinnati	8	8	.500	4
Cleveland	6	7	.462	3	Pittsburgh	8	8	.500	4
Minnesota	5	11	.313	5.5	Milwaukee	7	9	.438	5
Western Division					Western Division				
Texas	10	6	.625	-	LA Dodgers	10	6	.625	-
Oakland	9	7	.563	1	Colorado	8	7	.533	1.5
Seattle	7	8	.467	2.5	Arizona	9	8	.529	1.5
LA Angels	7	9	.438	3	San Francisco	7	10	.412	3.5
Houston	5	11	.313	5	San Diego	6	10	.375	4

English Premier League table

LONDON: English Premier League table after Thursday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Leicester	34	21	10	3	59	33	73
Tottenham	34	19	11	4	64	25	68
Arsenal	34	18	9	7	58	34	63
Man City	34	18	7	9	62	34	61
Man Utd	34	17	8	9	42	30	59
West Ham	34	14	14	6	57	43	56
Liverpool	33	15	9	9	56	43	54
Southampton	34	14	9	11	45	35	51
Stoke	34	13	8	13	37	47	47
Chelsea	33	11	11	11	49	45	44
Everton	34	9	14	11	53	48	41
Watford	34	11	8	15	33	40	41
Bournemouth	34	11	8	15	41	57	41
Swansea	34	10	10	14	34	45	40
West Brom	34	10	10	14	31	42	40
Crystal Palace	35	10	9	16	36	45	39
Norwich	34	8	7	19	35	60	31
Sunderland	33	7	9	17	39	57	30
Newcastle	34	7	8	19	36	62	29
Aston Villa	34	3	7	24	23	6516	— relegated

Note: Top four teams qualify for Champions League; teams finishing 5th-6th qualify for Europa League; bottom three teams relegated to Championship.

Spanish La Liga table

MADRID: Spanish La Liga table ahead of this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Barcelona	34	25	4	5	96	29	79
Atletico Madrid	34	25	4	5	58	16	79
Real Madrid	34	24	6	4	101	30	78
Villarreal	34	17	9	8	42	31	60
Athletic Bilbao	34	16	6	12	51	41	54
Celta Vigo	34	15	9	10	47	54	54
Sevilla	34	13	10	11	47	42	49
Valencia	34	11	10	13	42	40	43
Malaga	34	10	12	12	31	31	42
Real Sociedad	34	11	8	15	42	46	41
Eibar	34	11	8	15	45	53	41
Real Betis	34	10	11	13	31	46	41
Las Palmas	34	11	7	16	38	46	40
Deportivo La Coruna	34	7	17	10	42	56	38
Espanyol	34	10	7	17	35	63	37
Rayo Vallecano	34	8	11	15	46	66	35
Granada	34	8	9	17	38	61	33
Sporting Gijon	34	8	8	18	35	55	32
Getafe	34	8	7	19	31	62	31
Levante	34	7	7	20	31	61	28

German Bundesliga table

BERLIN: German Bundesliga table ahead of the weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Bayern Munich	30	25	3	2	72	14	78
Borussia Dortmund	30	22	5	3	72	30	71
Bayer Leverkusen	30	15	6	9	47	33	51
Hertha Berlin	30	14	7	9	40	36	49
Moenchengladbach	30	14	3	13	59	47	45
Mainz 05	30	13	6	11	42	39	45
Schalke 04	30	13	6	11	41	43	45
VfL Wolfsburg	30	10	9	11	42	41	39
Ingolstadt 04	30	10	9	11	27	33	39
Cologne	30	9	10	11	32	39	37
Darmstadt 98	30	8	11	11	34	44	35
Hamburg	30	9	7	14	35	43	34
Hoffenheim	30	8	10	12	35	45	34
Augsburg	30	8	9	13	38	48	33
VfB Stuttgart	30	9	6	15	46	60	33
Werder Bremen	30	8	7	15	42	61	31
Eintracht Frankfurt	30	6	9	15	29	49	27
Hanover 96	30	6	3	21	26	54	21

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.

French Ligue 1 table

PARIS: French Ligue 1 table ahead of this weekend's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Paris SG	34	27	5	2	89	1886	- champions
Monaco	34	15	13	6	50	41	58
Lyon	34	16	8	10	55	36	56
Nice	34	15	9	10	51	38	54
Saint-Etienne	34	16	6	12	40	34	54
Lille	34	13	13	8	37	27	52
Rennes	34	13	12	9	50	45	51
Angers	34	13	10	11	38	33	49
Caen	34	14	4	16	35	50	46
Nantes	34	11	11	12	30	37	44
Lorient	34	10	13	11	46	52	43
Bastia	34	12	7	15	31	38	43
Bordeaux	34	10	13	11	42	53	43
Guingamp	34	11	9	14	42	49	42
Marseille	34	8	16	10	44	40	40
Montpellier	34	11	7	16	40	42	40
Reims	34	9	9	16	38	50	36
Gazelec Ajaccio	34	7	13	14	33	49	34
Toulouse	34	7	12	15	39	50	33
Troyes	34	3	8	23	24	7317	- relegated



ITALY: Juventus' defender Leonardo Bonucci (R) celebrates with teammates at the end of the Italian Serie A football match Juventus Vs Lazio on Thursday at the "Juventus Stadium" in Turin. — AFP

ALLEGRI REACHING FOR REMOTE AS JUVENTUS SIGHT SCUDETTO

MILAN: Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri is ready to put his feet up and celebrate a record-equalling fifth consecutive Serie A title "in front of the television" after a rollercoaster season for the Turin giants.

Juventus are "a small step away" from equalling their 1935 feat of winning five league titles on the trot after seeing long-time rivals Napoli slip to nine points adrift with four games remaining.

The Italian champions will win a fifth 'scudetto' if they beat Fiorentina away on Sunday and Napoli fail to beat Roma in the Italian capital on Monday. It is a scenario that Allegri, who came close to an early exit from the club last autumn before the Serie A giants turned the corner, would readily accept—although he admits Fiorentina will be no pushover. "Our heads were under the water and we didn't drown," said Allegri referring to their early season troubles.

"Now, we're a small step away from completing an historic journey, but in Florence we need to play well. Fiorentina are a strong team and have been big rivals of our for years.

"But I wouldn't say no to celebrating in front of the television." Given Juve were only a handful of points above the relegation zone and virtually ruled out of contention last October, it is an impressive turnaround for the team that Allegri took under his wing in the summer of 2014. In his first season in charge, Allegri-sacked by AC Milan in January 2014 — led the Bianconeri to their first league and Cup double in 20 years and their first Champions League final in 12 years, only to succumb to Barcelona. Despite exiting the competition at the quarter-finals following defeat to Bayern Munich, Juventus can still secure their second consecutive double as they face AC Milan in the Italian Cup final on May 21. They can stretch their unbeaten run to 25 games on Sunday, but face a Fiorentina side desperate to get back to winning ways after a shock defeat to Udinese in midweek.

But Sousa said his misfiring side is

ready for Juve: "We're all up for it. We have a chance, the team is in good shape and we have to go out and play as we know how to against a team that has been practically unbeatable." With Juventus virtually assured of the league crown, Napoli and Roma are still engaged in a close fight for the second automatic Champions League place. And it could all come down to Monday's clash at the Olimpico, where Gonzalo Higuain will make his long-awaited return for the visitors following a three-match suspension.

Higuain was handed a four-match ban for lashing out at the referee on the way to a 3-1 defeat at Udinese two weeks ago, an incident that torpedoed their scudetto hopes despite the sanction being reduced by one game on appeal. Napoli trounced

Bologna 6-0 on Tuesday, but Higuain would be advised to bring his scoring boots for what could be a decisive encounter. Defeat in the capital would see Roma close to within two points of second place. The Azzurri finished third in Serie A last season but failed to qualify for Europe's premier club competition after a 4-2 aggregate defeat to play-off opponents Athletic Bilbao. Elsewhere, Inter Milan coach Roberto Mancini has called on his misfiring side to find the net for the visit of Udinese on Saturday. A shock 1-0 defeat at Genoa on Wednesday virtually ended Inter's hopes of Champions League football next season and Mancini said: "We need to improve in front of goal because with all the chances we create we need to be scoring more often." —AFP

FIFA SETS UP WORKER WELFARE BODY FOR QATAR WORLD CUP

DOHA: Gianni Infantino announced yesterday that FIFA will establish a body to monitor working conditions for labourers at Qatar's 2022 World Cup stadiums and insisted the tournament would stay in the Gulf.

Speaking during his first visit to Doha as president of world football's governing body, Infantino said FIFA would act on criticisms it has done little to protect those building venues for its showcase tournament in six years' time.

"We will not just sit and wait," he told journalists at a press conference. "FIFA will step up its efforts in overseeing in particular the set-up by the (Qatar) Supreme Committee in order to ensure the protection of the workers' rights in the construction of the FIFA World Cup sites." He added that the proposal had been welcomed by the "highest Qatari authorities". The body would monitor systems in place to ensure decent working conditions, and would be independ-

ent, added Infantino. It is not yet clear who will sit on the committee but Infantino said he wanted it to be "put in place very, very soon." Infantino said FIFA would "discuss" with human rights organisations the possibility of a NGO sitting on the new committee.

He added: "FIFA is not the world welfare agency... our job is to govern football, but of course we are aware of our responsibilities." The initiative was announced after recent criticism suggesting FIFA had not done enough to address the contentious issue of workers welfare. An Amnesty International report in March, which alleged for the first time labour abuses at a World Cup stadium site in Qatar, said FIFA had shown a "lack of meaningful action" on the issue.

Amnesty had also directly criticised Infantino following its report and had urged him to press the case for reform while in Qatar. —AFP

DEMOLITION DERBY CAN SPARK MORE LIVERPOOL JOY SAYS LUCAS

LIVERPOOL: Lucas Leiva says Liverpool's Merseyside derby demolition of Everton will prove a huge boost as they set their sights on European success.

Jurgen Klopp's in-form team are in the Europa League semi-finals with a first-leg visit to Spanish side Villarreal to come next Thursday. Victory in that competition - and a first European trophy since 2005 - would earn them a place in next season's Champions League. But should they fall short, the Reds have an alternative route back into the Europa League via the Premier League with their current form suggesting they have every chance of making it.

Three successive league wins, and six from their last eight games, have lifted

Liverpool up to seventh place in the table. That could be enough - depending on who wins the FA Cup - to qualify, but a top-six finish will certainly do it.

Klopp's side have a game in hand on both Manchester United and West Ham, who are currently fifth and sixth, and are two points adrift of the Hammers and five of cup semi-finalists United.

Neither play in the league this weekend, giving Liverpool every incentive to extend their impressive home record against relegation-threatened Newcastle and former manager Rafael Benitez.

And Liverpool will go into Saturday's game on the back of an emphatic 4-0 thrashing of neighbours Everton, which long-serving Brazilian midfielder Lucas is

looking to build on to aid the team's push for Europe. "I think it was a deserved win. It's special because it's the first derby under Jurgen," Lucas said.

"We are all happy and hopefully we can keep this good momentum going because we still have a lot to play for this season. "We want to finish as high as possible in the Premier League. We know it's important.

"We want to play European games and if we can get a spot through the Premier League it will be brilliant because the Europa League is too open. We have a chance but we don't know if we're going to win it. "We just have to keep going. This (the win against Everton) shows the squad is in good

shape, everyone is playing well and we are getting results, so it's all positive.

"But we know football can change very quickly so we just need to keep very relaxed and focused."

OPTIMISTIC

Klopp may rotate his side again to keep players fresh for next week's trip to Spain with striker Divock Origi, who has scored five goals in his last five games, definitely out of the Newcastle game with an ankle injury. Newcastle's players, who have largely kept a low profile during this troubled season, are now talking a good game as they head to Anfield and attempt to end their 22-year jinx. — AFP

RAGING VARDY LEAVES LEICESTER IN A BIND

LONDON: His exploits with Leicester City have alerted Hollywood scriptwriters, but an on-pitch indiscretion by Jamie Vardy has compromised his unheralded team's extraordinary bid for the Premier League title.

With 22 goals in the season to date, Vardy has become the symbol of a football fairytale, but his dismissal during last weekend's 2-2 draw with West Ham United leaves Leicester in the lurch.

Sent off after being shown a second yellow card for diving, Vardy reacted by angrily berating referee Jon Moss and has accepted a Football Association misconduct charge for his outburst that could keep him on the sidelines for two matches.

"Vardy has been one of the best players in the league," said his Leicester colleague Danny Simpson, who did his best to put on a brave face. "Other players have scored in the team and before last week Vards hadn't scored for five or six games, so we'll deal

with it." Vardy's dizzying achievements have caught the eye of British screenwriter Adrian Butchart, who is in talks about turning the 29-year-old's rags-to-riches tale into a film.

It is a beguiling story, which has seen Vardy transform himself from non-league scrapper in English football's seventh tier into England international, Player of the Year nominee and potential Premier League champion. The scrawny striker's gritty back story, fiery temperament and hard-running playing style have turned him into something of an anti-hero for Leicester's supporters, who have never seen their club win the title. "Jamie Vardy's having a party, bring your vodka and your charlie (cocaine)!" is a regular chant at Leicester's King Power Stadium. Meanwhile, an enigmatically aggressive Facebook post made by Vardy in October 2011 — "Chat shit get banged" — has become the go-to put-down among British youngsters on social media.

But while Leicester's fans revel in Vardy's

outlaw status, the West Ham incident suggested that the rough edges that once saw him convicted of assault during his non-league days have not been smoothed away.

ULLOA TO DEPUTISE

British newspapers this week were splattered with pictures of Vardy pillorying Moss, his face screwed into a furious scowl, his right index finger jabbed towards the official's face. The red card rules Vardy out of Sunday's home game with Swansea City and his acceptance of the FA charge could mean he misses next weekend's challenging trip to Manchester United as well.

Vardy's latest scrape has also rekindled memories of the pre-season incident in which he was caught on camera racially goading an Asian man in a casino, for which he was fined by Leicester. He later apologised. Gary Lineker, Leicester's most famous former player, defended Vardy against accusations of racism in a recent Guardian interview, describing the incident as a "mistake", but met with a backlash on social media. Both Leicester manager Claudio Ranieri and England counterpart Roy Hodgson have supported Vardy over his West Ham dismissal, with both men adamant that he did not dive.

But it changes nothing for Leicester, who are five points clear of second-place Tottenham Hotspur and embarking upon the biggest four-game sequence in the club's history without their top scorer and talisman. Leonardo Ulloa, who came on to score a stoppage-time penalty against West Ham, is expected to step in for Vardy and left-back Christian Fuchs has backed the Argentine striker to prove himself a capable deputy. "It's a new situation for us because Jamie hasn't missed a game yet, but I think we can cope," Fuchs told the BBC.

"Every time Leonardo Ulloa comes off the bench he has done well and he's a big part of the team." Ulloa's four goals this season include a dramatic late winner against Norwich City in February, while Vardy's regular strike partner Shinji Okazaki has chipped in with six goals.

But neither player has captured the imagination like the snarling Vardy, who can only hope that his self-inflicted absence does not spell doom for Leicester's title dream. — AFP



SAINT-DENIS: Paris Saint-Germain's French head coach Laurent Blanc gives a press conference at the Stade de France stadium in Saint-Denis, north of Paris yesterday, on the eve of the French League Cup football match Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) vs Lille. — AFP

PSG CONTINUE BID FOR TOTAL DOMINANCE

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain face an in-form Lille side in the French League Cup final at the Stade de France today, as they look to complete part three of a possible domestic clean sweep of titles.

Laurent Blanc's side are on track to repeat their haul of last season when they won the French Cup and League Cup, the Ligue 1 title, as well as the season-opening Champions Trophy. The capital city club's main aim this term was to conquer Europe, only to be beaten by Manchester City as they bowed out at the quarter-final stage for the fourth year in a row.

But after wrapping up the Ligue 1 title in record time, PSG are just two wins away from successfully defending their cup trophies, after setting up a mouthwatering French Cup final against arch rivals Marseille by beating Lorient on Tuesday. Talismanic striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic grabbed the winner in the 75th minute with his 42nd goal of a fantastic farewell season. The rest of the campaign still appears full of possibilities for the league champions, but Blanc is under pressure to at least match the feats of 12 months ago.

The French coach is still sweating on the fitness of key midfielder Marco Verratti, who has been out since February 20 with a groin problem, for the Lille clash, while David Luiz may miss out with an ankle injury. Luiz's absence would mean that Marquinhos partners captain Thiago Silva in central defence, as he did in the European exit to Man City. Goalkeeper Salvatore Sirigu looks set to leave the club at the end of the season after being replaced as number one by German Kevin Trapp, but he could still make an indelible mark with his last two matches likely to be the two cup finals. PSG are on course for a third successive French League Cup and are the record five-time winners of the competition, while Lille have never lifted the trophy and will be playing in the final for the first time.

REJUVENATED LILLE

Lille will be tough opponents on Saturday though, after a recent resurgence in form under the tutelage of new coach Frederic Antonetti. Earlier this season they were struggling for goals and embroiled in a relegation battle, but a thumping 5-1 semi-final win over Bordeaux sparked them into life. A six-match winning streak, during which they have scored 16 goals, has propelled them to within just four points of the Champions League places with four Ligue 1 games remaining. — AFP



LEICESTER: Leicester City's English striker Jamie Vardy (L) goes down in the box under pressure from West Ham United's Italian defender Angelo Ogbonna (R) during the English Premier League football match. — AFP

MAN UTD EYE FA CUP SOLACE AGAINST SHELLSHOCKED EVERTON

LONDON: Chasing a gilded finale to a difficult season, Louis van Gaal's Manchester United face an Everton team reeling from Merseyside derby humiliation in Saturday's first FA Cup semi-final at Wembley.

Van Gaal found himself back in the media's crosshairs following a 3-0 defeat at Tottenham Hotspur earlier this month, but not for the first time this season, his side responded with a timely burst of wins.

Victory at West Ham United in their FA Cup quarter-final replay provided the spur for back-to-back league wins over Aston Villa and Crystal Palace that have bolstered United's quest for Champions League qualification and they will travel to London with renewed confidence.

"We are further than last year," Van Gaal

said of his side's FA Cup progress. "Then it was the quarter-final, now it is the semi-final. It means we are better than last year.

"We are in the semi-final and still in the race for fourth. That was our aim." A long, dark English winter is threatening to burst into a far more pleasant spring for Van Gaal, who is seeking to steer United to a first FA Cup final since they lost 1-0 to Chelsea in 2007.

Uncertainty surrounding the Dutchman's Old Trafford future continues to swirl, with Jose Mourinho and Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino continually touted as potential successors in the British press.

But success in the FA Cup, which United last lifted in 2004, allied to a top-four finish

in the Premier League would strengthen Van Gaal's hand greatly as he approaches the final year of his three-year contract.

Furthermore, United's line-up in recent weeks has demonstrated the commitment to youth that helped Van Gaal land the job in the first place. Marcus Rashford, the 18-year-old striker who only made his debut in February, continues to play, and score, with the coolness of a seasoned professional and his displays have been supplemented by the verve of fellow forwards Anthony Martial, 20, and 23-year-old Jesse Lingard.

MARTINEZ EXPOSED

The trio's displays have meant that captain Wayne Rooney, back in action after a knee injury, has had to drop into a midfield

role, which is where he is likely to play if selected against his old club today.

While the worm may be turning, albeit slowly, for Van Gaal, the same cannot be said of Everton manager Roberto Martinez, who is living through the blackest days of his Goodison Park tenure.

A run of seven games without victory in the league has definitively ended Everton's European ambitions and Wednesday's 4-0 thrashing at Liverpool left the Spaniard looking exposed.

Martinez has tasted FA Cup glory once before, memorably leading Wigan Athletic to a shock 1-0 victory over Manchester City in the 2013 final, and he has called on his players to re-focus as quickly as possible. — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Aston Villa v Southampton	7:00
beIN SPORTS 12 HD	
Liverpool v Newcastle United	7:00
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	
Bournemouth v Chelsea	7:00
beIN SPORTS 9 HD	

SPANISH LEAGUE

Rayo Vallecano v Real Madrid	7:00
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Atletico de Madrid v Malaga	19:15
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Barcelona v Sporting Gijon	21:30
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
Eibar v Deportivo La Coruna	23:05
beIN SPORTS 2 HD	

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE

Internazionale Milano v Udinese	1:45
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

Hertha Berlin v Bayern Munich	16:30
beIN SPORTS 5 HD	
FC Koln v Darmstadt	16:30
beIN SPORTS	
Stuttgart v Borussia Dortmund	16:30
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
VfL Wolfsburg v FC Augsburg	16:30
beIN SPORTS 6 HD	
FC Ingolstadt 04 v Hannover 96	16:30
beIN SPORTS	
Schalke 04 v Bayer 04 Leverkusen	19:30
beIN SPORTS 5 HD	

FRENCH LEAGUE

Toulouse v Olympique Lyonnais	18:30
beIN SPORTS 6 HD	

SANCHEZ DOUBLE LIFTS ARSENAL INTO THIRD PLACE

LONDON: In-form Chilean forward Alexis Sanchez struck twice as Arsenal defeated West Bromwich Albion 2-0 on Thursday to re-assert their hold on a Champions League berth in the Premier League.

Booted off following Sunday's 1-1 draw at home to Crystal Palace, Arsenal delivered a more clinical display at the Emirates Stadium as Sanchez took his tally to five goals in four games, and 16 for the season, with a first-half brace from outside the box.

After consecutive draws, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger will have been relieved to see his team record their 500th Premier League victory, which lifted them above Manchester City and into third place.

The result also served to keep Arsenal's title challenge mathematically alive, but with leaders Leicester City 10 points above them, the north London club's chief objective over their final four games will be to hold off fifth-place Manchester United, who they lead by four points.

West Brom, who have lost three successive games for the first time this season, remain 10 points clear of the relegation zone, but they are unlikely to feel completely safe until they register another victory. Rumours of a mass boycott by disgruntled Arsenal fans were not fully borne out, but it was possible to discern some 10,000 bare seats as this re-arranged fixture kicked off.

One of three Arsenal changes from the stalemate with Palace saw Aaron Ramsey make his first start in a month after a thigh injury and the Welsh midfielder played a part in the hosts' sixth-minute opener. The goal was all Sanchez's own work, however, as he gathered Ramsey's square pass, brilliantly spun away from Sandro and drilled a low shot into the bottom-left corner.



LONDON: Arsenal's Welsh midfielder Aaron Ramsey (R) takes on West Bromwich Albion's Beninese midfielder Stephane Sessegnon (L) during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and West Bromwich Albion at the Emirates Stadium in London on Thursday. — AFP

PENALTY APPEALS

A sequence of set-pieces briefly offered West Brom hope and after Sanchez survived a handball appeal when he flicked the ball against his own hand inside the Arsenal box, Gareth McAuley hit the bar with a header from James McClean's in-swinging corner.

But Arsenal were soon back on the front foot and West Brom goalkeeper Ben Foster almost

embarrassed himself by allowing a tame Mesut Ozil shot to creep between his legs, forcing Craig Dawson to clear off the line.

In the 38th minute Sanchez made it 2-0, flashing a free-kick past a flat-footed Foster. West Brom manager Tony Pulis made a double-change at half-time, sending on Jonas Olsson and Salomon Rondon for James Chester and Sandro and switching to a bolder 4-4-2 formation. — AFP

CITY FACE CRUCIAL STOKE CLASH AHEAD OF REAL SHOWDOWN

MANCHESTER: Manchester City will warm up for one of the biggest games in their history with a less glamorous, but no less significant, clash against Stoke today.

City are just days away from playing 10-time European champions Real Madrid in their first Champions League semi-final, with the first leg at Eastlands on Tuesday.

Lifting the trophy would be a landmark moment for the club, owned and bankrolled since 2008 by the Abu Dhabi United Group. But despite their spending power and the talent in City's squad, the current domestic season has not

gone according to plan. Manuel Pellegrini's third placed side have failed to mount a Premier League title challenge in the Chilean's final campaign in charge before being replaced by Bayern Munich boss Pep Guardiola.

With four games to go they are not yet certain of securing the top-four finish that would guarantee them Champions League action next season, making Stoke's visit to Manchester an important fixture in its' own right even so close to the Real showdown.

Kevin de Bruyne believes it might have been a different story if City, two points ahead of fifth

placed Manchester United, had kept their key players fit at critical stages of the season.

The Belgium international, who scored City's winning goal against Paris Saint Germain in the Champions League quarter-finals shortly after returning from a knee injury, said: "I will not say we would be in the title race without injury problems. But I think we would have some more points because we didn't have the opportunity to rest some players." "Some players were also on the edge of being tired or being injured so it is not easy all the time." "Now almost everybody is back and it gives a different feeling in the group."

ATTRACTIVE

As well as the return of de Bruyne, who has scored 15 goals since signing from Wolfsburg for a club record £55 million (\$78 million) last August, City also have captain and defensive leader Vincent Kompany and winger Raheem Sterling back from injury in a nearly fully-fit squad. David Silva may not play against Stoke as City, who are looking for a fourth win in five league games after dropping points in a 1-1 draw at struggling Newcastle in midweek, continue to rest their midfield playmaker, who has been nursing an ankle problem, for the clash against Real. — AFP

Sports



Cubs Jake Arrieta pitches second no-hitter of career

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HOUSTON: Patrick Beverley #2 of the Houston Rockets takes a forearm from James Michael McAdoo #20 of the Golden State Warriors in the second half at Toyota Center on Thursday in Houston, Texas. —AFP

HARDEN FIRES ROCKETS PAST WARRIORS IN GAME 3

HOUSTON: The frantic, final moments nearly undermined all the Houston Rockets built in scratching out a double-digit lead, but James Harden took advantage of the disarray by doing what he does best.

Harden nailed a step-back jumper with 2.7 seconds left, and the Houston Rockets claimed a 97-96 victory over the Golden State Warriors in Game Three of a Western Conference first-round playoff series at Toyota Center on Thursday.

The defending champion Warriors, playing a second consecutive game without All-Star guard Stephen Curry (right ankle sprain), still lead the best-of-seven series 2-1 with Game Four set for Sunday at Toyota Center.

The Rockets blew a 17-point lead and trailed with 10.6 seconds left after Trevor Ariza threw away an inbounds pass that facilitated a fastbreak layup by Warriors reserve

guard Ian Clark. With Houston out of timeouts, Harden followed with a quick dribble, darted into the lane and spun free before nailing a 10-foot jumper.

Warriors forward Draymond Green dribbled the ensuing inbounds pass off his foot and out of bounds for a turnover with one second left. "A lot of people just get nervous and don't want to be in that situation," said Harden, who scored a game-high 35 points.

"For me, I strive in moments like that, so you just have to have confidence."

Harden added eight rebounds and nine assists. Donatas Motiejunas produced 14 points and 13 rebounds, while Dwight Howard also recorded a double-double (13 points and 13 rebounds) plus two blocks.

Reserve forward Marreese Speights led Golden State with 22 points in 18 minutes. Klay Thompson contributed 17 points and

eight rebounds, and Shaun Livingston, who again filled in for Curry, added 16 points.

KERR UNHAPPY

What Speights started in the second quarter and carried through the third, Livingston picked up in the fourth.

Following a pair of Harrison Barnes free throws that sliced the Warriors' deficit to six points, Livingston added three jumpers, the last with 8:59 left to cut it to 81-80.

Despite following that spurt with a three-minute drought, the Warriors hung tough. Trailing 88-80, they rallied with seven consecutive points and later took their first lead since 2-0 when Clark nailed a floater with 1:25 left. "Well, I'm not really encouraged. This is how we were supposed to play," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "We should have actually played better. We made too many mis-

takes." Golden State surrendered 20 points off 14 turnovers and missed 19-of-25 three-point attempts. The Rockets sought early energy, and already leading 21-15, closed the first period with a 10-3 run. Harden was the linchpin, tallying seven consecutive points before Ariza turned a turnover into a transition dunk.

Harden closed the quarter with a free throw, a pull-up jumper plus a basket following his offensive rebound for a 13-point advantage entering the second.

Houston extended to a 53-36 lead when Jason Terry and Harden sank three-pointers, but that was when Speights went on his scorching streak.

The Warriors closed the half with a 9-0 run following a technical foul on Howard. Speights drilled his third trey of the half with 2.4 seconds left to cap his 14-point period and cut the deficit to 55-48 at the break. —Reuters