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CHEATS ABOUND IN KUWAIT'S CAR REPAIR SECTOR

GET A SECOND QUOTE • ASK FOR RECEIPTS FOR ALL PARTS

By Ben Garcia

In Kuwait, there are no standards or government regulations setting the charges for car repairs. Most dealerships and mechanics charge customers here widely differing rates, while others take advantage of every opportunity to charge customers exorbitantly or even deceive motorists.

Consumers will often get wildly different quotes from different garages. Car owner Noora, brought her car for service after an accident. She was asked to pay KD 1,800. "I didn't know why I had to pay that amount, so I went to another garage and they quoted me KD 1,000 only. After five months, the car broke down again, and I had to pay an additional KD 200. But the total is still less than KD 1,800," she said.

Sunil had his car's AC fixed at one of the garages in Sharq. Initially, the mechanic told him to pay KD 90, but when he went to another garage, he only paid KD 25. "I really don't know how they are pricing the labor charges and the parts needed for the car. If you do not know anything about cars, you'll continue to be cheated," he said.

Oftentimes consumers are even told different explanations for what is causing the problem. Joseph, for instance, visited a mechanic in Shuwaikh last month. The repairman said his car needed a new gearbox, and quoted him a price of KD 350. Seeking a second opinion, he went to a mechanic recommended by his friend. "This mechanic told me to only change the thermostat, which did the trick. I only paid KD 2.5 for the new thermostat, instead of KD 350," he said.

There are plenty of honest mechanics and car repair shops out there but finding them can be a challenge.

And sometimes mechanics take advantage of vehicle owner's lack of knowledge to cheat them regarding repairs. Joy's car needed a new engine, so she went to Salmi and visited several scrap merchants - most quoted her KD 500 for a "new" engine. "I was about to pay the amount when I got a call from a friend, who told me to visit his garage. He checked the

engine for a few minutes and started it - I didn't need to repair or even replace my engine," she said.

There are plenty of honest mechanics and car repair shops out there but finding them can be a challenge. Babu, who has been working as an electrical auto mechanic for 30 years, told Kuwait Times he has encountered many complaints

from customers regarding cheating.

"What can I do? Even our fingers are not at all the same, so you'll see all types of people in the car repair business. You are responsible for your own fate. If you visit more than two mechanics, you'll probably get the right price," Babu, who currently manages a garage in Jleeb, said.

He advised customers to be more alert and discerning. "If you do not want to be cheated, ask for a receipt for every part changed in your car. Some mechanics will tell you they changed this and that part, but if there are no receipts, how can you be sure that they changed the problematic parts? So be very careful, as they do many things to bluff," he said.

Tony, another mechanic from the Philippines works in a small garage in Sharq. He has good advice for customers who want to avoid being ripped off. The number one rule is to ask around. "If you don't know a good mechanic, probably your friends, colleagues or relatives know someone. Explore this option before going to a garage or mechanic about which you do not know anything. Many mechanics claim they know all about cars, but the fact is they don't know anything. There are many people in the industry who have become 'mechanics' only after a few oil changes - avoid such people," he said.

Finally, he advised customers to go directly to the car dealership as they have all resources to check the problems of their cars, since they have complete knowledge of the brands they deal in. "Try also to check online the prices of parts changed in your car, so at least you have an idea of the prices in the market," Tony said.



Photo of the day



Photo shows the inner courtyard of a traditional Kuwaiti house. — Photo by KUNA / Ali Al-Romi

in my view

NO COUNTRY FOR YOUNG MEN

By Aakash Bakaya

news@kuwaittimes.net

Young men in Kuwait face a growing number of challenges. The government has taken steps to engage the 'youth'. But more and more shops, malls and other gathering places are adopting 'family only' days where young men alone or with friends are unwelcome.

Whether you're a fresh graduate or a fresh hire, social life is an important part of life in Kuwait and for many visiting Kuwait's primary social spaces - malls - are a weekend must do. At the same time, there have been an unsettling number of fights and violent incidents in malls, almost always involving young, unmarried men.

So here we are with an unfair but understandable situation. Take what happened to me on New Year's Eve. A few friends and I decided to spend the New Year at Souq Sharq. We all were tired from work and wanted to get away from the more crowded places and since we were in the area it was a good choice also because I've been there on New Year's a few times before when I was younger to watch the liquid clock drain out and start from the beginning again.

But the moment we parked the car, we knew something was wrong. There was a stream of people walking in the opposite direction and none of them looked too pleased. What we didn't notice at the time was that almost all of them were young men. When we reached the entrance, we were greeted by a couple of security guards blocking

our entrance. We asked what the problem was to which he nonchalantly said "Sorry, today is a family-only day. You're not allowed to enter".

We were dumbfounded. "Family-only day" is unarguably discrimination. It's unfair and there's no recourse. We left. I understand security should come first and that the recent fights have left everyone a bit skeptical of young men. But is it fair to tarnish us all with the same brush? Should all young men be denied entry into the public spaces of Kuwait because of a few kids getting into fights? Should half the country's population - unmarried males - all be labeled troublemakers because of a few?

Not surprisingly, we experienced the same thing again a few weeks later. This time it was at an entertainment park. We wanted to visit the bookshop but were turned away at the entrance, warned that it was only open for 'families'.

Young men face a variety of such 'restrictions'. We cannot rent hotel rooms or apartments. Many days in the week beaches and water parks are off limits. We tend to get more police scrutiny and bus drivers even try to avoid having us ride.

Not all the young men of Kuwait are troublemakers. Many of us, in fact the majority, are honest, hard working and decent young men who hope to one day have a family. Maybe when that happens, I'll be able to go shopping again.

OBITUARY



Warba Insurance Company

mourns the sudden
death of their
colleague

K.S. Krishnamoorthy
(Former Adviser)

who died on 17-3-2016

May His Soul Rest in Peace



Volunteering at **BACCH**

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

Welcome to Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice, a place where everyone possesses a Zen attitude, has an enchanting smile on their faces and dresses down modestly. It's a place where people voluntarily come to work for a great cause - to care for youngsters with life-threatening illnesses. The hospice aims to provide palliative health, mental and spiritual care

for children and support their families to ease their sufferings after their children are diagnosed. "A lot of volunteers come with the notion that all of our kids are hooked up to IVs, having a great misconception of what it is like to be in hospice care. When they come, they cannot tell which children have illnesses and which ones don't. It's a very beautiful thing to see," said Mariam Abdulkhalek.

— Photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi



Mariam has been working at Bayt Abdullah for two years as a volunteer coordinator and is part of a team that manages events and donations. "I love it. It's a great place to work!" she beamed.

What are the volunteering opportunities at BACCH?

"Most of our volunteers want to be with the kids, but sometimes it's too much for them. Some people who've gone through a certain situation find it hard to be with children. So, we have a lot of different volunteering opportunities. Because we are a non-governmental organization, we offer everything from administrative help to helping us when families come and stay for the whole weekend and we hold activities for them. Also, they can help in facilitating events and fundraising. We only take volunteers above the age of 16 and up. For high school students and university students, we write them a recommendation letter if they complete 40 hours. They also choose the timings convenient to them, once or twice a week. Some volunteers will only want to help once a month or only during our events," Mariam explained.



Mariam Abdulkhalek

Initially, volunteers are not allowed to deal directly with the children. They must first spend a specified period with team members to enable them to get to know them and understand their abilities and personalities. They do some administrative tasks like help setting up the library, fundraising, organizing storage rooms, or managing the toy and stationery inventories. In addition, a volunteer is not left alone with any child, even after giving a detailed overview about them and what is expected from them.

Mariam or any team member is always there to supervise during the first days. "Usually, they don't realize the immensity of what they're signing up to, and when once they start, they can't emotionally handle it. When a child dies, we hold a debriefing session. They are welcome to join the family to sit with the psychologist. We talk about the kids and the good moments shared. We are with the volunteer every step of the way - they're never alone. It's normal that some of them come wanting to spend time with the kids, but when they start hanging out with them, they feel they can't complete even halfway through. That's normal, it's totally fine," said Mariam.

BACCH is looking for people that have an experience in dealing with children, but it's not mandatory. Volunteers should be cheerful and have good morals. It's preferable to have a skill like playing an instrument or proficiency in art and crafts. "We are also looking for those who are very keen to return again, because the child builds a relationship with them and gets attached to them. It's difficult to tell the child they're not here anymore," stressed Mariam.

Dealing with sensitive cases requires a strong personality

and self-control in difficult situations. To continue to work at Bayt Abdullah is a challenge. Mariam flatly told Kuwait Times that it's not easy work. "I won't lie to you - it's very hard. Especially when you build a relationship with the child, and you see that person all the time. But I love it because I think of Bayt Abdullah as a place where children come to experi-

ence a great life, to have fun, to feel as comfortable as we can help them feel as long as they can. I never think of Bayt Abdullah as a final destination. It's just about putting in your mind that it's a way of life instead of an end point," she said.

To volunteer at BACCH, visit <http://www.bacch.org/> to fill out an application.

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

- competition will receive an appreciation plaque.
- Any school or individual interested to participate in this competition is welcome to visit the office of Kuwait Times and collect the drawing sheets.
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Tarabya in her garden. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Young Kuwaiti author turns to gardening

By Faten Omar

“When life disappoints you, a tomato will never get you down,” is the mantra of Tarabya Al-Eidan, author of the book ‘Herbal Healing’, who found peace and mental well-being from gardening.

Eidan is not a trained gardener but she first fell in love with nature when she climbed a tree near her family’s house. She later turned to gardening after being inspired by a school assignment to plant flower seeds, watch how they grow and then write a report. But with her busy schedule of homework and playing videogames with her brother, the after-school hours were not the best time to indulge in gardening and all things nature.

However, Eidan is now an astute gardener, who in her spare time likes to cook contemporary cuisine, clean the house, ride her bike and do yoga on the weekends. “The idea of my book took seed two years ago, but I only started to write the book last year. When someone hears about ‘herbal healing’, they think it is about medicine, but actually I played with the words. The book is about how gardening helped me find healing,” Eidan said.

Eidan, who holds a BSc in Chemistry (with a minor in English Literature) from Kuwait University, learned how to garden

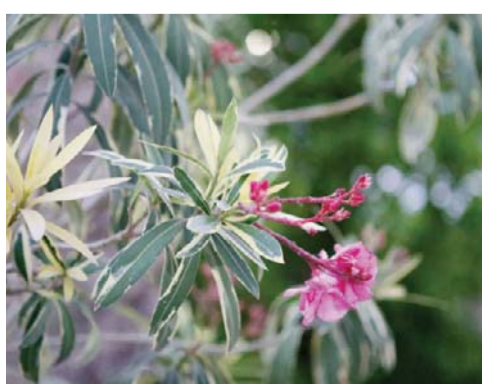
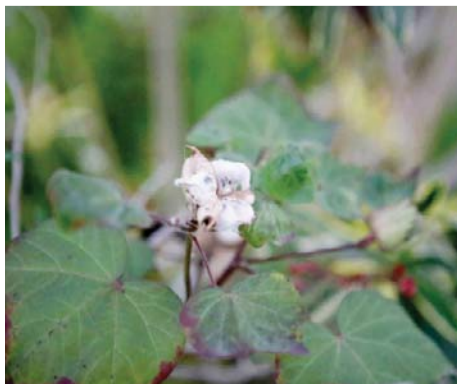
in elementary school, when the teacher gave an assignment to plant some flowers and record their progress. “After being away from gardening for a long time, I began this hobby again when we moved to our new home. I did some gardening and started growing plants such as potato, cotton, tomato, mint, rosemary and others,” she said.

Eidan developed her knowledge from social media and learned more about seeds. And this was her way of burying her doubts, fears and sadness into the ground. Eidan told Kuwait Times that being outdoors most of the time is a lot of fun and helped her get some fresh air and her hands dirty with the soil, which made her feel amazing. She added that the weather of Kuwait is a challenge, “but when someone cares about something, they can do it right and it will grow properly”. “I learned from my grandmother about mistakes she made when mixing up seeds and growing plants randomly, as I know that it should be organized,” she said.

Eidan wrote “Herbal Healing” in a year. It sums up her experience with gardening over the course of five years. Ultimately, it’s about her journey in finding mental well-being through the joys of gardening and being in touch with nature. “With the potatoes I dug up yesterday, I was able to enjoy the most delicious breakfast ever. I roasted

them in the oven along with rosemary - also from my garden - and ended up having them with a side of eggs - with oregano from my garden too - and the first tomato of the season. I only got one edible tomato along with tons of potatoes, but that’s just fine because I love potatoes more anyway,” she said.

She expresses her joy in cooking what she plants. “It was really inspirational to witness that tiny plant making its way through a crack of concrete and carry on with its existence. If not for its survival within the rigid sidewalk, maybe I would never have had the strength to carry on myself,” Eidan writes in her book.



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Interested and qualified candidates may apply to: email to kuwait.recruitment@almarai.com or by fax to +965 24344536, please mention the code for the position applied for.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Food Festival kicked off yesterday at the Marina Crescent. The three-day event (17-19 March) will feature different Chef Cooking Demonstrations every half hour. There will be live cooking demonstrations and interactive Cooking School presentations with International and local Celebrity Chefs, on two Chef Stages.

SHEEP THIEF NABBED

KUWAIT: Farwaniya police have arrested a thief for stealing sheep while grazing and then selling them to butchers in Hasawi area. A security source said Farwaniya detectives received several complaints about the theft and set up a team. Their investigations led to a suspect who targets grazing areas. The Egyptian suspect always stops his car on the side of the road - claiming it broke down after which he then steals what he can.

Kuwaitis arrested in Cairo

Cairo Airport customs officers arrested two Kuwaitis for having 32 kilograms of hashish upon their arrival from Casablanca, Morocco. The two suspects have been sent to Egypt's Public Prosecution and charged with trading in illicit drugs. Both suspects have confessed to the charges.

AK-47, arms found

Weapons detectives arrested three persons, a citizen and two bedoons during raids in Jahra and Saad Al-Abdallah areas. Police found AK-47, a pistol and ammunition. Detectives found out that the citizen is wanted to serve jail sentences. In another development, a citizen was taken to Jahra hospital with hand injuries after firing a bullet while hunting birds near Abdaly farms. Jahra security forces received a call about shooting in Abdaly farms, so police patrols went to the area and found a citizen injured while hunting pigeons. He was taken to Abdaly health center - then transferred to Jahra hospital for further treatment. —Al Rai

PROMOTING CITIZENSHIP

KUWAIT: First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said Wednesday that promoting principles of citizenship would strengthen communities and contribute to better countries. The constitution of Kuwait highlights principles and values that protect rights and dignity of people, as well as guaranteeing freedom of belief and expression, thus mirroring spirit and traditions of the Kuwaiti people, said Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled in a speech read on his behalf by his deputy Khaled Al-Jarallah.

The speech was the opening of the first conference of the citizenship and development society, held under the theme "Citizenship is source of rights and obligations and development." He said the constitution of Kuwait was in harmony with traditions of the people. "The accelerating developments in the world and their impacts on our region make the strengthening of citizenship a major pillar of national security ...," he said. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled cited a speech by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who said the genuine citizenship was measured by sacrifice and dedication of the citizen to his or her country.

He commended the citizenship and development society for shedding light on importance of education which would contribute to boosting citizenship and genuine belonging. Society Chairperson Sheikha Maimouna Al-Sabah development was generated by human beings and would benefit them as well. "There is a strong relation between citizenship and development," she added. She said the true citizenship would only be achieved when the citizen knew his full rights, and worked hard to achieve it. Sheikha Maimouna said the civil society organizations should play a leading role to promote citizenship and thus development. —KUNA

KUWAIT'S TRADE SURPLUS WITH JAPAN SHRINKS FOR 9TH MONTH

TOKYO: Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan narrowed 46.1 percent from a year earlier to JPY 20.8 billion (\$186 million) in February, shrinking for the ninth month, as exports declined more than a third, the Finance Ministry said yesterday. But Kuwait maintained monthly black ink with Japan for an unbroken eight years and one month, the ministry said in a preliminary report. Kuwaiti overall exports to Japan plunged 35.7 percent year-on-year to JPY 36.1 billion (\$323 million) for the ninth straight monthly fall, and imports from Japan also decreased 12.5 percent to JPY 15.3 billion (\$137 million), down for the second month in a row.

Middle East's trade surplus with Japan also narrowed 48.5 percent to JPY 261.0 billion (\$2.3 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region tumbling 35.1 percent from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural

resources, which accounted for 93.2 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, shrank 36.8 percent. The region's overall imports from Japan went down 8.7 percent, chiefly due to weak shipments of vehicle and machinery. Japan's global trade balance returned to surplus in February, reflecting a continued decline in crude oil prices, though both exports and imports declined. The world's third-biggest economy posted the first trade black ink in two months at JPY 242.8 billion (\$2.2 billion) last month. Overall exports fell 4.0 percent from the year before. Imports slid 14.2 percent, with shipments of crude oil plunging 33.3 percent due to low prices. Deficit with China, Japan's biggest trade partner, slid 50.5 percent to 382.4 billion yen (\$3.4 billion). The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Wang Di addresses the audience as China and Kuwait mark the 45th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

CHINA, KUWAIT LAUD BILATERAL TIES; MARK 45TH ANNIVERSARY

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: On the occasion of the 45th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations with Kuwait, the Embassy of China held a symposium on 'the relation between China and Kuwait and co-building of the economic belt of the silk road and sea silk road of the 21st century' at the Regency Hotel yesterday. The Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Wang Di talked about the bilateral relations between Kuwait and China from different views including: economic, cultural, youths and others. He also mentioned different important figures expressing the strong relations between the two countries.

Faisal Al-Ghais, former Kuwaiti Ambassador to China noted that although

the diplomatic relation with China was established in 1971 - both countries already had commercial and economic relations before. He mentioned seven major points of the bilateral relation - appreciating the supportive role of China during the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. "Kuwait currently has an embassy in China in addition to two consulates - and will soon launch the third consulate. We also have four official bureaus in China. This expresses the importance of the relations with China. Also there are good cultural and scientific bilateral relationships. Chinese students are now studying in Kuwait University and I wish more Kuwait students will go to study in China. I spent my best days in China, and the people

there are peaceful and they love foreigners," Al-Ghais added.

Ahmad Khazal, Deputy General Manager for Youth Affairs at the Public Authority for Youth and Sports spoke about the sports bilateral ties. "Since early 1970s, we have had great relations with China. We have Chinese coaches and trainers for Gymnastics, swimming and table tennis. I hope that more visits from both sides will take place in the future to exchange this experience," he said. 20 other personalities addressed the audience. The trade exchange between Kuwait and China is around \$11.25 billion, from which oil export from Kuwait represent the majority. Also Kuwait is considered China's seventh biggest oil supplier.

KUWAIT BLACKLISTS HEZBOLLAH-LINKED JOURNALISTS

AL-JARALLAH REITERATES TRAVELING WARNING TO LEBANON

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior has blacklisted nearly a dozen Lebanese journalists for suspected links to Hezbollah. Five Lebanese journalists in Kuwait will not have their residencies renewed and two others were given one month to leave the country, Al Rai Arabic newspaper reported yesterday. Other journalists suspected of being pro-Hezbollah or providing financial or political support have been placed on a blacklist and will be barred from entering the country. The list reportedly includes Lebanese, Syrians and other Khaleeji nationalities.

Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khalid reportedly oversaw the entire process, rejecting "several demands from people asking for mercy", describing Kuwait's security as a "red line not to be crossed". Unnamed security sources

quoted by Alrai newspaper said that the blacklisted persons will be classified as 'persona non-grata' and be deported from the country "through legal mechanisms that take national security and the expatriates' interests into account". The sources said that the blacklist includes names of media figures and business who were proven by compelling evidence to provide financial, media and political support to the recently outlawed Lebanese militia or to have established contacts or held meetings with Hezbollah leaders and representatives.

Terrorist group

Hezbollah militias and their leaders, factions and groups were this month classified as a terrorist group by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Arab League. The GCC is made up of

Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Three mechanisms will be enforced in dealing with the black-listed pro-Hezbollah supporters. Under the first mechanism, people who were declared persona non-grata will be denied entry when they return to Kuwait after their trips abroad.

As a second procedure, blacklisted persons will not have their residence permits renewed once they expire automatically. Under the third mechanism, some blacklisted persons will be summoned immediately and given a month's deadline to leave the country. According to the same sources, The State Security General Directorate barred six persons from entering Kuwait on their arrival at the airport and rejected the applications of five others to

renew their residence visas. They are reportedly media figures working for a TV channel and a newspaper.

Travel warning

Meanwhile, Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah has reiterated warning to citizens not to travel to Lebanon, and for those in the country to leave immediately. His remarks came after three Kuwaiti citizens were killed in less than a week in Lebanon. Al-Jarallah regretted the murder of the three citizens in less than a week-time "which shows that the friendly country is experiencing critical and difficult circumstances." He was speaking on sidelines of the first conference of the citizenship and development society. Al-Jarallah said all "signs show that theft motives were behind those crimes." —Agencies



SUSPECTS ARRESTED; FAKE \$70,000 AND KD 10,000 SEIZED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A Syrian expat was arrested for attempting to trade in forged currency inside the country. The Syrian (Humaidi Fayeze) was arrested with forged \$70,000 and KD 10,000. The suspect was also found to be a wanted person. He said another person (Samer Ismail) gave him the forged currency. His accomplice was arrested in Hawally.

Female employee detained

Residency Affairs detectives arrested an employee at one of the departments used to issue residency permit to some sponsors without their knowledge. She was sent to concerned authorities.

Liquor factory busted

Ahmadi police busted a local liquor factory being run in Wafra. 12 Asians were arrested in the factory. 180 full containers, 250 bottles, 6 distillers, 15 boxes of yeast, six large bags of sugar were confiscated.



EXTREMISM, TERRORISM MUST NOT BE 'LINKED TO' RELIGIONS

GENEVA: All forms of violent extremism must not be linked to any religion or civilization or racial groups because all heavenly doctrines advocate peace, the Arab Group at the United Nations Human Rights Council emphasized. Combating violent radicalism, terrorism, protecting and boosting human rights and basic freedoms, as well as safeguarding law sovereignty, are all interrelated objectives said the Group, in a statement read on its behalf by Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghenaim, Kuwait Delegate during a UNHCR's discussion pan-

el on combating such violence.

Violent extremism and radicalism have been taking various forms, in mounting numbers, in several countries; and "they have been increasingly feeding various forms of violence including terrorism," he said on the Group's behalf. The Arab Group strongly believes that fighting radical extremism and uprooting radicalism warrant greater attention, continuing international and regional cooperation, in tandem with the fight against terrorism, said Ambassador Al-Ghenaim.

Shedding light on these problems' roots,

the ambassador mentioned lack of proper education, soaring poverty and incitement rhetoric, as some of the factors that lead to developing a sense of inferiority by communities and individuals. Such feelings motivate these groups to seek non-peaceful means to express their suffering from injustice. Moreover, hatred of foreigners and hostility against religions encourage youth to be enrolled in radical and terrorist groups. Therefore, there must be bold action on part of the institutions in fighting such dangerous perils. —KUNA

ASSEMBLY LAUNCHES ITS FIRST CULTURAL SEASON

By Mishal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: General Secretariat of the National Assembly launched its first cultural season yesterday under the slogan "share in legislation". The activities started with a panel discussion on the societal movement, with monthly dialogue sessions. Participants in the societal movement panel discussed what Kuwait had provided since its establishment in the form of suitable environment to spread culture.

Within the framework of recovering Kuwait's cultural pioneering role, they insisted on the importance of reforming the educational system and correcting the defect of the population structure, and adopting new principles and values that rely on strengthening self dependence.

At the opening session, Assistant Secretary General for Information Sector at the Assembly Abdelhakeem Al-Sabti expressed pleasure on the first culture season which coincided with Kuwait's designation as the Islamic capital for 2016. This he said reflects Kuwait's role in the field of culture, arts and letters at the regional level.

Al-Sabti confirmed during the session (attended by Assembly Secretary General Allam Al-Kandary) the Kuwait's role, which represented over decades a cultural beacon in the region, and produced generations of educated, writers and poets. He said that the choice of "share in legislation," comes out of instilling the positive values and establishing the method of societal dialogue which the Assembly had selected since the launch of the current parliamentary term in 2013. The panel included Dr Mai Al-Naqeeb, Prof. Amer Al-Tamimi, Dr Ali Al-Zubi, Prof Faeed Al-Abdal and Dr Mohammad Al-Rumaihi.



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WASHINGTON: Secretary of State John Kerry arrives to deliver a statement that the US has determined that ISIS is responsible for genocide against religious minority groups in areas under its control including Yazidis, Christians and Shiite Muslims, at the State Department. —AP

ISLAMIC STATE CARRYING OUT 'GENOCIDE'

US VOWING TO END SLAUGHTER OF CHRISTIANS, SHIITES AND YAZIDIS

WASHINGTON: The United States declared yesterday that the Islamic State group's slaughter of Christians, Yazidis and Shiites amounts to a genocide and vowed to halt it. Secretary of State John Kerry made the proclamation after Congress demanded Washington recognize that the group seeks to exterminate religious minorities.

"Daesh is genocidal by self-proclamation, by ideology and by actions, in what it says, what it believes and what it does," Kerry declared. "Daesh is also responsible for crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing directed at these same groups, and in some cases also against Sunni Muslims, Kurds and other minorities," he added.

The Islamic State group has regularly carried out mass killings of Shiite Muslims, Christians and Yazidis. In June 2014 it seized the formerly cosmopolitan city of Mosul in northern Iraq, placing whole communities under threat of murder, rape or enslavement.

'Existential threat'

Already in March last year, UN investigators warned the self-proclaimed caliphate

was trying to wipe out Yazidis, members of a pre-Islamic religious minority. While genocide is a crime under international law, US officials say Kerry's ruling does not put Washington under any more legal obligation to act.

Instead, they argue, the United States is already doing its utmost to halt the slaughter by leading a 66-nation coalition to "degrade and destroy" the group. Kerry said the facts must one day be brought before an international tribunal, and that the United States would do all it could to support an investigation and prosecution.

He said that through air strikes and support for local forces, the coalition has pushed IS fighters from 40 percent of the territory it once held in Iraq and 20 percent in Syria. "We've degraded their leadership, attacked their revenue sources and disrupted their supply lines, and currently we are engaged in a diplomatic initiative aimed at trying to end the war in Syria," he said.

Kerry argues Bashar al-Assad's brutal campaign to cling to power in Syria fuels the chaos that allowed the IS group to seize the

east of his country. He vowed to continue pressing for a negotiated settlement to the broader civil war to allow local forces and the international coalition to focus its fire on the extremist threat.

"My purpose in appearing before you today is to assert that in my judgment Daesh is responsible for genocide against groups in areas under its control including Yazidis, Christians and Shia Muslims," he said. "For those communities the stakes in this campaign are utterly existential," he said. "So we must bear in mind after all that the best response to genocide is a reaffirmation of the fundamental right to survive." The intensity of the conflict and the IS group's history of murdering journalists, aid workers and suspected "spies" has made it difficult to document its crimes in great detail.

Murder and slavery

But the group has itself issued propaganda videos showing the mass killing of prisoners, and issued its own legal rulings pronouncing that captured non-Muslim women

slaves may be raped by its fighters. "We've not been able to compile a complete record, I think that's obvious on its face," Kerry admitted. "But over the past months we have conducted a review of the vast amount of information gathered by the State Department, by the intelligence community, by outside groups."

Kerry cited what he said was the August 2015 massacre of hundreds of Yazidi men and older women by the IS group, which trapped tens of thousands more on an exposed mountain without food or medicine. "Without our intervention, it is clear those people would have been slaughtered," Kerry said, adding that thousands of Yazidi women and girls had been sold at auction.

Kerry added that the group has executed Christians in northern Iraq and in Libya, where it also has a growing presence, and had sold Christian girls into sexual slavery. And he cited the murder of hundreds of Shiite Turkmen from minority communities in Iraq, accusing the group of a systematic effort to destroy the cultural heritage of ancient communities. —AFP

Kuwait Times Celebrates the 11th painting competition «Kuwait beautiful & Green»

With the aim of boosting environmental public awareness, developing the sense of aesthete and caring for environmental issues in Kuwait, Kuwait Times is currently preparing for its 10th Students Painting Competition to invest the success so far achieved since its inception in 1994, namely that achieved in the previous cycle in 2015 where over 13000 students aging 6-18- from over 80 public, private, Arab and foreign schools in Kuwait took part .We do hope 2016 participants would exceed 15000.

It has been already ten years since Kuwait Times started organizing the «Kuwait beautiful & Green» students painting competition in collaboration with the ZAIN as our main sponsor and JW Marriott hotel where the competition was borne, with the aim of promoting students' environmental awareness, encouraging them to effectively take part in various environment-oriented



activities with an ultimate end of acquiring more knowledge and skills, sense of responsibility as well as positive attitudes. It also aims at boosting the principles of moderation and tolerance

among students and encourage them to be ambitious, to protect public resources and to take sustainability-related initiatives that would help protect the environment. environmental protection

is not just a motto or meaningless words. It is in fact an integral part of our history and heritage. It is a way of life because we have been and will always be committed to peaceful co-existence between man and nature.

All Students aging 6-18- in various stages are invited to participate in the competition with drawings and paintings elaborating their environmental passions as the environment is the base of sustainable development in the form of planting rather than desertification, cleanliness and greenery rather than negligence public safety and lethal pollution. The door still open for schools or individual students to participate in this environmental completion, for more information call us on 248356167/.

This is how we want our Kuwait to be; a green beautiful oasis that reflects the beauty and high taste within our souls.





ADEN: Yemenis gather at the scene of two suicide blasts which provoked the explosion of a motorbike in Dar Sad, north of the southern Yemeni port city of Aden. —AFP

SAUDI TO SCALE DOWN YEMEN CAMPAIGN; DEATH TOLL RISES

STRIKE ON SANAA MARKET KILLS 119

SANAA: Saudi Arabia said yesterday its military coalition will scale down operations in Yemen, an announcement that came as the death toll from an airstrike by the alliance on a market north of the Yemeni capital this week nearly doubled, reaching 119.

A UN official said 22 children were among those killed on Tuesday in the Hajja province, an area controlled by Yemen's Shiite rebels known as Houthis, the latest in a series of similar airstrikes that have killed hundreds of civilians since the Yemen war began.

The conflict pits the Shiite rebels and military units loyal to a former president against the internationally-recognized government, which is largely confined to the southern city of Aden. The fighting has killed more than 6,200 civilians, displaced millions and pushed the Arab world's poorest country to the brink of famine.

The US-backed, Saudi-led coalition of mostly Arab states intervened militarily in Yemen a year ago, launching first an airstrikes campaign in support of the internationally recognized government, then sending in elite forces, mostly from Gulf Arab states, in an effort to roll back the rebel gains.

The Houthis seized the Yemeni capital of Sanaa in 2014 and later swept across much of this country at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi military spokesman Brig. Gen. Ahmed Al-Asiri told The Associated Press over the phone from the kingdom's capital, Riyadh, that his country and its coalition partners would continue to provide air support to Yemeni

forces battling the Houthis and their allies.

'Cohesive government'

"The aim of the coalition is to create a strong cohesive government with a strong national army and security forces that can combat terrorism and impose law and order across the country," Al-Asiri said. Only "small" teams of coalition troops would remain on the ground to "equip, train, and advise" Yemeni forces, which are gradually replacing coalition forces, he said, adding that the coalition's primary task will from now on be to help build a Yemeni army. "This takes time and it needs patience," he said.

Scaling down military operations, however, will not impact on the size of coalition naval and air assets deployed to protect Yemen's porous coastline on the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, he stressed. Meanwhile, Meritxell Relano, UNICEF's deputy representative in Yemen, told the AP of the new death toll - almost double the 65 who were initially reported killed in Tuesday's strike on the market in Hajja - came from a UNICEF field team at the site.

Dead children, charred bodies

The airstrike in the Houthi-controlled town of Mastaba also wounded 47 people, she said, and warned the death toll could rise further. The attack on the market marked the second deadliest in Yemen since the Saudi-led airstrikes began, after an airstrike hit a wedding party in September, killing at least 131 people.

After the strike, the Houthis' TV network Al-Masirah showed graphic footage of dead children and charred bodies next to sacks of flour and twisted metal. Witnesses said houses, shops and restaurants were also damaged, while cars caught fire. Al-Asiri, the Saudi military spokesman, said the coalition was investigating the Mastaba attack, arguing that Tuesday's airstrikes targeted a "gathering area" for Houthi fighters, located about 10 kilometers away from the market.

"Initial, independent and field sources say that 80 percent of the deaths are Houthi forces," said a comment scribbled on a map of the area he sent to the AP in Cairo. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has condemned the airstrike. "Attacks directed against civilians and civilian objects, including populated markets, are strictly prohibited," he said, urging a "prompt, effective, independent, and impartial investigations into all allegations of serious violations."

Yesterday, Jamie McGoldrick, the UN's humanitarian chief in Yemen, told reporters at a Sanaa news conference that none of the warring parties in Yemen are fulfilling their obligations to protect civilians or facilitate humanitarian assistance. The war has left Yemen fragmented and given the terror Al-Qaeda network a freehand to expand and seize cities and large swaths of land. Militants from the extremist Islamic State group have also taken advantage of the chaos to wage a series of deadly attacks across the country. —AP

RADICAL KURDISH GROUP CLAIMS ANKARA ATTACK

ANKARA: A radical Kurdish group with ties to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party yesterday claimed responsibility for the suicide car bomb attack that killed 35 people in Ankara last weekend. The claim by the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK) came as Germany closed diplomatic missions and a school in Turkey yesterday over security concerns.

In a statement on its website, TAK named the woman bomber as Seher Cagla Demir, who had been involved since 2013 in a "radical fight against a policy of massacre and denial against the Kurdish people." "On the evening of March 13, a suicide attack was carried out... in Ankara, the heart of the fascist Turkish republic. We claim this attack targeting centers... where decisions to massacre Kurdish people are made," the statement said.

The group said it was a response to security operations by Turkish forces in the Kurdish-dominated southeast of the country. "This action was carried out to avenge the 300 Kurds killed in Cizre as well as our civilians who were wounded," the statement said. "We would like to apologize for the civilian losses which had nothing to do with the dirty war being waged by the fascist Turkish republic," the group added. In February, Turkish forces ended an almost two-month military offensive backed by a curfew against Kurdish rebels in the southeastern town of Cizre.

Tightened security

Turkey has suffered five major bombings since July last year, killing more than 200 people, including two in Ankara in less than a month. Foreign missions in the capital have heightened security measures. The German embassy in Ankara as well as the consulate and German school in Istanbul were closed yesterday for security reasons, the consulate said on its website.

Last January, 12 German tourists were killed in a suicide attack blamed on the Islamic State group in the heart of Istanbul's tourist district. Turkey, which faces multiple security threats, is battling both IS and Kurdish militants.

Sunday's attack came three weeks after a similar car bombing in Ankara killed 29 people, also claimed by TAK. In the immediate aftermath of the latest bombing, the Turkish authorities pointed the finger at the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), against which Ankara has waged a relentless assault since late last year after a shaky two-year truce collapsed.

The government said one of the bombers was a woman in her mid-20s affiliated with the PKK and trained in Syria by the People's Protection Units (YPG), a Kurdish militia group the Turkish military shelled for several days in February. The TAK statement yesterday included a photo of the woman bomber.

The TAK is a little-known group which has nonetheless risen to prominence in recent months after the February bombing and after it claimed a mortar attack on Istanbul's Sabiha Gokcen airport on December 23. The shelling left one airport cleaner dead and also damaged several planes. —AFP



ANKARA: Turkish security forces clashed with rebels in the main city of the Kurdish-dominated southeast on March 15, days after a deadly bombing in Ankara claimed by the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), a radical Kurdish group with ties to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party. —AFP

EU CAUTIOUS ON CHANCES OF MIGRANT DEAL

BRUSSELS: European Union leaders voiced caution yesterday about the chances of clinching a deal with Turkey to curb the migration crisis, warning of a long list of difficult issues to overcome. The deal faces hurdles including threats by Cyprus to block Ankara's demands for faster EU membership, and legal concerns over a plan to send all migrants who land in Greece, including Syrians, back to Turkey. A divided EU has pinned its hopes on a bargain with Turkey to cut off the main route for the 1.2 million asylum seekers who have landed in the bloc since January 2015, sparking the continent's biggest migration crisis since World War II. The 28 EU leaders will thrash out their negotiating position in Brussels yesterday before meeting Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu today to push for a deal.

"I am cautiously optimistic but frankly, more cautious than optimistic," said European Council President Donald Tusk, warning of a "catalogue of issues" to resolve. "If we keep our cool we will achieve success," he added. European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker said that he was "fairly optimistic that we will reach an agreement" and that it would "of course respect European law and the Geneva Convention". Juncker added that Russia's recent military withdrawal from war-torn Syria could also stem the flow of refugees.

Cyprus problem

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, facing a rise in populist parties at home who are angered by her open door policy to Syrian refugees, said this week the deal

was the "first real chance" to end the crisis. The draft plan also includes visa-free travel for Turks to the EU and possibly doubling aid for Syrian refugees in Turkey to six billion Euros (\$6.8 billion).

Fears the deal could be

also visited Ankara.

Anastasiades opposes the opening of new "chapters" in the long-stalled EU membership application by Turkey, which refuses to recognize the Cypriot government on the island, divided since Turkish

opportunity to support the settlement talks in Cyprus. Only if this is possible, can we move forward here." Legal concerns are the other major stumbling block, despite last-minute efforts in Brussels to "rebalance" the deal.

Turkish soil. In order to meet legal requirements, all migrants arriving in the Greek islands across the Aegean Sea will be registered and have their asylum applications processed there, according to a draft of the agreement seen by AFP. The draft also stresses that the one-for-one plan is a "temporary and extraordinary measure" and effectively capped at 72,000 migrants. However the UN and rights groups have warned that this amounts to an illegal mass expulsion of asylum seekers.

'Blackmail' warning

Proposals to give Turkey visa-free travel to the EU's Schengen passport-free zone by June have also worried several countries. Critics have voiced unease over Turkey's arrests of journalists and academics-Germany's Spiegel magazine said Thursday it had been forced to withdraw its Turkey correspondent-and an intensifying military campaign against Kurdish separatists.

France has warned against attempts by Turkey to strong-arm Europe, and Czech President Milos Zeman charged that Ankara's request for billions of Euros more in EU aid amounted to "blackmail". Juncker however in a German newspaper interview said Turkey was "not ready" for membership and would not be for "another ten years". The summit will also call for aid to Greece to deal with a huge bottleneck of refugees, after Balkans countries shut their borders to stop people heading north to richer Germany and Scandinavia. Around 40,000 migrants are now in Greece including thousands in dire conditions in makeshift camps on the border with Macedonia. —AFP



The German and Greek leaders blasted Balkan countries for shutting their borders to migrants ahead of an EU ministers meeting on March 10. Greek authorities said there were 41,973 asylum seekers in the country, including some 12,000 stuck at Idomeni on the closed Macedonian border. — AFP

derailed by Cyprus's tense relations with Turkey have seen both Tusk and Juncker hold talks with President Nicos Anastasiades in the run-up to the summit. Tusk

troops invaded the north in 1974. Tusk stressed in his summit invitation letter that parts of the deal which "re-energize" Turkey's membership bid should also be "an

Under the key clause, in exchange for Turkey taking back all migrants arriving in Greece, the EU will resettle one Syrian refugee for every Syrian readmitted on

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MOZAMBIQUE UNREST TURNS HIGHWAY INTO 'GHOST ROAD'

MAPUTO: Mozambique's arterial north-south highway has earned the moniker of a "ghost road" with former rebels staging regular raids ahead of a threatened power grab in the country's centre this month.

"We registered eight attacks by Renamo gunmen last week, which caused a total of three deaths-including a three-year-old-and 23 injured," police spokesman Inacio Dina told a news conference in the capital Maputo on Tuesday. Renamo, which waged a 16-year civil war that ended in 1992, has refused to accept the results of 2014 elections when it was beaten once more by the Frelimo party, in power since independence 40 years ago.

Renamo alleged fraud and sporadic fighting broke out in June last year. In December, party leader Afonso Dhlakama warned that Renamo planned to seize control of six provinces of central and northern Mozambique, where he won a majority in the presidential elections. There are a total of 11 provinces in Mozambique. Dhlakama said on Monday that Renamo would take control of at least some districts by the end of this month.

Attacks have increased since February, with daily clashes between government forces and Renamo reported on social media and by the independent press, particularly in the centre of the country. On the main north-south highway civilian vehicles travel through the worst areas in convoys under military protection, and many foreign embassies now advise their nationals to avoid the route.

"The army is positioned to ensure the safety of travelers and tourists who circulate in this region," police spokesman Dina told AFP. "Mozambique is not at war." The resource-rich but poor southern African nation is at pains to reassure investors and tourists that it is stable again. But not all Mozambicans agree. "Though clashes only take place in some areas, people are dying, refugees are fleeing," Fernanda Lobato of the civil society organization Olho do Cidadao told AFP. "We have to face reality. Here in Maputo, in the south, we feel nothing, but there is no doubt that the country is at war."

'Conflict risk alert'

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 11,500 Mozambicans have sought refuge in neighbouring Malawi, with 250 people arriving daily. On March 1, the Brussels-based International Crisis Group put Mozambique on "conflict risk alert".

Renamo claims that it has also come under attack by government forces, with a wave of kidnappings and killings targeting its local representatives this year. Local media say the main highway, the NR1, has become a "ghost road", as only three or four convoys managing to get through each day. —AFP

6M AMERICANS HAVE DIRTY WATER IN HOMES

WASHINGTON: Some six million Americans have drinking water tainted with higher levels of lead than allowed by US federal guidelines, the USA Today reported yesterday. With the nation focused on a major crisis in Flint, Michigan, where lead from aging pipes leached into the municipal water supply, the newspaper launched an investigation which found higher than acceptable lead levels in about 2,000 water systems across the United States.

Tainted water was supplied to hundreds of daycare centers and schools, the report said. Children are the population most vulnerable to the pernicious effects of lead, a toxin which affects the neurological system and can lead to permanent learning delays and behavioral problems. Higher than allowed lead levels were found in all 50 US states, USA Today reported.

A sample of water drawn from one elementary school in Maine found lead levels some 42 times higher than the Environmental Protection Agency limit of 15 parts per billion, while a preschool in Pennsylvania recorded lead levels 14 times higher than allowed. An elementary school in Ithaca, New York tested earlier this year showed 5,000 parts per billion of lead—a level so high it met the federal Environmental Protection Agency's designation for "hazardous waste."

More than 8,000 children in Flint, economically devastated by shutdowns and layoffs in the car industry, were exposed to lead for more than a year before the tap water contamination was uncovered by citizen activists. —AFP



TAMPA: In this March 14, 2016, photo, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks at a campaign event. —AP

GOP LEADERS GRAPPLE WITH GRUDGINGLY ACCEPTING TRUMP

TRUMP'S LIKELY ASCENT TO GOP PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

WASHINGTON: Republican leaders are wavering between grudging acceptance and deep denial about Donald Trump's likely ascent to the GOP presidential nomination. With at least three more states in his win column, Trump is now the only candidate with a path to clinching the Republican nomination before the party's convention in July. But he still must do better in upcoming contests to get the necessary 1,237 delegates, leaving some opponents with a sliver of hope he can still be stopped.

"I still think it's a very realistic chance that nobody's going to have a majority of the delegates," said Henry Barbour, a senior Republican National Committee member who worked on Marco Rubio's delegate strategy until the Florida senator exited the race Tuesday.

Not deserving

Barbour said Trump "doesn't deserve to be president," but also said he could ultimately support the billionaire if he "can convince me that he's presidential material." Trump cautioned that his supporters would revolt if he falls just short in the delegate count and loses in a rules fight. "You'd have riots," Trump said on CNN's "New Day." "If you just disenfranchise these people, I think you would have problems like you've never seen before." Despite the deep concerns about Trump within the Republican Party, there was little tangible action Wednesday that indicated a way to stop the real estate mogul's march toward the general election.

There was no rush among party leaders or donors to coalesce around Ted Cruz, the only candidate in the race with even a long-shot chance of overtaking Trump in the delegate count. A small

group of conservatives moved forward with plans to meet to discuss the prospect of rallying behind a third-party option, but no candidate had been identified to lead that effort.

The three best-financed efforts to stop Trump abruptly ceased advertising after Tuesday's elections. The outside groups American Future Fund, Our Principles and Club for Growth have no Trump attack ads planned for Arizona - a crucial winner-take-all contest in six days - or in any states beyond.

Former House Speaker John Boehner floated his successor, Paul Ryan, as the nominee in the event of a convention fight. But Ryan quickly took himself out of the mix, saying through a spokeswoman that he would "not accept a nomination and believes our nominee should be someone who ran this year."

Trump v Clinton

Meanwhile, Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton set her sights on a November showdown with Trump. Her victories in four primary contests Tuesday was a harsh blow to rival Bernie Sanders, giving Clinton what her campaign manager described as an "insurmountable lead" in the delegate count.

"We are confident that for the first time in our nation's history, the Democratic Party will nominate a woman as their presidential nominee," Robby Mook wrote in a memo to supporters. Clinton has at least 1,599 delegates to Sanders' 844. It takes 2,383 to win the Democratic nomination.

Trump urged Republicans to view the party's nominating contest with the same sense of clarity. During a round of calls to morning television shows, he said some of the same Republican sena-

tors who publicly criticize him have called him privately to say they want to "become involved" in his campaign eventually. He also picked up an endorsement Wednesday from Florida Gov. Rick Scott.

Trump also effectively killed the GOP debate scheduled for Monday in Utah, saying "we've had enough debates." After Ohio Gov John Kasich said he wouldn't debate without Trump on stage, host Fox News scrapped the event.

Trump has won 47 percent of the Republican delegates awarded so far, according to the Associated Press delegate count. He needs to win 54 percent of the remaining delegates to clinch the nomination by the time the primary season ends on June 7.

Just a handful of states will vote between now and mid-April, a reprieve for opponents. "We've got four weeks to identify what the most effective path is," said Tim Miller, a former Jeb Bush aide who now works for an anti-Trump super PAC. Former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, who is supporting Kasich, said there were "calls going back and forth between the Kasich-Rubio campaign" about the possibility of a joint ticket, though he said those conversations were preliminary.

Any scenarios that end with blocking Trump could leave the party in chaos. But some Republicans suggested that given the party's current state, the chaos couldn't get much worse. "The divisions are already there," said John Jordan, a California-based donor who was leading a pro-Rubio super PAC. "There's already open warfare on TV. A couple thousand people in a food fight in Cleveland pales in comparison." —AP



GUANTANAMO: A couple walks next to a poster of Cuban President Raul Castro and Cuban former president Fidel Castro. —AFP

US-CUBA THAW HAS YET TO REACH GUANTANAMO

TESTAMENT TO THE BAD OLD DAYS IN TIES

GUANTANAMO: Jorge Frometa sometimes wakes up to a sound most Cubans never hear: the US national anthem, which plays out every morning at the nearby Guantanamo naval base, far removed from the blossoming US-Cuban reconciliation.

As President Barack Obama prepares to jet in to Cuba next week for an historic visit, the American base at the eastern tip of the island stands as testament to the bad old days in US-Cuban ties. Washington has had a permanent lease on the territory since 1903, over vehement protests from Havana, which wants the 120 square kilometers back.

Frometa, a 68-year-old retiree, lives in Caimenera, one of two villages that border the US base. Non-residents can only travel there with a special permit from the Cuban authorities. "We live quietly in Caimenera. The naval base doesn't worry us. Sometimes you go a long time without even remembering it exists. Other times you hear the US national anthem in the mornings and you realize you're millimeters from the base," he told AFP.

Cuba sits 170 kilometers off the Florida coast, but the 11,000 inhabitants of Caimenera are much closer. The Cuban government has declared the two villages that border the base "high-sensitivity zones for national defense." Frometa, a former maritime security inspector, was born a short drive away in Guantanamo, the capital city of the Cuban province of the same name. He moved to Caimenera in 1994.

"People come and go and some-

times don't even look at it (the base). You get used to it," he said. Other residents echo the communist government's call for the United States to abandon the base, where the US is still holding 91 terror suspects detained in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. "We want them to close the prison and give us back the base. We're trusting in Obama's goodwill," said Maria, who works for the national electric company.

Since 2014, Cubans have been allowed to venture to a scenic overlook called La Gobernadora where they can get a good look at the base. The hangars of the base's airport can be seen in the distance, on the western side of the bay. On the opposite side are buildings surrounded by acacia and mangrove trees.

Last Cubans

Besides some 750 US military personnel, more than 2,500 foreigners work at the Guantanamo base and prison—mostly Jamaicans and Filipinos. Today, no Cubans are employed at the base, but 50 former employees still recall working there. The last pair retired in 2013. One of them, 84-year-old Rodi Rodriguez, is the only Cuban civilian authorized to enter the base. Each month he goes there to collect his and the other retired workers' pension checks.

The routine never varies, he says: as he crosses the border, he is met by a group of armed soldiers, a US official and an interpreter—even though he speaks fluent English. At the entrance

to the base, he must identify himself to another US official, who issues him a verbal "invitation" to proceed.

Then he goes to an office to collect an envelope with \$34,000 in cash. "They give me the envelope in a little office decorated with both countries' flags. Then I leave and take it to the bank in Guantanamo," he said. He himself gets more than \$1,000 a month, some 100 times the average Cuban retiree's pension. Rodriguez, who did various jobs at the base for more than 40 years, said he always stayed on good terms with his American employers.

"I never offended anyone," he said. "I even got along with the counter-revolutionaries"—Cubans opposed to Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution who worked at the base before emigrating to the United States. But he calls himself a patriotic Cuban, even if he was occasionally the target of jeers from communist party members as he left the base.

"How would Americans feel if we installed a naval base in Houston? Well, we feel like that," he said. Tensions between the two Cold War enemies have subsided since the days when air raid sirens used to warn local residents of an American invasion that never happened, he said. But he's underwhelmed by Obama's visit to faraway Havana, he added, blaming the US Congress for blocking the president's efforts to close the Guantanamo Bay detention center. "I don't expect much from the visit," he said. "The prisoners are still at the naval base. He hasn't been able to close it." —AFP

MASS PROTESTS IN BRAZIL AFTER ROUSSEFF RECORDING UNVEILED

BRASILIA: Protests have erupted in Brazil after a recorded phone call between President Dilma Rousseff and her once-popular predecessor was released, suggesting that she appointed him to her cabinet to spare him from arrest for corruption. Rousseff appointed Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva as her chief of staff on Wednesday hoping that his political prowess can save her administration. The president is battling an impeachment attempt, a deep recession, and the fallout of an explosive corruption scandal at state oil giant Petrobras. However hours after Lula's appointment, federal judge Sergio Moro, who is heading a probe into the Petrobras scandal, ordered the release of a call recorded by police suggesting darker motives.

Rousseff called Lula's bugged phone to tell him she would be sending him the official decree nominating him as her chief of staff so that he could make use of it "if necessary." That extract seems to confirm that Lula's nomination to the post was aimed at sparing him possible arrest for corruption. Cabinet ministers can only be tried before the Supreme Court in Brazil, and ministerial immunity will now protect Lula from prosecution in criminal court.

Lula vigorously denies involvement in the scandal, in which investigators say construction companies conspired with Petrobras executives to overbill the oil giant to the tune of \$2 billion, paying huge bribes to politicians and parties along the way. Rousseff's office said the phone call was merely to discuss a procedural matter.

'Resign! Resign!'

The recording's release caused an uproar in Congress, where furious opposition lawmakers shouted "Resign! Resign!" Some 2,000 people spontaneously gathered in the capital Brasilia to demand that Lula step down and Rousseff leave office. "Instead of explaining himself and assuming his responsibilities, former president Lula preferred to flee out the back door," said lawmaker Antonio Imbassahy, lower house leader for opposition party PMDB.

"It's a confession of guilt and a slap to society. President Dilma, by appointing him, has become his accomplice," Imbassahy added. "The final chapter in this story will be her impeachment." As night fell, another protest broke out in Sao Paulo. "Resign! Resign!" shouted several thousand protesters gathered outside the building housing FIESP, a powerful federation of Sao Paulo industries. The building was illuminated in green and yellow—Brazil's national colors—and included a large inscription that read "Impeach now." The impeachment push is not directly related to the corruption scandal, but has advanced in tandem with it.

The president's office responded by announcing that "judicial and administrative measures" would be taken to "repair the flagrant violation of the law and the constitution committed" by judge Moro, but gave no specifics.

On social media, critics gleefully quoted Lula's own words as a rabble-rousing labor leader back to him: "In Brazil, when a poor person steals, he goes to prison. When a rich person steals, he becomes a cabinet minister!" Some three million Brazilians flooded the streets in nationwide protests on Sunday calling for Rousseff's departure.

Lula's 'third term'

Rousseff fired back at her critics in a press conference. "Lula's arrival in my government strengthens it and there are people who don't want it to be stronger," she said.

She played up Lula's political acumen and said she would give him "the necessary powers... to help Brazil." Opponents however warned that Lula would be the country's de facto leader. "The ex-president is launching... his third term and the president is ending her second," said Green Party Senator Alvaro Dias.

Lula, the 70-year-old co-founder of the ruling Workers' Party (PT), left office with 80 percent popularity ratings and the status of a hero to the left. During his two terms, he presided over a watershed period of prosperity and social programs that helped lift tens of millions out of poverty.

But his legacy is threatened by charges that he accepted a luxury apartment as a bribe from a company implicated in the Petrobras scandal. Lula however has far greater charisma than Rousseff, as well as the political instinct for forging alliances. "No one else in the PT has the force of Lula," said political analyst Michael Mohallem of the Getulio Vargas Foundation. —AFP



KABUL: Pigeons fly outside Shah-Do Shamshira Mosque. — AP

US MILITARY PERSONNEL PUNISHED FOR AFGHANISTAN HOSPITAL ATTACK

AERIAL ATTACK KILLED 42 CIVILIAN PATIENTS

WASHINGTON: More than a dozen US military personnel have been disciplined, but face no criminal charges, for errors that led to the aerial attack on a civilian hospital that killed 42 people in northern Afghanistan last year, US defense officials say.

The punishments, which have not been publicly announced, are largely administrative. In some cases the actions, such as letters of reprimand, are tough enough to effectively end chances for further promotion. The military has previously said some personnel were suspended from their duties but has given no further details. The disciplined include both officers and enlisted personnel, but officials said none are generals.

The officials, who were not authorized to discuss the outcomes publicly and so spoke on condition of anonymity, said the disciplinary process is nearly complete. It is derived from a military investigation of the Oct 3, 2015, attack, the results of which are expected to be made public in a partially redacted form in coming days.

Sandra Murillo, a spokeswoman for Doctors Without Borders, said the charity would not comment on disciplinary actions until the Pentagon communicates its decisions directly to the group or makes a public announcement.

The hospital, run by the medical charity Doctors Without Borders in the northern city of Kunduz, was attacked by a US Air Force special operations AC-130 gunship, one of the most lethal in the US arsenal. Doctors Without Borders has called the attack "relentless and brutal" and demanded an international investigation, but none has been undertaken.

'Human error'

Army GenJohn Campbell, who was

the top US commander in Afghanistan at the time but has since relinquished command, has called it a "tragic but avoidable accident caused primarily by human error." The attack was unleashed as US military advisers were helping Afghan forces retake Kunduz, which had fallen to the Taliban on Sept 28. It was the first major city to fall since the Taliban were expelled from Kabul in 2001.

Afghan officials claimed the hospital had been overrun by the Taliban, but no evidence of that has surfaced. The hospital was destroyed and Doctors Without Borders, also known by its French acronym, MSF, ceased operations in Kunduz. President Barack Obama apologized for the attack, which was one of the deadliest assaults on civilians in the 15-year war.

The US command in Kabul said in February that it has expressed condolences and offered payment to more than 140 families and individuals affected by the attack. In November the US military provided an outline of what happened. It said the crew of the AC-130 gunship, which is armed with side-firing cannons and guns, had been dispatched to hit a Taliban command center in a different building, 450 yards away from the hospital. However, hampered by problems with their targeting sensors, the crew relied on a physical description that led them to begin firing at the hospital even though they saw no hostile activity there.

'Not appropriate'

Many chances to avert the error were missed, officials said. At a November news conference, Brig Gen Wilson Shoffner, a spokesman for Campbell, said the actions taken by the US aircrew were "not appropriate" to the threat they faced, suggesting that a

number of them could be faulted. Campbell and Shoffner said that neither the US Special Forces commander who called in the strike at the request of Afghan forces, nor the US aircrew, was aware that a hospital was being hit until it was too late.

The main US military investigation was completed on Nov 15 but has not yet been publicly released. US Central Command, which is responsible for US military operations in Afghanistan and across the greater Mideast, rejected in December an AP Freedom of Information Act request for the report, which it said was approximately 5,000 pages long.

A separate US report on the incident, obtained last fall by The Associated Press, said the AC-130 aircraft fired 211 shells at the hospital compound over 29 minutes before commanders realized the mistake and ordered a halt. Doctors Without Borders officials contacted coalition military personnel during the attack to say the hospital was "being 'bombed' from the air," and the word finally was relayed to the AC-130 crew, the report said.

In an interview with reporters last week, Campbell, who is retiring on May 1, said the fall of Kunduz was a surprise - perhaps even to the Taliban. "They had no clue they were going to take over Kunduz," he said. The insurgents had infiltrated a small number of fighters and attacked a prison in the city, he said.

"They got in the prison and the police just kind of left," and so the Taliban decided to keep pressing with the help of other Afghan police who colluded with the Taliban and were "bought off," Campbell said. US special operations forces were then sent to the area in support of Afghan forces. — AP

SRI LANKA SAYS 'THREAT' TO ELECTRICITY NETWORK

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka warned yesterday of a "serious security threat" to its electricity grid as engineers battled for the fifth straight day to restore supplies crippled by an explosion and fire. Deputy power minister Ajith Perera said investigators had not ruled out sabotage in Sunday's blast and a fire at the main distribution centre just outside the capital.

"There is a serious security threat. That is why the military has been called in to protect these (electricity) locations," the minister told reporters in Colombo. He said investigators had so far been unable to determine the cause of the blast that plunged the country into darkness for about eight hours, the worst black-out in 20 years.

Sri Lanka's army, navy and air-force have been deployed to provide round-the-clock protection to all installations. The military was deployed at vital sites during the island's decades-long Tamil separatist war that ended in May 2009, but there have been no guerrilla-related attacks in the past seven years.

Authorities imposed electricity rationing of seven-and-a-half hours daily as engineers tried to restore normal supplies after Sunday's fire. But by yesterday afternoon, the authorities had still not managed to get the system fully back online.

Perera said only one of three generators at the Chinese-built coal-fired power plant that automatically shut down on Sunday had been reconnected. The \$1.35 billion plant commissioned in 2011 has been plagued with frequent breakdowns, he said. Sunday's was the second major power failure in less than a month and the worst since May 1996, when the entire country was without electricity for four days. — AFP

BANKS WILL CHASE MALLYA FOR 'EVERY PENNY', SAYS MINISTER

NEW DELHI: Indian banks will strive to recover "every penny" from a troubled liquor baron who left the country owing more than \$1 billion, the finance minister said yesterday, as warnings sound over a mounting bad debt problem. More than a dozen lenders are chasing Vijay Mallya, dubbed the King of Good Times, for 90 billion rupees (\$1.34 billion) in unpaid loans, but he left the country on March 2 despite calls for his arrest.

"Every government agency, whether it's the taxation department or the investigative agencies, wherever he has violated the law, is going to take strong action," Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told a conference organized by India Today television channel in New Delhi. "As far as the banks are concerned... I've been briefed that they are going all out to recover every penny of the last rupee that they can."

The businessman's 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 wealthy individuals, such as Mallya, who obtain huge loans they later fail to repay. Jaitley told the gathering that many bad loans were due to a slowdown in sectors such as steel, which is suffering after China flooded the market with cheap excess metal. But the finance minister also said that lenders granting individuals large loans-sometimes in unusual circumstances-which then went awry was "the real cause of worry".

"This has brought a huge bad name both to India's banking and also to India's private sector. It's extremely dangerous for the future if we are not able to remedy this," he said. The financial crimes agency has summoned Mallya to appear before investigators on March 18 in connection with a money-laundering probe, but he has not indicated if he will appear.

The entrepreneur, who has not been charged with any crime, denies absconding and has lashed out at media who accuse him of fleeing the country. In its budget last month Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government announced recapitalization measures for public sector banks, although some economists said the funds were not sufficient. On Saturday the market regulator laid out tougher measures to tackle individuals or businesses classified as "wilful defaulters", preventing them from raising fresh funds on capital markets or from sitting on listed company boards. — AFP

MYANMAR PLANNING TO FORM ETHNIC MINISTRY

YANGON: Yesterday Myanmar's incoming government announced plans to create a ministry for ethnic affairs, marking the importance it places on relations with minorities in a country scarred by festering civil wars and sectarian tensions.

The move was contained within a wider civil service reform plan announced in parliament that aims to streamline the unwieldy junta-era bureaucracy, slashing the total number of ministries from 36 to 21. A new civilian leadership, led by Aung San Suu Kyi and her presidential proxy Htin Kyaw, will take office at the end of the month.

The ministry plans will be debated by lawmakers on Friday, parliament speaker Mann Win Khaing Than said. They will

be implemented after Htin Kyaw is sworn in on March 30. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) has vowed to run a more inclusive administration open to Myanmar's ethnic minorities, many of whom chafed under military rule and launched frequent armed struggles seeking greater autonomy.

Last week an ethnic Chin Christian, backed by the NLD, was elected one of two vice-presidents, while the party has pledged to form a cabinet from across the political spectrum. Myanmar is still burdened by the legacy of half a century of junta domination that plunged the nation into poverty and isolation. The new government faces an obstacle course of challenges as it takes the reins of power, including ethnic conflicts,

poverty and the residual power of the army. It also inherits a notoriously inefficient and creaking bureaucracy that was neglected, underfunded and riddled with corruption during military rule.

Under the current system, for example, there are separate ministries for electric power and energy, while rail transport is run separately from the transportation ministry. Three key ministers—those of home affairs, border affairs and defense—will still be run by the army, despite the country's leap towards democracy in recent years.

While rank and file civil servants are not expected to lose their jobs, the ministries themselves will be trimmed down in the new plan, which has one

minister each for energy, transport, agriculture and the president's office.

The ministry of information, which churned out propaganda and diatribes against the democracy movement under junta rule, will also remain. The plan also combines the powerful ministry of mines into a broader natural resources and environment portfolio. This will remain a crucial position in the nation, whose rich natural resources are largely concentrated in ethnic minority areas where local people see little sign of the billions of dollars in revenues they produce. A particular challenge will be Myanmar's massive jade industry in conflict-torn Kachin state, which remains secretive and poorly regulated. —AFP



KABUL: Afghan actors perform in a play depicting the 2015 lynching of Afghan woman Farkhunda. — AFP

PROTESTERS MARK ONE YEAR SINCE MOB KILLING OF AFGHAN WOMAN 'A MATTER OF GREAT SHAME FOR OUR POLITICAL SYSTEMS'

KABUL: Wearing masks bearing an impression of her bloodied face, dozens of Afghans protested in Kabul yesterday to demand justice for a woman savagely killed a year ago after being falsely accused of blasphemy. The mob killing of the 27-year-old woman known as Farkhunda in broad daylight last March triggered angry nationwide protests and drew global attention to the treatment of Afghan women.

Protesters, some with fake blood on their faces, chanted "Justice for Farkhunda!" on the banks of Kabul River where the frenzied mob turned on her. "The murder of Farkhunda touched us all. It was an unforgettable crime against humanity," Laila Qarayi, a women rights activist. Street plays reen-

acted her grisly death, symbolizing public anger over a Supreme Court ruling last week that upheld reduced sentences for the men convicted of her murder. The court vacated the death penalty in four cases, reduced prison terms to 20 years in three others and 10 years in the fourth.

It also cut the sentences of nine other defendants. "It is a matter of great shame for our political and justice systems that justice was not delivered in this case," said Kabul University lecturer Saifuddin Saihoon. A spokesman for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani told AFP that the country's attorney general has been "instructed to make justice for Farkhunda his top priority and review the case". But when contacted by AFP,

a spokesman for the attorney general said they had not received instructions from the president for any review.

Farkhunda was attacked on the banks of the Kabul River after an amulet seller, whom she had reportedly castigated for peddling superstition, falsely accused her of burning a copy of the Koran. Her case has become a symbol of the endemic violence that women face in Afghanistan, despite reforms since the hard-line Taliban regime fell in 2001.

The backlash highlighted the angst of a post-Taliban generation in Afghanistan—where nearly two-thirds of the population is under 25 — that is often torn between conservatism and modernity as the country rebuilds after decades of war. — AFP

INDIAN POLICE ARREST MUSLIM STUDENTS OVER BEEF RUMORS

NEW DELHI: Police in India arrested four Muslim students on charges of breaching the peace after rumors the men were cooking beef sparked protests, an officer said yesterday. Hundreds of fellow students and right-wing Hindu activists had gathered outside a university residence in the northern state of Rajasthan on Monday and were accusing the four of cooking beef—a taboo in parts of the Hindu-majority nation.

Many Indian states including Rajasthan have banned the consumption of cow meat, which has become even more contentious since the murder last year of a Muslim man wrongly suspected of eating beef. Local police officer Labhu Ram said a "tense" crowd had gathered and were demanding the men be arrested, although he denied media reports they had been physically attacked.

"We came to know about the incident and rushed to the campus," he told AFP by phone from Chittorgarh district, where the university is located. "There was high tension as the angry crowd was demanding their arrest, we seized the suspected material and appealed people to leave the spot." The arrested students, who were all from India's only Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir, were granted bail on Wednesday and have since been released.

Ram said the meat they were cooking had been tested and found to be goat, not beef. A spokesman for the university said the rumors appeared to have been fabricated. "It was goat meat and some elements tried to make it into a big controversy," Harish Gurnani told AFP. Critics say beef bans discriminate against Muslims and other religious minorities who rely on the cheap meat for protein. —AFP

PAKISTAN TO JOIN AIR BASE ATTACK PROBE

KATHMANDU: Pakistani investigators will travel to India later this month to help probe a deadly attack on an air base that killed seven soldiers in January, New Delhi's foreign minister said during a visit to Nepal yesterday. Sushma Swaraj announced the joint investigation after meeting with Pakistan's foreign affairs adviser Sartaj Aziz in Pokhara, on the sidelines of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation gathering of foreign ministers.

India has blamed militants from the Pakistan-based Islamist group Jaish-e-Mohammed for the assault on Pathankot air base in the northern state of Punjab, which triggered two days of gunbattles. "The date for the joint investigation team visit from Pakistan has been decided... It will arrive on the night of (March) 27th and start its work from 28th," Swaraj told reporters after the meeting.

It is the first time Pakistan has participated in a probe of this kind, an Indian foreign ministry source said. The rare targeting of an Indian military installation outside the disputed region of Kashmir came days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surprise visit to Pakistan in December. It led to the postponement of peace talks planned between the nuclear-armed arch-rivals, with Modi urging his Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif to take "firm and immediate action". Yesterday Pakistan's Aziz said meeting with Swaraj was held in a "very good atmosphere". "The way in which Pathankot issues have been handled, the way the operation was done and now the joint investigation team going there... I think the cooperation on this subject will give some good results," Aziz said. — AFP

OBAMA MOVES TO IMPLEMENT US SANCTIONS ON N KOREA

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama signed an order Wednesday implementing UN-backed sanctions on North Korea after a nuclear test and missile launch this year, as Pyongyang promised reprisals. The White House said Obama had signed an executive order targeting the volatile hermit state's energy, financial and shipping assets. The measures were agreed to at the United Nations in response to the January 6 nuclear test and February 7 ballistic missile launch.

"The order is not targeted at the people of North Korea, but rather is aimed at the government," said the document signed by Obama. Among the entities targeted are the "Propaganda and Agitation Department" of the Workers' Party of Korea and mining firms that provide the regime with much-needed revenues.

The US Treasury Department estimates that coal revenues alone generate over \$1 billion a

year for the government of Kim Jong-Un. In response to the UN sanctions and a US-South Korean drill, Kim has already ordered an upcoming nuclear warhead test and multiple ballistic missile launches.

US officials say the threats are concerning, but fit a pattern of saber rattling by the regime. Analysts and diplomats have said that loopholes in the UN sanctions leave room for China, Pyongyang's key economic supporter, to continue business as usual.

In 2014, China accounted for more than 90 percent of North Korea's \$7.61 billion in total trade, according to the latest available figures from South Korea's state-run Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency.

In response to Obama's executive order, Beijing said yesterday that it "opposes any country's unilateral sanctions." "We have stressed that the unilateral actions taken by any country must

not undermine the lawful rights and interests of China," foreign ministry spokesman Lu Kang told a regular briefing. On Wednesday, North Korea jailed a 21-year-old American student. Otto Warmbier was sentenced to 15 years' hard labor for stealing a propaganda banner from a hotel.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest accused Pyongyang of using US citizens as "pawns to pursue a political agenda" and called for his release. "We strongly encourage the North Korean government to pardon him and grant him special amnesty and immediate release," Earnest said. "The allegations for which this individual was arrested and imprisoned would not give rise to arrest or imprisonment in the United States or in just about any other country in the world." In announcing the sentence, state news outlet KCNA said Warmbier had committed his offense "pursuant to the US government's hostile policy" toward North Korea. —AFP

AUSTRALIA HAILS 600 DAYS OF NO ASYLUM-SEEKER BOAT ARRIVALS

SYDNEY: Australia yesterday hailed its controversial regime of turning back asylum-seeker boats as a success after 600 days with no vessels arriving, and almost 700 people being repelled since the policy was launched.

Under the hard-line measures, asylum-seekers trying to reach Australia by boat are turned back to their country of departure or sent to remote Pacific island camps, where conditions have been criticized with allegations of rape and other abuse. They are blocked from resettling in Australia even if they are found to be refugees in a policy the conservative government has defended as stopping deaths at sea.

"Tomorrow (Friday) marks 600 days since the last successful people-smuggling venture to our country and the government's absolutely determined to make sure that it stays that way," Immigration Minister Peter Dutton said in Canberra. Since the start of "Operation Sovereign Borders" in September 2013 when the government came to power, 25 boats carrying 698 people had been turned back and "safely returned to their country of departure", Dutton added.

Rights groups have criticized camp conditions while doctors and whistleblowers have said the detention of asylum-seekers, particularly children, has left some struggling with mental health problems. Amnesty has also called for an independent review into allegations that Australian authorities paid crew on a people-smuggling boat US\$30,000 to return 65 asylum-seekers to Indonesia.

Stoked tensions

The policy has stoked tensions with Jakarta, which warned earlier this month after six Bangladeshi migrants were returned to the eastern Indonesian city of Kupang on a fishing boat that such operations were potentially dangerous. A group of "potentially illegal immigrants" from Sri Lanka were returned to the South Asian nation in February, the operation's commander Major General Andrew Bottrell added at the press conference.

Bottrell said a further 57 people-smuggling activities were disrupted during this period, preventing 1,900 asylum-seekers from trying to head to Australia, but did not provide further details about where they were from. He said that "people smuggling networks have been severely degraded". Under the previous Labor government, at least 1,200 people died trying to reach Australia by boat between 2008 and 2013. Dutton added he was "very proud" the number of children held in detention had fallen to just 29, and he was working to bring it down further. Detention levels are down from a record number of almost 2,000 children in June 2013. —AFP

MISSING JAPANESE JOURNALIST RE-EMERGES IN NEW VIDEO

FIRST PROOF OF LIFE FOR OVER 6 MONTHS

TOKYO: Footage has emerged of a Japanese journalist who went missing in Syria apparently asking for Tokyo's help in securing his release. Yesterday the Japanese government said it was studying the video of Jumpei Yasuda, who has not been heard from since the middle of last year. The footage was posted online by Tarik Abdul Hak who told AFP it had been provided to him by a group called Al-Noor, which he said "has been mandated by (the Al-Qaeda-linked) al-Nusra to carry out mediation for his release".

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, the government's top spokesman, said that he was "not aware" of any ransom demand. Speculation has swirled around Yasuda since reports first emerged that he may have been captured in Syria. "We are aware of the video and are analyzing it," Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida told reporters on Thursday.

In the one-minute video, the bearded man wearing a black jumper with a scarf around his neck says in English: "Hello, I am Jumpei Yasuda. Today is my birthday, 16 March." He remains mostly calm, but becomes slightly emotional when he addresses a message to members of his family. Speaking "to my country", Yasuda indicates there has been no official response to his plight. Militants from the self-styled Islamic State group last year beheaded Japanese war correspondent Kenji Goto and his friend Haruna Yukawa.

The government in Tokyo was criticized for what detractors saw as its flat-footed response to the crisis at the time, including apparently missed opportunities to free both men. Yasuda had posted frequent comments on Twitter, expressing frustration that many journalists were staying away from Syria. But the tweets



This file photo taken on April 20, 2004 shows Japanese journalist Jumpei Yasuda arriving at Narita Airport. —AFP

abruptly stopped on June 21 last year. In his last Twitter post on that day, he said: "I have reported what is happening through my blog and Twitter without disclosing where I am." He

added that unspecified "interference" with his reporting activities had increased substantially to the point that he might not be able to continue. —AFP

Lifestyle

FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2016



A model displays a creation designed by Japanese designer Tae Ashida during the 2016 Autumn/Winter Collection at the Tokyo Fashion Week in Tokyo, yesterday. — AP

Iraq's only ballet and music school faces funding crisis

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Students practice ballet at the Baghdad School of Music and Ballet in the Iraqi capital.



Ballet students socialize after practice. — AP photos

Iraq's only ballet and music school faces funding crisis



Students practice at the barre during ballet class.



Massa Ibrahim prepares for ballet class at the Baghdad School of Music and Ballet in the Iraqi capital.

Iraq's only music and ballet school has survived decades of war, sanctions and dictatorship, but now faces a funding crisis due to low oil prices and the costly war against the Islamic State group. On a recent day boys and girls in leotards warmed up on a practice bar before a mirror-lined wall, while an orchestra worked its way up scales in the next room, with students tuning cellos and plucking notes on Middle Eastern string instruments known as ouds. The teachers are still receiving salaries, but funds for instruments and equipment are drying up, leading to the cancellation of performances and raising concerns that the school - which has always recruited based on talent alone - may one day only serve the wealthy or close altogether.

Leezan Salam, 20, who studied ballet at the school as a young girl and is now an instructor, fears for the future of the arts in Iraq. "Our situation is very difficult," she said, referring to the country's seemingly perpetual waves of unrest. "The atmosphere around us is harsh, it makes people tough." The Music and Ballet School was built in 1969, and was generously funded under Saddam Hussein's secular Baath party until crippling sanctions were imposed on the country following the 1991 Gulf War. The school's fortunes improved after the 2003 US-led invasion, when the economy began to recover, and it remained open during the worst of the sectarian fighting that erupted three years later.

But now Iraq is bogged down in a war against the Islamic State group - which controls much of the country's north and west - and struggling with a refugee crisis. It needs \$4 billion a month to pay government employees, but with oil prices near record lows, its income is only half that, and officials predict a budget deficit of more than \$30 billion. As Baghdad struggles to make ends meet, many fear the arts will be the first thing to go. "These governments, all they care about are politics and religion," the school's assistant manager Madeeh Yahya Kassim said.

In recent years, the school has increasingly relied on donations from embassies, cultural institutions and private donors abroad. Kassim said that so far, this year's budget for instruments and equipment is just a quarter of what it was three years ago, and the Culture Ministry has told him to start charging tuition, rather than offering free classes to all those who pass

the entrance exams. Applications are meanwhile at an all-time high, and more than 200 students had to be turned away because the school simply didn't have space. "We aren't like a normal kind of school," Kassim said. "Our instruments, costumes and ballet shoes cost more money than just textbooks."



Teacher Leezan Salam, left, takes a selfie with her students.

A year's worth of supplies and maintenance for the whole school costs \$45,000 dollars, he said. Teachers say they've already had to cancel a handful of performances because they don't have the necessary costumes or instruments. Salam, the ballet instructor, fears that the costs of losing the arts could be far higher. "Without this school, Iraq would have a whole generation that's less accepting, less open minded," she said. "This school, it helps people learn to accept, it will ensure us a more peaceful future. At least that's what I hope." — AP

Why 'Batman v Superman' is still a high-stakes bet

In an era in which comic-book heroes dominate the box office, "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" might appear like a sure bet. Warner Bros.' March 25 release gives fans arguably the two biggest superheroes in the fantasy constellation, serving up Ben Affleck, one of the biggest stars of his generation, as the Caped Crusader, and Henry Cavill as the Man of Steel. At the helm is Zack Snyder, the director celebrated for creating the surprise hit "300." And the studio's crack marketing team, known for sparing no expense, is going full tilt on its promo blitz. But high expectations create both opportunity and risk.

The formidable intellectual property that Warners is deploying—exciting the collective memories of multiple generations of fans—inspires enormous good will and curiosity about what comes next for (as Lex Luthor would say) the Bat of Gotham and the Son of Krypton. But it also means that fans will react viscerally to characters they feel they own, expecting to have old sensibilities affirmed, even as they anticipate being dazzled by a fresh new take. Ratcheting up the stakes is the fact that "Batman v Superman" serves as the ambassador for a whole new generation of films from Warner's DC Entertainment unit — 10 pictures over the next five years—that are supposed to lift up Warner's lackluster film slate and supercharge results into the foreseeable future.

Pretty critical

"They have the chance to come out with all these other movies," said media analyst Jessica Reif Cohen of Bank of America/Merrill Lynch. "But it makes the situation much harder; harder to win an audience, harder to market, if this one doesn't work. ... It's pretty critical." The stakes have been thrown into high relief by the blockbuster success of crosstown rival Marvel Studios. The Disney subsidiary's last six films have averaged \$875 million at the global box office. If Warners could get just halfway to Marvel's consumer products results, DC could add \$150 million to Time Warner's profits



annually, a WB exec has said.

"It would be a slight exaggeration to say everything is riding on this film," said Doug Creutz, an analyst with Cowen and Co. "But if they can't make this sale to audiences, then they have a huge problem. They have told Wall Street they are going to grow earnings at Warner Bros. If you can't make that franchise work, then you can't achieve that goal." While expressing optimism about the film, Warner Bros. execs have tried not to push expectations any higher. With a production cost of at least \$250 million and added global marketing costs easily topping \$150 million, the movie would have to gross \$800 million to recoup its investment, if it were reliant just on box office (though the film will also benefit from substantial TV, merchandising and other receipts). Studio insiders consider the \$800 million figure inflated.

"They have told Wall Street they are going to grow earnings at Warner Bros. If you can't make that franchise work, then you can't achieve that goal," analyst Doug Creutz Current tracking suggests a robust opening of at least \$120 million-

\$140 million when the movie launches on about 4,000 screens in the US. One media analyst, who asked not to be named, said that given the costs and need to launch a series of future films, "anything under \$1 billion in worldwide box office will be a disappointment."

Months prior to the premiere, Affleck conceded the high stakes in an interview with *Variety*. "I think there is a ton of pressure on it," said the actor, whose selection to play Batman initially rankled some diehard fans. "I mean I would be bulls-ing you to say there isn't." Affleck expressed optimism the film will succeed, as did Greg Silverman, the studio's president of creative development and worldwide production. "This film is really important to the fans," said Silverman, "and we feel a responsibility to make sure they get what they deserve: a great film about great characters they care about as much as we do."

Produce films

"Batman v Superman" originally was slated for release last July, but in early 2014, Warner Bros.

Entertainment chairman Kevin Tsujihara pushed the movie off eight months, allowing for script revisions and other changes. Studio insiders feel that the delay helped make the film better. Tsujihara knew the calendar shift would hurt the studio's 2015 results and, indeed, without the cinematic crusaders driving revenue, Warners suffered its worst year in recent memory, dragged down by films like "Jupiter Ascending" and "Pan" (which each lost more than \$100 million) and "Man from U.N.C.L.E." This year, it hopes, marks its comeback.

Eddy Von Mueller, a senior lecturer in the Film and Media Studies department at Emory University, said that DC has tended to produce films that lean more toward "engagement" with the world, in contrast with the more purely escapist fare produced by Marvel. Von Mueller, who has written extensively about special effects and superhero films, said that if the gritty tone of "Batman v Superman's" trailers carries throughout the two hour, 31 minute film, "It could be a tougher sell to audiences." But the self-described fan boy said the film will benefit from a curiosity factor, and could escape the superhero fatigue that many observers think may be coming. "I am really curious to see where this goes," Von Mueller said. "Can they develop an ensemble franchise out of the DC properties?"

Warners believes it can, in a big way. Among the studio's plans through 2020: "Wonder Woman," starring Gal Gadot, arrives in 2017, along with the first of what could be several "Justice League" films, featuring Batman, Superman and the other superheroes. In future years, movies centered on the Flash, Aquaman, Cyborg, Green Lantern and others are anticipated. Any way you look at it, all of the leaping, flying, zapping spinoffs will be delivered on the backs of Batman and Superman. For the DC heroes to fly, "Dawn of Justice" must lead off a winner. — Reuters

In 'Midnight Special,' Nichols lights sci-fi with sincerity

Jeff Nichols' "Midnight Special" - a sci-fi mystery that plays out in a clandestine, nocturnal chase from Texas to Florida - began with an idea of light in the writer-director's mind, and a desire to recapture the cryptic thrill of science-fiction films like "Starman" and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." But it wasn't until after Nichols, the 37-year-old writer-director of "Mud" and "Take Shelter," was driving to his writing office in Austin, Texas, one day when he knew what "Midnight Special" would be about. That was when he heard the news of Sandy Hook.

"This movie, it's a silly sci-fi chase movie, but at its heart is me trying to deal with that: Pulling over to the side of the road and hearing about children being shot and picturing my son being afraid in his final moments and just being devastated," says Nichols. "Does the movie reach those heights? Probably not. Is it good that it doesn't? Maybe. But this is what I was feeling." "Midnight Special," which Warner Bros. will release Friday, is the first studio film for Nichols whose films - personal tales rooted in classically American moviemaking - have made the Arkansas native one of the most exciting voices in independent film. "Midnight Special" finds him developing his command of special effects in a bigger budget production than he's done in

the past, yet remaining a steadfastly sincere storyteller.

Love and protection

"The thing that Jeff possesses in spades is if you carved his heart out, I'm sure it would be heavier than most people," says Joel Edgerton, a co-star in the film. "He feels things very deeply. His films are infused with an emotion that generally trends toward family and love and protection and care. Even if there's violence, it's because it's spurred on by the lack of those things." In "Midnight Special," Michael Shannon (who has appeared in every movie by Nichols, beginning with his debut, "Shotgun Stories") stars as the father to 8-year-old Alton (Jaeden Lieberher), a boy who possesses a mysterious special power. Alton, who wears goggles to cover eyes that can illuminate in searing beams of light, has attracted the pursuit of the government (Adam Driver plays a sensitive NSA agent) and the religious sect from which his father is trying to rescue him.

The film, patient but explosive, metes out exposition slowly and leaves some questions unanswered. It opens with a Chevelle throttling through the night, headlights off, with the father and his accomplice (Edgerton) driving with night-vision goggles. Their mission is vague and uncertain, but Shannon's father is

compelled by a faith in his son and a determination to shepherd Alton where he needs to go. "That's parenthood," Nichols, who has a 5-year-old son with his wife, said in an interview over lunch in Greenwich Village. "Just because you believe in something doesn't mean you understand it. In fact, usually you don't." "Midnight Special" is a kind of companion to Nichols' "Take Shelter" (2011), which grew out of his anxiety in becoming a parent. Shannon played a paranoid father who sees literal storm clouds on the horizon.

"Fear has been the basis of all of my movies, almost," says Nichols. "'Shotgun Stories' was about the fear of losing my brother. 'Take Shelter' was the fear of the entire world falling apart and the fear of becoming a parent. 'Midnight Special' was the fear of losing my child. But fear in and of itself is not a story. It's a catalyst that creates something." "Mud," a Mark Twain-esque coming-of-age tale set along the Mississippi and co-starring Matthew McConaughey, was very well received and selected for the Cannes Film Festival. But it struggled to find a distributor and wasn't much promoted. Nichols grants that the experience "shook my confidence." — AP



This photo shows director Jeff Nichols posing for a portrait in New York to promote his film, 'Midnight Special.' — AP



Aboriginal artist Loongkoonan poses in front of some of her artwork.



Aboriginal artist Loongkoonan poses in front of some of her artwork in the lead up to the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia. — AFP photos

Aboriginal painter, aged 105, happy to see her art make its mark

Australian artist Loongkoonan only began painting aged about 95, little more than ten years on her works have electrified the indigenous art scene and are now being exhibited overseas.

The softly-spoken centenarian, who as an artist goes by one name, arrives at the Art Gallery of South Australia wearing a light-weight silver jacket over a bright blue floral dress, and a black bowler hat on her head. She's tired after the long journey from her community in remote Western Australia, but is nonetheless thrilled to see her canvasses on display as part of the prestigious Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art.



Aboriginal artist Loongkoonan looks at some of her artwork.

"I'm really, really happy," she says, in comments interpreted from her indigenous Nyikina language by her niece Annie Milgin. "And I'm really, really proud." Born around 1910, Loongkoonan has defied the statistics relating to Australia's Aborigines who have, on average, a markedly shorter life expectancy than their fellow citizens and are the country's most disadvantaged people. Diane Mossenson, whose gallery in Perth has shown her work, says Loongkoonan's family attribute her good health in part to traditional remedies, adding that the artist's eyesight has always been "brilliant".

"She doesn't take any Western medicines at all except for perhaps a Panadol (painkiller) when she's got a little bit of an ache or a pain," she says. "It's all bush medicine." Throughout her long life, Loongkoonan has maintained her connection to her traditional culture and lifestyle, and today lives in the small community of Jarlmadangah in Australia's far northwestern Kimberley region. "So how much of her life is spent doing things like fishing and hunting? She still does that," explains Mossenson. "Now whether she is the fastest one chasing the goanna (monitor lizard) or as the niece says, sometimes she sits out at a tree and she supervises everybody else

doing it, but she is still able to go out and participate."

Loongkoonan's life is written into her work—bright depictions of bush tucker (food), natural springs and other geographical features of the Australian Outback, working on cattle stations, and growing up alongside the Fitzroy River. And as an elder of the Nyikina people from the central western Kimberley region, she is the custodian of much traditional language and lore, and strives to impart her knowledge through her art. "Even if the artwork is about bush tucker and her country, it triggers a conversation of who Loongkoonan was as a person and begs us to ask further questions about what her life was about," explains Mossenson.

'A really lovely energy'

From the start, Loongkoonan's style, which the artist has previously described as painting the landscape "the same way eagles see country when they are high up in the sky", was distinctive and arresting. "When Loongkoonan's first and early paintings came in, although they were rather raw and simple in a way by contrast to what's currently on show, they still had an amazing graphic element to them and a really lovely energy," says Mossenson. "That was just the way she chose to want to paint and portray her country."

Loongkoonan's works have recently had their first international exhibition at the Australian embassy in Washington, and Mossenson says they don't always fit the norm of what is the expected style of Aboriginal painting, with some slow to recognize her work. "The puzzle for me as we've been representing has been these most amazingly beautiful works ... have been embraced by some people, but broadly within those that thought they knew everything about Aboriginal art there has been in some ways a slow recognition of her work," she says. But to her niece Annie Milgin, Loongkoonan's works are not only "so beautiful", but with "old people gone" carry a strong message.

"She's talking about bush medicine, and the bush tucker. And that's what she learned from her mother and her father and her grandmothers," she tells AFP from Adelaide. Mossenson, who says Loongkoonan did not have children of her own but brought up many of her nieces and nephews, adds the artist is someone for whom painting keeps her healthy in mind, spirit and body, even though she is currently having a break. Asked if she feels strong when she is painting, Loongkoonan agrees, saying she would only stop if she felt "really, really sick". Indigenous Australian art is considered the oldest ongoing tradition of art in the world, but it was not until the 1970s that it began to receive widespread recognition in the West. Since then, the industry has flourished. — AFP

Hula hoop mania swinging back into action

Long considered a 1950s staple associated with child's play or circus acts, hula hooping has been making a comeback as a fitness craze or art form, with even Michelle Obama hooping it up for health. Attesting to the growing popularity of the trend, enthusiasts from around the globe have descended on Los Angeles this week for what has been billed as the "world's first urban hula hooping festival."

Hailing from Germany, Finland, Canada, Australia or from across the United States, participants in the week-long event are sweating it out in workshops, showcasing the latest hooping techniques to burn calories or to spin on the dance floor. The event will climax with a flash mob of hula hoopers. "The trend is definitely catching on and a lot of the best hula hoopers today are 17- or 18-year-olds who are coming up with stuff we have never seen before," said Rebecca Halls, founder and director of the Los Angeles event. "Hula hoop artists are also really pushing the envelope in terms of dance."

Hoop queen Marawa Wamp, who holds the world record for twirling 162 hoops simultaneously and who is attending the festival, said there are only benefits to reap from hooping, whether in terms of fitness, for fun or as an art form. "For anyone who thinks hula hoop is for the schoolyard, I would say this: I have performed for Kenzo during Paris Fashion Week, and Andree Deissenberg of the Crazy Horse in Paris wants to put me in a show," boasted Wamp, who travels the world teaching hula hoop and performing.

The 33-year-old, who also holds the Guinness record for the longest ride on high-heeled roller skates, said there are also thera-

peutic benefits to hooping. "I have worked in an orphanage in Nepal, I have taken hoops to Somalia, to

Cuba, and everywhere you go, no matter how jaded people are, everyone wants to hoop," she said. "And when they do, they are happy."

Alternative way to exercise

Pat Meda, 62, said she got hooked about three years ago while watching a television show about hooping and hasn't stopped twirling since. "They call me the hoop lady at the college where I work," said Meda, who lives in the Los Angeles area and makes her own hoops. "I even taught a nun how to hula hoop." Fitness experts say hooping, which dates back to ancient Greece when hoops were fashioned from grapevines to use for exercise, is a fun alternative to traditional routines such as jogging or working out on machines.

"It's a tremendous total-body workout, given the variety of movements," said John Porcari, a professor in the Department of Exercise and Sport Science at the University of Wisconsin. Porcari, who oversaw a 2011 study on hooping sponsored by the American Council on Exercise, said those who practice hooping can burn up to 400 calories per hour. "You get all the benefits of exercise and it can relieve anxiety, blood pressure and depression," he told AFP. "And what's more, people enjoy it." — AFP



A girl plays with a hula hoop in a makeshift camp at the Greek-Macedonian border near the Greek village of Idomeni. — AFP

Concert kicks off leading up to opening of **Louvre Abu Dhabi**

A season of events leading up to the opening later this year of the Louvre Abu Dhabi has kicked off with a concert mixing traditional Arab music with a classical Western orchestra. Led by German-born conductor Christoph Eschenbach, the performance on Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat island on Wednesday evening saw 10 Emirati musicians playing alongside 120 members of the Vienna-based Gustav Mahler youth orchestra. The ambitious Louvre Abu Dhabi project, announced with much fanfare nearly a decade ago, aims to promote the oil-rich United Arab Emirates as a leader in the global art world.

It has faced repeated delays but the opening of the museum-set to host more than 300 works including from Leonardo da Vinci and Vincent van Gogh is now set for the end of this year. Speaking to AFP before the performance, Eschenbach called the upcoming opening "a very important step" in the global development

of art. "That it is being celebrated with music is beautiful," he said. Fathallah Ahmed, a composer who was part of the team that worked on merging the music written by Emirati oud player Faisal al-Saari with the classical Western symphony, called the performance "a very valuable opportunity to introduce Emirati music to the West".

Built at a cost of \$500 million euros, the Louvre Abu Dhabi will feature 9,200 square meters (100,000 square feet) of gallery space. Many of France's grand museums, including the Louvre, the Musee d'Orsay and the Palace of Versailles, will loan art to Abu Dhabi as part of a 30-year collaboration with the Emirate worth one billion euros. Officials have described the Louvre Abu Dhabi—designed by French architect Jean Nouvel—as the largest cultural project in the world since New York's Metropolitan Museum opened in 1870.— AFP



Emirati men watch a concert conducted by German-born music conductor Christoph Eschenbach.



German-born music conductor Christoph Eschenbach leads an orchestra playing local Gulf melodies merged with Western symphonies in a performance inspired by the Louvre Abu Dhabi in the Emirati capital.



German-born music conductor Christoph Eschenbach leads the orchestra. — AFP photos

Springsteen bids adieu to **Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena**

There's no better musical act to bid adieu to the Los Angeles Memorial Sports Arena than Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, who kicked off their first of three final shows on "The River" tour Tuesday night at the storied venue, an oblong husk of steel and peeling vinyl seats that opened in July 1959 and where Springsteen (who famously dubbed it "the dump that jumps") has performed over 30 times throughout the course of his iconic career. Saturday, March 19, will mark the arena's swansong before it's demolished (cue references to Springsteen's "Wrecking Ball.")

At 66 years old, Springsteen knows something of love and loss, and one could easily draw comparisons between the sports arena's aesthetic fall from grace and the themes of perplexing adulthood and inscrutable relationships inherent in "The River," the landmark 1980 double-sided album that Springsteen and his band played in its entirety to a packed audience made up of fervent fans for whom the Jersey-born rocker is far more than a performer, but a spiritual touchstone for whom they will make multiple pilgrimages during any given tour. (As one lifelong fan put it, "I lost count of how many shows I've been to at around 75 and the year 2006." Another fan, with a graying mullet cut and a red bandanna tied around her neck, flew from Australia for the performance, wearing a t-shirt that read "I crossed shark infested waters for 'The River.'")

"The River" was my coming of age record,"

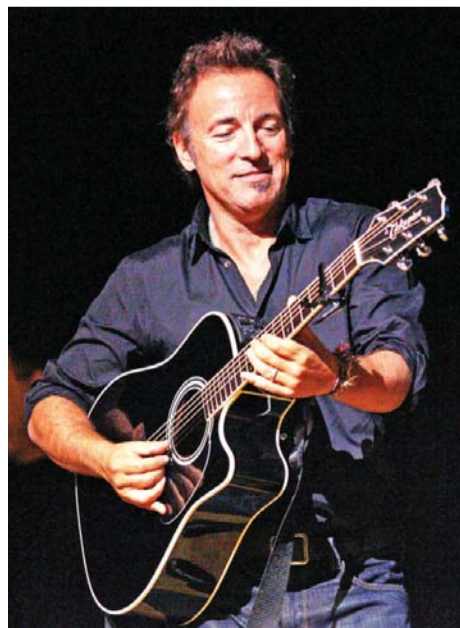
Springsteen told the crowd before launching into his three-and-a-half-hour set (two hours of "The River" and one-and-a-half hours of more mainstream Springsteen hits). "I wanted to make a big record that felt like life. I wanted it to contain laughter and friendship and tears."

From languid ballad "Independence Day"—"the first song I wrote about fathers and sons, the kind of song you write when you are young," Springsteen said—to the hopeful and upbeat "Hungry Heart" and the wistful, romantic melody "I Wanna Marry You," to "Drive All Night" and the album's eponymous track, "The River," with its sullen, blue-collar lyrics about teenage pregnancy and economic depression and the harsh effects of real life on young love, Springsteen revealed himself through story and song the way he always does, naturally and eloquently—as a songwriter, as orator, as philosopher.

Darkness and despair

"If you lose your love, do you lose yourself?" mused Springsteen before his track "Stolen Car," a song lamenting a married couple's drifting apart, his oft-plied imagery of the car a metaphor for escape and solace in the face of darkness and despair. While "The River," haunting and dirge-like and obscure, might have underwhelmed-infuriated, even more casual Springsteen concert-goers aching for his radio favorites, the "Boss" did not disappoint, churning out hits like "Badlands," "Rosalita" and

"Thunder Road," widely considered one of the greatest rock songs ever recorded. Its prophetic lyric "I got this guitar and I learned how to make it talk" prompted attendees at last night's show (and every show) to clench their eyes shut and strum along on air guitar. Springsteen fans don't merely sing his songs—they commune with them.



But Springsteen is a guy—an artist, a hero—who understands that without sadness there can be no joy, without endings there can be no beginnings. These tropes were manifested in last night's rousing rendition of "Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out" from Springsteen's breakout 1975 album, "Born to Run," a account of how Springsteen and his E Street family—including Max Weinberg, Steven Van Zandt, Garry Tallent, Patti Scialfa, Roy Bittan and Nils Lofgren—came together. A longtime staple at Springsteen shows, the song has since become a memorial and tribute to founding E Street members Danny Federici, who died in 2008, and saxophonist Clarence Clemons, the "big man (who) joined the band" and died in 2011. This concept of loss in the midst of life was perhaps best summed up by the way in which Springsteen described "The River" album at the show's start: "The River is about time, time slipping away as you walk alongside your own mortality and realize how you have a limited amount of time to love." — Reuters

Bruce Springsteen



Photo shows houses in Ollantaytambo, Peru, at the foot of a mountain in the Sacred Valley with Ancient temples, storehouses and other structures built by the Incas, carved into the mountainside.



A room in a private home used for tourist homestays in Ollantaytambo, Peru. — AP photos



Photo shows local resident Rajoo Bejar Romero reading a book as plates of chicken, rice and sliced tomato served as part of a homestay experience.

En route to **Machu Picchu**, homestays in Ollantaytambo, Peru

By Fritz Faerber

The nearly bare room has unadorned white walls and twin beds with thick, alpaca wool blankets beneath polyester covers. A shower curtain hangs from a mop handle to screen off a small bathroom, but there's no hot water or heat. On a small table with a single chair is the one thing that turns these Spartan accommodations into a warm home for a night: four fresh red roses in a jar. Luz Marina Bejar Romero cut them for me, her guest.

Luz Marina lives in the Sacred Valley of Peru, in the town of Ollantaytambo, a gateway for tourists heading to Machu Picchu. She and her 10-year-old son Rajoo live down a dusty street in a small home surrounded by a high wall. They keep chickens,

guinea pigs, ducks and a noisy turkey. I am here for a homestay. At about \$20 for a night with three meals included, price might seem to be the draw. But for me, the attraction is an opportunity to live like a local for a night and get to know my host family.

Budding naturalists

I chat haltingly in Spanish with Rajoo about international soccer and his favorite player, Brazil's Neymar. I find similarities between him and my own son, separated by language, a few years and several thousand miles. They both love soccer and sports, are budding naturalists and enjoy math. We talk about the animals that live in the region and he asks about my home. Luz Marina chimes in from the kitchen where she is making a simple, tasty dinner of rice and fried chicken. She'd killed the chicken just

for me, prompting a twinge of guilt on my part.

Ollantaytambo - sometimes shortened to Ollanta - is filled with all types of lodging for the waves of tourists who come through en route to Machu Picchu: B&Bs, hippie hangouts, hotels. The small Andean town is located about 90 minutes by train from Machu Picchu. Many hiking treks also depart from Ollantaytambo for those walking the Inca Trail. At one end of town, sweeping terraces ascend dramatic cliffs where a temple fortress marks the last site of an indigenous victory over invading Spaniards. Temples, storehouses and other ancient structures dot the steep mountainsides surrounding the town. As impressive as the old stone is, I'm more interested in contemporary local culture. It's why I connected with Awamaki, an organization in Ollantaytambo that works to preserve traditions while building economic opportunities like the homestays.

Vivian Smith Baca, Awamaki's sustainable tourism coordinator, describes the accommodations as rustic and says she hopes visitors learn what life is like in the mountains. "I'd like to hear it may not have been most warm or comfortable night of their lives, but they learned a lot," she said. "To be able to spend time in someone's house, is great."

Weaving workshops

The group started in 2009 to help a weaving cooperative in Patacancha, a small Quechua village about an hour's drive from Ollanta. Volunteers also run a storefront to help the women sell their vibrant textiles directly to visitors.

In addition local women lead weaving workshops where visitors can try their hand at spinning and dyeing yarn and weaving bracelets. A recent weaving class drew an eclectic group of expats living in Peru. For a few hours we struggled to hold a consistent pattern as a colorfully-clad local cheerfully helped us.

"The best thing about it is you get an entire experience from beginning to end of all to do with weaving, which is a great part of their lives. And, it's just a little bit more than hopping in, doing something quick and going away," said Chrissie Ellison, a British expat who teaches in Peru. Spaniard Jose Manuel Rabanal brought his wife and two children for the tour. The kids made friends with village children and dove into making bracelets. Rabanal had a bit more trouble with the loops of yarn tied to his waist. At last, his "professor" completed his bracelet, eliciting a cheer and warm hug from Rabanal.



Photo shows visitors gathered outside a colonial-era church on the road between Ollantaytambo and Patacancha, Peru.



A group of women wearing colorful woven clothes in Patacancha, Peru.



Professional work

"It's been an amazing experience and these ladies, they deserve a recommendation, they do very professional work. I've seen some of their (weaving) patterns and I was amazed by them," said Rabanal, showing off his new bracelet. Smith says the tours have helped improve the lives of villagers. Added income has enabled many families to replace thatch roofs with tin. Families can afford to send their children to better schools in bigger towns and have added more fruits and vegetables to their diets.

"I'm happy. I'm an artisan, and when visitors come, I sell my textiles, crafts. I sell them my artisanal goods. If there were no visitors, I would not sell. I'm pleased," said weaver Cristina Sulcapuma, speaking in Quechua. Not far from the town and the weavers, Machu Picchu's stunning views and awe-inspiring engineering offer a window into ancient Incan culture. But a visit to that world wonder is all the more meaningful with a glimpse of contemporary daily life, offered by the Incas' descendants in Ollantaytambo. — AP

Luz Marina Bejar Romero and her son Rajoo outside their home in Ollantaytambo, Peru, where they host tourists on homestays.

Niger's legacy of legendary horses lives on

Niamey's dusty racing track is a far cry from the nation's equine glory days when horses bred in the country enjoyed international fame. But the legacy of Niger's most famous stallion Dokin Iska Dan Filingue that raced in front of Queen Elizabeth II in 1956 lives on in a neglected corner of the country's capital. Though formal meets ended 30 years ago, hundreds of young Nigeriens gather at weekends to witness the improvised races. In the shadow of a giant advertising board for the country's now defunct lottery, proclaiming "Fortune for the winners, benefits for the Nation", professional jockeys, trainers and bookmakers all jostle to make money and entertain the crowds. And despite barely visible track markings, the country's small racing scene hopes that the nation's past glories can be revived with the construction of a new horse racing complex.

'An unbeatable horse'

Niger's love affair with all things equine is largely down to the global success of Dokin Iska Dan Filingue whose name in Hausa means 'the horse of the wind from Filingue (a town in the country)'. "It was an unbeatable horse," said Abdoulaye Mohamed, head of the Nigerien horse racing federation (Feniseq) while surveying the track from a folding chair with a pair of binoculars. Filingue was immortalized in a song by the celebrated Hausa singer and storyteller Ibrahim Narambada who died in 1960 which proclaims that the horse, an Arewa native to Niger, won at every race course in the country.

At the height of his racing prowess, Filingue enjoyed international acclaim after a memorable victory in front of Queen Elizabeth II who was in Nigeria on a state visit. "It was even said that the horse was then sent to England where he again won all

his races. But that wasn't true. That was gossip ... the horse was sent back to Niger. In his twilight years they built an enclosure for him here so that people could come and visit him," said Mohamed.

'Here we have nothing'

Though the horses that compete on the sandy track in the Saturday afternoon races are a far cry from their famous forebears, crowds of several hundred faithfully turn out to witness the jockeys and their steeds compete. One of the jockeys, Soulemene Ali, 46-years-old and 1.64 metres tall, wraps black tape on a wooden stick to double as a crop as he prepares to race. Dressed in plastic boots-which he stuffs with coloured fabric-and jeans but no helmet, Ali, known to the crowds as 'Papa Jockey', blamed crippling poverty in the country for his improvised racing attire.

"I'm poor, just like everything here. We see the races in Europe on TV, they have everything. Here we have nothing. That makes me want to run there," he said. As many as 20 jockeys take part in Niamey's racing scene, with most entirely dependent on their results to secure a living. After each race the jockeys coming in first or second place are given envelopes containing 20,000-40,000 Central African Francs (30 to 60 euros) depending on the value of the bets placed.

Some of the jockeys have the opportunity to work directly for a breeder and receive a monthly salary of as much as 300,000 CFA francs (460 euros), a significant amount in a country where more than three quarters of people live on less than \$2 a day. "Rivalries are strong. We sometimes elbow each other," admitted Papa Jockey. But those not fortunate enough to be paid a salary sometimes struggle to make ends meet. "They don't get pensions. They

race until they can't do it anymore," said Alio Daouda, a magistrate who also works as a breeder. Daouda, who is also a member of the FEniseq federation, has an ambitious vision for reviving the country's dormant horse racing sector. He is seeking investors to fund a major overhaul of Niger's racing scene. "We have the space, we could build a hotel, a conference centre. All of the races could be organized, it could be institutionalized and jobs could be created. But here, everything is deserted," said Daouda.

Lucky orange tasselled cap

Back on the track, the races continued. Eight horses surged past kicking up a cloud of orange dust prompting huge cheers from the assembled crowd. The race was won by Noura Idris, recognizable in the distance from his lucky orange tasselled cap. The day's meetings were fruitful for him, having finished second in the first race of the day and winning the last contest. "Sometimes you have to hold him to keep it going to the end. I started with my father when I was young. As I was winning a lot of races in the countryside, I was made to come to Niamey," said Idris, who unlike the other jockeys wears authentic riding boots, albeit with a loose heel.

And according to leading lights in the local racing world, the key to racing success in Niger may not simply rest with horse and rider. One respected former jockey who notably rode in Nigeria, said the secret to victory was to find and sacrifice a red goat. "I found one and I won!" remembered Souleymane Mamane. — AFP



File photos show Nigerien jockeys competing during a horse race at the hippodrome of Niamey. — AFP photos



Chef Gilles Quillot (right) speaks to prisoners working in the kitchen at the Clink Restaurant ahead of the lunch service.



Prisoners work in the kitchen at the Clink Restaurant ahead of the lunch service inside Brixton Prison. — AFP photos



A table place setting with plastic cutlery is pictured in the Clink Restaurant inside Brixton Prison in south London.



A prisoner cooks a stir-fry in the kitchen.



A table place setting with plastic cutlery is pictured in the Clink Restaurant inside Brixton Prison.

Inmates cook up a future at London jail

With its leather chairs, glass tables and London prices, The Clink seems like any other restaurant. But the cutlery is plastic, the kitchen knives are kept locked up and the view from the window is of barbed wire. Located inside Brixton Prison in south London, The Clink lies behind three security gates in a courtyard ringed by high fences, and is staffed by inmates serving lunch each day to up to 120 members of the public.

"Prison is the worst experience of my life. This has saved me, it's kept me sane," said Matt, a trainee in the kitchen for the past nine months. Outside, the 45-year-old ran his own construction business. Inside, he prepares dishes such as sesame coated duck breast with bok choy, priced at £14.95 (19 euros, \$21). Today, Matt is one of half a dozen white-clad cooks taking part in a masterclass with Gilles Quillot, head chef at the French embassy in London. "I was a bit nervous at the idea of coming into a prison, as you would imagine," said Quillot, as he showed one of the trainees how to prepare white asparagus.

"But I have to say that the guys have been absolutely fantastic... I've already offered a job to one or two!" Quillot was visiting ahead of next week's "Gout de France" (Good France) event, when The Clink will join restaurants around the world in a celebration of French food promoted by the French government. "To be a good cook, it's simple—you have to enjoy giving to others," he told AFP. "So cooking is obviously a good idea for rehabilitation." The Clink is one of four such restaurants run by a charity which aims to give inmates the skills and qualifications needed to start a new life when they are released. They claim to have cut reoffending rates from about one in two prisoners nationally, to one in eight graduates. But for many trainees, the scheme is as much about helping them survive their time inside.

'A second chance'

Built in 1819, Brixton is one of Britain's oldest prisons with former inmates including Mick Jagger—in 1967 following a drugs bust—and the notorious London gangsters, the Kray twins. These days the jail is focused more on getting its 800-odd low-risk prisoners ready for release, sending some out into the community every day to work. Prison governor Giles Mason says the restaurant, which opened in 2014, is "a really good part of what we do at Brixton"—and insists that no risks are taken when it comes to public safety.

The tables are neatly laid with black plastic cutlery, and the knives in the kitchen have to be signed in and out. There is no alcohol, and customers have to leave their phones and laptops outside. "You don't feel like you're in a prison when you're in here," said Mohammed, a 23-year-old waiter who is working towards a qualification in hospitality. Another waiter, Jamie, is a roofer by trade who has been in and out of 17 prisons in the last decade. He said his experience serving the public has boosted his confidence. "I've given myself a second chance," he said.

'Away from the animosity'

Quillot praises the well-equipped kitchen, but rehabilitation efforts at Brixton are hampered by the prison's age, with inspectors

reporting cramped and often grim conditions. "It's horrible," said Lancelot, as he expertly rolls risotto balls to make arancini. "That's why I love it in here. I get away from all the animosity out there." Before he was sent to jail, the 59-year-old ran his own takeaway business serving traditional West Indian food.

Goat curry was his specialty, and he grins at the memory of it. "This is really out of my comfort zone!" he laughs, holding out a ball of rice. "But I'm gettin' perfect." He looks over to watch Quillot plate up a starter of pan-fried scallops over a bed of broad beans and chorizo. The trainee cooks jostle each other to try the dish, but Lancelot makes a face. "Not my kinda thing," he said. — AFP



Prisoners working as waiters stand at the pass in the kitchen at the Clink Restaurant.



A prisoner holds a note book behind his back whilst being taught how to cook a dish in the kitchen at the Clink Restaurant ahead of the lunch service.



This spring, embrace vegetables, but don't overpower them

By Meera Sodha

Spring is nature's fashion week. After winter's endless parade of root vegetables, it feels as though nature has pressed the big green button, refreshing the new season's offerings. Being showcased right now is a new look for your fridge, in a variety of greens.

At my local Sunday market in London, on display are big leafy bunches of spinach, pointed sweetheart cabbages, fennel with thrusting green tops and spring's favorite darling, the slender asparagus.

Even in the village where I grew up, the fields have gone from empty to busy overnight. Workers lob about with big wooden crates of cut leeks, lettuces and a renewed sense of purpose. It is catching: All I want to cook and eat is green, something fresh, light and colorful.

A favorite green supper of mine is this beautiful spring pilau. Buttery rice packed with spiced fennel, onions and garlic cooked slowly until soft and fin-

ished with a last-minute addition of still-crisp asparagus and fava beans or peas. A handful of fresh mint and a squeeze of lemon juice is stirred in just before serving to lift and unify all the flavors.

It's a gentle dish. The key to spring cooking is never to overpower the flavor of the new vegetables. They've spent a long time getting to the point where they're ready. So don't hijack them with bigger, bolder flavors or spices. A little cumin, green chili and garam masala are all they need to help them sing.

This dish can be eaten by itself, though adding a little yoghurt and mango pickle won't hurt. But for something a bit more special, some spring lamb cutlets, flash fried with salt, cumin and chili would make wonderful sidekicks.

Use whichever spring vegetables you have available. Green beans and spring cabbage or leeks make for a wonderful pilau, too.



SPRING VEGETABLE PILAU WITH FENNEL AND ASPARAGUS

Ingredients

Start to finish: 35 minutes

Servings: 6

- 1 1/2 cups basmati rice
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 medium red onions, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 green finger chilies, very thinly sliced
- 2 medium bulbs fennel, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 2 bunches asparagus, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 9 ounces fresh or frozen peas or fresh fava beans (outer skins removed)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 1/2 teaspoons garam masala
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup chopped fresh herbs, such as mint, dill or cilantro
- 1 lemon, cut into wedges

Preparation

Set the rice in a mesh strainer and run under cool water until the water runs clear. Transfer to a bowl, then add enough cool water to cover. Set aside for 20 minutes. In a large saucepan, bring the stock to a boil. Drain the rice, then add to the stock. Return to a simmer, then cook until tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Use a mesh strainer to strain the rice, then set aside, covered with a kitchen towel.

In a larger skillet over medium, melt the butter. Add the onions and cook for 6 to 8 minutes, or until translucent and softened, but not browned. Add the garlic and chilies, then cook for another 2 minutes. Add the fennel, stir to mix, then add a couple tablespoons of water and cover. Cook for 8 minutes, or until soft. Add the asparagus, peas or fava beans, cumin, garam masala and salt. Stir and cover, then cook for another 5 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat. Stir the herbs and rice into the vegetable mixture; you might need to delicately break up the clumps of rice using your hands. Transfer to a serving dish and serve with wedges of lemon on the side. — AP



By Melissa D'Arabian

People often ask me what my most-used kitchen tool is (a high-speed blender). But if you were to ask my mom that same question 30 years ago, I am sure she would have answered her Pyrex baking dish. When I was growing up, probably 75 percent of my meals were made in that thing. Baked fish. Baked chicken. Baked pasta. Baked rice casserole.

Baked dinner figured big in my childhood. As I got older and moved into my own apartment, I wondered why my mom didn't explore other techniques a little more. She could have been searing that fish! And why not saute that chicken for

some delicious crusty browning that results in so much flavor?

Now that I'm a mom, I understand the appeal of the litany of baked dishes my mom had on her (admittedly limited) menu. Baked stuff is easy! And as a mom of four busy girls, I need something easy to make on a Tuesday night, because between dance class and lacrosse practice, I only have a short window during which to make dinner happen. And since the healthiest dinners are the ones we make ourselves, baked chicken is on frequent repeat in my family meal repertoire. But I've learned a few lessons during the past forty years, improving significantly upon Mom's version.

First, I use dark meat chicken with the bone-in. This signifi-

cantly widens the window of cooking time forgiveness, so if someone is running late, dinner is still juicy. Plus, dark meat chicken has more flavor, and the little extra fat means it's more filling. Second, I go heavy with the aromatics - herbs, onion and garlic almost can't be overused in baked chicken.

Upgrading from white wine to vermouth also is a great flavor-booster. Lastly, I start the chicken with just enough of a saute to get a tasty, golden crust. But if you really can't make that happen, don't be shy about just loading up that glass baking dish and popping it into the oven.



BEST BAKED WEEKNIGHT CHICKEN

Ingredients

Start to finish: 1 hour 15 minutes

Servings: 4

8 bone-in chicken thighs, skin removed

Salt and ground black pepper

2 tablespoons olive oil, divided

2 teaspoons herbes de Provence (or dried thyme and oregano mixed)

20 cloves garlic, peeled and lightly smashed

3 shallots, thinly sliced

1/4 cup lemon juice

1/4 cup dry vermouth

Preparation

Heat the oven to 350 F. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. In a large, Dutch oven over medium-high, heat 1 tablespoon of the oil. Working in batches, briefly brown the chicken thighs on both sides, 6 to 7 minutes, transferring them to a plate as you work. In a small bowl, toss together the herbes de Provence, garlic, shallots and remaining 1 table-

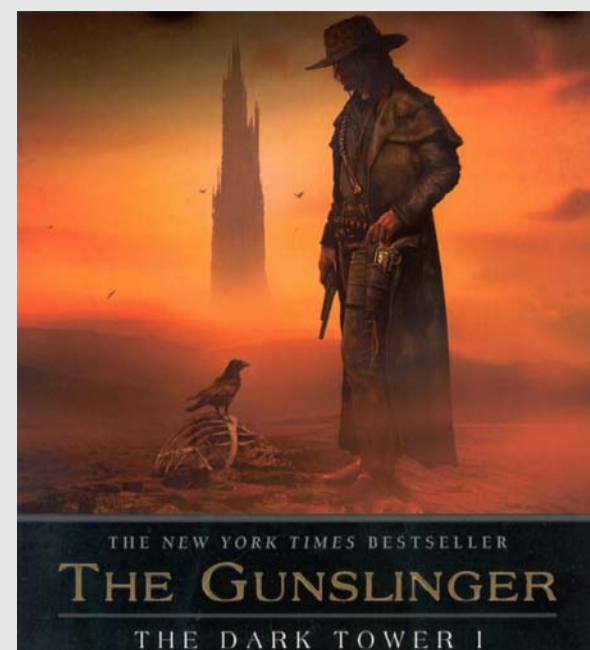
spoon of olive oil. Add a little salt and pepper.

Once all the chicken has browned, return it to the pot off the heat. Arrange the chicken in a single, but tight layer. Spoon the shallot and garlic mixture around the chicken. Pour the lemon juice and vermouth evenly around the chicken. Cover the pot and bake for 15 minutes. Uncover and bake for another 15 to 25 minutes, or until the chicken reaches 175 F.



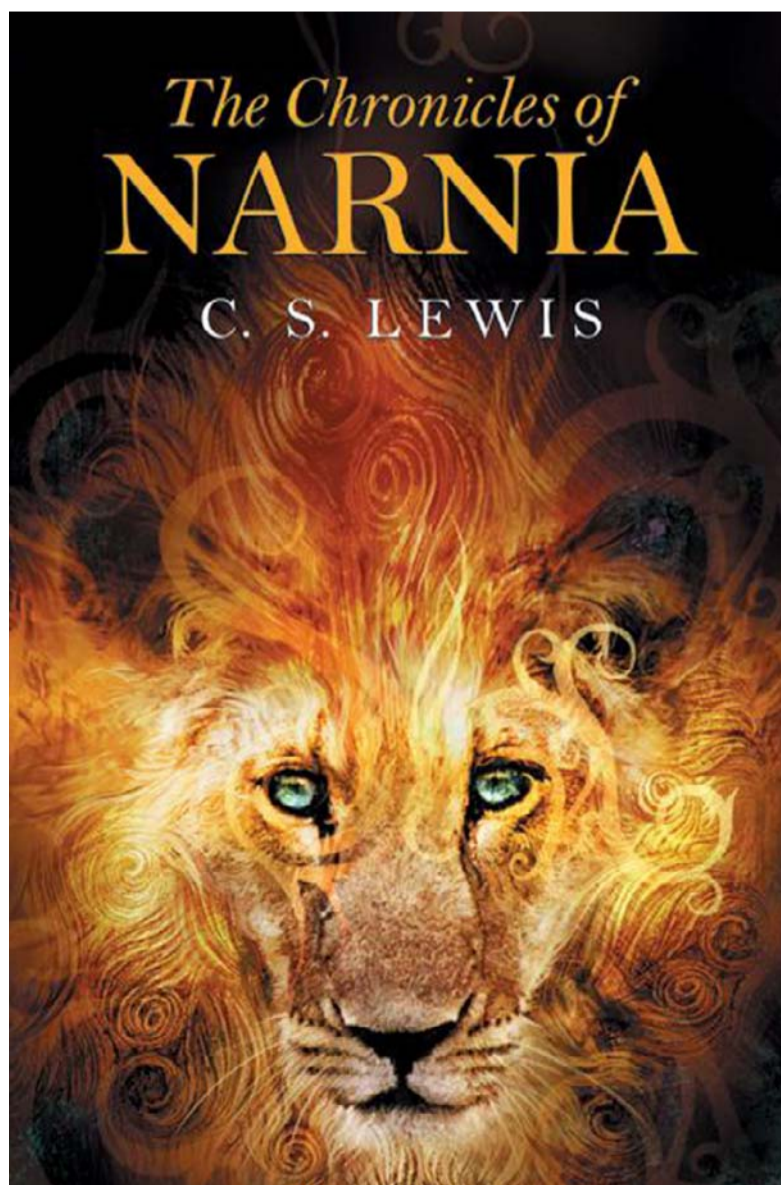
8 must-read fantasy book series

Some readers equate fantasy with hobbits and magic wardrobes. Others conjure images of a wizard PI in Chicago or a gunslinger in a magical Wild West. And that is the beauty of the genre. Fantasy thrives on the creation of new worlds, species and magic systems. It allows for the impossible to occur - for elves to fall in love with humans and for street urchins to wield magic. Fantasy introduces readers to adventures starring world-conquering villains and selfless heroes (or, sometimes, tender-hearted villains and amoral heroes). In short, fantasy is a genre of epic strength and incandescent beauty. To celebrate the heritage of the genre, here's a list of some must-read fantasy series.



The Dark Tower by Stephen King

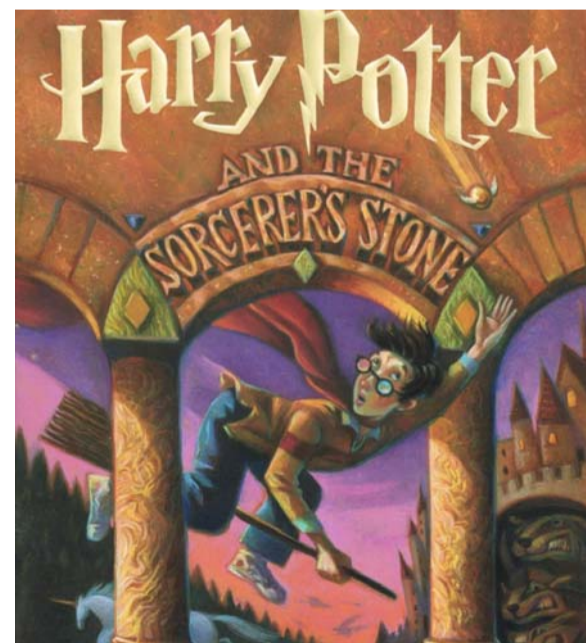
You probably associate Stephen King's name with another brand of genre fiction, but that's no reason to discount his forays past traditional horror. With *The Dark Tower*, King masterfully blends dark fantasy, western and horror across eight tales, which were released between 1982 and 2012. The story's Wild West-esque environment might not appear to be the ideal landscape for fantasy, but the trials and travels of its main character, the Gunslinger, are more *Lord of the Rings* than Clint Eastwood. And though fans have different opinions on the best installments within the series, its continuity and whether it will receive the film adaptation it deserves, *The Dark Tower* series has proven worthy of its decades-spanning discussion.



The Chronicles of Narnia by CS Lewis

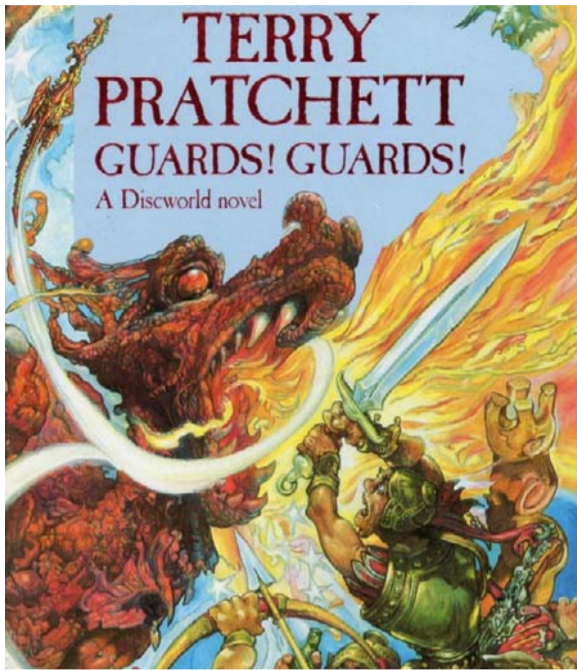
CS Lewis' kindhearted Narnia series sometimes feels like the yang to Tolkien's serious and moody yin, which makes sense, given that the two Inklings were close friends for decades. Lewis' series, though, is too often reduced to the child-friendly *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It's the other entries that feel more epic and filled with heraldic magic, such as the high-seas adventure and beautiful vistas of *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, or the wondrous moments of Narnia's birth in *The Magician's Nephew*. The way time passes so quickly in Narnia vs. our own world also infuses the series with a gentle but persistent sense of remorse; constant reminders that all things are impermanent. Even the great empires of our heroes in one entry are all swept away by the time we reach the next, ultimately showing us many sides of the land of Narnia.

Harry Potter by JK Rowling

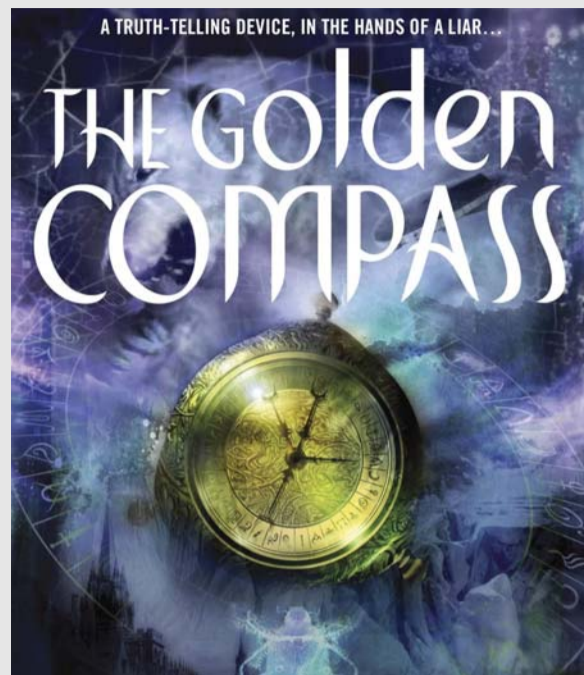


What began as a children's series about an orphaned boy whisked away to a magical school developed into one of the most beloved book franchises of all time, turning its then-unknown author into a billionaire. But forget the movies, the theme parks, the college Quidditch teams and the ubiquitous halloween costumes. None of that would exist if this coming-of-age story, told over seven novels, wasn't so completely enchanting. JK Rowling's wizarding world is so well developed and her characters so lifelike that legions of fans abandoned work, social interaction and even sleep every time a new entry was released. It earned its place alongside the giants of the fantasy genre with gripping tales about the boy who lived.

Discworld by Terry Pratchett



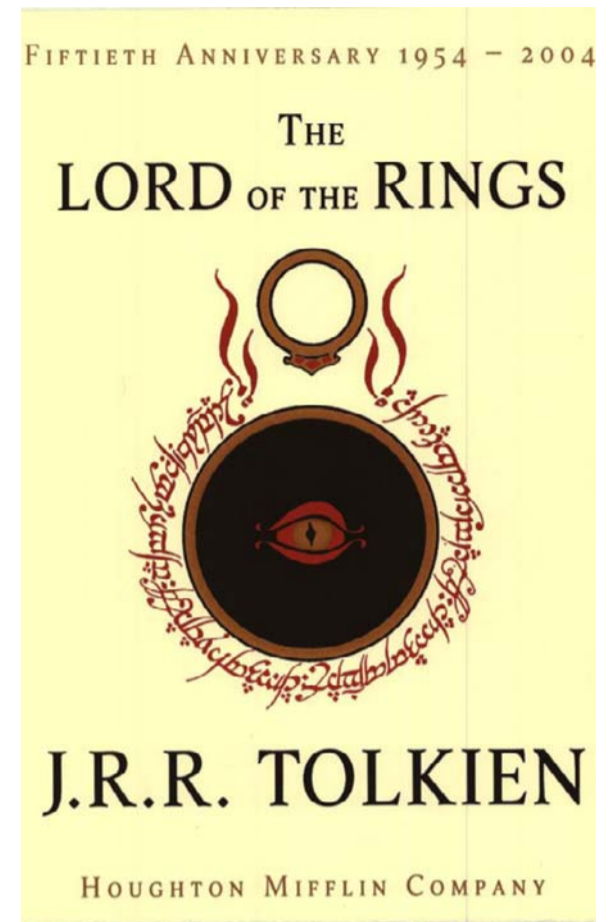
Terry Pratchett was a voice sorely needed in the regal, sonorous fantasy genre, where so many authors have imagined themselves as the next Tolkienesque figure. That wasn't for Pratchett, whose Discworld books imagined what might happen if the characters of an ostensibly high fantasy-type universe grew up a little, only to develop thoroughly modern foibles and anxieties. By transferring much of the action to the stinking, grimy underbelly of an industrial-era city, Pratchett gave us answers to fantasy questions that no one had even thought to ask: what kind of menial city labor is appropriate for trolls? The sprawling comic mythology of the series simultaneously highlights different ends of the Disc continent while returning time and time again to persistent groups of beloved characters hailing from different tiers of the social strata - The City Watch, the Witches, the inept wizard Rincewind, the devious Patrician of the city, etc. Pratchett's comedy is rooted in absurdism, and each entry combines real character-building with an outside threat that ultimately builds to a madcap conclusion with universe-wide consequences.



His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman

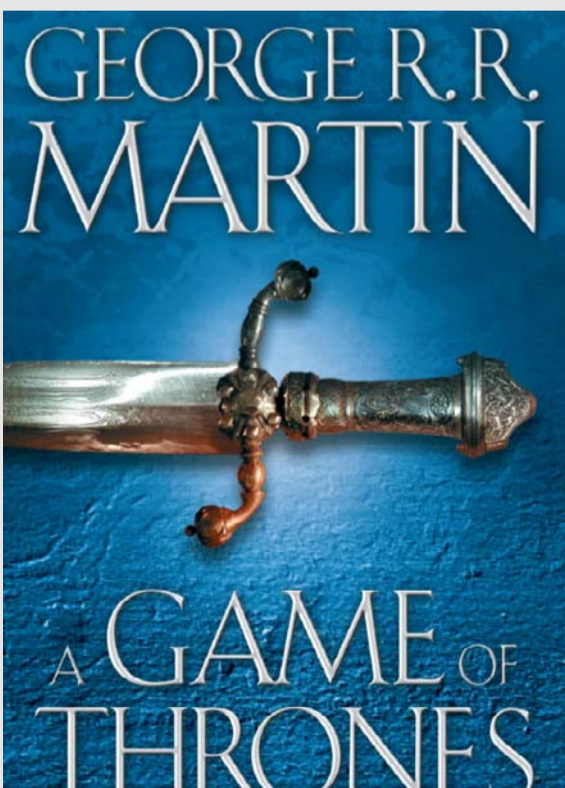
Between Nine Inch Nails' landmark Further Down the Spiral tour, the fundamentalist-skewering film *Se7en* and Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass*, it's safe to say Christianity and the mainstream media weren't huge friends in 1995. But unlike the disturbing exploitation of the first two works, Pullman's fantasy masterwork tackled its philosophical adversary with intelligence and staggering imagination. *The Golden Compass* - or *Northern Lights* as it's known in Pullman's native England - set off a trilogy following a young girl named Lyra as she adventured through multiple universes with a device that could answer any question. Pullman's world(s) building is intoxicating, concocting a reality where children manifest souls as animal companions before the Catholic Church the Magisterium severs their bond, rendering the kids as inert slaves. The fact that *The Boston Globe* would uncover a far more insidious parallel of this scenario seven years later speaks to a relevancy that a blockbuster film adaptation couldn't hope to achieve. But as Lyra attempts to liberate the multiverse from theological rule, *His Dark Materials* pulls off a monumental accomplishment: enchantment and provocation in equal turn.

The Lord of the Rings by JRR Tolkien



JRR Tolkien spent a dozen years building the world of Middle Earth between *The Hobbit's* publication and the completion of Frodo's epic journey to Mordor in *The Return of the King*. Every location the Fellowship encountered possessed a rich history and language, showcasing songs and poetry and mythology that always spoke of more beyond the page. But it was the four simple hobbits, bravely facing a world far larger and darker than their home in the Shire that made every strange encounter relatable. Fighting orcs and spiders and worse, there was a nobility inverse to their size and a struggle between good and evil that resonates 62 years later.

A Song of Ice and Fire by George RR Martin



While only five of the planned seven books have been published - worrying fans, HBO and George RR Martin himself - what we've already been given is so epic in scope as to (almost) make Middle Earth appear quaint by comparison. There are so many different players on the chessboard, struggling for either power, survival or revenge, that the fifth volume could only deal with half of its key characters. But all of the religions, customs and histories of the seven kingdoms of Westeros and the free cities to the east still fit together as they jostle for position. Martin has been criticized for killing off his characters, but the brutality of this Machiavellian, patriarchal society only serves to make us care more deeply about the innocent and afflicted underdogs of the realm.



When it comes to building a world and the magic that comes with it, *The Wheel of Time* is part of an elite group. The depth of characters and storylines that Robert Jordan created is staggering, but it's understandable when you realize the series borders on 12,000 pages. Not only did Jordan write about the clash of different cultures, peoples and lands, but he also invented a world where women control magic and men are tainted by it. Like

George RR Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*, you'll wonder about halfway through how Jordan could successfully weave the threads together in the end. Sadly, Jordan died in 2007 while working on the final book, but Brandon Sanderson did a brilliant job of finishing the series while working from Jordan's notes. The result is an enthralling conclusion that will stand the test of time.

- (www.pastemagazine.com)

WORD SEARCH

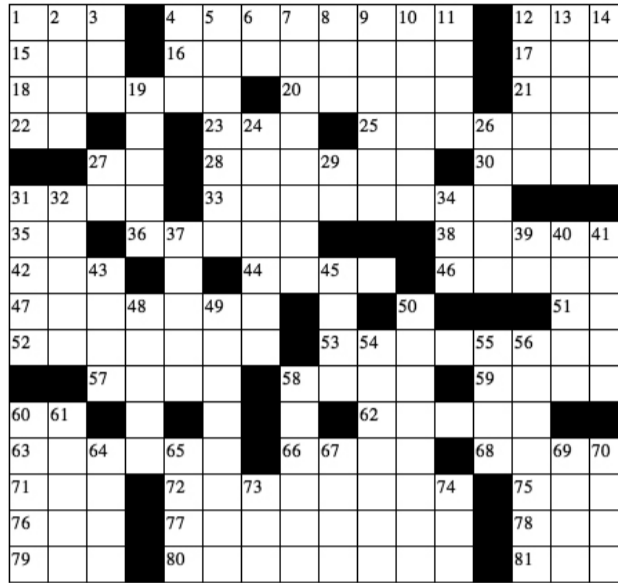
Phonetic Alphabet

Find and circle the Phonetic Alphabet words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional word from the Phonetic Alphabet.

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

- ALPHA HOTEL OSCAR UNIFORM
- BRAVO INDIA PAPA VICTOR
- CHARLIE JULIET QUEBEC WHISKEY
- DELTA KILO ROMEO X-RAY
- ECHO LIMA SIERRA YANKEE
- FOXTROT MIKE TANGO ZULU
- GOLF

CROSSWORD 1199



ACROSS

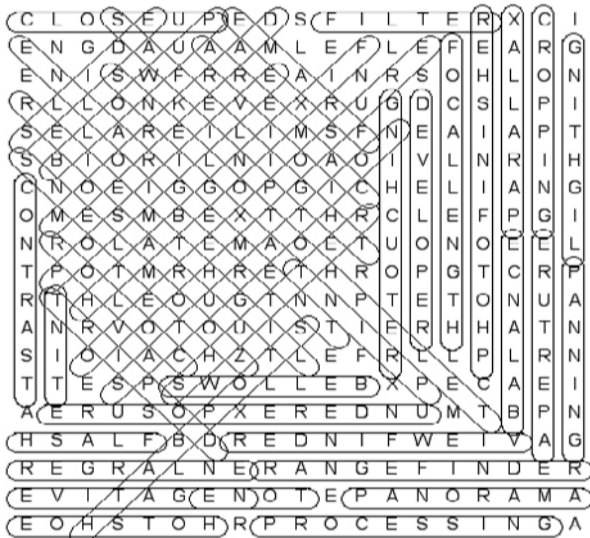
1. A federal agency established to regulate the release of new foods and health-related products.
4. Mixtures of vinegar or wine and oil with various spices and seasonings.
12. (computer science) A computer that is running software that allows users to leave messages and access information of general interest.
15. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
16. Relating to or being a member of an ethnic group.
17. Imperial dynasty that ruled China (most of the time) from 206 BC to 221 and expanded its boundaries and developed its bureaucracy.
18. Sightlessness (especially because of a structural defect in or the absence of an eye).
20. An ancient upright stone slab bearing markings.
21. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
22. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
23. A case for containing a set of articles.
25. Any of numerous New World woodland birds having brightly colored males.
28. A genus of Reduviidae.
30. Informal terms for money.
31. The capital and chief port of Qatar.
33. Low stinging nettle of Central and South America having velvety brownish-green toothed leaves and clusters of small green flowers.
35. The square of a body of any size of type.
36. The basic monetary unit in many countries.
38. Lower in esteem.
42. Having much flesh (especially fat).
44. A contagious skin infection caused by the itch mite.
46. Obvious and dull.
47. A member of the Siouan people formerly inhabiting the Black Hills of western South Dakota.
51. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
52. A colorless water-soluble glutinous protein obtained from animal tissues such as bone and skin.
53. Of or relating to the peoples who speak the language of the Arawak.
57. A bluish shade of green.
59. No longer having or seeming to have or expecting to have life.
60. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
62. The capital and chief port and largest city of Senegal.
63. Long-tailed black-and-white bird that utters a chattering call.
66. Armor plate that protects the chest.
68. A doctor's degree in music.
71. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
72. Animals having a bony or cartilaginous skeleton with a segmented spinal column and a large brain enclosed in a skull or cranium.
75. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
76. An angular shape characterized by sharp turns in alternating directions.
77. Threatening or foreshadowing evil or tragic developments.
78. (informal) Roused to anger.
79. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
80. Genus of North American herbs with basal cordate or orbicular leaves and small panicked flowers.
81. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Loose or flaccid body fat.
2. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
3. A dark-skinned member of a race of people living in Australia when Europeans arrived.
4. Japanese ornamental tree with fragrant white or pink blossoms and small yellow fruits.
5. A member of an Indian people formerly living along the Gulf coast of Louisiana and Texas.
6. A blood group antigen possessed by Rh-positive people.
7. (followed by 'with') Deeply filled or permeated.
8. A luminance unit equal to 1 candle per square meter measured perpendicular to the rays from the source.
9. A dilute solution of acetic acid that is used as a solvent (e.g. for a drug).
10. The basic unit of money in Gambia.
11. A feeling of strong eagerness (usually in favor of a person or cause).
12. God of wealth and love.
13. Glazed yeast-raised doughnut-shaped roll with hard crust.
14. Something (often something deceptively attractive) that catches you unawares.
19. Rice cooked in well-seasoned broth with onions or celery and usually poultry or game or shellfish and sometimes tomatoes.
24. Of or relating to Iran or its people or language or culture.
26. Jordan's port.
27. A public promotion of some product or service.
29. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
32. An iconic mental representation.
34. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
37. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
39. An associate degree in nursing.
40. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
41. Either of two large African antelopes of the genus Taurotragus having short spirally twisted horns in both sexes.
43. A fine grained mineral having a soft soapy feel and consisting of hydrated magnesium silicate.
45. Wearing or provided with clothing.
48. A basketball shot made with one hand from a position under or beside the basket (and usually banked off the backboard).
49. Women's underwear and nightclothes.
50. A public register showing the details of ownership and value of land.
54. Send out rays or waves.
55. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
56. Preaching the gospel of Christ in the manner of the early church.
58. (of experimental animals) Raised under sterile conditions.
61. A unit of weight for precious stones = 200 mg.
64. Mentally or physically infirm with age.
65. A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.
67. United States film actress who appeared in films by D. W. Griffith (1896-1993).
69. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
70. An informal term for a father.
73. (Babylonian) The sky god.
74. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.

Yesterday's Solution

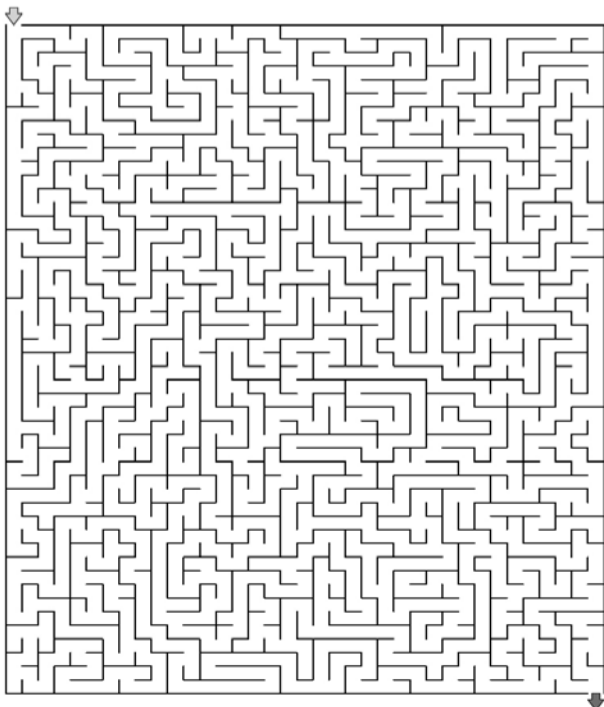
Photography



- APERTURE ENLARGEMENT OVEREXPOSURE SATURATION
- BALANCE ENLARGER PANNING SHUTTER
- BELLOWS FILTER PANORAMA SLIDE
- BLOWUP FIXING BATH PARALLAX STOP BATH
- CAMERA FLASH PHOTOFINISHER TELEPHOTO LENS
- CLOSE UP FOCAL LENGTH POSITIVE TINT
- COLOR FRAME PRINT TONE
- CONTRAST HOT SHOE PROCESSING TRIPOD
- CROPPING LIGHT METER RANGEFINDER UNDEREXPOSURE
- DARKROOM LIGHTING RETOUCHING VIEWFINDER
- DEVELOPER NEGATIVE SAFELIGHT ZOOM LENS

The hidden sentence is: SINGLE LENS REFLEX CAMERA

CHALLENGING MAZE



Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

AMC

00:55 Hide
02:25 Assassination Tango
04:20 Mirrormask
06:00 A Kiss Before Dying
07:30 Beauty Shop
09:15 Mannequin
10:45 Dirty Rotten Scoundrels
12:35 Jakob The Liar
14:30 Limit Up
16:00 The Watsons Go To Birmingham
17:30 Robinson Crusoe
19:00 Hackers
20:45 Big Screen
21:00 The Myth Of Fingerprints
22:35 Dirty Rotten Scoundrels

10:30 On The Move
11:00 On The Move
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
19:00 Bloomberg Markets: European
Close
20:00 Bloomberg Markets
21:00 Bloomberg Markets
22:00 Bloomberg Markets
23:00 Brilliant Ideas
23:00 What'd You Miss?

CCTV NEWS

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

CNBC

00:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report
01:00 CNBC Conversation: Felipe Calderon
01:30 U.S. Squawk Alley
02:30 Access: Middle East
03:00 Asia Squawk Box
05:00 Asia Street Signs
07:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report
08:00 Capital Connection
09:00 Squawk Box Europe
12:00 Europe Street Signs
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

crime & investigation network

00:00 My Crazy Ex
01:00 Crime Stories

02:00 Born To Kill
03:00 Deadly Wives
04:00 The First 48
05:00 Born To Kill
06:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
07:00 The FBI Files
08:00 The FBI Files
09:00 Homicide Hunter
10:00 Beyond Scared Straight
11:00 Martina Cole's Lady Killers
12:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
13:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
14:00 The First 48
15:00 Homicide Hunter
16:00 Private Crimes
16:30 Private Crimes
17:00 The FBI Files
18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
20:00 The First 48
21:00 Homicide Hunter
22:00 Martina Cole's Lady Killers

Discovery CHANNEL HD

00:20 Fast N' Loud
01:10 Salvage Hunters
02:00 Redwood Kings
02:50 Kings Of The Wild
03:40 What's In The Barn?
04:05 The Liquidator
04:30 Garage Gold
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 Chasing Classic Cars
06:00 You Have Been Warned
06:50 The Weapon Hunter
07:40 Big Giant Swords
08:30 The Island With Bear Grylls
09:20 Men, Women, Wild
10:10 So You Think You'd Survive?
11:00 Salvage Hunters
11:50 Redwood Kings

12:40 Kings Of The Wild
13:30 Fast N' Loud Clip Shows
14:20 Street Outlaws
15:10 Extreme Car Hoarders
16:00 Pacific Warriors
16:50 Pacific Warriors
17:40 Pacific Warriors
18:30 Pacific Warriors
19:20 Pacific Warriors
20:10 Pacific Warriors
21:00 Fast N' Loud Clip Shows
21:50 Street Outlaws
22:40 Extreme Car Hoarders
23:30 Alcatraz: Escaping The Rock

ID. INVESTIGATION DISCOVERY

00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
01:30 The Haunted
02:20 Ghost Lab
03:10 Deadly Affairs
04:00 True CSI
04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
05:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
05:30 The Haunted
06:20 Fatal Encounters
07:10 On The Case With Paula Zahn
08:00 Dr. G. Medical Examiner
08:50 On The Case With Paula Zahn
09:40 Fatal Encounters
10:30 Murder Shift
11:20 Deadly Affairs
12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
13:00 The Will
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:40 California Investigator
15:05 Dr. G. Medical Examiner
15:55 Fatal Encounters
16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn
17:35 Murder Shift
18:25 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 The Will
20:05 Deadly Affairs
20:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
21:45 California Investigator
22:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
22:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
23:00 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones

03:50 Bush Pilots
04:35 American Guns
05:20 Extreme Engineering
06:05 Gunslingers
06:50 HMS Ark Royal
07:35 Origins
08:00 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
08:50 Bush Pilots
09:40 Extreme Engineering
10:30 Codes And Conspiracies
11:20 Origins
11:45 Chasing Classic Cars
12:10 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
13:00 Bush Pilots
13:50 Extreme Engineering
14:40 Codes And Conspiracies
15:30 Origins
15:55 Chasing Classic Cars
16:20 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
17:10 Bush Pilots
18:00 Extreme Engineering
18:50 Codes And Conspiracies
19:40 Origins
20:05 Chasing Classic Cars
20:30 Collapse: When Structures

Disney CHANNEL

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 & Cat Noir
07:40 Jessie
08:05 Shake It Up
08:30 Shake It Up
08:55 That's So Raven
09:20 That's So Raven
09:45 Austin & Ally
10:10 Austin & Ally
10:35 A.N.T. Farm
11:00 A.N.T. Farm
11:25 Jessie
11:50 Jessie
12:15 Cars Toons
12:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
12:45 Fish Hooks
13:00 Fish Hooks
13:10 Austin & Ally
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:00 Liv And Maddie
14:25 Descendants Wicked World
14:30 Liv And Maddie
14:55 Dog With A Blog
15:20 Dog With A Blog
15:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
16:10 Violetta
17:00 I Love Violetta
17:10 Invisible Sister
18:40 Descendants Wicked World
18:43 Best Friends Whenever
19:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
19:30 Violetta
20:20 I Love Violetta
20:30 Home On The Range
21:55 Violetta Recipes
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

SC DISCOVERY science

00:35 Speed Junkie
01:20 How It's Made
01:44 How It's Made
02:08 Mega Builders
02:55 Space Voyages
03:42 Science Of The Movies
04:29 Speed Junkie
05:16 Mega Builders
06:03 Space Voyages
06:50 Mighty Ships
07:37 How Do They Do It?
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:23 Speed Junkie
09:08 Science Of The Movies
09:53 Mighty Ships
10:38 How It's Made
11:00 How It's Made
11:23 Invent It Rich
12:08 Space Voyages
12:53 Mighty Ships
13:38 Speed Junkie
14:23 How It's Made
14:46 How It's Made
15:10 Science Of The Movies
15:57 Invent It Rich
16:44 Space Voyages
17:31 Mighty Ships
18:18 Science Of The Movies
19:05 Killer Robots: Robogames
2011
19:50 Da Vinci's Machines
20:40 Space Voyages
21:25 How It's Made
21:50 How It's Made
22:15 Sci-Trek
23:00 Da Vinci's Machines

Discovery world

00:40 HMS Ark Royal
01:30 Zero Hour
02:20 Origins
02:40 Chasing Classic Cars
03:05 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations

Disney JUNIOR

00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calimero
00:35 Zou
00:50 Loopdidoo

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:50 River Monsters
01:45 I'm Alive
02:40 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
03:35 Tanked
04:25 Animal Cops South Africa
05:15 Gator Boys
06:02 Treehouse Masters
06:49 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
07:36 Monkey Life
08:00 Monkey Life
08:25 Preposterous Pets
09:15 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
10:10 Treehouse Masters
11:05 Tanked
12:00 Preposterous Pets
12:55 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
13:50 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
14:45 Gator Boys
15:40 Treehouse Masters
16:35 Tanked
17:30 Animal Cops South Africa
18:25 River Monsters
19:20 Big Fish Man
20:15 Tanked
21:10 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
21:40 Echo And The Elephants Of

BBC FIRST

00:15 Eastenders
00:45 Holby City
01:40 Stella
02:30 Happy Valley
03:35 Eastenders
04:05 Frankie
05:05 Father Brown
06:00 Holby City
06:55 Frankie
07:50 Doctors
08:25 Eastenders
08:55 Stella
09:45 Father Brown
10:40 The Musketeers
11:35 The Musketeers
12:30 Doctor Who: The Husbands Of River Song
13:30 Holby City
14:25 Doctors
14:55 Eastenders
15:25 Death In Paradise
16:25 Death In Paradise
17:20 Death In Paradise
18:20 Doctors
18:50 Doctors
19:25 Father Brown
20:15 War And Peace
21:00 War And Peace
21:50 Sherlock: The Abominable Bride
23:30 Stella

Bloomberg TELEVISION

00:00 With All Due Respect
01:00 Charlie Rose
02:00 First Up With Angie Lau
03:00 First Up With Angie Lau
04:00 Trending Business
05:00 Trending Business
06:00 Asia Edge
07:00 Bloomberg West
08:00 Charlie Rose
09:00 Countdown
10:00 Countdown



LAST PASSENGER ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 01:05 Art Attack
 - 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
 - 01:45 Calimero
 - 02:00 Zou
 - 02:15 Loopdidoo
 - 02:30 Art Attack
 - 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
 - 03:05 Calimero
 - 03:20 Zou
 - 03:30 Loopdidoo
 - 03:45 Art Attack
 - 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
 - 04:20 Calimero
 - 04:35 Zou
 - 04:45 Loopdidoo
 - 05:00 Art Attack
 - 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
 - 05:35 Calimero
 - 05:50 Zou
 - 06:00 Loopdidoo
 - 06:15 Art Attack
 - 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
 - 06:50 Calimero
 - 07:00 Zou
 - 07:20 Loopdidoo
 - 07:35 Art Attack
 - 08:00 Calimero
 - 08:10 Zou
 - 08:25 Loopdidoo
 - 08:40 Miles From Tomorrow
 - 09:05 Sofia The First
 - 09:30 Goldie & Bear
 - 09:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 - 10:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 - 10:35 Doc McStuffins
 - 11:00 Sofia The First
 - 11:30 Goldie & Bear
 - 12:00 Miles From Tomorrow
 - 12:25 Special Agent Oso
 - 12:40 The Hive
 - 12:50 Handy Manny
 - 13:15 Jungle Junction
 - 13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 - 14:00 Sofia The First
 - 14:25 Goldie & Bear
 - 14:50 Doc McStuffins
 - 15:15 Zou
 - 15:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 - 15:55 Loopdidoo
 - 16:10 Miles From Tomorrow
 - 16:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 - 17:00 Sofia The First
 - 17:25 Jungle Cubs
 - 17:50 Aladdin
 - 18:15 Gummi Bears
 - 18:40 Goldie & Bear
 - 19:05 Miles From Tomorrow
 - 19:30 Sofia The First
 - 19:55 Doc McStuffins
 - 20:20 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
 - 20:35 Miles From Tomorrow
 - 21:00 Goldie & Bear
 - 21:30 Sofia The First
 - 22:00 Jungle Cubs
 - 22:25 Aladdin
 - 22:50 Gummi Bears
 - 23:20 Lilo And Stitch
 - 23:50 Zou
-
- 
- 00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am
 - 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 Wander Over Yonder
 - 10:00 Rocket Monkeys
 - 10:25 Ultimate Spider-Man
 - 10:50 Boyster
 - 11:20 Boyster
 - 11:45 Pair Of Kings
 - 12:10 Pair Of Kings
 - 12:35 Lab Rats
 - 13:00 Lab Rats
 - 13:30 Phineas And Ferb
 - 13:55 Phineas And Ferb
 - 14:20 Kickin' It
 - 14:45 Kickin' It
 - 15:10 Guardians Of The Galaxy
 - 15:15 Rocket Monkeys
 - 15:40 Wander Over Yonder
 - 16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 - 16:30 Kirby Buckets
 - 16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much
 - Everything
 - 17:25 K. C. Undercover
 - 17:50 Supa Strikas
 - 18:15 Lab Rats
 - 18:40 Mighty Med
 - 19:10 Annedroids
 - 19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 - 20:00 Kirby Buckets
 - 20:25 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much



THE SONG ON OSN MOVIES HD

- EHD**
- 00:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
 - 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
 - 01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 - 02:20 E! News
 - 03:15 Giuliana & Bill
 - 04:10 E! Entertainment Special
 - 05:05 The E! True Hollywood Story
 - 06:00 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
 - 06:55 Kourtney And Kim Take Miami
 - 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 Stewarts And Hamiltons
 - 14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 - 15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 - 16:00 Dash Dolls
 - 17:00 Dash Dolls
 - 18:00 E! News
 - 19:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
 - 20:00 Fashion Police
 - 21:00 WAGs
 - 22:00 E! News
 - 23:00 Botched
-
- food network**
- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 - 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 - 01:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
 - 01:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
 - 02:00 Tia Mowry At Home
 - 02:30 Tia Mowry At Home
 - 03:00 Man Fire Food
 - 03:30 Man Fire Food
 - 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 - 04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 - 05:00 Iron Chef America
 - 06:00 Chopped
 - 07:00 Man Fire Food
 - 07:30 Man Fire Food
 - 08:00 Chopped
 - 09:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
 - 09:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
 - 10:00 The Kitchen

- 11:00 The Pioneer Woman
 - 11:30 The Pioneer Woman
 - 12:00 Chopped
 - 13:00 Guy's Big Bite
 - 13:30 Guy's Big Bite
 - 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 The Pioneer Woman
 - 18:30 The Pioneer Woman
 - 19:00 Chopped
 - 20:00 Iron Chef America
 - 21:00 Follow Donal... To Europe
 - 21:30 Follow Donal... To Europe
 - 22:00 Australian Food Adventures With Matt Moran
-
- HISTORY**
- 00:20 Pawn Stars
 - 00:45 Pawn Stars Australia
 - 01:10 Aussie Pickers
 - 02:00 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
 - 02:50 American Pickers
 - 03:40 Shipping Wars
 - 04:05 Shipping Wars
 - 04:30 Pawn Stars
 - 05:00 Hoard Hunters
 - 06:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
 - 06:50 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
 - 07:40 Hunting Hitler
 - 08:30 American Restoration
 - 08:55 Mountain Men
 - 09:45 Ax Men
 - 10:35 Swamp People
 - 11:25 American Restoration
 - 11:50 American Restoration
 - 12:15 Counting Cars
 - 12:40 Counting Cars
 - 13:05 American Pickers
 - 13:55 Hoard Hunters
 - 14:45 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
 - 15:35 Hunting Hitler
 - 16:25 Counting Cars
 - 16:50 Alone
 - 17:40 Down East Dickering
 - 18:30 Duck Dynasty
 - 18:55 Duck Dynasty
 - 19:20 Ax Men
 - 20:10 Swamp People
 - 21:00 Alcatraz: The Search For The Truth
 - 22:40 Hunting Hitler
 - 23:30 The Curse Of Oak Island
-
- itv HD CHOICE**
- 00:10 The Chase
 - 01:05 Emmerdale

- 01:30 Eggheads
 - 02:00 Coronation Street
 - 02:30 Big Star's Little Star
 - 03:25 The Jonathan Ross Show
 - 04:20 Seven Days With...
10:15 The Chase
 - 05:15 Come Dine With Me Couples
 - 06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
 - 07:00 Eggheads
 - 07:30 Grantchester
 - 08:25 Seven Days With...
09:20 Big Star's Little Star
 - 10:15 The Chase
 - 11:05 Eggheads
 - 11:35 Come Dine With Me Couples
 - 12:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?
 - 13:25 Emmerdale
 - 13:50 Emmerdale
 - 14:20 Coronation Street
 - 14:45 Big Star's Little Star
 - 15:35 The Jonathan Ross Show
 - 16:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
 - 17:25 Remember Me
 - 18:20 Emmerdale
 - 18:45 Emmerdale
 - 19:10 Coronation Street
 - 19:35 The Jonathan Ross Show
 - 20:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
 - 21:25 Remember Me
 - 22:20 Coronation Street
 - 22:50 Emmerdale
 - 23:15 Emmerdale
 - 23:40 Seven Days With...
11:00 Eat Street
 - 11:25 Eat Street
 - 11:50 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
 - 12:15 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
 - 12:40 Confucius Was A Foodie
 - 13:35 Rustic Adventure Argentina
 - 14:00 Eat Street
 - 14:30 Eat Street
 - 14:55 Cruise Ship Diaries
 - 15:25 Tales From The Bush Larder
 - 15:50 Tales From The Bush Larder
 - 16:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 - 16:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 - 17:15 Eat Street
 - 17:40 Eat Street
 - 18:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
 - 19:05 Cruise Ship Diaries
 - 19:30 Tales From The Bush Larder
 - 20:00 Tales From The Bush Larder
 - 20:25 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 - 20:50 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 - 21:15 Eat Street
 - 21:40 Eat Street
 - 22:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
 - 22:55 Confucius Was A Foodie
 - 23:45 Rustic Adventure Argentina
-
- NAT GEO people HD**
- 00:10 Eat Street
 - 00:35 Eat Street
 - 01:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
 - 01:50 Rustic Adventure Argentina
 - 02:15 Eat Street
 - 02:40 Eat Street
 - 03:05 Cruise Ship Diaries
 - 03:30 Tales From The Bush Larder
 - 03:55 Tales From The Bush Larder
 - 04:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 - 04:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 - 05:10 Eat Street
 - 05:35 Eat Street
 - 06:00 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
 - 06:25 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
 - 06:50 Confucius Was A Foodie
 - 07:40 Rustic Adventure Argentina
 - 08:05 Eat Street
 - 08:30 Eat Street
 - 08:55 Cruise Ship Diaries
 - 09:20 Tales From The Bush Larder
 - 09:45 Tales From The Bush Larder
 - 10:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 - 10:35 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia

- OSN FIRST HD COMEDY**
- 00:30 Playing House
 - 01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
 - 01:30 Web Therapy
 - 02:00 Curb Your Enthusiasm
 - 02:35 The League
 - 03:00 Your Family Or Mine
 - 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 Your Family Or Mine
 - 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 Playing House
- 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 Parks And Recreation
- 19:30 The Simpsons
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Playing House
- 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
- 22:00 Community
- 22:30 Curb Your Enthusiasm
- 23:00 The League
- 23:35 Late Night With Seth Meyers

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:00 REC 4: Apocalypse
- 02:00 Destruction: Las Vegas
- 04:00 Jaws: The Revenge
- 06:00 Age Of Dinosaurs
- 08:00 Rush Hour
- 10:00 The Assault
- 12:00 Abandoned Mine
- 14:00 12 Rounds
- 16:00 Rush Hour
- 18:00 Hummingbird
- 20:00 Last Passenger
- 22:00 Hitman

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 A Million Ways To Die In The West
- 02:00 Cas & Dylan
- 04:00 Planet 51
- 06:00 The Love Punch
- 08:00 Orange County
- 10:00 Planet 51
- 12:00 Cas & Dylan
- 14:00 The Misadventures Of The Dunderheads
- 16:00 Orange County
- 18:00 At Middleton
- 20:00 Date Night
- 22:00 What We Do In The Shadows

OSN MOVIES HD DRAMA

- 01:15 Belle
- 03:00 The Railway Man
- 05:00 The Fold
- 07:00 Wrath
- 09:00 Romeo & Juliet
- 11:00 The Fold
- 13:00 The Railway Man
- 15:00 Hours
- 17:00 Romeo & Juliet
- 19:00 Two Night Stand
- 21:00 The Trials Of Cate McCall
- 23:00 Maps To The Stars

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 01:00 Medicine Man
- 02:45 Gattaca
- 04:45 Great Expectations
- 07:00 Powder
- 09:00 Paradise
- 11:00 Great Expectations
- 13:15 1911
- 15:00 A Civil Action
- 17:00 Paradise
- 19:00 Thank You For Smoking
- 21:00 Foxcatcher
- 23:15 Donnie Brasco

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:00 Rage
- 03:00 Last Knights
- 05:00 Kristy
- 07:00 The Song
- 09:00 Son Of Batman
- 11:00 Mortdecai
- 13:00 So Undercover
- 15:00 The Giver
- 17:00 Pompeii
- 19:00 Winter's Tale
- 21:00 Jupiter Ascending
- 23:15 Dracula Untold



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Partnerships, possibly business related, are on the agenda, Aries. You might find yourself in discussions dealing with such partnerships, as well as contracts and other paperwork. You might also set aside time during which you can concentrate on a romantic relationship, a new one or current one that's changing and growing. This is a good time to make decisions, as your mind is particularly focused now.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Paperwork regarding finances, possibly those connected with your job, might take up a lot of your time today, Taurus. You should be feeling especially strong, confident, and focused, so if you've been thinking about looking for a new position, this is the day to check the ads. Advancement through your own efforts is strongly indicated by the aspects in force today.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Go ahead and make a list today, Gemini. Powerful emotions are likely to lure you from your current path unless you have some sort of concrete plan to fall back on. Put idle hands to use by delegating tasks to the people around you. You'll be amazed at the little blocks of time you have when you stay on task and keep yourself and everyone else around you in motion.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A couple with a child might visit you today. One or both of these people could be connected with you in a business capacity. Whatever the connection, Cancer, a lot of interesting discussion should take place, and promising plans for the future could well be made. Take care not to stay up too late, however. Your mind could go a thousand miles an hour and you'll need to unwind so you can sleep!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

A lot of paperwork involving new plans for your business interests could need immediate attention. Getting it done properly is probably going to require a lot of ingenuity on your part, Leo, but you'll manage it. Your mind is particularly quick, sharp, and focused today, so you'll be able to accomplish a lot in whatever you try. In the evening, attend a concert, lecture, or other event in your community.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A new business opportunity may come your way, Virgo. You aren't likely to want to commit to a permanent involvement, but you might take it on temporarily simply for the sake of the money. Perhaps you want to make some changes in your home, such as new furniture or paint. Whatever comes your way, you'll probably put a lot of energy into it and accomplish it all. Go for it!



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your physical energy is high and your ambition even higher, Libra. You're likely to want to turn your mind to new projects that can advance your socioeconomic status. You could spend a lot of time today gathering information and sending it out, doing whatever it takes to accomplish your goals. A number of short journeys in your neighborhood are definitely on the agenda. Pace yourself so you don't get too tired.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Practical abilities that you didn't know you possessed might suddenly appear today, Scorpio. You could be working behind the scenes on a project of some kind, perhaps involving earning some extra money or raising funds for a worthy cause. Your intuition is operating at a high level, so don't be surprised if you tune in to the thoughts of others. Your imagination and inspiration are also on target. Make use of them!



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

The completion of a long-term goal might have you feeling enthusiastic, energetic, and happy. You're also likely to be looking to the future, Sagittarius, formulating ideas for other projects and discussing them with friends. Group activities could benefit you at this time and put you in touch with new people who could possibly become close to you. In the evening, go to an exciting movie. A thriller would suit you just fine.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Career matters are at the forefront of your concerns today, Capricorn. Opportunities for advancement may suddenly appear that you weren't aware of yesterday, and you'll need to make snap decisions and go for what you want right away. Don't be surprised if someone you'd nearly forgotten about is of great help today. The presence of people dear to you is going to be significant.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Travel that is possibly related to business could come up for you, Aquarius. A friend or colleague may accompany you. Expect the unexpected where your career is concerned. Unusual developments may open new doors so you can pursue different goals. You might want to take a course of some kind for pleasure or advancement. Your mind is especially sharp, so you're likely to retain whatever you study now.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

If you've been thinking about trying some new investments or starting a new savings plan, this is the day to get started, Pisces. You're a lot more mentally focused than usual. People around you might have ideas that you should consider. You might experience some intuitive insights, so go with your gut. Don't let your mind get in the way. Tonight, keep a notebook by your bed to record your dreams!

COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Bahamas	001242	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahrain	00973	Martinique	00596
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritania	00222
Barbados	001246	Mauritius	00230
Belarus	00375	Mayotte	00269
Belgium	0032	Mexico	0052
Belize	00501	Micronesia	00691
Benin	00229	Moldova	00373
Bermuda	001441	Monaco	00377
Bhutan	00975	Mongolia	00976
Bolivia	00591	Montserrat	001664
Bosnia	00387	Morocco	00212
Botswana	00267	Mozambique	00258
Brazil	0055	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brunei	00673	Namibia	00264
Bulgaria	00359	Nepal	00977
Burkina	00226	Netherlands	0031
Burundi	00257	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Cambodia	00855	New Caledonia	00687
Cameroon	00237	New Zealand	0064
Canada	001	Nicaragua	00505
Cape Verde	00238	Niger	00227
Cayman Islands	001345	Nigeria	00234
Central African	00236	Niue	00683
Chad	00235	Norfolk Island	00672
Chile	0056	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
China	0086	North Korea	00850
Colombia	0057	Norway	0047
Comoros	00269	Oman	00968
Congo	00242	Pakistan	0092
Cook Islands	00682	Palau	00680
Costa Rica	00506	Panama	00507
Croatia	00385	Papua New Guinea	00675
Cuba	0053	Paraguay	00595
Cyprus	00357	Peru	0051
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Philippines	0063
Czech Republic	00420	Poland	0048
Denmark	0045	Portugal	00351
Diego Garcia	00246	Puerto Rico	001787
Djibouti	00253	Qatar	00974
Dominica	001767	Romania	0040
Dominican Republic	001809	Russian Federation	007
Ecuador	00593	Rwanda	00250
Egypt	0020	Saint Helena	00290
El Salvador	00503	Saint Kitts	001869
England (UK)	0044	Saint Lucia	001758
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Pierre	00508
Eritrea	00291	Saint Vincent	001784
Estonia	00372	Samoa US	00684
Ethiopia	00251	Samoa West	00685
Falkland Islands	00500	San Marino	00378
Faroe Islands	00298	Sao Tome	00239
Fiji	00679	Saudi Arabia	00966
Finland	00358	Scotland (UK)	0044
France	0033	Senegal	00221
French Guiana	00594	Seychelles	00284
French Polynesia	00689	Sierra Leone	00232
Gabon	00241	Singapore	0065
Gambia	00220	Slovakia	00421
Georgia	00995	Slovenia	00386
Germany	0049	Solomon Islands	00677
Ghana	00233	Somalia	00252
Gibraltar	00350	South Africa	0027
Greece	0030	South Korea	0082
Greenland	00299	Spain	0034
Grenada	001473	Sri Lanka	0094
Guadeloupe	00590	Sudan	00249
Guam	001671	Suriname	00597
Guatemala	00502	Swaziland	00268
Guinea	00224	Sweden	0046
Guyana	00592	Switzerland	0041
Haiti	00509	Syria	00963
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Serbia	00381
Honduras	00504	Taiwan	00886
Hong Kong	00852	Tanzania	00255
Hungary	0036	Thailand	0066
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Toga	00228
Iceland	00354	Tonga	00676
India	0091	Tokelau	00690
Indian Ocean	00873	Trinidad	001868
Indonesia	0062	Tunisia	00216
Iran	0098	Turkey	0090
Iraq	00964	Tuvalu	00688
Ireland	00353	Uganda	00256
Italy	0039	Ukraine	00380
Ivory Coast	00225	United Arab Emirates	00976
Jamaica	001876	United Kingdom	0044
Japan	0081	Uruguay	00598
Jordan	00962	USA	001
Kazakhstan	007	Uzbekistan	00998
Kenya	00254	Vanuatu	00678
Kiribati	00686	Venezuela	00582
Kuwait	00965	Vietnam	0084
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Laos	00856	Virgin Islands US	001340
Latvia	00371	Wales (UK)	0044
Lebanon	00961	Yemen	00967
Liberia	00231	Yugoslavia	00381
Libya	00218	Zambia	00260
		Zimbabwe	00263

'FARC FROG' CAUGHT UP IN COLOMBIAN CONFLICT

BOGOTA: The little green frog's natural camouflage reminded the professor who discovered it of the guerrilla fighters hiding out in the very same Colombian forest. So American zoologist John Douglas Lynch controversially named the new species *Atelopus farci*, for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the Marxist rebel group that has been fighting the government since 1964. Now, despite their olive-green camo, both the FARC and the frog have disappeared from the creature's sole habitat, a mountainside forest in central Colombia, near the town of Alban.

Conservationists fear the little frog is extinct-collateral damage in the government's increasingly promising peace process with the

guerrillas, whose insurgency had the beneficial side-effect of protecting rural areas from deforestation and agriculture, according to Lynch. "Cloaked in camouflage and hiding out in the forest, (the frog) immediately reminded me of the FARC," said Lynch, a professor at the National University of Colombia.

"In the (species) description, I was careful not to mention any revolutionary political aspect, but I was impressed by the fact that this guerrilla group was protecting the Andean forests." The name has not been without controversy. "It was his decision. I never asked him why. But in my opinion, it was stupid. It could have made (the frog) a target for other armed groups or the government itself," said fellow scientist

Gustavo Gonzalez, a master's student in biology at Lynch's university.

Twice kidnapped

Lynch is well aware of the downside of the violence that has gripped his adopted country for more than half a century. FARC fighters kidnapped him for several days in 1999 as he conducted research in a rebel-held area. Another guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army (ELN), kidnapped him again the following year. After his second kidnapping, he gave up doing research in rebel-held areas. But there was an unexpected upside to the violence, too, he says: It held big agriculture at bay, safeguarding the wild habitats of species such as *Atelopus farci*, better known as the forest stubfoot toad.

Lynch identified the species in 1985, when he collected some 200 specimens in a single night. Today, researchers cannot find a single one. "It's extinct," said Lynch, the leading authority on the species. The forest stubfoot toad is not the only species affected. In a master's thesis entitled "The Wildlife of War and Peace in Colombia," journalist Lina Tono recently explored how the waning of the conflict has led to an expansion of palm oil plantations, to the detriment of native forests and species such as the brown spider monkey, which is critically endangered.

Danger of peace?

After more than half a century of conflict that has killed more than 260,000 people, the Colombian government and the FARC say they are



COLOMBIA: US herpetologist John Douglas Lynch gestures at the National University of Colombia, in Bogota. — AFP photos

close to signing a peace deal. The FARC have been observing a unilateral ceasefire since July, and the government has reciprocated by halting air strikes. The guerrillas agreed to sit down to talks in 2012, after former president Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010) scaled up the army's offensive and forced the FARC to retreat from some of their strongholds, including the forest around Alban.

That enabled Lynch and other scientists to return to formerly rebel-held areas for the first time in years. When Lynch went back to Alban, he searched high and low but failed to find a single forest stubfoot toad. The waters where the frogs used to

live smelled bad and had no tadpoles, he said. Lynch discovered several pig farms had been opened higher up the mountain, whose runoff was contaminating water sources. He fears the end of Latin America's longest-running conflict will paradoxically have a negative impact on conservation. Others are more positive about the end of the war. For scientists, "the main impact of the conflict has been to limit access to field work sites, limit the possibility for quality, long-term research, in a large part of the country," said Brigitte Baptiste, the director of the Humboldt Institute, a leading research center on Colombia's rich biodiversity. — AFP



COLOMBIA: View of stuffed "Atelopus Farci" frogs at the National University of Colombia.

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times



Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

 فهد علي المخيزيم
 استشاري أطفال
 M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM



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



Kuwait

KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (17/03/2016 TO 23/03/2016)

SHARQIA-1			
TRIPLE 9	11:30 AM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	10:30 PM
SOLACE	1:45 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:30 AM
TRIPLE 9	4:00 PM	MARINA-3	
SOLACE	6:15 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	1:00 PM
TRIPLE 9	8:15 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D	1:30 PM
SOLACE	10:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	3:30 PM
TRIPLE 9	12:30 AM	KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D	5:30 PM
		KUNG FU PANDA 3	7:30 PM
SHARQIA-2		THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	9:30 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	12:00 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	12:05 AM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	2:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:00 PM	AVENUES-1	
KUNG FU PANDA 3	6:00 PM	EMELIE	11:30 AM
LONDON HAS FALLEN	8:00 PM	EMELIE	1:15 PM
LONDON HAS FALLEN	10:00 PM	ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME	3:15 PM
LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:05 AM	EMELIE	5:15 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM	ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME	7:15 PM
LONDON HAS FALLEN	1:00 AM	EMELIE	9:15 PM
		ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME	11:15 PM
		ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME	1:15 AM
SHARQIA-3		AVENUES-2	
THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	12:15 PM	UNNATURAL	12:45 PM
ZOOTOPIA	2:45 PM	UNNATURAL	2:45 PM
ZOOTOPIA	5:00 PM	UNNATURAL	4:45 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	7:15 PM	UNNATURAL	6:45 PM
THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	9:15 PM	UNNATURAL	8:45 PM
THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	11:45 PM	UNNATURAL	10:45 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:45 PM	UNNATURAL	12:45 AM
MUHALAB-1		AVENUES-3	
KAPOOR AND SONS- Hindi	11:45 AM	KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D	1:00 PM
THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	2:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	3:15 PM
KAPOOR AND SONS- Hindi	5:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D	5:30 PM
UNNATURAL	7:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D	7:45 PM
THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	9:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	10:00 PM
UNNATURAL	12:15 AM	TRIPLE 9	12:15 AM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM
		TRIPLE 9	1:00 AM
MUHALAB-2		360°- 1	
SOLACE	11:30 AM	KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D	12:00 PM
SOLACE	1:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D	2:15 PM
SOLACE	3:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D	4:30 PM
ZOOTOPIA	5:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	6:45 PM
SOLACE	7:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D	9:00 PM
TRIPLE 9	9:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	11:15 PM
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BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D	11:15 PM
TRIPLE 9	12:45 AM	WED	
MUHALAB-3		360°- 2	
LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:30 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	12:00 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	12:30 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	2:30 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	2:30 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	5:00 PM
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LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:30 AM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	10:00 PM
		THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	12:30 AM
FANAR-1		360°- 3	
ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME	12:30 PM	UNNATURAL	11:45 AM
ZOOTOPIA	2:30 PM	UNNATURAL	1:45 PM
UNNATURAL	4:45 PM	UNNATURAL	3:45 PM
ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME	6:45 PM	UNNATURAL	5:45 PM
UNNATURAL	8:45 PM	UNNATURAL	7:45 PM
ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME	10:45 PM	UNNATURAL	9:45 PM
UNNATURAL	12:45 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D	11:45 PM
		UNNATURAL	9:45 PM
FANAR-2		AL-KOUT.1	
KUNG FU PANDA 3	11:30 AM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	12:30 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	1:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	2:30 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	3:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:30 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	5:45 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	6:30 PM
KUNG FU PANDA 3	7:45 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	8:30 PM
THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	10:00 PM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	10:30 PM
THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	12:30 AM	LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:30 AM
FANAR-3		AL-KOUT.2	
KAPOOR AND SONS- Hindi	12:45 PM	UNNATURAL	1:00 PM
THE WAVE	1:30 PM	ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME	3:00 PM
THE WAVE	3:45 PM	ZOOTOPIA	5:00 PM
KAPOOR AND SONS- Hindi	6:00 PM	UNNATURAL	7:15 PM
KAPOOR AND SONS- Hindi	9:00 PM	ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME	9:00 PM
THE WAVE	12:05 AM	UNNATURAL	11:00 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM	UNNATURAL	1:00 AM
MARINA-1		AL-KOUT.3	
SOLACE	11:30 AM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	11:30 AM
SOLACE	1:30 PM	THE WAVE	2:15 PM
TRIPLE 9	3:45 PM	THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT	4:30 PM
SOLACE	6:00 PM	THE WAVE	7:00 PM
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TRIPLE 9	10:00 PM	THE WAVE	11:45 PM
TRIPLE 9	12:15 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	9:15 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 AM
SOLACE	1:00 AM		
MARINA-2			
LONDON HAS FALLEN	12:00 PM		
ZOOTOPIA	2:00 PM		
KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:15 PM		
ZOOTOPIA	6:15 PM		
LONDON HAS FALLEN	8:30 PM		

A Leading Industrial Company Requires Jobs

Serial No.	Job	Experience
1	Production Worker	Age limit - 27 years old
2	Mason	Building, altering and repairing tile or ceramic structures and surfaces.
3	Chief worker	Minimum 5 years experience in Supervising finishing works in building construction
4	Plumber	Experience in plumbing
5	Carpenter	Experience in carpentry and aluminum
6	Painter	Experience in all types of house painting

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Hatim holder of Indian Passport No: K8514434, Sadar Bazar, VIL - Partapur, Bedwa, Teh - Garhi, Banswara, Rajasthan, hereby changed my name to Hatim Mansur Najmi.
**(C 5146)
14-32016**

I, Gregory Joao Gomes, (old name) holder of Indian Passport No. Z2111063, son of late Joao Gomes from Borim - Goa, hereby change my name to Anselmo Gregorio Gomes, (new name) as per my birth certificate.
(C 5145)

I, Ligorio Dsouza, holder of Indian Passport No. N1868736, Agosso Loliem Canacona Goa, south Goa 403728, hereby change my name to Ligorio De Sousa, H.N. 355, Agas Loliem Canacona Goa. (C 5144)

I, Betty Juliet D Souza, holder of Indian Passport No. 9397340, H.N. 64 Comba Margao Salcete, Goa, India, hereby change my name Betty Juliet Pires. **(C 5144)
12-3-2016**

Hospitals

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

Clinics

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

Ooredoo Honors Hala Febrayer 2016 Shopping Festival Organizers and Presents Grand Prizes to Lucky Winners

Exceptional awards ceremony was conducted in the company's headquarters



Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of international Ooredoo Group, has recently conducted an awards ceremony to present Hala Febrayer Shopping Festival lucky winners with their prizes. The Awards ceremony was held at Ooredoo's headquarters in Kuwait City. Hala Febrayer is the biggest annual festival in Kuwait which attracts nationals, residents as well as visitors from the region, Ooredoo's partnership with Hala Febrayer reflects the company's belief in its social responsibility toward the community and in the importance of

effectively taking part in national events and activities. On this occasion, Ooredoo's Director of Corporate Communications, Mijbil Alayoub said: "I would like to also congratulate all lucky winners of the renowned Hala Febrayer Shopping festival, which was conducted in Kuwait's mall throughout the festival period, and thank them for joining our ceremony today" added Alayoub. 30 Lucky winners of Hala Febrayer Shopping Festival draws won grand prizes, where 15 of them won cars presented by Northern Gulf Trading Company,

Hyundai's sole agent in Kuwait and the other 15 won 1000 KD cash prizes presented by Ooredoo. Two of the lucky winners entered the draw after purchasing from Ooredoo branches and automatically entered the draw. The massive national event included cultural, religious, entertainment and sports activities, such as Hala Febrayer camp in Bneider, five musical concerts, Hala Febrayer Carnival, Shopping Festival, Hala Febrayer Marthom in addition to The Graffiti 'For the Love of Kuwait' competition and The Equestrian Championship.



Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2016



Startup makes virtual reality intuitive with eye-tracking

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BANK OF ENGLAND LEAVES INTEREST RATES ON HOLD



CAPE TOWN: Shock revelations about a wealthy Indian family's interference in South African government affairs set embattled President Jacob Zuma up for a high-pressure appearance in parliament. — AFP

ZUMA UNDER PRESSURE IN NEW GRAFT SCANDAL INDIAN FAMILY INTERFERENCE STILL A CRIPPLING ISSUE

CAPE TOWN: Shock revelations about a wealthy Indian family's interference in South African government affairs set embattled President Jacob Zuma up for a high-pressure appearance in parliament yesterday.

The admission by deputy finance minister Mcebisi Jonas that he was offered the top job in the treasury by the Gupta family caused outrage in a country already alarmed by a series of corruption scandals. The Gupta brothers Ajay, Atul and Rajesh were smalltime businessmen back home but have built up a string of companies with interests in computers, mining, media and engineering since moving to South Africa in the 1990s.

They have long been accused of wielding undue influence over Zuma, whose son Duduzane is a partner in some of their businesses. Zuma's third wife also used to work for them. Jonas said he received a threatening text message while he was preparing his statement exposing the job offer by the Guptas, the

Business Day reported.

The newspaper quoted the message from an unnamed businessman as reading: "Please keep your own counsel. Martyrdom is best left to Christ." In his statement on Wednesday, Jonas said: "Members of the Gupta family offered me the position of Minister of Finance to replace then-minister Nene. I rejected this out of hand."

The Guptas, who had attracted controversy a few years ago by flying in wedding guests at the Waterkloof air base which is normally reserved for visiting heads of state and diplomatic delegations, issued a statement denying Jonas's claims. But even the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has expressed concern about the graft allegations, amid speculation that the president's position at the head of the party could be fatally weakened.

"We need to deal with this; it will degenerate into a mafia state if this goes on," ANC Secretary-General Gwede Mantashe told Bloomberg News. "The fact we are talking

about this so boldly now shows that things are going to change."

Economic woes

The ANC, which led the struggle to end apartheid, holds a meeting of its national executive committee starting today, where the Gupta issue is likely to dominate. The official opposition party in parliament, the Democratic Alliance (DA) said the latest developments make Zuma's position "increasingly untenable".

"He, and the ANC, need to consider whether he should resign from office, or be recalled." The party said it would lay corruption charges against the Gupta family. Zuma faces parliament for a scheduled question time later yesterday, where he will meet a barrage of questions including on the country's dire economic situation. The alleged job offer to Jonas occurred before Zuma sacked respected finance minister Nhlanhla Nene in December—a move that triggered a collapse in the rand and massive with-

drawal of foreign investment. Nene was replaced by little-known lawmaker David van Rooyen, who was widely seen as a weak placeholder for Zuma loyalists such as the Guptas.

His appointment caused such a negative reaction that Zuma sacked him after just four days and reappointed Pravin Gordhan, who served as finance minister from 2009 to 2014. Gordhan is leading efforts to try to restore confidence in the economy and avoid a downgrade of the country's debt to junk status by the ratings agencies.

Another ANC member, Vytjie Mentor, also alleged this week that she was offered a cabinet post by the Guptas—an accusation that Zuma denied. The Guptas are also alleged to have determined the appointment of other government figures, including minister of mines Mosebenzi Zwane. Zuma, a veteran political survivor whose term in office ends in 2019, has previously defended his friendship with the Guptas. — AFP

INDIA 'NOT SCARED' IF MONSANTO LEAVES, COTTON ROW ESCALATES

NEW DELHI: US seed company Monsanto is welcome to leave India if it does not want to lower prices of genetically modified cotton seeds as directed by the government, a minister said on Wednesday, in a sign the rift between New Delhi and the firm is widening.

The comments come as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nationalist government expects to develop its own genetically modified (GM) cotton varieties early next year to end Monsanto's dominance; it controls over 90 percent of cotton seed supply. New technologies are critical to lifting India's poor farm productivity, although even if India did develop a home-grown GM cotton variety in 2017, it would struggle to sustain a programme that needs to refresh seeds every decade or so, experts warned.

The introduction of Monsanto's GM cotton seeds in 2002 helped turn India into the biggest producer of the fiber, while other crops like pulses continue to suffer as transgenic food is banned and local research has stalled.

Despite the gains GM cotton brought for more than 7 million cotton farmers in India, some of them and their associations, including one affiliated to Modi's ruling party that promotes self-reliance, have complained Monsanto overprices its products.

Under pressure to mollify farmers hit by three straight crop failures due to bad weather, Modi's government has imposed a cut of around 70 percent in royalties that local firms pay Monsanto for its cotton technology.

India's anti-trust regulator is also investigating whether the company misused its near-monopoly to jack up rates. A Monsanto joint venture with a local company says it is confident the allegations will be proved groundless. Monsanto has taken the government to court over the royalty. It said in a statement this month it would have to reevaluate its India business, because it was difficult to bring in new technologies in an "environment where such arbitrary and innovation-stifling government interventions make it impossible to recoup research and development investments ..." But Sanjeev Kumar Balyan, the junior agriculture minister, told Reuters the government was trying to rectify what he called past mistakes that allowed a foreign company to dictate seed prices and stifled local crop research.

"It's now upon Monsanto to decide whether they want to accept this rate or not," Balyan said. "If they don't find it feasible, then they are free to take a call. The greed (of charging) a premium has to end. "We're not scared if Monsanto leaves the country, because our team of scientists are working to develop (an) indigenous variety of (GM) seeds," he said. A Monsanto spokesman declined to comment beyond the statement, but analysts said it was unlikely to withdraw from India lightly given the huge size of the market and its strategic importance now that China has bid to snap up the company's biggest rival, Syngenta, for \$43 billion.

"Invite Monsanto back?"

Monsanto India is the firm's only listed unit outside its home base, and it has been selling seeds and herbicide in the country for more than four decades. Globally the company has cut its earnings forecast as seed prices fall amid lower farm spending, and any climb-down in India could lead to demands for price cuts in other markets.

Monsanto warned in January that its international GM traits businesses could face unpredictable regulatory environments that may be highly politicized. "The decision of the government to override contracts signed by private entities sends a negative signal when the prime minister is going around the world seeking private investment," said Ashok Gulati, an agricultural economist who formerly advised the government.

He said that although India might be able to develop its own GM cotton seeds based on Monsanto's current Bollgard II technology, their efficacy will drop sharply in 4-5 years as pests they are meant to kill become resistant. "What will we do then? Invite Monsanto again?" he asked, adding that developing new technology would require expensive and extensive research.

Monsanto has said that heightened regulation by India went against the government's own policies to promote innovation and improve ease of doing business, and that it was important for the country to ensure sanctity of contracts and recognize intellectual property rights. —Reuters

EUROZONE INFLATION REVISED UP, HELPING EURO TO CLIMB

EURO CLIMB TO FIVE-MONTH HIGHS

LONDON: Underlying inflation pressures in the 19-country Eurozone were not as subdued in February as initially thought, official figures showed yesterday, in a development that's helped the euro climb to five-month highs against the dollar.

The European Union's statistical agency said yesterday that the core rate, which strips out energy, food, alcohol and tobacco, was 0.8 percent in the year to February, up from the initial estimate of 0.7 percent. The headline number, which includes those typically more volatile items, was left unchanged at minus 0.2 percent. The negative rate was the main reason behind the European Central Bank's decision last week to expand its stimulus measures for the eurozone economy.

The ECB is worried that low or negative inflation will become embedded into expectations to the detriment of the wider economy. For example, if consumers expect a sustained period of falling prices, or so-called deflation, they may delay spending. And businesses may opt against investing.

The figures showed 11 countries that use the euro have inflation rates below zero. Cyprus and Spain have remarkably weak inflation rates of minus 2.2 percent and 1 percent. Others like Austria and Belgium aren't suffering the same phenomenon, with positive inflation rates of 1 percent and 1.1 percent respectively.

Big package stimulus

Given the backdrop across most of the eurozone, the ECB backed another big package of stimulus measures last week. As well as expanding its monthly government bond purchases, it cut all its main interest rates, including a surprise reduction in the rate banks pay to borrow from the ECB to zero. It hopes the package will shore up economic activity, boosting inflation.

The ECB will be hoping that with oil prices having recently recovered from multi-year lows inflation will start pushing



FRANKFURT: Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank (ECB), arrives for a press conference following a meeting of the bank's Governing Council. — AFP

higher in the coming months. The ECB aims to have the inflation rate just below 2 percent. Few economists think the headline rate is heading back toward that target anytime soon given tepid economic growth in the Eurozone, a slowing Chinese economy and low inflation expectations.

Danae Kyriakopoulou, senior economist at the Centre for Economics and Business Research, expects the headline rate across the eurozone to at least start rising soon largely because of a pickup in oil prices. However, she thinks the core rate could actually start to slide back as the increase in oil prices dents demand for other goods. "The rises in oil prices act to

reverse the boost that consumers have enjoyed given the eurozone's status of a net oil-importing region," she said. ECB President Mario Draghi indicated that further cuts in the rate the central bank charges commercial banks on their deposits were unlikely and that has helped the euro push higher - lower rates can weigh on a currency as the returns available to investors are reduced. Wednesday's decision by the U.S. Federal Reserve to keep its own interest rates unchanged and its suggestion that increases this year will be limited have also pushed the euro higher. Following the figures, the euro was up 1 percent at \$1.1328, its highest level since Oct 20. — AP

TOSHIBA SELLS MEDICAL DEVICES UNIT TO CANON FOR \$5.9 BN

TOKYO: Japan's Toshiba has sold its medical devices unit to camera and office equipment maker Canon for almost \$6 billion, it said yesterday, as it sheds businesses to recover from a major accounting scandal. The deal came as Toshiba's share price plunged nearly eight percent after a report it was under investigation by US authorities over allegations it hid losses in its nuclear business.

News of the Canon deal comes as Toshiba expects a whopping loss of about \$6.0 billion for the year to March due to sagging global demand and a profit-padding scandal, in which high-handed bosses for years systematically pushed their subordinates to cover-up weak financial figures.

In the wake of the scandal, Toshiba-a vast conglomerate that makes everything from rice cookers to nuclear plants-has ushered in thousands of job cuts and

plans to sell various business units in a bid to revive its fortunes.

Under the deal Toshiba sold all its shares in Toshiba Medical Systems, a major producer of medical imaging tools such as MRI and CT scans, to Canon for 665.5 billion yen (\$5.9 billion). Separately, Toshiba said it had reached a basic accord to sell a majority interest in its home appliance business to China's Midea, though a Toshiba spokeswoman said a price for the deal had yet to be announced. She said the two sides were scheduled to reach a final accord by the end of March. Sales in Toshiba's home appliance business came to 225.4 billion yen for the fiscal year to March 2015, the most recent annual figure available. In December, Japan's Securities and Exchange Surveillance Commission said Toshiba should be slapped with a record 7.37 billion yen fine over the profit-padding scheme that hammered the reputation of one of

Japan's best-known firms. Many Japanese high-tech companies are rushing to enter the medical field, as a graying population boosts demand for healthcare services and tools. Sony launched a medical joint venture with endoscope maker Olympus, which also went through a massive loss-hiding scandal and required a strong partner to rebuild itself.

Shares in Toshiba plunged 7.96 percent to 191.8 yen after a report said it is being probed by US authorities over allegations it hid \$1.3 billion in losses at its nuclear power operations. It had been up almost five percent before the story broke. Bloomberg News, quoting unnamed sources, reported that the US Justice Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission are examining whether any fraud occurred. Toshiba did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the report. — AFP

CHINA INTERNET GIANT TENCENT SEES 22% RISE IN Q4 PROFIT

SHANGHAI: Chinese Internet giant Tencent, operator of the country's most popular messaging app WeChat, reported yesterday a 22 percent jump in fourth quarter net profit but fell short of expectations.

The firm is engaged in a three-way fight over mobile payment services in China with domestic rival Alibaba and US tech behemoth Apple. Net profit for the fourth quarter reached 7.16 billion yuan (\$1.10 billion), Tencent said in a statement. The market had expected a higher 7.44 billion yuan, according

to an average of analysts' estimates compiled by Bloomberg News.

Monthly active users for WeChat-known as Weixin in Chinese-reached 697 million at the end of 2015, up 39 percent year-on-year, the statement said. Tencent also operates an older instant messaging service called QQ.

"Our QQ and Weixin social platforms continued to improve and innovate, reinforcing their positions as China's most-used mobile applications," Tencent chairman and chief executive Pony Ma said in the statement. "We

created new social advertising formats and technology to help advertisers reach consumers online," he said. Besides advertising, Tencent uses its social media platforms to offer mobile games, digital music, video and other services to users, and the statement said the company was looking to "enrich" its mobile payment services this year. Tencent is second in China's mobile and online payments market with a 17 percent share but lags far behind e-commerce giant Alibaba, which commands nearly three-quarters, according to

Beijing-based BigData Research.

US technology giant Apple last month launched its mobile payment service Apple Pay in China, in a challenge to the established firms. Fourth quarter revenue surged 45 percent year-on-year to 30.44 billion yuan, Tencent said. For all of 2015, revenue rose 30 percent on the year to 102.86 billion yuan, yielding a net profit of 28.81 billion, a 21 percent rise, it said. Shares of Tencent closed up 0.93 percent in Hong Kong, where it is listed, on Thursday. — AFP

HONG KONG'S LI BEATS PROFIT PREDICTIONS AFTER COMPANY REVAMP

HONG KONG: Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing's flagship CK Hutchison Holdings posted yesterday a net profit of HK\$31.2 billion (US\$4 billion) for 2015, beating analysts' estimates after a sweeping reshuffle of Li's business empire.

But the firm, which controls assets in telecoms, utilities, ports and other industries in over 50 countries, said "significant headwinds" had affected its performance, with low oil prices particularly hitting its energy business.

The company reshuffle took place in June but the full-year earnings report gave results adjusted to show what earnings would have been if the revamp had occurred at the beginning of 2015, to aid comparison. The adjusted results showed net profit for 2015 had slipped eight percent to HK\$31.2 billion compared to the previous year, but beat the HK\$30.9 billion average analysts' estimate from Bloomberg.

Net profit taken only from June without any adjustment stood at HK\$118.6 billion. "Significant headwinds in both currencies and commodities affected certain core businesses in the group in 2015," Li said in a statement.

However, strong performances in the telecoms sector and savings made by the firm's reorganization had helped offset challenges, Li said. Hutchison also announced a full-year dividend of HK\$2.55 a share. — AFP

LOW OIL PRICE SENDS LUFTHANSA PROFITS SOARING

FRANKFURT: German airline Lufthansa said yesterday that low oil prices and booming passenger business sent profits soaring in 2015, a year marred by the Germanwings crash and drawn-out industrial action by pilots and crew.

Lufthansa chief executive Carsten Spohr described last year as an "emotionally challenging year" due to the crash of a passenger jet in March belonging to its low-cost subsidiary Germanwings, killing all 150 people on board.

The German carrier also battled two long and bitter separate industrial disputes with pilots and cabin crew over pay and pension provisions. Nevertheless, "2015 was a good year in economic terms," Spohr said. Net profit soared to 1.7 billion euros (\$1.9 billion) in 2015, from just 55 million Euros a year earlier.

Underlying or operating profit grew by 55.2 percent to 1.8 billion Euros and revenues were up 6.8 percent at 32.1 billion Euros. "The doubling in the passenger airlines' result is not only due to lower fuel costs, but also to the favorable developments in our passenger volumes and to our capacity discipline," CEO Spohr said. As well as the Lufthansa brand, the group also owns Swiss and Austrian Airlines, as well as low-cost carriers Eurowings and Germanwings. And underlying profits in the passenger business doubled to 1.5 billion Euros in 2015 from 701 million Euros in 2014. Germanwings and Eurowings reached profitability for the first time. An A320 Airbus jet belonging to Germanwings crashed in the French Alps on March 24, 2015, apparently a deliberate act on the part of co-pilot Andreas Lubitz who had a history of depression. The strength of Lufthansa's profits "also confirms that our focus on quality in both the premium and the point-to-point segment is the right approach. And the very good results from Lufthansa Technik and LSG Sky Chefs further affirm that the Lufthansa group is on the right track," Spohr said.

The management board will propose a dividend payment of 0.50 euros per share for 2015 after no dividend was paid for 2014. "Our dividend policy is clear and comprehensible," said chief financial officer Simone Menne. "We are committed to making continuous dividend payments to our shareholders in the years ahead." — AFP



GARFORTH: Britain's Finance Minister George Osborne (center) is pictured as he speaks to pupils during a netball lesson at St Benedict's Catholic Primary School. — AFP

BANK OF ENGLAND LEAVES INTEREST RATES ON HOLD

HEIGHTENED UNCERTAINTY ABOUT ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

LONDON: The Bank of England has voted to keep its main interest rate on hold, it said yesterday, faced with a weak growth outlook at home and abroad. The move by the Monetary Policy Committee to keep borrowing costs at 0.50 percent, where they have stood for seven years, comes a day after the US Federal Reserve also left rates unchanged.

"At its meeting ending on 16 March... the MPC voted unanimously to maintain Bank Rate at 0.5 percent," the Bank of England said in published minutes. The BoE also maintained the amount of cash stimulus, or quantitative easing (QE), pumping around the British economy at £375 billion (\$540 billion, 478 billion Euros). "The MPC's decision to leave interest rates on hold... was unsurprising given the softness of recent activity indicators and heightened uncertainty about the economic outlook," said Vicky Redwood, chief UK economist at Capital Economics research group.

Britain's finance minister George

Osborne on Wednesday said that the country's economy was set to grow slower than expected this year amid turbulence in financial markets. And yesterday, the BoE repeated its view that "there appears to be increased uncertainty surrounding the forthcoming referendum on UK membership of the European Union".

Osborne on Wednesday warned that any "Brexit", or departure from the European Union, would risk damaging the nation's economic recovery, ahead of the June referendum. His comments came as Britain unleashed more austerity in its latest annual budget and cut its growth outlook, blaming the impact of global market turbulence rooted in China.

'Cocktails of risks'

Britain's economy is set to grow by 2.0 percent this year, down from a November estimate of 2.4 percent, Osborne said. The chancellor pointed to a "dangerous cocktail of risks" including "turbulence in financial markets, slower

growth in economies like China, and weak growth in the developed world".

The Federal Reserve meanwhile on Wednesday cut its outlook for the US economy and kept its interest rate policy unchanged, citing the impact of the global slowdown and turmoil in world markets. It came a day after Japan's central bank held fire on unleashing more stimulus, in contrast to recent European Central Bank action.

The ECB last week fired off a new volley of shots in its ongoing battle to avert deflation in the euro area and jumpstart economic recovery in the region. The ECB slashed already record-low interest rates, said it would pump massive new sums into the banking system and, for the first time, would start buying corporate bonds. "Central banks have been a key focal point for the markets over the last week, with particular attention being paid to their communication more so at times than the policy actions themselves," said Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at Oanda trading group. — AFP



TOKYO: Fove's chief executive Yuka Kojima, standing at left, talks with her co-founder Australian Lochlainn Wilson at their office. — AP

STARTUP MAKES VIRTUAL REALITY INTUITIVE WITH EYE-TRACKING

'GO INSIDE THE WORLD THAT'S BEHIND THE DISPLAY'

TOKYO: No more fiddling with remote-controller buttons or a mouse. Just look. San Francisco-based startup Fove has developed eye-tracking for virtual reality - that kernel of technology many feel is key for the illusion of becoming immersed in a setting. Glance, and a video-game character talks back. Or use a death stare to shoot down virtual spaceships. Watch a movie of a forest or a room and be able to look around wherever you want.

"It allows you to go inside the world that's behind the display," said Yuka Kojima, Fove's co-founder and a rare female chief executive in male-dominated Japan Inc. Fove, which comes from "fovea," the part of the eye with the sharpest vision, from "field of view," and the word's similarity with "love," has devised a way to use tiny infrared sensors inside headset goggles to monitor the movements of a wearer's pupils.

It's a small company, founded in 2014, with offices in Tokyo, San Francisco and Los Angeles, and employing just 17 people. But Fove is getting attention from the fledgling VR industry, as "virtual reality" is known, and winning backing from innovative financiers. It has raised about \$500,000 through Kickstarter.

Revolutionize entertainment

Virtual reality could revolutionize entertainment, like movies, games and live-streaming of sports. It has myriad potential business applications, such as giving apartment hunters a virtual look at real estate options and car buyers tours of virtual showrooms.

It could also prove useful for training of pilots and surgeons, and has already been adopted by the military. The make-believe experience could aid in so-called "empathy training" for police and other service providers. Pornography is another potentially lucrative application.

A recent report by New York-based Superdata, which analyzes data on games, said smaller companies could become "first-movers," as established players keep a cautious wait-and-see atti-

tude. Rahat Ahmed, co-founder and chief of strategy at New York-based Trinity VR, an investor in technology and emerging markets, says the big plus of VR is "intuitive interaction." Augmented reality enables users to see three-dimensional objects in the real world, while VR delivers a 360-degree fictional universe.

"Every major company has to have a VR-AR strategy," Ahmed said recently at the CLSA Japan Forum in Tokyo, referring by AP to "augmented reality," which enables users to see three-dimensional objects in the real world, while VR delivers a 360-degree fictional universe. "It allows connecting - going fishing with your father who is far away."

New technology usually has its share of detractors, and there are worries that VR could have harmful effects if users become too immersed in their fantasy environments and estranged from reality. But Fove developers say VR can play a positive role.

In one poignant demonstration, a bed-ridden grandmother wears a Fove headset to "attend" her grandson's wedding, sending a human-shaped robot controlled by her eyes in her place. The woman gestures happily, reaching out from her bed as if the newlyweds are standing before her. Eye-tracking can enable disabled people to use their eyes to control devices, says Kojima's co-founder at Fove, Australian Lochlainn Wilson. He developed Fove's breakthrough technology for eye-tracking.

Potential rivals

With the help of Fove and a Japanese university, for example, a young man with spinal muscular atrophy, an illness that has weakened his arms and fingers, used eye movements to play a piano. "We want to do things with VR that people haven't thought about, or have thought to be impossible," said Wilson, who met Kojima while she was studying English for four months in Australia. "And we have got other secret projects in the future."

Fove has potential rivals, such as elec-

tronics and entertainment company Sony Corp. and Facebook's Oculus, which later this month will begin shipping the consumer version of its Rift virtual-reality headset for \$600, plus \$1,500 for an "Oculus-ready" PC. Oculus says it is working on eye-tracking for its headsets, and other players like Eyefluence Inc., based in Milpitas, California, have also developed the technology.

Microsoft Corp. will soon have a developer version of its augmented reality device, HoloLens, for \$3,000. Fove's headset for game and other content developers will become available sometime later this year for about \$500 - though for the headset to work well, you need in addition a good PC costing \$1,000 or more.

The company plans to make 1,200 such headset kits, but Kojima says Fove could boost production to as many as a million headsets if she clinches a deal to supply them to Internet cafes. Fove also is offering to license the technology to other companies. Fove's eye-tracking technique is convincing: In one recent demonstration, a headset wearer watched a computer-graphic figure holding a machine gun slowly approach, evoking a sense of menace.

Looking at the space behind the figure, the background came into more vivid focus and the figure in front dimmed bit, enhancing the illusion of perspective. Kojima, who is also a filmmaker, became interested in story-telling from when she was studying at Tokyo's prestigious Ochanomizu University. Later, while working as a game producer at Sony Computer Entertainment, she began to wonder why games allowed only "yes" or "no" choices, when stories usually called for more subtlety.

Fove, she believes, can fix that by making the interaction more intuitive. "It should feel more like the way we are facing each other now, laughing, making eye contact, a nonverbal form of communication," said Kojima. "Nuances should be part of storytelling. It should be natural." — AP

ACURA BRINGS NSX SPECIALTY CAR PRODUCTION TO THE US

MARYSVILLE: The next generation of Acura's top-of-the-line NSX is ready to begin full production in Ohio in late April - the first time in the car's 27-year history that it will be made outside of Japan. Honda Motor Co confirmed the start of production of its new specialty car yesterday. It will make 800 per year in Ohio for global shipment.

Honda's decision to build its top Acura specialty car in North America is a conscious decision to tap the US market and distinguish itself from European competitors, such as Lamborghini, Ferrari and others, said engineering project leader Clement D'Souza. "The new level of craftsmanship that we are promoting through this car, the technology that we are putting into this car, cascading down to the rest of our vehicles, will also help the brand image," he said. "Overall, companywide, it's going to be a huge boost not only to the Acura brand, but also to the Honda brand global-wide." The 2017 NSX starts at \$156,000. It features a 3.5-liter twin-turbocharged V-6 engine with 573 horsepower that is hand-built in nearby Anna, Ohio. It's an all-wheel-drive hybrid, with three electric motors that assist in acceleration and handling. It's been about four years in development. Acura announced plans to bring back the NSX - which was last produced in 2005 - at the 2012 auto show in Detroit. Matt DeLorenzo, managing editor at Kelley Blue Book, said the US is going to be one of the car's biggest markets and Acura is looking to American production of the automobile as both a convenience and a selling point to customers.

Spacious production

A gleaming, spacious production facility - with windowed views onto painting, quality testing and other processes often hidden from view - is intended so potential buyers can see the process up close, he said. The centrally located Midwest state could be an attractive closer-to-home alternative than Honda's Takanezawa plant in Japan. "It's a lot easier to get to Columbus than it is to Tochigi," DeLorenzo said.

The plant where the car is being built was constructed from the ground up to incorporate what the company says is an ideal synergy of human labor and machine technology. Each component is hand assembled and each of 547 bolts is hand-started and manually tightened by a master technician. Meanwhile, significant portions of the welding, painting and assembly work are completed by highly specialized robots, one nicknamed the T-Rex. "We have questioned everything," said Doug Duff, who handles vehicle quality testing at the center. "By questioning everything we have done, it's led to a lot of new ideas." That includes 21 U.S. patent applications associated with the manufacturing process. The facility has been operating four, 10-hour shifts a week as ramps up to a full production schedule of 8 to 10 cars daily.

Its assembly line is also operated by around 100 humans, who manually push vehicles mounted on dollies from station to station every 62 minutes. By contrast, a traditional assembly station at the company's neighboring Honda plant is completed in 52 seconds. Executive vice president Tom Shoupe said it's significant that, over Acura's now 30-year history, more than half of its cars sold in the US were also manufactured in North America. He said it is part of a company vision laid out in 1987 to bring its products closer to its customers. The 9,000 NSX's sold in the US between 1991 and 2005 were made in Japan. — AP

AUTOMAKERS TO PUT AUTO BRAKING IN CARS BY 2022

WASHINGTON: Transportation officials and automakers say they've agreed to make automatic braking standard in nearly all cars within six years - by 2022. Mark Rosekind - who heads the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - says the voluntary agreement with 20 car manufacturers means that the important safety technology will be available more quickly than if the government had gone through the lengthy process of issuing mandatory rules.

Automatic braking systems use cameras, radar and other sensors to see objects that are in the way, and slow or stop a vehicle if the driver doesn't react. It's the most important safety technology currently available that's not already required in cars. Safety advocates have filed a petition asking the government to issue mandatory regulations. Those advocates say voluntary agreements aren't enforceable. — AP

RANGERS DOWN DUCKS

ANAHEIM: Kevin Klein had the first two-goal game of his 11-year NHL career, scoring the tiebreaking goal with 6:41 to play in the New York Rangers' 2-1 victory over the Anaheim Ducks on Wednesday night. Klein also scored the tying goal in the second period for the Rangers, who opened their three-game California road trip with their second win in five games overall. Antti Raanta made 22 saves in the Rangers' second victory over Anaheim this season. Jamie McGinn scored and John Gibson stopped 21 shots for the Ducks, who have lost four of five in their first poor stretch since Christmas. The Ducks lost in regulation at home for the first time since Jan 17, ending a 10-game points streak at Honda Center.

FLYERS 3, BLACKHAWKS 2

Defenseman Radko Gudas scored on a deflected shot in the third period, helping the surging Philadelphia Flyers beat the Chicago Blackhawks to move into position for a wild-card playoff spot. Michal Neuvirth made 24 saves as Philadelphia improved to 8-1-1 in its last 10 games and leapfrogged idle Detroit for the eighth spot in the Eastern Conference. The Flyers beat the Red Wings 4-3 at home on Tuesday night. Gudas' slap shot at 9:53 of the third went off the stick of Blackhawks defenseman Christian Ehrhoff and then bounced off the ice before elevating past goaltender Scott Darling. Ryan White and Brayden Schenn scored for the Flyers (34-23-12), who swept the two-game season series against the Blackhawks (41-24-6).

CANADIENS 3, SABRES 2, OT

Paul Byron scored at 3:15 of overtime to lead the Montreal Canadiens over the Buffalo Sabres. Andrei Markov and Greg Pateryn scored in regulation and Ben Scrivens made a season-high 41 saves for the Canadiens, who snapped a two-game losing streak. Zach Bogosian and Marcus Foligno had goals for Buffalo and leading scorer Ryan O'Reilly had an assist in his first game back after missing 11 games with a broken right foot. Robin Lehner made 19 saves.

OILERS 6, BLUES 4

Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Mark Letestu each scored twice and the Edmonton Oilers defeated the St Louis Blues. Taylor Hall and Leon Draisaitl also scored for the Oilers, who have won six of their last 10 games, but had lost their last two. David Backes scored twice, and Jaden Schwartz and Patrik Berglund also had goals for the Blues, who have lost two straight after a six-game winning streak.

AVALANCHE 3, CANUCKS 1

Mikkel Boedker scored twice as the

Colorado Avalanche moved back into play-off position with a win over the Canucks. Andreas Martinson also scored for the Avalanche, who have 76 points - one ahead of idle Minnesota for the last wild-card spot in the Western Conference. Henrik Sedin scored for Vancouver, which completed a four-game homestand at 2-2. The Canucks are 10 points back of the Avs in the wild-card race.

FLAMES 4, JETS 1

Michael Frolik had a goal and two

assists and the Calgary Flames scored three times in the first period before cruising past the Winnipeg Jets. Joe Colborne had a goal and an assist and Mikael Backlund, the third member of that line, added two assists as the Flames won consecutive games on home ice for the first time since December. Sean Monahan and Mark Giordano also scored for Calgary. Drew Stafford scored for Winnipeg, which had won two straight and has yet to string together three wins in a row this season. — AP



CALGARY: Joni Ortio #37 of the Calgary Flames stops the shot of Chris Thorburn #22 of the Winnipeg Jets during an NHL game at Scotiabank Saddledome on March 16, 2016. — AFP

CHAMPION EFIMOVA SUSPENDED OVER SUSPECT MELDONIUM USE

MOSCOW: Russian four-time breaststroke world champion Yuliya Efimova has been suspended from competition over alleged doping, Russia's swimming federation said yesterday, with media reporting she faces a life ban for using meldonium. Russia's swimming federation confirmed that it had received documents from the sport's governing body "confirming the temporary suspension of the sportswoman from competition in connection with a possible doping rule violation".

Russian media reported that 23-year-old Efimova—who won a bronze medal at the London Olympics and trains in the United States—faces a life ban after becoming the latest athlete to test positive for meldonium, a substance banned on January 1. This could be a repeat violation, as she was banned for 16 months after failing a test for a banned steroid in October 2013. The news of the suspension came as Ukraine's athletics federation on Thursday said 800-metre runner Natalya Lupu would not compete at the 2016 indoor world championships for also using meldonium.

"WADA has some questions related to the use of meldonium for Natalya Lupu," the federa-

tion said in a statement. "In connection with this it was decided to cancel Natalya Lupu's trip to the Portland world championships." The fallout over meldonium exploded into public view when Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova admitted earlier this month that she had tested positive for the substance at the Australian Open in January. The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) said last week that 99 athletes worldwide have tested positive for the drug since the ban came into force at the start of the year.

Meldonium is manufactured in Latvia and prescribed to treat heart disease. The drug is available as an over-the-counter medication in many parts of Eastern Europe but not approved for use in the United States by the Food and Drug Administration. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday blasted sports officials in the country for failing to warn athletes in time that meldonium had been added to the list of banned substances. Russian track and field is currently battling a separate doping scandal that has seen the team suspended from competition over claims from WADA last year of state-sponsored doping in the sport. — AFP

HARYANTO LIVING THE DREAM AS INDONESIA'S FIRST F1 RACER

MELBOURNE: Indonesian trailblazer Rio Haryanto said Thursday he is ready for a first tilt at Formula One in Sunday's season-opening Australian Grand Prix, on the back of just four days testing in his new Manor car. The 23-year-old, who will become Indonesia's first F1 driver, will make his grand prix debut after signing a one-year deal last month with Manor Racing, previously known as Marussia. "There's been a tremendous response back home. Obviously to be able to compete in Formula One is a great thing and I'm very proud and I'm sure the whole nation is proud to have me in F1," Haryanto said at his first official F1 media conference.

"I'm new to F1, so there are a lot of things to learn and my expectation is to try and learn as quick as possible and try to build a great relationship with the team... we'll see how it goes in the race." It's been a whirlwind few weeks for Haryanto as he gets accustomed to what is required to compete against the superstars of F1, but he said he was happy living his dream. "This has been my dream for such a long time and I'm enjoying every minute," he said. "It's an incredible time for me and my country. The support means so much to me so I want to include my fans every step of the way."

Government funding

Haryanto, who has been with Manor Racing since 2010, driving in GP3 in Europe, said he covered plenty of ground in his pre-season testing in Barcelona. "It was only four days but we packed a lot into that space of time," he said. "We covered pretty much everything; single lap, race simulation, qualifying simulation, practice starts, practice stops, plus a whole list of other race weekend procedures. "Of course, you would always like more time to prepare, but I'm ready." Haryanto, who has his family with him to help him relax in Melbourne, said he was focusing on getting everything right for his first F1 grand prix. "I want to take it all in, as it's a weekend I'll remember for the rest of my life," he said. "On the track, I'm looking forward to my first qualifying-and the race of course-but I think the qualifying format is going to be interesting. It's something new for everyone. "Then lining up on the starting grid is going to be pretty special, but there's a lot to do before then!" Manor said Haryanto impressed during his F1 trials and the 2015 GP2 series, where he finished fourth overall and topped the podium on three occasions. "He's a great talent," said Dave Ryan, who was last year appointed Manor's new racing director as the team sought to turn around its fortunes. — AFP



CALIFORNIA: Golden State Warriors' Andrew Bogut (right) blocks the shot of New York Knicks' Robin Lopez (8) during the first half of an NBA basketball game on Wednesday, March 16, 2016, in Oakland. — AP

LEBRON-LESS CAVS BEAT MAVS

WARRIORS HOME STREAK HITS 50

CLEVELAND: Kyrie Irving scored 33 points and made a key steal in the closing seconds, leading the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 99-98 win over the Dallas Mavericks on Wednesday night. LeBron James was given the night off by coach Tyrone Lue as part of his plans to keep Cleveland's starters fresh for the playoffs. The Cavs hardly missed their star until the Mavericks stormed back from an 18-point deficit in the fourth quarter. Dallas had several chances to take the lead, but the Mavericks missed two open 3-pointers and had a costly turnover before Irving swiped a pass intended for Dirk Nowitzki with 2.9 seconds left. Irving was fouled and made two free throws before Dallas' Deron Williams hit a 3-pointer at the final horn to conclude a frenzied finish. Kevin Love had 23 points and 18 rebounds for the Cavs, who are 4-12 in games without James over the past two seasons.

WARRIORS 121, KNICKS 85

Stephen Curry scored 34 points as Golden State extended its record regular-season home winning streak to 50 games with a victory over New York. Curry shot 8 for 13 from long range and 12 of 20 from the floor overall before sitting out the fourth quarter with his team up big. The reigning MVP hit 3-pointers on three straight possessions late in the first quarter and on two in a row at the end of the third as the Warriors improved to 32-0 at Oracle Arena this season. Klay Thompson scored 19 points with five 3s and Marreese Speights added 13 with three 3s off the bench as Golden State (61-6) stayed one game ahead of the 1995-96 Bulls' pace in their record 72-win season. Carmelo Anthony had 18 points, six rebounds and six assists for the Knicks.

WIZARDS 117, BULL 96

Finally playing as if their chance at a playoff berth was on the line, which it is, Washington

picked up its second consecutive lopsided victory over a team just ahead of them in the standings, beating Derrick Rose's Chicago behind John Wall's triple-double. Wall, an All-Star point guard, produced 29 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds, outplaying Rose, who returned after missing two games with a strained left groin and finished with 16 points and four assists. Wall received plenty of help, including 20 points from Bradley Beal and 15 from reserve Garrett Temple, all in the first half, when he shot 5 for 5 on 3-pointers. Chicago's Taj Gibson played only 8 minutes and had three points.

THUNDER 130, CELTICS 109

Kevin Durant had 28 points, nine assists and seven rebounds in just over three quarters, helping Oklahoma City cruise over Boston. Russell Westbrook scored 24 points and Enes Kanter had 17 points and 12 rebounds for the Thunder, who had lost six of their last 10 games. Isaiah Thomas led Boston with 29 points, and Tyler Zeller had 16. The Celtics lost their third straight after winning six of seven. It was their most lopsided home loss this season. Durant has scored 20 or more points in 60 of the 61 games he's played this season, including 53 straight. He came out with just under nine minutes to play. It was Boston's second straight loss at TD Garden following a 14-game home winning streak.

CLIPPERS 122, ROCKETS 106

DeAndre Jordan had 23 points and 14 rebounds, and Los Angeles opened up a large halftime lead and never relented en route to a victory over Houston. Jordan finished 8 of 8 from the floor, with six dunks. JJ Redick added 25 points, including 14 in the first quarter, going 5 of 9 from the 3-point line. Chris Paul

had 15 points and 15 assists for the Clippers (43-24), who shot 56 percent. Jamal Crawford had 14 points and seven assists; and Luc Mbah a Moute, Austin Rivers and Wesley Johnson each had 12 points as the Clippers snapped a two-game skid. James Harden led Houston (34-34) with 33 points. Michael Beasley had 16 points and eight rebounds off the bench for the Rockets, who shot 49 percent.

TIMBERWOLVES 114, GRIZZLIES 108

Zach LaVine scored 28 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 18 points and 10 rebounds as Minnesota beat short-handed Memphis. Memphis pulled within 108-104 with 1:12 remaining but then Towns scored four straight points to stop the rally. Anthony Wiggins had 16 points for the Timberwolves, while Gorgui Dieng and Ricky Rubio added 15 points each. Rubio added 11 assists. LaVine was 11 of 19 in the game and matched a career high with six 3-pointers on 10 attempts. Memphis was missing injured players Marc Gasol, Mike Conley, Zach Randolph, Chris Anderson and Vince Carter. The Grizzlies dressed nine players. Lance Stephenson led Memphis with 24 points and 11 rebounds, while JaMychal Green finished with 18 points. Matt Barnes added 14 points, while Ryan Hollins, Briante Weber and Jarell Martin scored 12 apiece for the Grizzlies. Memphis lost its second straight.

HORNETS 107, MAGIC 99

Marvin Williams and Nicolas Batum each scored 26 points as Charlotte beat Orlando to finish its homestand with a 6-1 record. Williams added nine rebounds and four 3-pointers, while Batum had nine assists and seven rebounds for the Hornets, who have won 14 of their last 17. Cody Zeller had his fourth double-double of the season with 13 points and 13

rebounds. Kemba Walker chipped in with 16 points and eight rebounds. The Hornets are one game behind Miami for the fourth-best record in the Eastern Conference. Victor Oladipo had 15 of his 25 points in the first quarter. Brandon Jennings chipped in with 16 points and Andrew Nicholson added 13 for the Magic, who have lost five of their last seven games. The Hornets led by as many as 26 in the second half.

HAWKS 118, PISTONS 114

Jeff Teague scored 22 points, including two crucial free throws with 17.9 seconds left, as Atlanta held off Detroit for its sixth win in seven games. Atlanta went on a 10-0 run late in the fourth quarter to take a 113-104 lead, then let the Pistons back in the game. Marcus Morris cut the lead to two with a three-point play with 18 seconds remaining, but Teague's pair of free throws made it 118-114, and neither team scored after that. Andre Drummond had 18 points and 18 rebounds for Detroit, but he went only 8 of 17 from the free throw line, and the Hawks were more than willing to foul him. Al Horford scored 21 points for Atlanta.

PELICANS 123, KINGS 108

Anthony Davis had 27 points and 14 rebounds and Ryan Anderson scored 21 of his 29 points in the second quarter as New Orleans beat Sacramento to end a four-game losing streak. The Pelicans set a season high with 74 points in the first half while completing a four-game sweep of the Kings this season. Jrue Holiday added 17 points, Tony Douglas scored 11 and newly signed Tim Frazier had a career-high 14 points with nine assists. DeMarcus Cousins had 20 points and 12 rebounds for Sacramento but struggled with his shot most of the night. — AP

SERENA SETS UP NO 1 AND NO 2 INDIAN WELLS CLASH

INDIAN WELLS: Serena Williams dethroned defending champion Simona Halep in straight sets Wednesday to set up an Indian Wells semi-final showdown between the world No 1 and 2. Williams reached just her second semi in 15 years by beating Halep 6-4, 6-3 on Wednesday. "She's a dangerous player," Williams said of Halep. "She knows what it takes to beat the best player so I knew I had to play as best as I could." Williams advances to face Agnieszka Radwanska, who has never beaten Williams in nine career matches.

Fifth seeded Halep was the one who helped spoil Williams' much-anticipated return to the WTA and ATP Tour tournament last year, winning their semi-final in a walkover after Williams pulled out right before the match with a knee injury. Halep went on to beat Jelena Jankovic in the final. It was all Williams on Wednesday as the 21-time Grand Slam winner played as if she had something to prove, blasting six aces and winning 80 percent of her first-serve points.

"Feels good to get that win," Williams said. "I had to buckle down." Last year's semi-final withdrawal by Williams cut short her first Indian Wells campaign since 2001, when spectators booed her during the final and jeered her sister, Venus, and father Richard Williams after the pair arrived to watch the match. Richard Williams alleges he heard racial comments. That scene sparked a lengthy boycott by both Williams sisters as Venus made her long-awaited return this year, but lost in her opening match to Japanese qualifier Kurumi Nara.

Radwanska defeated Petra Kvitova 6-2, 7-6 (7/3) in their quarter-final, but the victory had an added bonus as she vaulted past Angelique Kerber into the world number two spot. It was just the fourth time Radwanska has beaten Kvitova in 10 career meetings. Kvitova dug deep in during the second set, breaking Radwanska twice for a 4-2 lead. Radwanska came racing back, drawing from her arsenal of shots to force a tiebreaker. —AFP

DJOKOVIC GAINS REVENGE AS NADAL RALLIES TO ADVANCE

GOFFIN STUNS WAWRINKA; RAONIC BEATS BERDYCH

CALIFORNIA: Novak Djokovic avenged his only loss of 2016 with a ruthless 6-3 6-3 victory over Feliciano Lopez as the Serbian top seed eased into the quarter-finals of the BNP Paribas Open on Wednesday. An eye issue forced Djokovic to retire against his Spanish opponent at the Dubai Duty Free Championships last month but he had his sights set firmly on victory for their rematch in California. The world number one needed just 66 minutes to prevail as he won 75 percent of his points on serve and broke Lopez three times. "I have respect for his game, which definitely made me very cautious of approaching this match and made me very determined to impose my game plan from the very beginning," Djokovic told reporters. "I was very solid. I didn't allow him to come to the net too many times. It was a good performance."

Djokovic enjoyed his best performance of the tournament to date and

next meets Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, who defeated Dominic Thiem 6-3 6-2, as the defending champion seeks an unprecedented fifth title at Indian Wells. Earlier in the day, third seed Stan Wawrinka was sent packing in the fourth round and the Swiss was very nearly joined by Rafa Nadal, who pulled off a Houdini-like escape to reach the last eight. Fourth seed Nadal, three times a champion at Indian Wells, rallied from 5-2 down in the final set, saving a match point on the way, before battling past 18-year-old German prospect Alexandr Zverev 6-7(8) 6-0 7-5.

The power-hitting Zverev had been bidding to become the youngest quarter-finalist at the event since 1989 and led 40-30 when serving for the match in the ninth game but his nerve deserted him at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden. "This is painful right now, but it doesn't change anything about the process," Zverev said.

Spanish left-hander Nadal won the last five games of the deciding set to advance and was delighted with the fightback. "I am especially happy about the mentality on court, the fighting spirit during the whole match, believing that I can win a match during the whole time even in the tougher situations," Nadal said.

Wawrinka was ousted by Belgian David Goffin, who sealed a 6-3 5-7 7-6(5) victory when his Swiss opponent netted a forehand in a closely contested tiebreak after a wildly fluctuating match that lasted nearly two-and-a-half hours. It was only the second time in his career that Goffin had beaten a player ranked in the top 10 and it earned him a spot in the last eight of an ATP Masters 1000 event for the second time. Also advancing to the last eight was 12th-seeded Canadian Milos Raonic, who overpowered sixth-seeded Czech Tomas Berdych 6-4 7-6(7). — Reuters



SALWA CUP - PLAYERS BATTLE FOR TOP SPOT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Table Tennis Tournament (Salwa Cup) will witness the strongest competition today at the late Khalid Yousuf Khalid Al-Marzouq Hall in Salwa Sports Club. Top world-ranked players will compete in their first matches in round 32. The competition will be hard and exciting with the return of China's Ma Long who won the previous Salwa Cup. Former champion Vladimir Samsonov (from Belarus) will also be competing today.

On the list of today's features are; Stefan Fegerl, Sansoli, Juin, Koki Niwa, Xin Xu, Andre Kagina, Ting Xin, Dimitrij Ovtchqrov, Cih-Yuan Chuang, Youngsik Jung, Zhendong Fan and Kuwait's Salem Al-Hassan. In the women's individual matches World No 1 Shiwen Liu, Hyowon Sco, Jihee Jeon, Jiago Li, Kasumi Ishikawa, I-Ching Cheng, Ai Fukuhara, Yuling Zhu, Petrissa Solja, Yana Tie and Tianwei Feng will compete.

Meanwhile, Kuwait National Team Coach

Dakhil Al-Habsi said the aim is to raise the level of players, adding that the perform-

ance of players Marzouq Al-Rashidi and Abdallah Al-Bahrani is good compared so

far. Al-Habsi said the competition is one of the strongest technically. He wished that Kuwait player Salem Al-Hassan makes it to round 16 - and be closer to a good result.

Salwa Cup kicked off on Wednesday under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah with the U21 category for both men and women. Kuwait's Marzouq Al-Rashidi lost to Hong Kong's Siu Hang Lam 3-1, to become the first Kuwaiti player to play in the tournament, while another Kuwaiti player Abdallah Al-Bahrani lost to Thailand's Padasak Tonviriyavechakul 3-0.

In the women's U21 competition's results; Kuwait's Shahad Al-Enezi lost to Japan's Saki Chipata 3-0, while Thai's Paranan defeated Lebanon's Malak Khouri. In the men's category; Chao Hong Son defeated Saudi Arabia's Abdelaziz Bushalaha 3-0, while Egypt's Shadi Majdi defeated Japan's Tionin Riozaki 3-2. Jordan's Khalid Khudair lost to Thailand's Yi Yanso while Lebanon's Mohammad Hami lost to Kazakh player Kiril Jersiminko 0-3.





DHARAMSALA: Indian cricket officials walk on the pitch after it was covered at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium (HPCA) during rainfall in Dharamsala yesterday. Australia plays against New Zealand in the world T20 cricket tournament today in Dharamsala. — AFP

AUSTRALIA BEGIN QUEST FOR ELUSIVE T20 CROWN

DHARAMSALA: Australia begin their latest quest today to clinch the elusive crown of World Twenty20 champions against a New Zealand side who are on a high after their stunning victory over tournament hosts India.

Steve Smith's side top the Test rankings and won their fifth 50 over World Cup last year by crushing New Zealand in the final in the Melbourne Cricket Ground. But for all their dominance in the older formats, Australia

have struggled in 20 over cricket and have only once made the final of the World T20, back in 2010 when they lost to England. Veteran all-rounder Shane Watson said Australia would not hold back from reminding their trans-Tasman rivals about the outcome of last year's World Cup when they meet again in today's match in Dharamsala. But he acknowledged the Black Caps would be no pushovers this time and would be full of confidence after their shock 47-run victory over red-hot favourites India on Tuesday. "We are going to have to play very well because they are going to be very confident leading into this game," Watson told reporters in the Himalayan hill town which is home to the Dalai Lama.

A 3-0 home defeat to India in January underlined Australia's frailties in T20 cricket although there were encouraging signs earlier last month when they beat South Africa 2-1 away. In Johannesburg, Glenn Maxwell spanked a career best 75 off 43 balls in a world record fourth wicket stand of 161 with David Warner, highlighting the all rounder's growing importance to the team. "Glenn Maxwell is a huge player in our team," said Watson. "The way he bats, whether the ball is turning or whether it's not turning, his array of shots when he gets into his innings is incredible. He hits the ball around the ground." Maxwell is also expected to be busy bowling his offbreaks against a side who struggled against India's spinners. New Zealand spinners Ish Sodhi, Mitchell Santner and Nathan McCullum shared nine wickets against the Indians, leaving the selectors with a headache over whether to bring back pacer Trent Boult or Tim Southee. Coach Mike Hesson has been trying to keep the team's feet on the ground since the India win, telling New Zealand radio that qualification for the semis in a pool that also includes Pakistan and Bangladesh is a tough ask. "Great start for us but we know that even just getting out of the pool is going to be incredibly difficult," he told Newstalk ZB. — AFP

ENGLAND SEEK A 'MUST WIN' AGAINST PROTEAS

MUMBAI: England need a win against South Africa yesterday after defeat in their opening World Twenty20 match while the Proteas want to get their bid for a first international trophy off to a strong start. Captain Eoin Morgan's England side were blown away by a Chris Gayle century at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Wednesday night as the West Indies won by six wickets. Morgan will be looking for more from his batsmen after they fell short of his target of 200, finishing on 182 for six, and from his bowling attack who he said performed at around 80-90 percent. The English skipper rued losing the toss to West Indies captain Darren Sammy, who opted to field, and Morgan feels the game of chance will again play a big part today in Mumbai's humid conditions.

"It was a lot more dewy tonight and the ball got a lot more wet. But certainly we're better for playing in it," he said following the opening Super 10 Group 1 defeat. "Even at the toss I said I was going to chase so it could be a big part for me in the South Africa game," Morgan added. The captain said before the tournament that he would use all 15 squad members at his disposal, and replacing David Willey with powerful fast bowler Liam Plunkett is a likely switch for today's do-or-die contest.

Morgan said he treated every match as "a must-win game" and the next encounter is no different as a second defeat would all but end England's chances of progressing to the semi-finals. For South Africa the night match marks the start of their quest to once and for all remove the chokers tag that skipper Faf du Plessis admits has become "a monkey on the back" of their team. Since their readmission in 1991 after the apartheid era ban, the Proteas have been the nearly men of world cups in both T20 and 50 over cricket, falling agonizingly short of the final on several occasions.

Despite their failure to win a major trophy, South Africa are one of the tournament favorites and are currently in third place in the T20 world rankings. "The only way you can get rid of that (the chokers' tag) is to perform under pressure," du Plessis said last week. "I think it's fair but the only way you will ever get that monkey off your back is if you do win a trophy," added the 31-year-old batsman. — AFP

RIVAL INDIA-PAKISTAN FANS SWITCH SIDES ON FACEBOOK

NEW DELHI: Rival cricket fans from India and Pakistan have switched sides on social media ahead of a hotly awaited World Twenty20 clash, in protest over long-running tensions between the nuclear-armed countries. Fans from the cricket-mad nations have swapped support for their teams on Facebook, with Indian and Pakistani users posting profile pictures with their rival's colors.

The hashtag "ProfileforPeace" was trending on Facebook ahead of tomorrow's match, whose build-up has been mired in controversy over security arrangements for the Pakistani team. Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg said he had been bowled over by the move. "Something pretty interesting is happening in India and Pakistan on Facebook right now," Zuckerberg said in a post.

"Hundreds of thousands of Indian cricket fans are putting the Pakistani frame around their picture. And Pakistani fans are doing the same thing—showing support for India." Mumbai-based artist Ram Subramanian, who changed his colors to those of Pakistan, said he hoped the trend would make both governments realize that many Indians and Pakistanis do not hate or mistrust each other. "India and Pakistan need to have a conversation. How long are they going to keep this (tension) going?" the 37-year-old said. Subramanian said he started a ProfileforPeace trend last October after a right-wing Hindu group forced the

cancellation of a visiting Pakistani singer's concert in Mumbai.

His changed his profile picture to one of himself holding a note that read "I don't hate Pakistan". The trend comes after Pakistani skipper Shahid Afridi was criticized over his declaration that Pakistan's cricketers receive more love in India than back home. The comments raised eyebrows as Pakistan's buildup to the tournament has been embroiled in controversy over whether they would be allowed to travel to India because of security concerns. They agreed to make the trip only after negotiations with India over security arrangements and the shifting of their match against the hosts to Kolkata from Dharamsala.

India and Muslim-majority Pakistan have fought three wars since independence in 1947 and diplomatic relations remain tense. India suspended bilateral cricket with Pakistan after the deadly 2008 Mumbai attacks which New Delhi blamed on militants based across the border. Ehsanullah Shah, a lawyer from Lahore, said changing his profile picture to India was a chance to promote peace. "I have a lot of friends who're Indians, I love them to bits, and I'm all for peace between us as countries," the 30-year-old said. "So if I was given the opportunity to show these two things, my love for my friends and for peace; well I'm not one that lets these opportunities get by." — AFP

FOOTBALLER SUSPENDED OVER CHELTENHAM URINE INCIDENT

LONDON: An English second-tier football club has suspended one of its players after he was photographed urinating in public at horse racing's Cheltenham Festival. MK Dons said Wednesday they had fined midfielder Samir Carruthers two weeks' wages and suspended him for their next match after both he and Shrewsbury's James Collins, currently on loan at Northampton, were pictured in the Sun newspaper urinating in a glass on Tuesday's first day at Cheltenham's south-west course that annually stages England's premier jumps racing meeting.

Collins was also photographed throwing the contents of the glass over a balcony. MK Dons chairman Pete Winkelmann said: "Samir has received a warning, been fined two weeks' wages and handed a suspension by the club,

which is inclusive of this Saturday's fixture with Brighton." Carruthers, 22, had earlier apologized publicly, telling Sky Sports: "I just want to say I'm sorry to everyone, my family, the club, the chairman, the gaffer.

"I've not been raised to do something like that and I've let everyone down. I've let the community down and I've let Milton Keynes down and I have to take the criticism that comes with it. Meanwhile, a joint statement issued by Shrewsbury and Northampton said: "Following a joint internal investigation and discussions between both clubs, on-loan striker James Collins has been fined the maximum allowable two weeks' wages and warned of his future conduct." Collins, 25, said: "I cannot apologize enough for my actions and the pictures from my visit to

Cheltenham Races yesterday."

Cheltenham had earlier barred the same group of footballers from attending on Wednesday, with a tweet saying: "In regards to images of inappropriate behavior from yesterday (Tuesday), we have cancelled their booking for today (Wednesday)." Alcohol and horse racing have a long mutual history. But there have been concerns among horse-racing officials that the now often common sight at many British courses of drunken and scruffy racegoers is not promoting the right image of their sport, although this has in turn led to accusations of elitism. Last month, organizers of the Grand National festival at Liverpool's Aintree course in north-west England, urged women attending this year's Ladies' Day to smarten up in a bid to make the day more "aspirational". — AFP



LEICESTER: Leicester City's English midfielder Danny Drinkwater (right) in action against Newcastle's English midfielder Jack Colback during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Newcastle at King Power Stadium in Leicester. —AFP

LEICESTER'S DRINKWATER GETS ENGLAND'S CALL-UP

LONDON: Leicester City midfielder Danny Drinkwater was awarded his first England call-up yesterday for the forthcoming friendly games against Germany and the Netherlands. Former Manchester United youth player Drinkwater, 26, has played a key role for Leicester in their sensational surge to the top of the Premier League table and was rewarded with a place in England manager Roy Hodgson's 24-man squad. There were returns for Southampton goalkeeper Fraser

Forster, Liverpool striker Daniel Sturridge and Arsenal forward Danny Welbeck after injury, but captain Wayne Rooney misses out due to a knee problem.

"What he's done has been pretty evident to everybody," Hodgson said of Drinkwater during a press conference at Wembley Stadium. "He's had a fantastic season in a team that's having a fantastic season, but even last year we were aware of him. "In that area of the field the competition is quite fierce, but

I thought this was a good opportunity to bring him in and see if he can produce that quality of football for England." England tackle world champions Germany in Berlin on March 26 before playing Holland at Wembley three days later, as they step up their preparations for this year's European Championship in France. Hodgson's side are also due to face Turkey, Australia and Portugal in friendlies before opening the tournament against Russia in Marseille on June 11. — AFP

'WORLD CLASS' REDKNAPP CONFIRMED AS JORDAN NEW BOSS

AMMAN: Harry Redknapp was yesterday hailed as the man to take Jordan to their first ever World Cup finals after his confirmation as the country's new manager by Prince Ali bin Hammam. The former Tottenham boss takes the post in the same week as he began another job as Championship side Derby's managerial advisor. Prince Ali, president of the Jordanian Football Association, said: "I'm very proud to be able to announce Harry's appointment to our national side. "He is a world class manager with an internationally recognized record at the highest level."

On Wednesday, the 69-year-old Redknapp told British media that he would be flying out to Jordan immediately after his first Derby game against local Midlands rivals Nottingham Forest on Saturday and return for the game at Cardiff on April 2. This is his first job as a national manager. He missed out on the England manager's post when he was widely regarded as the favorite to succeed Fabio Capello, but instead saw Roy Hodgson appointed ahead of Euro 2012.

Jordan have two World Cup qualifiers next month, against Bangladesh and Australia. Prince Ali, who lost out in last month's FIFA presidential election, added: "This is a fantastic step for the national game in Jordan. "There are some important fixtures coming up for football in this country and we are confident Harry is the man to help us succeed in qualifying and take us to the next level." Redknapp's last role in club management was at QPR, but he left Loftus Road in February 2015 citing his need to have knee replacement surgery. — AFP

PSV FANS UNDER FIRE FOR HUMILIATING BEGGARS

MADRID: Fans of Dutch side PSV Eindhoven came under fire in Spain yesterday for throwing money at beggars and mocking them as they desperately scrambled to scoop up the coins. Spain's interior minister Jorge Fernandez Diaz described the scenes as "an absolute disgrace" while the president of the Madrid regional government Cristina Cifuentes was outraged by the "lamentable" behavior.

"I feel ashamed that in Madrid—even if the hooligans are from a foreign team—we see such scenes. It's not only racism but an absolute lack of humanity." Images broadcast by Spanish media showed Dutch fans seated on the terrace of a bar in the Plaza Mayor a few hours before Tuesday's game against Atletico Madrid, throwing coins on the ground to force beggars to collect them. "This behavior is outrageous. We want to clearly dissociate ourselves from the conduct of some fans," said PSV president Toon Gerbrands. "PSV will take appropriate action, which could include stadium bans or tougher sanctions." — AFP



MADRID: PSV Eindhoven's coach Phillip Cocu stands during the UEFA Champions League football match Club Atletico de Madrid vs PSV Eindhoven at the Estadio Vicente Calderon in Madrid. — AFP

MESSI TO CHINA? I HOPE NOT, SAYS LA LIGA CHIEF

SINGAPORE: The head of Spain's La Liga said the cashed-up Chinese Super League wasn't far from becoming one of the world's top football competitions-but he hopes Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo aren't headed there just yet. Speaking in Singapore, La Liga president Javier Tebas also said that he welcomed China's burgeoning interest in football, which includes investments in Spain's Atletico Madrid and Espanyol. Atletico's Colombian striker Jackson Martinez, signed for 42 million euros (\$47 million) by Guangzhou Evergrande, was one of the big signings in China's lavish spree during the recent transfer window. But Tebas said he hoped Barcelona and Real Madrid superstars Messi and Ronaldo weren't about to join China's growing band of expensive foreign imports.

"You'll have to ask them that but I certainly hope not," he said during a visit to Singapore, adding: "There are enough football stars to go around." "Even though some improvement is needed at the moment, it's slowly raising its standard," Tebas, speaking through a translator, said of the Chinese Super League. "And in a few years, if the standard is better, it can become among the top in the world. All of us will reap the benefits because it means we can all work together to increase standards." A pre-retirement stint would be more likely for Messi and Ronaldo if they were tempted by China, although reports have also linked some of football's biggest names to CSL clubs.

Model owners

Inspired by a push headed by

President Xi Jinping to turn China into a footballing power, Chinese teams have invested heavily in foreign players, often for outlandish sums. Chinese clubs smashed the Asian transfer record four times as they splashed 331 million euros (\$366.8 million) in the January-February transfer window, outstripping the English Premier League. Chinese businesses have also invested in European football, with one state-backed company taking a \$400 million stake in England's Manchester City. A Chinese company also sponsors Portugal's second division, and sparked concern over plans to impose a quota of players from China.

But Tebas said China's investments in La Liga were a "good opportunity" for Spanish clubs as they raised teams' profile

in the massive Chinese market. Wanda Group, owned by Chinese billionaire Wang Jianlin, has a 20 percent stake in Atletico, and a Chinese model car-maker is the majority owner of Espanyol. "Because they have an interest in the league, we feel it's a good opportunity because this helps their investment," Tebas said.

"It also allows the teams to have an increased profile in China," he added. Tebas also said La Liga's ability to retain key players would depend on its spending power, although he was confident Spanish clubs would remain competitive in the transfer market. "This is an issue of finance, whether the La Liga is still growing," he said. "If we continue on that path, and have enough future resources, we will be able to keep our players." — AFP

WENGER IN FIRING LINE; ARSENAL WITHER ANEW

LONDON: Returning to London after Champions League elimination at Barcelona's hands, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger faces more uncomfortable questions than ever before about his stewardship of the club. A season that was still full of hope at the turn of the year is now unravelling in all-too-familiar fashion, with Arsenal out of Europe, out of both cup competitions and trailing Premier League leaders Leicester City by 11 points, albeit with a game in hand.

They remain on course for a top-four finish, but Champions League qualification is losing its consolatory effect on the club's fans, many of whom have come to see it as a sign of the culture of mid-level achievement that Wenger has allowed to take root at the Emirates Stadium. "I think the natives have turned. There's more people who want the boss out than want him in," former Arsenal striker Ian Wright said on BT Sport after Arsenal's 3-1 loss to Barcelona on Wednesday, which completed a 5-1 aggregate defeat. "I'm not sure if he still will be there in the summer, if they don't win the league."

With Chelsea floundering, Manchester City fatally inconsistent and both Liverpool and Manchester United in transition, this season had held the promise of a first league title for Arsenal since 2004. Instead they have failed to grasp the nettle, with outsiders Leicester and worse-arch rivals Tottenham Hotspur surging past them to fight out the most improbable English title duel in recent memory. "This was the perfect year for Arsenal to win the Premier League and they've missed it," said Emmanuel Petit, another former Wenger protegee.

FA Cup wins in 2014 and 2015 ended Arsenal's nine-year silverware drought and indicated that the club was reacquiring the trophy-winning know-how that characterized the first eight years of Wenger's tenure, which yielded three Premier League titles and four FA Cups. The signings of Mesut Ozil and Alexis Sanchez also hinted at a new dawn, but Arsenal remain bedeviled by the same frailties: recurrent injuries, exacerbated by unaddressed weaknesses in key areas of the squad, tactical naivety and, crucially, a bewildering lack of backbone.

'Time to say goodbye'

The achievements of Wenger's 20-year tenure—notably the successful move to the Emirates and the establishment of Arsenal as a global brand—have earned the 66-year-old Frenchman iconic status at the club. He is thought to retain the full support of American majority shareholder Stan Kroenke and there is no suggestion that he is in danger of the sack. Kroenke even suggested last week that he is not interested in winning the title, telling a conference in Boston: "If you want to win championships then you would never get involved." Fan discontent is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore, however, and reports this week suggested that it could prompt Wenger to walk away from his post before his contract expires next year.

Celebrity fan Piers Morgan, the newspaper editor turned chat-show host, continues to fire up the #WengerOUT campaign on social media, while a banner held aloft during the recent FA Cup win at Hull City read: "ARSENE, THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES, BUT IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE." The banner was condemned by Arsenal players past and present—as well as David Beckham—but it illustrated the deep discontent felt by certain fans, as glimpsed in the scuffles that broke out outside the Emirates following Sunday's 2-1 FA Cup quarter-final defeat by Watford. —AFP



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's Polish striker Robert Lewandowski (center) celebrates scoring past Juventus' goalkeeper from Italy Gianluigi Buffon (left) during the UEFA Champions League match FC Bayern Munich v Juventus on March 16, 2016. — AFP

BAYERN SURVIVE JUVENTUS SCARE

FOUR-GOAL FIGHT-BACK WOVES GUARDIOLA

MUNICH: Substitutes Thiago Alcantara and Kingsley Coman scored extra-time goals as Bayern Munich roared back to beat Juventus 4-2 in their Champions League last 16, second leg on Wednesday and win 6-4 on aggregate. A stunned Bayern found themselves 2-0 down after 28 minutes at the Allianz Arena as Paul Pogba and Juan Cuadrado struck for the Italians before the Bavarians scored four unanswered goals.

Just like in the first leg in Turin, when Bayern threw away a two-goal lead in a 2-2 draw, the home side fought back as Robert Lewandowski netted on 73 minutes before Thomas Mueller's dramatic equalizer in the 91st minute forced extra time. Thiago came off the bench to put Bayern ahead for the first time on 108 minutes before fellow replacement Coman on loan from Juventus curled in a superb strike on 110 minutes to put the Bavarians in the quarter-finals for the fifth season in a row.

"That was a crazy game," said Mueller. "We knew, even when we were 2-0 down, that we were still in it." Bayern captain Philipp Lahm added: "What an unbelievable evening. You could see how tight things are when two top teams meet each other. We knew it would be all over if we had conceded a third goal." The fightback keeps alive Pep Guardiola's dream of bringing the Champions League trophy to Munich at the third and final attempt before his high-profile move to Manchester City next season. This is the seventh time Guardiola has reached the Champions League quarter-finals in as many attempts as a coach at the highest level.

In his four years with Barcelona, he won the title in 2009 and 2011, reaching the semi-finals in 2010 and 2012, while he steered Bayern to the last four in Europe in each of the last two seasons.

Much had been made in the build-up about how vulnerable Bayern are on the counter-attack and Guardiola's side were again found wanting on the break early on as Juventus went ahead with just five minutes gone. The Italians fired a long ball down the right flank, David Alaba mistimed his clearance and right-back Stephan Lichtsteiner tapped the ball to Pogba who swept a shot into the net with Manuel Neuer out of his goal.

Wrong offside call

Alvaro Morata then put the ball in Bayern's net after chipping Neuer on 22 minutes, but was wrongly flagged offside. However, the Spaniard set up Juve's second by evading several Bayern defenders on a stunning run from deep in his own half, before finding Cuadrado in space. The Colombian kept his cool to fire past Neuer and leave Bayern with a mountain to climb. It could easily have been 3-0 at the break as Cuadrado hit the post just before the half-time whistle.

Guardiola brought on Juan Bernat at the start of the second half and then introduced Coman for Xabi Alonso on the hour to inject much-needed pace, and the changes paid off. Bayern pulled a goal back when Douglas Costa's cross from the right was headed home at the back post by Lewandowski, then Coman swung in the cross for Mueller to head home the equalizer. A superb save from Neuer denied Lichtsteiner early in extra time, but Bayern were not to be robbed of a famous comeback victory. Thiago was brought on for Franck Ribery and quickly made an impact as he played a one-two with Mueller before guiding the ball into the bottom corner with a superb finish. —AFP

FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2016

MUNICH: Bayern Munich's Austrian defender David Alaba plays the ball during the UEFA Champions League, Round of 16, second leg football match FC Bayern Munich v Juventus in Munich on March 16, 2016. — AFP

BAYERN SURVIVE JUVENTUS SCARE