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Photo of the day



KUWAIT: Photo of the moon seen from Kuwait by KUNA photographer Ghazi Al Qaffaf. The phases of the moon are incredibly important in the Islamic calendar and will determine the start of months including the upcoming holy month of Ramadan.

Local Spotlight

HOTELS IN KUWAIT



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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A tour of the country will draw your attention to the large number of hotels here, new and old, and ones that are expected to open shortly. You wonder who will stay at these hotels, since we are neither a touristic country nor do we attract a lot of businesses, so this is a worthwhile question! I cannot remember the last time I spent a weekend at a hotel in Kuwait - probably when my kids were very young and wanted to enjoy the pool in summertime. But then I realized it was not worth to book a hotel or desirable to spend a large amount of money for a vacation inside the country.

Who are allowed to rent hotel rooms? They do not allow singles, both citizens and expatriates, to stay in hotels. It's funny, of course, because they think that allowing singles in hotels means girls will enter the rooms and therefore problems will occur. I cannot understand why someone would want to take his girlfriend to a hotel in Kuwait. He would look like someone who is looking for a scandal, because the reception staff and security will ask for a marriage certificate, photos of civil IDs, phone numbers, etc. It is an embarrassing situation for any person, whether citizen or expatriate, because it means losing privacy in addition to the assumption that the only reason to rent a room is to look for girls and sex.

Even if a family wants to spend the weekend in a hotel, they will be asked for the same papers. I have a friend who told me a ridiculous story. He wanted to give his parents a surprise gift to mark the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage. It was a weekend vacation in a hotel, and when he wanted to reserve the room, he was told by the staff that he needed a marriage certificate to book the room! The friend could not stop laughing, because 50 years ago, marriage papers were not common as the ceremony was conducted by a sheikh. Many older Kuwaitis do not have a marriage certificate. The couple did not get their gift due to stupidity!

Hotels in Kuwait are expensive too. There are rooms ranging in prices of KD 100 and more per night, and if someone is willing to pay that much, it is because of boredom and the desire for change, especially by wealthy citizens. I do not see many people who are inclined to the idea of spending holidays and weekends in a hotel in Kuwait, especially with the absence of nightlife.

A lot of Kuwaitis tend to travel outside the country to spend short vacations, especially Dubai and Bahrain. I do not think the only reason is the availability of alcoholic beverages there, as there are a lot of families that do not seek nightlife or drinks, but are looking for comfort for their children and shopping that satisfies all tastes, with multiple avenues of entertainment available at all times.

What do hotels here have to offer? The pool and perhaps a health club, but this can be enjoyed without staying at the hotel. Some of the hotels here depend on conferences, weddings and perhaps breakfast buffets. All hotels are looking to achieve profits like any other business, but the problem here is that even holding a private party with a singing group requires a license from the ministry of interior. Why this complexity and the presumption of bad intentions, that people are troublemakers?

So I am not surprised that the majority of people spend their vacations abroad, even though it is expensive, because hotels in Kuwait are not necessarily attractive. Those that have achieved success here are four-star hotel apartments, because they are cheap and suitable for families. Hotels in Kuwait need to rethink their target audience and the services they provide to the local community.

In my view

EVOLUTION AND THE KUWAITI DIALECT

By Jeri Al-Jeri

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Evolution is a process of continuous growth with adaptations to the environment. Observers of languages realize how they grow, decay and die. A language is an intellectual creation that lives in an environment. Since it is a mental creation, its environment is in the ideological realm. Some changed, with its people, drastically, by adopting a different set of transcription, such as the case with Turkish, which changed from Arabic letters to Latin letters.

Some have a more settled existence and are not threatened, therefore such languages preserve their forms. Not surprisingly, some resemble life-forms that existed from the dinosaur era and kept their shape, like redwood trees and dragonflies. But what about dialects that do not count as fully formed languages? Are they a part of the overall grand evolutionary chain of formations? Or are they awkward fetuses that solely depend on their parent? And where does our Kuwaiti dialect fit in?

The previous question summarizes where all dialects might fit. In other words, if a dialect is going to fight for its future, then it ought to have enough grammar and vocabulary strength to stand up on its own, let alone learn how to march its way through geographies and decades. My Kuwaiti dialect is a proud yet crippled dialect. Due to the nature of this objective article, it is needed to follow only logical conclusions in this scientific matter.

As it is stated in the beginning of this article, that languages in general mimic the ideological stance of its people, the country of Kuwait we know and love started as a humble "armory storage" that was called Kuut, that was prepared for elite merchant caravans. It then had settlers around this blessed "Kuut", then our families from various tribes gathered. This gathering received the attention of the unified Islamic states of the Ottoman caliphate. That made the "Kuwaiti" people raise the red flag with the bold crescent in white, to announce this "state's" legitimacy. Therefore, most tribes had their distinct dialects melt into

a new single mold. A mold that had Turkish decorations and Iranian logistics. Certainly, the foundational demography was Arabic. However, the Arab tribe leaders dealt with merchandise that was mostly Iranian, from fruits to carpets, during the time of the relationship with the Turkish caliphate.

Therefore, the Kuwaiti people call windows (pencere/بانجرا), fruits and spoons (kaşık/خاشوقا) and sanitary ware (banyo/بانيو), that are Turkish words, to this day. And we communicate in Persian prepositions - for example, you in Farsi is (malt), while in Kuwaiti it's (malk). Unfortunately, most Kuwaiti people think that these words and prepositions are a part of their pure Arabian tribal heritage.

The Kuwaiti dialect also had an amount of English words after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, but independence and awareness of Islamic teachings caused a lot of schools to attract people more and more to their original language. Faith-based languages survive. Lastly, will the "Kuut" become a castle?

As a proud member of the glorious democracy of Kuwait, I can state with confidence that our dialect is not a mutated fetus that has no future, but rather a linguistic phenomenon that was only needed during Kuwait's stages of development. And a day will come when this "Kuut" will replace its Turkish roof and its Iranian furniture and its Western doorknobs, to bring our eternal language back.

The sands of the Arabian Peninsula hosted countless dialects and languages of empires like Persia and Rome, even languages of religions such as Christianity and Zoroastrianism, which have tumbled and crumbled. The Arabic language, unlike our Kuwaiti dialect, sprouted among the sands of the Arabian desert, rising as a creative and spontaneous means of communication to serve the needs of dealing in goods and services. All in all, languages mimic biology, and I conclude that my Kuwaiti dialect is not purely Arabic. In terms of survival, it is not the fittest.



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Young artist with extraordinary talents

By Ben Garcia

Anfal Bo Hamad is a 19-year-old painter, photographer, dancer, stage actor and singer. Her multifaceted talents may seem extraordinary, even more so considering Anfal was born with Down syndrome. Her mother, Najat Muhmmad Al-Reyahi, calls her a young girl with extraordinary talents, while people admire her for being active, organized and jolly.

Anfal is not unique in Kuwait. There is approximately one baby born with Down syndrome in 581 births in the country, according to Arab Center for Gene Studies data. Historically children with Down syndrome were considered shameful or kept out of the public eye. Attitudes, however, have changed as more families recognize the special gifts and talents of these children.

Down syndrome is a genetic disorder caused by a chromosomal abnormality. It affects the patient's intellectual and mental abilities. There are three types of commonly known Down syndrome conditions, and they can appear as severe, moderate or slight retardation. Down syndrome cases occur equally in all races with an overall incidence rate of approximately 1 in 800 births. 'Down' syndrome was derived from the name of John Langdon Down, a physician who described the condition in year 1860.

Special talents

Children with Down syndrome can live full, meaningful and productive lives. Dr Essa Mohammad Al-Jassem, a consultant at the Center for Child Evaluation and Teaching (CCET) and a Down syn-

drome expert, explained there are several types of people with Down syndrome. "Their conditions vary from one person to another," Dr Essa said. "They are not all the same - they are unique persons and some of them are really talented, while some of them can perform jobs," he said.

Patients with severe cases normally live only a few years, because of complications of the heart, liver or other internal organs. But patients with moderate and light symptoms can live full, normal lives. They are very sensitive people and want to be close to the people they love; they require attention which should be given freely and wholeheartedly so they can live longer. Survival of such patients depends on how parents, society and medics handle them, Dr Al Jassem explained.

"Parents should understand they are humans, so they deserve respect and proper care just like anyone of us. Down syndrome patients, especially those with moderate and light symptoms, can get married, but have to avoid having babies because it can be transferred to babies genetically. They can also work and socialize, learn many skills, attend schools and some of them have achieved great



accomplishments. I know such a person and he is touring the world. We have another patient here at the CCET and he is in charge of the library," Essa said.

"Teaching them early can help them develop and they can be valuable members of the Kuwait society. They can make friends with people, can manage themselves, cook and leave the house and come back. They can be independent; normally some of them have no formal education, but it's okay," he said.

A day in the life of Anfal

Anfal's day begins with a reading of the Holy Quran. Then she prepares to go to special school, where she spends most of the day with lessons in arts, reading and writing. "They have lessons; of course not the same as the curriculum of normal students, but they are busy every day in school. They have cooking classes, and she likes to cook," her mother Najat said, who decided to retire early from her job as an arts and music teacher to focus and give more time and attention to her daughter.

"Down syndrome patients, especially those with moderate and light symptoms, can get married...can work and socialize, learn many skills, attend schools and achieve great things."

"I taught in schools before I decided to retire and concentrate on my daughter. I worked hard for others, but not too much for my own daughter, so I felt guilty. I took early retirement to concentrate on my daughter," she said. "When I retired, I put most of my money in my home. We shifted to this house lately (in Abdullah Mubarak), and we are thankful. I have spent most of my retirement money. I still have a lot of work to do, but I am happy. I have a son who is now in college and also very active. He loves his sister very much. I sent him to America to study, but he missed his sister, so he came back," Najat said.

During her early years, Anfal demonstrated a love for art. According to her mother, when she was four months old, Anfal was able to hold a pen and imitate drawings. "I am an artist too and an art teacher, so I know she has the talent. When you give proper care to Down syndrome patients, they will have a better quality of life. She can be better than me. I know there is no cure for Down syndrome, but we can help them improve their lives tremendously," Najat said.

"I want to give all the necessary support to my only daughter. I am now concentrating on her and it helps a lot in improving her craftwork - we were able to participate in many art competitions," she noted. "I retired eight years ago, but I couldn't completely abandon my first love of teaching, so I organized a small group for Anfal - I call it Anfal Team," she said.

That group has about seven Down syndrome and autistic students. "I formed this group to help them support each other. Parents should give strength to each other and give all they can to their kids. I hold classes in my house and we help each other. I get monetary support from the government, but not for everything. We usually participate in programs and arts competitions at our own expense," Najat said.

Anfal has won several awards both in Kuwait and abroad. Her specialty is mixed media painting. "I help her shape the idea, then she does it on her own. But she gets tired quickly, so a painting will not be completed in one sitting. It needs a week or sometimes even months to finish. But I don't force her at all. If she is in the mood, she can draw small things in a day," said Najat.

In Kuwait, the government offers special care for Down syndrome patients and those with other disabilities by providing them regular financial aid, schooling and other benefits. "The government supports them and provides money so they can go to school. They have their own association that looks after their welfare. They can apply for a job and can get the job they want. The ministry of education has a program for the inclusion of Down syndrome patients; the government wants them to be in mainstream schools so that they can play and socialize with other kids," Dr Essa explained.





Egg-centric Art

By Nawara Fattahova

Sabah Asad, a Kuwaiti artist, teacher of engineering at Kuwait University and consultant at the ministry of planning, practices a rare and very interesting art. He is one of the first Kuwaitis engraving on eggshells, his hobby since 2004. He does not sell his pieces, but collects them to hold an international exhibition.



Asad started his artistic career when he was still in high school. "After graduating, I started participating in art exhibitions. Then in 2004, I saw some images on the Internet of egg engravings and I liked them, so I decided to do this kind of art. It was difficult as the correct tools were not available, so I started with the most simple technique and developed it," he told Kuwait Times.

A shortage of egg varieties in the local market is another obstacle. "We don't usually have goose

A shortage of egg varieties in the local market is another obstacle. "We don't usually have goose or duck eggs available, which are the best for eggshell engraving, as they are medium-sized and thick."

or duck eggs available, which are the best for eggshell engraving, as they are medium-sized and thick. The most commonly available eggs in our markets are hen eggs, so I use them the most for my artworks. The smallest egg I worked on was the egg of a nightingale," Asad said.

Then there is the ostrich egg, which is also rarely available, especially since it's expensive. "I prefer to use regular eggs for engraving as it's more challenging. The common hen egg is very fragile, so it can easily break, while the ostrich egg doesn't shatter even if you drop it. Only one of my ostrich eggs ever broke, and this was during one of



the workshops that I was presenting, as it was used very much," explained Asad.

It takes him between seven to eight hours of work to finish engraving one egg. "I love the hard work, and I enjoy it even if I work for six hours and the egg breaks. This happens with regular eggs and not the ostrich egg.

Also, I have a few emu eggs that are dark green in color. Engraving on ostrich eggs is very difficult as the shell is hard. Till today, I have engraved 23 eggs, apart from those that broke, and I never color any of them - I prefer to keep the natural color.



Sabah Asad. — Photos by Joseph Shagra





People have broken many of my eggs, as here in Kuwait people love to touch art pieces and they easily break in their hands - they don't appreciate the effort I spent on this work," he rued.

This art has made Asad develop special feelings for eggs. "Now I adore eggs. I can't even break an egg to eat it, so I ask my children to break it for me. I don't throw anything, and I keep all the remaining parts of my broken engraved eggs. I also take photos of every piece I finish, so I have a memory of it if somebody breaks it. This art that shows the details of the egg is one of the great evidences of God's creation and power," he noted.

Engraving an egg is a long process. "The membrane of the egg keeps the shell together, and if it tears, the egg will split, as the function of this membrane is to protect the chick inside. So it has to be



completely dry to break it and remove it from the shell so I can engrave the egg. I first prick the egg from the top with a needle, and turn it upside down, closing the hole with my finger and make another hole on the other side. Then with a thin wire, I mix the contents slowly and empty it. Then I put some water in it to clean it and leave it to dry. After that, I can work on it," said Asad.

"The regular chicken egg is very fragile and any crack will damage the entire egg. So I have to hold the whole egg in my palm to protect it, and after it's empty, it becomes harder to hold. This art of engraving on eggs needs patience, and it gives me the impetus to challenge myself to do a harder piece," he pointed out.

He is now planning to hold an art exhibition of his egg art pieces outside Kuwait. "I'm thinking of France to hold my exhibition, as here in Kuwait there is no appreciation for my art, while abroad they know the value of this art. Once I was in the United States and I saw an old lady painting on egg shells, and people were watching her with passion and they bought her works for high prices - one egg was sold for \$500 - and this was just painting. But people here don't value art properly," Asad lamented.



ASSEMBLY BUREAU DISCUSSES MP DASHTI'S MEMBERSHIP

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouk Al-Ghanem yesterday chaired a meeting for the Assembly Bureau to discuss the question of the membership of controversial MP Abdulhameed Dashti for failing to attend sessions. Ghanem told reporters that the bureau asked the constitutional experts of the Assembly to prepare a legal viewpoint on the issue amid calls by several MPs to revoke the membership of Dashti who has been outside the country apparently to escape several cases against him in court.

The Speaker said that the bureau specifically discussed a request by Dashti to have a medical leave for treatment abroad and this issue is different from

what the Assembly discussed last month. Last month, the Assembly rejected a request by Dashti to consider his staying away from sessions as legal. The rejection came after a heated debate in the Assembly in which a large number of MPs strongly criticized Dashti by calling him pro-Iran.

Dashti left the country over two months ago to an unknown destination after the government and some Arab embassies filed lawsuits against him for strongly criticizing Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and taking a pro-Iran stand. The Public Prosecution has already issued a number of warrants to arrest him and earlier this week, it issued a decision to detain him for 10 days whenever he comes back. The outspoken lawmaker faces several years in jail if convicted in the cases after the National Assembly agreed

to lift his parliamentary immunity to allow his trial. The Speaker said that he will apply the rules of the internal charter and the law regardless of any opinion, adding that the decision will be based on the law and not because the lawmaker in question is Dashti. Islamist MP Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran meanwhile, said it is better to revoke the membership of Dashti in the last six months of the Assembly term, which will be early next year, in order to avoid by-election to replace him. Jeeran said a by-election now will trigger sectarianism in his constituency. Under Kuwaiti law, if a parliamentary seat falls vacant, it must be filled through by-election within 60 days. The term of the assembly expires in July 2017 when Kuwait is scheduled to have parliamentary polls.

3 ARRESTED FOR FORGING AND SELLING VISAS

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Relations and Security Information Department said that criminal detectives have arrested a gang forging entry visas. The suspects include two Kuwaitis and an Egyptian. Undercover detectives apprehended the suspects after engaging them in a visa transaction with marked currency notes. One of the suspects - an unemployed Kuwaiti confessed to forging the visas by removing the information and replacing them with their clients' information. The suspects target Asians - making KD 400 for each visit visa. 20 visa forms were found in their possessions.

Wife 'disciplined'

Hawally Governorate police have ordered the detention of a citizen. The suspect is accused of 'restricting freedom, harming and threatening to kill' his wife. Interior Ministry officials received a call from another citizen alleging that his cousin has been detained by her husband for days. Several policemen stormed

the house. The man (husband) claimed he was just disciplining his wife. The suspect locked his wife in the bathroom for two days and threatened to harm her if she shouts.

Egyptian 'wanted'

Sulaibiya Police have published the name of an Egyptian (M A) who disappeared with container of goods worth KD 50,000. A Kuwaiti reported that he made an agreement with a UAE company to deliver some goods. The UAE company delivered as agreed but the Egyptian driver who received the container ran away with the goods. In another development, Jahra detectives are interrogating an Egyptian to get information that could lead to the arrest of five outlaws who stole a car at gun point. An Egyptian expat said the suspects attacked and made away with his car. He submitted a medical report stating his injuries. — Al-Qabas, Al-Anbaa

KRCS ASSISTS SYRIAN REFUGEE CANCER PATIENTS IN JORDAN

AMMAN: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding with King Hussein Cancer Center - whereby KRCS would set up a charitable fund to help pay the expenses of treatment for Syrian refugee cancer patients. The memorandum was signed by KRCS' Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer and the Cancer Center's director Princess Dina Mera'ad. The fund will have about \$325,000 to spend on Syrian refugee cancer patients over a period of two years, said Dr Al-Sayer in a statement to KUNA following the signing of the memorandum. He indicated that contributions to the fund came not only from KRCS but also from Kuwait Finance House and Kuwait Women Cultural Society. Having toured the facilities at the

Center, he praised what he saw in the way of the quality of services offered to patients especially the children's ward.

On her part, Princess Dina valued the help Kuwait has been offering to the Center, noting that the charitable fund would alleviate some of the financial pressure currently burdening the Center in its treatment of Syrian refugee cancer patients. Dr Al-Sayer and a delegation with him are in the midst of an official visit to Jordan to attend the 41st meeting of the Arab Organization of Red Crescent and Red Cross Societies. According to official statistics, there are over 1.3 million Syrians in Jordan, about half of whom arrived as refugees following the eruption of internal strife in Syria, which was about six years ago. — KUNA



KRCS' Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer visits King Hussein Cancer Center. — KUNA



14 DRUG CASES

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Drugs Control General Department registered 14 cases of drug trade, and arrested 25 suspects including a citizen, seven Egyptians, six Indians, three bedoons, one Sri Lankan, one Jordanian, one Bangladeshi,

one Palestinian, two Nepalese and two Filipinos. 100g shabu, 1.5 kg marijuana, 750g hashish, 3010 Tramadol tablets, 70g heroin were seized. The suspects were sent to concerned authorities, while 20 persons were deported after being arrested with the help of drug dealers.



'MANIPULATING EXIT AND ENTRY RECORD' AT AIRPORT

Kuwait: Residency detectives have arrested a Jordanian and an employee at the Airport Passport offices for 'manipulating the exit and entry record' in the airport computers. Relations and Security Information Department said that the Jordanian named Jaafar Najah Al-Junaid was arrested after he paid money to an airport staff named Nafe Al-Dhafiri (a Kuwaiti) to manipulate the exit and entry for his wife Manal Fareed Asaad (Jordanian) without her leaving - to avoid pay-

ments of residency violation fines. The suspects have been sent to concerned authorities.

Syrian poses as detective

A Syrian who posed as a First Lieutenant detective was arrested in Adan area after a tip-off. The Syrian, Mohammad Farhan Al-Saleh claimed he is a residency detective and asked for the IDs of workers at Al-Ayoub complex in Hawally. Several forged IDs were found in his possession.

BARBERS IN OLD KUWAIT - 'JACKS OF ALL TRADES'

KUWAIT: In addition to haircutting, grooming and shaving, barbers in old Kuwait also performed cupping, dental extraction, treating burns and fractures, which made them indeed 'Jacks of all trades'. Most barbers back then were simple tradesmen, who owned small

storefronts or worked in the streets, moving between areas, houses and gathering places for low prices.

With the passage of time, each barber had his own place, where people also sought after treatment prescriptions with a herbomineral for-

mulation for various diseases and pains and infections.

On some occasions, barbershops in Kuwait also served as places of social gatherings, debates, interactions and engaging citizens in discussions about contemporary issues. Most barbershops

in old Kuwait used to spread in Al Tannakah (tinsmiths) souk, Al-Khababez (bakers) souk and some other public markets, and among the most famous Kuwaiti barbers at the beginning of the last century, where 'Bilal' and 'Safar Ali'. — KUNA

KUWAIT BATTLES TERROR FINANCING, LAUNDERING

DOHA: Kuwait is keen and actively working with countries in the region to boost efforts on combating money laundering and terrorism financing, Kuwaiti finance figure said yesterday. Kuwaiti President of the Financing Investigation Unit and head of the National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing Talal Al-Sayegh made the remarks on the sidelines of the 23rd meeting of Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force (MENAFATF), hosted by Doha.



Talal Al-Sayegh

Al-Sayegh added that such efforts come also to find the most suitable methods in practice in relation to combating money laundering and terrorism financing. Al-Sayegh said Kuwait is also helping raising awareness and developing professional and practical levels for all workers in this field, including Kuwait's keenness on taking part in regional and international events concerned with money laundering and terrorism financing. Al-Sayegh, who is also the current president of the meeting group, said that Kuwait is keen on emphasizing the importance of cooperation among regional countries in bolstering financial stability in the region.

He affirmed Kuwait's keenness to join international community in its serious endeavors to combat the crimes of money laundering and terrorism financing, pointing that the State of Kuwait has already taken several regulatory measures in this area, such as modern and comprehensive regulatory legal framework in line with the international standards of the MENAFATF. Participants in the meeting include a number of Kuwaiti government entities representing the finance ministry, foreign and interior ministries, and members of the national committee for combating money laundering and terrorism financing. — KUNA

AUSTRALIA AMBASSADOR LAUDS TIES WITH KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Kuwait and Australia have a strong relationship in all areas, especially since Australia involvement in the liberation of Kuwait back in 1991, said Australian Ambassador to Kuwait Warren Hauck yesterday. The two countries have a lot of cooperation, especially in military, where they are both partner in fighting terrorism in the Middle East area, as they both participated in meetings that Kuwait hosted on coalition to fight the so-called Islamic State (IS), the Ambassador said. Kuwait and Australia have a lot of engagements, mostly military and humanitarian, as Australia is a big supporter for the humanitarian efforts in the region, especially with the situations in Syria and Iraq, he said.

"It's pleasing to see the increasing number of Kuwaiti student in Australia. Ten years ago, the number was 180, but last year it was about 1,400, a very good growth that reflects the strength of the education system in Australia, which is at the top of the world standard," he added. In trade, "Kuwait has always been a good market as the trade with Australia came to about USD 700 million. Kuwait for us is the largest market in the world for livestock and wheat trade," and for a number of years it has been a large market for car exports, where Australia have much more to offer.

"Australia is looking forward for free trade agreement with Kuwait and GCC," he said. Kuwait investment in Australia now worth about USD 12 billion, which makes Kuwait one of the top 20 investors in Australia, he added. About the Governor-General official visit to Kuwait on May 1st, the ambassador said that the last state visit to Kuwait with this capacity was in 2011. The governor's visit will focus on education and business, as well as defense links between the two countries, as it coincides with the 25th anniversary of liberation of Kuwait. — KUNA

KNPC SIGNS KD 1.2 BN LOAN FOR FUELS PROJECT

KUWAIT SIGNS OIL SUPPLY DEAL WITH TURKEY'S TUPRAS

KUWAIT: State-owned refiner Kuwait National Petroleum Co (KNPC) yesterday signed the first tranche of financing for its multi-billion-dollar Clean Fuels Project, a major plank of the country's economic development plan. The tranche, provided by local banks and lasting for 10 years, is worth 1.2 billion dinars (\$3.98 billion) and led by National Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Finance House, KNPC chairman Jamal Al-Noori said at the signing ceremony.

Pricing details were not given. KNPC chief executive Mohammed Al-Mutairi had said last month that the first tranche would be worth 900 million dinars. No reason was given for the increase in size. The second tranche of the loan, which will be arranged by international lenders, is expected to be \$6 billion and close by the end of this year, KNPC acting chief executive Ahmad Al-Jimaz said at the ceremony.

The two tranches comprise about 70 per cent of the total financing required for the project, while the remaining 30 per cent will be financed from KNPC's

own funds. National Bank of Kuwait's share of the first tranche was worth 400 million dinars, and Kuwait Finance House's portion was 275 million dinars, NBK's chief executive Isam Al-Sager said at the ceremony. Eleven banks, including five Islamic lenders, took part in the first tranche. Part of the country's 30 billion dinar economic development plan, the Clean Fuels Project will upgrade and expand two of the Gulf state's largest refineries with a focus on producing higher-value products such as diesel and kerosene for export.

Meanwhile, work on Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) Clean Fuel Project (CFP) is 50% complete and is expected to be finished on schedule in 2018, Chief Executive Officer of KPC Nizar Al-Adsani said yesterday. Al-Adsani said that CFP is amongst the most monumental projects KPC has undertaken, which aims to help ramp up the country's port capacities. Moreover, he noted that increased port capacity would help propel Kuwait into new markets, which would in turn, help bring the

country's 2030 vision of increased development to fruition. Relying on foreign financial aid is an integral part of KPC's strategy, as it aims to bolster its ties with local banks, Al-Adsani added.

Kuwait, Tupras ink deal

In another development, KPC has signed a contract to supply crude oil to Turkish refiner Tupras, Kuwait's state news agency reported yesterday without giving details of the deal. The agreement, which KPC said was signed on Monday, came amid "intense competition among crude exporting countries for market share in the Mediterranean region", said Nabil Bouresli, KPC's head of international marketing, according to KUNA. Kuwait produces around 3 million barrels of oil per day and plans to boost its output to 3.15 million bpd in the third quarter of 2016, Bouresli said in February. Turkey imported 149,227 tons of crude oil from Kuwait in 2015, out of the 25 million tons it purchased abroad, according to Turkey's energy watchdog EPDK. — Agencies



KUWAIT: Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Medical Services Dr Jamal Al-Harbi seen with visiting US delegation representing 18 American health providers from US universities, hospitals, and medical firms. — KUNA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH DISCUSSES BILATERAL COOPERATION WITH US HEALTH PROVIDERS

KUWAIT: Seeking to constantly streamline the provision of health care to the public, the Ministry of Health looks for cooperation with well-established international health providers, said the Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Medical Services Dr Jamal Al-Harbi yesterday. He made that statement to reporters on the sidelines of a meeting between the

ministry officials and a visiting US delegation representing 18 American health providers from US universities, hospitals, and medical firms.

He said the meeting focused, among other things, on exchanging expertise on linking hospitals, clinics, primary care centers with electronic filing systems and on proper steps to send Kuwaiti

physicians to the US to hone in their acquired skills. He further said that the ministry was planning to invite American surgeons to perform delicate and complex surgeries here in Kuwait such as heart or brain surgeries. Dr Al-Harbi also indicated that the meeting discussed the notion of sending Kuwaiti patients to the US for treatment there. — KUNA

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ALEPPO: Syrians evacuate a toddler from a destroyed building following a reported air strike on the rebel-held neighborhood of Al-Kalasa in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo yesterday. — AFP

‘CATASTROPHIC’ SITUATION IN ALEPPO: UN

SYRIA AIRSTRIKES, SHELLING KILL OVER 60; SCORES KILLED IN HOSPITAL HIT

BEIRUT: A wave of airstrikes and shelling killed more than 60 people in less than 24 hours in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo, monitors and activists said yesterday. The contested city is now one of the main battlegrounds of Syria's devastating civil war, with a ceasefire that has collapsed and peace talks in Geneva stalled. At least 27 people died as a hospital supported by Doctors Without Borders and the International Committee for the Red Cross and nearby buildings were hit overnight in the rebel-held part of Aleppo.

"The catastrophic deterioration in Aleppo over the last 24-48 hours" has jeopardized the aid lifeline that delivers supplies to millions of Syrians, said Jan Egeland, chairman of the UN humanitarian task force. "I could not in any way express how high the stakes are for the next hours and days."

The UN envoy for Syria appealed early yesterday on the United States and Russia to help revive the peace talks and a cease-fire, which he said "hangs by a thread." However, the violence only escalated. New airstrikes yesterday in residential areas in the rebel-held part of the city killed at least 20 while state media reported that at least 1,000

mortars and rockets were fired at government-held areas of Aleppo, killing at least 14 civilians.

The chief Syrian opposition negotiator Mohammed Alloush blamed the government of President Bashar Assad for the violence. He said "the environment is not conducive to any political action." He denounced the intensive bombing as an attempt by Assad's government to drive the residents of Aleppo out, labelling it "a crime of ethnic and sectarian cleansing."

About 200 civilians have been killed in the past week in Syria, nearly half of them around Aleppo. There has also been shelling in Damascus, along with a car bombing - both rarities for the capital. The ICRC said the fighting, including the destruction in airstrikes overnight of a key hospital in Aleppo, is putting millions at grave risk.

With peace talks in Geneva completely deadlocked, Syrians are regarding the escalating bloodshed with dread, fearing that Aleppo is likely to be the focus of the next, more vicious, phase of the war. Rebel commanders said government forces have been mobilizing soldiers, equipment and ammunition in preparation for a military action in

Aleppo. The well-known Al-Quds filed hospital supported by MSF and ICRC and located in the rebel-held district of Sukkari was hit shortly before midnight Wednesday, according to opposition activists and rescue workers. Six hospital staff and three children were among the 27 who died there.

Carnage in hospital

The hospital has been one of the main medical centers operating in Aleppo since the city became deeply divided in 2012. Dating back to the 1990s, the hospital was renamed after the area came under rebel control to carry the name of one of the uprising's early victims, Basel Aslan, who was detained and tortured to death, said civil defense volunteer Ibrahim Alhaj. It received aid and assistance from various foreign groups, as well as a volunteer medic from the United States, according to its Facebook page.

The Syrian Civil Defense, a volunteer first-responders agency whose members went to the scene of the attack, put the death toll at 30 and said the dead included six hospital staff. Among those slain was one of the last pediatricians

remaining in opposition-held areas of Aleppo and a dentist. The defense agency, also known as the White Helmets, said the hospital and adjacent buildings were struck in four consecutive airstrikes. It said there were still victims buried under the rubble and that the rescue work continued. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said three children were among the 27 victims but it was not immediately clear if they were patients at the hospital.

MSF said in a statement that at least 14 patients and staff were among those killed, with the toll expected to rise, and that the hospital was "hit by direct airstrike." It was the area's main pediatric care center. "Where is the outrage among those with the power and obligation to stop this carnage," asked Muskilda Zancada, MSF head of Syria mission. The 34-bed, multi-story hospital had an emergency room and offered services such as obstetric care, outpatient and inpatient treatment. It had an intensive care unit and an operating theatre. Eight doctors and 28 nurses worked full time in the hospital, the MSF said, adding it has supported the hospital since 2012. — AP

BIDEN ARRIVES IN IRAQ ON SURPRISE VISIT

FIGHT AGAINST IS, GOVT CRISIS IN FOCUS

BAGHDAD: US Vice President Joe Biden made a surprise visit to Iraq yesterday to implore the country's leaders to resolve a crippling political crisis that has hindered efforts to defeat the Islamic State group.

Biden landed in Baghdad mid-afternoon after a secret, overnight flight from Washington on a military plane. Stepping onto the tarmac in blistering heat, he greeted the US ambassador and Lt Gen Sean McFarland, the US commander heading the fight against IS, as swirling dust masked the skyline behind them. Vice President Joe Biden met with Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi to discuss resolving Iraq's political crisis.

The meeting was Biden's first stop after arriving in Iraq on an unannounced trip Thursday. Biden will also meet with other leaders and US personnel in Iraq.

The White House didn't disclose Biden's itinerary, but said he would meet with Iraqi leadership to stress national unity and discuss the campaign against IS extremists. Biden also planned to meet with US personnel working in the country.

His visit comes amid a wave of tense protests and demands for sweeping political reforms that have paralyzed Iraq's government, already struggling to tackle a dire economic crisis and battle IS. The Obama administration has stepped up its military role with more troops and equipment in hopes of putting Iraq on a better path as President Barack Obama prepares to leave office in January.

Though there's been progress in wresting back territory from IS and weakening its leadership, senior US officials traveling with Biden said any lost momentum will likely be due to political unrest rather than military shortcomings. Chaotic politics are nothing new in Iraq, but the present infighting risks becoming a distraction, with politicians more focused on keeping their jobs than fighting IS, said the officials, who weren't authorized to comment publicly and requested anonymity. Due to concern about Biden's security, his trip to the



BAGHDAD: US Vice President Joe Biden steps off a C-17 military transport plane upon his arrival in Baghdad yesterday. — AP

war zone was not announced in advance. Journalists making the 17-hour journey with Biden had to agree to keep it secret until he was inside Iraq.

The turmoil engulfing Iraq's government grew out of weeks of rallies by followers of influential Shiite cleric Muqtada Al-Sadr demanding an end to pervasive corruption and mismanagement. Thousands have protested just outside Baghdad's heavily guarded Green Zone, calling for politicians to be replaced by independent technocrats and for Iraq's powerful Shiite militias to be brought into key ministries.

Trouble-shooting

At the center of the crisis is Prime Minister Al-Abadi, a Shiite whom the US considers a welcome improvement over his predecessor, Nouri Al-Maliki. Yet Al-Abadi's failures to deliver on long-promised reforms and manage

Iraq's growing sectarian tensions have threatened his ability to lead the country. Al-Abadi is caught between ordinary Iraqis pleading for government accountability and entrenched political blocks that are reluctant to give up a powerful patronage system widely blamed for squandering Iraq's oil fortunes. On Tuesday, Iraq's parliament approved a half-dozen new Cabinet ministers Al-Abadi nominated in a gesture to protesters, but the rest of the Cabinet lineup remains in contention.

The turbulence has roiled the Iraqi capital, with lawmakers throwing water bottles and punching each other as some call for Al-Abadi to resign along with the Sunni parliament speaker and Kurdish president. Last month, Al-Abadi pulled troops fighting IS on the front lines to protect Baghdad amid the protests. Meanwhile, an economic crisis spurred by collapsing oil prices has further compounded Iraq's troubles.

Obama, in Saudi Arabia last week, said Al-Abadi had been a "good partner" but added he was concerned about his hold on power. Obama said it was critical that Iraq's government stabilize and unite competing factions so it can fight terrorism and right its economy.

"They've got a lot on their plate," Obama said. "Now is not the time for government gridlock or bickering." It was precisely because of that bickering that Obama emerged from his meeting with Gulf leaders without the promises of financial support for Iraq's reconstruction that he had sought. Gulf countries preferred to wait and see whether Iraq could get its political act together before agreeing to help. Aiming to build on recent progress in retaking territory from IS, the US this month agreed to deploy more than 200 additional troops to Iraq, bringing the authorized total to just over 4,000, and to send Apache helicopters into the fight. Although the White House has ruled out a ground combat role, Obama's decision puts American forces closer to the front lines to train and support Iraqi forces preparing to try to take back the key northern city of Mosul. US officials would not put a timeline on reclaiming Mosul but said they expect progress to slow during the summer.

For Biden and Obama, the next nine months represent their final opportunity to position Iraq for a peaceful future before their terms end. Though they came into office pledging to end the war and did so in 2011, US troops returned to Iraq in 2014 amid the rise of IS. Obama now acknowledges that his goal of defeating the militants won't be realized during his presidency.

The slow but consistent increase in US military involvement in Iraq, and more recently in Syria, has raised concerns about the extent of the mission, and the risks of another Mideast entanglement. On the other hand, many Obama critics deem his efforts too little, too late. Nearly all of this year's presidential candidates are pledging a more aggressive campaign against IS. — AP

EGYPT EXPLORERS HUNT GOLD IN THE DESERT

EASTERN DESERT, Egypt: Off the off-road tracks deep in Egypt's eastern desert, prospectors are ramping up the hunt for the treasure once revered by the Pharaohs as the "skin of the gods" - gold.

Essential for ancient artifacts like the famed burial mask of Tutankhamun and still highly desired in Middle Eastern culture today, gold has been mined in Egypt for millennia. But experts say the country is heavily underexplored and that modern technology now allows much deeper excavation of the ancient sites shown on Pharaonic treasure maps. If developed, gold and mineral mining could prove a boon to the country at a time it is desperate for foreign currency, and provide jobs for its burgeoning population of 90 million. But miners and experts say current legislation is out of step with global practices and doesn't give enough incentives to bring in foreign investment.

"Mining has been going on here for over 5,000 years, but in the 21st century it's essentially virgin ground," said Mark Campbell, president of the Canadian exploration company Alexander Nubia, which is increasing its drilling this year in a 1,070-square mile area in the desert. "Exploring for gold and minerals in Egypt today with modern technology is like having a map where X marks the spot."

The group has identified six potential mines in the area, filled with barren valleys and pink rock outcroppings known as the Arabian-Nubian Shield, which stretches south to Eritrea and east to Saudi Arabia. While veins close to the surface have been largely excavated by successive Pharaonic, Roman and even British colonial operations, the sites still hold gold concentrations deeper down that nowadays can be extracted with heavy machinery. At the moment, Campbell's team is drilling core samples that are sent off for analysis in Romania. The gold can't always be seen by the naked eye, with concentrations of only a few grams per ton of dense, mineral-filled ore. But it's promising enough for the team of two dozen explorers and specialists to have undertaken plans to open Egypt's first new mine by 2019.

Dormant sector

One former British colonial-era mine in the area, known as Abu Zawal, was abandoned in the mid-20th century after nationalist strongman President Gamal Abdel Nasser chased away foreigners and ended decades of laissez-faire capitalism in the Arab world's most populous country. The British also had been following in the tracks of the ancients - the site is still littered with



LUXOR: Geologist Leonard Karr (left) shows core samples drilled out from rock formations in Egypt's eastern desert, between Luxor and Hurghada. — AP

Roman pottery fragments, an ancient fort and water well, as well as Pharaonic grinding stones that lie scattered alongside turn-of-the-century spent rifle cartridges. But the mining sector today remains largely dormant, a victim of outdated policies, experts said. Despite some reforms that

went into effect last year amid government promises to create more favorable investment laws, Egypt's mining legislation still falls short of international standards, and attempts by the government to attract foreign investment have largely failed. — AP

SUDANESE POLICE FIRE TEAR GAS AT PROTESTS OVER STUDENT'S KILLING

CAIRO: Sudanese police fired tear gas on hundreds who gathered in central Khartoum yesterday in a second day of protests over the killing of a student at a campus demonstration a day earlier. "Killing of a student, killing of a nation, down with military rule," protesters chanted. Protests in Sudan are usually limited to campuses and yesterday's demonstration was unusual in that it took place in the centre of the capital.

Clashes also erupted later at another protest by hundreds in front of Khartoum University. Police used batons and students hurled rocks. Students had initially demonstrated on Wednesday against government plans to sell off Khartoum University buildings, before gunmen in plain clothes opened fire on them, killing 20-year-old Mohammed al Sadek.

His funeral later in the day turned into an anti-government protest by students, witnesses said. President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, who took power in a 1989 coup, brooks little dissent in Sudan, which has been suffering from an economic crisis since South Sudan seceded in 2011, costing Khartoum more than 70 percent of its oil revenues. — Reuters



ADEN: Yemeni loyalist forces gather at the scene of a suicide attack targeting the police chief in the base of the Saudi-backed government yesterday in Yemen's second city Aden. — AFP

YEMEN SUICIDE BOMBER TARGETS ADEN POLICE CHIEF

ADEN: A suicide bomber targeted the police chief of Yemen's second city Aden yesterday in the latest attack against senior officials in the base of the Saudi-backed government, a security official said.

The bombing came after loyalist forces backed by a Saudi-led military coalition seized the key southeastern port city of Mukalla and the nearby airport and oil facilities from Al-Qaeda, ending a year-long occupation by the jihadists. General Shallal Shayae escaped unharmed from the attack but several people were wounded when the bomber blew up a vehicle packed with explosives, the official said.

A witness said the bomber was stopped at a checkpoint on the perimeter of the compound around the general's house, where he blew himself up. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing, but Shayae has survived attacks by jihadists more than once.

In February, suspected Al-Qaeda militants opened fire on a convoy carrying Shayae and Aden governor Aidarus Al-Zubaidi, but they escaped unharmed. Shayae and Zubaidi also survived a car bombing that targeted their convoy in Aden on January 5 killing two of their guards.

The port city has seen a growing jihadist presence since loyalist forces backed by the Saudi-led coalition drove Huthi Shiite rebels out of the city in July.

For the first 12 months of the intervention that the coalition launched in March last year, it focused its firepower on the rebels, creating a power vacuum that was exploited not only by Al-Qaeda, but also by rival jihadists of the Islamic State group. — AFP



This file photo taken on September 8, 2002 shows a partial view of the Dimona nuclear power plant in the southern Israeli Negev desert. — AFP

ISRAEL NUKE REACTOR DEFECTS SPARK SECRECY DILEMMA

AGEING ATOMIC CENTRE FUELS SAFETY FEARS

JERUSALEM: Growing safety fears surrounding Israel's largest but ageing atomic research centre have provoked fresh questions over its future and a dilemma over the secrecy of the country's alleged nuclear arsenal. Israel, believed to be the Middle East's sole nuclear power, has long refused to confirm or deny that it has such weapons.

The Haaretz newspaper reported on Tuesday that a study had uncovered 1,537 defects in the decades-old aluminium core of the Dimona nuclear reactor in the Negev desert of southern Israel. The defects at the centre, where nuclear weapons were allegedly developed, were not seen to be severe and the risk of a nuclear outbreak is very limited, the report said.

However, there are growing calls for new safeguards and even a new research centre-which could present the country with a decision on whether to acknowledge for the first time that it has nuclear weapons.

The US-based Institute for Science and International Security estimated in 2015 that Israel had 115 nuclear warheads. At the same time Israel has strongly opposed other regional powers, most notably its arch-foe Iran, obtaining nuclear weapons.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was also one of the most vociferous critics of the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers that was implemented in January, leading to the lifting of international sanctions on Tehran.

Officially the Dimona centre focuses on research and energy provision. But in the 1980s nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu, a former technician at the centre, alleged to a British newspaper that it was also used to create nuclear weapons. He was later jailed for 18 years for the revelations.

'Waiting for disaster'

The core of the Dimona reactor was provided by France in the late 1950s and went online a few years later. Common practice is that such reactors are used for only 40 years, though this can be extended with modifications.

Uzi Even, a chemistry professor at Tel Aviv University who was involved in the creation of the reactor, is concerned about the safety of the site and has campaigned for a decade for it to be closed-"so far, to no avail".

He called for it to be shut off for security reasons. "This reactor is now one of the oldest still operating globally," he

said. Michal Rozin, a lawmaker with the leftwing Meretz party, has called for a radical shakeup in policy in the light of the safety worries.

"The nuclear reactor has no supervision besides the body that runs it, the Israel Atomic Energy Commission," she wrote in a letter, seen by AFP, to the parliamentary foreign and defence committee.

"We don't need to wait for a disaster to make a change." Israel's atomic energy agency said in a statement that the country had the "highest international standards" of security and safety, adding that many reactors can last for far longer than 40 years.

'Political matter'

While a challenge, safely closing a nuclear reactor and opening a new one is far from impossible, Arthur Motta, chair of Nuclear Engineering at Pennsylvania State University, told AFP.

"Technically it is not a difficult problem," he said. "Nuclear energy is so dense, the volume of a reactor that provides a whole city with energy is just (the size of) a building." "It is more a political matter."

And there are a number of political reasons why the site has remained open, not least the thousands of jobs at risk, Even said. Building a new site could also see Israel pushed to officially declare its nuclear capabilities. While Israel is widely believed to have nuclear weapons, officials do not formally confirm or deny the claims-a policy often dubbed deliberate ambiguity.

As such, the country has yet to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which would require its sites to undergo regular inspection of its facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency, Motta explained. The IAEA declined to comment. "I don't think we have the capability to build a new reactor (alone)," Even said. "And no one will sell us a reactor before we sign the non-proliferation agreement."

Writing in the Israeli daily Ma'ariv, investigative journalist and security specialist Yossi Melman called it a "strategic dilemma of the first order". "If it were to sign the treaty (Israel) would be able to obtain nuclear reactors." "But it would also have to declare and reveal what it has, nuclear-wise, and the monopoly it allegedly has on this in the Middle East." — AFP



A Russian Soyuz 2.1a rocket carrying Lomonosov, Aist-2D and SamSat-218 satellites lifts off from the new Vostochny cosmodrome outside the city of Ulgorsk, about 200 km from the city of Blagoveshchensk in the far eastern Amur region yesterday. —AFP

PUTIN HAILS FIRST ROCKET LAUNCH FROM NEW COSMODROME

VOSTOCHNY, Russia: Russia launched the first rocket from its new Vostochny cosmodrome yesterday, with President Vladimir Putin hailing the event after dressing down officials over a delay caused by a technical glitch. The launch is a major milestone for Russia's beleaguered space sector, with the new spaceport in the far east of the country touted to mark a rebirth of an industry plagued by a string of embarrassments in recent years.

The Soyuz 2.1a rocket carrying three satellites took off at 11:01 am (0201 GMT), the Roscosmos national space agency said in a statement, after the countdown was automatically halted for technical reasons 24 hours previously.

National television showed the Soyuz 2.1a taking off into a blue sky in light winds, although foreign media organisations including AFP were not allowed to enter the new space centre. Putin was present for the take-off. "You know they say that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. You have to make the first launch to confirm the cosmodrome is ready for work. And you did it!" Putin told industry officials.

"I want to congratulate you. We can be proud. It's a serious and important contribution to the development of the Russian space industry," he added.

"Yesterday the technical side was put to the test and the launch had to be stopped, but it happens. It's a normal thing." The postponement of Vostochny's inaugural launch had seen the Russian strongman scold space chiefs-despite delays worldwide being relatively frequent.

A European launch from French Guiana had to be put off three times last week before finally taking place on Monday. The Russian delay was due to a malfunction of a cable, a space agency spokesman, Mikhail Fadeyev, told AFP.

'World leader'

Construction on the new spaceport began in 2012 but has been marred by a string of labour disputes, corruption scandals and delays. The first satellite launch had been scheduled for late 2015, but setbacks forced authorities to review the timetable.

"Despite all its failings, Russia remains the world leader in the number of space launches," Putin told a meeting of space officials on Wednesday. "But the fact that we're encountering a large number of failures is bad. There must be a timely and professional reaction."

The new spaceport in the far eastern Amur region has been hailed by Putin as Russia's biggest current building project with a budget estimated at 300 billion-400 billion rubles (\$4.5 billion-\$6 billion, four billion-5.3 billion euros). Some 10,000 workers have been building 115 kilometres (70 miles) of roads — AFP

TOURIST TRINKETS CRAFTED BY HAITI'S CHILD ARTISANS

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Seated on an earthen floor on the outskirts of Haiti's capital city, seven-year-old Samuel Jean fashions a little boat from a piece of wrought iron. This not child's play, but work, as the little boy helps his parents craft trinkets to sell to tourists for a meager sum.

Officially, Haiti's labor laws forbid minors younger than 14 from working, but extreme poverty leaves no other option for many families on this divided Caribbean island, the poorest country in the Americas.

In the village of Noailles on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, a half-century old tradition exists of employing children to create ornaments from wrought iron. "Many people have come here to see our work: Bill Clinton, foreign MPs, ambassadors," shouts Walner Joseph, 46, over the clanging of hammers in his workshop that employs about 15 people, including children.

"He's a big boss, even at his age," Joseph jokes, pointing to a child of about eight or nine. "The tradition continues like that-it is an eternal way of life in Noailles," he said.

More souvenirs than tourists

Tourism has yet to take off in Haiti. For now, there are more souvenirs in circulation than visitors, so much of what is produced by Haiti's artisans end up being purchased-sometimes for Haitian expatriate merchants-for sale to customers elsewhere in the Caribbean. Artisan Bastien Jean Ricardo who sells his wares for the overseas market, has been fortunate enough to find a backer that promotes Haitian artisanal products. For Ricardo, 36, his success was forged in youth, hammering iron at the same age he was learning to read. "It was a little hard at first. I gave myself a few whacks on my finger with the hammer," he recalls.

Ricardo's wares are billed as "fair trade" yet he too follows the custom of training proteges at a tender age-illustrating the widespread reality of children



PORT-AU-PRINCE: Samuel paints a metal craft with a mixture of black paint and varnish, in the village of Noailles, in Croix des Bouquets, 12.9 kilometers (8.0 mi) to the northeast of Port-au-Prince. — AFP

working for a living in Haiti, despite child labor laws banning the practice on paper.

"I'm showing the craft to young people, but what I give them to do is easier" than the work he did at the same age, he said. "Some children start work at four or five years old. It is true that it's dangerous, but one has nothing else beside that to live on."

More than 60 percent of the Haitian population earns less than two dollars a day, and nearly half of all homes are run by single parents, usually women-the group hardest hit by poverty. "Placing a child in a situation where he has to work is not necessarily seen as something negative but as a bridge, a way to access the services that he otherwise would not have access to," explained Inah Kaloga, UNICEF's local child protection officer.

Supplementing a meager living

In Haiti, where 80 percent of schools are private, Kaloga said, the cost for tuition, uniforms and other education-related expenses can be a burden for parents. "Faced with these barriers to an

education, for many families, the idea of children working is not about earning extra income to improve daily life, but about providing for children's needs in a regular and sustainable way," she said.

It is poverty like this that led Tyson Jean-Baptiste to the metal workshop in Noailles when he was just nine years old. "Iron is the only thing on offer as a business, and I want to finish high school," said Tyson, now 18. But by no means every young child in work in Haiti can afford an education in parallel. For some, like little Samuel Jean, daily labor in the workshop is a matter of simple survival. When work is plentiful in Noailles, the boy can earn as much as 10 dollars per day, a vital supplement to the living his father, a maize farmer, is able to eke from the land.

It is a grinding existence. Samuel's family of five squeezes into a makeshift shelter just a few square meters in size, sealed with plastic sheeting held up by sticks. He makes his daily round of workshops and dreams of one day, perhaps, owning his own craft shop to peddle wares to tourists. —AFP

MY NAME? MAKE IT SIMPLE: CZECHIA!

PRAGUE: Czech Republic and/or Czechia? Ever since gaining independence after their peaceful split with Slovakia in 1993, the Czechs have been poring over a correct short form for their country's name. Led by President Milos Zeman, Czech officials fed up with seeing often wrong and chaotically used names for the Czech Republic launched a campaign this month that should end the dispute once and for all. "I use the word Czechia because it sounds nicer and it's shorter than the cold Czech Republic," Zeman once said. The Czechs are going to propose that the United Nations registers the names of "Czechia" in English, "Tchequie" in French, "Chequia" in Spanish and "Tschechien" in German as translations of the Czech version, "Cesko".

These are still subject to approval by the Czech government, and will be used wherever the longer, formal name is not required. "The name 'Czechia' will not replace the full official name of the Czech Republic," the foreign ministry says on its website.

The relationship between the two will be similar to that of France with its official name, the French Republic. But the issue has sparked controversy even inside the Czech centre-left government. "I disagree with the name 'Czechia'," Regional Development Minister Karla Slechtova said,

adding: "I don't want people to confuse our country with Chechnya."

To which the foreign ministry retorted: "Poor geographical knowledge cannot be a reason for not using a country's name." It pointed out there are plenty of countries with similar-sounding monikers, from Niger and Nigeria to Slovakia and Slovenia. Czechs living abroad sometimes face other unexpected problems when telling people where they were born. "I prefer to say I'm from Prague," says Ivana Schachnerova, living in Italy since 1989.

"When I say I'm Czech (ceca), everyone will help me cross the street," confusing the word for "cieca" or "blind". Even the Czech language does not have a generally accepted short name for the territory which was once the Bohemian Kingdom (Regnum Bohemiae) before becoming part of the Habsburg Monarchy. In 1918 it was incorporated in the newly-established Czechoslovakia and then turned into the Czech Republic when Czechoslovakia split in 1993, four years after shedding its totalitarian Communist rule of four decades.

The search for a short name has been a puzzler in a land that was founded, according to ancient legend, by the mythological "Forefather Cech". — AFP



People walk along rail tracks at a makeshift camp for migrants and refugees near the village of Idomeni not far from the Greek-Macedonian border yesterday. — AFP

SHOWDOWN TALKS AS ITALY FUMES OVER AUSTRIA MIGRANT 'SLAP'

BAN HITS OUT AT 'INCREASINGLY RESTRICTIVE' REFUGEE POLICIES

ROME: Italy and Austria were set for showdown talks yesterday as Italian politicians and media reacted furiously to Vienna's new anti-migrant measures that could close the border between the two countries. Austrian Interior Minister Wolfgang Sobotka, who has vigorously defended the controversial package which was driven by a surge of the far right, was due in Rome to explain his government's plans to Italian counterpart Angelo Alfano.

Prime Minister Matteo Renzi has warned that closing the famous Brenner Pass in the Alps would be a "flagrant breach of European rules" and is pushing the European Commission to force Austria to hold off on a move that many fear could come to symbolise the death of Europe's Schengen system of open borders. But the Vienna government is under intense domestic pressure to stem the volume of asylum seekers and other migrants arriving on its soil with the far right surging in polls.

UN chief Ban Ki-moon hit out yesterday at what he called "increasingly restrictive" refugee policies in Europe, saying he was "alarmed by the growing xenophobia here" and elsewhere in Europe, in a speech to the Austrian parliament. Wedged between the Italian and Balkan routes to northern Europe, Austria received 90,000 asylum requests last year, the second highest in per capita terms of any EU country.

'Whole world's burden'

Legislation approved Wednesday by the Austrian parliament enables the government to respond to spikes in migrant arrivals by declaring a state of emer-

gency which provides for asylum seekers to be turned away at border points. "We cannot shoulder the whole world's burden," Sobotka said Wednesday in defence of a law denounced by rights groups as a betrayal of Austria's history as a place of refuge, most notably for dissidents fleeing the old Soviet bloc.

Some 250 police have been deployed at the Brenner Pass and preparations are under way for the construction of a 370-metre (yard) barrier which would be up to four metres (13 foot) high in places, that is due for completion by the end of May.

"Brenner: Vienna's slap in the face," was the headline in *La Stampa* daily, in a reflection of the outraged tone of virtually all the coverage. The pass is a major transport link between southern and northern Europe with an average of 2,500 lorries and 15,000 cars using it every day.

Austria is preparing for a potential closure of the pass as fears grow that migrant arrivals in Italy could spike this summer as a result of the effective closure of the Balkan route into Europe.

Italy insists there is no evidence of that happening and that it is taking steps to prevent it if it does.

Rome also maintains that the numbers of migrants refused asylum in Austria and returning to Italy is rising. According to the interior ministry, 2,051 people—mainly from Pakistan and Afghanistan—returned to Italy in the first four months of this year, compared with 3,143 for the whole of 2015.

Rome this week unveiled plans to fingerprint migrants crossing the Mediterranean as soon as they are

picked up by rescue boats.

Fears of arrival spike

There have long been tensions with other EU countries over migrants arriving in Italy and travelling north without being registered. If they are not registered, countries like Austria and France and popular destination states like Germany and Sweden do not have the option of sending them back to Italy. Under the EU's much-criticised Dublin Treaty, asylum claims must be processed by the first country in which refugees arrive.

Italy was warned last year by the European Commission that it must make its registration procedures more efficient. But Italian officials say the country cannot cope alone with the migrant influx. More than 350,000 people from all over the world have reached Italy on boats from Libya since the start of 2014, as Europe battles its biggest migration crisis since World War II.

Fears of a spike in arrivals have given added urgency to attempts to find a lasting solution to the crisis and Italy is pushing a plan to introduce NATO naval patrols off Libya in time for the summer-peak season for people smuggling. Modelled on an existing NATO operation in waters between Turkey and Greece, the plan has been backed by US President Barack Obama and is expected to be approved by alliance leaders at a summit in Warsaw in July.

Italy has also proposed an EU-funded scheme to offer African countries cash to cooperate with the fast-track repatriation of migrants deemed to have no claim to asylum in Europe. — AFP

RUSSIAN GIRL, 10, FLIES WITHOUT TICKET OR ID

MOSCOW: Russian transport police say a 10-year old girl flew from Moscow to St Petersburg without identification or a ticket. The incident that transport police reported Wednesday raises questions about security at Russian airports.

The girl, whose identity was not revealed, left home for school on Tuesday and did not return. Alexander Rzhanev of the St Petersburg city hall told Russian news agencies the girl went to Moscow's Vnukovo airport where she mingled with a crowd boarding a flight to St Petersburg. The official said she boarded the plane together with a large family with children. Police picked her up at St Petersburg's airport where she was wandering unaccompanied. Children's rights ombudsman Pavel Astakhov said on Wednesday the girl's trip sends "a serious alert sign" about airport security. — AP

UK'S LABOR SUSPENDS EX-LONDON MAYOR OVER HITLER REMARKS

LONDON: Britain's opposition Labor Party yesterday suspended former London mayor Ken Livingstone after he said Adolf Hitler supported Zionism, in a furious row over anti-Semitism that is dividing the party.

"Ken Livingstone has been suspended by the Labor Party, pending an investigation, for bringing the party into disrepute," a Labor spokesman said.

Livingstone told BBC radio: "When Hitler won his election in 1932 his policy then was that Jews should be moved to Israel. He was supporting Zionism before he went mad and ended up killing six million Jews". "I have been in the Labor Party for 40 years and I have never heard anyone say anything anti-Semitic. I have heard a lot of criticism for the state of Israel and its abuse of Palestinians, but I have never heard someone be anti-Semitic," he added.

He was defending Labor lawmaker Naz Shah, who was suspended on Wednesday for sharing allegedly anti-Semitic posts on social media amid growing claims that the party under veteran socialist leader Jeremy Corbyn has a problem in which criticism of Israel has strayed into anti-Semitism.

Shah told parliament's lower House of Commons that she "profoundly" regretted the posts made in 2014, before she became a lawmaker. She shared a graphic of Israel superimposed onto the United States under the words "Solution for Israel-Palestine Conflict-Relocate Israel into United States", adding the comment: "Problem solved."

She also used the hashtag #IsraelApartheid above a quote saying "Never forget that everything Hitler did in Germany was legal".

'Nazi apologist'

More than 20 Labour MPs had earlier called on Corbyn to suspend Livingstone following his BBC interview. Sadiq Khan, Labour's candidate to become the next London mayor, called the remarks "appalling and inexcusable", adding: "There must be no place for this in our party".

Backbench MP John Mann confronted Livingstone in a face-to-face row caught on camera, calling him a "Nazi apologist" and a "disgusting racist". "He is a Nazi apologist and he's a worse historian than he is a politician," Mann, who is to be disciplined by the party over the confrontation, later told BBC television.

Livingstone accused Mann of going "completely over the top." Former party leadership contender Liz Kendall earlier tweeted that "Ken Livingstone should be suspended".

She is one of many critics of Livingstone who hail from Labor's centrist rump, exposing the party's deeper ideological rifts. Livingstone—known as 'Red Ken' by the British media due to his far-left views—has been a colorful and controversial personality in British politics for decades.

In 2005, he compared a Jewish journalist to a concentration camp guard and was suspended from office as the mayor of London. He once called US President George W Bush "the greatest threat to life on this planet". Tony Blair led Labor to a general election victory in 1997, pledging to create a directly-elected London mayor. But the prime minister blocked Livingstone's nomination in 2000, deeming him too left-wing. Livingstone stood as an independent and won, although he was kicked out of Labor for running against their official candidate. He was later reinstated just before winning his second term in 2004 despite vocal opposition to the war in Iraq. — AFP

TRUMP MENTION OF 'WOMAN'S CARD' DRAWS BACKLASH

ATLANTA: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's claim that Hillary Clinton is playing "the woman's card" has drawn intense backlash, from the Democratic front-runner herself as well as tens of thousands of critics on social media.

"If fighting for women's healthcare and paid family leave and equal pay is playing the 'woman card,' then deal me in," Clinton said in Philadelphia as she celebrated wins in four out of five of Tuesday's Democratic primaries.

Trump had leveled the "woman's card" accusation Tuesday after his own five-state primary sweep. "She's playing that card like I've never seen anyone play it before," Trump said on NBC's "Today" Thursday. "All I'm doing is bringing out the obvious, that without the woman's card, Hillary would not even be a viable person to even run for a city council position."

Trump's remarks prompted social media hashtags like #dealmein and #womancard, the latter ranking among the top 10 global trending topics on Twitter Wednesday, with more than 45,000 tweets by late afternoon.

Voters also circulated video of Mary Pat Christie, the wife of Trump backer and New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who stood behind Trump during his victory speech Tuesday and looked as though she was rolling her eyes as he made those comments.

The exchange highlights Trump's perilous standing among female voters who could help propel Clinton to the White House. An anti-Trump super PAC, backed by Republican donors, last month launched an ad in which unnamed women read aloud quotes Trump has proffered about females. In March, Trump distributed via social media an unflattering image of Heidi Cruz, Trump rival Ted Cruz's wife, prompting the Texas senator to assert that "strong women scare Donald."

Cruz, who's aiming to topple Trump at the Republicans' July convention in Cleveland, implicitly emphasized the front-runner's turbulent relationships with women Wednesday as he tapped former candidate Carly Fiorina as his would-be running mate, praising her as someone who has "over and over ... shattered glass ceilings."

Four years ago, 11 out of 13 general election swing states went to the nominee who won among women. Of those 11, President Barack Obama, with 55 percent of the female vote nationally, won nine; Republican Mitt Romney won just two.

If Clinton manages an even wider advantage among women than Obama, Democrats say she may get a boost in states like Pennsylvania and Colorado, casting them out of Trump's reach while allowing her to compete in GOP-leaning territory like Georgia and North Carolina.

As for Trump's claim that women "don't like" Clinton, he's wrong at the very least about Democratic primary voters. Exit polls conducted for The Associated Press and television networks in 25 states this year show Clinton won 62 percent of female voters over Bernie Sanders' 36 percent.

In a recent AP-GfK poll of the general population, women weren't significantly more likely than men to have an unfavorable opinion of either Trump or Clinton. Women, however, were more likely than men to say they definitely would not vote for Trump in a general election, 66 percent to 60 percent.

About half of men and women said they would definitely not vote for Clinton. Among Republicans only, primary exit polls have shown Trump facing a gender gap his last remaining rivals do not have. In the 25 states polled, Trump won 36 percent women and 44 percent of men. Cruz and Ohio Gov. John Kasich both demonstrated consistent support across genders. — AP



HOLLYWOOD: A sign reading "No Trump Anytime" is seen near the iconic "Hollywood" sign in the hills above Hollywood, California. — AFP



INDIANAPOLIS: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump addresses the crowd during a campaign rally at the Indiana Farmers Coliseum on Wednesday in Indianapolis, Indiana. Trump is preparing for the Indiana Primary on May 3rd. — AFP

TRUMP'S 'AMERICA FIRST' SPEECH ALARMS US ALLIES

WORLD REACTION MUTED AS TRUMP CLOSES IN ON NOMINATION

LONDON: Donald Trump's first major foreign policy address alarmed American allies, who view the Republican front runner's repeated invocation of an "America first" agenda as a threat to retreat from the world. While most governments were careful not to comment publicly on a speech by a US presidential candidate, Germany's foreign minister veered from that protocol to express concern at Trump's wording. "I can only hope that the election campaign in the USA does not lack the perception of reality," Frank-Walter Steinmeier said.

"The world's security architecture has changed and it is no longer based on two pillars alone. It cannot be conducted unilaterally," he said of foreign policy in a post-Cold War world. "No American president can get round this change in the international security architecture... 'America first' is actually no answer to that."

Carl Bildt, a former Swedish prime minister and foreign minister who served as UN envoy to the Balkans in the aftermath of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, said he heard Trump's speech as "abandoning both democratic allies and democratic values".

"Trump had not a word against Russian aggression in Ukraine, but plenty against past US support for democracy in Egypt," Bildt said on Twitter, referring to lines from Trump's speech that criticized the Barack Obama administration for withdrawing support for autocrat Hosni Mubarak during a 2011 uprising.

"FIRST ISOLATIONIST CANDIDATE"

Trump's speech, uncharacteristically read out from a teleprompter, seemed aimed at showing a more serious side of a politician who has said he intends to act more "presidential" after months of speaking mainly off the cuff. He promised "a disciplined, deliberate and consistent foreign policy" in contrast to the "reckless, rudderless and aimless" policies of Obama and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton,

and that America's allies needed to stand up for themselves."

Trump's likely Democratic opponent if he secures the Republican nomination. The speech included no dramatic new policy proposals that might generate headlines, such as his past calls to bar Muslims from entering the United States or to build a wall on the frontier with Mexico.

Where he was specific, like rejecting the terms of last year's nuclear deal with Iran, calling for more investment in missile defence in Europe and accusing the Obama administration of tepid support for Israel, he was firmly within the Republican mainstream.

A major theme—that more NATO allies should spend at least 2 percent of their economic output on defence—is one that has also been taken up by the Obama administration itself, including repeatedly during the president's visit to Europe last week.

Nevertheless, Trump's rhetoric raised alarm in allied countries that still rely on the superpower for defence, particularly the phrase "America first", used in the 1930s by isolationists that sought to keep the United States out of World War Two.

Former South Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Sung-han, who now teaches at the Korea University in Seoul, said Trump would be "the first isolationist to be US presidential candidate, while in the post-war era all the US presidents have been to varying degrees internationalists."

"Saying the US will no longer engage in anything that is a burden in terms of its relationships with allies, it would be almost like abandoning those alliances," he said. "It will inevitably give rise to anti-American sentiment worldwide."

Xenia Wickett, head of the US and Americas Program at Britain's Chatham House think tank, said the speech "suggests Trump would make America's allies less secure rather than more."

"He talked about allies being confident but all of his rhetoric suggested that America should be unpredictable

and that America's allies needed to stand up for themselves."

"DISASTER"

Earlier in the US nomination process, foreign leaders were not shy to condemn Trump openly and publicly. In December, when Trump called for his temporary ban on admitting Muslims, British Prime Minister David Cameron called him "divisive, stupid and wrong". Hundreds of thousands of Britons signed a petition calling for Trump to be banned from Britain for hate speech, which was taken up in parliament. Cameron declined to ban Trump, but said: "If he came to visit our country, I think he would unite us against him."

In January, German Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel lumped Trump together with the leaders of European far-right parties as "not only a threat to peace and social cohesion, but also to economic development".

These days, with Trump now seen as likely to win his party's nomination, European officials are more circumspect in public, but sound no less alarmed in private.

A Trump presidency "would be a disaster for EU-US ties," said one senior EU official involved in shaping foreign policy in Brussels. "Right now, we and the Obama administration generally understand each other. I don't think we understand Donald Trump. He has no understanding of the delicate, complex nature of foreign policy on Europe's doorstep."

Nevertheless, some of the policies Trump shares with other Republicans do have sympathetic audiences abroad. Ryszard Terlecki, head of the parliamentary group of Poland's ruling rightwing Law and Justice party, said Trump had a point when criticising the Obama administration for backing away from plans for increased missile defence. — Reuters



SOUTH SHORE: Visitors gather for the wake of Gary Rhoden at the Crockett L. Reed Funeral Home on Wednesday in South Shore, Ky. — AP

FUNERALS TO BE HELD IN DAYS AHEAD FOR 8 KILLED IN RURAL OHIO

PIKETON, Ohio: Grieving family members will gather for funeral services in the days ahead to remember eight of their own who were killed in what authorities are calling a "cold-blooded, calculated massacre" in rural Ohio. A visitation was held for one of the eight Wednesday night at a funeral home in Kentucky, about 30 miles south of where the victims were fatally shot.

Gary Rhoden, 38, was among those killed. Family friend Lisa Wallace attended his viewing at Crockett L. Reed Funeral Home in South Shore, Kentucky. "Everybody is in shock, and they really want their privacy," Wallace told WCPO-TV in Cincinnati, Ohio. "And a lot of them are scared. I would be. Considering," she said.

Mourners spent hours at the funeral home while local police and sheriff's deputies stood watch, a reminder that the killer or killers are still on the loose. Authorities say they've interviewed more than 50 people, but haven't made any arrests or confirmed a motive for the slayings. They remain tight-lipped about the investigation. "I assume the person or the people who committed these murders are watching the news reports about Pike County," state Attorney General Mike DeWine said. "I do not intend or want to broadcast any information that would let them know details about this investigation."

The bodies of seven adults and a teenage boy were found in their homes in the hills near Piketon, about 80 miles east of Cincinnati, on Friday. The victims were 40-year-old Christopher Rhoden Sr.; his ex-wife, 37-year-old Dana Rhoden; their three children, 16-year-old Christopher Rhoden Jr., 19-year-old Hanna Rhoden and 20-year-old Clarence "Frankie" Rhoden; Christopher Rhoden Sr.'s brother, 44-year-old Kenneth Rhoden; their cousin, 38-year-old Gary Rhoden, and 20-year-old Hannah Gilley, whose 6-month old son with Frankie Rhoden was unharmed. Two other children, Hanna Rhoden's 4-day-old daughter and Frankie Rhoden's 3-year-old son, also were unharmed. A coroner said seven members of the Rhoden family were shot multiple times, and one had nine gunshot wounds. —AP

TODDLER SHOOTS MOTHER DEAD IN MILWAUKEE

'WEAPON BELONGED TO MOTHER'S BOYFRIEND'

WASHINGTON: A toddler riding in the back of a car accidentally shot dead his mother with a gun that slid out from under the driver's seat, US police said Wednesday. The 26-year-old victim, Patrice Price, was pronounced dead at the scene following Tuesday's incident in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the local sheriff's office said.

The child, aged two and a half and identified by local media as a boy, fired the 40-caliber gun through the driver's seat where his mother was at the wheel. Local broadcaster WISN quoted the victim's father as saying that she was a mother of three. "This little girl right here meant everything in the world to me," Andre Price told the station. "And I lost the other half of my heart."

The weapon apparently belonged to the victim's security guard boyfriend, with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel newspaper reporting that she was driving his car because hers had been stolen days earlier. The sheriff's office said that deputies found a security officer's gun belt belonging to the boyfriend on the floor of the front passenger seat.

The firearm was recovered on the floor behind the driver's seat. An investigation is under way. Also in the vehicle was another of Price's children, aged one, and the woman's mother. Neither of the children was in a car seat. Price's mother told relatives that her daughter turned to her after a loud pop rang out and said:

"Momma, don't let me die," WISN reported.

Following the shooting, fellow motorists stopped and pushed the car out of traffic before police arrived and performed CPR on Price while awaiting the arrival of emergency medical personnel. Tuesday's shooting comes on the heels of a similar accident, though not fatal, in Florida last month.

In that instance, a four-year-old boy accidentally shot his mother in the back while she was at the wheel, leaving the passionately pro-gun woman badly wounded. Jamie Gilt, who had boasted online about her toddler's shooting prowess, was cruising down a major thoroughfare with her son in the back when he shot her on March 8. The bullet went through the seat cushion.

The mother and boy were on their way to pick up a horse, said police, who rushed to Gilt's aid after an officer checked to see why the vehicle had stopped. The weapon was a .45-caliber handgun the boy found on the floor of the pickup truck Gilt was driving. Police said she legally owned the weapon.

According to Everytown for Gun Safety, a group aimed at reducing US gun violence, there have been at least 77 shootings this year during which a child or adolescent aged 17 or under unintentionally fired a gun and killed or injured someone. Firearms claim the lives of some 30,000 people in the United States each year. — AFP



PALM BEACH: The family of Corey Jones gathers behind attorney Benjamin Crump for a news conference outside the Palm Beach County Courthouse yesterday. — AP

FAMILY OF MAN KILLED IN POLICE SHOOTING LEERY OF GRAND JURY

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla: Relatives of a legally armed black musician who was fatally shot by a police officer while waiting for a tow truck said they are "leery" of a local prosecutor's decision to present the case to a grand jury.

The family of Corey Jones issued a statement Wednesday, saying that while they are glad Palm Beach County State Attorney Dave Aronberg didn't clear since-fired Palm Beach Gardens officer Nouman Raja, their "hearts are heavy." Aronberg could have charged Raja if he believed the evidence was sufficient.

"While we are leery of the grand jury process, we will remain vigilant and peacefully demand greater accountability and transparency from law enforcement," the family said in their statement. Family members were expected to address reporters at a news conference yesterday. Aronberg said at a Wednesday news conference that presenting the case to a grand jury will be the best way to decide whether there is enough evidence to charge Raja. Citing state law, Aronberg said he could not discuss what evidence investigators have collected.

"The goal is to do justice," Aronberg said. "We have been as transparent as we are allowed to be under the rules." Aronberg, a Democrat, is up for re-election this year. He said that played no part in his decision, but retired Circuit Judge Edward Rogers, a Jones family supporter, accused Aronberg of "taking the easy way out" by presenting the case to a grand jury.

"He doesn't need a grand jury. It's solely up to him. He just didn't want to do it," Rogers said.

Jones had left a gig before dawn Oct. 18 when his SUV broke down on an Interstate 95 off ramp in Palm Beach Gardens. A fellow band member tried unsuccessfully to jumpstart the vehicle, then left Jones, 31, to await a tow truck along a dark interstate ramp in the affluent city north of West Palm Beach. Jones, who was also a housing inspector, had a concealed weapons permit and was legally allowed to carry the gun. His family said he carried a gun because he was hauling expensive equipment. —AP

HAWAII CHURCH DEPLOYING IGLOOS TO HOUSE HOMELESS FAMILIES

HONOLULU: A church in Hawaii looking to address the state's ongoing homelessness crisis has settled on a solution that on first look appears better suited for the frigid winters of Alaska than the islands' tropical climate: igloos. There's no risk of the dome-shaped structures melting. They are made of fiberglass and their construction keeps the interior about 10-15 degrees cooler when the hot sun is blazing down, officials at First Assembly of God in Honolulu said.

Church officials plan to order a dozen homes, each of which can house four people, and erect them on the windward side of Oahu on land that the church had planned to use as a cabin retreat for its members. "It is a crisis situation," said Klayton Ko, the church's senior pastor, noting that the igloos can be part of an interim solution until several years from now when new affordable housing becomes available.

The igloos are the latest idea in the islands as the state struggles to deal with the nation's highest per capita homelessness rate. Honolulu is using shipping containers to house some people, and others are pushing traditional thatched "hale" homes. It's not the first time igloos or domes have been deployed before for the homeless. In Los Angeles, about 35 people lived in a cluster of them called "Dome Village" beginning in 1993, but the shelter closed in 2006 when the property owner raised the rent.

Ko said he was inspired when he read about the village online. The igloos have 21 panels that overlap like fish scales, said Don Kubley, president and CEO of Juneau-based InterShelter, which manufactures the igloos. "The panels stack like Pringle potato chips and can fit in the back of a pickup truck," Kubley said. The 20-foot-wide, 314-square-foot domes will cost the church about \$9,500 each, not

including a floor or base, plus \$800 each for shipping, Kubley said. The church has raised about \$100,000 for the project so far through donations from its members and other churches, and it's seeking corporate sponsors, said Daniel Kaneshiro, pastor at First Assembly of God. Oregon-based Pacific Domes has supplied domes to homeless shelters, and their structures were used to house people who lost their homes in Hurricanes Andrew, Katrina and other major disasters, said Asha Deliverance, the company's founder.

The company has worked on proposals to erect domes on a large scale for homeless people in major cities, including San Francisco, but none of the projects have panned out, she said.

"It's been a really touchy subject, because every city wants to get rid of their homeless," Deliverance said. "They don't want to support homelessness and what that attracts." —AP



MUMBAI: Then Indian United Breweries Group chairman Vijay Mallya (C, in white) as he poses with models during the launch of the Kingfisher 2014 calendar in Mumbai in this file photo. — AFP

INDIA ASKS BRITAIN TO DEPORT LIQUOR TYCOON

'MALLYA'S PRESENCE NEEDED FOR INVESTIGATIONS'

NEW DELHI: India's foreign ministry said yesterday it has asked Britain to deport the embattled former airline boss Vijay Mallya, who faces a money laundering investigation. Mallya, a part-owner of the Force India Formula 1 team who used to run a liquor empire, left India on March 2 owing more than \$1 billion and is believed to be in Britain.

Last week India revoked his passport, after he repeatedly failed to appear before investigators looking into financial irregularities at Kingfisher Airlines, which ceased operating in 2012 leaving millions of dollars in unpaid bills.

"As of today, the ministry has written to the High Commission of the UK in Delhi requesting the deportation of Sri Vijay Mallya so that his presence can be secured for investigations against him under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002," ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup told journalists.

Swarup said India had not yet heard back from the British authorities. An Indian court last week issued an arrest warrant for the 60-year-old, once dubbed the King of Good Times for his lavish lifestyle.

His massive debt has become a symbol

of Indian banks' vast volume of bad loans—meaning in default or close to it—seen as a threat to financial stability in Asia's third-largest economy.

Critics say the government has not done enough to tackle the issue of wealthy individuals such as Mallya, who obtain huge loans that they later fail to repay. The Enforcement Directorate, India's financial crimes agency, has reportedly accused him of siphoning off money from Kingfisher to buy property abroad—a claim the company denies.

"I don't think they are going to deport him but we have to make an effort, we can't keep sitting on it," a directorate official told AFP on condition of anonymity yesterday. "If he is deported then once he comes back here he will be arrested at the airport itself."

Banks in pursuit

On Tuesday India's top court said details of embattled tycoon Mallya's assets would be shared with the banks chasing him over \$1.34 billion in unpaid loans, despite his protestations the information should be kept private. The Supreme Court said banks should be given details of Mallya's overseas assets, as well as those of his wife and children, as India's attorney general branded the absent entrepreneur a "fugitive from justice".

Earlier this month the banks rejected his offer to repay \$600 million and told the Supreme Court they wanted him to return to India so they could negotiate with him personally over the total owed. — AFP

CHINESE DISSIDENT SAYS INDIA CANCELS VISA

NEW DELHI: Chinese dissident Lu Jinghua said yesterday New Delhi cancelled her visa to travel to India to meet the Dalai Lama, just days after another Chinese activist was blocked after protest from Beijing.

Lu, who fled China following the Tiananmen Square crackdown in 1989, said she had been granted a tourist visa to travel from her home in the United States to India.

But Lu said Air India officials stopped her at New York's JFK airport from where she was due to fly to India to attend a conference this week in the hill station of Dharamsala, the home of the Dalai Lama.

"They said I'm very sorry, you cannot go," Lu told the India Today network

from New York, adding that she had already received email confirmation of a visa. India did not comment specifically on Lu, but has said in reference to another case that foreign visitors require a non-tourist visa to attend conferences.

"I was going to Dharamsala to meet the Dalai Lama so that's the reason why they denied me the visa," she said. The incident comes after the government on Monday said it had cancelled a visa for an exiled Uighur dissident, after China protested and described him as a "terrorist".

Dolkun Isa, a Germany-based activist from China's Xinjiang region, was due to attend the same conference on democracy in Dharamsala. — AFP

PAKISTAN POLICE ARREST MAN FOR GRUESOME 'HONOR KILLING' OF SISTER

KARACHI: Pakistani police have arrested a man in Karachi for slitting his sister's throat and letting her bleed to death, the latest "honour killing" in the deeply patriarchal country. Hayat Khan, aged around 20, used a kitchen knife to murder his sixteen-year-old sister Sumaira after he found her talking to a man on her mobile phone at their home in the low-income Orangi Town neighborhood of the city on Wednesday, senior police officer Azfar Mahesar said.

He then threw her out of the house where she continued to bleed and writhe in pain on the steps as neighbors gathered.

Investigating officer Gulzar Ahmed confirmed the details of the attack adding that Sumaira had suffered multiple stab wounds to the neck, chest and back. Mobile phone footage shot by an unknown onlooker shows several men and boys standing around Sumaira, who is lying face down, dressed in a red tunic and orange headscarf and draped in a blanket.

Her head is seen lolling from side to side and the fingers of her right hand appear twisted. A young boy is shown fighting back tears as one man says in Pashto: "Let's take her to a hospital in a car," and another man replies: "It's almost here, it's coming brother." The video then pans to Hayat, dressed in a purple shirt and blue jeans, who stares directly at the camera.

Abdul Hakeem, a local resident, told AFP: "She was taken by car to a private hospital but she died before she arrived." Mahesar told AFP that police had taken the unusual step of making themselves the complainants in the case, in order to avoid a loophole in the law that allows the relatives of the victim to forgive the killer.

"We have registered the case on behalf of the state as we don't want to give the family the option of settling the case outside court," he said.

The move came after Inayat Khan, Hayat and Sumaira's father, had told local media "what is done is done" and said he forgave his son. Hundreds of women are murdered by their relatives in Pakistan each year on the pretext of defending family "honor".

"A Girl in the River: The Price of Forgiveness"—a film telling the story of a rare survivor of an attempted "honour killing" — won the Academy Award for best documentary short in February. — AFP

MURDERS FORCE BANGLADESHI GAY RIGHTS ACTIVISTS UNDERGROUND

DHAKA: Xulhaz Mannan was a rallying figure for Bangladesh's marginalized but increasingly outspoken lesbian, gay and transgender community, but his brutal murder has dealt a huge blow to the movement and forced some of its leaders underground. Mannan, who founded Bangladesh's first magazine for gays and lesbians which he used to launch a vibrant rights movement in the deeply conservative, Muslim-majority country, was hacked to death on Monday along with a fellow activist.

Friends and fellow campaigners this week rushed to remove all trace of their activism from social media sites, fearing they could themselves become targets. "Everyone felt safe because of him. But he is gone, so everyone is scared," one fellow activist who helped set up the magazine told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity. "I'm sure everyone (is now) facing the same devastating situation." A group of unidentified attackers carrying machetes and guns murdered Mannan and Mahub Tonoy after gaining access to his Dhaka apartment on Monday night.

It was the latest in a series of killings of secular bloggers and liberal activists in Bangladesh that have caused global outrage, and sparked fears that the attackers are expanding their range of targets to include openly gay people.

Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) has said it killed the men, accusing them of working to "promote homosexuality" in Bangladesh. The government, however, says homegrown Islamists were responsible. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday blamed the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its Islamist ally, Jamaat-e-Islami.

Kyle Knight, who works on LGBT issues for Human Rights Watch, condemned the government for failing to protect activists and said the murders had stoked fears in the small community. "In recent months LGBT activists had been receiving threats from extremists, and had taken steps to secure themselves—including by going into hiding," he said in an email response to AFP. "But discretion on the part of LGBT activists and individuals in the face of persistent abuse and heightened security concerns should not be confused with abolition—indeed some courageous individuals have already indicated their intent to double their efforts." — AFP

PHILIPPINE TROOPS HIT MILITANTS HOLDING 20 FOREIGN HOSTAGES

MANILA: Philippine warplanes yesterday attacked Islamic militants holding 20 foreign hostages on a remote southern island, but there was no sign of the captives, the military said.

Government forces said they rained artillery fire on Abu Sayyaf gunmen on a mountainous area of Jolo island, as planes and helicopters flew low over the jungle terrain dropping bombs.

President Benigno Aquino on Wednesday vowed to "neutralise" the militants, who have declared allegiance to the Islamic State group, a day after the severed head of Canadian hostage John Ridsdel was dumped near Jolo's city hall. "As a result of the bombardments... they were able to occupy the former places occupied by the Abu Sayyaf that resulted in the recovery of (Ridsdel's) torso," military spokesman Colonel Noel Detoyato told reporters in Manila.

He said local civilians told authorities that 14 gunmen

were killed, but no bodies were reported to have been discovered and his tally could not be independently verified.

Detoyato said the offensive, targeted at veteran one-armed Abu Sayyaf commander Radullan Sahiron, was proving a success. "What is important here is that operations are continuing and we are gaining headway and our troops are determined," Detoyato said.

However he said there had been no sightings of the remaining hostages, and that the militants had apparently escaped the area that had been the target of the attacks. Aquino said Wednesday the hostages, including a Canadian, a Norwegian and a Filipina abducted with Ridsdel from yachts at a southern Philippine marina seven months ago, were being held by Sahiron on Jolo.

The militants are also holding 18 Indonesian and Malaysian sailors kidnapped from waters south of the Philippines over the past month, as well as a Dutch bird watcher abducted in 2012.

The Abu Sayyaf is a radical offshoot of a Muslim separatist insurgency in the south of the mainly Catholic Philippines that has claimed more than 100,000 lives since the 1970s. It is believed to have just a few hundred militants but has withstood repeated US-backed military offensives against it, surviving by using the mountainous, jungle terrain of Jolo and nearby islands to its advantage.

Abu Sayyaf gangs have earned many millions of dollars from kidnapping foreigners and locals since the early 1990s.

Although the Abu Sayyaf's leaders have pledged allegiance to Islamic State, analysts say they are mainly focused on their lucrative kidnappings-for-ransom rather than setting up an Islamic caliphate.

The Abu Sayyaf is also blamed for deadly bombings, including an attack on a ferry on Manila Bay in 2014 that claimed 116 lives in the country's deadliest terror attack. — AFP



BEIJING: Chinese officials answer questions about a law regulating overseas non-governmental organizations during a press conference at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. — AP

CHINA SLAPS CONTROVERSIAL CONTROLS ON FOREIGN NGOS

LAW DRAWS OUTCRY, CONCERNS FROM CHARITIES

BEIJING: China passed a controversial new law yesterday giving police wide-ranging powers over overseas charities and banning them from recruiting members or raising funds in the country, prompting an immediate outcry.

The law on overseas non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has provoked concerns from charities and foreign governments that it hands police discretionary powers amid a government crackdown on civil society. It was approved almost unanimously by a committee of the Communist-controlled National People's Congress (NPC), spokesman He Shaoren told reporters, with 147 votes in favour and only one against. At least 1,000 foreign NGOs are thought to operate in China, including development charities such as Save the Children, advocacy groups including Greenpeace, chambers of commerce and university centres.

The law, which comes into force in January, gives police the right to approve the registration of all foreign NGOs, according to a text distributed by the NPC.

Police will revoke the registration of any organization which "damages national interests" or "threatens society's interests," it said.

Any groups committing actions deemed "separatist" or "subverting of state organs" will also be banned, as will those which "spread rumors".

"There have been some foreign NGOs which have planned or carried out activities threatening the stability of society and national security," NPC official Zhang Yong told reporters at a briefing. He did not give details. The law does not give a clear definition of an overseas NGO but is likely to cover foreign charities and business associations, and also applies to groups based in Hong Kong and Taiwan, although international schools and hospitals are exempt.

"Our initial reaction is disappointment that the public security agencies in China are going to be managing the registration process for NGOs," said Jake Parker, vice president for China operations at the US-China Business Council. The law comes as President Xi Jinping oversees a crackdown on civil society, which has seen scores of lawyers, academics and activists detained and dozens jailed.

Several have been imprisoned on charges of "subverting state power," or "separatism," for what their advocates say is

merely expressing opinions critical of the ruling party. At the NPC briefing, official Guo Linmao dismissed concerns over police supervision, saying: "Ordinary folk have a saying: If you have a problem, call the police, if you haven't broken the law, what are you afraid of?"

'Very real threat'

Overseas NGOs will have to hand annual work plans and financing details to a Chinese government agency, and will be forbidden from recruiting "members" in mainland China, barring special permission from the State Council, China's cabinet. They will also be banned from fundraising in mainland China. China's state-run media in recent years have accused foreign organizations of undermining national security and trying to foment "colour revolution" against the ruling party. China in January arrested and deported a Swedish human rights activist who had trained Chinese lawyers, and foreign NGO staff working on legal issues report an increasingly restricted environment. Foreign diplomats have previously written to China's government to express fears over the law. — AFP

PHILIPPINES' AQUINO WARNS OF LOOMING DICTATORSHIP

MANILA: Philippine President Benigno Aquino warned yesterday his country was on the brink of another dictatorship, in a thinly veiled reference to controversial politicians leading surveys to win the top two posts in next month's elections.

Tough-talking Rodrigo Duterte has emerged as a clear favorite in surveys for the presidential poll, with voters apparently embracing his vows to kill tens of thousands of criminals outside the judicial system.

Meanwhile, the son and namesake of dictator Ferdinand Marcos is leading the vice-presidential race with a campaign strategy of highlighting the alleged benefits of his father's rule.

"This is the tragedy poised to befall our nation: that we were oppressed before and yet will allow ourselves to be oppressed again and suffer the same problems that we endured under the dictatorship," Aquino said in a speech in Manila. "Our successes could vanish especially if my successor would stray from our straight and narrow path. The question is, will you allow these bullies who make enemies each time they open their mouth to become president?"

Aquino did not mention Duterte by name, but it was a thinly veiled reference to him, as the presidential favourite is often called a bully and foul-mouthed by his opponents.

However Aquino did specifically mention Marcos Jr, criticizing him for refusing to apologize for his father's crimes. Marcos Sr's two-decade rule ended in 1986 as millions took to the streets in a famous "People Power" revolution led by Aquino's mother.

Marcos was accused of plundering billions of dollars from state coffers and overseeing widespread human rights abuses. However the Marcos family, exiled to the United States after the revolution, has staged a remarkable political comeback that would be cemented if the son is elected vice president.

Duterte is one of the Philippines' most controversial politicians, having admitted to running vigilante death squads that killed more than 1,000 people during his long-time rule as mayor of the major southern city of Davao.

On the campaign trail, Duterte, 71, has promised to pardon himself for mass murder, should he be charged with killing criminals during his time as president. He has also pledged to fill Manila Bay with the bodies of 150,000 criminals, while regularly using foul-mouth language such as calling the pope a "son of a bitch". — AFP



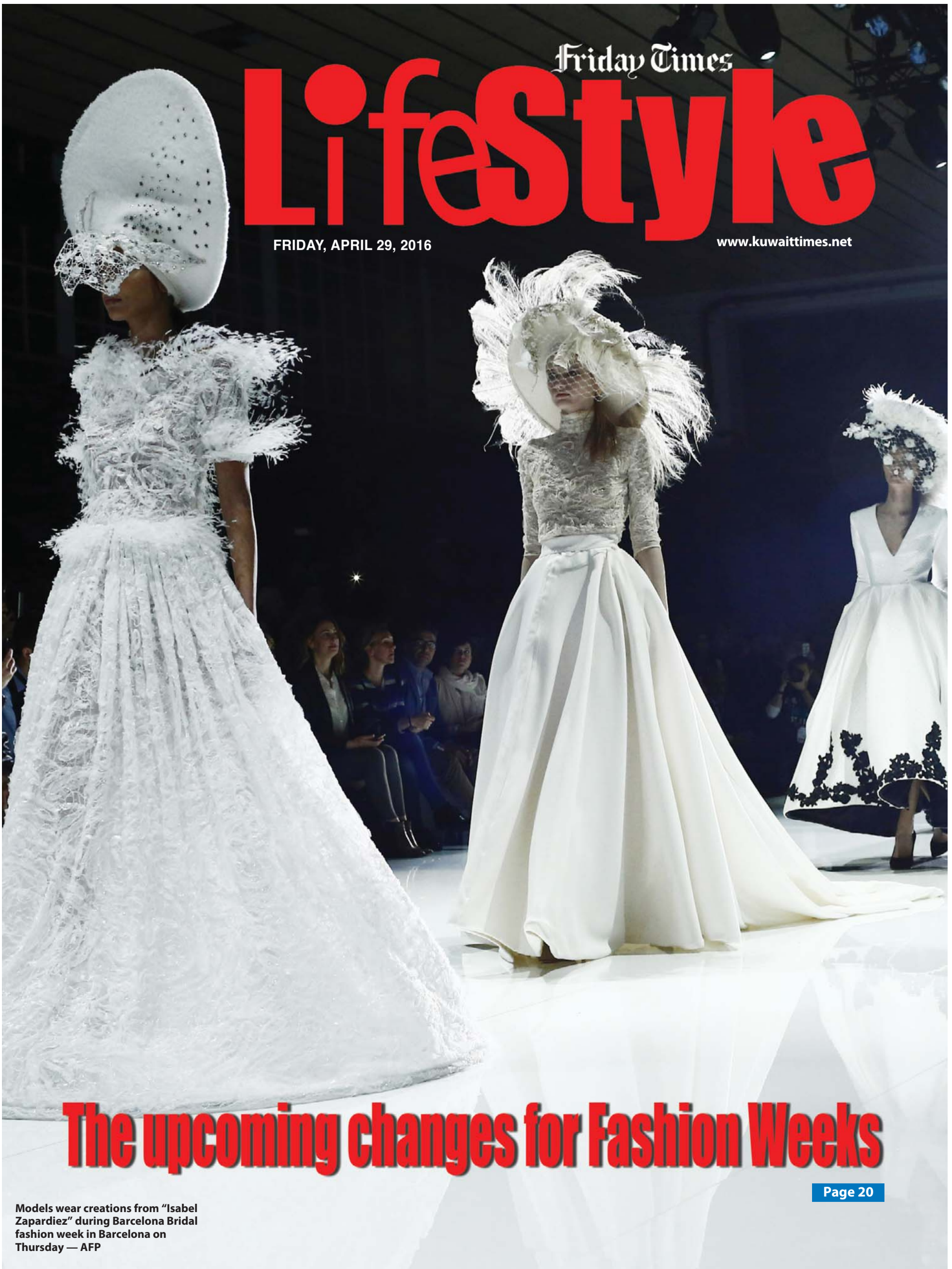
MANILA: Philippine boxing icon Manny Pacquiao (right) along with Presidential candidate Vice-President Jejomar Binay wave to supporters during a campaign sortie in Los Banos town, Laguna province south of Manila yesterday. — AFP

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The upcoming changes for Fashion Weeks

Models wear creations from "Isabel Zapardiez" during Barcelona Bridal fashion week in Barcelona on Thursday — AFP



Tom Ford's S/S 2011 collection which was modeled on celebrities like Singer Beyonce Knowles as opposed to models which demonstrates how the one of a kind designer always likes to change things up.

The upcoming changes for **fashion Weeks**

By Thari F. AlRashed

Fashion Week has been a staple in the Fashion industry ever since "Press week" took place in New York City in 1943. That week was orchestrated due to the American Fashion Media being unable to go to Paris, where the most Fashion shows took place at the time. Of course throughout the years many changes have affected the presentation of the latest fashions to the masses.

Currently there are major Fashion Weeks in various countries and regions throughout the world. Typically designers show their

the very back or even not being invited at all is what's relevant. The media and celebrities who do not contribute financially to the designer label are taking center stage.

Another slap in the face of these high-end customers is the wait time they have to endure until being able to get their hands on pieces they want. The usual time it takes for the attires and accessories to get produced for the masses is six months after their showing in the four major Fashion weeks them being Paris, New York, London and Milan. Which is ridiculous when you are willing to pay obscene amounts of money for them.

another argument could be that they should plan ahead of time to avoid treating the people who actually keep them in business this way.

But that treatment is about to change

Prestigious designers have taken a stand against this. Them being Tom Ford, the House of Burberry which is lead by its chief creative officer, designer Christopher Bailey and Demna Gvasalia from the Vetements fashion brand have all made it clear they plan on overhauling the way they present their clients with new collections. By giving their consumers the respect they deserve. They will all adopt a "see-now-

buy-now" business model with both men's wear and women's wear being showcased together and available for purchase the very next day online and in stores. Burberry has started developing this change back in 2010, when all the Fashion show pieces were made available for pre-order on their website after their Fashion shows for people to order.

lection as it arrives in stores will allow the excitement that is created by a show or event to drive sales and satisfy our customers' increasing desire to have their clothes as they are ready to wear them."

If the former creative director of Yves Saint Laurent and Gucci's vision becomes a reality, other designers will in no doubt jump on this new business plan. Leading to all sides of this industry being much more satisfied. Clients will get to wear the clothes they want right away and designers will make more revenue.

How would this affect this region of the world you might ask. And more importantly how will it affect the Kuwait Market? It will change a number of things. Starting with stores here having more fashion insight, since they will be receiving new collections before customers know what the designers' new creations are. Sales people will not have to be asked if they will be receiving certain garments next season since customers will have no idea what to expect, until after it's available to purchase. It will be so refreshing to walk into a store here and actually be surprised and delighted by the collections they have in stock. As opposed to the looks of confusion and shock sales people give when asked "What collection or season is this item from?" or even "When will you be receiving this jacket that is in this picture I'm showing you"

However, and especially in the Middle East, the Fashion industry has not been one to be able to keep secrets. Keeping the collections under wrap until it's available to purchase could be a challenge. Social media will only make this task more difficult since a leak can easily happen. Which was the case last year when the H&M Balmain collection was leaked online before it was scheduled to be showcased.

These changes will take effect beginning this September, with designers Tom Ford, Burberry and Vetements.



Designer Tom Ford



Burberry's chief creative officer designer Christopher Bailey



Demna Gvasalia Lead Designer for the Vetements brand

Fall/Winter and Spring/Summer shows in a specified time in the country of their origin. In the past, Fashion shows were catered to and attended by the designer's clientele. But more recently these shows have taken a life of their own. Becoming a media frenzy. The actual people who purchase these garments are no longer given the treatment they deserve. Going from being seated in the front row to

Obscene because not only do they cost a lot, but also since by the time they are available to purchase the same designer would have already shown his "newer" collection. Leaving the clients with the feeling that what they can buy now after waiting six month for it is already old since they have seen what the new season will bring. One could argue that it takes that long to produce quantities that large. Yet,

buy-now" business model with both men's wear and women's wear being showcased together and available for purchase the very next day online and in stores. Burberry has started developing this change back in 2010, when all the Fashion show pieces were made available for pre-order on their website after their Fashion shows for people to order.

Ford was quoted saying "Showing the col-

Movie 'Doctor Strange' turns Tibetan man into European woman

Tibetan male character from the "Doctor Strange" comic books presented such a potential political minefield to Marvel that in the film version they cast a Caucasian woman in the role, reflecting the pressures Hollywood movie makers perceive when trying to appeal to the Chinese market.

One of the film's screenwriters has suggested that the casting of British actress Tilda Swinton as sorcerer the Ancient One was partly done to avoid potentially offending China's government and moviegoers, who now represent the world's second-largest annual box office after North America. After his comments circulated widely online, the writer said he was expressing only a personal opinion, not that of Marvel's.

Although some online commentators criticized the casting of a white woman rather than a Tibetan actor, the writer's comments suggest the film's backers apparently didn't want to risk losing out on Chinese distribution by introducing the highly politically charged subject of Tibet.

While the Ancient One was written in the comic book as Tibetan, "if you acknowledge that Tibet is a place and that he's Tibetan, you risk alienating 1 billion people," screenwriter C. Robert Cargill said in a podcast interview with the Texas-based DoubleToasted.com.

There was, Cargill said, a risk of "the Chinese government going,

'Hey, you know one of the biggest film-watching countries in the world? We're not going to show your movie because you decided to get political.'" Hollywood producers are increasingly attempting to woo the Chinese audience and government with China-friendly story lines and Chinese actors. Only a limited number of Hollywood films are allowed into China each year and those dealing with political or social topics frowned upon by the ruling Communist Party are doomed to miss the cut.

Movies that simply mention Tibet and Tibetans aren't necessarily displeasing to Beijing, although those that criticize its rule over the Himalayan region, such as the 1997 film "Seven Years in Tibet" starring Brad Pitt, most definitely are. China says Tibet has been part of its territory for more than seven centuries, although many Tibetans say the region was effectively independent for most of that time.

In a statement, Marvel said it has "a very strong record of diversity in its casting of films." "The Ancient One is a title that is not exclusively held by any one character, but rather a moniker passed down through time, and in this particular film the embodiment is Celtic," the Marvel statement said.—AP

Search to begin for Michael Strahan's successor on 'Live'

If finding a new partner for Kelly Ripa on her daytime talk show is anything like the process that led to Michael Strahan's hiring, it won't be quick. "Live" went through nine months and 59 guest co-hosts before former football star Strahan was chosen to replace Regis Philbin. Strahan, who started in 2012, is leaving to work full-time at "Good Morning America" and ABC announced that his last day will be on May 13.

The last time around, some of the guest hosts were just filling in, others actively trying out for the full-time job. Among Ripa's partners were Anderson Cooper, Seth Meyers, Neil Patrick Harris, Jeff Probst, Nick Lachey, Josh Groban, Alec Baldwin, Jerry Seinfeld, Jonah Hill, Sam Champion and Ripa's real-life husband, Mark Consuelos. Some of those men can be expected to be considered again. Speculation quickly centered on CNN's Cooper, particularly after Ripa was photographed on Tuesday leaving her home while carrying a copy of the just-released book he wrote with his mother, Gloria Vanderbilt. "These sorts of things are never by accident," said Bill Carroll, an expert in the syndication market for Katz Media.



Cooper had his own daytime talk show in 2012, taking him out of the running for Philbin's job. He filmed the show for two years while continuing his evening work as a CNN anchor. A few weeks after Strahan was selected, Cooper learned his own show was being cancelled. Cooper appeared with Ripa that fall on Andy Cohen's Bravo show, "Watch What Happens Live," and Cohen asked whether they felt like it was an opportunity that got away. "I still feel," Ripa replied, looking at Cooper, "like you and I are destined to be together, someday, somehow."

Cooper declined comment on Thursday. Cohen, who has gone on speaking tours with Cooper and is a close friend, was considered another possible Strahan successor but has said he is not interested.

Officials at the show's parent Walt Disney Co. will make the decision on who replaces Strahan. Executive Producer Michael Gelman and Ripa, who has been on the job since 2001, are expected to have input as well. The recent drama surrounding Strahan's exit - Ripa was angered by getting virtually no advance notice of the move and skipped work for several days, compelling Disney officials to apologize to her - is likely to strengthen her hand as a kingmaker, Carroll said.

ABC initially said last week that Strahan would stay with the show until September, then abruptly announced on Wednesday that he'd be leaving nearly four months earlier. It's unclear what impact that will have on the length of the search; "Live" airs reruns for at least part of the summer.

The long search that produced Strahan didn't hurt the show in the ratings. "Live with Kelly and Michael" is a close second behind "Dr. Phil" as the most popular daytime talk show. "The viewers, in a way, like being part of the process - 'oh, that one looks great' or 'oh, that one won't work,'" Carroll said. "Everybody has an opinion."

Strahan wasn't considered one of the most likely candidates when the process started five years ago, but jumped into the running when his guest host stints got a strong response, Carroll said. He's since become so popular that ABC is counting on him to help reverse sinking ratings on its morning flagship, "Good Morning America."—AP

Anderson Cooper whose name has been circulating as a possible replacement for Michael Strahan on the morning talk show, "Live! With Kelly and Michael."—AP

Jessica Lange Trains for the Broadway Marathon of 'Long Day's Journey Into Night'

When you've got big names like Jessica Lange, Michael Shannon, Gabriel Byrne and John Gallagher Jr. starring in "Long Day's Journey Into Night" on Broadway, some equally big names will show up for the opening night.

At the Wednesday opening of the Roundabout Theater Company's revival, Jessica Chastain, Blythe Danner, Nathan Lane, Annette Bening and Rebecca Hall were among the recognizable faces in the audience. So were Ryan Murphy, who produced "Long Day's Journey" in association with the Roundabout, and Sarah Paulson.

Lange, of course, knows those two from her work on "American Horror Story." But after the opening night performance of "Long Day's Journey," the actress said that her TV work over the last few years, intense as it was, doesn't have much in common with the mammoth part of the drug addict Mary Tyrone in "Long Day's Journey."

Related Broadway Review: "Long Day's Journey Into Night" "There's nothing like this," she said. "Nothing that I've ever done before." Over the course of the play's four hours, Lange has to gradually disintegrate into a drug-addled stupor, seven times a week. It's a marathon. "You don't have a lot of life outside of this," she explained. "You sleep late, you get up, you start immediately thinking about this show. Everything is gearing toward this. Everything is gearing toward the curtain."

Byrne, appearing in his third Broadway production of a major Eugene O'Neill play, echoed that sentiment. "It requires focus and discipline and stamina and energy," he said. "You have to really take care of yourself. You have to go to bed early and you have to eat properly. You have to exercise. And weirdly enough," he added, "you have to keep your head clear of doubt and fear and all the demons that come out of the cupboard and try to diminish you. You have to keep a very clear connection to the play." Director Jonathan Kent put it more succinctly. "It's a fiendishly hard play to do," he said. — Reuters



Jessica Lange attends the "Long Day's Journey Into Night" Broadway opening night at American Airlines Theatre on Wednesday in New York City. — AFP



DJ Zedd has told Dr. Luke he got 'permission' to record a track with Keshha

The 29-year-old singer will release her first musical offering, 'True Colors', on Friday (29.04.16) since a court ruled she could not leave her contract with her former collaborator, and the 'Beautiful Now' producer felt compelled to "clarify" that his song with the star is fully legal. Zedd announced the track on Wednesday (27.04.16) by posting an image of the single's cover, along with the caption: "ZEDD & KESHA - TRUE COLORS. OFFICIALLY OUT: 4/29 Music can be freedom." He quickly followed it with a message on Twitter directed at her former producer Dr. Luke, writing: "Just to clarify: We didn't use any loopholes. Kemosable / RCA gave us permission to release. (sic)" And Luke wasted no time in thanking the star for his "clarification". He wrote back: "Thanks for the clarification @Zedd." The exchange follows Keshha's legal battle with Dr. Luke, after she alleged he had

drugged, raped and emotionally and verbally abused her during their working relationship. The 'Tik Tok' star pressed charges in court but her claims were dismissed in April and he has vehemently denied any wrongdoing. However, she is pursuing the lawsuit to end their recording contract. Meanwhile, the blonde beauty took to her Instagram account on Wednesday and declared it was a "miracle" she had found her "voice" again with DJ Zedd. The pop star posted a black and white photograph of her singing into a microphone in his studio and captioned the image: "It's a miracle when someone gives you a chance at finding your voice again with no reason other than that he is a f*****g beautiful person with a heart of gold @zedd #truecolors (sic)"

Prince reportedly had been diagnosed with AIDS six months before he died

The 57-year-old musician passed away at his Paisley Park estate in Minneapolis last week and it has been alleged that he contracted HIV in the Nineties before developing full-blown AIDS last year after refusing medication for the illness on religious grounds. Friends of the late star - who was a Jehovah's Witness - told the National Enquirer magazine: "He was in bad shape. Doctors told Prince his blood count was unusually low and that his body temperature had dropped dangerously below the normal 98.6 degrees. He was totally iron deficient, very weak and often disoriented. He rarely ate and when he did it all came right back up." However, Prince is said to have told his friends: "God can - and will - cure me." After his initial HIV diagnosis, Prince was reportedly discouraged from taking medication by members of his faith. A source said: "They told Prince he'd have everlasting life and believed he had been cured by faith." But the symptoms returned and it was too late for medication. He expected to live through the summer but his immune system was very weak." He is alleged to have been taking prescription opiates for "AIDS-related pain and hip problems". These claims come following recent reports that Prince overdosed on the painkiller Percocet six days before his death and had to be given a "save shot" to counteract the effects of opiates, after being taken ill on his private jet on the way back from a gig in Atlanta. According to friends, Prince knew he was dying and had already started planning his funeral. A post-mortem was carried out on Prince's body last week and it confirmed there had been no trauma or violence in the time leading up to the singer's death. The star's body has now been released to his family.



Ariel Winter's mother disapproves of her daughter's breast reduction surgery

Crystal Workman hasn't spoken to the 18-year-old 'Modern Family' star in over three years, but she has voiced her concerns over Ariel's decision to reduce her breast size from 32F to 34D. She said: "I don't think anyone at that age should be cutting into their breasts. I am surprised she did it so young and that the doctor did it for her so young. 'I'm sorry, I just think this is inappropriate. She should never be embarrassed of her scars but she shouldn't be flaunting them.'" What's more, Crystal has been outspoken about her daughter's claims about her upbringing, after Ariel accused her mother of physically abusing the actress during her

childhood. She told Inside Edition: "I didn't start this battle. I haven't seen her in three and a half years. I think Ariel is conjuring up stories to help her career at my expense and I feel as a parent I am being bullied." Crystal also denied claims she is a pushy mother, insisting she has allowed Ariel to follow her own ambitions. She said: "She was begging me, 'I want to be on TV'. She would say, 'I can do better than your clients'. 'She has never been pushed into the industry. Ariel has wanted to be in the industry since she was five years old."





Victoria Beckham

'always felt uncomfortable' in the Spice Girls

The 55-year-old entrepreneur, who worked with the girl group through the peak years of their success, has claimed Victoria only found her "true vocation" when she quit music and started working in the fashion industry. Simon explained: "Victoria, coming out of the Spice Girls, being married to David Beckham, launched a solo career. She never felt comfortable. Even in the Spice Girls - it was great fun, she was in the world's biggest group for two or three years - but she didn't feel comfortable. "She could sing pretty well, she could dance pretty well, but she always felt uncomfortable." Although Victoria went on to enjoy some success as a solo artist, Simon revealed fashion has always been her true "passion". Speaking at the Business Innovation Awards in Los Angeles, Simon said: "When the Spice Girls broke up, she had a few songs as a solo artist but she wasn't happy and she said to me 'Simon, I just don't want to do music any more. What do you think I should do?' "It was one of those things that you get this kind of clarity of vision. I've known Victoria since she was 18 and her passion in life was always clothes. She was called Posh Spice because she always wore the best dresses and she knew everything about clothes. "I said 'You should be in fashion. You should be a designer'." Simon was named the Entrepreneur of the Year at the seventh annual Business Innovation Awards on account of his success in the music, television, sport and fashion industries.

Sarah Harding admits having lip fillers was a 'mistake'

The 34-year-old singer-and-actress underwent the cosmetic procedure in her late 20s but insists that's the only enhancement she has done to her features and can't understand why people think otherwise. Speaking to Closer magazine, she said: "I don't understand what people think I've had done. I can smile, I can frown, everything on my face moves. I've dabbled with my lips in the past, but that was a mistake and I learned from it. The only thing I've had done is getting my eyebrows tattooed on." The former Girls Aloud star admits the constant scrutiny of her appearance and lifestyle does upset her more than people realize. She said: "People don't know me, they see me and think, 'She's got a hard face'." They assume that because I look tough and I'm in the limelight, my feelings don't get hurt. But I'm still a human being and I have emotions just like everybody else - people forget that. I wear my heart on my sleeve and, although I try to ignore negative comments, they do get to me." Sarah is currently busy with her career but her love life is quiet as she is single again. The blonde beauty had been dating 21-year-old hunk Benjamin Costain earlier this year, but it seems their romance has now fizzled out as she is back on the market and looking for love again. She explained to BANG Showbiz: "I don't have a boyfriend. I love how people know my love life better than me. I am single. I would like to think I'll have kids and settle down by the time I'm 40 so I've still got a few years in me yet. I'm quite a young 34 - I feel like I'm 18 still. I'm such a big kid. I annoy the hell out of people."



Kim Kardashian West is less than five lbs. away for her pre-baby weight

The 35-year-old beauty - who gave birth to her second child, son Saint West, in December last year - is close to losing the 70 lbs. she gained during her pregnancy after strictly following the Atkins40 plan. Kim Snapchatted a photo of herself on the scales and captioned it: "YOU GUYS!!!! PRE BABY WEIGHT WAS 135!!!! (sic)" Kim, who has been following her diet since January, revealed she now weighed 139.6 lbs., which is only slightly above her pre-pregnancy weight of 135 lbs. As part of her diet, Kim has been eating around 1,800 calories a day, some of which is needed in order to keep up her milk supply for son Saint. The reality TV personality, who also has a two-year-old daughter, called North, with her hip-hop star husband Kanye West, previously revealed she had learned lessons from her first pregnancy. She said: "I gained a lot of weight and I have a lot to lose. "This time I think weight has come off quicker than last time because I kind of learned how to eat better. Last time I worked out a little bit harder. This time I'm eating differently."



MIAMI: Beyonce performs during the Formation World Tour at Marlins Park on Wednesday. — AP photos



Beyonce slays at tour opening and might get an Emmy nomination too

Whether scorned woman or confident seductress, Beyoncé moved seamlessly between the two on the opening night of her Formation World Tour in Miami, offering no insight into the rumors of marital infidelity fueled by her latest album.

Queen B came out swinging Wednesday in an oversized black western hat and bodysuit, trading her normal stilettos for military-style combat boots. She opened the show with "Formation" and had the crowd in a frenzy as she moved to her latest anthem "Sorry," noticeable scorn in her tone as she sang, "Tonight, I regret the night I put that ring on."

Both songs were from "Lemonade," which she released days earlier in an HBO special with full visuals. Much of the album appeared to tie into Beyoncé's life, and lines like "Are you cheating on me?" raised questions of whether her husband, Jay Z, had been unfaithful.

Her opening anthems were fueled by red lights and hot fireballs shooting into the night sky to punctuate her rage - and the angrier she got, the more excited the crowd grew. At one point, Beyoncé donned a sequined bodysuit studded with red flames as she sang about her plans to "smack that trick" as a tempestuous lightning storm raged on a screen behind her and later a red, she-devil-esque number.

Just when you thought she was in full-on fury, she switched to the overtly sexual "Rocket" and "Drunk in

Love," a song seemingly about her once hot and heavy marriage. She drew from an older song, "Me, Myself and I," to remind the crowd "I'm going to be my own best friend," and brought two girls from the audience who had perfected the choreography to the much-mimicked "Single Ladies."

She moved so skillfully between vulnerable and in control, that it was impossible to tell what was real and how much was artistic posturing. Beyoncé did not mention her husband - aside from a quick thank you at the end - and said little about her new album, noting only that her favorite song was "All Night," a slow number that starts, "I've found the truth beneath your lies." There was no mention of the presumed other woman, the much-discussed "Becky with the good hair."

Noticeably absent from the two-hour concert were the political undertones of her Super Bowl halftime show earlier this year, where Beyoncé's dancers donned berets, sported Afros and wore all black, similar to the style of the Black Panther party.

Police unions urged officers not to volunteer or work at her shows and criticized what they called her "anti-police" messages. The police presence at the Miami show seemed normal, and media reports have revealed that security sign-ups for her upcoming Tampa show have not been an issue.



She also did a quick cover of the Eurythmics' "Sweet Dreams," cast her stage in purple to honor Prince during a costume change while "Purple Rain" played and dedicated her final number "Halo" to the late star as fireworks shot into the night sky.

"Prince, thank you for your beautiful music. ... He's an artist that inspired all of us," she said. In perhaps the most meaningful moment, Beyonce said her daughter reminded her on the way to rehearsal earlier in the day that "when I was a little girl and I dreamed, I dreamed of this day right now. ... You're witnessing my dream coming true right now."

Later, a montage of Jay Z holding the couple's newborn child in the hospital played as she sang - a reminder that the last time she toured, she headlined with her husband. Wednesday's show also included a snippet from Jay's grandmother's 90th birthday telling the crowd she turned life's lemons into lemonade.

And Beyonce - whatever state her personal life and marriage is in - appears to be doing the same. Her commanding performance of "Freedom" served as reminder to the world that she "breaks chains all by myself. I'm gonna keep running because a runner don't quit on herself," she sang as her dancers splashed about an onstage pool. She carried that theme into "Survivor," encouraging those in the crowd who had "survived anything in your life, I want you to celebrate with me tonight." And, just to keep everyone guessing, she gave a shout-out to her husband at the end. "I want to dedicate this song to my beautiful husband," she said. "I love you so much."

HBO to Submit 'Lemonade' for Emmy Consideration

"Lemonade" has left the world abuzz since HBO debuted the visual album for a 27-hour window Saturday night. For those who missed it, it's available for purchase via iTunes, or streaming via Jay Z's Tidal platform. But the television drop makes it eligible for Emmy consideration, and HBO plans to submit "Lemonade" in the variety special category, Variety has learned.

Whether Kahlil Joseph and Beyonce herself, the credited directors of the piece, can be joined by "additional directors" Melina Matsoukas, Todd Tourso, Dikayl Rimmasch, Jonas Akerlund and Mark Romanek remains to be seen. HBO is in the midst of working out those details.



In 2015, the Emmy for outstanding variety special went to NBC's "Saturday Night Live 40th Anniversary Special," which edged out, among other nominees, "The Kennedy Center Honors" on CBS.

Meanwhile, "Lemonade" should be a shoo-in for consideration in the lighting design/lighting direction category, given the lush imagery from vignette to vignette. The frames conjured by the seven d.p.s credited on the film have drawn comparisons to the work of Terrence Malick, and the project does have one definitive connection to the reclusive director: Joseph shot behind-the-scenes footage for Malick's 2013 film "To the Wonder."

Beyonce previously received two Emmy nominations, for her Super Bowl XLVII Halftime Show in 2013 and for the "On the Run Tour" concert special with Jay Z. — Agencies





Tandoori Roast Chicken

By Meera Sodha

Ever since my parents came to England in 1972, my mum has had a wild love affair with roast chicken. The only thing she loves even more is her family and unfortunately for her, my dad is a vegetarian. So for 41 years now, her opportunities to turn the oven on, throw caution to the wind and put a beautiful bird in to roast have been limited. She's simply too loving a wife to torment my dad like that. That's why every Mother's Day, there is only one thing that we will cook: tandoori roast chicken. But this isn't just any old roast chicken; it is one worthy of a feast. It has all the merits of a normal roast chicken, flavorful crispy skin, butter-soft meat and largely fuss-free prep, but it is much more elegant and celebratory. The chicken is made tender with a marinade of yogurt and lemon juice, then enlivened with earthy cumin, garam masala, ginger and garlic. Once the ingredients have been blended into a paste, all that's needed is a quick rub down and rest (the chicken, not you) before it goes into the oven, leaving you free and out of the kitchen.

It's the only time of the year we force our father into the kitchen to help with the sides (supervised, of course). But given that there are plentiful greens around this time of year, they are quick and easy, too. We love to serve this with spring's finest asparagus, peas and spinach, a little lime pickle, toasted naan bread and some crisp white drink. All of this fuss-free cooking allows us more time for a relaxing family lunch together. Until we need to tackle the washing up, that is.

Ingredients

You will need a blender to make the marinade. I like to marinate the chicken first thing in the morning to give it time for the flavors to mingle.

Start to finish: 2 1/2 hours (10 minutes active)

Servings: 4

4-pound whole chicken, giblets removed
3 green serrano chilies, roughly chopped
6 cloves garlic
1 thumb-sized piece ginger
1 tablespoon garam masala
1/2 tablespoon cumin seeds
3/4 teaspoon hot paprika
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 tablespoons lemon juice
3 tablespoons canola oil
1/2 teaspoon turmeric
1 1/4 teaspoons kosher salt (or to taste)
2/3 cup plain Greek yogurt

Preparation

Line a roasting pan with foil, then place the chicken in the center. Combine all remaining ingredients except the yogurt in a blender, then puree until reduced to a fine paste. Mix in the yogurt. Rub the yogurt mixture over all parts of the chicken, then refrigerate and allow to marinate for at least 30 minutes and up to several hours.

When ready to cook, heat the oven 350 F. Roast the chicken, not covered, on the oven's middle shelf for 40 minutes. Baste the chicken with any juices in the pan, then lightly cover with foil. Roast for another 40 minutes, or until the meat reaches 170 F at the thigh and 165 F at the breast. Remove the chicken from the oven, leaving it covered, and set aside to rest for 15 minutes before serving.—AP



Nutrition information per serving: 370 calories; 150 calories from fat (41 per cent of total calories); 16 g fat (6 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 100 mg cholesterol; 18 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 4 g sugar; 33 g protein; 630 mg sodium.

Rethinking muffaletta as a thin-crust pizza for Mardi Gras

By Alison Ladman

We love pizza. We love muffaletta. We decided they probably would be easy to love together. So we decided to combine them. In honor of Mardi Gras, we created a muffaletta flatbread, a basic thin-crust pizza topped with all the classic ingredients of New Orleans' beloved muffaletta sandwich. We start with a red pepper pesto blended from roasted bell peppers, capers and toasted walnuts. We then top that with an olive and cherry pepper blend, then finally sliced salami and provolone cheese. For a shortcut version, prep the red pepper pesto and olive salad ahead of time. They can be refrigerated for several days. You also could substitute mixed marinated olives from the grocer's olive bar for the olive salad.



Nutrition information per serving: 390 calories; 170 calories from fat (44 percent of total calories); 19 g fat (4.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 25 mg cholesterol; 45 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 4 g sugar; 13 g protein; 1,120 mg sodium.

Muffaletta Flatbread

Start to finish: 45 minutes
Servings: 6

Ingredients

For the red pepper pesto:

1/2 cup roughly chopped roasted red peppers, drained and patted dry
1 tablespoon capers, rinsed
1 tablespoon olive oil, plus extra
2 tablespoons toasted walnuts

For the olive salad:

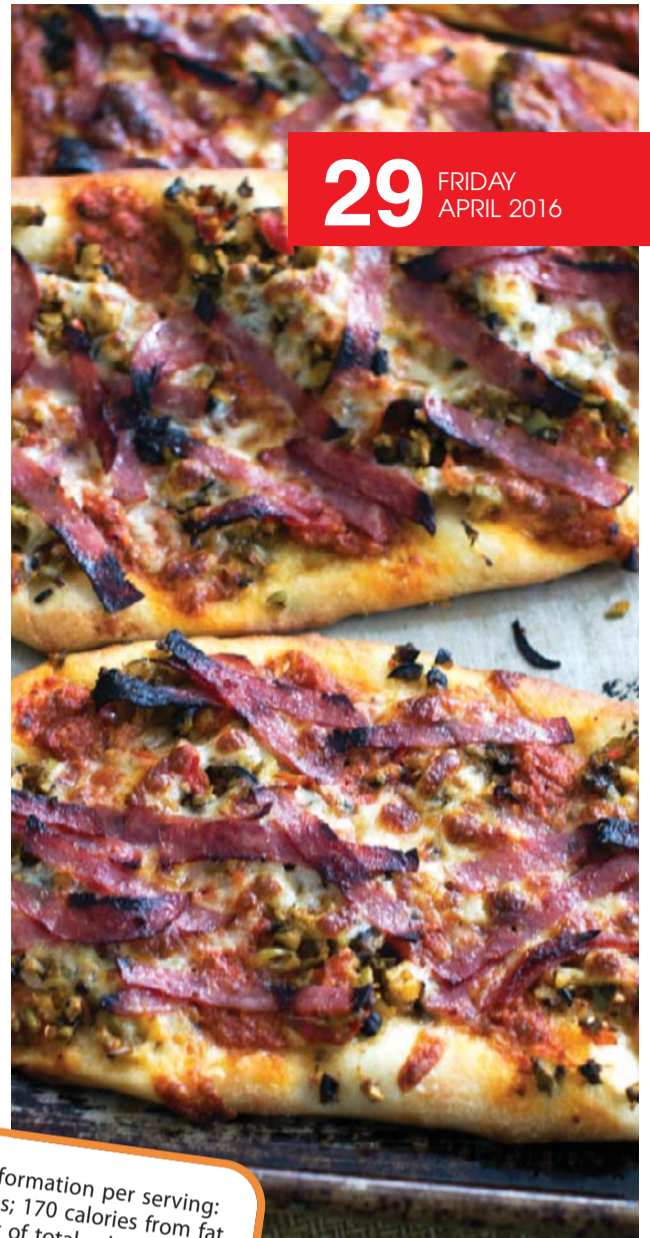
1/2 cup green olives
1/4 cup black olives
1/4 cup chopped sweet cherry peppers
1/4 cup chopped pickled vegetables
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon dried Italian herb blend
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes

For the flatbreads:

20-ounce ball pizza dough, room temperature
2 1/2 ounces sliced salami, cut into thin strips
3 ounces sliced provolone cheese, cut into thin strips

Preparation

Heat the oven to 500 F. Lightly coat 2 baking sheets with vegetable oil or cooking spray. To make the pesto, in a food processor combine the roasted red peppers, capers, olive oil and the walnuts. Pulse until very finely chopped, then transfer to a bowl. To make the olive salad, in the food processor (no need to clean it) combine both olive varieties, the cherry peppers, pickled vegetables, garlic, pepper, Italian herbs and red pepper flakes. Pulse until roughly chopped. The pieces should be no bigger than a 1/4 inch. Divide the dough into 6 pieces. Stretch or roll the dough into long, thin ovals, about 4-by-9 inches. Arrange the dough on the prepared baking sheets and allow to rest for 10 minutes. If needed, stretch out the dough ovals again. Lightly brush each piece of dough with olive oil. Top each with alternating stripes of pesto and olive salad across the dough, then top with strips of salami and provolone. Bake for 6 to 8 minutes, or until the dough is crisp and the flatbreads are lightly browned. Enjoy warm or at room temperature. — AP



Friday Times

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2016

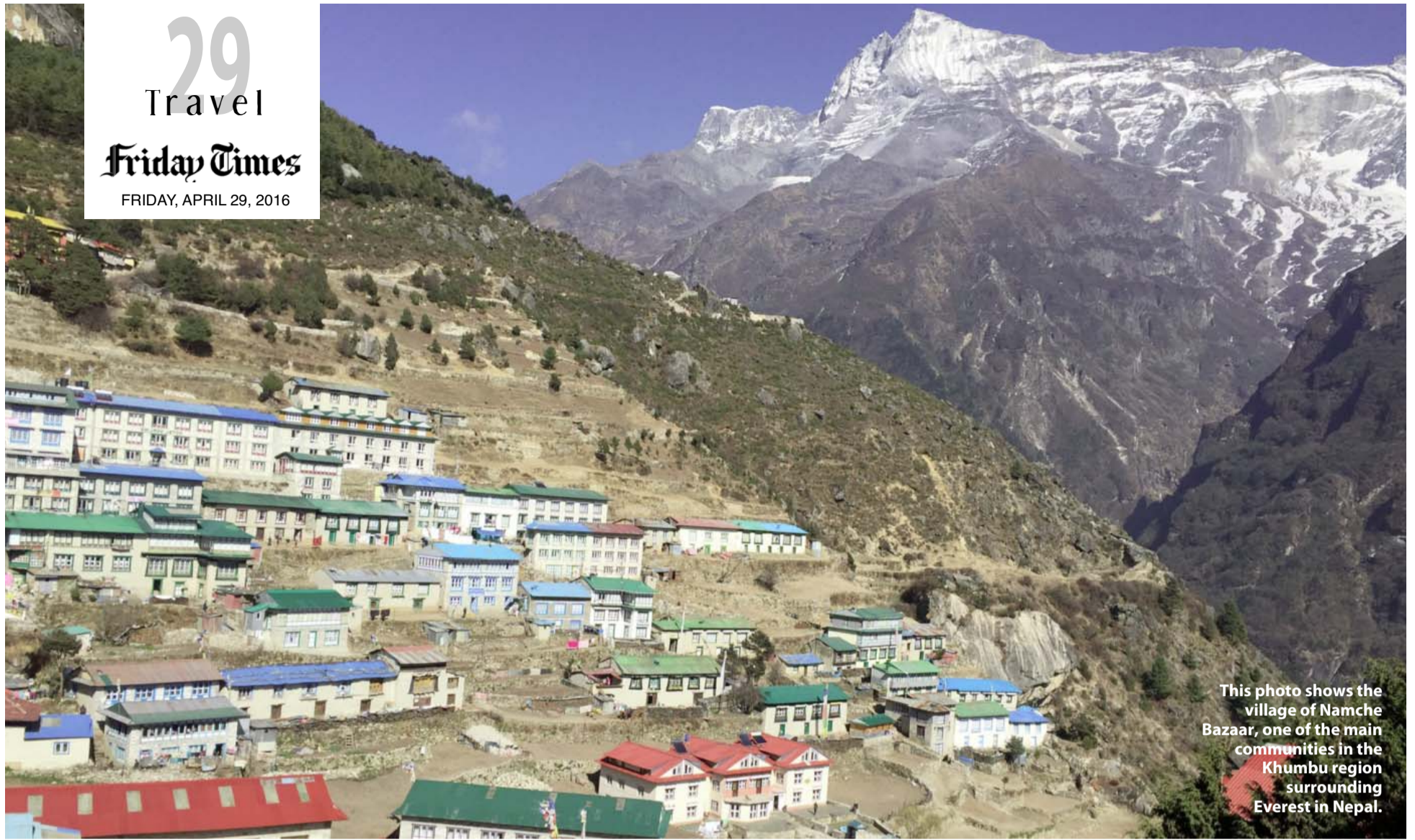
Travel



This photo shows trekkers heading to Everest Base Camp, Nepal. —AP photos



**On trek to Everest,
a chance to push
boundaries, find peace**



This photo shows the village of Namche Bazaar, one of the main communities in the Khumbu region surrounding Everest in Nepal.

By Karin Laub

We reach Everest Base Camp on a sunny but chilly afternoon, after an eight-day trek that stretched our physical and mental limits. Aching knees from steep descents and headaches from mild altitude sickness are forgotten as the yellow and orange tents for the summit-bound - framed by some of Himalaya's highest snow-capped peaks - come into view. We stay for only about an hour on a hill overlooking the camp, pitched near Everest's Khumbu icefall. We take photos, along with dozens of other amateur trekkers from across the globe, before hiking to the nearest lodge, about three hours away.

We're proud. We reached 5,364 meters (17,598 feet). That's roughly 550 meters (1,800 feet) higher than Mount Blanc, the tallest peak in the Alps. Getting to one of Nepal's most popular trekking destination also brings home a simple truth - it's the journey that matters. The 90-kilometer (56-mile) hike to Base Camp from an airstrip in the mountain village of Lukla was a "real pain," says Wayne

Pedersen, 57, a South African who works in Dubai. "But I never would have missed it because of what I got out of it - the scenery, the beauty, the comradeship."

The journey begins

Our journey starts in early April, at the Shanker Hotel, a former 19th century royal palace in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu. We each get a water-resistant duffel bag, sleeping bag and down jacket. Some of these trekkers came to Nepal last year, but abandoned their plans when an April 25, 2015 earthquake killed nearly 9,000 people and destroyed hundreds of thousands of homes. The trekking industry - a key money-maker for the country - was hit hard. A year later, bookings are still down 40 percent, said Narayan Regmi of our tour company, Himalayan Glacier. "Please come to Nepal and help the destroyed economy," he says.

Now my fellow trekkers, most in their 40s and 50s, are back for a second try. From Kathmandu, we fly 40 minutes northeast to Lukla, where the tiny Tenzing-Hillary airstrip - named after Edmund Hillary and Tenzing

Norgay, the first to summit Everest - is considered one of the world's most dangerous. Its stunted runway is bookended by a mountain wall and steep drop. In the mountains, the only modes of transportation are our feet, yaks, donkeys and - in an emergency - helicopters. We don't see a car for two weeks.

Agonies and joys

During our first downhill hike from Lukla, my left knee starts hurting. At the first overnight stop, I realize I've underestimated the physical challenges. In coming days, I take anti-inflammatory pills to get through steep descents. Coping with the rising altitude is the biggest challenge. A hasty ascent into air with less oxygen can lead to mountain sickness, with headaches and vomiting. Our Nepali head guide, Tulsi Bhatta, exhorts us to "go slow and drink lots of water." A few days into the trek, he begins measuring oxygen levels - we stick a finger into a small gadget - and offers those with poor readings a diuretic to alleviate symptoms.

I get a headache at around the 4,000 meter (13,000 feet) mark. By the time we reach the

night's stop in the village of Dingboche, I take one of Bhatta's pills and crawl into my sleeping bag. Unfortunately, a side effect involves frequent bathroom trips, which in our no-frills lodge means stumbling down a cold hallway with a flashlight. I'm better the next day. Others also suffer from minor bouts, but everyone recovers.

We soon realize that pushing through exhaustion creates a special kind of satisfaction. The scenery is truly spectacular. It includes sightings of Everest, the world's highest mountain at 8,850 meters (29,035 feet), and of Ama Dablam, a snow-topped peak flanked by long ridges that make it look like a giant ghost raising his arms. We repeatedly cross gorges cut by roaring white-water rivers, using wobbly suspension bridges adorned with colorful Buddhist prayer flags. Rhododendron trees with bright magenta blooms, green fields of onions and low rock walls line our path.

Villagers occasionally greet us with a smile and a "Namaste." No one pushes goods on us. "You get a culture and one of the most amazing environments at the same time," says



This photo shows trekkers at a rest stop north of the village of Namche Bazaar, Nepal.



A Nepali porter carrying his load north of the village of Namche Bazaar, Nepal.



The Buddhist monastery gate at the entrance to the small mountain village of Tengboche, elevation 12,664 feet (3,860 meters), at sunrise.

Steven Wilson, 49, a pastor from Lexington, Massachusetts, who is trekking with a different group. "I think that's the gift."

Etiquette and teahouses

Spring and fall are peak seasons. The trail to Base Camp is more crowded than expected. Hikers make way for load-carrying yaks. Bells strapped around their necks announce their arrival. Porters, some in their early teens, have right of way. Hunched forward, they carry trekkers' heavy duffel bags and goods for local communities. This includes stoves, cooking gas, Coke and plywood for construction. Loads are suspended from headbands and cushioned with foam rolls pressed against lower backs. Bhatta, 32, who started as a porter, then learned English and became a

guide, says he's been fortunate.

"I didn't have any options," Bhatta, whose home was destroyed in the earthquake, says of his load-carrying days. "In Nepal, we don't have industries, nothing." It is always a relief to reach the teahouse - simple lodges - where we spend the night. Teahouses become more basic as we push up the mountain. Prices for bottled water increases, reflecting higher transport costs at rising elevations. Typically, a stove in the dining room burns dried yak dung for warmth and heats water in huge kettles. Weary trekkers play cards or read books as cookies are passed around.

Dinner staples include egg dishes, soups, stuffed dumplings and the local specialty, dal bhat - lentil soup over rice and vegetable-potato stew. Searching for protein, I buy cans

of tuna, seek peanut butter for breakfast and eat yak steak twice. It's chewy, but edible when mixed with a sauce. Unheated rooms have wooden bunks with thin mattresses. Communal toilets and wash basins are common. Hot showers are increasingly rare at higher elevations.

In a nightly ritual, I roll out my sleeping bag, cover a pillow with my own case and place a flashlight next to my head. There's little to do after nightfall except read. An 8 pm bedtime is not unusual. Bhatta and his assistants, always cheerful, come around with "bed tea" in the mornings, to make sure everyone is awake and ready to pack their bags.

The payoff

The rewards of the 12-day trek become

more apparent toward the end. I'm stronger and more sure-footed. I fall into a rhythm as I plant my trekking poles on steep steps and push up without gasping for air. The sights and sounds of the trail make up for any remaining discomfort. Colorful prayer wheels whirl, powered by a small stream. Maroon-robed monks chant religious verses in the region's largest Buddhist monastery.

A bird of prey glides above a canyon. Elsewhere, a group of Nepali men sit on the ground, gambling with dice and small shells. We walk in silence at times, single file. There are no ping-pong iPhones here, no distractions. It's a chance to contemplate issues that get pushed aside in the day-to-day busy-ness of life. In the best moments on the trail, it's peaceful. — AP



A memorial stupa for US mountain climber and guide Scott Fischer, on the outskirts of the village of Dughla, on the path to Everest Base Camp, Nepal.



Mt Everest, in middle, altitude 8,848 meters (29,028 feet), is seen on the way to base camp.

WORD SEARCH

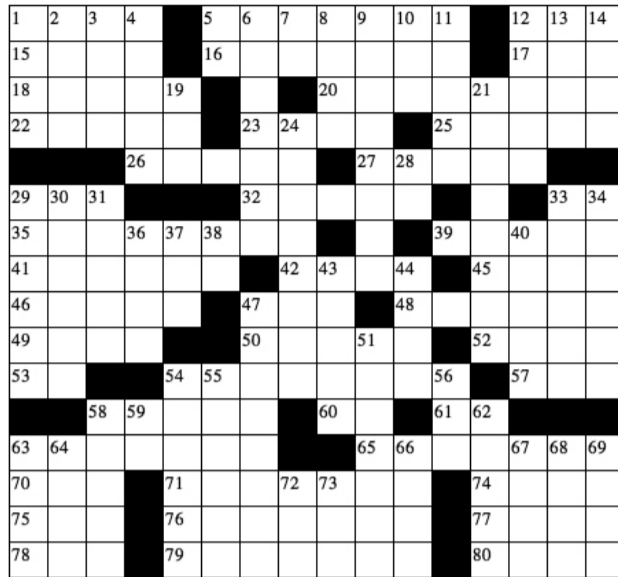
More 80's Songs

Find and circle all of the 1980's song titles that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an Elton John song.

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

- AFRICA
- ALWAYS
- AMERICA
- BEAT IT
- BROKEN WINGS
- CALL ME
- CONTROL
- CRUISIN'
- DOWN UNDER
- ENDLESS LOVE
- FAITHFULLY
- FAME
- FAST CAR
- FREEDOM
- GLORIA
- GUILTY
- HEARTBREAKER
- HEAVEN
- HOLD ME
- HUMAN
- HUNGRY HEART
- INFATUATION
- KOKOMO
- LA BAMBA
- LET'S DANCE
- MAGIC
- MANIC MONDAY
- MONY MONY
- NEVER
- NOTORIOUS
- OUR HOUSE
- PASSION
- PATIENCE
- PINK HOUSES
- PURPLE RAIN
- ROCK ON
- SAILING
- SARA
- SATISFIED
- SHOUT
- SONGBIRD
- SUKIYAKI
- SUSSUDIO
- THE FLAME
- THE LOOK
- THE ROSE
- TIME
- TOO SHY
- TRUE
- TRULY
- TWO HEARTS
- VACATION
- VOICES CARRY
- WE BELONG
- WHIP IT
- YOUR LOVE

CROSSWORD 1241



ACROSS

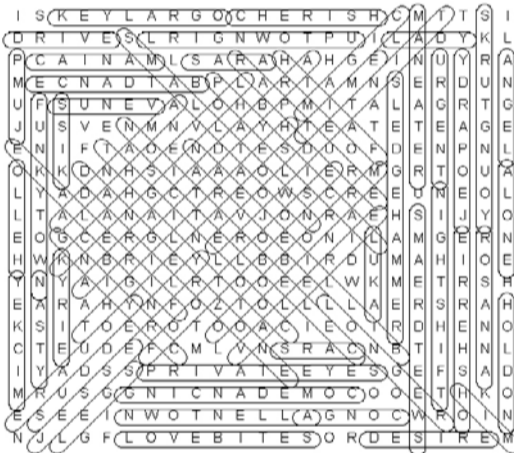
1. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
5. Form a mental image of something that is not present or that is not the case.
12. Cooking utensil consisting of a wide metal vessel.
15. A member of a Finnish people living in the northwestern Urals in Russia.
16. Marked by cairns.
17. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
18. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
20. Having accompaniment or companions or escort.
22. Any property detected by the olfactory system.
23. An edge tool used to cut and shape wood.
25. (Greek mythology) A princess of Colchis who aided Jason in taking the Golden Fleece from her father.
26. Any of a group of heavenly spirits under the god Anu.
27. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
29. (informal) Of the highest quality.
32. Occurring or encountered or experienced or observed frequently or in accordance with regular practice or procedure.
35. An island in the Indian Ocean off the east coast of Africa.
39. Come to pass.
41. The word class that qualifies verbs or clauses.
42. (prefix) Opposite or opposing or neutralizing.
45. A friendly nation.
46. The basic unit of money in Sierra Leone.
48. Of or pertaining to or characteristic of Nepal or its people or language or culture.
49. A town in north central Oklahoma.
50. (anatomy) Of or relating to the ilium.
52. Any place of complete bliss and delight and peace.
53. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
57. A cgs unit of work or energy.
60. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
61. Before noon.
63. A member of the Sioux people formerly inhabiting an area along the Missouri river in western North Dakota.
65. Crustaceans characteristically having five pairs of locomotor appendages each joined to a segment of the thorax.
70. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
71. A genus of Cichlidae.
74. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
75. The fatty flesh of eel.
76. Type genus of the family Elephantidae.
77. Bound or secured closely.
78. The month following April and preceding June.
79. Decree or designate beforehand.
80. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.

DOWN

1. A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
2. A person who acts and gets things done.
3. A platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it.
4. A member of the extinct Algonquian people formerly living in northern Indiana and southern Michigan.
5. Being nine more than ninety.
6. Shrubby tree widely distributed along tropical shores.
7. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
8. An industrial city is southeastern Austria.
9. Act together or towards others or with others.
10. Remaining after all deductions.
11. Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
12. A genus of Ploceidae.
13. American novelist (1909-1955).
14. A quantity of no importance.
19. A flexible container with a single opening.
21. A commercial browser.
24. British statesman who as Prime Minister bought controlling interest in the Suez Canal and made Queen Victoria the Empress of India (1804-1881).
28. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).
30. Marked by a rhythmical cadence.
31. A brief stanza concluding certain forms of poetry.
33. United States architect who invented the geodesic dome (1895-1983).
34. Hard to endure.
36. An ancient Iranian language.
37. A strong emotion.
38. A small pellet fired from an air rifle or BB gun.
40. A group of biological taxa or species that share features inherited from a common ancestor.
43. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
44. A ruler of the Inca Empire (or a member of his family).
47. An order of monocotyledonous plants including Amaryllidaceae and Liliaceae and Iridaceae.
51. An early French settler in the Maritimes.
54. Wearing a hat or a hat of a particular kind.
55. Store in a silo, as of fodder.
56. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
58. In a manner differing from the usual or expected.
59. Informal terms for a mother.
62. A blanket that is used as a cloak or shawl.
64. The content of cognition.
66. Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
67. A roughly cylindrical that is vessel open at the top.
68. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
69. An informal term for a father.
72. (usually followed by 'to') Naturally disposed toward.
73. The 21st letter of the Greek alphabet.

Yesterday's Solution

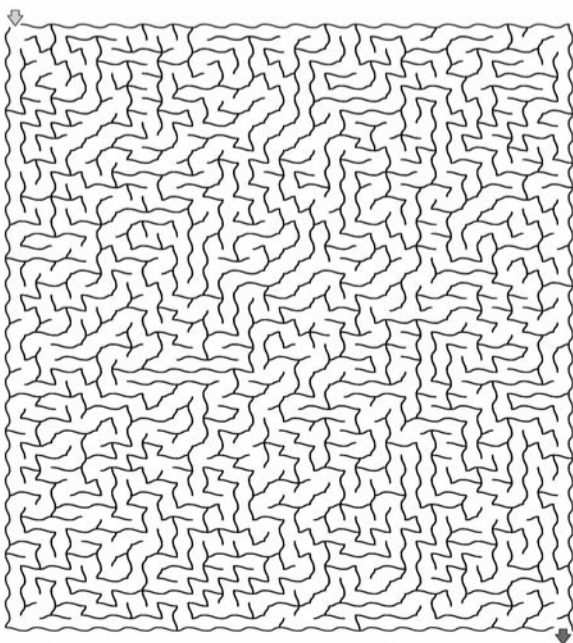
80's Songs



- ABRACADABRA
- ALLENTOWN
- ALONE
- AMANDA
- ANGEL
- BATDANCE
- BILLIE JEAN
- CARS
- CELEBRATION
- CHERISH
- COME DANCING
- CONGA
- COOL NIGHT
- CRYING
- DANGER ZONE
- DESIRE
- DRIVE
- FAITH
- FIRE LAKE
- FOOTLOOSE
- FUNKY TOWN
- HEARTLIGHT
- HELLO
- HIM
- HOLD ON
- JEOPARDY
- JESSE
- JUMP
- KEY LARGO
- KISS
- KYRIE
- LADY
- LEGS
- LONGER
- LOVE BITES
- LOVE SHACK
- LUKA
- MAGIC
- MANEATER
- MANIAC
- MICKEY
- MR. ROBOTO
- NASTY
- NIGHTSHIFT
- OH SHERRIE
- PHYSICAL
- PRIVATE EYES
- RAPTURE
- ROSANNA
- SARA
- SLEDGEHAMMER
- SMALL TOWN
- SUDDENLY
- SWEET DREAMS
- TAINTED LOVE
- TIME
- UPTOWN GIRL
- URGENT
- VALERIE
- VENUS
- YOU ARE
- YOUNG TURKS

The hidden song is: I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR

CHALLENGING MAZE



Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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



- 01:00 The Believer
- 02:40 She's Gotta Have It
- 04:05 Soul Plane
- 05:30 George Washington
- 07:00 Solarbabies
- 08:35 Captain Jack
- 10:15 Teen Witch
- 11:45 The Man In The Iron Mask
- 13:55 The Adventures Of Gerard
- 15:25 Teen Witch
- 16:55 The Night They Raided Minsky's
- 18:35 The Man In The Iron Mask
- 20:45 Big Screen
- 21:00 The Believer
- 22:45 Big Screen
- 23:00 Juice

- 04:00 Trending Business
- 05:00 Trending Business
- 06:00 Asia Edge
- 07:00 Bloomberg West
- 08:00 Countdown
- 09:00 Countdown
- 09:30 On The Move
- 10:00 On The Move
- 11:00 The Pulse
- 12:00 Bloomberg Surveillance
- 13:00 Bloomberg Surveillance
- 14:00 Bloomberg Go
- 15:00 Bloomberg Go
- 16:00 Bloomberg Go
- 17:00 Bloomberg Markets
- 18:00 Bloomberg Markets: European Close
- 19:00 Bloomberg Markets
- 20:00 Bloomberg Markets
- 21:00 Bloomberg Markets
- 21:30 Brilliant Ideas
- 22:00 Bloomberg Markets
- 23:00 What'd You Miss?

- 12:30 Culture Express
- 13:00 Africa Live
- 14:00 News Update
- 14:30 Dialogue
- 15:00 News Update
- 15:15 China 24
- 16:00 News Update
- 16:15 Global Business
- 17:00 News Update
- 17:15 World InSight
- 18:00 Asia Today
- 18:30 Culture Express
- 19:00 News Update
- 19:30 The Heat
- 20:00 Africa Live
- 21:00 Global Business
- 21:30 Dialogue
- 22:00 News Update
- 22:15 China 24
- 23:00 News Update
- 23:15 World InSight



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

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



- 00:00 Crime Stories
- 01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 02:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 03:00 The Jail: 60 Days In
- 04:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 05:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
- 05:30 Frenemies
- 06:00 I Killed My BFF
- 07:00 Gangs Of Britain...
- 08:00 Crime Stories
- 09:00 Frenemies
- 09:30 Private Crimes
- 10:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 11:00 After The First 48
- 12:00 The FBI Files
- 13:00 I Killed My BFF
- 14:00 Crime Stories
- 15:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 16:00 Gangs Of Britain...
- 17:00 After The First 48
- 18:00 The FBI Files
- 19:00 I Killed My BFF
- 20:00 Crime Stories
- 21:00 The First 48
- 22:00 The Killer Speaks
- 23:00 Nightmare In Suburbia



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



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



- 00:00 CNBC Originals
- 00:30 CNBC Conversation: Felipe Calderon
- 01:00 U.S. Squawk Alley
- 02:00 Asia Squawk Box
- 05:00 Asia Street Signs
- 07:00 Capital Connection
- 08:00 Squawk Box Europe
- 11:00 Europe Street Signs
- 12:00 Worldwide Exchange
- 13:00 U.S. Squawk Box
- 16:00 Squawk On The Street
- 18:00 U.S. Squawk Alley
- 19:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report
- 20:00 U.S. Power Lunch
- 22:00 U.S. Closing Bell



- 00:20 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman



- 00:00 Violetta
- 00:45 The Hive
- 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:40 Hank Zipzer
- 02:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:30 Violetta
- 03:15 The Hive
- 03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 04:10 Hank Zipzer
- 04:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 05:00 Violetta
- 05:45 The Hive
- 05:50 Mouk
- 06:00 Lolirock
- 06:25 Sofia The First
- 06:50 Gravity Falls
- 07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 07:40 Jessie
- 08:05 Shake It Up
- 08:30 Shake It Up
- 08:55 Hannah Montana
- 09:20 Hannah Montana
- 09:45 Girl Meets World
- 10:10 Girl Meets World
- 10:35 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:00 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:25 Jessie
- 11:50 Jessie
- 12:15 Whisker Haven Tales With The Palace Pets
- 12:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 12:45 Fish Hooks
- 13:10 Austin & Ally
- 13:35 Austin & Ally
- 14:00 Liv And Maddie
- 14:25 Cars Toons
- 14:30 Liv And Maddie
- 14:55 Dog With A Blog
- 15:20 Dog With A Blog
- 15:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 16:10 Violetta
- 17:00 Violetta Recipes
- 17:10 Wendy Wu: Homecoming Warrior
- 18:40 Best Friends Whenever
- 19:05 Evermoor Chronicles
- 19:30 Violetta
- 20:20 Violetta Recipes
- 20:30 Harriet The Spy: Blog Wars
- 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



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



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



- 00:00 Charlie Rose
- 01:00 Bloomberg West
- 02:00 First Up With Angie Lau
- 03:00 First Up With Angie Lau



47 RONIN ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

23:05 Henry Hugglemonster
23:20 Calimero



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



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



00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Private Chef
01:30 Private Chef
02:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
02:30 Valerie's Home Cooking
03:00 Man Fire Food
03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Chopped
07:00 Man Fire Food
07:30 Man Fire Food
08:00 Chopped



THE DROP ON OSN MOVIES HD



09:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
09:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
10:00 The Kitchen
11:00 Trisha's Southern Kitchen
11:30 Trisha's Southern Kitchen
12:00 Chopped
13:00 The Pioneer Woman
13:30 The Pioneer Woman
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Man Fire Food
15:30 Man Fire Food
16:00 Chopped
17:00 The Kitchen
18:00 Trisha's Southern Kitchen
18:30 Trisha's Southern Kitchen
19:00 Chopped
20:00 Guy's Grocery Games
21:00 Chopped
22:00 Cutthroat Kitchen
23:00 Iron Chef America



00:20 Pawn Stars
00:45 Pawn Stars Australia
01:10 Down East Dickering
02:00 Ice Road Truckers
02:50 Ax Men
03:40 American Restoration
04:05 American Restoration
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Grave Trade
06:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
06:50 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
07:40 Battle 360
08:30 American Restoration
08:55 Mountain Men
09:45 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
10:35 Swamp People
11:25 Fifth Gear
12:15 Counting Cars
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 American Pickers
13:55 Grave Trade
14:45 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
15:35 Battle 360
16:25 Counting Cars
16:50 Shark Wranglers
17:40 Aussie Pickers
18:30 Duck Dynasty
18:55 Duck Dynasty
19:20 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
20:10 Swamp People
21:00 Storage Wars: New York
21:25 Storage Wars: New York
21:50 Pawn Stars
22:15 Pawn Stars Australia
22:40 Battle 360
23:30 Inside Alcatraz: Legends Of The Rock

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



00:10 Sara's New Nordic Kitchen
00:35 Tom's Istanbul Delight
01:00 Cesar To The Rescue
01:50 Chefs Run Wild
02:15 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
02:40 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
03:05 Cruise Ship Diaries
03:30 Tales From The Bush Larder
03:55 Street Food Around The World
04:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
04:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
05:10 Tales From The Bush Larder
05:35 Tales From The Bush Larder
06:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
06:50 Cesar To The Rescue
07:40 Chefs Run Wild
08:05 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
08:30 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
08:55 Cruise Ship Diaries
09:20 Tales From The Bush Larder
09:45 Street Food Around The World
10:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of

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



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

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



00:00 Turkey Shoot
02:00 The Prince
04:00 Northmen: A Viking Saga
06:00 I, Robot
08:00 Destruction: Las Vegas
09:30 47 Ronin
11:45 Stranded
13:30 X-Men: Days Of Future Past
15:45 I, Robot
17:45 47 Ronin
20:00 Non-Stop
22:00 The Terminator



00:00 Role Models
02:00 Pitch Perfect
04:00 The Misadventures Of The Dunderheads
06:00 Nitro Circus: The Movie
08:00 Green Card
10:00 The Misadventures Of The Dunderheads
11:45 Pitch Perfect
13:45 The Other Sister
16:00 Green Card
18:00 At Middleton
20:00 Wish I Was Here



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

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



01:45 Secret Window
03:30 Calvary
05:30 Reds
09:00 Les Miserables
12:00 Paradise
14:30 The Alamo
17:00 Manny
19:00 Low Down
21:00 Legends Of The Fall
23:15 Dallas Buyers Club



01:00 The Drop
03:00 Insurgent
05:15 Jack And The Cuckoo Clock Heart
07:00 Philomena
09:00 Insurgent
11:00 Avengers: Age Of Ultron
13:30 JLA Adventures: Trapped In Time
14:30 The Theory Of Everything
16:45 McFarland, USA
19:00 The Maze Runner
21:00 Ant-Man
23:00 The Equalizer



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



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



00:30 Super League
02:30 Inside The PGA Tour
03:00 PGA Tour
06:30 European Tour Weekly
07:00 Golfing World
08:00 World Rugby
08:30 Welsh Open Snooker
10:00 Super Rugby Highlights
10:30 Live Super Rugby
12:40 Live Super Rugby
15:00 World Rugby
15:30 Gillette World Sport
16:00 Super Rugby
18:00 Golfing World
19:00 Super Rugby Highlights
19:30 Super Rugby Highlights
19:55 Live Super Rugby
21:58 Live Super League



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Paperwork is a breeze-time goes by quickly. The demand for your skills intensifies and you are aware of new options for professional growth. Those you are closely involved with will unexpectedly open new spheres of experience for you. Listen to your own inner guidance, especially if you have the sense of being pulled into an investment risk. Take time this evening to catch up on letter writing and phone calls and remember that being alone can be as positive as it sometimes may seem negative. Invite your loved one to join you later, in an activity that will make you both laugh. Perhaps a comedy video would be fun or a new comedy movie or consider the old radio shows you might find on the internet. Mostly, enjoy light conversation and hugs.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may spend a lot of time with co-workers away from the work area today. It is also a good time to think seriously about your career. Additionally, you may find it necessary to voice new ideas. You have great confidence in most anything you do these days. Confidence in happy outcomes makes the difference between success and failure. You can teach others through your positive example. Communicating with long-distance associates and engaging in social functions with close friends complete this busy day. Sudden rains make it imperative to take care of your vehicle and that is something you take time for this afternoon. Hurry home this evening-celebrations are enjoyed with others, whether they are two or ninety-two.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This could be a centered, superficial day. One of those days where you are needed and you are available and looking productive but there is no work to keep you busy. Making lists, escorting people, instructing and directing are just about the sum total of your day. It may not be possible for you to reach anything meaningful or moving. Go with the flow and be as flexible as possible. This afternoon, others enjoy the ways in which you express yourself. You could be a stand-up comedian with your rapid tongue-in-cheek deliveries. Think now about future travels to faraway places that will round out your appetite for life. It is never too early to make your plans for your next vacation. Save now and you could go most anywhere.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You have strong control over your own life whether you like the direction it is taking or not. Making changes with your life path could be a consideration now. You could change the direction with a little bit of work if you wish, or at least make moves in a more positive direction. One day at a time, you can do anything. The movement of the business day itself is productive, but slow and patient is essential. A clear-minded insight into your own plans is possible and ideas are available. This is a good time to evaluate what you really want. Your charisma and charm are blossoming with the coming of spring. This time of the year brings invitations and makes you the recipient of many unexpected kindnesses. Use caution with charge cards just now.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Lots of progress is happening in the workplace today. Work, relationships and life in general seem to fit together rather nicely. Your workload is lighter and you are getting good at resolving problems with grace and ease. Your judgment is good and there is success. You may find the door of progress is opening wide. You get into the swing of spring and new beginnings by recognizing where you can begin new projects at work or at home. It is essential that you enjoy what you have just now and not live beyond your means. Your willpower is increasing; you are more daring and focused. Your emotions and desires are strong. If you need to borrow for a large purchase, use caution. Patience with elderly people and authority figures is essential.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Attention to details that are financial may give you insights into extra funds now, perhaps on the personal level as well as at work. Meetings and conferences go well today. This is a time of enthusiasm and new beginnings. Snap decisions that you may regret could happen if you are not careful-think before acting. Snap decisions could happen in group meetings as well as your own snap judgment. Consider writing options to several ideas and then make decisions, on your own or in groups. Today is full of hard work and responsibility, both in salvaging some endeavors that appear to be failing and in branching out in new directions. At home you relax as hard as you work and a game of tennis, swimming or a round of golf will put you in the zone.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

There will be an opportunity to use your special talents today. You may touch upon very emotional parts of you and find yourself analyzing and psychoanalyzing. Open your arms to change, but do not let go of your values. Your perceptive abilities are at a high point and you will enjoy a positive outcome in whatever you involve yourself with today-even if, at any one moment, a situation may not seem positive. A friend or co-worker shares your views. This afternoon you think about working with school students in your area to encourage money responsibilities. Teaching positive budgeting is an admirable thing. In many ways, you encourage high standards from others. There are lots to talk about with a loved one this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You are against a particular change, but that is just what may be happening in the employment area of your life. Think your ideas through, before making your presentation. Patience will see you through a particular project. You get a chance to know your co-workers better as you work in a team effort. You will be starting a three-year cycle when work and responsibilities are rewarding. Security needs come first. You will be deeply aware of your own strengths and weaknesses. Economize on an expenditure of time, effort and resources. Be alert and flexible. Romance with your mate is exciting and tender this day. Spontaneity works best in this relationship. Enjoy eating out with friends or family this evening.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

There are changes you have made lately that improve your work situation. There are gains and profits now through may. Travel because of business matters is a positive at this time. If you are given the opportunity to travel-say yes! It is most important to be practical and conscientious. You could be most persuasive with others and eloquent in speech and communication. The activities of this day are perfect for self-expression and you are able to get your point across quite well. Marriage, contracts and partnerships are seen as keys to success and happiness and they have plenty of lessons to teach you. You can appreciate feelings and movement. You may want to just get out and walk or exercise this afternoon. A dance class might be fun this spring.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A co-worker is supportive of your ideas. You assume a new aura of authority and can act in a leadership capacity. You have much charisma and clarity. This afternoon, while visiting with friends, you may be tempted to add your thoughts on some controversial subject. When it comes to spiritual and philosophical beliefs, allow others to search for their own truth. Do not turn a conversation into a sermon. Use a subtle approach to those in authority. This evening you may decide to take stock of your personal holdings. It is also a good idea to keep and update your family records. The road to happiness is always under construction and you will actively be thinking of ways to improve and upgrade your family life.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

This is a perfect time to be assertive and to move forward with your career decisions. You have all the drive and eagerness necessary. Channeling this energy should be easy. The path is open. Financial ties to other people are highlighted-money matters and investments are a focus. This is a time when you must be careful in your decisions about finances. You have the desire to involve yourself in a new and possibly shaky investment. There should be caution in what sort of financial activities you choose. Talking with insurance agents, brokers or employers could be beneficial regarding this investment. It is best to act in a practical manner. Wanting something or someone seems to take on special importance; here are desire and charisma.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may be unable to get the support you require just now. A holding pattern until some more appropriate time in the future might be advisable. Someone may challenge you and you are not ready. Your current situation may demand some reevaluation. You have a good attitude, however, and may take the obstacles today as just another challenge to prove you know how to use your wits in solving work problems. Your keen intuition assists in negotiating with customers and in making sales final. Those who have resisted your ideas will respond more favorably in the future. Family and home gains much of your attention this evening. You may be in the mood for deep and penetrating conversations or thoughts-a little poetry or music.

COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Kuwait	00965
Albania	00355	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Algeria	00213	Laos	00856
Andorra	00376	Latvia	00371
Angola	00244	Lebanon	00961
Anguilla	001264	Liberia	00231
Antigua	001268	Libya	00218
Argentina	0054	Lithuania	00370
Armenia	00374	Luxembourg	00352
Australia	0061	Macau	00853
Austria	0043	Macedonia	00389
Bahamas	001242	Madagascar	00261
Bahrain	00973	Majorca	0034
Bangladesh	00880	Malawi	00265
Barbados	001246	Malaysia	0060
Belarus	00375	Maldives	00960
Belgium	0032	Mali	00223
Belize	00501	Malta	00356
Benin	00229	Marshall Islands	00692
Bermuda	001441	Martinique	00596
Bhutan	00975	Mauritania	00222
Bolivia	00591	Mauritius	00230
Bosnia	00387	Mayotte	00269
Botswana	00267	Mexico	0052
Brazil	0055	Micronesia	00691
Brunei	00673	Moldova	00373
Bulgaria	00359	Monaco	00377
Burkina	00226	Mongolia	00976
Burundi	00257	Montserrat	001664
Cambodia	00855	Morocco	00212
Cameroon	00237	Mozambique	00258
Canada	001	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Cape Verde	00238	Namibia	00264
Cayman Islands	001345	Nepal	00977
Central African Republic	00236	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Chad	00235	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Chile	0056	New Caledonia	00687
China	0086	New Zealand	0064
Colombia	0057	Nicaragua	00505
Comoros	00269	Niger	00227
Congo	00242	Nigeria	00234
Cook Islands	00682	Niue	00683
Costa Rica	00506	Norfolk Island	00672
Croatia	00385	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Cuba	0053	North Korea	00850
Cyprus	00357	Norway	0047
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Oman	00968
Czech Republic	00420	Pakistan	0092
Denmark	0045	Palau	00680
Diego Garcia	00246	Panama	00507
Djibouti	00253	Papua New Guinea	00675
Dominica	001767	Paraguay	00595
Dominican Republic	001809	Peru	0051
Ecuador	00593	Philippines	0063
Egypt	0020	Poland	0048
El Salvador	00503	Portugal	00351
England (UK)	0044	Puerto Rico	001787
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Qatar	00974
Eritrea	00291	Romania	0040
Estonia	00372	Russian Federation	007
Ethiopia	00251	Rwanda	00250
Falkland Islands	00500	Saint Helena	00290
Faroe Islands	00298	Saint Kitts	001869
Fiji	00679	Saint Lucia	001758
Finland	00358	Saint Pierre	00508
France	0033	Saint Vincent	001784
French Guiana	00594	Samoa US	00684
French Polynesia	00689	Samoa West	00685
Gabon	00241	San Marino	00378
Gambia	00220	Sao Tome	00239
Georgia	00995	Saudi Arabia	00966
Germany	0049	Scotland (UK)	0044
Ghana	00233	Senegal	00221
Gibraltar	00350	Seychelles	00284
Greece	0030	Sierra Leone	00232
Greenland	00299	Singapore	0065
Grenada	001473	Slovakia	00421
Guadeloupe	00590	Slovenia	00386
Guam	001671	Solomon Islands	00677
Guatemala	00502	Somalia	00252
Guinea	00224	South Africa	0027
Guyana	00592	South Korea	0082
Haiti	00509	Spain	0034
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Sri Lanka	0094
Honduras	00504	Sudan	00249
Hong Kong	00852	Suriname	00597
Hungary	0036	Swaziland	00268
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sweden	0046
Iceland	00354	Switzerland	0041
India	0091	Syria	00963
Indian Ocean	00873	Taiwan	00886
Indonesia	0062	Tanzania	00255
Iran	0098	Thailand	0066
Iraq	00964	Toga	00228
Ireland	00353	Tonga	00676
Italy	0039	Tokelau	00690
Ivory Coast	00225	Trinidad	001868
Jamaica	001876	Tunisia	00216
Japan	0081	Turkey	0090
Jordan	00962	Tuvalu	00688
Kazakhstan	007	Uganda	00256
Kenya	00254	Ukraine	00380
Kiribati	00686	United Arab Emirates	00976

PARASITIC WORMS MAY HOLD KEY TO CUTTING SPREAD OF HIV

'TREATING ONE COULD REALLY IMPACT ON THE OTHER'

LONDON: A parasitic worm which affects millions of the world's poorest people may hold an important but little-known key to cutting the spread of HIV, researchers said ahead of a conference on the issue in London. Schistosomiasis affects at least 250 million people. It is caused by parasitic worms, picked up in infested waters, which drill through people's skin and lay eggs in their bodies. If the worms lay eggs in a woman's genital areas, including the vagina and cervix, they can cause lesions which make women more vulnerable to HIV, experts in the tropical disease said.

Women are three times more likely to be infected with HIV if they have female genital schistosomiasis (FGS), studies carried out in Zimbabwe, Tanzania, South Africa and Mozambique have found. "It's going completely under the radar," Marianne Comparet, director of the London-based International Society for Neglected Tropical Diseases (ISNTD), said in an interview. "Treating one could really impact on the other," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Men with the worms in their genitals show a sharp increase in the amount of HIV virus in their semen, researchers said. The

treatment for schistosomiasis is cheap - the drug has been donated for years to the World Health Organization (WHO), so this could be a relatively easy way to help cut the spread of HIV, experts said. "In the same way that circumcision came out as something that really changed the way people approached HIV transmission, this could really be the next big thing in controlling HIV transmission," Comparet said. Circumcision has been found to cut the spread of HIV among heterosexuals and is recommended by the WHO as a means of prevention. Nearly 37 million people live with HIV, the majority in Africa.

A little-known disease

It is not known how many people have FGS, but estimates range from 20 million to 80 million, the vast majority in Africa. According to the WHO, most cases of FGS are undiagnosed and few medical staff are aware of its existence. It gets no mention in medical textbooks or nursing curricula in any of the countries where schistosomiasis is endemic, WHO says.

The UN agency recommends the regular treatment of young girls through mass drug administration in schools and communities to prevent FGS from developing. Treatment kills adult worms but it cannot reverse damage they have already done to people's organs and tissues. "It starts early on, and then when you are a young woman, without any treatment it becomes really serious, and when women become sexually active they are very vulnerable to HIV," Jutta Reinhard-Rupp at Merck Serono said in an interview. — Reuters



In a picture taken on April 27, 2016, South Korean Olympic athletes and models show the South Korean Olympic team uniforms for the 2016 Rio Olympic Games at the Korean National Training Center in Seoul. South Korean athletes at the Rio Olympics will wear long-sleeved training kits impregnated with mosquito repellent to protect them from the Zika virus, the national Olympic committee said yesterday. — AFP

SPANISH SCIENTISTS USE SKIN CELLS TO CREATE HUMAN SPERM

BARCELONA: Scientists in Spain on Wednesday they had created human sperm from skin cells, a medical feat which could eventually lead to a treatment for infertility. The researchers said they were working to find a solution for the roughly 15 percent of couples worldwide who are unable to have children and whose only option is to use donated sperm or eggs. "What to do when someone who wants to have a child lacks gametes (eggs or sperm)?" asked Carlos Simon, the scientific director of the Valencian Infertility Institute, Spain's first medical institution fully dedicated to assisted reproduction.

"This is the problem we want to address: to be able to create gametes in people who do not have them." The result of their research, which was carried out with Stanford University in the United States, was published Tuesday in Scientific Reports, the online journal of Nature. They were inspired by the work of Japan's Shinya Yamanaka and Britain's John Gordon who in 2012 shared a Nobel prize for the discovery that adult cells can be transformed back into embryo-like stem cells.

Simon and his team managed to reprogram mature skin cells by introducing a cocktail of genes needed to create gametes. Within a month the skin cell was transformed to become a germ cell, which can develop into sperm or an egg, but it did not have the ability to fertilize, they found. "This is a sperm but it needs a further maturation phase to become a gamete. This is just the beginning," Simon said. It is a step further than that reached by Chinese researchers who earlier this year announced they had created mice from artificial sperm.

"With the human species we must do much more testing because we are talking about the birth of child," Simon said. The researchers also must take into account legal constraints since the technique involves the creation of artificial embryos which right now is only allowed in some countries. "We are talking about a long process," Simon said. — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times

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

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



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (28/04/2016 TO 04/05/2016)

SHARQIA-1
THE TRUST 12:00 PM
THE TRUST 2:00 PM
MIDNIGHT SPECIAL 4:00 PM
THE TRUST 6:15 PM
THE TRUST 8:15 PM
MIDNIGHT SPECIAL 10:15 PM
THE TRUST 12:30 AM

SHARQIA-2
THE JUNGLE BOOK 1:00 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 3:15 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 5:30 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 7:45 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 10:00 PM
NO WED
THE HUNTSMAN WINTER'S WAR 12:15 AM
NO WED

SHARQIA-3
MOTHER'S DAY 1:15 PM
HASAN WA BOQLOZ 1:30 PM
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MUHALAB-1
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MUHALAB-2
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BAAGHI: A REBEL FOR LOVE - Hindi 6:15 PM
THE TRUST 9:00 PM
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BAAGHI: A REBEL FOR LOVE - Hindi 6:15 PM
FAN- Hindi 9:30 AM
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FANAR-3
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MIDNIGHT SPECIAL 2:00 PM
GREEN ROOM 4:15 PM
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MIDNIGHT SPECIAL 10:30 PM
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FANAR-4
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MARINA-1
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MARINA-2
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AVENUES-5
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AVENUES-6
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AVENUES-7
GREEN ROOM 11:45 AM
GREEN ROOM 1:45 PM
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GREEN ROOM 5:45 PM
MA3 AL KHATAR (Kuwaiti Film) 8:00 PM
GREEN ROOM 10:15 PM
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GREEN ROOM 12:30 AM
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360°- 1
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CRIMINAL 12:30 AM
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360°- 2
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AL-KOUT.2
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GREEN ROOM 11:45 PM
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BAIRAQ-1
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THE JUNGLE BOOK 4:30 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK -3D 6:45 PM
THE JUNGLE BOOK 9:00 PM
NO WED
THE TRUST 11:15 PM
NO WED

SITUATION WANTED

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CHANGE OF NAME

Kanagamani Packirisamy son of Packirisamy and Saroja bearing an Indian Passport No. Z2443141 and having address A2K Vilavanapadugai, Kalam Pulivalam, Thiruvapur Dt, Tamil Nadu, India had embraced Islam and changed the name as Kamaludeen. **(C 5167)**

Balveni Dadala daughter of Dadala Pullaiah and Dadala Nagaratnamma bearing an Indian Passport No. G0613666 and having an address D.No 2-13-3, Plot No. 10/2 Reddy buildings Venkat Nagar Kakinada, east Godavari Dt, Andhra Pradesh, India, had embraced Islam and changed the name as Ayesha. **(C 5167) 25-4-2016**

ACCOMMODATION

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EMERGENCY

112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988



Prayer timings

Fajr: 03:51
Shorook 05:15
Duhr: 11:47
Asr: 15:22
Maghrib: 16:18
Isha: 19:40

Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2016

ASIA'S MARCH IRAN OIL IMPORTS SURGE 50%



BOJ holds off stimulus, cuts inflation target

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WOLFSBURG: A new e-Golf vehicle (right) and a Passat (left) of German car maker Volkswagen are seen in one of the twin car towers at the Volkswagen factory during a visit on the sidelines of the company's annual press conference yesterday in Wolfsburg, northern Germany. — AFP

MIDEAST FUNDS CUT CASH AS MARKETS FIND FLOORS MIXED SENTIMENT TOWARDS SAUDI AFTER REFORM PLAN

DUBAI: Middle East fund managers are reducing their cash holdings and building back long positions in equities and fixed income because of signs that markets have bottomed out, a monthly Reuters poll shows. During the previous six months, many managers retreated into cash because of sliding oil prices, the threat of US interest rate hikes and a looming economic slowdown in the Gulf.

While these concerns have not disappeared, they have eased somewhat. Brent crude oil has risen above \$47 per barrel to its highest level this year, the US Federal Reserve has signalled caution on monetary tightening, and first-quarter corporate earnings in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries have not been as bad as some investors feared. This appears to be encouraging funds to return to the markets gradually, although they still expect difficult times for economies in the Gulf and Egypt this year.

"Q2/2016 will be a more stable quarter compared to Q1/2016, and the volatility will subside significantly," said Mohammed Ali Yasin, managing director at Abu Dhabi's NBAD Securities.

The poll, conducted over the past 10 days, found that of 14 leading fund managers, 36 percent expected to increase their allocations to Middle East equities over the next three

months and that 29 percent anticipated a reduction. Last month, only 7 percent expected to raise their equity allocations and 14 percent to cut them. In fixed income, 29 percent now expect to increase their allocations and none to reduce them. Last month, the figures were 29 percent and 14 percent. Poll findings are provided here:

The rebound of oil prices, as well as economic reform and austerity plans announced by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, have made investors more comfortable with regional credits.

Some funds, however, are expecting a big increase of bond supply in the region as governments finance budget deficits caused by low oil prices. This would push yields up further, providing entry points for investors. Mohammed Eljamal, managing director of Abu Dhabi's Waha Capital, said that he expected to see about \$40 billion to \$50 billion of issuance from GCC corporates and sovereigns over the next 12 months.

"This upcoming supply would put pressure on secondary market spreads and we expect wider GCC spreads over the next few months," Eljamal said. "We are currently underweight GCC credit, and are looking to

increase our exposure through new issuances as spreads adjust wider."

SAUDI, EGYPT

The poll showed the United Arab Emirates was still the most popular stock market among funds because of its diversified economy, but sentiment was mixed towards Saudi Arabia after it unveiled a reform package designed to cut its dependence on oil. Thirty-six percent of managers now expect to increase their Saudi equity allocations and 21 percent to reduce them; last month, the figures were 21 percent and 7 percent.

Some funds said they were looking for gains in healthcare, real estate development and tourism, sectors the Saudi government has been trying to stimulate. "During this transitional period there will certainly be winners and losers, and we are aiming to take advantage of the winners," said Akber Khan, director of asset management at Qatar's Al Rayan Investment, though he did not specify the sectors on which he was bullish.

Eljamal of Waha Capital, however, said there was likely to be little positive impact on the stock market in the short term. "The Saudi non-oil growth envisioned by Vision 2030 would

provide a meaningful uplift to earnings in the medium- to long term. In the short term, however, the Saudi market will continue to face headwinds from a revenue growth slowdown and cost inflation from subsidy cutbacks," he said. Last month's poll showed a big improvement in sentiment toward Egyptian shares after the central bank devalued the currency, making assets cheaper for foreign investors and potentially helping to ease Egypt's foreign exchange shortage.

The latest survey, however, showed fund managers split on Egypt. Twenty-nine percent said they planned to increase their equity allocations, down from 36 percent last month, while 29 percent plan to reduce them, sharply up from the 7 percent recorded in the previous survey.

Black market prices of the Egyptian pound show traders are still expecting further depreciation of the currency, with some hoarding US dollars. "Now that the euphoria surrounding the Egyptian pound devaluation has died down, the outlook over the near term remains uncertain because we could potentially see more devaluation," said Muhammed Shabbir, head of equity funds at Dubai-based Rasmala. — Reuters

ASIA'S MARCH IRAN OIL IMPORTS SURGE 50%

IMPORTS BY INDIA TOP 500,000 BPD, HIGHEST IN 5 YEARS

TOKYO: Asian imports of Iranian oil in March jumped 50 percent from a year earlier as shipments into India and South Korea have climbed since international sanctions were lifted on Iran's disputed nuclear program.

The strong exports point to Iran's success in regaining market share in Asia after the sanctions were eased in January. Before 2012, Iran exported around 2 million bpd, with more than half going to Asia, mainly China, South Korea, India and Japan. Tehran has been banned from selling oil to the

United States for decades.

Iran's oil flows to Europe have also begun to pick up after a slow start though the country has struggled to increase oil exports because many of its tankers are tied up storing crude, some are not seaworthy, and foreign ship owners remain reluctant to carry its cargoes.

Imports by Iran's top four buyers - China, India, Japan and South Korea - came to 1.56 million bpd in March, up 49.9 percent from a year ago, government and tanker-tracking data shows.

India's imports last month totalled 506,100 bpd, the highest in five years, the data showed. The nation's imports from Iran are set to surge to a seven-year high during the fiscal year of 2016/17, industry sources said.

South Korea's imports in March fell slightly from a two-year high in February to 264,452 bpd but were still 94.5 percent higher than a year ago. Imports by China and Japan fell from a year ago. The following tables show Asia's Iran crude imports in bpd for last month and the year to date. — Reuters



MIDRAND: People shop during the official opening of the "Mall of Africa" in Midrand, South Africa, yesterday. — AFP

SPANISH JOBLESS RATE FORMS UNEASY BACKDROP TO ELECTION RE-RUN

MADRID: Spain's unemployment rate ticked up slightly in the first quarter of the year, suggesting the country's most pressing economic problem is as deep-seated as ever as it enters its fifth month without a government.

Adding grist to a debate over how soon the policy vacuum may start to impact what has been a solid economic recovery, the jobless rate - the second-highest in Europe after Greece - hit 21 percent, up from 20.9 percent a quarter earlier, data showed yesterday. Spaniards are preparing for an election re-run at the end of June, after the rise of new parties following a double-dip recession and in a labor market that has remained stubbornly dysfunctional-produced a hung parliament in a ballot in December.

Politicians on the right and left failed to forge a viable coalition in the ensuing four months. Their disagreements over eco-

conomic strategies, including the course labor policy should take, are likely to dominate the new round of campaigning.

For some of those struggling to make ends meet, like 54-year-old Juan Manuel Arades, the situation is worse than ever despite signs that job creation is continuing.

Since losing his position of 21 years at a transport company some eight years ago, Arades has only been able to find sporadic work, and his last job ended in December. Next month his unemployment benefits will have run out, while his wife's 10-month contract at a school ends in June and is too short to allow her to accrue any subsidies.

The pair may be able to apply for help from various emergency schemes, though many people struggle to qualify. "When it comes to unemployment no-one really does anything," Arades said.

He may vote for former communists Izquierda Unida ("United Left") again - a party which could team up on a joint platform with anti-austerity Podemos ("We Can"). But he would have preferred to see politicians, even those he did not back, agree on a coalition.

"We've been going around in circles for four months. Every time it's harder to motivate yourself to vote," Arades said.

REFORMS STALLING?

A 2012 labour reform by the centre-right People's Party (PP), which won the most votes but lost its majority in December, is credited by many economists for helping a jobs recovery after Spain exited the downturn in mid-2013. The overhaul enabled employers to lower wages and cheapened firing costs, and unemployment has come down from a peak of nearly 27 percent. — Reuters

News

in brief

Saudi tenders to buy 550,000 tons of wheat

ABU DHABI: Saudi Arabia's main state grain agency, the Saudi Grains Organization (SAGO), said yesterday it was seeking 550,000 tons of hard wheat in a tender. The wheat should contain 12.5 percent protein and will be for shipment from July to August, SAGO said in a statement. The deadline for offers is today, it said. Of the total, 330,000 tons will be for shipment to the port of Jeddah, 165,000 to Dammam and 55,000 to Jizan. Saudi Arabia last purchased wheat on Feb. 29 when it purchased 870,000 tons.

Dubai's DP World sees 2.4% rise in volumes

DUBAI: Dubai's DP World, one of the world's largest port operators, reported yesterday a 2.4 percent rise in gross container volumes on a like-for-like basis in the first quarter of 2016. Gross volumes totalled 15.5 million 20-foot equivalent units (TEU) in the opening three months of 2016, the company said in a filing to the stock exchange. Growth was largely driven by the company's terminals in Europe and the Indian sub-continent. Conditions in Latin America remained challenging. In the United Arab Emirates the group handled 3.6 million TEU, down 5.9 percent from a year earlier. "Overall, we remain well positioned to grow volumes ahead of the market, while we continue to focus on driving profitability by targeting higher margin cargo, improving efficiencies and managing costs," DP World Chairman Sultan Ahmed Bin Sulayem said in the statement filed to the Nasdaq Dubai exchange.

IFC arranges \$375m to boost Iraq's power sector

DUBAI: International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank's private sector investment arm, said yesterday it had arranged \$375 million in financing for an Iraqi power company to provide electricity to millions of people in Kurdistan and Baghdad. The company, Mass Global Energy Sulimaniya, will use the funds to add 500 megawatts of capacity to a 1,000-megawatt power plant in Kurdistan, providing power to 3 million people. It will also help complete a new power plant near Baghdad that will supply about half of the Iraqi capital's electricity requirements.

Dubai Investments Q1 net profit rises 5.4%

DUBAI: Dubai Investments reported a 5.4 percent rise in first-quarter net profit yesterday. The conglomerate, in which sovereign fund Investment Corp. of Dubai owns an 11.5 percent stake, made a profit of 297.5 million dirham (\$81 million) in the three months to March 31, it said in a statement. This compares with a profit of 282.2 million dirhams in the corresponding period of 2015.

UAE's UNB Q1 net profit drops 27%

DUBAI: Union National Bank (UNB), 50 percent owned by the Abu Dhabi government, posted a 27 percent drop in first quarter net profit yesterday. The fifth largest lender in the emirate by assets reported a net profit attributable to equity holders of the bank of 447 million dirhams (\$121.76 million) in the three months to March 31. This was down from 611 million dirhams a year earlier, according to its financial statement. Two analysts polled by Reuters had forecast UNB would make a quarterly profit of 314.00 million dirhams and 454.30 million dirhams respectively. The bank's total net profit for the period was 450 million dirhams, down from 615 million dirhams, according to a statement from the bank released minutes before its more detailed quarterly financial report was published.

TURKISH CONGLOMERATES RACE INTO CONSTRUCTION

ISTANBUL: Turkish conglomerates are racing to add high-end apartment blocks and office towers to Istanbul's rapidly-changing skyline, turning to one of the world's most profitable real estate markets for quick returns as other parts of the economy suffer.

Anadolu Holding, which has interests in banking, retail and brewing, plans to venture into real estate with two developments in Istanbul this year, while Aksoy Holding, an energy-to-tourism conglomerate, is building a luxury residential complex on the Aegean coast and plans another project in Istanbul. Construction lies close to heart of President Tayyip Erdogan, who sees big real estate projects - both public and private sector - as a showcase for Turkey's rising prosperity, as well as a vehicle for

job creation and winning loyalty at the ballot box by increasing the supply of new housing.

But some economists warn that such investments risk fuelling volatile consumption-led growth and undermining government efforts to put Turkey's economy on a more sustainable path.

They say they fail to address an under-investment in manufacturing technology that could erode the global competitiveness of Turkish industrial products and exports. "Investments in construction create a doping impact in the economy in the short run but these are not quality investments boosting productivity," said Haluk Burumcekci, an economist who runs the Istanbul-based Burumcekci Consulting.

"And in the long run such invest-

ments do not help a sustainable growth model." The government says it is committed to ensuring sustainable growth. It has pledged reforms to boost labor productivity and household savings, and make Turkey one of the world's top-10 economies by 2023. Output grew by a stronger-than-expected 4 percent last year, but it was largely consumption-led growth.

Turkish house prices have jumped 70 percent since 2010, according to Turkey's Association of Real Estate and Real Estate Investment Companies (GYODER). Turkey topped global rankings with price rises of 18 percent last year alone, according to the Knight Frank Global House Index.

Strong population growth and demand from investors elsewhere in the

Middle East, who see Turkey as a relative safe haven in the region, are fuelling the construction boom, despite persistent worries among some investors about a housing bubble. Demand for new homes stands at least half a million a year, almost doubling with the need for renovating existing houses, industry executives say. They estimate more than a third of Turkey's 20 million residential buildings need refurbishment, many to meet tighter earthquake regulations.

"The potential is still there," said Omer Faruk Celik, head of the Real Estate Developers and Investors Association. "Even though profitability is not very high in construction, the shorter return period on investment makes it more attractive than other areas of industry," he said. — Reuters

GERMAN UNEMPLOYMENT REMAINS AT RECORD LOW

FRANKFURT: Germany kept unemployment at historic lows in April as the recovery in Europe's biggest economy remains on track, unfazed by global uncertainties and a huge influx of refugees, data showed yesterday. The unemployment rate - which measures the jobless total against the working population as a whole - stood at 6.2 percent in April, unchanged from March.

In numerical terms, the number of people registered as unemployed in Germany declined by 16,000 to a seasonally-adjusted 2.706 million, the Federal Labour Office said in a statement. At current levels, unemployment now stands at the lowest level since West and East Germany reunited in 1990 after the fall of the Berlin Wall the previous year. In raw, or unadjusted, terms, the jobless total decreased, falling by 101,000 to 2.74 million. The unemployment rate fell to 6.3 percent in April from 6.5 percent in March, the office said.

"The German economy is expected to show tangible growth in the first quarter of 2016, even if the level of growth won't be maintained over the course of the year," the labor office said.

"In view of the global uncertainties, economic expectations are pointing to a moderate upturn. The labour market is continuing to develop positively," the office said. Analysts welcomed the data.

"They were a positive surprise," said BayernLB economist Stefan Kipar. The drop was particularly remarkable given the rising number of asylum applications that had been approved.

The refugees were less likely to be able to find jobs in the immediate future than other people and so their numbers were likely to push up headline unemployment, the expert said.

"Despite the recent drop in exports to China and other emerging markets, Germany continues to create ever more jobs," said Berenberg Bank economist Holger Schmieding. Strong gains in real disposable incomes and fiscal stimulus "point to further gains ahead. In turn, solid employment growth will underpin consumer spending, helping to cushion the German economy somewhat against external shocks," Schmieding said. — AFP



TOKYO: Money traders monitor computer screens with the day's exchange rate between yen and the US dollar, top right, and Nikkei stock index, bottom, at a foreign exchange brokerage in Tokyo yesterday. — AP



LE HAVRE: Smoke rises from burning barricades as trade unionists block roads in Le Havre, northwestern France, yesterday. Protesters blocked roads with burning tyres in the northern French port as workers and students staged a fresh strike to demand the withdrawal of a hotly contested labour bill. — AFP

FRENCH LABOR LAW SHAKE-UP SPARKS MORE MASS PROTESTS

TRAVEL DISRUPTED, FLIGHTS CANCELLED

PARIS: Sporadic strikes and protests disrupted commuter travel and led to the cancellation of flights at Orly airport south of Paris yesterday as trade unions and students demanded that the French government ditch planned labor law reforms.

Workers burned tyres on roads to halt traffic in parts of the country while groups of protesters rallied in Paris and other cities in street marches to demand the withdrawal of a reform bill parliament will start to debate next week. Union leaders sought to maintain the momentum of a movement that has brought four separate days of protest over legislation designed to make it easier for employers to hire and fire.

The Unions say that less red tape will help reduce the unemployment rate which is above 10 percent. At Orly airport, France's second-largest, airlines were told

in advance to scrap 20 percent of flights, although traffic was reported as largely normal at the larger Charles de Gaulle airport north of the capital.

The head of France's large CGT union attacked a law that, he said, would allow employers to short-circuit national regulation of basic worker rights by giving employers greater freedom to set terms of pay, rest and overtime rates. "We want it withdrawn as long as the goal means the law is no longer the rule, and that every company can opt out on work time or overtime rates. That's unacceptable," CGT chief Philippe Martinez said.

Lawmakers in the lower house of parliament are due to debate the bill for the first time next Tuesday. Labor Minister Myriam El Khomri has already watered down the text to abandon some proposed reforms.

With the traditional Labour Day rallies organised for Sunday May 1, opponents of the labour law hope to maintain their momentum and local media are speculating about the risk of a more broad-based movement, even a rolling strike. An opinion poll published by BFM TV suggested close to 80 percent of French people fear an escalation despite news this week of a significant drop in the monthly jobless count.

France's Labor Ministry reported the steepest fall in unemployment since the economic boom days of 2000 in a rare boost for President Francois Hollande a year out from the elections. Others demonstrating since the outset include a youth protest movement which has been holding night-time vigils in Paris's Place de la Republique and other city centre venues since the end of March. — Reuters

DELTA THROWS BOMBARDIER A LIFELINE WITH DEAL TO BUY 75 CSERIES

MONTREAL: Delta Air Lines Inc yesterday ordered 75 CSeries CS100 planes worth \$5.6 billion from Bombardier Inc, throwing a lifeline to a new aircraft program that is years late and billions of dollars over budget. The widely anticipated order marks a turning point for Canada's Bombardier as it strives to break into the fleets of top airlines globally and serve a niche market for 100-seat planes that larger rivals Boeing Co and Airbus Group SE have neglected.

With the CSeries order, Delta said it would not induct Embraer's E190 into its fleet as planned. Delta had said in December it would add up to 20 Embraer 190 and 20 new Boeing 737-900ER jets. Bombardier said separately yesterday that the deal included an option for Delta to buy an additional 50 CS100 aircraft. For Delta, the deal allows it to phase out 50-seat jets that it contracts regional airlines to fly under its Delta Connection brand.



MIRABEL: The Bombardier aircraft CSeries as it lands in Mirabel, Quebec. US-based Delta Air Lines has placed an order for 75 CS100 Bombardier aircraft with an option to purchase 50 more in a deal worth \$5.6 billion, the struggling Canadian aviation giant said yesterday. — AFP

The larger CS100 planes burn less fuel per passenger and have room for two cabin classes rather than one, giving it the opportunity to up-sell customers to business. The Bombardier aircraft will also be flown by Delta's own pilots, reducing Delta's reliance on contractors as a shortage of regional pilots looms in the United States.

Boeing beat out Bombardier to sell United Continental Holdings Inc 65 jets earlier this year. The planemaker is also studying whether to revise one version of its best-selling 737 jet to fend off the competition. Swiss International Air Lines, a unit of Deutsche Lufthansa AG, expects to take delivery of its first CS100 at the end of June, with the first flight, from Zurich to Paris Charles de Gaulle, scheduled for July 15. Air Canada has also signed a letter of intent to buy 45 CSeries, with an option for 30 more of the narrow-body aircraft. — Reuters

DEUTSCHE BANK POSTS SURPRISE PROFIT, BEATS EXPECTATIONS

FRANKFURT: Deutsche Bank posted a surprise net profit in the first quarter that was helped by lower litigation costs, but Chief Executive John Cryan warned investors not to expect good results for the full year. Quarterly net income fell 58 percent to 236 million euros (\$267.5 million) after its investment bank slumped in volatile markets and following its exit from certain businesses, but beat analysts' average expectation for a net loss of 249 million euros.

Shares in Germany's flagship lender, which announced a restructuring plan last October, were 3.6 percent higher yesterday in a market that was down by 1.3 percent.

"On an operating basis, the year is looking in line. The first couple of months were very slow, especially compared with how they normally are. The issue is that we want to get an awful lot done this year," Cryan said on an analyst call.

Despite the rise in the bank's share price, it is still down 24 percent since the start of the year and has recovered little since a selloff of European bank shares in February on concerns about their ability to cope with a low-growth, low interest-rate environment. Posting no profit or a low profit this year would be a sign of progress, Cryan said. Deutsche Bank booked 1.4 billion euros less in legal costs in the quarter than in the year-earlier period but expects to settle other big cases this year which will result in an increase in the litigation bill in the coming quarters. Cryan, who this year urged investors to be patient with his revamp of Deutsche Bank, said the restructuring efforts would peak in 2016 and mostly be completed in 2017.

"POSITIVE SURPRISE" ON COST SIDE

Union Investment, one of Deutsche Bank's top investors said Deutsche Bank had surprised positively on the cost side. "The development of the capital side is negative. That remains a challenge, but there is no acute need for a capital increase," fund manager Helmut Hipper said.

Deutsche Bank reiterated that it was confident of complying with bank regulators' demands regarding its capital cushion. It is targeting a stable core tier 1 ratio of 11.1 percent at year-end, despite a 0.4 percentage point drop in the first quarter. While the sale of its Chinese Hua Xia unit will boost the ratio by 0.5 percent, greater clarity on bank rules also means that Deutsche Bank has another year-until the end of 2019 — to show a required reading of 12.25 percent.

"We see downside risk on litigation—we model 3.6 billion euros in 2016 — which is likely to eventually necessitate a capital raise, in our view," analysts at Citi said in a note. Investment banking revenues dropped 23 percent in the first quarter as sliding commodity prices, worries about the Chinese economy and the low interest rate environment kept clients from trading, investing or issuing new securities.

European peers like Barclays and US rivals such as Goldman Sachs had suffered similar trends in their investment banking activities. — Reuters

US ECONOMY STALLS IN Q1 AS ACTIVITY WEAKENS BROADLY

INVENTORIES, BUSINESS INVESTMENT, TRADE ERODE GROWTH

WASHINGTON: US economic growth braked sharply to its slowest pace in two years as consumer spending softened and a strong dollar continued to undercut exports, but a pick-up in activity is anticipated given a buoyant labor market.

Gross domestic product increased at a 0.5 percent annual rate, the slowest since the first quarter of 2014, the Labor Department said yesterday in its advance estimate, also as businesses doubled down on efforts to reduce unwanted merchandise clogging up warehouses.

The economy was also blindsided by cheap oil, which has hurt the profits of oil field companies like Schlumberger and Halliburton, resulting in business spending contracting at its fastest pace since the second quarter of 2009, when the recession was ending. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the economy expanding at a 0.7 percent rate in the first quarter. The economy grew at a 1.4 percent pace in the fourth quarter.

Almost all sectors of the economy weakened in the first quarter, with the housing market the lone star. The slowdown in growth is likely temporary, given a fairly robust jobs market. Applications for unemployment benefits are near a 43-year low and employment gains averaged 209,000 jobs per month in the first quarter. In addition the Institute for Supply Management's manufacturing and non-manufacturing surveys, which are closely correlated to economic activity, have rebounded in recent months.

While the Federal Reserve on Wednesday acknowledged economic activity had "slowed," it also said labor market conditions had "improved further." The US central bank appeared to view the threats from the global economy and financial markets as having diminished.

The Fed left its benchmark overnight interest rate unchanged and suggested it was in no hurry to tighten monetary policy further. It hiked rates in December for the first time in nearly a decade.

Economists also say the model used by

the government to strip out seasonal patterns from data is not fully accomplishing its goal despite recent steps to address the problem. Residual seasonality has plagued first-quarter GDP, with growth underperforming in five of the last six years since the recovery started in June 2009.

CONSUMER SPENDING COOLS

Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, increased at a 1.9 percent rate. That was the slowest since the first quarter of 2015 and was a deceleration from the fourth quarter's 2.4 percent rate. Households have been frugal, cutting back on purchases of automobiles, despite cheap gasoline. Households appear to have socked away modest wage gains from the tightening labor market and the gasoline savings. They have also reduced their debt. Income at the disposal of households after accounting for taxes and inflation increased 2.9 percent in the first quarter after rising 2.3 percent in the prior period. Savings rose to a lofty \$712.3 billion from \$678.3 billion in the fourth quar-

ter. Higher savings and a lower debt load augur well for an acceleration in consumer spending. Tepid consumer spending gave businesses more reason to place fewer orders for goods and ramp up efforts to reduce an inventory bloat. In the first quarter, businesses accumulated \$60.9 billion worth of inventory, down from \$78.3 billion in the fourth quarter.

The small inventory build cut 0.33 percentage point from first-quarter GDP growth, up from the 0.22 percentage point drag in the fourth quarter. Trade subtracted 0.34 percentage point from GDP growth, with dollar strength weighing on exports and sucking in imports. The dollar gained 20 percent versus the currencies of the United States' trading partners between June 2014 and December 2015.

So far this year the dollar is down 2.6 percent on a trade weighted basis, raising optimism for a rebound in exports. A sustained plunge in energy sector investment put more pressure on business spending. Investment in equipment tumbled at a 8.6 percent rate, the steepest decline since the second quarter of 2009. — Reuters



SINGAPORE: Two women have their lunch in a park at Raffles Place business district in Singapore yesterday. — AFP

RETAIL FOCUS HELPS TO SHIELD LLOYDS FROM BANKING CHILL

LONDON: Lloyds Banking Group bucked the downward trend among major British lenders yesterday, maintaining flat first quarter revenue and cutting bad debts despite a tough economic environment. Lloyds, Britain's largest mortgage lender, reported underlying pre-tax profit of 2.1 billion pounds (\$3.05 billion) in the first quarter of this year, compared with a profit of 2.19 billion pounds a year earlier.

That was in line with the 1.99 billion pound average estimate of three analysts surveyed by Reuters. Chief Executive Officer Antonio Horta-Osorio is eliminating thousands of jobs to streamline the business and support a progressive dividend policy, in the final phase of a recovery plan following a 20.5 billion pound taxpayer-funded bailout during the 2007-09 financial crisis.

Lloyds' performance was better than Standard Chartered and Barclays, where quarterly revenue fell in their large investment banking operations because of a weak global market environment. Lloyds is relatively insulated because of its greater reliance on retail customers.

"Overall, these represent a solid if unexciting set of results, which is not necessarily a bad thing for a bank," said Gary Greenwood, an analyst at Shore Capital. Lloyds shares fell 2.9 percent to 67.2 pence by 1130 GMT, as some analysts questioned whether the bank would be able to boost revenue against the backdrop of a slowing British economy. "The bank insurance contribution and retail fee income was notably soft," said Ian Gordon, an analyst at Investec. Finance Minister George Osborne is looking to sell the last remaining government-held shares in Lloyds over the next year after a discounted sale to the general public was postponed earlier this year due to turmoil in global financial markets.

Banking and political sources expect the sale of Lloyds' shares to resume after the British referendum on membership of the European Union in June, concluding with a larger offer to retail investors. The state has reduced its holding from 43 percent to less than 10 percent, raising over 16 billion pounds.

PROVISIONS

Britain's largest retail bank said total income fell 1 percent to 4.4 billion pounds, as higher revenue from its retail bank were offset by lower income in its insurance division. Impairments dropped 6 percent to 149 million pounds. "These results demonstrate the strength of our differentiated, simple, low risk business model and reflect our ability to actively respond to the challenging operating environment," Horta-Osorio said in the statement. — Reuters



A logo of the British bank Lloyds sign outside a branch in London. — AFP

BRAZIL KEEPS RATES ON HOLD IN BID TO EASE INFLATION

BRASILIA: Brazil's central bank left interest rates at a near 10-year high on Wednesday in a bid to ease inflation in what could be the current board's last decision ahead of a likely change in government. The bank's board, known as Copom, unanimously voted to keep its benchmark Selic interest rate at 14.25 percent for the sixth straight time as widely expected by economists and traders. At its last meeting, two of the eight members of the bank's board voted to raise rates by 50 basis points.

A recent slowdown in inflation had raised pressure on the central bank to cut some of the world's highest interest rates to ease the pain from what is the country's worst recession in a century.

Still, the bank signaled rate cuts were not yet immi-

nent. "High twelve-month inflation and inflation expectations far from the official targets offer no room for the easing of monetary policy," the bank said in its decision statement. The bank completely changed its statement when compared to that of its previous meeting, saying it has had some progress in controlling inflation.

Analysts interpreted the vote to hold rates after three previous split decisions as a sign policymakers are gearing up to ease monetary policy later this year. "Overall it is a hawkish statement, in which the bank acknowledges progress in fighting inflation but still not enough for them to ease policy," said Alberto Ramos, chief Latin America economist for Goldman Sachs. — Reuters



TOKYO: People walk on a pedestrian crossing in Tokyo yesterday. Japan's central bank opted yesterday not to expand its massive stimulus policies to boost growth, apart from channeling extra support for financing disaster recovery efforts on the earthquake-stricken southern island of Kyushu. — AP

BOJ HOLDS OFF STIMULUS, CUTS INFLATION TARGET

YEN SOARS, STOCKS SLUMP ON BOJ DECISION

TOKYO: The Bank of Japan held off from expanding monetary stimulus yesterday, defying market expectations for action even as soft global demand, an unwelcome rise in the yen and weak consumption threatened to derail a fragile economic recovery. The yen surged the most against the dollar and the euro in nearly six years as the decision caught investors off guard, while the Nikkei share average sank 3.6 percent.

BOJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda left the door open for more stimulus, stressing there were no limits to what monetary policy can do to address strong risks to the outlook.

"There's absolutely no change to our stance of aiming to achieve 2 percent inflation at the earliest date possible, and to do whatever it takes to achieve this,"

Kuroda told a news conference. "If needed, we can deepen negative rates much more." At Thursday's rate review, the BOJ decided to maintain its pledge to increase base money at an annual pace of 80 trillion yen (\$732 billion) via aggressive asset purchases. It also left unchanged a 0.1 percent negative rate it applies to some of the excess reserves that financial institutions park at the BOJ.

"I think the odds of (monetary easing) were half and half, but the most surprising point is that the markets seemed to have been surprised," said Masashi Murata, a currency strategist at Brown Brothers Harriman. "The most important point is that BOJ, especially Kuroda, would like to save its weapons and power for an emergency."

In a separate move, the BOJ created a 300 billion yen loan program offering funds at zero interest to banks in areas hit by this month's earthquake in southern Japan. Kuroda defended the decision to keep policy unchanged, saying that a steady improvement in the economy allows the BOJ to spend some time studying the effect of its past easing steps.

"We took pre-emptive action by adopting negative interest rates in January ... Now is the time to see how the effect of our policies spread to the economy," he said.

Kuroda said the positive effects of negative rates would begin to spread to the economy before the end of the year. "We won't deploy ammunition in small increments ... That doesn't mean that once we take action at a certain meeting, we will hold off on action at the next meeting or leave, say, six months in between policy changes." The BOJ next meets for a rate review in mid-June, followed by a more crucial meeting in late July where it conducts a quarterly review of its growth and

inflation projections. "For now, the BOJ is in a wait-and-see mode to judge the effects of its negative rate policy," said Hidenobu Tokuda, senior economist at Mizuho Research Institute.

"Eventually, I think the BOJ will lower the interest rate further into negative territory later this year, perhaps after the July (upper house) election."

HELICOPTER MONEY UP NEXT?

The BOJ also cut its inflation forecasts in a quarterly review of its projections on Thursday. And it once again pushed back the timing for hitting its 2 percent price target, by six months, saying it may not happen until March 2018 at the latest.

The decision came in the wake of data that showed consumer prices slipped in March at the fastest pace in three years while household spending fell at the sharpest rate in a year, adding pressure on the BOJ to do more to spur growth. Household and corporate inflation expectations have weakened despite the BOJ's decision in January to add a 0.1 percent negative rate to its massive asset-buying program.

The BOJ has been in a bind, with many central bankers worried about the gloomy outlook but increasingly reluctant to use their diminishing policy ammunition. Kuroda tried to counter growing market views that the BOJ is running out of options, saying he saw no trouble with the bank's bond-buying operations.

He also dismissed the idea of "helicopter money," or underwriting government debt so the money can go directly to citizens, saying that it was impossible to adopt it under current Japanese law. "Having said that, I don't think there are limits to monetary policy." — Reuters



PHOENIX: Arizona Diamondbacks' Jake Lamb is unable to reach an RBI single by St Louis Cardinals' Aledmys Diaz during the seventh inning of a baseball game on Wednesday, April 27, 2016. — AP

METS STRETCH WINNING STREAK TO 6

NEW YORK: Neil Walker hit his ninth home run, tying for the major league lead, Matt Harvey won his second straight start and the New York Mets beat the Cincinnati Reds 5-2 Wednesday night to stretch their winning streak to six. Walker's third-inning homer off Jon Moscot (0-2) extended the Mets' lead to 3-1 and tied the team record for home runs in April. Harvey (2-3) gave up two runs and seven hits in six innings, striking out a season-high seven, and Addison Reed pitched a perfect ninth for his first save.

WHITE SOX 4, BLUE JAYS 0

Dioner Navarro hit a go-ahead, two-run triple in the seventh, helping Chicago win its sixth straight. Jose Quintana (3-1) struck out a season-high 10 in six innings for Chicago, which leads the major leagues with five shutouts and is 10 games above .500 for the first time since Sept. 25, 2012. Quintana allowed five hits and walked three. Marco Estrada (1-2) gave up one hit through six innings but was knocked out in the seventh.

TIGERS 9, ATHLETICS 4

Justin Verlander (3-2) allowed three runs and five hits in 6 1/3 innings, and J.D. and Victor Martinez both homered. Sonny Gray (3-2) lasted only two innings in the shortest start of his big league career. He gave up four runs, two hits and four walks, throwing 65 pitches. Detroit had lost seven of its previous nine, scoring more than three runs only once in the prior seven games.

ORIOLES 3, RAYS 1

Joey Rickard hit a three-run home run and Chris Tillman (2-1) tied his career high with nine strikeouts, giving up two hits in 6 2/3 scoreless innings to beat Tampa Bay for the second time this season. Rickard homered in the fifth against Matt Moore (1-2), who allowed three runs and three hits in seven innings with nine strikeouts. He has lost two straight starts after going unbeaten in seven in a row dating to last season. Zach Britton finished for his fifth save.

RED SOX 9, BRAVES 4

Dustin Pedroia had a grand slam and a solo

homer, and David Ortiz had three doubles to pass Red Sox greats Ted Williams and Jimmie Foxx on the career extra-base hits with 1,119 as Boston won its fourth straight. Freddie Freeman homered end the Braves' homerless streak at 15 games, the longest since the 1946 Boston Braves went 16 in a row. Knuckleballer Steven Wright (2-2) allowed two runs - one earned - and three hits in seven innings. Bud Norris (1-4) got just four outs, giving up six runs and seven hits.

ANGELS 4, ROYALS 2

Mike Trout hit a tying two-run homer, Yunel Escobar hit a go-ahead solo shot in the sixth inning and Andrelton Simmons also went deep to power Los Angeles over Kansas City. Escobar, the Angels' leadoff hitter, drove Chris Young's 3-1 pitch to center field for his third homer of the season leading off the sixth to put the Angels ahead 3-2. He had four hits in Tuesday night's 9-4 victory. Simmons ended the scoring in the seventh with his first homer as an Angel. His other 31 came with the Atlanta Braves, who sent the two-time Gold Glove shortstop to the Angels in a trade for Erick Aybar in November. Fernando Salas (1-1) got the victory in relief and Joe Smith got three outs for his second save in as many chances.

RANGERS 3, YANKEES 2

Elvis Andrus had a tiebreaking RBI triple and Texas beat New York even after former Rangers shortstop Alex Rodriguez hit his 100th homer in the stadium. A-Rod's 690th career homer gave him triple digits in the Rangers' ballpark. He hit 86 at home for Texas from 2001-03 and has 14 more in 65 games as a visitor there - first with Seattle before his big deal with the Rangers, and after being traded to the Yankees. Andrus tripled into the right-center field gap in the sixth, a ball that rolled to the wall after Rowned Odor drew a two-out walk off CC Sabathia (1-2), to snap a 2-all tie. Martin Perez (1-2) struck out three while allowing two runs and six hits over six innings.

PIRATES 9, ROCKIES 8, 12 INNINGS

Jordy Mercer hit a tiebreaking RBI double in

the 12th inning, and Pittsburgh continued its mastery of Colorado with a marathon win. Kyle Lobstein (2-0) pitched three scoreless innings and Mark Melancon pitched the bottom of the 12th for his fifth save for Pittsburgh, which has won eight straight in Denver. Trevor Story and Nolan Arenado each hit their ninth homers, and Mark Reynolds and Gerardo Parra also went deep for the Rockies. Gregory Polanco homered in the seventh inning and drew a walk off Carlos Estevez (0-1) before Mercer's double.

CARDINALS 11, DIAMONDBACKS 4

Adam Wainwright pitched into the sixth inning for his first win and hit a three-run triple in St Louis' fifth straight offensive outburst for another win over Arizona. St Louis scored 18 combined runs in two games to close out a sweep over San Diego and had 15 in splitting the first two against Arizona. The Cardinals kept bashing, knocking around Patrick Corbin (1-3) and finishing with 14 hits, four by Stephen Piscotty. Wainwright (1-3) gave up homers to Brandon Drury and Paul Goldschmidt but ended his worst start since 2012 behind the Cardinals' big run support.

MARLINS 2, DODGERS 0

Justin Nicolino gave up two hits in 7 1/3 innings in his season debut to lead Miami over Los Angeles for its fourth straight win. Nicolino (1-0), just recalled from Triple-A New Orleans, walked two and struck out two. He didn't allow a runner past first base and retired 12 of the final 13 batters he faced. Giancarlo Stanton and Marcell Ozuna hit RBI singles in the first inning off Scott Kazmir (1-2) to provide the scoring. The Dodgers have dropped three straight and saw their scoreless streak extended to 14 innings.

ASTROS 7, MARINERS 4

Jose Altuve opened the game with his third leadoff homer of the season, doubled twice and scored three runs to help Houston avoid a sweep with a victory over Seattle. Evan Gattis added three RBIs for Houston.

Robinson Cano and Adam Lind had solo

homers for Seattle, which earlier in the day announced a pending ownership shift from majority owner Nintendo of America to the team's minority owners. Houston's Collin McHugh (2-3) allowed two runs and five hits with one walk, but needed 101 pitches over five innings. Hisashi Iwakuma (0-3) allowed five runs and seven hits with two walks on 93 pitches in five innings.

INDIANS 6, TWINS 5

Francisco Lindor drove in three runs and Cleveland spoiled the big league debut of Jose Berrios with a victory over Minnesota. Carlos Santana had three hits and the Indians avoided losing to the Twins on a walk-off hit for the third consecutive night. Cody Allen picked up his seventh save in seven tries after giving up a game-winning hit to Miguel Sano in the ninth inning on Tuesday night. Berrios (0-1), the top pitching prospect in the Twins farm system, gave up five runs and six hits with five strikeouts in four innings. Byung Ho Park hit his fifth homer of the season and Danny Santana had three hits and an RBI for Minnesota.

PHILLIES 3, NATIONALS 0

Jeremy Hellickson (2-1) allowed two hits over seven innings and struck out eight, and Jeanmar Gomez pitched a perfect ninth for his sixth save. Gio Gonzalez (1-1) fell behind on Darin Ruf's sacrifice fly in the sixth. The Phillies made it 2-0 an inning later with an unearned run on a throwing error by third baseman Anthony Rendon, and Carlos Ruiz homered off Sammy Solis in the eighth.

GIANTS 13, PADRES 9

Brandon Belt was a homer short of the cycle and drove in five runs, Hunter Pence drove in a pair on three hits and San Francisco completed a three-game sweep. Jeff Samardzija (3-1) allowed a season-high five runs in 5 2/3 innings and snapped a tie with a two-run single for the Giants, who won their fifth in six games. Andrew Cashner (1-2) gave up six runs - three earned - four hits and four walks in 2 2/3 innings. — AP

DONALD KEEN ON LONG-TERM ROLE WITH AUSTRALIA

MELBOURNE: Former South Africa fast bowler Allan Donald will join Australia as their bowling coach for their tour of Sri Lanka, Cricket Australia (CA) said yesterday. The appointment was not permanent, the organization added, though Donald, who captured 330 test wickets in his 10-year career for the Proteas, said he would be keen to succeed former coach Craig McDermott on a long-term basis. "If it does happen to be a long-term thing, then I would absolutely love to do that," Donald told Cricket Australia's website (www.cricketaustralia.com.au). "There's no question about it. I would love to work with Boof (head coach Darren Lehmann) and

his team, without a shadow of doubt."

Former Australia fast bowler McDermott stepped down after the World Twenty20 tournament in India and the team is still searching for a permanent replacement. Local media reported last week that Lehmann had sounded out Yorkshire coach Jason Gillespie, a former Australia fast bowler, about joining his group. Cricket Australia have said they hope to make a decision on a permanent appointment before Australia's international program at home, which starts in early November, against South Africa.

West Australia bowling coach Adam Griffith is joining the team for their trian-

gular limited overs series against West Indies and South Africa in the Caribbean in June. Donald, however, will join the team for the three tests, five one day internationals and two Twenty20 matches in Sri Lanka from July 26-Sept 9. "When Boof asked me I didn't expect that at all," Donald added. "For me as an international cricketer playing against Australia, there was a lot of respect for the way they played their cricket." The 49-year-old, who has also spent time as bowling coach for New Zealand and then for his native South Africa from 2011-15, is currently with the Royal Challengers Bangalore in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

"He brings a wealth of experience with him and our guys will benefit greatly from having him around," Lehmann added. "His test record speaks for itself and he was without a doubt one of the most formidable bowlers of his generation. "He has also had considerable success in sub-continent conditions and will bring a fresh perspective, and challenge some of our thinking." Lehmann added that former Australia player Stuart Law would join the team for the tour as batting coach. Current batting coach Greg Blewett had been excused to spend time with his family, with his second child due to be born during the tour, CA said. — Reuters

DUCKS DOWN AND OUT AS PREDATORS ADVANCE

LOS ANGELES: After winning Game 6 of their Western Conference quarter-final series on Monday, the Nashville Predators saw a message in their locker room: "Noon flight to Anaheim. Pack for six days." Colin Wilson, Paul Gaustad and Pekka Rinne ensured those instructions would remain relevant. Wilson and Gaustad scored in the first period as the Predators eliminated the Anaheim Ducks from the Stanley Cup playoffs with a 2-1 victory in the seventh game of the series on Wednesday at the Honda Center.

Rinne stopped 36 shots for the Predators, who will face the San Jose Sharks on Friday in the first game of the conference semi-finals. "I was able to see most of the shots," Rinne said. "Defensively, I thought we did an excellent job. Sometimes, you have to win games like that." Ducks left winger Andrew Cogliano agreed. "Tonight was probably one of our best offensive games in the series, if not the best," Cogliano said, "but they gutted it out. They're a tough team to play against in their own end because they cut cycles off."

The victory came in the first Game 7 in Predators history. "It's a big step," Nashville coach Peter Laviolette said. "If you don't take this step, you can't take any more steps." Ryan Kesler scored the only goal for the Ducks, who received 18 saves from goalie Frederik Andersen yet failed to win a seventh game for the fifth time since 2009. For the fourth consecutive year, opponents eliminated Anaheim in a Game 7 while the Ducks served as the home team. "We were playing catch-up the whole game, the whole series and all year," Ducks center Ryan Getzlaf said. "It came to bite us at the end."

Anaheim coach Bruce Boudreau admitted that this loss in a Game 7 contained a stronger

sting. "With the way the score was and the way we were pushing, I'd say yes, especially with how hard we had to push from November just to get to where we were," Boudreau said. "We did everything the hard way." Rinne prevented the hosts from taking the lead about four minutes after the opening face-off, when he did the splits while making a lunging catch of Cam Fowler's slap shot from the blue line.

Wilson put Nashville ahead 6:19 into the game with his second goal of the playoffs. Defenseman Mattias Ekholm flipped a high pass from the left boards in the Predators' zone to Wilson at the Ducks' blue line. Wilson tried to feed a pass between Anaheim defensemen Simon Despres and Clayton Stoner to Mike Fisher. Despres blocked the high pass with his glove and deflected the puck to the ice.

However, before Despres could play the puck, Wilson stole it and propelled a backhand inside the right post. "Those flipped-up pucks are hard to control for the defensemen," Wilson said. "I was just trying to wait. With the way 'Fish' was going, pushing him back, I was fortunate enough for it to come up on my stick." That goal tied Wilson with Martin Erat for fourth place on the Predators' all-time playoff goal-scoring list with eight. Gaustad's second career playoff goal and first in the series extended the lead to 2-0 at 15:53. With his stick at shoulder level, Gaustad deflected Shea Weber's slap shot from the right point under the crossbar. Boudreau challenged the call, which video replay upheld.

Nashville needed the crossbar to keep the Ducks scoreless early in the second period. After Rinne blocked Rickard Rakell's tip-in, Jamie McGinn tried to convert the rebound with Rinne prone on the ice. However,

SOUTH AFRICA'S OTTO IN ORBIT WITH EAGLE AT 8

BEIJING: South African journeyman Hennie Otto blasted a stunning nine-under-par 63 to lead the Volvo China Open after the first round yesterday. Starting in the very first group on the 10th tee at the Topwin Golf and Country Club in Beijing, the world number 392 was only three under halfway through his round. But he shot two birdies in his first three holes on the front nine and an eagle at the eighth saw him back in just 30 strokes. Otto will be 40 in June and turned professional in 1998 but had to wait a decade for the first of only three European tour wins, the 2008 Italian Open.

"I played really well today," he said in comments posted on the organizers' website. "You

have to hit it in the right places and that's the thing I did today. "I've always got a good frame of mind every week but it's just my putting let me down and today it came through." Otto was two strokes ahead of Austria's Bernd Wiesberger, who won the French Open last year, with four players tied one shot further back: Finland's Roope Kakko, Paraguayan Fabrizio Zanotti, Peter Hanson of Sweden and Frenchman Gregory Bourdy. Sweden's Rikard Karlberg had a hole-in-one with a seven iron at the 201-yard 16th, winning a Volvo XC90 car for his effort. "The factory is 30 minutes from where I live so it's pretty cool," he said. "I've won a Swedish car in China." — AFP



CALIFORNIA: Pekka Rinne #35, Shea Weber #6, Mattias Ekholm #14, Barret Jackman #5, Roman Josi #59, and Paul Gaustad #28 of the Nashville Predators celebrate against the Anaheim Ducks after Game Seven of the Western Conference First Round during the 2016 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at the Honda Center on April 27, 2016. — AFP

McGinn's shot hit the crossbar about five minutes into the period. "We knew they were going to make a push after we were up 2-0," Predators defenseman Roman Josi said. "But the defense was amazing tonight. They've got a great cycle game and pass it to the points, but our forwards did a great job getting in the shot lanes."

Kesler ended Rinne's quest for a shutout on a power play 1:45 into the third period. The center one-timed a shot in front of the crease

off Jakob Silfverberg's pass from behind the net for his fourth goal. Anaheim came close to scoring the tying goal with about seven minutes to play. Hampus Lindholm fired a shot from the blue line that deflected off the back of Rinne's glove and slowly trickled off the left post before Rinne covered it with his glove. "It came down to seven games for a reason," Weber said. "Everything about it was a battle, a fight. I guess it was only fitting it was that close in the end, as well." — Reuters

NFL READY TO MOVE ON FROM 'DEFLATEGATE': GOODELL

CHICAGO: As far as NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell is concerned, the league is ready to move on from "Deflategate." Speaking two days after a major victory for the NFL in its dispute with New England quarterback Tom Brady and the players' union, Goodell defended the league's discipline process for players in the wake of critical comments by New Orleans quarterback Drew Brees. While praising Chicago's work on the NFL draft, he offered no clues as to where it might be held next year.

A federal appeals court ruled Monday that Brady must serve a four-game suspension handed down by the NFL for the use of underinflated footballs at the AFC championship game in January 2015. The court overturned a ruling by a Manhattan judge while siding with the league in its battle with the NFL Players Association.

"It should have been the decision last year from the district court, and that's what

the appellate court said," Goodell said Wednesday. "They reaffirmed our authority and the underlying facts to the case, so we think it came out in the right place. So we're not planning any more steps. We obviously would like to put the matter behind us and move forward." The NFLPA could appeal the decision to the full 2nd Circuit or the US Supreme Court, but it likely would be a time-consuming climb even if the courts took the unusual step to consider it. A message was left Wednesday seeking comment from the union.

Brady and the NFL also could negotiate a settlement, a possibility left open by Goodell. "We're not going to sit here and hypothetically talk about what we're going to do," Goodell said. "We had a lot of discussions last year. But the determination by the appellate court was very clear and very strong. We will continue, obviously, to negotiate with the union on the commis-

sioner discipline issue. We've done that in the past. We've made changes in the past and we're still open to doing that."

Put Brees in the camp hoping for more changes. Reacting to the NFL's successful appeal of the Brady case, Brees told SI.com he thinks the commissioner has too much power and he doesn't trust any investigation led by the league. Goodell said the league strives for fairness when it comes to the rules. "The rules apply to every player. They apply to every team. They apply equally, and that's what we do," he said. "It doesn't matter whether you're the first person on the roster or you're the 53rd man on the roster, the rules apply to all teams fairly and equally."

Goodell joined Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and some of the NFL's top prospects for a football clinic for a group of kids in Grant Park on the eve of the NFL draft. The first round began yesterday night

at a downtown theater, but Goodell was quiet when asked about where it might be held in 2017. He acknowledged Philadelphia was a possibility. He said the league wants to move it around, but declined to rule out a return to Chicago for a third straight year. "Our staff's been working on it," Goodell said. "Once we get done with this event, we'll sit down, we'll evaluate this event and the alternatives, and then we'll make a decision, probably I would guess in the next 60 days, 90 days."

The timeline for resolving the Raiders' situation in Oakland is more up in the air. Owner Mark Davis is flirting with moving the franchise to Las Vegas after a long dalliance with relocating to Los Angeles, but Goodell said there is nothing to talk about right now when it comes to such a move. "Those are decisions that are made once there is an opportunity and where there's an alternative. — AP

NO CURRY, NO PROBLEM; WARRIORS ROUT ROCKETS

HORNETS PUSH HEAT TO THE BRINK WITH GAME FIVE WIN

LOS ANGELES: The Golden State Warriors brushed off the unsettling absence of injured star Stephen Curry on Wednesday to demolish the Houston Rockets and advance to the next round of the NBA playoffs. The Warriors' hopes of successfully defending their NBA crown received a blow on Sunday after Curry was sidelined for at least two weeks with a sprained knee ligament. But the Warriors did enough in a 114-81 rout of the Rockets to remind the pretenders to their crown that they remain a formidable outfit even without their talisman.

The 4-1 series victory means the Warriors will now face either the Portland Trail Blazers or the injury-ravaged Los Angeles Clippers in the next round of the Western Conference playoffs. Portland appear to be in pole position to face Golden State after defeating the Clippers 108-98 on Wednesday to take a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven series. Whether the Blazers will have enough to trouble the Warriors, even without Curry, remains to be seen. Golden State coach Steve Kerr, who received his NBA Coach of the Year award just before tip off at the Oracle Arena, hailed his team's strength in depth after the win. "Literally every single guy on our roster contributed during this series," Kerr said.

That point was emphasized by the performance of Curry's replacement, veteran Shaun Livingston, who finished with 16 points on Wednesday. James Harden scored a game-high 35 points for the Rockets, but the result was never in doubt after the Warriors sprinted into a 37-20 lead in the first quarter that they never looked like losing. While the Warriors overcame the absence of Curry smoothly, the Clippers were unable to paper over the gaping hole in their ranks left by the absence of injured stars Chris Paul and Blake Griffin. The Clippers fought bravely to stay in touch heading into the fourth quarter at the Staples Center.

'We were exhausted'

But as the game reached its critical phase, Portland stretched away to seal a deserved win which leaves them needing just one more victory to advance. Game Six takes place today in



CALIFORNIA: Shaun Livingston #34 of the Golden State Warriors watches his shot go in the basket against the Houston Rockets in Game Five of the Western Conference Quarterfinals during the 2016 NBA Playoffs at ORACLE Arena on April 27, 2016. — AFP

Portland. CJ McCollum finished with 27 points while Damian Lillard scored 16 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter. Maurice Harkless added 19 points and 10 rebounds, Allen Crabbe 11 points, and Mason Plumlee and Gerald Henderson contributed 10 points to cap a fine all-round display.

For the Clippers, JJ Redick finished with 19 points while Jamal Crawford scored 17. DeAndre Jordan added 16 points and 17 rebounds. Clippers coach Doc Rivers said his team had been running on empty when it mattered. "Like they turned their

energy up in the beginning of the third (quarter), and we were exhausted," Rivers said. "I had to call two timeouts. You could just see it. That's not conditioning, that was emotion." Redick meanwhile insisted the Clippers would be ready to rise to the challenge when they hit the road to face Portland. "I don't want to equate a basketball game to death, but it is do or die," Redick said afterwards.

Elsewhere Wednesday, the Charlotte Hornets stunned the Miami Heat 90-88 to take a 3-2 lead in the best-of-seven series. Courtney Lee was the

hero for Charlotte, sinking a game-winning three-pointer with just under 30 seconds left to leave the Hornets within one win of a place in the next round. Charlotte will be at home for today's Game Six, where victory would see them advance. Lee set up his game-winning play after grabbing a crucial long rebound. He also conjured a key block on Dwyane Wade with 2.6 seconds left as the Hornets held on. "He's a terrific athlete and he has good timing," Hornets coach Steve Clifford said. — AFP

CLUB AMERICA LIFT CONCACAF CHAMPIONS LEAGUE



MEXICO CITY: Mexico's America players celebrate their victory over Mexico's Tigres, during the Concacaf Champions League football final, at the Azteca Stadium in Mexico City. — AFP

MEXICO CITY: Club America captured the CONCACAF Champions League title for a second straight year on Wednesday after a 2-1 win over Tigres gave them a 4-1 aggregate triumph. Club America followed up a 2-0 victory over Tigres last week with another strong effort in front of a packed crowd at Estadio Azteca in Mexico City and will represent the region at the Club World Cup in Japan. The defending champions fell behind in the 39th minute where France international Andre-Pierre Gignac converted to put Tigres on the scoreboard first.

But that was as close as they would ever come to catching Club America in the overall aggregate. Tigres opened the second half with spirit and retained much of the possession before Ecuadorian Michael Arroyo came on as a substitute in the 65th and struck soon from the edge of the box to give Club America some breathing room. Osvaldo Martinez sealed things and set off the celebration in the 87th minute where he converted a penalty shot following a tackle on Miguel Samudio. This was the 11th straight time a team from Mexico's first division has won the CONCACAF regional club tournament. — Reuters

DRUNK LIVERPOOL FANS FORCE EMERGENCY LANDING

LIMOGES: A flight from Liverpool to Alicante was forced to land in France yesterday after two drunken British nationals began fighting on board. The incident took place onboard a Ryanair flight between two men believed to be Liverpool supporters on their way to their team's Europa League semi-final first leg against Villarreal.

The captain said he decided to divert to the central French city of Limoges as he felt the incident was endangering the other passengers. Both men were taken to a local police station.

"They are being held while they sober up, and between them being drunk and the language barrier, it is difficult to be certain about their reasons for the fight and going to Spain," said a police spokesman. "The two men will be heard later in the day, when an English-speaking interpreter is present." The Boeing 737, carrying just over 180 passengers, was able to resume its flight to Spain. — AFP

FRENCH CHAMPIONS PSG CHASING POINTS RECORD

PARIS: French champions Paris Saint-Germain continue to tick off their remaining league fixtures as they welcome Rennes to the capital today night, knowing that a win would equal their own Ligue 1 points record. Laurent Blanc's men made it three French League Cup triumphs in a row last weekend, despite being reduced to 10 men, thanks to Angel Di Maria's winner against Lille.

Now they will turn their attention back to the league, where they are 27 points clear at the top of the table with just four matches to play. PSG have just one game left this season of any real importance, the French Cup final against arch rivals Marseille at the Stade de France on May 21, although they need just four more points to break the Ligue 1 record of 89 that they set in 2013-14.

The only disappointment for the club this season was the Champions League quarter-final exit at the hands of Manchester City, but Qatari chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi quashed speculation about coach Blanc's future by saying that he would stay at the club next

term. Some of the PSG players, including Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Javier Pastore, were allowed to go on holiday to Las Vegas after the French League Cup win. Rennes coach Rolland Courbis though brushed off any thoughts that the weekend trip could affect their performance or fitness levels today. "Given that they have had three days' rest, I have other things to do than to judge PSG players and they had permission to go to Las Vegas," he told sports daily L'Equipe.

"I would have preferred them to have just played in the Champions League semi-finals, or to have just played a Ligue 1 game like Lille and Angers (on Wednesday), but we are not in charge. "After their three days' rest, they can do what they want."

Rennes have dropped out of the race for Champions League qualification after picking up just one point in their last three matches, although Courbis still thinks that a top-six finish and a possible Europa League place are within his side's grasp with three games to go. "Two wins could be enough to finish sixth,

which would be much better than seventh," Courbis, whose team sit one point behind sixth-placed Lille, added.

"The minimum target for our last three games against PSG, Montpellier and Bastia is six points. "We must stay professional and not let go when there is still something we can achieve, and that something is sixth. It's not easy, but it's not impossible."

It will be tough for Rennes to pick up one of their two targeted victories at the Parc des Princes, where PSG have lost just once in 37 league matches.

Having said that, the Brittany club have only been defeated twice in their last eight Ligue 1 trips to the capital. German goalkeeper Kevin Trapp is likely to return in place of Salvatore Sirigu for PSG, with Di Maria and Ibrahimovic looking to cap off a week in which they were both nominated for the Ligue 1 Player of the Year award. Courbis has said that striker Kamil Grosicki is a doubt with a muscle problem, while Fallou Diagne is suspended. — AFP

OLYMPICS: S KOREA UNVEILS MOSQUITO-REPELLENT KIT

SEOUL: South Korean athletes at the Rio Olympics will wear long-sleeved kit impregnated with mosquito repellent to protect them from the Zika virus, the national Olympic committee said yesterday. Brazil-epicenter of the mosquito-borne Zika virus outbreak, which is blamed for birth defects in babies-hosts the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro in August. The South Korean training kit and uniforms for the opening and closing ceremonies will cover most of the body and

be infused with repellent, a Korean Olympic Committee spokeswoman said.

Competition clothing cannot be mosquito-proofed due to strict regulations, she added. "But we will distribute mosquito-repellent sprays to the athletes and will also vaccinate them against other diseases that can be spread by mosquitoes just in case," the spokeswoman said. The committee will also train athletes on ways to avoid mosquito bites. There is no vaccine or cure for the Zika virus, which in

most people causes only mild symptoms—a rash, joint pain or fever. Brazil has reported around 1.5 million Zika infections out of a global total of 2.0 million.

The South Korean team is seeking at least 10 golds in Rio and a top-10 spot in the medals table. One of its best prospects, Ki Bo-Bae, who won individual and team women's archery golds at the London 2012 Games, said she was relaxed about the Zika scare. "I went to Brazil twice for training and people there didn't

seem too concerned about it and the athletes didn't experience any discomfort. "So no, I don't feel uneasy," Ki said. And national archery team coach Moon Hyung-Cheol was equally untroubled—although he was also reassured by the anti-mosquito clothing. "By the time we go, there will be no mosquitos because there weren't any when we went last September," he said. "Also, our team uniform is completely mosquito repellent," he added. — AFP

WORLD'S PRESS FLOCK TO COVER LEICESTER FAIRYTALE

LONDON: A sweep of the press room before Leicester City's recent victory over Swansea City confirmed the extent to which their pursuit of Premier League glory has captivated global audiences. Journalists from as far afield as Finland, Turkey, South Korea and Australia mingled in the queue for a pre-match meal, while a 10-strong Japanese contingent sat around a table discussing how Shinji Okazaki would fare in the absence of his suspended strike partner Jamie Vardy.

The team that narrowly avoided relegation last season are now just three points from the league title and their Cinderella story has won them admirers in the most unlikely locations. "Last season, no-one really wrote about Leicester in the US and no-one really talked about them," says Joe Prince-Wright, the lead soccer writer for American broadcasting giant NBC. "This season it's been incredible—people like (New England Patriots quarterback) Tom Brady and NFL players have been sending them messages." All of a sudden there's this clamor to latch onto the underdog story. The American public love an underdog story.

"Most people haven't got a team (to support) yet, but we get pictures from people on a tractor in some small town in the middle of the US and they've got a Leicester shirt or a Leicester scarf and they're following the Foxes." One tellingly titled recent video on the NBC Sports website was called: "What You Need To Know To Jump On The Leicester City Bandwagon". ESPN, meanwhile, has sent its acclaimed sportswriter Wright Thompson to Leicester for the season's final weeks to capture the Foxes' story. "I'm here for the duration!" he told AFP during the 4-0 victory over Swansea last Sunday.

A modest club from a humdrum city in England's east Midlands, Leicester's previous highest finish was a runner-up spot in 1929 and in times past the only newspaper they could rely upon for regular coverage was local daily the Leicester Mercury. This season's fairytale campaign has seen them featured in such



LEICESTER: A Leicester City fan poses for a picture outside King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England. — AFP

bastions of American journalism as the New York Times, Sports Illustrated and the Wall Street Journal. As Peter Soulsby, Leicester's mayor, told the Daily Telegraph earlier this month: "A provincial English city doesn't get on the front of the WSJ unless it's doing something amazing." The multinational make-up of the King Power Stadium press pack reflects the league

of nations that is the Leicester squad, which includes players from 14 different countries (not including those out on loan).

Italian manager Claudio Ranieri, whose employers, King Power, are Thai, has a Danish goalkeeper (Kasper Schmeichel), a Jamaica international as captain (Wes Morgan) and an Argentine centre-forward (Leonardo Ulloa), while Algerian winger Riyad Mahrez on Sunday became the first African to be named England's Player of the Year. According to a report compiled earlier in the season by Sky Sports, it is the second most diverse squad in the Premier League behind Watford's. While Leicester's quest for glory has seen journalists from around the world flock to the party, the press room's Japanese representatives have been there all along due to the club's acquisition of Japan international Okazaki from German side Mainz last July.

Masatoshi Mori from Japanese sports daily Hochi Shimbun arrived even earlier, attending his first press conference last season when news of the club's interest in Okazaki first emerged. "It was a relaxed atmosphere," he told AFP. "There was only the guy from the local paper, the BBC and including me, probably four or five journalists. Now, there are hundreds!" The Leicester story is not quite a triumph of racial harmony. Three young players were sacked after filming a racist sex tape during an end-of-season tour of Thailand and Vardy was obliged to apologize after being caught on camera racially taunting an Asian man in a casino. But in terms of sporting interest, it is a tale that has touched almost every corner of the world. — AFP

PALERMO OPEN 'BISCUITS TIN' AS RELEGATION LOOMS

ROME: Palermo have opened the Serie A "biscuit tin" of conspiracy by implying there is a plot to send them down into the second division as the battle for survival heats up. The Italian season would not be complete without such speculation, bizarrely known as biscuits by the media, and Palermo president Maurizio Zamparini duly obliged by crying foul after fellow strugglers Carpi beat Empoli 1-0 on Monday.

The win kept Carpi, who are 17th and hovering just above the drop zone, one place and three points clear of Palermo, who won a key relegation battle away to Frosinone (19th) on Sunday to revive their own chances of staying up. The bottom three in the 20-team table are relegated. Palermo's official website (www.palermocalcio.it) listed what it called "three absurd episodes" during Carpi's win and provided screenshots of incidents where the Sicilian club claimed that the referee had made the wrong call.

It also included a comment from Empoli coach Marco Giampaolo, who told Skysports Italia: "The other teams fighting against relegation must be very angry about this match." Palermo then invited the league's disciplinary tribunal to "monitor with great attention the next matches and all the teams involved in the battle to stay up, to avoid similar episodes". Palermo's volatile president, Maurizio Zamparini, said he feared that "they want to send Palermo into Serie B". "I don't know why, but I fear that's what is going on," he added, without elaborating.

The Italian league generally avoids comment on conspiracy theories and has not replied, but Carpi president Stefano Bonacini hit back. "I have the good grace to never speak about referees in a negative or positive way," he said. "We are not interested in whatever statements others release. We are fighting for our safety tooth and nail." Palermo have an excellent chance to draw level with Carpi on Sunday as they host Sampdoria (1300 GMT) while their rivals are away to newly crowned champions Juventus (1030 GMT), who have won 24 of their last 25 league games.

There are two matches remaining after this weekend and should Carpi and Palermo finish level on points, relegation will be decided on goal difference as they are level on their head-to-head record. Frosinone, a further two points below Palermo, visit AC Milan while bottom club Verona area already down. Most commentators feel that Zamparini would have only himself to blame for Palermo's demise after overseeing an astonishing eight coaching changes this season. — Reuters



Leicester City's Danish goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel

LEICESTER'S SCHMEICHEL AIMS TO TRIUMPH ON FATHER'S STAGE

LONDON: If Leicester City win the Premier League by beating Manchester United at Old Trafford on Sunday, goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel will have stepped out from his father's huge shadow on a richly symbolic stage. Peter Schmeichel enjoyed stellar success as keeper for United where he was integral to five titles during the 1990s, and as a result his son Kasper has spent much of his career being defined by his family name.

But there will be no need for comparisons should Leicester snare the first title in their 132-year history, and Old Trafford can expect the Schmeichels to party like it was 1999, the year Peter won the last of his United titles. "The issue is that I am 29, I am married, I have two kids, but people still see me as someone's son," Kasper said with respect to his upbringing in an interview with the Mail on Sunday.

"People are surprised when I say I am 29. They're like, 'Really?' One day, maybe when I am 40 and hopefully still playing, then I might be considered a mature enough person." Schmeichel is an indispensable and unsung star of Leicester's season, one of only two players, alongside centre-half Wes Morgan, to play every minute of their league campaign. Schmeichel, who is Denmark's

keeper just as his father was, is clear that the secret of Leicester's rise has been teamwork. "It's a lot of players coming together at the right time, not just football-wise but personally as well," he said. "We are similar age groups, a lot of us have played here together for three or four years."

Best team

That makes Leicester the exception on a Premier League carousel from which players and managers jump on and off with dizzying speed. Unlike their opponents United, Leicester know who their best team is and how to get the best out of them. On Sunday, a packed Old Trafford is again likely to witness the sort of attacking fluidity Alex Ferguson's teams once trademarked. But this time it will be the visitors, with five of the top 10 quickest players in the league, forcing the pace.

A Leicester victory would be welcomed by Arsenal, seeking to pip United to fourth place and Champions League qualification. On Saturday the Gunners entertain Norwich city, who are aiming to avoid a return to the Championship after just one season. — Reuters

ATLETICO LOSS BRINGS GUARDIOLA CLOSER TO THE FAMILIAR FAILURE

MADRID: After watching Pep Guardiola fail to inspire Bayern Munich to victory over Diego Simeone's Atletico Madrid in their Champions League semi-final on Wednesday, Manchester City may wonder if they have hired the wrong man to lead them for the next three years. Saul Niguez's splendid individual goal gave Atletico a 1-0 first-leg win and leaves Guardiola's side needing a huge performance next week in Munich to prevent a third consecutive Champions League semi-final exit at the hands of a Spanish team.

Guardiola is on track to lead Bayern to a third consecutive Bundesliga title but his three-year spell there will ultimately be judged on whether he can win Europe's elite club competition with them. Guardiola won the Champions League twice in four years with Barcelona, celebrating the first triumph in 2009 with club executives Txiki Begeristain and Ferran Soriano, who left the Spanish side for Manchester City. City, who drew 0-0 with Real Madrid in the other semi-final, named Guardiola as their new manager in February, like Bayern, viewing him as the man to lead them to European glory.

However, unless he can work out a way to overcome Simeone's resilient side, Guardiola will have to watch the Milan showpiece on television on May 22. His new club may even be there without him. Guardiola conceded that Atletico overpowered and outran Bayern, pressed them all over the pitch and defended well in numbers to limit them to efforts from distance. "We have to play at a different pace in the second leg," said Guardiola. Bayern had chances-David Alaba smashed the underside of the bar from way out-but they rarely controlled the game and lacked the hunger of Atletico's all-action unit. "It was a great goal, but we were at fault, it was a consequence of our low intensity," added Guardiola.

Atletico coach Simeone had drilled into his side the importance of shutting down Bayern's attacking options, and his players responded by pulling off an eighth clean sheet in 11 Champions League games this season. Having knocked out tournament holders Barcelona in the quarter-finals, the Argentine is well placed to book Atletico a second Champions League final spot in three seasons.

If he can mastermind another success in Munich, his growing reputation as a sharp strategist will be enhanced further, and perhaps have Manchester City casting envious glances in Atletico's direction. — Reuters



MADRID: Bayern Munich's Spanish coach Josep Guardiola kicks a ball during the UEFA Champions League semi-final first leg football match Club Atletico de Madrid vs Bayern Munich at the Vicente Calderon stadium in Madrid on April 27, 2016. — AFP

MICHEL PLATINI PREPARES FOR MAKE-OR-BREAK CAS HEARING

PARIS: Michel Platini appears before the Court of Arbitration for Sport today to appeal his six-year FIFA ban for ethics violations, with his future in football hanging on the outcome. The stakes could not be higher for the suspended head of European football. A favorable verdict and the 60-year-old will take his place in the stands at the Stade de France for the Euro 2016 opener between hosts France and Romania on June 10.

A negative verdict will mean the former Juventus star barred from entering the national stadium, his glittering career in the sport having come to an ignominious end. "This is the last avenue of appeal," Platini's lawyer Thibaud D'Ales conceded to AFP. The Frenchman has been sanctioned over an infamous two million Swiss franc (\$2 million, 1.8 million euro) payment he received in 2011 from then-FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

FIFA's ethics committee in December banned both men from all football activities for eight years. The suspensions were cut to six years in February. Both men insist they did nothing wrong and that the payment was part of a legitimate oral contract tied to consulting work that Platini did for FIFA between 1999 and 2002. The affair has already cost him a shot at becoming head of world football as he was forced to pull out of the race to become FIFA president in an election won by his number two at UEFA, Gianni Infantino.

UEFA has said it will not replace Platini until all his appeals are exhausted, so if the former French star is successful at CAS he could reclaim his job in time to preside over Euro 2016.

Platini's entourage is hoping for a decision "before May 3" when UEFA holds its congress in Budapest. Blatter, who is due to testify at the hearing, has also appealed to CAS and is awaiting a date for his hearing. Today's Lausanne-based tribunal will get underway at 0700GMT.

It consists of three legal experts, one each representing Platini and FIFA and a president. Platini has chosen Yale and Harvard educated Swedish lawyer Jan Paulsson, with world football's ruling body selecting Bernard Hanotiau of Switzerland. The hearing will be chaired by Luigi Fumagalli, a University of Milan-educated Italian international law expert.

As part of his defense Platini's legal team will produce an invoice for the suspect payment in an attempt to prove there was nothing untoward about the transaction. "Five people from the offices of FIFA were involved in this payment, which was processed by the Finance Committee and reported to the Executive Committee. It is far from a hidden payment," said D'Ales.

Platini's name has also emerged in the Panama Papers, a leaked set of 11.5 million documents that provide detailed information about more than 214,000 off-shore companies listed by the Panamanian corporate service provider Mossack Fonseca. But D'Ales denied this had any relevance to today's hearing. "His fiscal situation was known by the Swiss authorities. This has nothing to do with it." — AFP

VIEIRA DEFIANT AS NEW YORK WINLESS STREAK CONTINUES

NEW YORK: New York City manager Patrick Vieira insisted his struggling Major League Soccer side team will be able to turn their season around after their winless streak stretched to seven games on Wednesday. City had looked to be on course for their first win since the opening day of the season after defender RJ Allen rounded off a sweeping counter-attack to fire Vieira's men into the lead against the Montreal Impact on 51 minutes. But with a crucial victory beckoning, City succumbed to nerves, and sloppily defending of a Didier Drogba freekick allowed Dominic Oduro to steal in and head home an equalizer deep into stoppage time at Yankee Stadium.

The 1-1 draw left Vieira's star-studded side—an affiliate of the organization which owns English Premier League side Manchester City—languishing third from bottom of the 10-team Eastern Conference with seven points from eight games. After a disappointing season last year, when City failed to reach the playoffs despite making a series of high-profile signings including Andrea Pirlo and Frank Lampard, Vieira is anxious to stop the rot. The former France, Arsenal and Juventus star insisted however that his team's league position was not a true reflection of their play.

"We are in a period where everything is going against us," Vieira said. "But we

will stick together, we will fight together and we will turn it around. We showed that by the way we played tonight. "I'm feeling sorry for the players because they worked so hard and worked so well. They deserve more than they are getting at the moment." Vieira said City's long run of matches without a win was starting to foster anxiety amongst his players. "I think you could see that tonight," he said. "When you look at our last 10-15 minutes you could see how tense the players are because they wanted it so much. "When you're in a situation like this it can freeze you when things are not going your way. It's a difficult situation no doubt about it but we'll come through it."

Vieira blamed a lack of concentration for Montreal's injury time equalizer. "The goal we conceded was just a lack of organization, of concentration. To concede a goal like that is really frustrating because we deserved to win that game," he said.

"Our game plan was perfect for 90 minutes... the only way that we will turn this season around is to keep doing what we are doing. The players are working hard. But we're not getting the luck." Montreal are top of the Eastern Conference standings with 13 points from eight games, one point clear of Philadelphia Union who play San Jose tomorrow. — AFP



CALIFORNIA: Houston Rockets' James Harden (right) runs into Golden State Warriors' Andrew Bogut during the second half in Game 5 of a first-round NBA basketball playoff series on Wednesday, April 27, 2016. — AP

NO CURRY, NO PROBLEM AS WARRIORS DOWN ROCKETS