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SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2016

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urges world  
to stop Aleppo  
massacres



Protesters storm  
parliament  
in Iraq's  
Green Zone



Building  
collapse, floods  
kill 19 in  
Kenyan capital



Bale hits  
Real winner,  
Griezmann puts  
Atletico top



## STUDY CALLS FOR DEPORTING TERMINATED EXPAT WORKERS

### MOI READIES PLAN TO CRACK DOWN ON ABSCONDERS



Min 19°  
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07:16 & 17:29  
Low Tide  
00:03 & 12:08



150 FILS  
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40 PAGES

## YEMEN FOES HOLD DIRECT TALKS, PRISONERS FREED

**KUWAIT:** Yemen's warring parties held "productive" face-to-face peace talks yesterday on "key issues" in a bid to end the conflict in the impoverished Arab country, the UN envoy said. "The talks today were positive and productive... It is an encouraging beginning," Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed told a news conference after the first direct talks since the delayed negotiations began on April 21. "Today, we heard the parties pledge total commitment to (UN Security Council) Resolution 2216 and related decisions, the Gulf initiative and results of Yemeni national dialogue as the basis for a peaceful solution," he said.

Meanwhile, the Houthi movement said yesterday that Saudi Arabia had handed over 40 prisoners as part of an agreement to quell border fighting. "We received 40 prisoners, 20 of those were captured inside Yemen," Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul-Salam said in a statement. He did not say where the remaining prisoners had been captured.

Yesterday's talks came after the government and rebel delegations each submitted a framework for a political and security solution to end the 13-month war. Ould Cheikh Ahmed said that despite the progress made "we still have obstacles and ideas are still far apart". Most of the meetings in talks have so far been confined to encounters between rival delegations and Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

More than 6,800 people have been killed and around 2.8 million displaced in Yemen since a Saudi-led coalition began operations in March 2015 against

Continued on Page 13



**KUWAIT:** Yemen's United Nations envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed holds a press conference at the ministry of information yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait is studying a proposal to force a foreign worker to leave the country if he or she is sacked by their employer, according to sources, who explained that this step comes as the state mulls ways to cut its expatriate population. Under the current law, a worker who loses his job has three months to find another one or leave the country. This condition allows expatriate workers to remain in Kuwait, hampering efforts to adjust the country's demographic imbalance, according to a recent study presented to the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD).

In order to make the proposed condition applicable, a worker would only be entitled to his financial claims once he terminates his residency visa and leaves the country, the study suggests. The sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, declined to provide the source of this controversial study. They also did not clarify whether it includes workers in both the public and private sectors.

The study suggests that an expatriate worker is terminated because his employer no longer needs his services, and thus his stay in Kuwait "puts further pressure on public services" and becomes unfeasible. However, recent studies give different indications with regards to the labor market's needs of foreign workers, particularly in the private sector. According to the 2015 Labor Force Survey published by Kuwait's Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) last month, almost 95 percent of employees in the private sector are foreigners, and it currently employs nearly 75 percent of expatriate workers in Kuwait (not including around 600,000 domestic helpers, who make up 17 percent of expatriate workers).

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**NAIROBI:** A ranger stands in front of burning ivory stacks at the Nairobi National Park yesterday. — AFP

## KENYA TORCHES WORLD'S BIGGEST IVORY BONFIRE

**NAIROBI:** Eleven giant pyres of tusks were set alight yesterday as Kenya torched its vast ivory stockpile in a grand gesture aimed at shocking the world into stopping the slaughter of elephants. Huge white clouds of smoke spiraled into the sky as the flames took hold, fuelled by thousands of litres of diesel and kerosene injected through steel pipes. Lighting the fire in Nairobi's national park, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta demanded a total ban on trade in ivory to end the "murderous" trafficking and prevent the extinction of elephants in the wild.

"The height of the pile of ivory before us marks the strength of our resolve," Kenyatta said, before thrusting a burning torch onto the ivory. "No-one, and I repeat no-one, has any business in trading in ivory, for this trade means death of our elephants and death of our natural heritage." The tusks are expected to burn for days.

Kenyatta on Friday led a summit of African heads of state and conservationists pushing for a total ban. "We will not be the Africans who stood by as we lost our elephants," he told the meeting in a keynote address. The bonfires are the largest-ever torching of ivory, containing 105 tonnes from thousands of dead elephants, seven times bigger than any stockpile burned before. Another 1.35 tonnes of rhino horn are also being burned, representing the killing of around 340 of the endangered animals.

President Ali Bongo from Gabon, who lit

one of the pyres, spoke of the "massacre" of forest elephants in central Africa, and said he backed moves to stop the sale of all ivory. "Unless we take action now we risk losing this magnificent animal," Bongo said at the ceremony, telling poachers he was "going to put you out of business, so the best thing you can do is to go into retirement now".

Africa is home to between 450,000 to 500,000 elephants, but more than 30,000 are killed every year on the continent to satisfy demand for ivory in Asia, where raw tusks sell for around \$1,000 a kilo. The pyres contained some 16,000 tusks and pieces of ivory. Kenya has a long history of ivory burnings, spearheading a wider movement of public demonstrations across the world, but nothing on this scale before. On the black market, such a quantity of ivory could sell for over \$100 million, and the rhino horn could raise as much as \$80 million. Rhino horn can fetch as much as \$60,000 per kilo - more than gold or cocaine.

But Kenyatta dismissed those who put a cash value on the ivory. "For us, ivory is worthless unless it is on our elephants," Kenyatta said. But despite the staggering size of the piles being burned, totalling some five percent of global stocks, the ivory represents just a fraction of the animals killed every year. Kenya Wildlife Service chief Richard Leakey called on all African nations to follow Kenya

Continued on Page 13

## TEEN KILLED IN 'STARING' FIGHT

### SUSPECT SURRENDERS, CLAIMS SELF-DEFENSE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** A teenager was stabbed to death during a fight yesterday in Sabah Al-Nasser. The victim, a Kuwaiti, had an altercation with a stranger that escalated when the latter took a knife out of his car, stabbed the victim and fled the scene, according to eyewitnesses' reports. Passersby rushed the victim to Farwaniya Hospital where he was pronounced dead due to severe blood loss.

The alleged killer later turned himself in at a Jahra police station, and told police there that he was acting in self-defense. He said that the teenager was the one who had the knife, adding that he managed to pin him to the ground, took away the knife and attacked him. The suspect, also a Kuwaiti, had a stab wound on his hand. The victim was stabbed in the heart. The suspect was remained in custody pending further action.

The fight apparently started when the victim approached the suspect because he thought he was staring at him in a provocative manner. The two exchanged words and a fight ensued, ending up with the teen lying dead in a pool of his blood,

according to preliminary investigations based on eyewitnesses' accounts. Fights over trivial matters are very common in Kuwait, especially among youngsters, and they often end with deadly results. Last August, a 16-year-old boy was stabbed to death during a fight at 360 Mall. In 2013, a 24-year-old man died after he was attacked by three knife-wielding youngsters in Marina Mall. And in Dec 2012, an altercation in the parking lot of The Avenues mall left a 26-year-old dentist dead after four persons followed him inside the crowded mall and stabbed him there.

The government has identified youth violence as a problem that needs to be addressed. "The government is keen on protecting the youth and fighting the youth violence phenomenon," Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Minister of Information and State Minister for Youth Affairs said during a parliament session on Wednesday. He mentioned programs through which the youth affairs ministry "interacts with the youth through social media", and highlighted families' "key role" as part of any successful strategy to combat youth violence.



**MEYRIN:** This file photo taken on July 19, 2013 shows the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS), a general-purpose detector at the CERN Large Hadron Collider (LHC), during maintenance works. — AFP

## POP GOES THE WEASEL AS COLLIDER SHUTS DOWN

**GENEVA:** A weasel shut down the world's most powerful particle smasher when it wandered onto a 66,000-volt transformer and caused a short circuit, Europe's physics lab CERN said yesterday. The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) was halted "following technical issues, including a power cut due to the passage of a weasel on a high voltage electrical transformer," CERN spokesman Arnaud Marsollier told AFP. The collider suffered a "severe electrical perturbation" at 5:30 am (0330 GMT) Friday, CERN, the French acronym for the European Organization for Nuclear Research, said in its daily activity summary.

It said the cause was a "short circuit caused by fouine" - a beech marten, which is a member of the weasel family - on a 66-kilovolt transformer. Marsollier said that "some connections were slightly damaged and we are at work to repair" the damage caused by the weasel, which did not survive its high-voltage encounter. The repairs "should take no longer than a few

days," he said. "Not the best week for LHC!" CERN said in its summary.

The LHC, housed in a 27-km tunnel straddling the French-Swiss border, was used to prove the existence of the Higgs boson, also known as the God particle, by crashing proton beams at velocities near the speed of light. That discovery of the Higgs - the long-sought maker of mass - earned the 2013 Nobel physics prize for two of the scientists who had theorized its existence back in 1964.

Friday's incident came at an unfortunate time. Scientists had been gearing up to resume experiments at the giant lab early next week following a technical stoppage of several months, and to relaunch their superpowered hunt for particles that could change our understanding of the Universe. Following the weasel incident and several other technical issues, Marsollier said "we will now need to check over the entire machine again".

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**KUWAIT:** A patrol vehicle heavily damaged after colliding with a camel at Subbiya highway.



**KUWAIT:** Illicit pills caught with a passenger at Kuwait International Airport.



**KUWAIT:** Firemen pictured at the scene of a fire in Jabriya.

Local Spotlight

## WITHDRAWAL OF CITIZENSHIP

By Muna Al-Fuzai



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The process of withdrawal of Kuwaiti citizenship from those who are believed to have obtained it by fraud or unlawfully is still continuing. The judiciary is currently considering a number of such cases and regardless of the final decision, I do not think the discussion in the media will be over soon. It is a sensitive issue affecting human rights in all cases, whether these people are convicted of deception or fraud in obtaining it or are acquitted, because the damage is inevitable. The damage to the reputation of a person, especially if he is a politician or journalist, has negative consequences for the person himself and the society.

The government represented by the ministry of interior has announced a "cleansing" operation against citizenship manipulators, but some people have gone to court, which is the right of a victim. The ministry of interior says that Kuwaiti nationality is considered sovereign and should not be subject to any defamation. This is a nice thing to say, and I hope it is not too late to fix the damage.

I am in favor of the process of withdrawing citizenship from manipulators and those who have obtained Kuwaiti citizenship unlawfully, because no person with any sense can accept manipulation in such an important sovereign document. Obtaining citizenship by fraud is dangerous because it affects the composition of the community and its security and culture, along with the privileges that they do not deserve, especially with regards to jobs, housing, loans and marriage. So busting manipulators is essential, but it does not mean that arresting counterfeiters is enough and this will solve the basic problem and its future repercussions, especially with regards to the multiplicity of loyalties and belonging.

How is the process being done? How could someone access those documents to facilitate the procedure? Official statements and of those who have been arrested talk about contacts with persons working in those departments, and so it was easier for them to access official papers.

A former employee at the general directorate of nationality and travel documents was forging documents and received huge amounts of money for it. A Syrian expat was arrested when he paid KD 20,000 to add his two sons to a Kuwaiti nationality file. A bedoon was also arrested for paying KD 10,000 for the same purpose. Often these people pay money to people who have access to Kuwaiti citizenship certificates who issue them after accepting bribes. This is a criminal act for sure.

The Assistant Undersecretary for Citizenship and Passports Affairs Major General Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah told the media that the withdrawal of citizenship is not an act of revenge but a matter of recalculation. If the recalculation targets those who obtained citizenship unlawfully, I certainly support this measure - but I am wondering who is behind these criminal acts in the first place and who the beneficiaries are. We are not talking about the work of an individual, but possibly gangs. Improper handling of the matter will make it look like an act of vengeance against politicians and journalists. This is a natural perception because some manipulators are known to be government opponents who once had seats in the parliament.

The Kuwaiti nationality provides financial benefits and security to its holder, so I understand that some people want it for this reason and are ready to pay large sums of money in order to get it. The prevalence of corruption and nepotism will make offenders feel they are immune from legal accountability, punishment and perhaps may even die taking their secret to the grave. Later, it will be a shock to their children when their citizenships are withdrawn.

The issue of stripping someone of a document supposed to emphasize affiliation to the homeland is not an easy thing, especially if this action affects the person's wives and children who have no role in this deception. Therefore, this issue is specifically sensitive and should be treated with caution, with criminalization of the accused person and protection of innocent people.

# OFFICERS HURT AFTER PATROL HITS CAMEL

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Two police officers narrowly escaped death when they could not control their patrol vehicle and it collided with a camel crossing the street along Subbiya highway, said security sources. Both officers sustained severe injuries and were rushed to Jahra Hospital for treatment.

### Smuggling foiled

Kuwait International Airport officers arrested an Asian man arriving with 1,000 illicit pills. The man admitted that he tried to smuggle the pills into Kuwait. He was taken to the Drug Control General Directorate (DGCA) for further action.

### No injuries in fire

Firefighters tackled a blaze reported at a restaurant in

Salmiya yesterday. Firemen from two separate fire stations arrived to the scene and discovered that the fire started in the kitchen of the second-floor restaurant. They evacuated the place and tackled the flames. No injuries were reported. Meanwhile, an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire. Separately, a fire broke out in a vehicle in Ardiya industrial area, said security sources, noting that Ardiya firemen rushed to the scene and managed to control the fire before it spread to other vehicles parked nearby. In another incident, a fire broke out in a nine-storey building in Jabriya, said security sources, noting that firemen from Hawally, Salmiya and backup rushed to the scene and dealt with the fire that started in a laundry room on the sixth floor. The building had to be evacuated and ventilated while firemen fought the fire. No casualties were reported.



**KUWAIT:** Firefighters inspect damages after tackling a blaze at a restaurant yesterday.

## SHEIKH SALEM AL-ALI CENTER FOR HEARING, SPEECH 'EDIFICE OF KUWAIT'S DEVELOPMENT'

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Director of Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Center for Hearing and Speech, Dr Hadeel Al-Mutawa has asserted the center's keenness to implement a strategy that will develop and upgrade health services so as to contribute to keeping up with plans of the Ministry of Health's Development Plan 2030.



Dr Hadeel Al-Mutawa

Mutawa, who also serves as deputy director of ZAIN Hospital, said yesterday that the center has adopted a number of projects and forwarded them to the Ministry of Health to take the final approval in order to achieve the desired goals. She explained that the main objectives of the center is to provide medical services to citizens and residents of all health areas within hospitals or clinics in order to relieve pressure on the specialized hospitals and facilitate the diagnosis and treatment of patients and reduce the duration of waiting to see a doctor. She added, "We have begun reducing the time schedules for patients and facilitated their access to the clinics and provided appropriate medical service and advice to them."

She listed a number of projects the center intends to implement after the adoption of the needed budgets, including increasing the number of operating rooms from four to six, the development and expansion of the intensive care unit, increase the number of clinics of hearing screening and speech therapy as well as cochlear implants from seven to nine, as well as the introduction of another clinic for ear washing besides the existing one. She also said that among the most important projects is increasing cooperation and coordination with the Kuwait Institute for Medical Specialties as to contribute to the development of the medical staff and the training of nursing cadre of the center, according to the latest relevant medical technology and international conventions. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Assistant undersecretary for medical services Dr Mohammad Al-Khashti attends the event. — KUNA

## MEDICAL ETHICS PRIORITY FOR MINISTRY OF HEALTH: OFFICIAL

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Health supports all efforts aimed at informing all health providers and medical staff of the hallowed principles of medical ethics and confidential doctor-patient relationship, a ministry official said yesterday.

Opening a one-day conference on the subject of medical ethics, assistant

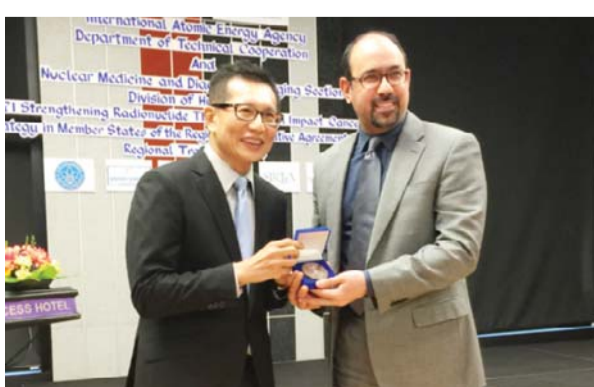
undersecretary for medical services at the ministry Dr Mohammad Al-Khashti stressed that the ministry took pains to train new physicians on following strict guidelines of medical ethics in their daily work with patients. The conference focuses on medical ethics in relation to such topics as organ transplantation, brain

death, pregnancy, and surrogacy, he said. Medical ethics is a system of moral principles that apply values and judgments to the practice of medicine. As a scholarly discipline, medical ethics encompasses its practical application in clinical settings as well as work on its history, philosophy, and sociology. — KUNA

## KUWAIT'S KSNMMI TAKES PART IN IAEA-SPONSORED TRAINING IN BANGKOK

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (KSNMMI) has participated in a regional training course on using radioactive pharmaceuticals for diagnosis and treatment of cancerous tumors held in Bangkok, Thailand. The course, sponsored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), was concluded on Friday.

KSNMMI chairman Dr Fahad Abdulrahman Marafi, who is also a consultant at the Kuwait Cancer Control Center (KCCC), said that he had taken part in the course as an authorized senior lecturer and consultant of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. Marafi added that it was the second time he participated with the IAEA in training Asian doctors. Kuwait is a leading country in the field of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, he noted. Experts from Australia and Belgium took part in the course, in addition to six local ones. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** KSNMMI chairman Dr Fahad Abdulrahman Marafi (right) participates in the event. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Information and Youth Affairs Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah meets with voluntary disabled team's head Salem Al-Qattan. — KUNA

## YOUTH MINISTER ATTACHES MUCH ATTENTION TO DISABLED PEOPLE

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said yesterday that the Youth Ministry pays much heed to people with special needs, and seeks to answer their needs.

Meeting the voluntary disabled

team's head Salem Al-Qattan, the minister said the Youth Ministry is also keen to promote the efforts of people with special needs, and to help them give out creative products, the ministry said in a release.

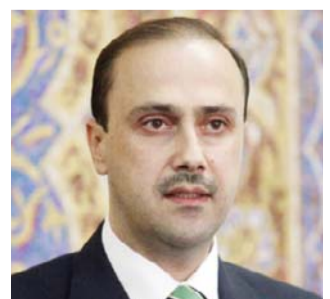
Sheikh Salman also appreciated the constructive efforts exerted by the voluntary team to fulfill the needs of

people with special needs and their families, the ministry added.

During the meeting, Qattan briefed the minister on his team's activities and achievements, and highly commended Sheikh Salman's distinguished support for the team and all clubs and societies that cater for the handicapped. — KUNA

## JORDANIAN MINISTER TOUTS KUWAIT AS EXEMPLARY HOST OF ARAB MEDIA

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait is well-adept at bringing together Arab media to forums and meetings whose results benefit people of the region in totality, said Jordanian information minister Muhammad Al-Momeni as he arrived in Kuwait yesterday. He is in the country to attend the Arab Media forum in its 13th edition which is being held under the auspices of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The theme of the forum is "Challenges to Arab Media". The Jordanian minister spoke highly of the Kuwaiti leadership and people, noting that he was coming to the forum with plethora of ideas of common concern for general discussion. The forum is scheduled for May 1-2 and Jordan has been selected as a guest of honor this year. On hand to welcome the Jordanian minister at the airport was Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. — KUNA



Jordanian information minister Muhammad Al-Momeni

# SPEAKER URGES WORLD TO STOP 'ALEPPO MASSACRES'

**KUWAIT:** National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem yesterday called on the international community, the UN and humanitarian agencies to exert intensive political and diplomatic pressure to stop bloody massacres committed in Syria's Aleppo, which have claimed the lives of hundreds of innocents.

Given a grinding humanitarian crisis, mass killing and chaos in Aleppo, there should not be just political or media talk, he said, calling for urgent humanitarian intervention with regional and international support to reach an immediate cessation of bloodshed in Aleppo.

He urged major countries, especially those concerned with the Syrian dossier, as well as the UN to seek to stop bloody massacres that claimed the lives of innocents in Aleppo, and to give regional and international humanitarian agencies access to the violence-hit city.

The speaker emphasized that there should be now immediate humanitarian action, rather than military or political one.

### Heinous aggression

Meanwhile, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Mubarak Al-Khurainij condemned bloody massacres committed in Aleppo, which have claimed the lives of scores of innocents and destroyed medical facilities there. Khurainij, in a press release, voiced sorrow at the "heinous aggression on humanity and world's silence over Aleppo massacre," terming what is happening in the Syria city as an "annihilation of the residents of Aleppo and other cities."

He called on the international community and human rights organizations to live up to their duties to "stop this war, protect the city's residents from terrorism and save the Syrian



Marzouq Al-Ghanem

people from foreign interference." The Deputy Speaker expressed surprise that the world strongly reacted to condemnable terrorist acts in Europe while remaining silent at such crimes against humanity. — KUNA

## PRIVATIZATION WON'T SOLVE PROBLEM: FORMER LAWMAKER

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Former MP Abdullah Al-Naibari said that the government's economic and financial reform plan is an attempt to reform the state budget's income by either avoiding a current deficit or avoiding an expected one. He added that the reform was an attempt to find supportive economic resources to assist oil that would someday be used up.

"The reform plan depends on facilitating national and foreign investments," he added, noting that the government's plan mainly relies on 'selling' public sector companies and privatizing healthcare, education, public works, the oil sector and the airport. "This will not lead to finding new resources and will not solve the problem," he underlined.

Naibari stressed that national labor would be facing unknown destinies in case of privatizing the state's establishments and public services because the private sector would not hire nationals nor would citizens themselves want to work for the private sector. "Unlike our ancestors, citizens now are very dependent on the government - they do not work and want to get everything without working hard," he said, warning that a deficit was inevitable within the coming seven years because spending would grow to reach \$52-88 billion by 2030. "The remedy will not be achieved by increasing electricity and water prices because such increases would at most make \$100-200 million while electricity subsidies alone would be more than \$2 billion," he pointed out.

### Development plan

Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih said that the new development plan has adopted two main courses - one dealing with challenges and the other rein-

forcing changes needed to achieve Kuwait's "Vision 2030". Responding to an inquiry by MP Saud Al-Huraiji, Subaih stressed that 19 legislations needed for the 2010/2011-2013/2014 fiscal years in addition to seven legislations needed for the 2010/2015 plan had been achieved.

Subaih added that according to the supreme planning and development council's secretariat general's report, previous development plans had been fruitful. She added that special teams had been formed to follow up



Abdullah Al-Naibari

each development project on a monthly basis and carry out various field visits to probe any hindrances and report to decision makers to solve them. "All ministers and undersecretaries have been provided with a 'dashboard' system to follow up the progress of development projects under their jurisdiction in order to report back to His Highness the Prime Minister" Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, she underlined.

### Farming lands

Chairman of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Faisal Al-Hasawi said that the authority intends to withdraw farming lands that had not been used by owners for a long time. "The lands will not only be withdrawn, but a KD 10,000 fine will be collected as well," he underlined. Hasawi said that once the municipal council approves the project, PAAAFR intends to distribute up to 10,000 sq m of land to citizens wishing to live along the border area from Salmi to Abdali. He added that PAAAFR would also distribute farms and ranches to families who do not own any and noted that if applicants are too many, the land area would be reduced to 5,000 sq m so that applicants could utilize those lands in farming, raising cattle and poultry and fish farming.



KUWAIT: MP Rakan Al-Nisf honors KFH.

## KFH PARTICIPATES IN STUDENTS' HONORING

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the honoring ceremony of the distinguished students at the College of Business Administration as part of its social responsibility and efforts to support the youth and students.

Present at the honoring ceremony was MP Rakan Al-Nisf and a number of the university teaching staff and representatives who applauded KFH's pioneering role in assuming the social responsibility and honoring the distinguished students.

KFH Public Relations Manager Yousef Al-Ruwaieh represented the bank in the honoring ceremony, noting that KFH is keen on participating in recognizing the distinguished students on an annual basis, sponsoring their activities and supporting them.

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# AUSTRALIA GOVERNOR ARRIVES IN KUWAIT



Australia Governor General Peter John Cosgrove is pictured with Amiri Diwan Advisor Mohammad Abulhassan after his arrival.

**KUWAIT:** Australia Governor General Peter John Cosgrove and a delegation accompanying him arrived in Kuwait on Friday for a four-day visit, during which he would hold official talks with His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Cosgrove was received by the head of the mission of honor and Amiri Diwan Advisor, Mohammad Abdullah Abulhassan. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Australia Governor General Peter John Cosgrove shares a conversation with Amiri Diwan Advisor Mohammad Abulhassan after arrival to Kuwait.

— KUNA photos

## FIRST TRAINING COURSE FOR KUWAITI JOURNALISTS WRAPS UP

**KUWAIT:** Chairman of the Higher Organizing Committee of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Hamad Journalism Excellence Award Ayman Al-Ali announced the completion of the first training sessions for Kuwaiti journalists who won the eighth session of the competition, which comes as part of the committee efforts to develop their media creativity and abilities.

Al-Ali said in a statement yesterday on the occasion of the conclusion of the five-

day session titled (Investigative Journalism) that the committee's plans on this front come in implementation of the directives of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the need to address youth and provide the necessary support to them. He said that the committee has set up this course in collaboration with Thomson Foundation at the American University's headquarters in

Kuwait, adding that British journalist Martin Chulov who works as a reporter for the British newspaper The Guardian in the Middle East was the lecturer.

He explained that the course aims to train young journalists to deal with private evidences, undeclared sources, leaks and incomplete facts, indicating that making this kind of evidence influential materials is not easy. — KUNA



Chairman of the Higher Organizing Committee of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Hamad Journalism Excellence Award Ayman Al-Ali (right) honors British journalist Martin Chulov (left), in presence of Dr Ali Shararah, Deputy Dean of the College of Social Sciences.



KUWAIT: A group photo of journalists who took part in the training session. — KUNA photos



Journalists attend a training session.

## YEMENI JOURNALISTS BREAK DEADLOCK, EXPLORE KUWAIT'S ATTRACTIONS

**KUWAIT:** Yemeni journalists attending peace consultations have failed to report positive progress in Kuwait-hosted talks, but decided to break this deadlock by exploring Kuwait, a country they only heard of but never seen.

"Being here to cover the intra-Yemeni talks, is a great chance to explore Kuwait's attractions," Yemeni Journalist Abdulkarim Al-Washli said. He pointed out that he has visited the headquarters of the leading Arab monthly magazine, Al-Arabi, and the museum of Bait Al-Othman. "Bait Al-Othman embodies the historic roots of Kuwait," he said.

Washli noted that he and a number of his colleagues have also visited and enjoyed Kuwaiti beaches. He expressed admiration of the urban and civilizational progress and development in Kuwait in various domains over the past few days.

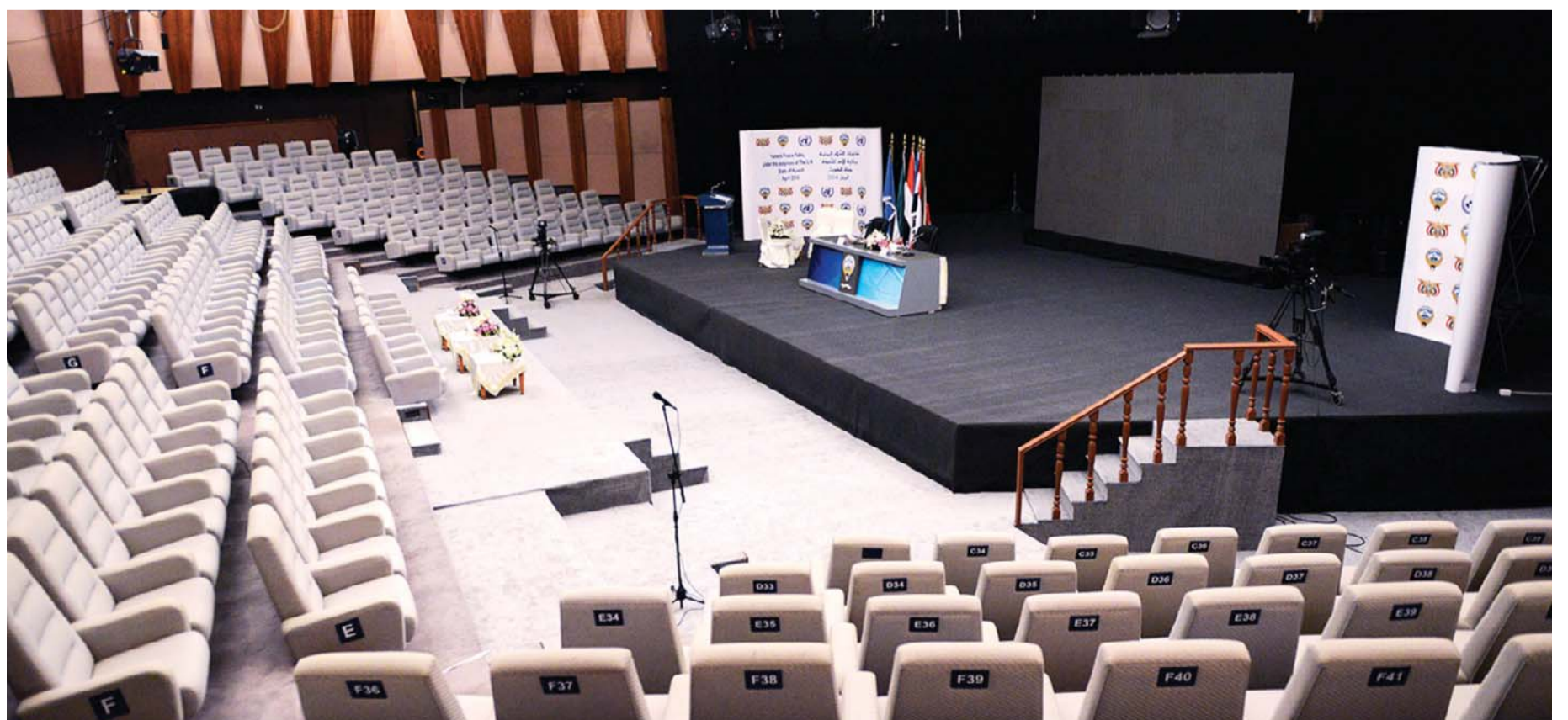
"We are here in the land of goodness, originality, the crossroad of cultures and center of humanitarian work and intellectual development are closely watching that nascent nation moving towards the future with confidence," he said. He voiced gratitude for Kuwait's unforgettable supportive stances towards Arab causes, particularly Kuwait's backing to Yemen in times of distress.

### Women's presence

Meanwhile, Yemeni News Agency (SABA) reporter Abdullah Hezam noted that he has been surprised by Kuwaiti women's significant presence in different domains in the society. In his regard, he lauded the role of Kuwaiti female journalists in covering the marathon Yemeni talks.

"I was also taken by the highly-civilized behavior of Kuwaiti people," Hezam said. He pointed out that he and several other Yemeni reporters have visited Kuwait's House of National Works. Hezam expressed admiration of the extreme precision of art master pieces, particularly those which document the Iraqi invasion and aggression of Kuwait.

In the meantime, Editor-in-chief of the Yemen Today daily's Ahmad Al-Hassan said that he has visited Al-Mubarakiya market. "I have witnessed various incidents which reflected the greatness of Kuwait and its people," he said. He lauded the smoothness of the unique relations between Kuwaiti rulers and people as well as Kuwaitis and expats. "It is clear that these relations are based on mutual respect," he said. — KUNA



## HAMAD AL-ROUMI THEATRE 'CULTURALLY VIBRANT' VENUE

**KUWAIT:** Hamad Al-Roumi Theatre is considered one of the culturally vibrant venues in the country that hosts many national celebrations and various press events. Nowadays, the theatre is the media center for 250 journalists from different local, Arab and international

media bodies which came to give a full coverage to the UN-sponsored intra-Yemen peace talks. The media center is jointly organized by the Ministries of Information, Interior and Foreign Affairs to offer the best services to the journalists. — KUNA



In Brief

### 510 BEDOONS AT KUWAIT UNIVERSITY

**KUWAIT:** Around 510 male and female students from Kuwait's bedoon (stateless) community are currently studying at Kuwait University, the Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents announced yesterday. This figure has now been doubled compared to when the apparatus was formed six years ago, Assistant Secretary General for Technical and Information Affairs in the Apparatus Waleed Al-Asfoor said, noting that this figure does not include the students studying at private colleges and universities. — KUNA



### OFFICERS GRADUATE FROM NATO COLLEGE

**ROME:** Kuwait Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Khaled Al-Sabah attended yesterday the graduation ceremony of new Kuwaiti liaison officers who are participating in an advanced military training course in the NATO Defense college in Rome. A number of high ranking senior officials from NATO Defense College and Kuwaiti diplomats also were present, Kuwait Embassy in Italy said in a statement. Kuwaiti trainee Lieutenant General Daboos Al-Daboos received an award of excellence during the ceremony. — KUNA



### BAHRAINI PM PRAISES KUWAITI PRIVATE SECTOR

**MANAMA:** Dean of the diplomatic corps, Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah praised yesterday tribute made by Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa over the leading development of the Kuwaiti private sector in Bahrain. He made his statements as the two attended the opening of the Gulf Property Show 2016, which took place recently in Bahrain. — KUNA



## Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A panoramic view of Kuwait City's skyline and its reflection on the Arabian Gulf's waters at night. — KUNA

### CMA STARTS APPLYING XBRL FOR BETTER 'SUPERVISORY ROLE'

**KUWAIT:** The Capital Markets Authority (CMA) will start applying an eXtensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL) to have an easier task practicing its supervisory role of the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE). XBRL is a global standard for exchanging financial information between business systems, CMA said in a press statement yesterday.

XBRL uses standardized tags in order to deliver computer readable financial information. These communications are defined by metadata set out in taxonomies. Metadata main purpose is to facilitate in the discovery of relevant information while the taxonomies classify data and find its roots. Using XBRL will provide an electronic disclosure system that reveals, with transparency, all financial and non-financial disclosures of companies listed on the KSE. Applying XBRL is part of CMA's con-

tinuous attempts to improve the financial sector, achieve sustainability, increase the capital, regulate and develop the capital market, and protect the rights of investors in Kuwait through providing a supervisory system.

XBRL will make it easier to unify all financial reports in a timely fashion, with utmost precision and fairness to all concerned parties. The XBRL organization is considered a not-for-profit organization. It includes about 600 entities and organizations from public and government sectors around the world.

Last year, CMA joined XBRL international as part of its efforts to play its full role, achieve the principles of transparency and integrity, and to keep up with the best international practice and international developments related to its work. — KUNA

### KD 205 MILLION PAID TO HOUSING AUTHORITY

**KUWAIT:** A sum of KD 205 million has been transferred by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) to the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW), as part of the amounts due to the authority, Director General of KFAED Abdulwahab Al-Bader said yesterday.

Bader said that these amounts will be completed to the authority once the final financial budget accounts are finalized, which are a total of KD 312 million, noting that the fund deducted 25 percent of its net profits to help the authority meet its obligations in providing residential care. Bader stressed that the fund does not constitute a burden on the state budget, but in fact it is self-funded due to its own annual profits since 1986.

"The Fund has provided more than KD 500 million dinars to Kuwait's Credit Bank between 2002 and 2007 in the form of bonds for the purpose of providing assistance to the housing problem," Al-Bader said. He also pointed out that the fund's total projects for Arab countries amounted to about 900 projects involving several sectors such as agriculture, energy, transportation and other development projects for the benefit of 105 countries with a total value amounting \$5.18 billion."

Last fiscal year, the number of projects financed by the Fund reached 29 projects with a total loan commitment of about KD 242.3 million covering, transport, energy, water, sewage, agriculture and industry in addition to social. — KUNA



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القباس

Al-Qabas

## MR PRESIDENT, YOUR MESSAGE WAS NOT DELIVERED

By Qais Al-Usta

The American president's visit to the region and his meeting with GCC leaders came out with nothing, as expected! This visit came to complete the summit that took place last year at Camp David as an attempt by the United States to reassure its Gulf allies over America's signing with Iran a treaty related to the Iranian nuclear program.

The United States signed the agreement, and the Iranian leadership got what it wanted, and continued with the same policies, and the American administration confirms to the world that the matter is under control, rather more than that, the American president asked for a meeting with the Islamic Republic of Iran's Supreme leader Ali Khamenei.

We tell the American president directly - your message Mr President, with regards to improving the confidence between America and GCC countries, was not delivered, as after what you said about terrorism and Gulf curricula, and your open accusation of GCC countries of exporting terrorism ideology, as if jihadist fundamentalism was not your ally during the 1980s against the Soviet Union, but no problem - interest is above all.

You came for the interest of your country; you came because you are the best who knows that the Gulf assets in the United States are huge, from investments to individual ownership of citizens to other things such as military purchases, planes, guns, naval ships, civil aircraft and cars. You came, Mr President, after the direct Saudi threat to liquidate all the kingdom's assets in America, and you are the best who knows the extent of this matter's issue on the American economy, and directly on the dollar.

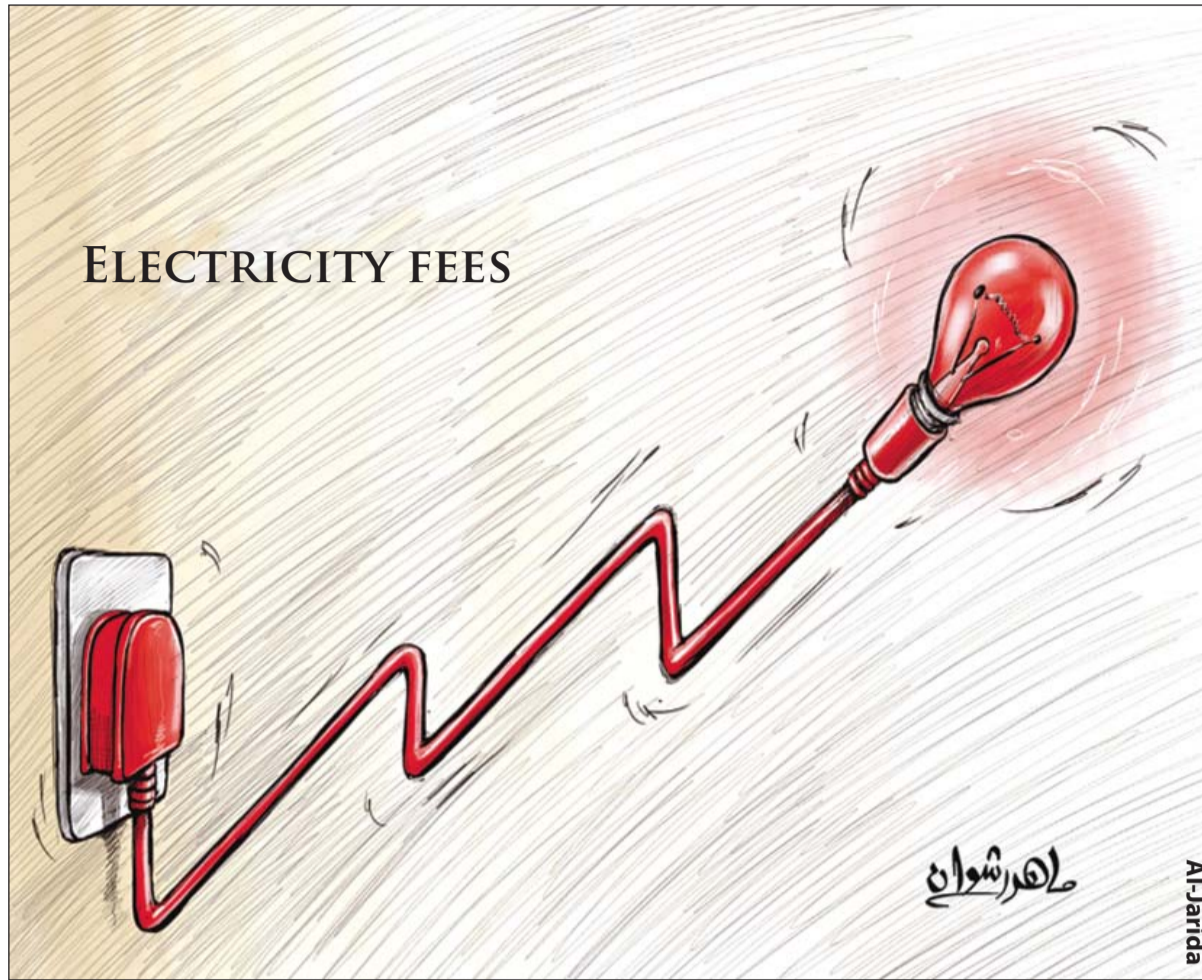
Mr President, we in Kuwait in particular, do forget the role of the United States in the Kuwait liberation war. We also have thousands of our students studying in American universities, and you are wrong, Mr President, if you think that we do not appreciate this, as it is a history that is engraved in our hearts and minds and will continue with our children and grandchildren, yet we are Gulf citizens that feel the suffering of our people in Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, Manama and Doha, we feel the suffering of the people of Muscat, and we realize that there is a clear Gulf worry towards the continued Iranian interference for years. We see with our own eyes what is going on in most Arab countries, and we know that the Iranian support is continuing, so the battles continue in an attempt by Tehran to benefit from the negotiations to solve issues, as used to happen with lingering issues such as Lebanon for example.

We in Kuwait attempted many times to improve relations with Tehran, and maybe the visit of HH the Amir during the summer of 2014 is the biggest evidence, and despite this, our reward was all types of cells!

Mr President, public relations parties, verbal statements and sending military experts who are no more 300 military men will not assure anyone. Anyone who wants to send a positive message to the region must behave with more responsibility, and help on the ground in implementing international resolutions, particularly in Yemen, and I mean resolution 2216, and Syria resolution 2254, but for other things, your message will not be delivered, be it "with a stamp or without". Mr President, there should either a responsible intervention that puts into consideration the size of destruction in the region for years, or leave us alone to handle our affairs by ourselves.

So was the message delivered?! I hope so.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



الانباء

Al-Anbaa

## A JOKE IRRELEVANT WITH US

By Salah Al-Sayer

The world of humor is full of anecdotes and jokes that cover the truth. One of these jokes says that 'whenever five Chinese come together, they write wisdom; whenever five Americans get together, they produce a movie; whenever five Japanese get together, they invent something and whenever five Arabs get together, they form five different doctrines, five different parties and each of them would claim the presidency and they would fight themselves to death!'

Well, this joke shows how divided Arabs are and how they always have disagreements. But what about real life, when on May 26, 1981, six of them met and agreed on a historic achievement acknowledged by everybody? By this I mean the meeting attended by the great GCC leaders Jaber, Zayed,

Khaled, Qaboos, Khalifa and Essa, who decided forming the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to become the strongest Arab organization ever known, with the aim of coordinating GCC integration in order to eventually reach unity.

All other Arab attempts to unite or cooperate have failed, but this must not make us forget about our successes and allow the negative image to prevail, forgetting all about the strength of this organization. We in the GCC know nothing of the division other Arabs suffer from and we must be proud of that. Finally, I wonder why GCC governments do not annually celebrate the GCC foundation anniversary the way they do with their respective national days?

— Translated by Kuwait Times



KUWAIT: Hessa Al-Najadah, Senior Officer - Public Relations at Burgan Bank with the Kuwaiti Development Union and 'National Academic Guidance' volunteer team.

## BURGAN BANK HAILS SPONSORSHIP OF 'BUILD YOUR LIFE' WORKSHOP

KUWAIT: As part of its comprehensive support of the National Educational Program 'I Intend to Build Kuwait', Burgan Bank recently concluded its sponsorship of the second 'Build your life' workshop. The workshop was held at Al-Hamra Luxury Mall over a course of two days, where it targeted students, parents, professors, and educational leaders.

The purpose of the workshop was to raise awareness on the importance of building one's personality and self in order to achieve targeted goals and future careers and to become more successful in life. The workshop was designed in an informative platform which included a series of live motivational performances and an educational exhibition

as well as live workshops to implement the information received into real life situations in the most dynamic way.

Burgan Bank's eagerness in supporting this program stems from its utmost belief in engaging with students and teachers to create Kuwait's future generations while shouldering students' capabilities and skills with the support of their peers and parents.

The 'Build your life' workshop was presented by the Instructor Ali Dashti who addressed 5 main topics namely; Principles of Change, Positive self-build, Keys of True Happiness, Steps to achieving Goals, and How to be Successful in Life. Parents also engaged in workshops

to understand how to positively impact their children's lives and how to allow them to reach the success they're looking for in their career and society in general.

It is worth mentioning that Burgan Bank's support to this initiative falls under its recently launched full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives. Burgan Bank's approach to 'ENGAGE' begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.

## Crime

Report

### Rapist officer's case adjourned

KUWAIT: The criminal court postponed hearing a case filed against a police officer over charges of sexually abusing a male detainee he had arrested, said security sources, noting that the public prosecution demanded capital punishment for the officer. Case papers indicate that while driving his private vehicle, the well-built officer stopped a citizen to ticket him for a traffic violation before he took him to an isolated spot, where he tied him up and raped him before driving off.

### Suicide

A Canadian national killed himself by jumping from the third floor of a Nugra building, said security sources, noting that the building's tenants heard a loud thud and on checking, they found the man already dead.

### Drunk driving

An Asian taxi driver was arrested after gyrating to some songs while driving under the effect of alcohol. He was driving in an unsteady course along Fahaheel Expressway, said security sources. On stopping him, police found the cabbie had a plastic bottle of homemade liquor he had been drinking from while listening to music. The driver was also found wanted for four financial claims.

### Fight

A citizen was severely injured when he was stabbed during a fight with two others he knows in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, said security sources, noting that the man's brother rushed him to hospital and reported the matter to the police. A case was filed and a search is on for the assailants.

### Murder threat

A citizen filed a case accusing another citizen who has a criminal record of threatening to kill him over some disputes they had, said security sources. A case was filed pending summoning the accused.

### Fugitive arrested

A citizen wanted for a six-year prison verdict was arrested in Salmiya after he tried to avoid a checkpoint by driving his vehicle on the wrong side of the road, said security sources. — Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

## ZAIN DIAMOND SPONSOR OF 13TH ARAB MEDIA FORUM

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its Diamond sponsorship of the 13th edition of the Arab Media Forum under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The event takes place from 1-2 May.

The forum, sponsored by Zain for five consecutive years, has proven itself to be one of the region's most prominent events that attend to Arab Media. The event brings together many ministers, media executives, journalists, academics, authors, actors, businessmen, and social figures from all around the Arab world.

Many seminars, workshops, and discussion panels will be held during the forum, one of which will witness the participation of Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan, ex Minister of Telecommunications of the State of Qatar Hissah Al-Jaber, along with Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Public Authority for Communications and Information Technology Engineer Salem Al-Uthaina.

Zain will also participate in the forum through its a dedicated booth, where the company will welcome visitors to discuss the various ways in which different communications mediums can enhance the development of current media tools in the Arab region. Zain's sponsorship and participation in this forum highlights its social commitment, as the company believes in the importance of the role press and media plays in the development of communities. Zain will continue supporting this very important sector which carries significant and informative messaging to the public at large and the communications world as a whole.



## VIVA SPONSORS ANNUAL OMRA TRIP FOR KUWAIT JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced its sponsorship of the annual Omra trip organized by Kuwait Journalist Association (KJA), to Makkah and Al-Madina Al-Monawara.

Corporate Communications team at VIVA bids farewell to the pilgrims in the presence of the head of the delegation Adnan Al-Rashed, Al-Anbaa newspaper deputy editor-in-chief, in an atmosphere of faith and spirituality, asking God Al mighty that their Omra be accepted and their good deeds.

VIVA is keen to continue its ongoing socially responsible role in the community by spreading the spirit of goodness amongst Kuwaiti society. We believe at VIVA in taking a holistic approach to our CSR activities, one that engages our employees, and creates goodwill in our

communities with a focus on helping to grow and develop the State of Kuwait.

VIVA's Corporate Social Responsibility

'CSR' activities can be reviewed on the company's website at <https://www.viva.com.kw/csr>. This offers a

description of each CSR initiative that VIVA has supported, or taken on since its inception.



## DIVORCE RATE HALF OF MARRIAGES IN 2015

KUWAIT: Divorce cases registered in Kuwait in 2015 were very high, reaching 46.72 percent compared to the number of marriages registered in the same year. According to an annual report by the ministry of justice, the total number of marriage contracts was 15,412 while divorces were 7,201. The report also showed that 13,484 people had filed applications to undergo premarital medical tests in 2015 compared to 13,414 in 2014. — Al-Jarida

— Al-Jarida



Iran moderates get most parliament seats after runoff

## HINDU TAILOR HACKED TO DEATH IN BANGLADESH

# PROTESTERS STORM IRAQ PARLIAMENT

## SADRISTS DIG IN INSIDE GREEN ZONE AS POLITICAL CRISIS DEEPENS

**BAGHDAD:** Thousands of angry protesters broke into Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone yesterday and stormed the Iraqi parliament building after lawmakers again failed to approve new ministers. Jubilant crowds, most of them supporters of Shiite cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr, invaded the main session hall, shouting slogans glorifying their leader and claiming that they had rooted out corruption.

The capital was already on high alert for a major Shiite pilgrimage, participants in which were targeted in a bombing that killed 23 yesterday, but extra security measures were taken after protesters stormed the Green Zone. "You are not staying here! This is your last day in the Green Zone," shouted one protester as thousands broke in.

Besides the parliament compound, the restricted area in central Baghdad houses the presidential palace, the prime minister's office and several embassies, including those of the United States and Britain. Protesters pulled down several slabs of the heavy concrete blast walls that surround the Green Zone to create an opening and also climbed over the barrier, an AFP journalist said. They then headed to parliament, where some rampaged through the building and broke into offices, while others shouted "peacefully, peacefully" and tried to contain the destruction, another AFP reporter said.

Security forces were present but did not confront them. Protesters also moved into the nearby compound of the secretary general of Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi's office. Some six hours after the Green Zone was stormed and despite the chaos, Abadi issued a statement claiming the situation in Baghdad was "under the control of the security forces" and urging protesters to return to "designated protest areas". Tear gas was used against protesters but violence did not escalate further, with both sides mostly seen fraternizing.

### Chaos in Parliament

An AFP photographer said members of the



**BAGHDAD:** Iraqi protesters wave national flags as they gather inside the parliament after breaking into Baghdad's heavily fortified "Green Zone" yesterday. — AFP

Sadrist militia group Saraya Al-Salam were eventually seen directing protesters to leave the parliament building after nightfall. Protesters earlier pulled barbed wire across a road leading to one of the Green Zone exits, effectively preventing some scared lawmakers from fleeing the chaos. They also attacked and damaged several vehicles they believed belonged to lawmakers.

Inside the main hall where lawmakers failed to reach a quorum earlier in the day, protesters sat in the MPs' seats taking "selfies" and shouting slogans. One protester called a friend on his mobile: "I am sitting (in parliament speaker) Salim Al-Juburi's chair, I have a meeting, we'll talk later." "We are the ones running this country now, the time of the corrupt is over," said another, as

crowds filled rooms throughout the building. Parliament failed to reach a quorum yesterday after approving some of Abadi's ministerial nominees earlier in the week. The Green Zone unrest started as Sadr ended a news conference in the Shiite holy city of Najaf during which he condemned the political deadlock. He had threatened to have his supporters storm the Green

Zone last month, but did not order them to enter the area in his Saturday address.

### Baghdad on High Alert

The politicians "refused to end corruption and refused to end quotas", Sadr said, adding that he and his supporters would not participate in "any political process in which there are any type... of political party quotas". Key government posts have for years been shared out based on political and sectarian quotas, a practice demonstrators want to end. Abadi's efforts to change the system have been opposed by powerful political parties that rely on control of ministries for patronage and funds.

According to interior ministry officials, the main entrances to Baghdad were temporarily closed, and measures were taken to protect the central bank and the airport. Security forces had already been on high alert as tens of thousands of Shiite faithful converged on the city for an annual commemoration. Both Washington and the United Nations have warned that the political crisis could distract from the fight against the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group.

A car bomb that exploded earlier Saturday in the Nahrawan area near Baghdad killed at least 23 people and wounded at least 38, security and medical officials said. It struck a road used by pilgrims walking to the shrine of Imam Musa Kadhim in northern Baghdad, officials said. IS, which considers Shiites to be heretics, claimed the attack and said it was carried out by a suicide bomber who detonated a vehicle laden with three tonnes of explosives. Kadhim, the seventh of 12 imams revered in Shiite Islam, died in 799 AD. The pilgrimage has in recent years turned into a huge event that brings the capital to a standstill for days. — AFP



**BURLINGAME, California:** An egg is thrown at a cardboard cutout of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump during a protest outside the Hyatt Regency Hotel where Trump was speaking on Friday. — AFP

# TENSE PROTESTS OUTSIDE TRUMP SPEECH IN CALIF

**BURLINGAME, California:** Hundreds of demonstrators jostled with police in riot gear outside a California hotel where Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump gave a speech, forcing the candidate to duck into a back entrance. At one point, several dozen protesters broke through barricades and attempted to storm the hotel where the California Republican Party Convention was taking place on Friday, but police, some wielding batons, were able to push them back.

The demonstrators waved banners that read "No hate, no racism, no Trump," "We need a uniter, not a divider" and "Trump is the modern day Hitler." Several carried Mexican flags. The tense stand-off at the Hyatt Regency near the San Francisco International Airport forced the Republican front-runner and his security detail to abandon his motorcade on a nearby highway, hop over a barrier and use a back entrance to the hotel. "That was not the easiest entrance I've ever made," he told the party members at the convention. "It felt like I was crossing the border."

California, which holds its presidential primaries on June 7, is crucial in Trump's push to secure the number of delegates needed to win the Republican presidential nomination outright. Trump blasted his rivals Texas Senator Ted Cruz and Ohio Governor John Kasich for staying in the race. "I think it's going to come to an end very soon," Trump told the crowd. "And really, I'm speaking to the people in this room, because there has to be unity in our party." After delivering his speech without incident, Trump was again escorted out the back entrance. A crowd of those attending the convention watched live footage of Trump leaving the hotel, and cheered when he entered his vehicle away from the protesters, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Kasich, who hours later spoke to the California Republicans, did not refer directly to Trump but did say that he's chosen in his own campaign "not to live on the

dark side of human nature". Once seen as inconceivable, Trump's quest for the 1,237 delegates needed to win the Republican nomination outright is within reach.

Some of the anti-Trump protesters outside the hotel lobbed rocks and eggs at officers, and at least five were arrested, a police spokesman said. He added that several demonstrators and police officers suffered minor injuries. "I am here because I don't like all the bad stuff Trump has been saying lately about immigrants and Latinos," said Eric Lopez, one of the demonstrators. "We are not all like the way he thinks we are."

Jorge-Mario Cabrera, spokesman for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), denounced Trump's rhetoric and said he hoped the real estate magnate would be defeated at the polls. "The community is sick of being denigrated, disrespected and attacked," he told AFP in a statement. "Nevertheless, our reaction should be to march peacefully, as we have always done, and vote at the polls."

The protest in Burlingame followed similar demonstrations that turned violent late Thursday at another Trump rally in southern California. Some 20 people were arrested outside the Orange County amphitheater in Costa Mesa during a Trump campaign stopover, which drew a crowd of thousands ahead of the state's June 7 primary. The demonstrators hurled rocks at passing vehicles and vandalized cars. They smashed at least one patrol car's window and punctured the tyres on a police sports utility vehicle, while trying to overturn another police car.

Protesters have disrupted campaign rallies for Trump across the country, denouncing the frontrunner's rhetoric against Muslims and immigrants. The billionaire developer has outraged many by comparing Mexican immigrants to "rapists" and vowing to build a wall along the Mexican-American border to prevent illegal immigration. — AFP



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# FIRE RAVAGES MUSLIM PRAYER HALL IN CORSICA

**AJACCIO, France:** A Muslim prayer hall in the French island of Corsica was ravaged by fire yesterday in what prosecutors said was probably a criminal attack. The blaze occurred just months after the island, popular with tourists for its turquoise waters and picturesque mountains, was rocked by anti-Arab riots over Christmas. French President Francois Hollande vowed a swift investigation into the blaze, and action if necessary. "If it is confirmed to be of criminal origin, those responsible must be rapidly identified and brought to justice," he said. "Any anti-religious act must not be tolerated," he added in a statement.

The building, one of the largest prayer halls in the capital Ajaccio, suffered major damage in the fire, said Abdallah Zekri, the head of the National Observatory Against Islamophobia. He called on the authorities "to do everything to shed light on this incident in order to avoid an escalation of violence." "It has been calm since the end of the year, but unfortunately certain ill-intentioned people want to

inflame the situation," he told AFP.

Protests erupted on the Mediterranean island over Christmas after firefighters and police called to a low-income immigrant neighborhood were ambushed and attacked. Demonstrators shouting slogans such as "This is our home!" and "Arabs get out", vandalised a prayer hall and set fire to books including copies of the Holy Quran. Several anti-Muslim acts occurred in the weeks that followed, including an attack on a Muslim butcher's shop.

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve issued a statement yesterday expressing "solidarity with the Muslims of Corsica". He also voiced the "commitment of the government to protect all places of worship, and to ensure freedom of worship throughout the territory". Nationalists won regional elections in Corsica for the first time in December. The island has the second largest proportion of foreigners in France, at between eight and 10 percent of the total population, after the Paris region. — AFP



**AJACCIO, Corsica:** French forensics and policemen work in front of a Muslim prayer room after it was destroyed by a fire, suspected to be arson, on this French Mediterranean island. — AFP



**TEHRAN:** An Iranian woman walks past a mural on a sidewalk in downtown Tehran yesterday. — AP

# ROUHANI ALLIES WIN IRAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

## CONSERVATIVE MPS LOSE DOMINANCE

**TEHRAN:** Reformist and moderate Iranian politicians allied with President Hassan Rouhani won a big victory in second round parliamentary elections and capped a remarkable comeback yesterday after years of isolation. The outcome represents a significant realignment of competing factions in the Islamic republic, with conservative MPs losing their dominance and being outnumbered for the first time since 2004. It was also an implicit public vote of confidence in Rouhani, who won a landslide election victory in 2013 and went on to clinch a historic deal with world powers over Tehran's nuclear program that lifted sanctions.

Official results also showed 17 women were elected - eight more than at present and the highest female representation since the country's revolution in 1979. Almost a quarter of parliament's seats were at stake in run-offs Friday in what was a showdown between reformists and conservatives seeking to influence the country's future. Although Iran's parliament has marginal powers - under the country's theocratic rule clerics can veto legislation - the result will help the government deliver economic reforms such as a new oil contracts law that could tempt foreign majors. It could also speed up social change demanded by reformists.

Their return as a major force is a shake up for hardliners in Tehran after an era of diplomatic clashes with the West over a nuclear program that, before Rouhani, had left Iran under threat of military attack. Most lawmakers who opposed the landmark agree-

ment struck last year after years of talks with Tehran's long-time foe the United States and other leading nations were rejected by voters. That verdict should make Rouhani's job easier.

Iran does not have rigid party affiliations, making election outcomes notoriously opaque. Some candidates were backed by both camps and others stood as independents. But of the 68 seats that were contested Friday, 38 went to the pro-Rouhani List of Hope coalition, 18 to conservatives and 12 to independents, according to final results published by the interior ministry.

That gives reformists 133 seats in the new 290-member parliament, 13 shy of a majority but more than their rivals' 125 MPs. Remaining seats went to independents and minorities who could hold the balance of power. The second ballot on Friday was needed because no candidate won the minimum 25 percent required in the first round.

### A Different Parliament

In stark contrast to the first two-and-a-half years of his presidency, the result should give Rouhani a supportive parliament. The outgoing conservative-led chamber repeatedly blocked him and even impeached one of his ministers. Iran's reformists have encouraged foreign investment, support moves for greater diplomatic rapprochement and seek social change and fewer political restrictions at home. Their electoral gains in February came just six weeks after Tehran's implementation of the nuclear deal.

Around 17 million citizens were eligible to vote on Friday and polling took place in 21 provinces, but not in Tehran, as reformists won all of the capital's 30 seats in the first round. Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had urged a strong turnout, saying the vote was no less important than the initial poll.

Mohammad Reza Aref, a partly US-educated engineer and leader of the reformist pro-Rouhani List of Hope, had set a target of at least another 40 lawmakers. Although that was narrowly missed, gains for the president's allies will make legislative reforms more likely. The vote also buys some time for Rouhani to try to turn around a struggling economy amid concern over the nuclear deal. He faces a re-election battle next June and would have been severely wounded had conservatives staged a fight-back in the second round vote.

Iranian officials including Khamenei have complained that the United States is not honouring its commitments and is in fact taking steps to dissuade non-American banks from doing business with Tehran. Although the conservatives went backwards two months ago they did not change tack this time round, keeping up pressure over what they say is a silent agenda among reformists to give up the principles of the revolution. But appeals for backing from Gholam-Ali Hadad Adel, head of the conservative coalition, who lost his own seat in Tehran because of the reformist surge in February, again went unheeded. — AFP

# FROM NY TO LA, STREET ART OF US CANDIDATES BLOOMS

**LOS ANGELES:** Many Americans are taking to canvas and poster board this year to express their political thoughts through depictions - sometimes unflattering - of presidential hopefuls like Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton. Trump, the controversial billionaire who is leading the Republican Party nomination race and is known for his sometimes incendiary comments, is perhaps the most popular subject among artists.

"It's gotten a lot of people together to create art against him," said Mitchel Dumlaio, cofounder of the LA Street Art Gallery. "It kind of speaks about the type of his political ideologies and backgrounds. The more controversial a candidate is, the more attention he gets." New York artist Hansky unveiled in Manhattan one of the most blunt and critical depictions of the former reality TV star to date: Trump's face incorporated into a pile of feces buzzed by flies.

### 'No Trump Anytime'

Known for disparaging remarks about Mexicans, Trump pinatas have been selling well for months both in the United States and Mexico. Other popular items in the Hispanic community are T-shirts and posters with the slogan "Donald eres un pendejo" (Donald you're an a\*\*hole) in large white letters on a black background along with a profile of Trump's face. The people behind the "pendejo" art - popular in places like New York, Los Angeles and Miami - are the owners of the Mexican licor brand Ilegal Mezcal, who have been active in organizing anti-Trump rallies. Lately residents in cities like Chicago, Washington, New York and Los Angeles have been seeing "No Parking Anytime" street signs modified to read "No Trump Anytime". "Like so many people, I don't have a voice in politics," said the Los Angeles-based artist Plastic Jesus, who came up with that idea. "The New York Times or The Times in London would never give me a column to write my opinion on politics, or the war on drugs or banking crisis," he told AFP. "But for me, street art is a good way to get my opinion out there and hopefully start a dialogue across the nation," he said.

Politics has always been a source of inspira-

### 'Hillary Stinks'

Hong is co-producer and co-curator of a touring art exhibit "The Art of a Political Revolution: Art for Bernie Sanders 2016." Flattering murals of Sanders have appeared in cities across the country including Philadelphia, Austin, Texas and Denver, Colorado. However Sanders's rival and Democratic Party front runner Hillary Clinton's depiction in popular art is not as positive. In one example her face is printed on a cardboard pine freshener - the kind that dangles from the rear view mirror in cars - with the slogan "Hillary Stinks - Reeks of Scandal" can be found for sale in Los Angeles.

The former secretary of state also appears in a faux poster for the animated ogre movie "Shrek", and in a series of black and white "Don't Say" posters, that include her face matched with words like "Entitled," "Secretive," "Polarizing" and "Calculating." "Street art in general has always been a tool against the establishment and the government, and Hillary is kind of seen as the establishment and the government: same old politicians that we've seen before," said Dumlaio. "People have a lack of trust on her and her campaign," he said. — AFP



**HOLLYWOOD:** A sign reading "No Trump Anytime" is seen near the iconic "Hollywood" sign on April 27, 2016 in the hills above Hollywood. — AFP



**ALEPPO:** Syrian civil defence volunteers evacuate a man and children from a residential building following an air strike on the rebel-held eastern neighborhood of Bab al-Nayrab in Syria's second city yesterday. — AFP

# RESIDENTS FLEE AS AIR STRIKES SHAKE ALEPPO

**ALEPPO:** Terrified residents fled a new wave of air strikes on rebel-held areas of Syria's divided city of Aleppo yesterday, as key regime backer Russia rejected calls to rein in its ally. Aleppo was left out of a new temporary US-Russian brokered truce that appeared to be holding in the regime stronghold of Latakia as well as Damascus and the nearby rebel bastion of Eastern Ghouta. US Secretary of State John Kerry was to travel Sunday to Geneva in a show of support for the truce and will meet the UN envoy to Syria and the Jordanian and Saudi foreign ministers. The State Department said his talks will focus on "efforts to reaffirm the cessation of hostilities nationwide in Syria".

A new round of UN-backed peace talks is set to start on May 10 in Geneva. In Aleppo's rebel-held east, dozens of civilians left the battered Bustan al-Qasr district early yesterday, an AFP correspondent said. "The situation has become unbearable," Abu Mohammed said as he prepared to flee with his wife and five children. "Everything is paralyzed."

Russia said that it would not ask Damascus to halt air raids on Aleppo. "No, we are not going to put pressure on (Damascus) because one must understand that the situation in Aleppo is part of this fight against the terrorist threat," Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov said. Washington has appealed to Moscow to keep President Bashar Al-Assad's regime in check. Once

Syria's economic hub, Aleppo and its surrounding countryside have suffered some of the worst fighting in a conflict that has killed more than 270,000 people and displaced millions.

### Watching the Sky

At least 246 civilians have died in shelling, rocket fire and air strikes in both sides of the city since April 22, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor said. At least 10 civilians died in rebel-controlled areas yesterday, the civil defence said. The few people out on the streets watched the sky anxiously for regime aircraft, running for shelter when one launched a new raid. The Britain-based Observatory, which relies on a network of sources on the ground, reported 28 air strikes on eastern neighborhoods. "The regime wants to push residents to flee Aleppo before a military offensive," Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said.

The SANA state news agency said shelling of western government-held neighborhoods killed 3 civilians including a child, and blamed Al-Qaeda affiliate Al-Nusra Front and its allies. A pro-government newspaper said Thursday the army was preparing a major campaign to recapture all of Aleppo and the surrounding province. Some families have fled to safer districts, while others left by the dangerous Castello road, the only route out of near-besieged east Aleppo.

Hospitals have also been bombed in nine days

of escalating violence in Aleppo. A total of four medical facilities were hit Friday on both sides of the front line, the International Committee of the Red Cross said. A raid on Wednesday hit a hospital supported by Doctors Without Borders and the Red Cross as well as nearby housing, killing 30 people and sparking an international outcry. On other fronts, fighting halted at 1:00 am yesterday (2200 GMT Friday) in a "freeze" set to last for 24 hours in Damascus and Eastern Ghouta, and 72 hours in Latakia.

### Aid for Besieged Towns

Humanitarian convoys carrying food and medicine meanwhile entered the besieged rebel-held towns of Madaya and Zabadani, northwest of Damascus, yesterday, the Red Cross said. At the same time, trucks entered the besieged government-held towns of Fuaa and Kafraya, southwest of Aleppo. Madaya became infamous in late 2015 after dozens died of starvation there. In the eastern province of Deir Ezzor, a couple and their two daughters were killed in strikes by unidentified aircraft on a village held by the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group, the Observatory said. And in north-eastern Syria, a suicide bomber killed five Kurdish policemen at a checkpoint in the city of Qamishli, police said. It was not immediately clear who carried out the attack, but IS has claimed previous bombings in the mainly Kurdish city. — AFP



## 33 RESCUED LIONS FLOWN FROM PERU TO S AFRICA

**LIMA:** More than 30 lions rescued from abuse in Peruvian and Colombian circuses were flown Friday to South Africa, in what campaigners called the largest-ever airlift of big cats. The 33 lions, with names such as Zeus and Shakira, were freed after the use of wild animals in circuses was outlawed in Peru in 2011 and Colombia in 2013. Saved from the lion tamer's whip, they have been rounded up with the help of authorities by Animal Defenders International (ADI), an animal rights charity.

"It's truly wonderful that these lions, after a lifetime of suffering and abuse in circuses, are going home to Africa," said the president of ADI, Jan Creamer. "All of the lions when they arrive from the circuses have health problems, parasites, disease," she added. "All of their lives they haven't had enough food, so they have long-term malnutrition problems." Recent months have been spent in straw-lined cages in a refuge north of Lima, however, they have been well fed and are in generally good health, Creamer said.

Twenty-four lions rescued in Peru were driven from their temporary rescue center to Lima airport to be picked up by a cargo plane that brought another nine over from Colombia. Late Friday, the airlift took off, transporting the big cats to their new life. "We are on our way!" read a post on the ADI website. "The 33 lions are on board the ADI Spirit Of Freedom Flight, on route to their wonderful new lives at Emoya Big Cat Sanctuary, South Africa."

The contingent of big cats includes Shakira, named after the Colombian pop singer. Her minders say she likes to play with a tyre and eat watermelons. From one of 10 Peruvian circuses comes "Ricardo, the

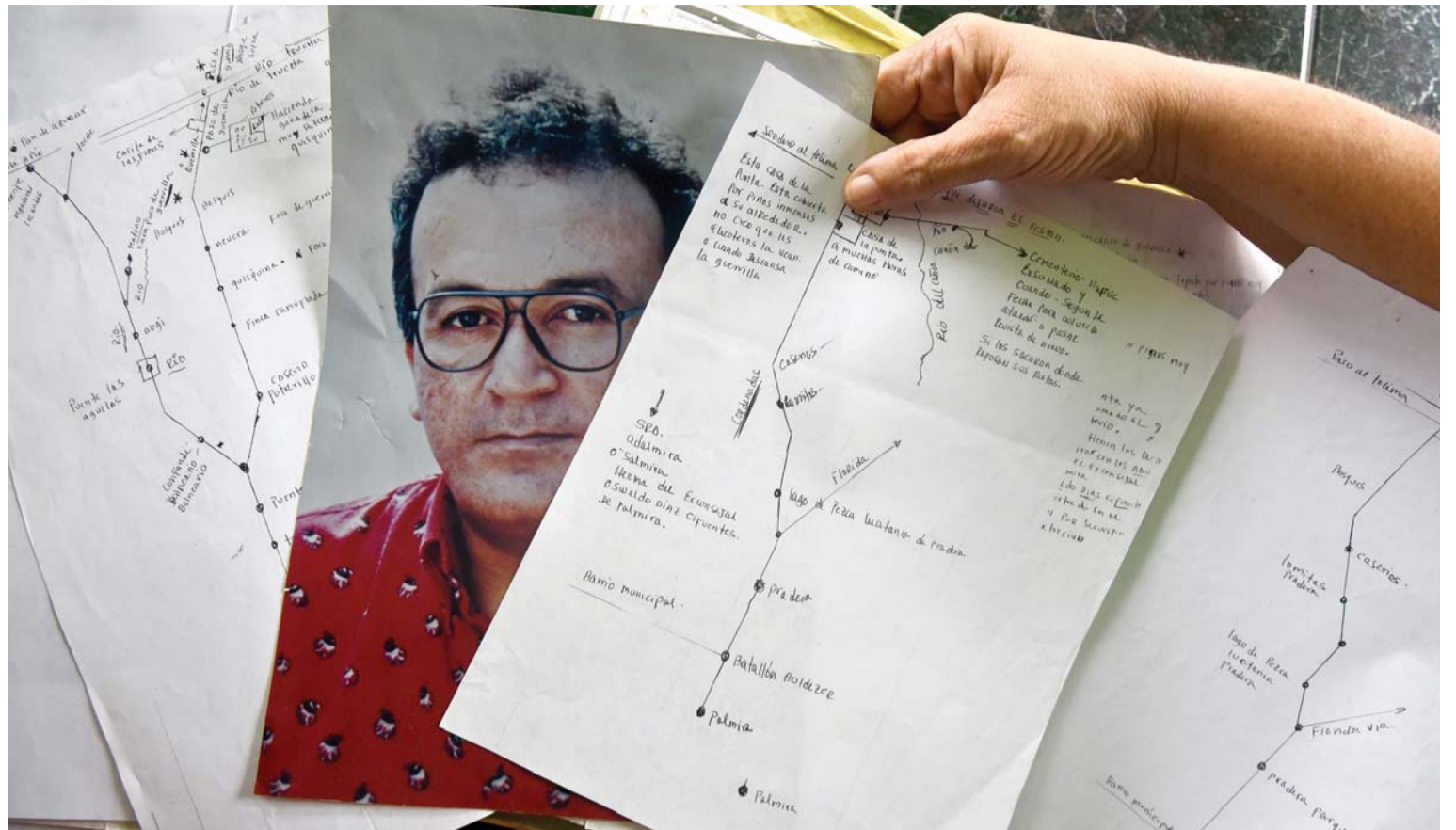
one-eyed lion" and from another "Joseph, the almost-blind lion."

### 'Heading Home to Paradise'

Together, the 33 were to take a 15-hour flight to South Africa in travel cages inside the plane chartered by ADI. They were to arrive yesterday in Johannesburg and be taken on to the Emoya Big Cat Sanctuary in the north of the country. "The lions will be in their natural habitat for the first time in their lives," Creamer said. "They should fit right into that habitat. It's the best environment for them."

ADI says it is the biggest transfer of such large captive animals ever. In the circuses the lions were poorly fed and trucked around in cages, the group said. The Colombian circuses gave up the nine lions voluntarily but police had to launch raids to free the lions in Peru. The rescuers say that one of the Peru contingent, Smith, attacked a teacher from a school party when she was invited into his cage by a lion tamer.

"Almost all of the rescued lions have been mutilated to remove their claws, one has lost an eye, another is almost blind, and many have smashed and broken teeth so would not survive in the wild," ADI said in a statement. At their new home, "the lions will enjoy large natural enclosures situated in pristine African bush, complete with drinking pools, platforms and toys," it added. "The lion habitats will be steadily expanded over the coming months as the lions become familiar with their new life and are introduced to each other." The cost of the transfer is \$10,000 per cat, ADI said. "These lions have endured hell on earth," Creamer said. "Now they are heading home to paradise." — AFP



**PALMIRA, Colombia:** Zamira Diaz, sister of Oswaldo Diaz - kidnapped by the FARC in Oct 2001 - shows a map given by an alleged FARC guerrilla which indicates the exact location where the remains of his brother are. — AFP

## DANGER KEEPS COLOMBIANS FROM BURYING THEIR DEAD

TENS OF THOUSANDS LISTED AS 'MISSING'

**PALMIRA, Colombia:** Zamira Diaz has a map showing where her brother Oswaldo is buried. But like many who have lost loved ones in Colombia's civil conflict, she cannot go and find him. Oswaldo lies in one of the "red zones" - rebel-held areas where even the police will not dare go and search. The hand-drawn maps bear instructions on how to get through the jungle to a spot several hours away from town, where Oswaldo is thought to be buried. "It is a no-go zone," Zamira says. "It is guerrilla territory, all covered with pine trees. It is still too dangerous to go there."

As the government and Marxist FARC rebels close in on a peace deal, Oswaldo represents one of the challenges to reconciliation after half a century of conflict: He is one of tens of thousands of victims listed as "missing". A town councillor from Palmira in the southwestern region of Cauca, he disappeared on Oct 15, 2001. He was 42.

Four men with guns came and took him away in front of his 13-year-old son, says Zamira, 64. Zamira keeps the maps in a thick file of documents about her brother. They were given to her by one of the campaigners working to find missing victims. When she received them, Zamira told the police but they

did not do anything, she says. "When security conditions are difficult, the public officials go accompanied by the police or the army, depending on the circumstances," the state prosecution service told AFP in a statement from its press service. "That way, they always reach the places where the events took place." The service did not say however whether officials had managed to get to the current resting place of Oswaldo Diaz, or of another missing victim, Manuel Castro Patino.

### Abducted at Breakfast

Patino's mother Mariela Patino, 56, says the youngest of her four children was taken away from their family farm one day while he was on leave from the army. "He was just finishing his military service. He was the baby of the family," she says, showing a photograph of Manuel aged 20 in his military fatigues. "We were having breakfast when six members of the FARC showed up. They accused him of being an army informer," she told AFP. "I reported it and started putting up notices everywhere. The FARC told me if I didn't leave, they wouldn't be responsible for my life or my family's."

She abandoned her home and moved to the city of Cali where she opened a beauty salon. She joined "The Missing Ones," an association campaigning to find lost victims of the conflict. One day, a FARC commander admitted to her that Manuel was buried in one of the no-go areas. "We went there but didn't find him. I passed the information to the state prosecutors. That was eight years ago," she says. "It is a red zone and the authorities cannot go there."

### Ransom demands

Oswaldo's family received ransom demands - for as much as \$67,000. Neither they nor many other families in the same situation could afford that. Twice they took DNA tests to identify bodies which turned out not to be Oswaldo. In 2014, the FARC admitted that they had killed him when he tried to escape. According to official figures, prosecutors have located 6,500 out of 45,000 people estimated to have gone missing during the conflict. Of those, 3,100 bodies have been returned to their families. "We have fought every way we can for them to tell us the truth," Zamira says, choking on her tears. "They must tell us where they are - not just my brother, but all the missing people." — AFP



**LIMA:** African lions born in captivity in Peru rest on April 27, 2016 caged in a container area in Puente Piedra, in the northern outskirts of Lima, prior to be airlifted to Johannesburg by Animal Defenders International. — AFP

## LONELY STRUGGLE OF MISSING MEXICAN STUDENTS' PARENTS

**MEXICO CITY:** There were no tears and their faces were hardened by 19 months of grief and anger as the parents of 43 Mexican students who vanished in 2014 marched in the capital. Less than two years ago, they would have been surrounded by tens of thousands of people as they protested against President Enrique Pena Nieto's handling of the case. But this past Tuesday - just two days after foreign experts issued a damning report accusing the government of obstructing their investigation - the protesters numbered only in the hundreds.

While the mass disappearance has tainted Mexico's image abroad, the protests have waned and Pena Nieto's administration is weathering the criticism despite falling approval ratings. "It's a long struggle and there are few of us," said Emiliano Navarrete, holding a picture of his missing son as he walked down Mexico City's main boulevard, Reforma. But, Navarrete said, "to shut us up they'll have to kill us." While he couldn't hide his disappointment at the low attendance, he said the "quality" of the people joining the parents was more important than "quantity."

The parents traveled from Tixtla, a town in the impoverished southern state

of Guerrero, where their 43 sons studied at a rural teacher college. Prosecutors say the students were whisked away by corrupt police in the city of Iguala on Sept 26, 2014, after they hijacked buses to be used for a future protest. But the experts of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, who were invited by the government to aid the probe at the parents' request, rejected the central conclusion in the case. The experts said there was no scientific proof that the students' bodies were burned in a funeral pyre at a garbage dump after they were killed by a drug gang.

### 'International Scrutiny'

The mass disappearance wrecked Pena Nieto's effort to shift attention away from Mexico's drug violence and toward his ambitious economic reform agenda. But while his popularity has dropped to 30 percent, his Institutional Revolutionary Party and its allies still managed to keep their majority in the lower house of Congress in elections last year. Clemente Rodriguez, another desperate parent, said Mexicans probably stopped protesting because they bought the government's conclusions in the case. With the latest protest, Rodriguez said, the families were

hoping to "give a boost" to the report published last Sunday by the commission experts, who alleged that authorities tortured suspect and committed "severe irregularities" at a key crime scene.

Vidulfo Rosales, a lawyer representing the parents, said the families of the students are now hoping that "international scrutiny" can help their cause. While the experts' mission ends on Saturday after their year-long investigation, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights plans to create a mechanism to ensure that Mexican authorities follow their recommendations and new lines of investigation.

### 'Case Must Not be Forgotten'

The experts "are putting a spotlight on our law enforcement system, which is totally dysfunctional, which tortures, which fabricates and hides evidence," said Denis Gonzalez, human rights program coordinator at Iberoamericana University. And that makes the government "uncomfortable," Gonzalez said. "It's not strange that society has become tired and distanced itself," Gonzalez said, noting that the country has suffered from the "psychological warfare" of a "mad war" against narco-trafficking. — AFP

## RINGLING ELEPHANTS PACK UP TRUNKS FOR RETIREMENT

**NEW YORK:** Elephants take a final bow at Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus on Sunday, ending a 145-year spectacle that delighted fans but enraged animal activists, who say the highly publicized retirement is not enough. The last 11 elephants touring with "The Greatest Show on Earth" will leave behind their enormous studded tiaras and begin traveling tomorrow to Ringling's 200-acre Center for Elephant Conservation in central Florida, said Stephen Payne, spokesman for the circus' parent company, Feld Entertainment.

Bonnie, Juliette and nine other female Asian elephants are retiring earlier than originally planned, reflecting shifting US attitudes toward animal entertainment. SeaWorld Entertainment Inc is phasing out killer whale shows at its amusement parks, halting the breeding of orcas in captivity as of last month and replacing the extravaganzas with what it terms educational encounters by 2019.

But the United States has a long way to go, say animal activist groups including People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the International Fund for Animal

Welfare and The Elephant Sanctuary. Even after the Ringling elephants perform their last headstands in Sunday shows in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania and Providence, Rhode Island, a total of 69 elephants will still be in the possession of smaller US circuses and traveling acts, with some too crippled to be exhibited and some kept for breeding, said PETA spokeswoman Katie Arth. Other wild animals continue as circus headliners, including at Ringling Bros, which tours with 28 tigers, six lions, one leopard, two kangaroos and three pythons, Payne said. At least 17 countries have outlawed circus acts featuring wild animals, but the practice remains largely legal in the United States. Hawaii is poised to be the first state to ban them and more than a dozen municipalities have enacted their own prohibitions.

While glad that the Ringling elephants are leaving their traveling days behind, animal activists are critical of the company's Polk City, Florida, facility that will serve as their retirement home. "It's nothing more than a breeding facility, where elephants are chained for approximately 16 hours a day or more in concrete-

floored barns and still beaten with bull-hooks," PETA's Arth said. "When they're allowed outside, they're confined to small, virtually barren paddocks." Payne brushed off the criticism as an effort by "animal rights extremists to score cheap publicity" and accused PETA of lacking first-hand knowledge of what it takes to care for an Asian elephant. The center focuses on conservation, breeding and research, including studies to determine why elephants face a lower risk of cancer than humans despite their far greater body mass, the center's website says.

A Reuters reporter who toured the camp in October saw dozens of elephants corralled in groups of twos and threes in scrub-filled areas about the size of suburban back yards that gave them enough room to walk around and included toys. At night they stay in large barns, with their feet often chained to keep them from stealing each other's food. "Free-range sanctuaries that are as large as possible are a much better option," said Katie Moore, animal rescue program director with the International Fund for Animal Welfare. — Reuters

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## AUSTRIA IN EU TALKS TO EXTEND MIGRANT BORDER CONTROLS

**VIENNA:** Austria said yesterday it was in talks with the European Union's executive body to extend border controls brought in last year to help stem the migrant flow. "I can confirm that we are having discussions with the EU Commission and our European partners about this," interior ministry spokesman Karl-Heinz Grundboeck said. His remarks came after German media reported that several EU states were pressing Brussels to extend the temporary controls inside the passport-free Schengen zone for at least six months.

The EU allowed bloc members to introduce the restrictions as hundreds of thousands of migrants

and refugees began trekking up the Balkans from Greece towards western and northern Europe last September. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany and Sweden have all clamped down on their frontiers as the continent battles its biggest migration crisis since the end of World War II. However, the extraordinary measures triggered in case of "a serious threat to public policy or internal security" are now due to expire on May 12.

"We request that you put forward a proposal, which will allow those member states who consider it necessary to either extend or introduce the temporary border controls inside Schengen as of May

13," the six countries said in a letter addressed to the EU, according to German newspaper Die Welt. A source close to the German government told AFP the letter would be sent on Monday. The European Commission, which did not comment on the matter, is due to give its verdict on May 12 on whether Greece has done enough in recent weeks to protect the EU's external borders. In case of a negative assessment, the executive could give the green light for an extension of the border controls.

The influx of people fleeing violence and poverty in the Middle East and elsewhere has put a huge strain on the bloc's 28 members. While the

flow via the Balkans route has slowed to a trickle after countries shut their borders, governments fear that the migrants will seek out new routes into the EU. More than 26,000 migrants have already landed on Italy's shores so far this year after setting off from Libya. The arrivals have prompted Austria to announce plans to reinstate border controls-including a 370-metre (1,200-foot) fence-at the Brenner pass in the Alps, a key transport corridor between northern and southern Europe. The move has sparked protests at the checkpoint in recent weeks and sparked tensions between Vienna and Rome. — AFP



**NAIROBI:** Kenyan police officers and Kenyan National Youth Servicemen search the site of a building collapse in Nairobi, Kenya yesterday. A six-story residential building in a low income area of the Kenyan capital collapsed Friday under heavy rain and flooding, trapping an unknown number of people in the rubble, Kenyan officials said. — AP

# 10 KILLED IN KENYA BUILDING COLLAPSE

### RESCUERS HUNT FOR SURVIVORS

**NAIROBI:** Rescuers in the Kenyan capital made desperate efforts yesterday to free survivors including a woman and child trapped in a building that collapsed in storms that have left a total of 17 people dead. President Uhuru Kenyatta visited the wreck of the six-storey building yesterday, where 10 people perished after concrete floors collapsed down on top of each other during torrential rainstorms on Friday.

The two-year-old building, home to more than over 150 families, had been condemned by building authorities but the order had been ignored. "Ten bodies have been recovered, and we have 80 people who have been treated and discharged from hospital," Interior Minister Joseph Nkaissey said yesterday. "There is a

lady in the building and her child who are alive, and all efforts are being made to rescue them, as well as other people still believed to be in the building," Nkaissey said.

#### 'Ignored directives'

But access for rescuers with larger machinery has been made difficult by the narrow and crowded streets. One survivor was pulled from the huge pile of debris shortly after dawn, Kenya Red Cross said, some 10 hours after the building collapsed Friday night. Pictures broadcast by local media showed soldiers, policemen and civilians searching through the rubble.

Kenyatta "braved the rainy and chilly weather" to visit densely-populated and poor Huruma neighborhood, a statement from the presidency said. He ordered police "take immediate action to identify and arrest owners of buildings who

have ignored directives by the National Construction Authority", it said. The building collapsed at around 9:30 pm (1830 GMT) Friday following some of the heaviest downpours since the start of the rainy season that caused flooding and landslides in many areas of the city.

Two neighboring buildings were declared unsafe and were evacuated. In other separate incidents, two people drowned when their vehicle was swept away by storm waters in the capital's Industrial Area, another person died in floods. Nairobi has been in the midst of a building boom for some years but the quality of materials used and speed of construction have sometimes been called into question. The growing middle class has triggered an explosion in demand for housing and a rise in real estate prices in the east African capital. — AFP

## PROTESTERS DENOUNCE 'INJUSTICE' AGAINST EX-SLAVES IN MAURITANIA

**NOUAKCHOTT:** Thousands of people have marched for the rights of former slaves in Mauritania and to denounce "injustice" against them in the West African nation where slavery persists despite being officially abolished decades ago. The march on Friday in the capital Nouakchott was organized by a group calling for the rights of the Haratines which was launched on April 29, 2013.

The protesters, who included opposition leaders, called for "the end of exclusion and injustice built into the system against the Haratine community", according to a document from the organizers, a call echoed by various speakers at a meeting following the march. "Without all our struggle, nothing will be done and the manifesto is to continue the battle against the injustice committed against all the wretched of this country, without exception!" said Boubacar Messaoud, the main leader and spokesman of the movement.

Despite being officially abolished in 1981, slavery is still deeply entrenched in the vast, largely desert nation where light-skinned Berber Arab Moors enslaved local black populations after settling in Mauritania centuries ago. Slave status is also often passed on from

generation to generation, according to rights groups. Messaoud, however, welcomed recent moves by the authorities to fight against slavery. In August 2015, Mauritania adopted a new law making slavery a "crime against humanity" and doubling the maximum prison term to 20 years. The country in December also set up three specialist slavery courts and decreed last month that March 6 would be national day for the fight against slavery.

On the sidelines of the protest, Messaoud called for the release of jailed anti-slavery activists, including Biram Ould Dah Ould Abeid, the leader of the Abolitionist Movement in Mauritania. In January last year Ould Abeid was jailed for two years along with two others for "belonging to a non-authorized organization, protesting, and incitement to rebellion." Their sentences were upheld on appeal in August. They took their case to the Supreme Court, which is to rule on May 17, according to a judicial source. Australia-based Walk Free Movement estimated in its 2014 Global Slavery Index that there were 156,000 slaves in Mauritania, or some four percent of the population. — AFP

## IN KENYA, PORTABLE TOILETS FIND A NEW ROLE - PROTECTING TREES

**NAIVASHA:** A new project is using solar energy to transform toilet waste into efficient cooking fuel, in an initiative to improve hygiene for people in communities without indoor sanitation and at the same time reduce the felling of trees for charcoal. In the communities around Naivasha, about 90 km northwest of Nairobi, Sanivation, a Kenyan social enterprise - a for-profit company also focused on social good - has begun providing toilets to homes that lack proper sanitation. The locally made toilets, called "Blue Boxes", are portable and require no fixed plumbing. Users pay a monthly charge to have them serviced twice a week. The health implications for a community with little access otherwise to modern toilets is significant, said Dr Oren Ombiru, Naivasha's health officer.

The leading cause of death for children under five in Kenya is diarrhoea, a problem exacerbated by poor sanitation, he said. Most homes in semi-urban areas do not have indoor plumbing, and some people have no choice but to defecate outdoors, he said. "Safe waste disposal is one of the best ways to prevent diarrhoea. This is a challenge for the vast majority of peri-urban dwellers, who are mainly low-income people," Ombiru said. Around 80 toilets have been provided so far, serving over 400 people. But it's what happens to the waste after it is collected from the toilets that makes the project more than a simple effort to improve sanitation.

#### Mix, cook and burn

The waste is mixed with charcoal powder and with waste plant material from nearby flower farms, which has been burned and crushed into fine powder. Sanivation uses solar technology to concentrate the sun's rays and heat the toilet waste to a high temperature, sterilizing it and making it safe for reuse. The

mixture is turned into smokeless briquettes that people can buy for cooking at home.

Benjamin Kramer-Roach, director of energy at Sanivation, says theirs is one of very few projects that use this model to transform human waste into solid fuel. Naomi Wanjira Chege, a mother of three children from Karagita area, about 15 minutes' drive from Naivasha, has been using a Blue Box toilet at home, and cooking with Sanivation's briquettes for a year. "The fact that the toilet is portable means that it can be used in any room of the house. So you don't have to worry about getting outside to use the toilet," she said.

Chege uses half a kilo of the briquettes to cook a meal. Although at 25 shillings (\$0.25) per kilo they cost a little more than she would pay for ordinary charcoal, she says they burn for longer - up to four hours. "You don't keep adding fuel when cooking, given that it can last for a long time," Chege said. Another advantage is that the briquettes produce no smoke or odors, she said. "When customers use our briquettes, bought at a higher price than charcoal, the efficiency from the long burn time actually saves them 10 to 15 percent per month on fuel costs," Kramer-Roach estimated.

He pointed to sales of 5 tons a month as evidence that the price hasn't put people off. Since the briquettes burn longer than charcoal produced from wood, every tonne sold saves the equivalent of 88 trees, he said. The toilets are popular, too, he said. Sanivation installs them without cost but charges a monthly fee of 600 Kenyan shillings (about \$6) to remove the waste. Kramer-Roach acknowledged that this cost is hard for some people to afford. But "because the payment is monthly, we have found people are able to plan ahead and save just like they would for electricity or rent," he said. — Reuters

## LIVINGSTONE LINKS HITLER TO ZIONISM

### LONDON EX-MAYOR DEFENDS HITLER COMMENTS

**LONDON:** Former London mayor Ken Livingstone said yesterday he regretted a row over anti-Semitism that has rocked Britain's opposition Labor party, but refused to withdraw comments linking Hitler to Zionism. "I really regret saying it because it has caused all this eruption," the veteran politician told LBC radio, amid a controversy that threatens to damage Labor's chances ahead of regional elections next week. But he said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had made similar remarks, adding: "I never regret saying something that is true."

Livingstone was suspended from the centre-left party on Thursday after saying Hitler initially wanted to move Jews to Israel, and "was supporting Zionism before he went mad and ended up killing six million Jews". His comments came in defense of Labor lawmaker Naz Shah, who was suspended on Wednesday in the face of widespread criticism for sharing anti-Semitic posts on social media two years ago. Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn has announced an independent review into racism in the party as the seeks to contain the row ahead of elections for devolved assemblies in Scotland and Northern Ireland and the London mayor next week.

Livingstone, a long-time ally of Corbyn who was mayor from 2000 to 2008, denied he was anti-Semitic, insisting: "My entire time in politics has been defending minorities." He accused "embittered" Labor MPs who disliked Corbyn, a long-time socialist



**Former London Mayor Ken Livingstone**

who was elected last year, of trying to whip up the row to undermine his authority. "The real appalling thing here is dishonest MPs who know that what I have said is true and stood up all this nonsense because they want to damage our chances at the local election, so they have a chance of undermining Jeremy," Livingstone said.

In a speech to the World Zionist Congress in October, Netanyahu suggested Hitler was not planning to exterminate the Jews, but expel them, until he met the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Haj Amin Al-Husseini, a Palestinian nationalist, in 1941. The comments were widely criticized, and Netanyahu later insisted he had no intention of exonerating Hitler. — AFP

## SAILORS RUSH FOR TATTOOS AS US NAVY BENDS RULES TO RECRUIT

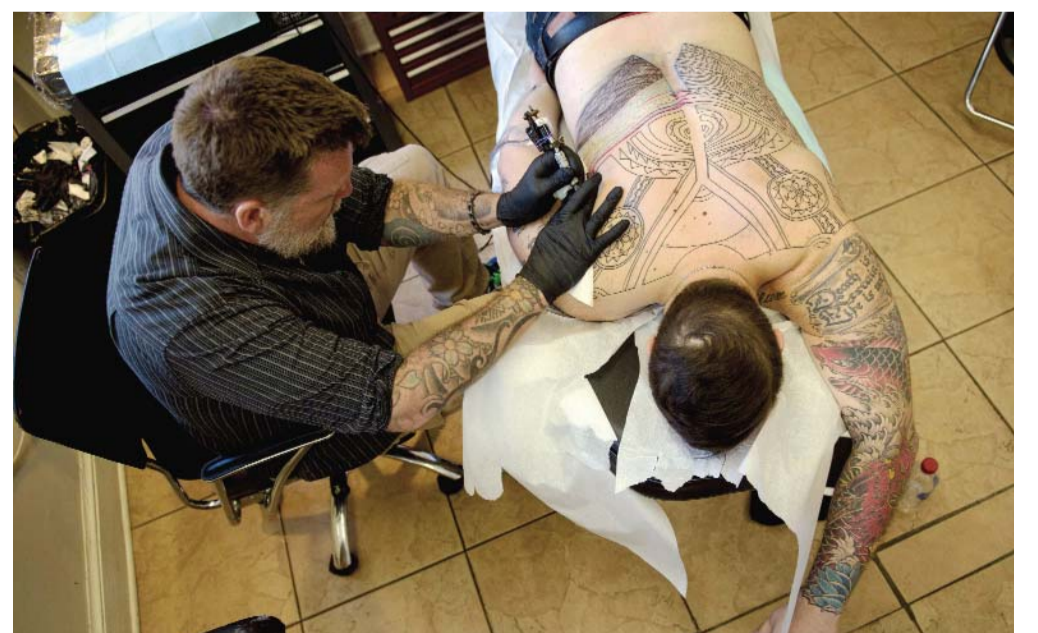
**WASHINGTON:** An indelible blue drawing of an ornate birdcage, festooned with roses and petals, wraps its way around Navy Corpsman Jessica Bryant's forearm. The 23-year-old sailor's tattoo is large, but not big enough to be considered a "sleeve," the type of design that covers an entire arm. Bryant hopes to remedy that, thanks to new Navy rules kicking in (April 30) - aimed at attracting recruits among young millennials who have adopted tattoos en masse. "When they make this really, really legal, I am going to finish the rest of it," she said during a recent visit to the Champion Tattoo Company in southeast Washington, across the road from a Marine barracks.

Until now, sleeve tattoos have been barred under military regulations. The Navy is scrapping the ban and going further still to adopt the most lenient rules on body art of any US military service. From next month, sailors will also be allowed a tattoo on their neck-up to one-inch across-and restrictions will be lifted on ink below the knee or elbow, including on the hands.

Additionally, sailors with visible tattoos will be allowed to work as Navy recruiters, a gig that was off-limits to them before. "Everyone's really thrilled," said Navy Corpsman Everette Abney, 28, as he perused tattoo designs to add to the colorful selection already on his forearm. News of the rule change was up on "Facebook for maybe an hour, and it had been shared about 40,000 times," Abney said. His friend, Navy Corpsman Taylor Hoyte, 20, is getting a tattoo of a pair of interlocking hands as part of a design that will eventually be a sleeve. "I want to keep going until I run out of room, from the neck down," she said.

#### Millennials and hipsters

Tattoos are a longstanding tradition among sailors the world over-think Popeye and his anchor-reaching back to the 18th century. But in recent



**WASHINGTON:** Butch Johnson, owner of Champion Tattoo Company, works on Tyler McManus, a 24 year old who left the US Marine in 2014 in Washington, DC. — AFP

decades, as the military sought for troops to project a more uniform and professional image, even the Navy restricted what kind of tattoo sailors can wear. With the practice more popular than ever among millennials and hipsters, the Navy's latest easing of the policy is aimed at reaching a wider array of potential sailors. According to a Harris poll, nearly half (47 percent) of Americans born in the 1980s and 1990s have at least one tattoo.

"This policy has increased the pool of candidates we recruit from. Will we get new recruits that

wouldn't have previously applied to the Navy? I think absolutely, yes," Navy spokesman Lieutenant Commander Nate Christensen said in a phone interview. "The Navy strives to reflect the nation we serve, to attract, recruit and retain the nation's best talent," he added. Offensive, overly vulgar or racist tattoos remain off-limits. Military tattoo restrictions have long stoked ire among rank-and-file troops. Many grumble that if they can die for their country, they should be able to express themselves on their skin. — AFP

# AFGHAN FORCES LAUNCH PUSH AGAINST TALEBAN

**KABUL:** Government forces have launched operations against the Taliban in 18 provinces of Afghanistan as fighting has intensified since the start of the insurgents' spring offensive this month, the ministry of defence said yesterday. The operations, backed by air power and artillery have been concentrated in areas where the Taliban insurgents have been aggressively challenging government forces seeking to reassert control over key districts.

Eighty anti-government fighters, including nine from Islamic State have been killed over the past 24 hours in the east, while six soldiers have been killed, a defense ministry statement said. The Taliban, which has ruled out joining peace talks while foreign troops remain in Afghanistan, announced the start of its spring offensive on April 12, pledging large-scale attacks against government strongholds as well as suicide bombings and targeted assassinations. Army chief of staff Qadam Shah Shaheem told reporters the Taliban was conducting "psychological warfare" designed to weaken morale and undermine confidence in the government but that it would not succeed.

Frustrated by a stalled peace process and by the Taliban's growing attacks,

President Ashraf Ghani has instructed the government forces to go on the offensive, security officials say. Speaking in parliament this week, Ghani branded the Taliban terrorists and vowed to avenge the killings of Afghans, in a marked escalation of government rhetoric against the insurgents. Government forces have beaten off a Taliban offensive in the northern city of Kunduz, which fell briefly to the insurgents last year, and appear to have stabilized the situation in the southern province of Helmand, where they pulled back from several districts in February.

However heavy fighting has continued sporadically in both regions and government and NATO officials say they expect more tough fighting after a difficult year in 2015 when around 5,500 soldiers and police were killed. In one of the biggest single attacks in Kabul since 2011, a Taliban truck bomb killed at least 64 people and wounded hundreds more on April 19. The insurgency has gained strength since the withdrawal of international troops from combat at the end of 2014, with the Taliban stronger now than any point since they were driven from power by US-backed forces in late 2001. — Reuters



**KUNDUZ:** An Afghan National Army soldier stands guard at the gate of a Doctors Without Borders hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan. About 16 US military personnel, including a two-star general, have been disciplined for mistakes that led to the bombing of the civilian hospital in Afghanistan last year that killed 42 people. — AP

# 16 BLAMED FOR MISTAKES IN US ATTACK ON AFGHAN CLINIC

'DISPROPORTIONAL RESPONSE TO A THREAT THAT DIDN'T EXIST'

**WASHINGTON:** Human error, violations of combat rules and untimely equipment failures led to the mistaken US aerial attack on a charity-run hospital in Afghanistan last fall that killed 42 people, a senior American general said. Investigators called the attack a "disproportional response to a threat that didn't exist." Sixteen military members were given administrative punishments that could stall or end careers, but no one faces a court martial.

A senior defense official said Friday one of the disciplined was a two-star general. The AC-130 gunship, bristling with side-firing cannons and guns, fired on the hospital in the northern city of Kunduz for 30 minutes before the mistake was realized and the attack was halted. Gen Joseph Votel told a news conference as he released the Pentagon's final report on the incident. The intended target was an Afghan intelligence agency building about 450 yards away.

No one involved knew the targeted compound was a hospital, Votel said, but investigators concluded the US ground and air commanders should have known. Votel expressed "deepest condolences" to those injured and to the families of those killed and said the US government made "gesture of sympathy" payments of \$3,000 to each injured person and \$6,000 to each family of the killed. Zabihullah Neyazi, a nurse who lost his left arm, eye and a finger in the

Oct 3, 2015, attack, said administrative punishment for the American service members wasn't enough and said a "trial should be in Afghanistan, in our presence, in the presence of the victims' families, so they would be satisfied."

Pharmacist Khalid Ahmad, 24, said those responsible "are criminals, and they must be jailed." Ahmad still has shrapnel embedded in his waist and cannot move his right leg. Doctors Without Borders, the international charity organization whose hospital was destroyed, said Friday that it still wants an "independent and impartial" investigation. It said the punishments were inadequate and "out of proportion" to the deaths, injuries and destruction caused by the mistaken attack. "The lack of meaningful accountability sends a worrying signal to warring parties, and is unlikely to act as a deterrent against future violations of the rules of war," the organization said.

The Americans who called in and authorized the attack never laid eyes on either the intended target or the hospital, Votel said. He is commander of US Central Command, which is responsible for military operations in the greater Middle East and Afghanistan. At the time of the Kunduz attack he headed US Special Operations Command. "This was an extreme situation" complicated by combat fatigue among US special operations forces, Votel said. He

said the ground force commander who authorized the AC-130 strike justified it on grounds of self-defense, but investigators determined that the attack was "a disproportional response to a threat that did not exist."

Investigators concluded that certain personnel failed to comply with the rules of engagement and the law of armed conflict, but Votel said those failures did not amount to a war crime. "The label 'war crimes' is typically reserved for intentional acts - intentional targeting (of) civilians or intentionally targeting protected objects or locations," Votel said. "Again, the investigation found that the incident resulted from a combination of unintentional human errors, process errors and equipment failures, and that none of the personnel knew they were striking a hospital."

Meinie Nicolai, president of Doctors Without Borders, also known by its French initials MSF, took issue with Votel's assertion.

"The threshold that must be crossed for this deadly incident to amount to a grave breach of international humanitarian law is not whether it was intentional or not," Nicolai said, noting that with various countries fighting in the region with different rules, "armed groups cannot escape their responsibilities on the battlefield simply by ruling out the intent to attack a protected structure such as a hospital." — AP



**KUNDUZ:** This undated file photo shows Afghan MSF medical personnel as they treat civilians injured following an airstrike at the MSF hospital in Kunduz. Survivors of a US air strike on a hospital in Afghanistan have called for those responsible to go on trial and dismissed an American military investigation that said the bombardment did not amount to a war crime. — AFP

# HINDU TAILOR HACKED TO DEATH IN BANGLADESH

ISLAMIC STATE CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY

**TANGAIL:** The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the murder of a Hindu tailor in central Bangladesh yesterday, according to a US-based monitoring group, amid a rise in attacks on religious minorities in the Muslim-majority nation. Police said Nikhil Chandra Joarder, who was hacked to death by at least two attackers outside his shop, may have been killed for making derogatory remarks about the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) several years ago.

"Elements from the Islamic State assassinated a Hindu in the city of Tangail in Bangladesh by stabbing him to death," the IS-affiliated Amaq news agency said, citing a source, according to SITE Intelligence Group. "He was known for blaspheming the Prophet Muhammad, (PBUH)" Amaq said in the Arabic message. Police officials told AFP they were investigating whether the killing was linked to Islamist militants or was tied to a family dispute.

"They came on a motorcycle and attacked him as he sat on a roadside. They hacked him on his head, neck and hand," deputy chief of Tangail district police Aslam Khan said. Bangladesh is reeling from a series of brutal attacks on members of minority faiths, secularists, foreigners and intellectuals in recent months, including two gay activists and a liberal professor in the past eight days alone. Many of the killings have been blamed on or claimed by Islamist groups and in several cases attackers riding motorbikes hacked the victims to death with machetes or cleavers.

However, the government denies that international Islamist groups such as IS or Al-Qaeda have a presence in the country, instead blaming homegrown militants for the killings. Local Muslims had in 2012 filed a complaint with police against Joarder, who owned a tailoring shop, for making derogatory comments about the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He was charged with hurting religious sentiments and spent three weeks in jail. "But the trial did not proceed after the complainants withdrew the charges," Abdul Jalil, the police chief of Gopalpur sub-district said. Another official said that the dispute appeared to have ended peacefully, adding that the victim's family said he was also being threatened by a relative.

### Arrests in Christian killing

Separately, police said yesterday they had arrested two members of a banned Islamist militant outfit, Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in the case of a Christian convert brutally hacked to death in March. "The JMB men are sus-



**DHAKA:** The Facebook page of Roopbaan magazine, a LGBT rights publication, is seen on the screen of a cell phone in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The killing of two gay rights activists in the Bangladesh capital has driven the country's already secretive and small gay community underground, wondering if they can trust a government that considers their status to be criminal, rights groups said. — AP

pects in the murder of Hossain Ali Sarker," Kurigram district police chief Tobarak Ullah said, adding that the arrests were made two days ago. IS group has in recent

months claimed responsibility for the killing of Christians, Hindu priests and members of the minority Sufi, Ahmadi and Shiite faiths in Bangladesh. — AFP

# THAILAND JAILS 9 ACTIVISTS CHARGED WITH SEDITION, COMPUTER CRIMES

**BANGKOK:** Nine activists who posted comments critical of Thailand's ruling junta and a military-backed draft constitution on Facebook have been jailed, police said yesterday, the latest opponents of the government penalized for airing dissent. The military seized power in May 2014, throwing out an old constitution, clamping down on dissent and promising an election by mid-2017. But a draft constitution drawn up under military supervision has drawn disapproval from both sides of the political divide, and the junta has responded by banning criticism of the charter in the run-up to an August referendum on it.

Eight activists were detained by the military on Wednesday over Facebook posts criticizing the draft and junta leader Prayuth Chan-ocha. They were charged with sedition, computer crimes and two of them face additional charges of breaking Thailand's royal defamation law, known as Article 112. "The court has approved the first phase of their jail term which will be 12 days," Winyat Chatmontree, a lawyer for the group, told Reuters on Friday. Under

the law, suspects can be detained for up to 12 days, extended seven times, before they are formally tried in court.

Demonstrations have been rare since the generals overthrew the government of former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in May 2014, but a small wave of opposition to the junta and the military-backed charter has arisen in recent weeks. The junta has appeared increasingly jittery ahead of the Aug. 7 referendum on the constitution, which the country's two biggest political parties have both criticized as undemocratic. Opponents say the charter would enshrine military power and would not heal political rivalry that has divided the country for more than a decade.

The military denies seeking indefinite power and says the proposed constitution would heal divisions and usher in stable, corruption-free politics. At the heart of Thailand's decade of tumultuous politics has been rivalry between populist political forces that have won huge support in the countryside and the Bangkok-based military-dominated establishment. — Reuters

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## AUSTRALIA TO BOOST ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING DRIVE

**SYDNEY:** Australia has proposed changes to simplify its anti money-laundering and terrorism financing laws, notably extending the regulations to include intermediaries and professions currently not required to report suspicious transactions. The 84 recommendations in a statutory review published on Friday include extending the current anti-money laundering rules to encompass accountants,

lawyers, real estate agents and dealers in high-value objects such as jewellery.

The global anti-money laundering body Financial Action Task Force (FATF) last year found significant gaps in Australia's AML framework, particularly in the regulation of professional service providers such as lawyers and accountants, who are not covered by existing rules. Friday's recommendations

would help bolster Australia's compliance and enforcement and allow it to simplify its anti-money laundering/counter terrorism financing (AML/CTF) regulations to minimize red tape and duplication.

The reforms will be progressed in two stages to prevent "regulatory fatigue," the Justice Minister Michael Keenan said in the report. Australian anti-money laundering

regulator AUSTRAC welcomed the recommendations. "Better reporting practices from industry means we produce better intelligence, which then helps national security, law enforcement agencies and our partners in Government to investigate and crack down on people doing the wrong thing," AUSTRAC CEO Paul Jevtovic said in a statement. — Reuters



**BEIJING:** China's Premier Li Keqiang (right) shows the way to Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida during a meeting at the Zhongnanhai leadership compound yesterday. — AP

## CHINA LAYS OUT FIRM CONDITIONS FOR IMPROVED TIES WITH JAPAN

### FOREIGN MINISTERS MEET TO SMOOTH TENSE TIES

**BEIJING:** China laid out firm conditions yesterday for improved ties with Japan, telling Tokyo's visiting foreign minister that there could be "no ambiguity or vacillation" in meeting Beijing's demands over historical interpretation, relations with Taiwan and other key matters. Beijing portrayed the visit by Fumio Kishida as an act of outreach to an angry China, as the two sides try to repair relations bedeviled by disputes over territory, history and competition for influence in East Asia.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Kishida that the ties must be based on "respect for history, adherence to commitment, and on cooperation rather than confrontation." Relations have gone through "twists and turns in recent years due to reasons best known by Japan," Wang said, adding that China desires "healthy and stable relations" with its neighbor and key economic partner. Japan needs to "turn its words into deeds," Wang said.

In an elaboration on Wang's comments, the

Foreign Ministry quoted him as saying that Japan must adhere to commitments laid down in previous agreements, "face up to and reflect upon the history and follow the one-China policy to the letter," the last part a reference to Beijing's insistence that self-governing Taiwan is Chinese territory. "No ambiguity or vacillation is allowed when it comes to this important political foundation of the bilateral ties," the ministry quoted Wang as saying. As part of what the ministry termed a "four-point requirement on improving bilateral ties," Wang also demanded that Japan "have a more positive and healthy attitude toward the growth of China, and stop spreading or echoing all kinds of China threat or China economic recession theories."

Kishida was making the first formal visit to China by a Japanese foreign minister in more than four years, part of an effort to revive a relationship that for years has been economically vital but politically dormant. High-level ties between the two countries have been

largely frozen since Japan nationalized a string of uninhabited East China Sea islands claimed by China in 2012, sparking deep anger among Chinese. Kishida's visit was the first formal one to China by a Japanese foreign minister in more than four years.

Despite their crucial economic relationship, many Chinese harbor deep animosity toward Japan dating from its brutal invasion and occupation of much of China during the 1930s and 1940s. Meanwhile, distrust toward Beijing runs deep among the Japanese public, who see their country's economic and political influence being overshadowed by a rising China. China is also deeply critical of Japan's alliance with the US and has warned Tokyo to keep out of a festering dispute over China's moves to cement its claim over virtually the entire South China Sea. Beijing has also lambasted moves by Japanese conservatives seen as whitewashing Japan's militaristic past and minimizing World War II atrocities committed in China and elsewhere. — AP

## CHINA DENIES HONG KONG VISIT REQUEST BY US CARRIER GROUP

**WASHINGTON:** China has denied a request for a US carrier strike group led by the USS John C Stennis to visit to Hong Kong, the US Defense Department said on Friday, amid heightened tensions over China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. A Pentagon spokesman, Commander Bill Urban, said a US warship, the USS Blue Ridge, was currently in Hong Kong on a port visit and the United States expected that to continue. Urban said the request for the Hong Kong visit by the carrier and its accompanying vessels, which have been patrolling the South China Sea, was recently denied, despite a "long track record of successful port visits to Hong Kong."

A US Navy official, who did not want to be identified, said the Chinese Foreign Ministry's commissioner in Hong Kong conveyed Beijing's denial of visit, saying it was "not convenient" at this time. China's Foreign Ministry, in a statement sent to Reuters yesterday, did not directly provide a reason for the denial. "On the visits of US military ships and aircraft to Hong Kong, China has always approved them on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the principle of sovereignty and the specific situation," it said, without elaborating.

The nuclear-powered Stennis has been conducting patrols in the South China Sea, which China claims most of and where Beijing has sparked US and regional concerns by building artificial islands to bolster its claims. US Defense Secretary Ash Carter visited the Stennis while it transited the South China Sea on April 15 to underscore US concerns about the need to maintain

freedom of navigation in the face of Chinese moves. A wide range of US military vessels and aircraft have long routinely stopped in Hong Kong, a reflection of the "one country, two systems" formula under which Britain handed the global financial hub back to China in 1997.

The visits occasionally have been suspended in periods of heightened tensions, such as after a mid-air collision between a US EP-3 surveillance plane and a Chinese plane off China's Hainan island in 2001. The USS Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier also was denied permission to enter Hong Kong over Thanksgiving in 2007 but was cleared to visit five months later. The Navy official said a visit by the USS Halsey also was denied in 2014. The United States has stressed the importance of good relations with China's military to avoid misunderstandings and Chinese military officers are invited routinely aboard US ships during port visits, and are sometimes flown out to land on US carriers at sea.

While aboard the Stennis, Carter dismissed China's characterization of a more robust US military presence in the region as being the cause of heightened tensions. Washington has in turn accused China of militarizing its outposts in the South China Sea by building airstrips and other facilities. Carter made a similar stop at the USS Theodore Roosevelt in November as it transited the South China Sea near Malaysia. The Stennis has been on a routine deployment in the Western Pacific for more than three months, the carrier strike group's commander, Rear Admiral Ronald Boxall, said earlier this month. — Reuters



**AT SEA:** This file handout picture from US Navy shows the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS John C Stennis as it conducts operations in the Gulf. China has denied the US aircraft carrier USS Stennis and accompanying naval vessels permission to make a port call in Hong Kong, a Pentagon spokesman said on April 29, 2016. — AFP



**PHNOM PENH:** Cambodian passengers board a train at the Phnom Penh train station as the railway service resumed after years of suspension. — AFP

## CAMBODIAN PASSENGER TRAIN BACK ON TRACK AFTER YEARS-LONG HIATUS

**PHNOM PENH:** Cambodia's sole passenger train resumed a regular weekend service yesterday after being suspended for years, with Prime Minister Hun Sen climbing aboard to inaugurate the first trip. "Today is a very important day for the railway," John Guiry, Royal Railway Cambodia's CEO said before the train rolled out of the capital Phnom Penh for Sihanoukville, a southwestern seaport. The Southeast Asian country has more than 600 kilometers of track extending from its northern border with Thailand down to the southern coast, but decades of war and neglect have left vast stretches of the network damaged.

"The train and railway were almost totally destroyed by war more than 40

years ago," Hun Sen wrote on Facebook a forum the strongman has embraced with gusto in recent months. "Because our country is now at peace, we have the opportunity to rebuild our transport infrastructure," he added. The premier, who has been in power for more than three decades, also published several dozen photos of himself greeting local passengers and chatting to orange-robed monks in the packed train cars. The nearly 270-kilometre route, which passes through farmland and follows part of the country's scenic coast, was reopened to passenger cars for a trial period during the Khmer new year holiday earlier this month. Trains will now run once a day in either direction from Friday through Sunday. — AFP

## JAPAN WANTS FOREIGN TOURISTS TO AVOID 'PUBLIC FLATULENCE'

**TOKYO:** A Japanese tourism board has called on foreign tourists to refrain from public "belching or flatulence" in an etiquette guide which was hastily rewritten, reportedly after complaints from a Chinese resident. The Hokkaido Tourism Organization, which represents Japan's northern-most island, published a downloadable brochure on its website, with polite instructions on everything from public bathing to using a Japanese toilet. Helpfully, it even dedicated an entire section to protocol for avoiding bodily functions. "Japanese etiquette is based on avoiding causing discomfort or nuisance to others," the guide points out. "Accordingly, Japanese will avoid bodily functions such as belching or flatulence in public entirely, or perform bodily functions as discreetly as possible."

However, the Chinese-language guide—originally entitled "Common Sense When Travelling in Hokkaido"—upset a Chinese resident who angrily claimed the diagrams featuring examples of bad tourist behavior were offensive. Japan's Kyodo news agency reported. The complaint prompted a new, foreigner-friendly version with softer explanations of Japanese customs. In the updated guide available in Chinese and English, gone are the large "X"-marks next to cartoon illustrations of tourists committing, from a Japanese perspective, embarrassing gaffes, such as putting used toilet paper into the waste bin—the general custom in China—instead of flushing it away.

According to The Japan Times newspaper, the original booklet was first published last August and

was targeted at Chinese tourists, including a reminder not to open products before buying them when shopping, a habit also seen in China. China has said it will monitor the behavior of unruly tourists abroad and punish them on their return home after being shamed by a string of well-publicized incidents in recent years. Research by the Bank of America Merrill Lynch found that more than 100 million

Chinese tourists went abroad in 2014, spending some \$164 billion.

But reports of disruptive behavior have tarnished their reputation, such as passengers scalding a flight attendant with hot water and noodles or a holidaymaker fined in Thailand for washing her feet in the wash basin of a public toilet. Media in Japan have carried a spate of reports of alleged uncouth behavior by Chinese visitors,

though some local commentators have urged understanding, recalling that the emergence five decades ago of Japanese tourists as a force in global travel was often met with complaints about their behavior. Around 85,000 copies of the Hokkaido tourist brochure have reportedly been printed in Chinese and English, to be distributed to hotels and tourist attractions across the island. — AFP



**YOKOHAMA:** A man rests under an advisory 'Watch out black kite' during the annual holidays known as 'Golden Week' at Marine Park in Yokohama near Tokyo yesterday. Hundreds of people enjoyed clamming on this one-kilometer long beach when tide was low. — AP



A mural 'Todos somos migrantes' (We are all migrants) shows a portrait of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump (left) in the Galerías Otay neighborhood of Tijuana in northwestern Mexico. — AFP

POP GOES THE WEASEL AS COLLIDER SHUTS DOWN

Continued from Page 1

He said it remained unclear when the experiments could resume, but added that it clearly would "take more time before we can get started."

The weasel was not the first animal to wreak havoc at the LHC. In 2009, a peckish bird briefly knocked out part of the particle collider when it dropped a baguette on an external electrical power supply and triggered a chain reaction that shut down part of the LHC's cooling system. But that time the system was restored within several hours.

After the Higgs discovery, the LHC underwent a two-year upgrade, reopening last year with double energy levels and a vastly expanded the potential for groundbreaking discoveries. The lab allows beams containing billions of protons to shoot through the massive collider in opposite

directions. Powerful magnets bend the beams so that they collide at points around the track where four laboratories have batteries of sensors to monitor the smashups.

The sub-atomic rubble is then scrutinized for novel particles and the forces that hold them together. Late last year, before the technical shutdown and after running for more than six months at double energy levels, scientists said they had discovered anomalies that could possibly hint at the existence of mysterious new particle. Some have theorized it could be a larger cousin of the Higgs boson, or that it could imply the existence of extra space-time dimensions. "We might have the first hint of something unexpected," CERN physicist Paris Sphicas told AFP this week, stressing the importance of rebooting the LHC experiments. "The only way to tell if this thing is real or just a statistical fluctuation, a fluke, ... (is with) much more data," he said. — AFP

KENYA TORCHES WORLD'S ABIGGEST IVORY...

Continued from Page 1

in destroying ivory and rhino horn, saying it was "shameful" to keep stocks in case of possible future sale. "They are speculators on an evil, illegal commodity," Leakey said.

The ivory seized from poachers and smugglers over several years - as well as from animals who died naturally - is equivalent to just a quarter of the number of elephants killed each year to feed demand in growing economies in Asia, eager for an elephant's tooth as a status symbol. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) banned the ivory trade in 1989. Activists say destroying the stocks will put anti-trafficking efforts at the top of the agenda at the next CITES conference.

China, which has tightened its laws on ivory imports, allows the resale of ivory bought before the 1989 ban, but activists say the trade in legal ivory acts as a cover for illegal imports and call for a complete ban on sales. But Kenyan media, which have covered multiple ivory burns ever since the first large pyre was torched in 1989, as well as the killing of elephants that continued unabated once the publicity event was over, appeared far more cynical.

All three main newspapers ran cartoons questioning the long term impact and motivation, pointing to the government's accountability in allowing the animals to be killed in the first place, and warning that without tackling corruption, poaching would continue. The Standard newspaper's cartoon showed one image of the pyre on fire today, and another tomorrow with vultures marked corruption, greed and incompetence feasting on a freshly killed elephant. — AFP

STUDY CALLS FOR DEPORTING TERMINATED...

Continued from Page 1

The same report points out that nearly 58 percent of unemployed Kuwaitis refuse to work in the private sector, preferring to wait until a public sector job becomes available.

This situation, coupled with the government's inability to encourage more citizens to work within the private sector, continues to cast a shadow on the government's ability to go ahead with its planned demographic structural strategies, through which Kuwait looks to cut down the expatriate population from 69 percent of the total population today to not more than 50 percent in the future. The sources said that the SCPD will discuss the recent study and the possibility of integrating it as an "essential part in

its policies to correct Kuwait's demographic imbalance". This comes amid reports saying that local authorities have a 'plan in place' to solve a problem pertaining with nearly 53,000 domestic workers reported absconding. According to the plan, Maj Gen Mazen Al-Jarrah, the Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Citizenship and Passports Affairs, will form a security team to carry out crackdowns on places suspected of harboring runaway maids, Al-Anbaa daily reported yesterday, quoting sources who added that 'new laws to fight this problem' are expected to be announced soon. The same newspaper reported last week that authorities have stepped up deportations of expatriate workers this year, saying that police deported 14,400 expats in the first four months of the year, compared to 26,600 in the whole of 2015.

YEMEN FOES HOLD DIRECT TALKS, PRISONERS...

Continued from Page 1

Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who seized swathes of territory including the capital Sanaa. Key issues include the withdrawal of armed groups, a handover of heavy weapons, the resumption of a political transition and the release of prisoners. The government delegation said their proposal is based on implementing Resolution 2216, which states that the rebels must withdraw from seized territories and disarm before talks can progress.

The rebel delegation representing the Iran-backed Houthis and forces loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh said that their proposals include "form-

ing a consensus authority that would oversee (political) transition". The rebel proposals also call for the lifting of the blockade imposed by the Saudi-led military coalition on Yemen.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed said although there has been an improvement in firming up the ceasefire that went into effect on April 11, some "grave violations" remain, especially in the besieged city of Taez. The UN envoy also said that the Saudi-led Arab coalition has stopped air sorties in the past four to five days. The UN Security Council on Monday stressed the importance of agreeing on a "roadmap" to implement security measures including the withdrawal of heavy weapons from Yemeni towns. — Agencies

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## Focus

LEICESTER CITY,  
5,000-1 LONGSHOTS,  
CLOSE IN ON TITLE

By Gregory Katz

**B**ettors looking for a wager with a fancifully high payoff last fall could have gone into their local betting shop in England and risked a bit of cash on the proposition that Elvis Presley would be found alive and well. Or they could have placed their money on a true longshot: The laughable idea that the lowly Leicester City soccer club would somehow surge to the top of the world-class English Premier League. Elvis surfacing in good health was a 2,000-1 shot; the Foxes taking the top spot was rated even more unlikely, at 5,000-1 to one odds.

The King of Rock and Roll is still buried on the grounds of his beloved Graceland, but the Foxes are on the verge of one of the greatest upsets in the history of modern sports, and the impact of their astonishing run on Britain's betting industry is already being felt as the team closes in on the top spot, which they can clinch as early as Sunday with a victory of past powerhouse Manchester United.

Joe Crilly, spokesman for the William Hill betting chain, said the company will no longer casually offer such high odds in the face of an expected £10 million (\$14.6 million) industry-loss that will be suffered this weekend or next if, as expected, the Foxes finish in first place. "It's a big loss but it's not going to bankrupt us thankfully," he said. "There will still be 5,000 to one shots from time to time, but we will certainly be a lot more careful if offering that price. Our company alone will be paying out 3 million pounds on Leicester City."

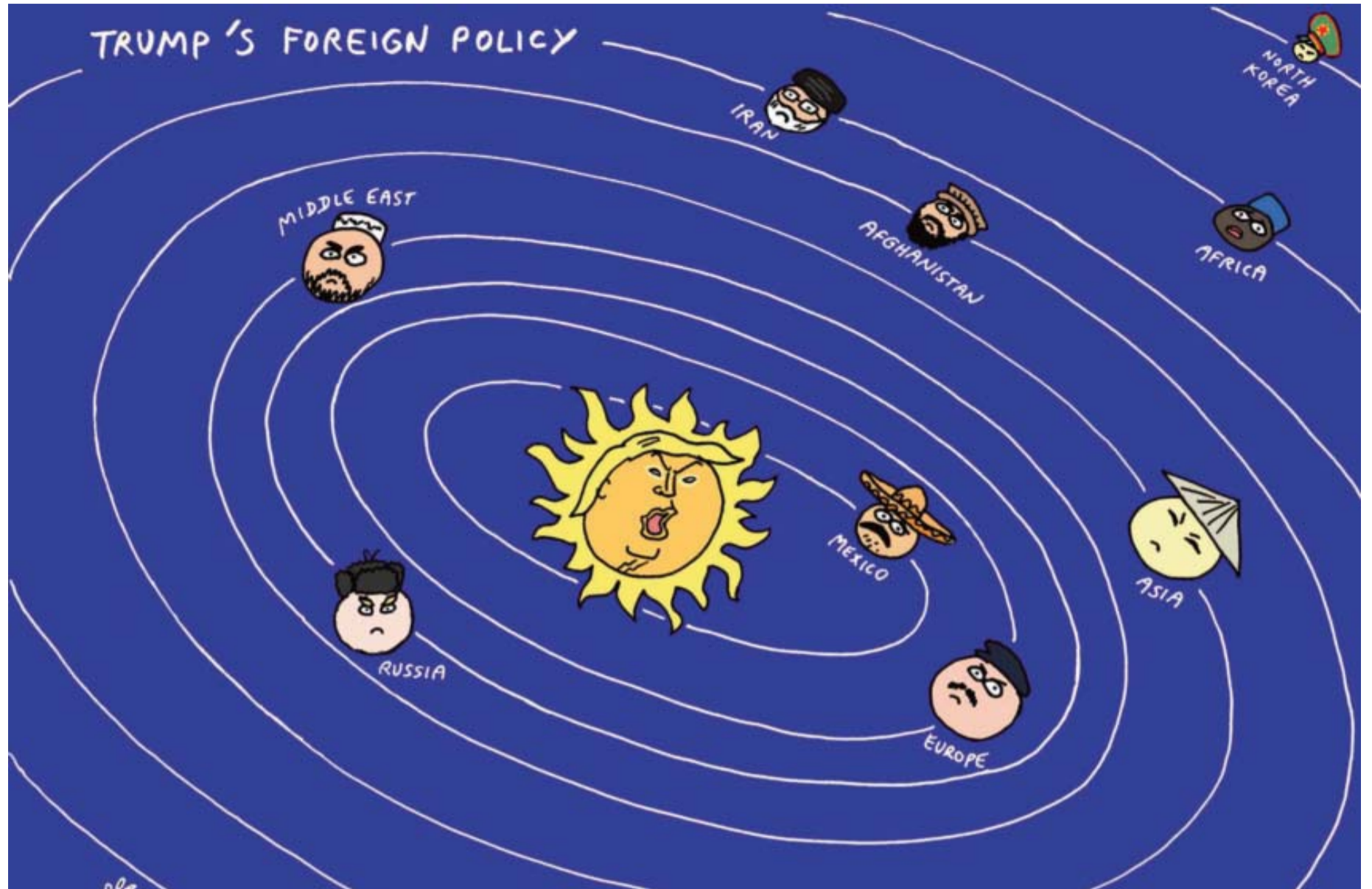
That loss will be slightly offset by profits made on bets on other English Premier League clubs, including perennial powerhouses like Manchester United and Chelsea that have fallen on hard times. But still, the reality of paying £100,000 each to the handful of people thought to have placed £20 on the Foxes is galling to the firm's bean counters, said Crilly. "Doom? Maybe not," he said. "But certainly a few people feel sick about it."

The Paddy Power chain said it faces its biggest Premier League payout ever. "In hindsight we were idiots offering odds of 5,000-1," the company said in a statement. In contrast, a bet that President Barack Obama would admit the moon landings had been faked was seen by the company as 10 times more likely. Betting firms say some people are holding £20 bets on Leicester City, with reports that some may have £50 tickets that would pay £250,000. Academy Award winning actor Tom Hanks last week said he had put £100 on the Foxes (the payoff would be half-a-million pounds) but industry professionals think he was joking. No one reports hearing of a bet that large.

One person kicking himself this weekend is longtime Leicester City fan John Micklethwait, the editor-in-chief of Bloomberg News, who for nearly 20 years dutifully placed a £20 bet on the Foxes to finish atop the league. Having moved from London to New York, he skipped the wager this year, missing out on what is expected to be the ultimate payoff. In a recent column, he pointed out that betting companies placed the chances of Leicester City winning the league as equal to the chances of U2 front man Bono becoming pope.

Carpenter Leigh Herbert has been more fortunate in his betting choices. He placed a £5 bet on Leicester City before the season began and has already collected part of the dough (about 5,680 pounds) when companies started trying to cut their losses by offering partial payouts and he cashed in £2 of his wager. He stands to collect the full amount (£15,000) on the final £3 of his bet. "I'm a fan, I wanted Leicester to win the league but I didn't in my wildest dreams think they would," he said. "It's been a roller-coaster. Now I'm excited, totally excited." —AP

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## Washington Watch

## FROM CAIRO TO GOLDBERG

By Dr James J Zogby

**E**arlier this month "The Atlantic" magazine featured a cover story, "The Obama Doctrine," written by Jeffrey Goldberg. Based on the author's many hours of interviews with President Obama, it represents an attempt to find a coherent framework with which to understand the President's overall foreign policy. It was both disappointing and damaging. It was disappointing in that it presents a portrait of a President who appears to have given up trying to deliver on the promise of his 2009 Cairo speech. He has resigned himself to an "unfixable" Middle East and "thrown in the towel," blaming the Arabs for this failure.

At the same time, the article is damaging in that the President is quoted saying things that are deeply insulting to Arabs, causing hurt that will be lasting. The Obama who emerges from the article appears condescending and dismissive. I understand that there is much in the piece that is Goldberg and not Obama, but there are still enough direct quotes, which the President does not deny, that are deeply troubling. One, in particular, stands out for its anti-Arab animus:

"Contrast (the Middle East) with Southeast Asia, which still has huge problems...but is filled with striving, ambitious, energetic people...the contrast is stark. They are not thinking about how to kill Americans. What they're thinking about is 'how do I get a better education? How do I create something of value?'"

Not only does the quote ignore the recent bloody history of and current repression practiced by several countries in Southeast Asia, it also slights the dynamic entrepreneurial spirit that is driving economic growth and social change across the Arab World, particularly in the Arab Gulf countries. The comments sounded more like something Donald Trump might have said, not Barack Obama.

Admittedly, this President began his term in office facing a greater set of challenges than any of his immediate

predecessors. The country faced the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression. Not only that, but after two failed wars and the Bush Administration's disastrous handling of Hurricane Katrina, Americans were facing a crisis in confidence. Similarly, American prestige around the world had plummeted to all-time lows, in particular, in the critical region of the Middle East. And to make matters worse, politics in Washington had become increasingly toxic, with Republicans determined to defeat the President's every effort to address the country's economic and foreign policy crises.

## Hope

Facing down these overwhelming challenges, the new President projected hope and optimism. Working with the Democratic leadership in Congress he moved a series of measures designed to rescue critical industries, stabilize financial institutions, stimulate the economy, expand health care coverage, and create new employment opportunities.

In an effort to address the grave challenges America faced in the Middle East, the President took a number of constructive steps and then traveled to Cairo where he delivered an historic address promising "a new beginning" in the US-Arab relationship. It was a remarkable speech that: admitted shared responsibility, called for mutual understanding, presented a constructive agenda for change, and closed with the President acknowledging that because "no single speech can eradicate years of mistrust" it was imperative that bold action be taken quickly to address the issues that divide our two worlds.

The Arab world responded positively, hoping the new President would deliver. His opponents at home, on the other hand, immediately attacked him, pledging to derail his efforts to change course on Iraq, Guantanamo, Israel/Palestine, and improving ties with Muslim countries - and they did.

Seven years later, the promise of that Cairo speech

remains unfulfilled. And expectations have been dashed to the ground. The reasons for the failure are many - some, though not all, of which can be planted at the feet of the weaknesses in the Arab world. There were others. Israeli intransigence blocked any reasonable effort to move toward peace. The Palestinian leadership, so weakened, deformed, and discredited by the US and Israel's mishandling of the so-called "peace process", was unable to play the role they were unfairly asked to assume.

The Arab Spring created new uncertainty and instability in the region. The US military, eviscerated by the disastrously long and demoralizing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, was reeling in exhaustion. And poisonous partisan domestic politics made it difficult for the President to find the support he needed to deliver on promised change.

## Blame

All of this is lost in Goldberg's "Obama Doctrine". Rewriting history, the Cairo speech is presented as an effort "to persuade Muslims to more closely examine the roots of their unhappiness". Those were Goldberg's words, but they were followed by this Obama quote: "My argument [in Cairo] was this: Let's all stop pretending that the cause of the Middle East's problems is Israel". True enough, but if the US couldn't live up to its responsibility in this "new beginning", it is surely unbecoming to place the blame solely at the Arab's doorstep.

The President still has almost nine months to correct and act to deliver on the expectations he created. He can take bold initiatives: support a nuclear free zone in the Middle East; recognize Palestinian sovereignty and statehood; and take steps to rein in Iran and create a regional security framework. I hope he does take steps like these because it would be sad if the epitaph describing the trajectory of his Administration's Middle East policy were to end up being "From Cairo to Goldberg".

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

## CUBA'S BUSINESSWOMEN LEARN ON THE FLY

By Carola Sole

**G**retel de la Rosa, a budding Cuban businesswoman, had been in Mexico City for just a few hours, but she already had stuffed three bags with fabric for her shop back home. While Cuba's communist regime has implemented modest economic reforms, allowing some private ventures, running a business on the island remains a challenge for trailblazers like de la Rosa. Her trip to Mexico's capital - a beehive of capitalism - with five other Cuban businesswomen was a chance not only to get goods they can't find at home, but also to learn from others with private sector experience.

As they sat at a bar in a hotel near the city's busy Reforma boulevard, the women said they have already learned much from their trips to places such as Chile, Bolivia and Cuba's former Cold War nemesis, the United States. "Since this sector is so new, we need a lot of information on issues that are very common for the rest of the world, such as business vision, marketing," said 33-year-old Yamina Vicente, who organizes parties and events through her business, named "Decorazon." "I have learned a lot. My business is different now than before I traveled," she said.

## 'Dreams and Wishes'

The six women came to Mexico City to participate in the Women's Forum on Wednesday and Thursday, an international gathering of women, but also men, from politics, business and civil society to discuss social and economic issues. They came with an arsenal of business cards with phone numbers, email addresses and even Facebook pages or business websites. While they use the Internet, web access is very expensive and hard to come by in Cuba, where it is tightly controlled by the state.

Only 3.4 percent of households have Internet access, but the government is opening public Wi-Fi hotspots and President Raul Castro has promised access to all Cubans by 2020. "Our dreams and wishes include being able to export and through the Internet you can not only buy but also sell," said Caridad Luisa Limonta, who owns a workshop of seamstresses in Havana. "If Cuba is opening up to the world, one of its potentials is to be able to export," she said.

## Gradual Changes

In the meantime, like many Cubans who can afford to travel, they take advantage of their trips to shop for the things they can't find in Cuba. De la Rosa bought fabric for her children's decoration store, but it was a "limited" quan-

tity to avoid problems with customs in Havana. It's nothing compared to the stuff that Nidialys Acosta buys and brings on planes. "For example, I've had car bumpers and fenders in my luggage," said Acosta, who since 2011 has run a business that repairs the famous classic American cars from the 1950s that are part of Cuba's street landscape and which are used as taxis for tourists. Most of the six women used to work for the government but they entered the nascent private sector that Castro allowed after he succeeded his brother, Fidel, in 2008. This has helped them earn more

money in a country where the average monthly salary is \$24. Only 10 percent of the island's labor force, or nearly half a million people, is in the private sector. While the US-Cuba diplomatic thaw has raised hopes of change on the island and a potential end to the US trade embargo, the Communist Party Congress earlier in April suggested that Havana's opening to the world would remain slow. "I think that there were a lot of expectations of sudden, quick changes, but I think the changes that are coming will be very gradual," Vicente said. — AFP



MEXICO CITY: (Left to right, top) Cuban businesswomen Gretel de la Rosa, Sandra Lidice Aldama and Nidialys Acosta, and (front) Caridad Luisa Montana, Yamina Vicente Prado and Marianela Perez Benitez, pose at the Women's Forum in Mexico City on April 27, 2016. —AFP

## DING DOWNS MCMANUS TO REACH FIRST WORLD FINAL

**LONDON:** China's Ding Junhui was just one match away from becoming Asia's first world snooker champion after seeing off Alan McManus 17-11 in a semi-final win yesterday. The 29-year-old Ding reached his first World Championship final in record style, with a break of 123 completing a decisive victory over experienced Scottish cueman McManus at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre in northern England. Ding's seventh century break of the semi-final saw him surpass the previous record of most centuries in a Crucible match (six) held jointly by Mark Selby and Ronnie O'Sullivan. His heavy scoring against McManus also included century breaks of 100, 131, 100, 128, 138 and 113, which all came amid contributions of 84, 62, 90, 97, 80 and 60. In the modern history of the World Championship, the only two winners from beyond Britain and Ireland are Canada's Cliff Thorburn (1980) and Australia's Neil Robertson (2010). Snooker, thanks in large part to Ding's efforts, has become increasingly popular in China and there has long been a belief within the game that an Asian world champion will bolster efforts to increase snooker's global appeal beyond its traditional heartlands.—AFP

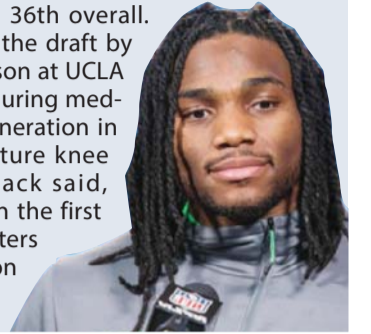


## PREMIER LEAGUE FANS MARK HILLSBOROUGH VERDICTS

**LONDON:** Premier League supporters hailed Hillsborough campaigners yesterday after new inquests into the 1989 stadium disaster found police responsible for the deaths of 96 Liverpool fans. At Goodison Park, home of Liverpool's local rivals Everton, campaigners including Margaret Aspinall, chair of the Hillsborough Family Support Group, were applauded on the pitch prior to a game against Bournemouth. During a minute's applause, fans unfurled a banner reading "JUSTICE AT LAST 96 BROTHERS IN ARMS". Aspinall, whose 18-year-old son, James, died in the disaster, shared a touchline embrace with Everton manager Roberto Martinez as she left the pitch. At St James' Park, Newcastle United supporters spontaneously broke out into a rendition of 'You'll Never Walk Alone', the Liverpool anthem, during a minute's applause ahead of their side's game with Crystal Palace. There will also be a minute's applause before Liverpool's game at Swansea City today, which will be the Anfield club's first domestic fixture since the verdicts were announced.—AFP

## SMITH, JACK DRAFTED DESPITE KNEE ISSUES

**LOS ANGELES:** The NFL dream was still alive on Friday for linebackers Jaylon Smith and Myles Jack, who were selected on the second day of the draft despite concerns over knee injuries that disrupted their college football careers. Smith was drafted by the Dallas Cowboys with the 34th overall selection, a higher spot than many expected because of the major knee injury he suffered playing for Notre Dame in the Fiesta Bowl on January 1. University of California at Los Angeles linebacker Myles Jack's agonizing wait ended when the Jacksonville Jaguars added to their offseason overhaul on defense by drafting 36th overall. Jack, ranked one of the five best players in the draft by NFLDraftScout.com, missed most of last season at UCLA after undergoing knee surgery. He learned during medical evaluations with NFL doctors that degeneration in the joint could mean he'd need microfracture knee surgery. "I would understand if I fell," Jack said, although he was so dejected at not going in the first round that he had departed draft headquarters in Chicago before the second round began on Friday.—AFP



AVONDALE: Jason Day of Australia tees off on the third hole during the second round of the Zurich Classic of New Orleans at TPC Louisiana on Friday in Avondale, Louisiana. — AFP



James DeGale

## CHAMPS JACK, DEGALE EAGER FOR UNIFICATION SHOWDOWN

**WASHINGTON:** James DeGale and Badou Jack will be aiming to stay on course for a super middleweight world championship showdown yesterday when they put their respective titles on the line in Washington.

Sweden's Jack defends his World Boxing Council belt against former world champion Lucian Bute of Canada while Britain's International Boxing Federation title holder DeGale takes on Mexico's Rogelio Medina.

"Anything can happen, but I want to fight James DeGale," said Jack, who brings a record of 20-1 with 12 knockouts to the fight against Bute. "Both of us are in our primes. We're young and confident, and it would be a great fight."

"But first, I have to take care of this former champion. He's a really good fighter. Some people say it's a 50-50 fight, so I have to take this very seriously. Both of us can punch. Both of us can box. Anything can happen inside of that ring." Bute, 32-3 with 25 knockouts, could be looking at a last world title shot. The 36-year-old lost to DeGale in November. Bute says that defeat re-

energized him, and he's prepared to take down Badou.

"Badou is a world champion, but he has nothing special," Bute said. "He does everything good, but not exceptionally. I have more experience, more speed."

DeGale, a former Olympic gold medalist making his second defence of the IBF title he claimed with a unanimous decision over Andre Dirrell in 2015, says Medina is just another step on his road toward total domination of the division.

"I've seen his record and I know he is a tough nut," DeGale said of Medina, who is 36-6 with 30 knockouts. "He's a Mexican, so he will come to fight as well. I don't think he will stand there and wait to be beaten. He will trade with me, and that's what I want. 'I'm just too good, too fast and too strong,' the Briton added. "It might take until the middle rounds, but I'll stop Medina." And then, DeGale said, he wants a unification bout in front of his home fans. "Best of luck to Badou Jack and Lucian Bute," DeGale said. "But I am coming for the winner. I want to unify the division." — AFP

## PERFECT PILLER PILES ON BIRDIES FOR TEXAS LEAD

**TEXAS:** American Gerina Piller continued her sizzling recent form with a ball-striking clinic, hitting every green in regulation on her way to the second-round clubhouse lead at the Texas Shootout in Irving on Friday. She rolled in several medium-length putts before completing her day in style with a tap-in birdie at the last for a bogey-free six-under-par 65 at Las Colinas Country Club. On a day when half the field did not complete the round due to fierce afternoon thunderstorms, Piller posted a 10-under 132 halfway total, one stroke ahead of South Korean Ji Eun-hee (66). Fellow South Korean Hur Mi-jung was alone in third place on eight-under after 12 holes when play was halted for the day. The second round is scheduled to resume early Saturday, with the third round set to begin late morning. Piller, who lives in nearby Fort Worth, is enjoying sleeping in her own bed this week, albeit without her husband, PGA Tour player Martin Piller, who is competing in New Orleans. "I love sleeping in my bed, our bed," said the 31-year-old, who is coming off top-six finishes in her past three LPGA events.

Though ranked 12th on the LPGA money list and 20th in the Rolex world rankings, Piller has not won an LPGA event, but believes she is getting closer.

"I've been making lots of birdies. It just seems like everything's coming together," she continued. "I've been really working on confidence and believing in myself." If Piller maintains her lead, she will be oldest winner of an LPGA event this year by nearly eight years, but there is a long way to go.

"I've been hitting it really good off the tee and my irons have been pretty spot on. Just got to get the putts to drop." Piller had a significantly better day than South Korean veteran Pak Se-ri, who withdrew after burning her leg with hot tea.

Pak, a 25-times LPGA winner, inspired a boom in the women's game in her homeland when she won the 1998 US Women's Open. The 38-year-old has said that this will be her final season on tour. — Reuters



TEXAS: Gerina Piller watches her fairway shot on the 10th hole during the second round of the LPGA Tour's Volunteers of America Texas Shootout golf tournament, Friday, in Irving, Texas. — AP

## INDIA TO RESUME WEST INDIES TIES WITH TEST SERIES

**NEW DELHI:** India's cricket board yesterday announced the resumption of bilateral cricketing ties with the West Indies, saying its team will travel to the Caribbean for a Test series later this year.

"The BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) and the WICB (West Indies Cricket Board) have resolved outstanding issues arising out of the abandonment of the tour of the West Indies team to India in 2014," the BCCI said in a

statement released to the media.

"With this understanding, bilateral series as part of the Future Tours Programme will be resumed with the Indian cricket team touring the West Indies in July-August, 2016 for a four match test series," it added.

Earlier this month India's board dropped a \$42 million damages claim against the West Indies over the abandoned 2014 tour after the team agreed

to return to play in India next year.

The huge damages claim lodged by the BCCI had threatened to cripple the cash-strapped West Indies, which has been at loggerheads with its own players. "BCCI is happy to resume their bilateral ties with the WICB," Anurag Thakur, BCCI's Honorary Secretary, said in the statement. The West Indies players flew home from India in October 2014 when a long-running pay dispute came to a

head in the middle of the tour.

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

Bravo was subsequently sacked as skipper and has since been an outspoken critic of the West Indies board. After captaining the West Indies to victory in

the final of the World Twenty20 in Kolkata earlier this month, Darren Sammy took a swipe at the governing body over what he said was a lack of support for the players.

The board slapped Sammy down but also announced plans for talks with senior players, many of whom have not played Test cricket since 2014, turning out instead in lucrative domestic T20 tournaments. — AFP

## MURRAY INSISTS DJOKOVIC CAN BE BEATEN IN MADRID

**MADRID:** World number one Novak Djokovic returns to the Madrid Masters for the first time in three years, aiming to forget his blip at the Monte Carlo Masters with a strong challenge expected from a resurgent Rafael Nadal.

Djokovic was stunned in his opening match in Monte Carlo by the unheralded Czech Jiri Vesely, to lose for the first time in 2016 other than when he was forced to retire with an eye infection against Feliciano Lopez in Dubai back in February.

The Serb's absence cleared the way for Nadal to land his first Masters title in nearly two years and the Spaniard extended his perfect start to the European clay-court season by claiming a ninth Barcelona Open last week to equal Guillermo Vilas's record of 49 clay-court titles. Nadal will be eager to claim his 50th on home soil having reached the final in Madrid in six of the past seven years, although he was comprehensively beaten by Andy Murray as the Briton claimed his first Masters title on clay in last year's final.

Murray has had an inconsistent season as he has dealt with the extra burden of becoming a father for the first time in February. Yet, despite Djokovic's dominance over the past year, Murray believes

the 11-time Grand Slam champion can be stopped in the tournament that starts on Sunday.

"Everyone and anyone can be beaten, but at the moment Novak's consistency is making him just that little bit harder to beat," said Murray. "He has incredibly consistent ground strokes, so he likes to draw the points out. I think more and more guys are trying to make the points against him shorter, they'll move into the net a bit earlier and put him under pressure. "However he has the ability to make shots from everywhere so it doesn't always work.

"It's good to have multiple game plans against him, if one isn't working you can switch to something different, it's important to keep him guessing and make him as uncomfortable as possible."

Djokovic, Nadal and Murray will be joined by Roger Federer in the Spanish capital. The 17-time Grand Slam champion had initially planned to skip Madrid to reserve his energy for the three remaining Grand Slams and Rio Olympics later in the year.

However, the Swiss's plans have changed having missed nearly three months of the season due to knee surgery, including the Masters series events in Indian Wells and Miami. —AFP



**SAN JOSE:** Roman Josi #59 and Pekka Rinne #35 of the Nashville Predators stop Joe Pavelski #8 of the San Jose Sharks from scoring in Game One of the Western Conference Second Round during the 2016 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at SAP Center on Friday in San Jose, California. — AFP

## JOEL WARD LEADS SHARKS PAST PREDATORS 5-2

**SAN JOSE:** Since early in his career in Nashville, the playoffs have brought out the best in Joel Ward. So it shouldn't have come as any surprise to the Predators that Ward delivered in the third period in his first post-season game against his former team.

Ward set up the tying goal and then put San Jose in the lead for good with a tiebreaker with 8:11 remaining in regulation to help the Sharks rally past the Predators 5-2 on Friday night in Game 1 of their second-round series.

"I just try to embrace the moment," Ward said. "I think it's just the atmosphere of the crowds whether it's home or away. It's fun. Everyone is ramped up." Ward set up Tomas Hertl's power-play goal that tied the game earlier in the period before scoring one of his own to help San Jose win its first playoff game when trailing after two periods since 2011.

Logan Couture added a power-play goal and an empty-netter for insurance, before Tommy Wingels sealed it with another empty-net goal as the Sharks found their game after having six days off since beating Los Angeles in a five-game series in the first round. Martin Jones made 29 saves. "The first 40 minutes we were spinning our wheels a little bit," coach Peter DeBoer said. "We weren't playing as fast as we would have liked to have played. Some credit to them for bottling things up. I thought we went out in the third and started to play the way we wanted to play." Mike Fisher and Ryan Johansen scored for the Predators, who allowed five goals in the third period after having only one day off since winning Game 7 of a first-round series in Anaheim.

Pekka Rinne made 33 saves but got little help in the third when two Nashville penalties led to a pair of power-play goals for San Jose. "I think we just shot ourselves in the foot tonight by turning over the puck so much tonight," Johansen said. "We took a couple of penalties and they fed right into that."

### FIRST APPEARANCE

Ward has long played his best hockey in the postseason, most notably when he scored seven goals in 12 games in 2011 to help lead Nashville to its first appearance ever in the second round. He proved he could do it just as well against the Predators. He started the comeback by setting up Hertl near the side of the net late in a power play early in the third. Hertl then fired a shot just under Rinne's glove on the short side.

Ward then scored his 15th career playoff goal when he was left all alone after taking a pass from Joonas Donskoi. He stickhandled past Rinne before tucking the puck into the net.

"He's stopped a lot of my shots," Ward said of his former teammate. "It is a little bit frustrating once in a while when you're shooting against him but I was just happy to get one by him."

Couture's first goal on the power play gave San Jose breathing room it needed when Johansen scored with 1:49 left and Rinne off for an extra skater. But Couture and Wingels answered with the empty-netters to clinch the win. "As the game went on we got better, and we could feel them on their heels a little bit," captain

Joe Pavelski said. "It was just good to see the guys keep feeding off the crowd, feeding

off goals and really pushing for that next one."

The game lacked the usual playoff atmosphere in the Shark Tank at the start where there were rows of empty seats in the first non-sellout in the playoffs in franchise history.

Nashville's tight-to-the-vest play also helped keep the crowd out of it as the Predators did their best to prevent the Sharks from setting up in the offensive zone and Rinne was once again sharp against San Jose.

The Predators struck early in the second after Matt Nieto was sent to the box for tripping in the offensive zone. Nashville had failed to convert on 26 of its first 27 power-play chances this postseason, including one in the first period, and appeared on its way to another blown opportunity. But late in the man advantage, Johansen slid a cross-ice pass to Fisher, who beat Jones with a wrist shot from the circle to the short side. —AP

## KYRGIOS DOWNS CORIC, EYES SECOND ESTORIL FINAL

**ESTORIL:** In-form Australian Nick Kyrgios moved closer to a second consecutive final at the Estoril Open after dominating Borna Coric 6-4, 6-4 in the quarter-finals on Friday. World number 20 Kyrgios, a losing finalist a year ago to Richard Gasquet, will Saturday face Spaniard Nicolas Almagro, who beat Argentine seventh seed Leonardo Mayer 6-4, 7-6 (7/5).

"He's someone I watched when I was growing up," Kyrgios said of the veteran Almagro. "I've always admired how he played. I'm not going to think too much about the match. I know what he's going to do and I know what I have to do to win." Kyrgios, who turned 21 this week, and 19-year-old Croatian Coric are two of the most promising stars on the ATP but had never previously played each other. The Australian broke early in both sets to establish himself and keep the momentum firmly on his side of the clay court.

He sent over an ace for two match points, with both saved by Coric, before Kyrgios finished the win on his third chance in 69 minutes. Coric was stopped at the Estoril quarter-final stage for a second straight quarter.

Kyrgios fired 10 aces to seven for his opponent and never faced a break point.

At the top of the draw, Pablo Carreno Busta prevented an all-French semi-final as he put out top seed Gilles Simon 6-3, 6-4. The upset sent eighth seed Carreno

Busta into a match-up with French third seed Benoit Paire, a winner over Spain's Guillermo Garcia-Lopez, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2.

Carreno Busta is one victory away from a second career ATP final after losing in Sao Paulo to Pablo Cuevas in February.

Simon's return to the seaside venue outside of Lisbon for the first time since 2011 ended in disappointment, as the world number 18 was ambushed by his 50th-ranked opponent, managing only two aces and losing serve twice. "It was the first time I've played him and he had a really good match," Simon said.

"He was very consistent. The match was close but always on his side. He played the right shot at the right moment, he was the better player today. Paire, whose patchy game can come and go, found it tough to adjust to the faster conditions in the heat of the day after playing night matches previously, but was pleased to get past Garcia-Lopez without too much trouble.

"It was a little tough in the beginning, not great for the confidence," said Paire whose physical niggles include losing a tooth this week.

"But I began feeling better and better as the match went on. He was a tough opponent, I'm glad I won in straight sets. When I was down I told myself just to keep going, I'm happy to win today." — AFP



**ESTORIL:** Australian tennis player Nick Kyrgios returns a ball to Spanish player Nicolas Almagro during their semi-final match of the Estoril Open Tennis tournament in Estoril yesterday. — AFP

## CHEN TO FACE MALAYSIAN RIVAL IN CHINA FINAL

**BEIJING:** World number one Chen Long of China eased past compatriot Tian Houwei at the semi-finals of the Asian Badminton Championship yesterday, setting up a meet with Malaysian rival Lee Chong Wei in the final.

Chen beat Tian 21-14, 21-16 in a quarter-final match in the central city of Wuhan, forcing his way through to compete for the men's singles crown on Sunday. Lee, ranked second in the world, recorded his 11th career win over China's Lin Dan when he edged past the two-time Olympic champion 22-20, 15-21, 21-4. In

the women's competition world number three and reigning Olympic champion Li Xuerui dispatched South Korean seventh seed Sung Ji Hyun 22-20, 21-11 in 40 minutes.

Indian star Saina Nehwal crashed out against Chinese opponent Yihan Wang. The 26-year-old went down 16-21, 14-21 in 41 minutes. Today's final pits Yihan against Xuerui. Both have won nine games against each other and will each be vying to earn their third Asian title. The championship is worth \$500,000 in prize money, according to the organiser's website. —AFP



**WUHAN:** Chen Long of China hits a return to Tian Houwei of China during their men's singles semi-final match at the 2016 Badminton Asia Championships in Wuhan, central China's Hubei province yesterday. — AFP



## LAKERS PUT FAITH IN WALTON TO LEAD RETURN TO GLORY

**LOS ANGELES:** Luke Walton, the new head coach of the Los Angeles Lakers, will leave the league's hottest team to take charge of an acclaimed NBA franchise that has fallen on hard times and currently occupies the other end of the spectrum. Despite being tasked with an unenviable rebuilding job, it is an opportunity he felt he could hardly turn down. Currently in his second season as assistant coach at the reigning NBA champion Golden State Warriors, Walton was confirmed as Byron Scott's replacement on Friday. Scott was dished after the Lakers went 17-65 in the recently-completed season, otherwise known as the Kobe Bryant farewell tour.

Walton, 36, the son of former NBA Most Valuable Player Bill Walton, will be the 26th head coach in Lakers history, and the 22nd since the franchise moved to Los Angeles in 1960. He played 564 regular season games during a decade-long career that included eight seasons and two championships with the Lakers.

"We're excited to bring Luke back to Los Angeles, where we feel he's going to start an outstanding coaching career," Lakers general manager Mitch Kupchak said in a statement. Walton will remain with Golden State for the remainder of the playoffs with a Western Conference second round series looming after they

dispatched the Houston Rockets in five games to start the post-season.

Walton was in charge of the team for the first 43 games this season while head coach Steve Kerr recovered from back surgery, helping them make an NBA record 24-0 start to the campaign. Once Kerr recovered, he led the team to the league's best ever overall season record of 73-9.

### FOREVER GRATEFUL

"I loved everything about my time at Golden State and learning from Steve (Kerr)," Walton said in a statement. "I'll forever be grateful to him, the organization and the team. But I have always dreamed

of being a head coach and the chance to do that for an organization like the Lakers doesn't come around very often."

Kerr expressed support for Walton's decision. "I'm incredibly happy for Luke," Kerr said. "As we witnessed earlier this season, he has all of the intangibles necessary to be an outstanding head coach in this league, including a terrific understanding of the game." Walton will take over a proud franchise that has plummeted down the standings over the past three seasons. The Lakers, whose 16 NBA titles is second only to the Boston Celtics (17), for many years were the league's most glamorous team, as well as one of its

most successful, dazzling fans with a fast-paced run-and-gun style that became known as "Showtime". Their precipitous slide coincided with the decline of legendary guard Bryant, who retired on April 14 at the age of 37.

After going 45-37 in 2012-13, the Lakers won only 27 games the following season, which prompted the firing of then-coach Mike D'Antoni.

Scott took over in July 2014 but lasted just two years as the team continued to regress, going 21-61 in his first campaign before breaking that franchise record for futility in the recently completed season. —Reuters

## RIO OLYMPICS FALL SHORT IN TEST EVENTS

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Power cuts, faulty spotlights, overheated swimming pools and insufficient air conditioning were among the problems plaguing key test runs at the Rio Olympics facilities, highlighting persistent challenges three months before opening day. But the international gymnastics, swimming and shooting sports federations, along with the Rio 2016 organizing committee, insist that the test events "went well overall," and that everything will be ready for the Games.

### GYMNASTICS

Andre Gueisbuhler, who heads the International Federation of Gymnastics (FIG), said five power outages lasting 15-90 minutes caused delays in both training and competition.

One of the outages that took place during training "endangered the safety of athletes," he added, without providing further details. Another took place just before the French and Belgian women's artistic gymnastics rotated. "I never saw a delay like that in the European or world championships," said a member of the French delegation. "In the end, the girls made it out okay, but it's really a pain when the training is timed and you've set an entry at a specific time in your mind and body."

The outage was due to a cable that broke due to construction around the site, Rio 2016 sports director Rodrigo Garcia explained.

### SWIMMING

The day of the 50-meter freestyle swimming competition final, which saw Brazilian star Cesar Cielo eliminated, an outage with projectors triggered a nearly hourlong delay. Similar electricity problems had already taken place during diving competitions in February.

An overheated generator was blamed. "The risk of this happening again during the Games is zero, because we will have a dual power feed system," Garcia said, adding that there has only been one gener-

ator so far to reduce costs.

With Brazil in the grips of a deep economic recession, about 20 percent of Rio 2016's operational budget was cut.

It was also very hot on the lower levels of the aquatics stadium, which became a sauna of sorts. "Temperatures during the Games will be completely different, since it will be (the Southern Hemisphere's) winter."

Temperatures average 25 degrees Celsius (77 Fahrenheit) in August in Rio, down from 30 in this unusually warm month of April. "The stadium is completely covered, and it's important to have artificial ventilation on the lower levels," FINA swimming federation executive Cornel Marculescu told AFP.

"We spoke with Rio's Mayor Eduardo Paes, who told us he would work on it.

We will keep a look, come here, stay in touch with organizers." In fact, negotiations are underway, with the mayor's office intent on controlling its budget and refusing to finance additional equipment.

### SHOOTING SPORTS

"I chose to arrive early enough to train properly, but I was disappointed because the shooting range is not completed and installations are not totally ready either," said a disappointed Delphine Reau, a double-medalist for France. The ISSF federation for shooting sports listed problems with organizers, pointing to "incomplete constructions, lacking air conditioning and lighting problems," its secretary general Franz Schreiber told AFP. Nonetheless, a new world record was set in 3x40 men's rifle shooting. "There was no air conditioning, and we all suffered in the heat of Deodoro Olympic Park," Brazilian shooter Felipe Wu told the Globoesporte sports website. "A Chinese Olympic champion (Du Li) wasn't able to finish the competition.

She got sick and dizzy, and they had to take her away in an ambulance," Wu said. "But such things happen. For a test event, it's better to get it wrong now so that everything can go well later." —AFP



**PORTLAND:** Los Angeles Clippers guard Jamal Crawford, right, shoots over Portland Trail Blazers center Mason Plumlee, second from left, during the second half of Game 6 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series Friday, April 29, 2016, in Portland, Ore. The Trail Blazers won 106-103. — AP

## BLAZERS ADVANCE 4-2 WITH VICTORY OVER THE CLIPPERS

**PORTLAND:** Even as they huddled after the victory that sent them through to the next round, the Portland Trail Blazers were drawing inspiration from the doubters.

The confetti fell on them from the ceiling and Damian Lillard told his gathered teammates he was proud of them for shutting out the "outside noise," like those who never thought the Blazers would make it to the playoffs - let alone the second round.

Now they'll have to shut out those who think they have no chance against the defending NBA champion Golden State Warriors. "We're just going to go out there and we're going to compete and we're going to put our best foot forward," Lillard said.

Lillard scored 28 points and the Blazers advanced to the Western Conference semifinals by beating the resilient Los Angeles Clippers 106-103 on Friday night to claim the first-round playoff series 4-2.

CJ McCollum added 20 points for the Blazers, who became the first team to overcome a 2-0 deficit since Memphis came back against the Clippers in the first round in 2013. It is the second time in three seasons that Portland has advanced out of the first round.

Jamal Crawford had 32 points and Austin Rivers added 21 points and eight assists despite having 11 stitches above his left eye from a collision in the first quarter. But the Clippers could not recover from injuries to Chris Paul and Blake Griffin in Game 4 of the series. Still, Los Angeles didn't surrender easily in the final game, never allowing Portland a double digit lead. "We didn't panic when they put up a fight," Lillard said. "We did the things necessary to win the game." The Blazers appeared to pull away when McCollum's 3-pointer made it 98-91 with 4:49 left, but the Clippers persisted. Already plagued by injuries, the Clippers lost DeAndre Jordan to what looked like a sprained right ankle before Los Angeles closed to 98-95 on J.J. Redick's jumper.

### FREE THROWS

McCollum's 3-pointer put Portland up 101-95 with 2:16 left. Again the Clippers clawed back, pulling within 103-101 on Redick's layup with just under a minute left. Crawford tied it with free throws but Mason Plumlee was fouled by Jeff Green under the basket for free throws to make it 105-103.

Crawford missed a 6-foot jumper and Plumlee made the second of two free throws with 1.5 seconds left for the final margin. Rivers' 42-foot hurl at the buzzer fell short.

"It's mixed emotions right now," Rivers said, his left eye swollen shut. "I'm very sad, I'm very disappointed, but I'm also very proud."

Portland will face a Golden State team that is dealing with its own injury issue: Reigning MVP Stephen Curry continues to rehab his sprained right knee. There is no official word on when he might return.

The Clippers were ultimately doomed by untimely injuries to their top two scorers. Paul broke a bone in his right hand in the third quarter of the Clippers' Game 4 loss at Portland. The Clippers' nine-time All-Star was averaging 23.8 points and 7.3 assists in the series before he was

hurt. He had surgery the next day and the Clippers declared him out indefinitely.

In the same game, Griffin aggravated the left quad injury that sidelined him for 41 games this season. After dropping the first two on the road and evening it with home wins, the Blazers took a 3-2 lead with a 108-98 victory at the Staples Center on Wednesday night. Clippers coach Doc Rivers tinkered with his starting lineup in the absence of Paul and Griffin, inserting Crawford, Rivers and Paul Pierce.

On Friday, he started Luc Mbah a Moute and Jeff Green, while Crawford and Pierce went to

the bench. "This team had more heart than any other team I've coached," the elder Rivers said. The Clippers got another scare midway through the first quarter when Austin Rivers sustained a cut above his left eye in a collision with Portland's Al-Farouq Aminu midway through the first quarter.

Rivers returned before the end of the half after getting 11 stitches. Crawford picked up the slack in his absence and had 22 points in the half. But Lillard and McCollum countered with a combined 25 and the Blazers led 50-48 at the break. — AP

## EL SHERBINI BECOMES YOUNGEST WOMAN TO WIN SQUASH WORLDS

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Nour El Sherbini became the youngest woman and first Egyptian to win the world squash championship when she overcame No. 1-ranked Laura Massaro of England 6-11, 4-11, 11-3, 11-5, 11-8 in the final yesterday. No. 2 El Sherbini, who lost to Massaro in the 2013 final, took more than an hour to prevail. She will replace Massaro as world No. 1 next month. The 20-year-old Sherbini's road to the title included beating eight-time defending champion Nicol David on her home court in the quarterfinals, and compatriot and world junior champion Nouran Gohar in the semifinals. She has won

19 of 20 matches this year, and was the first Egyptian woman to win the British Open last month. "I'm dreaming right now, I didn't imagine I could win this match," El Sherbini said. "Laura is a very tough player, and even until the end I didn't think I could do it."

For Massaro, it was her second loss in three finals, as she was beaten by David in 2012. "I'm obviously disappointed to lose but she played an amazing match from 2-0 down," Massaro said. "I've to take it on the chin and come back again. It's been an amazing tournament, and we as players couldn't have asked for more this week." —AP



**KUALA LUMPUR:** Nour El Sherbini of Egypt smiles as she poses with her trophy after winning against Laura Massaro of England during the prize giving ceremony of the PSA Women's World Championships squash tournament in Bukit Jalil, outside Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP



**SOCHI:** Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton, of Britain, walks in the paddock after the qualifying session for today's Formula One Russian Grand Prix at the Sochi Autodrom racetrack, in Sochi, Russia, yesterday. —AP

## MORE MISERY FOR HAMILTON AS ROSBERG TAKES POLE IN RUSSIA

**SOCHI:** Formula One championship leader Nico Rosberg seized pole position for the Russian Grand Prix yesterday after a power unit failure piled more misery on Mercedes team mate Lewis Hamilton.

The German, chasing his seventh successive win and fourth of the season, clinched one of the easiest poles of his career and will be joined on the front row by Finland's Valtteri Bottas in a Williams.

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel qualified second but has a five-place grid penalty for an unscheduled gearbox change.

"I was quite confident that the lap was good enough," said Rosberg, whose best effort was a hefty 0.706 seconds faster than Vettel's. "In Quali Two Ferrari was quite far away and I knew that Lewis was unable to participate in the last part of qualifying. I was very sure it was going to be enough," added the German, who also took pole last year in Sochi.

It was the 24th pole of Rosberg's career and the 40th in 42 races for champions Mercedes. Hamilton, the triple world champion and winner in Russia for the past two years but 36 points behind Rosberg in a season full of setbacks, saw his luck desert him in qualifying for the second race in a row. The Briton had been quickest on Friday and in final practice but was sidelined from the final 10-car showdown for pole when his car's power unit failed during the second phase.

He is set to start 10th, unless he collects

any further penalties. "It's the second engine I took at the last race and it's the same failure as the last race," said an unhappy Hamilton, who was also summoned to the stewards for failing to follow the race director's instructions at turn two.

In China two weeks ago Hamilton started from the back of the grid after he failed to set any lap time in qualifying due to a power unit failure.

The Briton, who took pole in the first two races of the season but then made slow starts, fought back to seventh in the race in Shanghai.

"It's a very bizarre situation," Mercedes motorsport head Toto Wolff told Sky Sports television. "It seems like the same failure as in Shanghai, which means we have to reassess the root cause of the failure.

"He seems to have all the bad luck and the other side of the garage has all the luck... It's getting tough for Lewis now and I have no doubt he will come out of it. But he has every right to be upset."

Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen and Williams' Brazilian Felipe Massa will share the second row with Australian Daniel Ricciardo behind for Red Bull with Force India's Sergio Perez sixth.

Vettel starts in seventh place with Russian Daniil Kvyat, the Red Bull driver that the German accused in China of behaving like a 'madman' and overtaking 'like a torpedo' as the Ferrari collided, together on the fourth row. — Reuters





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## BAYERN MADE TO WAIT FOR HISTORIC FOURTH TITLE

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SAN SEBASTIAN: Real Madrid's Welsh forward Gareth Bale (C) vies with Real Sociedad's defender Yuri Berchiche (L) and defender Mikel Gonzalez (R) during the Spanish league football match Real Sociedad de Futbol vs Real Madrid CF at the Anoeta stadium in San Sebastian yesterday. — AFP

## BALE HITS WINNER, GRIEZMANN PUTS ATLETICO TOP

**MADRID:** Gareth Bale's thunderous header 10 minutes from time inspired an under-strength Real Madrid to a hard-fought 1-0 win at Real Sociedad yesterday.

However, Real remain a point behind Atletico Madrid at the top of La Liga after Antoine Griezmann scored a minute after coming on as a substitute to hand them an equally nervy 1-0 win over Rayo Vallecano. Barcelona are now three points adrift of Atletico, but can reclaim top spot with victory away to Real Betis later. In the absence of the injured Cristiano Ronaldo and Karim Benzema, Bale stood out with a brilliant individual display capped by the winner to register Madrid's 10th straight La Liga win.

"I am happy for him because he has had prob-

lems this season with injury, but when is fit you notice," Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane said of Bale. "We could have scored earlier in the first-half, but we had to work until the end against a difficult side."

"I am happy with the performance and to get three points once again." As well as the absent Ronaldo and Benzema, Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane rested Marcelo, Dani Carvajal and Toni Kroos with one eye on the return leg of their Champions League semi-final against Manchester City on Wednesday. Without the other two members of Madrid's star "BBC" frontline, Bale was charged with finding the goals and the Welshman did everything but score in a fine first-half display.

Bale pulled his first effort wide on his weaker right foot before James Rodriguez wasted the

chance to open the scoring on a rare start in recent months as Geronimo Rulli turned away the Colombian's effort at his near post. Madrid then began to show their power from set-pieces as captain Sergio Ramos and Bale saw headers fly just wide from corners before another powerful Bale header from Rodriguez's inch-perfect cross also fell just the wrong side of the post as Madrid completely dominated the hosts before the break. The visitors continued to press after the break, but Rulli looked set to end their title hopes as the Argentine made brilliant save to deny Bale from another fine Rodriguez cross.

### EQUALISER

Yet, a week after leading Real back from a two-

goal deficit at Rayo Vallecano, Bale made the difference again when he got across his marker to bullet home a header from Lucas Vazquez's cross. Sociedad had barely offered any threat on goal during the 90 minutes, but nearly snatched an equaliser in stoppage time as David Zurutuza's header was saved low to his right by Keylor Navas. Atletico boss Diego Simeone also showed his priorities lie with the second leg of their Champions League semi-final against Bayern Munich in midweek as he made seven changes to the side that beat the German champions 1-0 on Wednesday. Angel Correa was one of those handed a rare start and his low drive forced Juan Carlos into an outstanding save after just six minutes. However, Atletico's youngsters struggled to

create anything more of note before Griezmann rode to the rescue early in the second-half. Indeed, Rayo could even have gone in front but for fine saves from Jan Oblak to deny Miku and Javi Guerra.

Griezmann made a sensational and instant impact after coming off the bench as he controlled a loose ball on the edge of the area before thrashing a volley into the bottom corner for his 30th goal of the season. Fernando Torres was introduced at the same time as the French international and should have sealed the three points from a brilliant Griezmann pass 20 minutes from time, but placed his shot too close to Carlos. Yet, despite a late Rayo onslaught, Atletico held out to record their 34th clean sheet of the season. — AFP

## WELBECK BRINGS WENGER SOLACE AMID PROTESTS



**LONDON:** Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger faced supporter protests before Danny Welbeck's goal secured a 1-0 home victory over Norwich City yesterday that moved his side up to third place. Welbeck scored three minutes after appearing as a 56th-minute substitute to move Arsenal eight points clear of fifth place in the Premier League and strengthen their bid to qualify for the Champions League.

Defeat at the Emirates Stadium left Norwich second from bottom, two points from safety, but with a game in hand on fourth-bottom Newcastle United.

Victory brought relief to Wenger, whose decision to introduce Welbeck changed the game, and his players, who were booed off following a scoreless first half that was marked by a display of dissent from some home fans.

The protest occurred in the 12th minute, signifying the 12 years since the club last won the league, but provoked a mixed reaction, and then a more muted response when it was repeated 12 minutes from time.

A number of posters were held up around the ground declaring that it was "TIME FOR A

CHANGE", but the display was met with boos from other fans and chants of "There's only one Arsene Wenger!" It confirmed that the club's supporters are divided in their views about the manager's future, but they are unanimous in sharing a sense of frustration over their club's failure to challenge for the title.

That feeling was underlined by club captain Mikel Arteta, who admitted in his match programme notes that Arsenal had passed up their best chance in five years to claim the title.

Some of the reasons for that failure were evident during a disjointed first-half display when Wenger's side struggled to find any momentum against a Norwich team who created the better chances despite enjoying only limited possession. Wenger acknowledged before the match that the only way to win round his critics is by delivering results on the pitch, although he did mount a spirited defence of his record in the decade since the club moved to the Emirates, pointing out the financial constraints he was forced to work under.

He also illustrated his loyalty to the club by stating that he had committed himself to the club to satisfy a demand for stability from the banks that funded the development of the new stadium.

But the Frenchman needs to deliver results now and until the introduction of Welbeck, it appeared as though an uncomfortable afternoon was likely to get even worse for him.

Arsenal were forced to rely on the reactions of goalkeeper Petr Cech to deny Nathan Redmond as early as the sixth minute. — AFP



LONDON: Arsenal's French defender Laurent Koscielny heads the ball during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Norwich at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. — AFP

## NOBLE BRACE MAKES IT PERFECT 10 FOR WEST HAM



**WEST BROMWICH:** West Ham United captain Mark Noble scored twice for the second game running as his side beat West Bromwich Albion 3-0 yesterday to go fifth in the Premier League. After Cheikhou Kouyate had headed in a cross from Dimitri Payet, who registered his 10th assist of the season, Noble scored either side of half-time at the Hawthorns, mirroring his brace in the 3-1 win over Watford. Victory took Slaven Bilic's side above Manchester United on goal difference and saw West Ham make it 10 games unbeaten in the top flight for the first time since 1985.

Tony Pulis's West Brom, now without a win in seven games, remain 13th. West Brom had shot a big hole in Tottenham Hotspur's titles hopes by drawing 1-1 at White Hart Lane last Monday and they started brightly, with Craig Gardner's curler testing West Ham goalkeeper Adrian. The hosts' two changes included a

start for 17-year-old Jonathan Leko, the first player born in 1999 to start a Premier League game, and the winger set up a chance for Gardner that the midfielder headed wide. But West Ham belatedly stirred and after Aaron Cresswell's low cross from the left narrowly eluded the sliding Diafra Sakho, they went ahead in the 34th minute.

As West Brom looked to launch a break from a West Ham corner, Winston Reid won a tackle in midfield that sent the ball out to Payet on the right and his delicately weighted cross was headed in by Senegal midfielder Kouyate. Kouyate turned provider in first-half injury time as West Ham doubled their lead, racing down the left and crossing for Noble, whose heavy first touch did not prevent him from poking home right-footed. With Angelo Ogbonna preventing Salomon Rondon from reaching Gardner's left-wing cross 11 minutes into the second half, Pulis turned to his bench. Striker Saido Berahino and midfielder Sandro both went close after entering the fray—the former scuffing wide, the latter shooting off-target from 25 yards—but the hosts would come no closer.

Instead it was West Ham who had the last word, with Payet driving into West Brom territory and slipping the ball wide to Andy Carroll, whose lofted cross was emphatically volleyed home by Noble. — AFP

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## HAIR LEFT HALF-CUT IN VENEZUELA ELECTRICITY CHAOS

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KIEV: Elderly women share a sandwich as they sell their possessions to get some extra money at a city flea market in Ukraine's capital Kiev on Orthodox Easter eve yesterday. Ukraine has reached a record 41 percent inflation rate for 20 years. — AP

## WATCHERS WONDER IF APPLE HAS LOST ITS MAGIC

### REVENUE DOWN; APPLE FORECAST DIFFICULT TIMES

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Is Apple facing a rare, simple pause in growth in a tough global economy or has it lost its magic for dreaming up must-have new gadgets like the iPhone? The question was front-of-mind on Wall Street, where shares in the California-based company fell more than six percent to \$97.82 by the official close of trading on the Nasdaq exchange. The drop erased the equivalent of \$40 billion in market capitalization and came after Apple Tuesday reported its first year-over-year quarterly revenue drop in 13 years. Apple also forecast that the current quarter would be difficult. Revenue was down during the first three months of this year due to the first drop in iPhone sales since the release of the world-changing handset in 2007. Sales of iPhones have been the engine for Apple earnings for a while.

#### Cruising on a flagship?

FBN Securities said in a note to analysts that it was "concerned" that since taking over as chief executive in 2011, Tim Cook has not delivered "any real transformative products." An Apple Watch that made its debut last year was seen as the company's first foray into a new product category under Cook. Apple has not revealed sales figures for its smartwatch, but Cook said on an earnings call that they "met expectations" during the quarter. Given the absence of official sales figures, observers are left to speculate how Apple Watch is doing in the

market. The fact that Apple Watch synchs to iPhones has raised doubts it could be a stand-alone hit instead of an accessory.

Apple Pay, the service that lets iPhones act as digital wallets, is viewed through a similarly dependent lens. Apple has long been a ripe target for rumors, with recent speculation including talk that the company is working on self-driving cars and virtual reality. "The car entry would be years away and it would not at all be clear if Apple would succeed—especially considering Tesla's recent success with its Model 3," FBN said in its note. Tesla has been swamped with orders even though release of the car is a year away.

#### Seeking a new Steve Jobs

"The pace of innovation has completely slowed down at Apple," said Global Equities analyst Trip Chowdhry. "The projects that Tim Cook is talking about are taking so much time... by the time they are ready they are already obsolete." Chowdhry depicted Apple as a company that was in fine shape except for a bedeviling lack of vision and passion at the top, pointing a finger at Cook, chief financial officer Luca Maestri, and senior vice president of retail and online stores Angela Ahrendts. "Get rid of these three people, and Apple will come back to its past glory," the analyst said. Apple has thus far delivered on the vision of Steve Jobs, and a new visionary who

is at least as passionate as the iconic figure is needed to fix the company, Chowdhry reasoned.

He recommended former Apple executive Jon Rubinstein for the job. Former Apple manager Guy Kawasaki, who helped launch the Macintosh computer in the 1980s said in a CNBC television interview that the company needs to get back to making products people "lust" for. Kawasaki gave the example of iPhones that boast improvements from prior generations but don't stand apart from predecessors in big ways. "We need a product that leaps to the next curve," Kawasaki said. "I don't think that is simply making the iPhone smaller or the iPad bigger." He said that Jobs and his famous "reality distortion field" could dazzle people with product upgrades, but without him such modifications have not come across as revolutionary.

Meanwhile, many analysts have taken to counseling investors to be patient. "Just wait until 2017, when comparisons will be easier," advised FBN, noting that earnings will then be up against those reported this year instead of a year in which a hot-selling iPhone 6 debuted. The coming iPhone 7 could be a "game changer" according to RBC Capital Markets. Analysts also pointed out that with more than a billion Apple devices being used around the world, Apple is positioned to rake in money selling content, products and services to users. — AFP



CALIFORNIA: A reporter walks by an Apple logo during a media event in San Francisco, California. — AFP



BUDAPEST: Taxi drivers block the oldest Hungarian bridge, the Lanchid (Chain Bridge), with their cabs in Budapest downtown. Taxi drivers in the Hungarian capital protested against the 'UBER' ride-sharing services. — AFP

## UBER VS OLA: HOW FIGHT FOR INDIAN TAXI MARKET ENDED UP IN THE COURT

### UBER SUES OLA FOR MAKING FAKE BOOKINGS ON ITS PLATFORM

**NEW DELHI:** A flurry of complaints from Uber drivers about an unusually high number of cancelled bookings was the spark that ignited a bitter legal fight with Ola, Uber's rival for dominance of India's \$12 billion taxi market, according to court documents and a source with direct knowledge of Uber's case. A seven-member internal team was set up to investigate the drivers' complaints in November, and its findings are the basis of a lawsuit filed by Uber accusing Ola of a campaign to disrupt its business and poach its drivers, said the source.

Ola, an Indian company backed by Japan's SoftBank Group Corp., denies any wrongdoing. Uber is suing Ola for \$7.5 million to compensate for lost revenue and goodwill, alleging the Indian market leader created about 94,000 fake user accounts with the ride-hailing service and used them to make more than 405,000 false bookings. The broad outlines of the lawsuit were reported when it was filed last month, but a Reuters review of court filings and interviews with sources close to both sides has uncovered new details about how Uber says it was able to trace fake bookings and calls to Ola employees, and Ola's response to the allegations.

It paints a picture of a no-holds-barred corporate battle between the two start-ups in one of the world's fastest growing taxi markets, where both have been burning millions of dollars of investor money as they seek to undercut each other with cheaper fares. A source close to Ola said the case against it had been fabricated in retaliation for a lawsuit it had filed earlier this year accusing Uber of flouting a court order to switch to clean-fuel cars in the Indian capital. Uber said it could not comment on a matter that was still before the courts, and Reuters was unable to independently verify the allegations made by either side. SoftBank, one of Ola's largest investors, declined to comment on the case.

Uber's investigation identified locations and internet protocol addresses of tens of thousands of users who had booked and cancelled rides, using information logged when a new customer account is created on Uber's platform, the source familiar with the company's case said. In court documents, Uber says it found 660 accounts used to make troublesome bookings came from a building housing Ola's office in the western city of Pune. Most of the rest were created near Ola's office in the tech hub Bengaluru, it said.

In the court filings, Uber said more than 23,000 of its drivers quit due to "illegal and wrongful interference" between September 2015 and February 2016. The source close to Ola said the company had made its own checks and found no correlations in the thousands of data points submitted by Uber in its complaint, which included names and mobile phone numbers alleged to belong to Ola employees. The data could have been compiled in a few hours using names, business addresses and phone numbers linked to Ola that could be looked up online, the source said.

The Delhi High Court has set a hearing on the latest case in September. Ola's case against Uber is before the same court. The backdrop to the legal sparring is a relentless price war between Uber and Ola, who also offer competing incentives to lure drivers. "The one which lasts the longest will eventually win and enjoy monopoly power," said Neil Shah, research director at Counterpoint Research. Counterpoint estimates Uber's growth has outpaced Ola over the last two years, when it doubled its market share to 26.5 percent. Ola, however, still leads with 52 percent share. — Reuters



**MORIGAON:** An Indian farmer spreads maize husks to dry in a field in Morigaon district, some 70kms east of Guwahati yesterday. Maize is India's third most important cash crop after wheat and rice. — AFP

# PUERTO RICO'S OTHER CRISIS: IMPOVERISHED PENSIONS

## CREDITORS WANT GOVERNMENT TO CURB SPENDING

**SAN JUAN:** When Puerto Rico attempted to shore up its chronically underfunded public-employee pensions in 2013, Francisco del Castillo "knew grown men and women who wept." Under the reform package, retirement ages rose. So did employee contributions. Current and future participants were transferred to less-generous defined-contribution accounts, similar to 401(k) retirement savings plans.

Del Castillo, then the deputy chief of the island's largest government-employee pension system, said members of his own staff who were on the verge of retirement suddenly faced the prospect of working seven or eight more years for reduced benefits. The law extracted "a pound of political flesh" from those, like del Castillo, who helped craft it, he said. "We wanted it to work." It didn't, largely because Governor Alejandro Garcia Padilla's government hasn't held up its end of the bargain.

To give the politically painful fixes time to take hold, the reforms required government employers to fund the pensions in the short term through annual lump-sum payments. The central government was supposed to have made \$367.6 million in such payments since 2014; so far, it has forked over just \$22.7 million. Governor Garcia Padilla's office declined to comment for this article. Failed fixes like the 2013 reforms help explain why Puerto Rico's public-employee pensions today are nearly broke - a financial debacle decades in the making, and now deeply entangled with the island's \$70 billion debt crisis.

Since Puerto Rico gained self-rule in the late 1940s, improvident populist governments have lavished additional pension benefits on public employees, from holiday bonuses to loans for international travel. These measures have rarely been accompanied by moves to pay for them, and occasional efforts to fill the funding gap have fallen short. Puerto Rican leaders have been eternal optimists, "always thinking things would eventually improve," said del Castillo, 40 years old and now legal counsel to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS), one of two main public-employee pensions on the island. "But things continued to deteriorate, and deteriorate, and deteriorate."

Today, TRS and the other main pension fund,

the Employees Retirement System (ERS), together covering about 330,000 workers and retirees, are virtually penniless. Their combined unfunded liability totals \$43.2 billion. With about \$1.8 billion in assets to pay \$45 billion in liabilities, the 96 percent combined shortfall is among the biggest of any US state pension this century, and probably the biggest ever for pensions "of this size and scale," said Keith Brainard, research director at the National Association of State Retirement Administrators.

And they're only sinking further. Their combined burn rate - the difference between what they pay out and what they receive in contributions - is more than \$1 billion a year, forcing them to rapidly liquidate assets. At that rate, they are forecast to run out of money in 2019, according to a 2015 report by actuarial and consulting firm Milliman, on whose recommendations the government relies. TRS officials declined several interview requests. ERS Administrator Pedro Ortiz Cortes said pensions "kind of fell off the radar" after the 2013 reforms. The legislation was "reasonable in theory," he said, though "the ability to comply was not taken into consideration."

### Shifting the burden

Absent a permanent fix, the responsibility to cover benefits will shift to the Puerto Rican government, creating a pay-as-you-go system funded mostly by taxpayers. At \$1 billion a year, retirement benefits would cost the island around 11 percent of annual revenue, an unsustainable burden when combined with the 36 percent of revenue now going toward paying bondholders. The upshot is that an island of 3.5 million people, where nearly half the population lives below the poverty line and the economy has been contracting for most of the past decade, is at a crossroads where neither path forward is appealing.

It can protect pensions, forcing hedge funds and other bondholders to accept draconian cuts under a debt restructuring - a scenario that could wreck Puerto Rico's ability to borrow internationally for years. Or, it can lessen the burden for bondholders by cutting pensions as well, sparking domestic political backlash and fueling out-migration that would further shrink an already

dwindling tax base. "I would need to go to the US, sell my house and start looking for a job" if pensions were cut, said Obdulia Lopez, 60, a retired social services worker from rural Juana Diaz who lives on a pension check of about \$1,000 a month, after taxes.

Puerto Rico can't fully control which path it takes. Governor Garcia Padilla's administration on Feb 1 unveiled a plan that would preserve pensions while reducing what's owed to bondholders. The Obama administration also promoted a plan to protect pensioners over investors, and Puerto Rico's top financial adviser, turnaround specialist Jim Millstein of Millstein & Co, in February said the island has taken pension reform as far as it can under current law.

But creditors with lobbying power-including hedge funds, mutual funds and bond insurers-want the Puerto Rican government to do more to curb spending, on pensions and other things. One source in the creditor camp called it "insane" to propose that "bondholders effectively take all the hit." Another said: "Puerto Rico's people are really the ones being victimized. If I had a heart, it would be breaking for them."

Majority Republicans in Congress are standing with bondholders. In a written response to questions from Reuters, Utah Republican Orrin Hatch, who chairs the Senate Finance Committee, said: "It's pretty clear a pay-as-you-go Puerto Rico pension system is no more sustainable than Puerto Rico's debt." In March, a group of 170 House Republicans voiced opposition to a draft bill by the House Natural Resources Committee that would allow for debt restructuring. Garcia Padilla has warned that without a resolution of some sort, Puerto Rico stands to default on some of its \$70 billion in debt as early as May, when \$422 million comes due.

The government payments into the pension funds under the 2013 law were designed to avoid the very conflict now playing out. Instead, they ended up as yet another example of how solutions can create new problems in the complexities of Puerto Rico's crisis. To reduce costs, Puerto Rico has cut its government payroll in recent years through layoffs and other measures that have led to declines in pension contribu-

tions. The payments from the government's general revenue fund were calculated in part to offset those declines, so skipping them means the island's payroll savings have only deepened the hole for retirees.

Maria Carattini Alvarado, a 72-year-old former teacher who spends more than half of her monthly pension on medicines for a blood condition, supplements her income by making ribboned hats that she sells for \$5 a pop. "I'd go live with my son in Texas" if pensions were cut, Carattini said. In Puerto Rico, teachers, as well as police officers, are ineligible for Social Security, so pension payments are often all they have in retirement. Like many retired teachers, Carattini gets affordable healthcare and housing through programs set up by the Asociacion de Maestros, one of Puerto Rico's teachers' unions.

But those benefits could disappear, too, if pensions collapsed, said union President Aida Diaz. "If people can't afford their dues, we can't provide those services," said Diaz, herself a pensioner. Most pensions have a few decades to mature, building up assets in the early years before members retire. Puerto Rico's pensions carried big unfunded liabilities nearly from the outset, inheriting them from retirement systems in place before the island became a self-governed US commonwealth in 1948. From there, longer life expectancies helped deepen the gap.

So, too, did island leaders. Populist Luis Munoz Marin, Puerto Rico's first elected governor, in 1956 instituted cultural excursion loans for pensioners. Puerto Rico was in "a stage of rapid social, economic and political development," the 1956 law said, and should aim to enable "the largest possible number of Puerto Ricans to travel to foreign countries." Today, ERS and TRS participants can take out as much as \$5,000 to travel if they can show that the trip will be culturally rewarding. The pensions also offer as much as \$5,000 for personal loans and \$100,000 for mortgage loans. Together, the two funds have more than \$1 billion tied up in illiquid loan portfolios.

### 'Candy to children'

The largess continued under Luis Ferre, governor from 1968 to 1972, who increased benefits

and instituted mandatory Christmas bonuses. Last December, creditors griped privately when Puerto Rico doled out about \$120 million of the bonuses even as it missed some minor bond payments. Christmas and medication bonuses, ad hoc cost-of-living adjustments, death benefits and other perks were expanded periodically throughout the 1980s, '90s and 2000s.

These now account for nearly \$3 billion in liabilities, according to Milliman's latest actuarial report, even after reductions under the 2013 reforms. Rafael Hernandez Colon, president of the Puerto Rico Senate during Ferre's administration, said his party went along with the Christmas bonuses "for political reasons" to avoid being labeled obstructionist, but did not consider it good governance. "We looked at it as giving candy to children," Hernandez Colon said in an interview at his foundation in Ponce, a city on Puerto Rico's southern coast.

Yet when Hernandez Colon won the governor's seat in 1972, his administration approved perhaps the most structurally damning benefit of all. Under a 1973 amendment to existing pension law, government employees who retired at 55, with 30 years of service, were entitled to lifetime annual payouts worth 75 percent of their salary. That percentage was based not on a worker's career average salary, but on the average of his three highest salaries. So those who were promoted close to retirement, or for only a short time, could earn lifetime pensions disproportionately to contributions.

"People were making pensions that might not have reflected the average of what they were putting in over decades," said Marcos Rodriguez-Ema, a banker and former government official involved in pension reform efforts in the 1990s and 2000s. Familiar populist language peppered the 1973 legislation, vowing to "stimulate the creative vitality" of workers who had dedicated their lives to Puerto Rico, and cushion them against the "uncertainty that comes with age." The amendment brushed off concern about future financial strain on the pensions, saying their investments were producing revenue twice what actuaries had approved, so the "measures won't be burdensome." — Reuters

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.721
Indian Rupees	4.570
Pakistani Rupees	2.890
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.074
Nepali Rupees	2.847
Singapore Dollar	224.810
Hongkong Dollar	39.012
Bangladesh Taka	3.858
Philippine Peso	6.466
Thai Baht	8.627

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.736
Qatari Riyal	83.166
Omani Riyal	786.383
Bahraini Dinar	804.040
UAE Dirham	82.430

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	32.550
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	34.467
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.215
Tunisian Dinar	150.920
Jordanian Dinar	426.440
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.017
Syrian Lira	2.158
Morocco Dirham	31.853

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.600
Euro	344.060
Sterling Pound	442.550

Canadian dollar	240.920
Turkish lira	107.690
Swiss Franc	312.930
Australian Dollar	232.250
US Dollar Buying	301.400

#### GOLD

20 Gram	248.350
10 Gram	127.090
5 Gram	64.390

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	302.550
Canadian Dollar	241.185
Sterling Pound	442.715
Euro	347.305
Swiss Frank	292.570
Bahrain Dinar	800.405
UAE Dirhams	82.615
Qatari Riyals	83.825
Saudi Riyals	81.360
Jordanian Dinar	426.200
Egyptian Pound	33.974
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.075
Indian Rupees	4.552
Pakistani Rupees	2.880
Bangladesh Taka	3.848
Philippines Peso	6.448
Cyprus pound	576.260
Japanese Yen	3.835
Syrian Pound	2.375
Nepalese Rupees	3.845

Malaysian Ringgit	78.125
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	47.110
Thai Bhat	9.635
Turkish Lira	108.200

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
<b>Europe</b>		
British Pound	0.430830	0.439830
Czech Korune	0.004660	0.016660
Danish Krone	0.041930	0.046930
Euro	0.0335428	0.0343428
Norwegian Krone	0.032989	0.038189
Romanian Leu	0.086889	0.086889
Slovakia	0.009030	0.019030
Swedish Krona	0.033377	0.038377
Swiss Franc	0.303631	0.313831
Turkish Lira	0.100984	0.111284
<b>Australasia</b>		
Australian Dollar	0.225752	0.237252
New Zealand Dollar	0.201914	0.211414
<b>America</b>		
Canadian Dollar	0.234177	0.242677
US Dollars	0.298800	0.303300
US Dollars Mint	0.299300	0.303300
<b>Asia</b>		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003444	0.004018
Chinese Yuan	0.045208	0.048708
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036981	0.039731

Indian Rupee	0.004346	0.004736
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002686	0.002866
Kenyan Shilling	0.003115	0.003115
Korean Won	0.000255	0.000270
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073887	0.079887
Nepalese Rupee	0.002886	0.003056
Pakistan Rupee	0.002671	0.002951
Philippine Peso	0.006464	0.006744
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.221484	0.227484
South African Rand	0.015208	0.023708
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001698	0.002278
Taiwan	0.009256	0.009436
Thai Baht	0.008303	0.008853

#### Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.796879	0.804879
Egyptian Pound	0.030721	0.035839
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000192	0.000252
Jordanian Dinar	0.423217	0.430717
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020848	0.044848
Nigerian Naira	0.001249	0.001884
Omani Riyal	0.780333	0.786013
Qatar Riyal	0.082488	0.083701
Saudi Riyal	0.079887	0.080837
Syrian Pound	0.001284	0.001504
Tunisian Dinar	0.147242	0.155242
Turkish Lira	0.100984	0.111284
UAE Dirhams	0.081487	0.082636
Yemeni Riyal	0.001369	0.001449

## STUDY ANALYZES IMPACT OF WASHINGTON STATE COAL-EXPORT PLAN

**SEATTLE:** A coal-export terminal proposed along the Columbia River in southwest Washington state could have unavoidable, significant impacts on greenhouse gases emissions, vessel traffic and rail safety, according to an environmental review released Friday. The analysis by the Washington Department of Ecology and Cowlitz County found that greenhouse gas emissions - from facility operations to when the coal is burned in Asia - would increase by 2.5 million metric tons each year when the project is fully running.

While measures can be taken to significantly reduce those emissions, the impact "would still be significant and adverse," the study noted. Other concerns include increased vessel traffic as 840 ships a year are added, and a potential for train accidents along rail routes in Cowlitz County and other parts of Washington as up to 16 mile-long train trips are added each day.

The study found the project could impact 21 of 23 areas reviewed, and that some of those consequences are significant, Ecology said in a statement. The review looked at fish habitat, water quality, local communities and other issues, and proposed ways for the project developers to reduce those effects. Millennium Bulk Terminals-Longview is proposing a terminal that would handle up to 44 million metric tons of coal a year. Coal would arrive by train from the Powder River Basin in Montana and Wyoming and the Uinta Basin in Utah and Colorado to be stored and loaded on ships for export to Asia. Construction could begin in 2018.

Lighthouse Resources Inc., formerly known as Ambre Energy, owns 62 percent of Millennium and Arch Coal Inc. the other 38 percent. Lighthouse owns the Decker Mine in Montana and the Black Butte Mine in south-

western Wyoming. Millennium CEO Bill Chapman said in a statement Friday that the project is a step closer to creating family-wage jobs in Longview while meeting the state's strict environmental standards. Business and some labor groups also expressed support, saying the project would create jobs, boost the local economy and strengthen the state's trade capacity.

"This is an important project for Washington state, and for the people of Cowlitz County and Southwest Washington searching for good paying jobs," said Kris Johnson, president of the Association of Washington Business. But environmental, citizens and other groups said Friday that the review confirms their concerns about wide-ranging impacts from moving millions of tons of coal through the Northwest and burning it in Asia. Opponents said the review acknowledges the negative consequences of the project but falls short because it relies on mitigation measures that aren't proven.

The study said air pollution from coal dust at the site and along rail lines would be below federal air quality standards. It also said coal dust would exceed nuisance levels, but it would not be significant impact since state or federal standards do not apply. Regulators recommended coal loaded on trains be sprayed with a substance at the mine site and in Pasco, Washington, to reduce coal dust. Steve Charter, a Montana rancher, said in a statement that the Washington coal port is also bad news for his state. He said rail towns would have to deal with traffic delays, diesel exhaust and other consequences.

The study found that without rail and road improvements, the increased train traffic would create long vehi-



**WASHINGTON:** A train hauling coal to British Columbia heads north out of Seattle between office buildings, condos and the downtown waterfront. — AP

cle delays during rush hour at railroad crossings in Cowlitz County and beyond. It said crossings in Spokane County would have the largest increases in vehicle delays. The public can comment on the study through June 13, and at three public hearings scheduled in May and June. Regulators plan to incorporate those com-

ments into a final review, a process that could take a year or longer. The state and county got a record number of comments, more than 215,000, earlier in its review. The Army Corps of Engineers, meanwhile, is doing its own separate environmental review. A spokeswoman said a draft is expected in September. — AP



**CALIFORNIA:** Photo shows the sign for the Exxon Mobil Torrance Refinery in Torrance, Calif. Exxon Mobil Corp reports financial results on Friday, April 29, 2016. — AP

## EXXON SEES SMALLEST PROFIT IN 16 YEARS, CHEVRON POSTS LOSS

**DALLAS:** Motorists are saving billions on cheaper gasoline, but the long slump in oil prices is taking a heavy toll on companies that find and produce crude. Exxon Mobil posted its smallest quarterly profit in more than 16 years Friday, while Chevron lost \$725 million, its worst showing since 2002, and raised the number of jobs it expects to cut this year from 7,000 to 8,000. Other oil companies are expected to report weak earnings in the next few days. Oil prices have tumbled from their 2014 highs of over \$100 a barrel, bottoming out at under \$30 in mid-February, because of a worldwide glut.

Giant companies like Exxon and major petroleum-producing countries such as Saudi Arabia have continued to pump more from the ground despite the slide in prices. Forecasters expect US shale producers to cut production, however, which could ease the glut, and prices have been recovering over the past three months. Benchmark US crude is trading at close to \$46. Exxon and Chevron stock have gained ground. "Investors are really focused on where things are heading, and that is higher oil prices," said Brian Youngberg, an analyst with Edward Jones.

Youngberg said companies will aim to avoid the boom-and-bust cycle of the last few years by turning up output more slowly this time - and maybe not until prices are in the \$50s. It might take two years or longer, he said, but eventually prices will be high enough to lead US shale operators to boost production. Exxon Mobil Corp, the world's biggest publicly traded oil company, made a profit of \$1.81 billion in the first quarter, down 63 percent from \$4.94 billion a year ago. It was Exxon's smallest quarterly profit since a \$1.5 billion gain in the third quarter of 1999, according to FactSet figures.

The company lost money in its vaunted

exploration and production business despite pumping slightly more oil and gas than a year ago. Profit fell by nearly half in its refining and marketing division. Only the smaller chemicals division made more money than last year. Revenue at Irving, Texas-based Exxon tumbled 28 percent to \$48.71 billion. Chevron Corp. recorded its second straight losing quarter. Its \$725 million loss was a sharp contrast from the first quarter of last year, when it made \$2.57 billion. Revenue plunged 32 percent to \$23.55 billion.

Chevron CEO John Watson said the company is controlling spending, focusing more on shorter-term projects, and completing key projects under construction to boost revenue. Exxon, too, is cutting capital spending - by 33 percent in the first quarter, compared with a year ago. This week Standard & Poor's downgraded Exxon's credit rating one notch, to AA+. Exxon had been one of just three U.S. corporations with the top rating of AAA, but S&P cited lower energy prices and Exxon's continuing high dividend payouts. The next day, Exxon raised its dividend for the 34th straight year.

On a call with analysts Thursday, Jeff Woodbury, Exxon vice president of investor relations, appealed for patience, saying that energy demand is growing and that eventually the oversupply of oil will be worked off. "We're headed in the right direction," he said. "In terms of how and when that will happen would be anybody's guess." On the plus side, the Energy Department estimates that the average US household saved \$660 last year because of cheaper gasoline and will save another \$350 this year. Exxon shares rose 37 cents to close at \$88.40, while Chevron fell 22 cents to \$102.18. Since Feb 1, Exxon has gained 14 percent and Chevron 18 percent. — AP

## US, EUROPE TRADE NEGOTIATORS BATTLE POLITICAL HEADWINDS

**NEW YORK:** Facing deeply entrenched differences and political headwinds, the top negotiators trying to reach a sweeping US-European free trade deal avoided agriculture, public procurement and other thorny issues in talks this week. Instead, Assistant US Trade Representative Daniel Mullaney and European Commission lead negotiator Ignacio Garcia Bercega said on Friday they concentrated on less controversial areas such as small and medium enterprises and technical language. But both insisted after their 13th negotiating round in New York that they can still reach a deal this year before US President Barack Obama leaves office in January.

Mullaney said concerns over a June referendum in Britain over whether to leave the European Union would not slow efforts to reach a deal to boost trade, investment and job growth on both continents, and nor would anti-trade rhetoric from the US presidential campaign trail. "We're confident that we can achieve that kind of an agreement and that when we do, later this year, it'll be an agreement that the public on both sides of the Atlantic can support," Mullaney said. Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump has said he would scrap the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal and has been especially critical of the 1994 North

American Free Trade Agreement for "destroying" US jobs.

Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton, has also said TPP is unacceptable in its current form. "I haven't seen a worse political environment for trade deals" negotiations, said Robert Vastine, a former president of the Coalition of Service Industries, who gave a presentation on services at a forum on the sidelines of the New York talks. He said the sour environment was contributing to the slow pace of talks and a lack of enthusiasm for making concessions, particularly when any deal would need to be approved under a new US president.

In Europe, too, the political environment is challenging, with widespread opposition to allowing more imports of US agricultural products over concerns about genetically modified foods, hormone-raised beef and fierce protection of local food-naming rules for items from Asiago cheese to Parma ham. A new survey released this week by the Bertelsmann Foundation showed waning support for a TTIP deal in both Germany and the United States. The poll, conducted by YouGov, showed that only 17 percent of Germans believe TTIP is a good thing versus 55 percent two years ago. In the United States, only 18 percent of those polled supported such a deal, versus 53 percent in 2014. — Reuters

## THE REAL ESTATE RELIC IS PAINFUL REMINDER OF ITALY'S BAD DEBTS

### BAD LOANS HOLDING BACK BANKS IN ITALY

**ROME:** An unfinished hotel and empty swimming pool sit sadly on the lush hillside of Pitigliano in Tuscany, where they should have welcomed the holidaymakers who flock to central Italy. But the Tosteto spa sits even more heavily on the balance sheet of Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena, which lent 11 million euros to the developer before declaring him in default eight years ago, and is still trying to recoup some of this cash.

Monte dei Paschi is one of the weakest banks in a sector saddled with 200 billion euros (\$227 billion) in loans unlikely ever to be paid back. These are holding back lending in the euro zone's third-largest economy and strangling growth after a three-year recession. Prime Minister Matteo Renzi is set to approve an emergency decree later on Friday aimed at stabilizing the industry by cutting the time it takes to recover debts. Until recently, Italian banks took seven to eight years on average to recoup bad loans. That is down to three and a half, and a proposed reform could reduce that to seven to eight months by creating a fast-track system, a central bank source said.

But the Pitigliano development highlights the slog lenders still face calling in old debts, which could strengthen their balance sheets, satisfy European capital requirements, and free them up to lend. Monte dei Paschi, which declined to comment for this article, seized the spa in 2010, according to a local court document. Six auctions have failed to attract a buyer, partly because the original developer still

holds rights to the land. Pitigliano's mayor, Pierluigi Camilli, described the abandoned hotel as a "relic." "It is there deteriorating because we cannot find a way to give it a future," Camilli said. "When the permits (to develop) were issued it looked like it could boost the local economy."

#### Weak banks

Long plagued by low profitability, weak governance and high costs, any further risks to the stability of Italy's banks could hinder the euro zone's bid to get over a debt crisis that has haunted it since 2009. A small reduction this year in the bad loans that built up in the downturn has been thanks to some lenders managing to sell non-performing loans, the Bank of Italy said, underlining how important these sales are. Around 66 percent of Monte dei Paschi's 10 billion euros in bad debts are secured by property like the Tosteto spa, which it can seize and sell to avoid losses if clients stop paying.

But these guarantees are worth little unless someone will buy the property. Sergio Gambassi, the original developer at Tosteto, said he never went bankrupt but Monte dei Paschi changed the terms of the mortgage and asked for money earlier than he expected. He said he sold his house by the sea and looked in vain for other funding. "I squeezed myself like a lemon," he said. Renzi's new decree is expected to let creditors seize other assets aside from the property pledged as security for loans, while also trying to help

companies avoid crises in the first place.

#### Market pressure

Pressure to resolve the bad debt problem has mounted this year as bank stocks have plunged 30 percent. Earlier in April, the government persuaded major banks to set up a fund to buy bad loans and subscribe to cash calls. The head of the ABI banking association told parliament this month that making credit recovery cheaper and easier would contribute "decisively to launching the market for bad debt". An entire section of the decree is dedicated to encouraging banks and their clients to reach agreement before starting litigation, a source close to the matter said. The Treasury is keen to avoid the courts getting involved in credit recovery, but the Justice Ministry is more cautious and is dragging its feet, another source said.

ABI says reducing recovery times by just one year would shrink the gap between prices buyers are willing to offer for non-performing loans and what banks will accept by 10 percent. For a seventh auction next month, the valuation for the Tosteto spa has been cut to 4.6 million euros from 8.9 million euros at its first auction. There is already an eighth auction scheduled for October, suggesting the sellers are not hopeful. Unless someone can be found to take the whole project forward, Gambassi said, "it will stay there, a white elephant crumbling over time. The municipality won't have the money to demolish it and I don't have the money." — Reuters



**NEW YORK:** A bubbling pool is the center of the Pool Room of the Fours Seasons Restaurant in New York. New York's original power lunch restaurant is closing and everything must go. The July 26 auction was announced this week and will mark the end of an era for a restaurant that has been a favorite of celebrities and business titans ever since it opened in 1959. — AP

## ORIGINAL POWER LUNCH EATERY TO CLOSE AND EVERYTHING MUST GO

**NEW YORK:** New York's original power lunch restaurant is closing and everything must go. Henry Kissinger's favorite banquet, the chairs that guests sat on when President John F. Kennedy celebrated his 45th birthday and even the pots and pans will go on the auction block when the Four Seasons closes in July. The July 26 auction was announced this week and will mark the end of an era for a restaurant that has been a favorite of celebrities and business titans ever since it opened in 1959. It continues to draw boldface names. "Drew Barrymore was in last week," Four Seasons co-owner Julian Niccolini remarked as he prepared for lunch service Friday. "A beautiful woman. She was with another beautiful woman."

Esquire magazine coined the term "power lunch" in 1979 to describe the scene at the Four Seasons, where Friday's guests included Peter G. Peterson, chairman of the Council on Foreign Relations. Many of the restaurant's regulars were outraged when Aby Rosen, the owner of the landmark Seagram Building that houses the Four

Seasons, announced last year that he was not renewing the lease. Instead, the space designed by legendary architect Philip Johnson will be leased to chefs Mario Carbone and Rich Torrisi and their business partner Jeff Zalaznick, who are known for trendy downtown eateries including Carbone,

Parm and Dirty French.

A spokesman for Rosen's real estate company, RFR Holding LLC, said the company had no update about plans for the new restaurant. The Four Seasons will reopen at a yet-to-be-announced location nearby, Niccolini said. "It's going to be a restaurant

designed for the next century," Niccolini promised. "We already have selected a very famous architect to design the new place." Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was the architect of the Seagram Building, and he and Johnson designed the Four Seasons, which is almost unchanged since it opened in 1959. With its Eero Saarinen cocktail tables and sleek Brno chairs, it is the epitome of the midcentury style embodied by the TV show "Mad Men," which shot a scene there.

Other movies and TV shows that used the restaurant as a set include the Richard Gere vehicle "Arbitrage" and an episode of "The Sopranos," co-owner Alex von Bidder recalled. Real-life scenes that played out there included Norman Mailer's 50th birthday party in 1973 and Martha Stewart and Barbara Walters' 2009 Thanksgiving dinner. The main dining room, known as the Pool Room, features an 11-by-11-foot marble pool that babbles like a woodland brook. Legend has it that Sophia Loren was the first guest to jump in. "There are no pictures," von Bidder said. "There were no cellphones at the time." — AP



**NEW YORK:** Cookware that will be offered at auction lines a shelf in the kitchen of the Four Seasons Restaurant, in New York. — AP

# KSE ENDS IN THE GREEN ZONE

## BAYAN INVESTMENT WEEKLY REPORT

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) ended last week in the green zone. The Price Index closed at 5,391.81 points, up by 0.84% from the week before closing, the Weighted Index increased by 0.71% after closing at 366.28 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 863.33 points up by 0.93%. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 3.38%, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 12.90 million, whereas trading volume average was 160.56 million shares, recording a decrease of 15.44%.

The three stock market indicators returned to the gains zone once again, supported by the purchasing and quick speculations operations which differentiated the trading activity for this period, and is concentrated mainly on the small-cap stocks. On the contrary, the market was subject to the profit collection operations that were present also during few sessions of the week, which lightened the three indicators' gains significantly.

As per the daily trading activity for Kuwait Stock Exchange during the last week, the three indicators were able to end the first session of the week with good gains supported by the speculative trading and the active purchasing operations that included a wide range of leading and small-cap stocks, among a minor decline in the pumped liquidity levels to the market compared to the previous session. On the next session, the three market indicators dropped in light of the profit collection trend that included many stocks of different sectors, especially in the Financial Services sector, the most sector affected the trading value.

Moreover, the market returned on Tuesday's and Wednesday's sessions to close in the green zone once again, supported by the random purchasing operations that concentrated on the small-cap stocks, especially the ones that were under selling pressures in the previous session, in addition to the collection operations that were executed on some leading stocks of which are expected to disclose positive financial results for the first quarter of the current year. On the last session of the week, the market witnessed strong profit collection operations concentrated on the small-cap stocks in particular, which caused the Price Index to lose some of its weekly gains, while the Weighted and KSX-15 indices were able to realize gains for the third consecutive session, which enhanced its weekly gains.

Furthermore, the market capitalization for KSE reached by the end of last week KD 23.84 billion increasing by 0.88% compared to its level in a week earlier, where it reached KD 23.64 billion; on an annual level, the market cap for the listed companies in the market declined by 5.62% from its value at end of 2015 where it was KD 25.27 billion. As far as KSE annual performance, the price index ended last week recording 3.98% annual loss compared to its closing in 2015, while the weighted index decreased by 4.04%, and the KSX-15 recorded 4.12% loss.

### Sectors' indices

Seven of KSE's sectors ended last week in the green zone, four recorded declines,

MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	802,796,428	949,328,741	-15.44%
Value (K.D)	64,518,269	66,774,952	-3.38%
Deals	18,846	20,166	-6.55%

MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)			
Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
23,844,300,000	23,635,200,000	0.88%	-5.62%

TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
HUMANSOFT	930.00	730.00	200.0	27.40%
NIH	61.00	48.00	13.0	27.08%
ALAQARIA	23.00	19.00	4.0	21.05%
IPG	350.00	305.00	45.0	14.75%
FIRSTDUBAI	61.00	54.00	7.0	12.96%

TOP LOSERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
COAST	47.00	53.00	-6.0	-11.32%
KAMCO	91.00	102.00	-11.0	-10.78%
NINV	110.00	122.00	-12.0	-9.84%
MARAKEZ	24.00	26.50	-2.5	-9.43%
ALMAL	30.50	33.50	-3.0	-8.96%

whereas the Health Care sector's index closed with no change from the week before. Last week's highest gainer was the Oil & Gas sector, achieving 4.36% growth rate as its index closed at 782.54 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Real Estate sector's index closed at 871.84 points recording 2.41% increase. The Telecommunications sector came in third as its index achieved 1.95% growth, ending the week at 631.20 points. On the other hand, the Insurance sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 2.09% to end the week's activity at 1,033.92 points. The Financial Services sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 0.76%, closing at 587.27

points, followed by the Consumer Goods sector, as its index closed at 1,073.99 points at a loss of 0.46%.

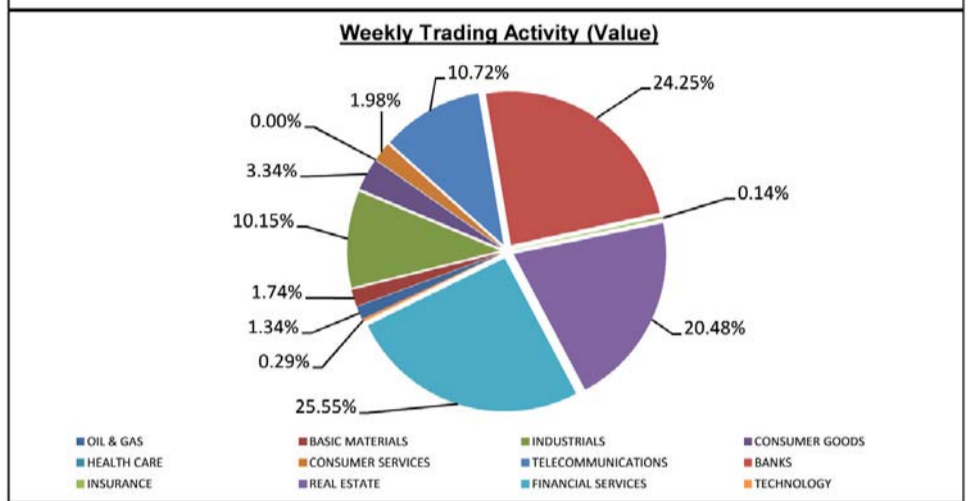
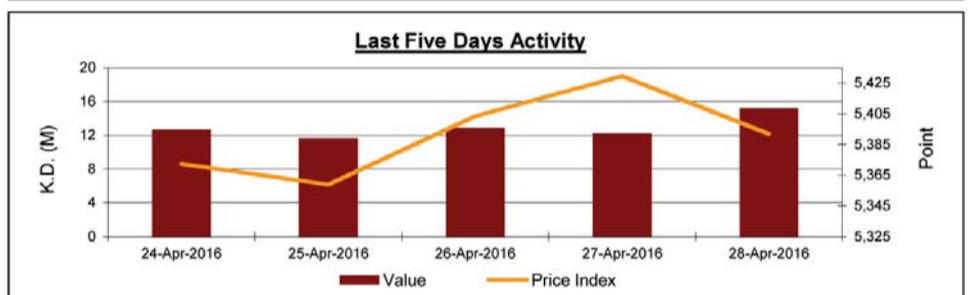
### Sectors' activity

The Financial Services sector dominated a total trade volume of around 318.28 million shares changing hands during last week, representing 39.65% of the total market trading volume. The Real Estate sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 32.02% of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 257.04 million shares. On the other hand, the Financial Services sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value;

SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %
OIL & GAS	19,768,118	2.46%	865,955	1.34%
BASIC MATERIALS	4,826,374	0.60%	1,122,686	1.74%
INDUSTRIALS	58,810,830	7.33%	6,550,807	10.15%
CONSUMER GOODS	8,951,770	1.12%	2,152,941	3.34%
HEALTH CARE	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
CONSUMER SERVICES	11,943,944	1.49%	1,280,375	1.98%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	37,868,221	4.72%	6,919,477	10.72%
BANKS	82,710,420	10.30%	15,646,480	24.25%
INSURANCE	386,776	0.05%	92,875	0.14%
REAL ESTATE	257,039,936	32.02%	13,216,141	20.48%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	318,281,499	39.65%	16,484,686	25.55%
TECHNOLOGY	2,208,540	0.28%	185,847	0.29%

SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	782.54	749.84	4.36%	-4.42%
BASIC MATERIALS	985.86	983.65	0.22%	-0.05%
INDUSTRIALS	1,009.11	993.14	1.61%	-3.25%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,073.99	1,078.94	-0.46%	-1.91%
HEALTH CARE	994.00	994.00	0.00%	7.42%
CONSUMER SERVICES	924.43	920.36	0.44%	-8.35%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	631.20	619.15	1.95%	5.44%
BANKS	829.72	832.77	-0.37%	-8.53%
INSURANCE	1,033.92	1,056.04	-2.09%	-8.26%
REAL ESTATE	871.84	851.29	2.41%	-7.33%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	587.27	591.78	-0.76%	-1.36%
TECHNOLOGY	968.30	951.66	1.75%	18.06%

KSE INDICES				
		Price Index	Weighted Index	KSX 15
Weekly	Last week	5,391.81	366.28	863.33
	Previous week	5,346.95	363.68	855.36
	Change (Point)	44.86	2.60	7.97
	Change (%)	0.84%	0.71%	0.93%
Annual	Last year	5,615.12	381.70	900.43
	Change (Point)	-223.31	-15.42	-37.10
	Change (%)	-3.98%	-4.04%	-4.12%



with a turnover of around KD 16.48 million or 25.55% of last week's total market trading value. The Banks sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 15.65 million representing 24.25% of the total market trading value.

# KFH-TURKEY TARGETS TURKEY'S TOP 10

**KUWAIT:** Group CEO at Kuwait Finance House KFH Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh said that (KFH-Turkey) is the biggest participation bank with 35% shares in assets, 37.5% shares in credits and 37.9% in deposits in Turkish participation banking sector. It has a pioneer role in participation banking supporting real sector of Turkish economy. He added during his participation in the 11th edition of the Turkish Arab Economic Forum (TAF) 2016 convened in Istanbul that KFH-Turkey's current credits reached nearly to \$9 billion, indicating that the bank has currently reached 365 branches and is employing over 5400 workers.

He illustrated that another important aspect of (KFH-Turkey) is that, it is the only bank in Turkey which has certified Research and Development Center with 300 engineers and is changing the banking sector with its recent innovative projects and products. He said that individual investors are able to invest in Turkey through KT Portfoy, which is a subsidiary of (KFH-Turkey). KT Portfoy Asset Management Company manages hedge funds established based on private sector and sovereign sukuk, stock shares, gold etc. Real estate funds and individual investment advisory are other fields of service of the company.

"When we look at the contributions of KFH-Turkey to the bilateral relationships between Gulf Countries and Turkey, we see that KFH-Turkey has increased the trade transactions; i.e. Imports & Exports by meeting the financial needs of businesses through its offshore branch in the Kingdom of Bahrain, its subsidiary in the Emirate of Dubai and its mother company KFH in Kuwait. Additionally Gulf funds have brought to Turkey by KFH-Turkey, where both Gulf investors and businesses in Turkey benefit." Al-Nahedh added. He indicated that in the long-run the Bank seeks to be one of the top 10 banks in profitability and service quality in

Turkey. On the other hand, the Bank seeks new opportunities to enlarge its international network at different locations.

In this respect, the Bank established a 100% subsidiary in Germany, KT Bank AG, which started operations from 1st July 2015. KT Bank AG features being the first bank on mainland Europa that offers Sharia compliant Banking services. He said that being the first participation bank that issued sukuk in Turkey, KFH-Turkey is planning to continue its services further in the sector. In 2015 KFH-Turkey issued approximately 2.2 billion TL worth of Sukuk. 800 million ringgit sukuk was issued in

Malaysia. Participation banking has been growing faster than the conventional sector in the last couple of decades.

It is worth noting that the forum attracted huge dignitaries and high profile institutions participations including ministers, a line-up of high profile speakers and businessmen. They discussed major issues and topics of high relevance to a growing Turkish-Arab economic partnership including Deepening Reforms and Re-launching the Economy, Investing for Growth, The Potential for Private Equity, Turkish-Arab Economic Partnership, and Strengthening Banking and Capital Markets Links.







**MARACAIBO, Venezuela:** A mother takes up her baby in a house at Falapitos de Santa Rosa de Agua neighborhood, on the banks of Maracaibo bay in Maracaibo city. The political tension, shortages and now enforced electricity blackouts that started this week have raised fears of unrest in the South American oil state. Looting and clashes were reported in various towns including the country's second-biggest city Maracaibo after daily power cut-offs were formally launched on Monday. — AFP photos

# US PLACES 5 NATIONS ON TRADE MONITORING LIST

CHINA, JAPAN, GERMANY, S KOREA, TAIWAN ON US WATCH LIST

**WASHINGTON:** The Treasury Department has placed five countries - China, Japan, Germany, South Korea and Taiwan - on a new monitoring list designed to pressure foreign governments to tackle large trade imbalances with the United States. The action was disclosed in a report the administration sent to Congress on Friday. The report, which by law Congress must submit to Congress every six months, does not designate any nation as a currency manipulator.

But Treasury did say it is employing new tools to more closely monitor actions of countries with which the United States is running large deficits. Under criteria Congress established earlier this year, Treasury put the countries on a monitoring list that will trigger talks but no economic penalties. However, if the discussions fail, the countries could face a greater threat of sanctions in the future. The legislation was part of an effort to toughen a 1988 law that requires Treasury to assess whether any US trading partner is manipulating its currency to gain unfair trade advantages.

The designation enables the United States to try to negotiate with the offending nation to reform its practices. If those talks fail, the United States can seek to impose trade sanctions such as penalty tariffs, though those sanctions must win approval of the World Trade Organization. The last country designated a currency manipulator under the 1988 law was China in 1994 during the Clinton administration. Unhappy with a dearth of designations over the past two decades, Congress amended the law in legislation that cleared the Senate in February to set up specific criteria that the administration could use short of deeming a country a currency manipulator.

The three criteria selected were the size of America's trade deficit with the nation, the size of the nation's current account trade surplus with all nations, and the frequency with which the nation intervened in currency markets. If a country met all three criteria, the law requires the administration

to engage in "enhanced analysis" of the country's practices. Treasury said that none of the five nations had met all three criteria. But all five meet two of the three criteria, which is why they have been placed on a "monitoring list." That will mean Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew and other administration officials will raise US trade concerns as part of regular discussions that take place during gatherings such as finance meetings of the Group of 20 major economies.

The new surveillance process is being put in place at a time when America's large trade imbalances with countries such as China, Japan and

Mexico have become an issue in the presidential campaign. Republican front-runner Donald Trump contends that the Obama administration and previous administrations have failed to enforce US trade laws. He has said those failures have allowed foreign countries to run huge trade surpluses with the United States, costing millions of American jobs. In his economic plan, Trump has promised to immediately declare China a currency manipulator as a way to bring the country to the bargaining table to change trade practices US critics contend are hurting American workers and companies. — AP



**NEW YORK:** Traders work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on April 29, 2016 in New York City. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed down over 100 points. — AFP

## HAIR LEFT HALF-CUT IN VENEZUELA ELECTRICITY CHAOS

**MARACAIBO:** Carmela de la Hoz sent a customer away with his hair half cut when the power went off in her salon. The customer will be back-but so will the blackouts. The rolling electricity cuts the Venezuelan government ordered across the country starting this week have hit the city of Maracaibo hard. Security forces are patrolling the streets to prevent unrest following reports of looting in Maracaibo and other towns, a sign that Venezuela's economic crisis is close to boiling point.

In their green uniforms, they guard subways and entrances to supermarkets where locals queue for hundreds of meters (yards) to buy rations of food and supplies. Citizens have already been short of basic goods for months. Now the power cuts prompted by an electricity shortage are driving locals to despair. "This is a disaster," De la Hoz said. "We can't live here." "How can I work without electricity? How can I pay my five employees and rent the premises?"

### Blackouts and burnouts

The city is home to an old fishing community beside the Maracaibo lake that gives onto Venezuela's northern gulf in the Caribbean. It lies near one of the world's biggest oil reserves. They once helped fuel an economic boom, but the price of the oil has plunged, slashing the state's revenues, and critics say the govern-

ment has failed to provide economic alternatives.

President Nicolas Maduro says a drought has dried up Venezuela's hydroelectric dams. His opponents say his government has mismanaged the entire power network. Maduro announced four hours of power cuts a day for 40 days from Monday. But locals here say the lights have been going off for much longer periods. While blackouts have not been enforced in the capital Caracas, poor families in cities like Maracaibo are suffering the consequences. Sweating in the sun, carpenter Jose Ortega, 45, stands in the doorway of his home—a rickety house mounted on piles on a bank of the lake.

Inside his workshop, the saw and sander are not working because of the power cut. "It is hitting us hard. We can't get supplies at any price," he said. "We are eating mostly bananas, although the fish we get from the lake help a bit." Switching the power supply on and off causes irregular surges of current that burn out the resistors on refrigerators and televisions. "They turn off the power with no warning," Ortega said. "You have no time to turn anything off and the equipment gets damaged." One of his neighbors, Ramon Morillo, 58, had to pay the equivalent of hundreds of dollars to get his fridge fixed. He catches fish to help feed his eight children. "We are screwed with the light, the water, the food," he said.

### Set to explode

Critics say Maduro's power cuts are misguided. The former head of the state electricity utility, Miguel Lara said he considers the blackout plan technically flawed, saying the cuts would be followed by periods of high use that would saturate the network. Francisco Martinez, president of the business association Fedecamaras said the measure is curtailing activity just when the country needs more working time to boost production.

The blackouts "will hugely affect production of goods and services and will increase scarcity," he said. When night fell on Thursday in Maracaibo, locals blocked roads and lit fires in the otherwise dark streets in angry protest. Analysts have warned of growing unrest in a country the United Nations ranks as one of the world's most violent. At her "World of Beauty" salon, De la Hoz said bandits killed her 32-year-old son to steal his car. "This is a pressure cooker," she said. "It's about to explode." — AFP



**MARACAIBO, Venezuela:** A boy tries to catch fish from his raft in Maracaibo bay, on the banks of the Falapitos de Santa Rosa de Agua neighborhood in Maracaibo city.

## THREE KD 5,000 WINNERS IN NBK'S AL JAWHARA DRAWS

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) announced three lucky winners in Al Jawhara weekly draws during the month of April. The draws were conducted under the supervision of Ministry of Commerce Representatives. Samy Ramadan Al Kandary, Mahmoud Jumaah Al Qaseer and Hanan Fares Al Bannaq each won KD 5,000. The winners expressed their gratitude and thanked NBK for its great services and promotions.

NBK has doubled customers' chances to win in the weekly, monthly and quarterly draws when they do not withdraw or transfer from their accounts. NBK customers have chances to win KD 5,000 weekly, KD 125,000 monthly and a grand prize of KD 250,000 quarterly. Each KD 50 in a customer's account entitles them to one entry in the draw, thus

more money in an account means more chances in each draw. The new feature introduced to Al Jawhara Account enables customers to double their chances when maintaining their balance without withdrawing or transferring from Al Jawhara account.

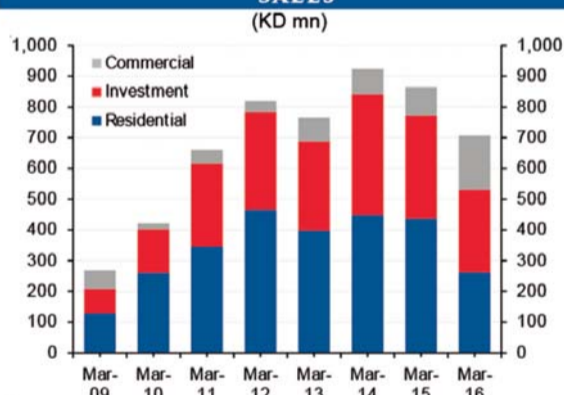
Al Jawhara is the most popular prize-giving account in Kuwait. Al Jawhara account entitles account holders to enter the weekly, monthly and quarterly Al Jawhara draws. All prizes are automatically credited to the winners' accounts the day after the draw. Al Jawhara accounts are available for both Kuwaitis and expats and can be opened at any of NBK's branches around Kuwait, or through NBK website for existing customers. For more information, please contact NBK Call Center at 1801801 or visit NBK official website www.nbk.com.

## NBK CONFIRMS ITS LEADING POSITION

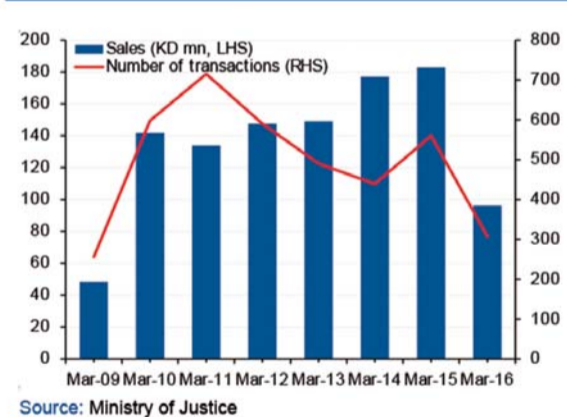
**KUWAIT:** During the signing ceremony of Clean Fuels project, Al Fulajj affirmed that NBK's leading role in this consortium is yet another testament of NBK's strong reputation, professionalism and credibility in the market place. "The Clean Fuels Project represents a remarkable boost for the prospects of the Kuwaiti economy, reflecting the government's commitment to continue with the execution of its development plan despite the drop in oil prices", Al Fulajj added.

He praised the role of Kuwait's banking sector, which has proved its continuous success and creditworthiness over many decades where it led the finance of Kuwait's modern economic renaissance since independence. He also confirmed that the development and infrastructure projects demonstrate the efficiency of the banking sector which was able to provide funding under the toughest conditions. It's worth mentioning that the banking sector in Kuwait enjoys high liquidity and depth of financial expertise. Allowing it to support better execution of infrastructure projects which in turn reflects positively on the progress of the national economy.

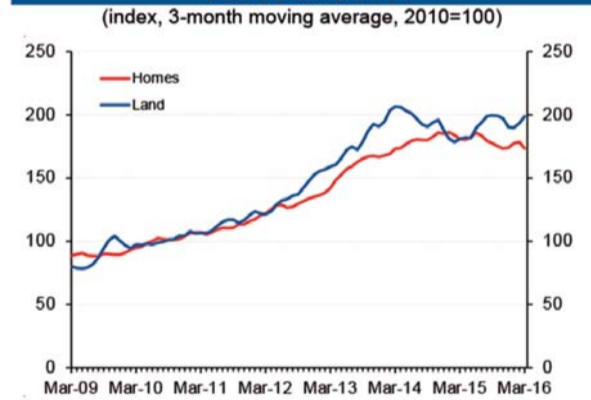
**CHART 1: QUARTERLY REAL ESTATE SALES (KD mn)**



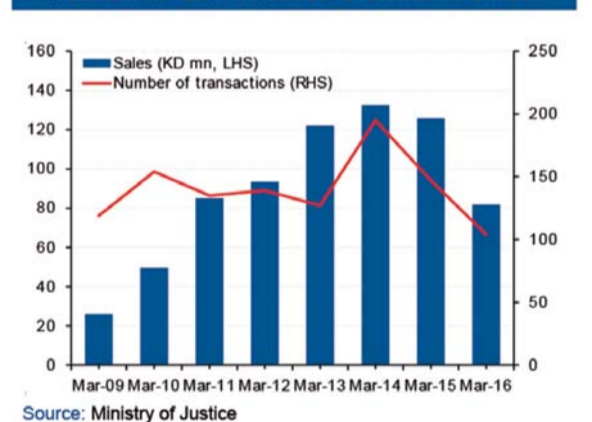
**CHART 2: RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE**



**CHART 3: RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE PRICE INDICES (index, 3-month moving average, 2010=100)**



**CHART 4: INVESTMENT REAL ESTATE**



# KUWAIT REAL ESTATE MARKET Q1 SALES DOWN 18 PERCENT

## NBK Economic Update

**KUWAIT:** Heightened oil market volatility, combined with wider fiscal deficits and potential hikes in utility charges and fees, all seemed to impact the real estate market in Q1. Real estate sales are still off the pace of 2014-2015, except for the commercial sector. Prices, on the other hand, appear to be holding well amid the subdued activity. Real estate market sales totaled KD 705 million by the end of the first quarter of 2016, down 18% compared to the first quarter of last year, as the market continues to correct amid growing uncertainty. March alone saw sales down by 29% year-on-year (y/y) to KD 235 million. Real estate price indices posted mixed results, reflecting investor caution regarding the sector's outlook.

Activity in the residential sector was weak despite a somewhat better performance in March. (Chart 2.) The sector registered 307 transactions during the month, worth KD 97 million; activity was up by 25% compared to February. Despite the monthly pick up, the quarter's performance was weak, recording a 47% drop y/y. Residential real estate price indices provided more evidence of firming in Q1. The residential-home price index stood at 173.5 points, 4.2% lower than the previous

year. Despite price growth slipping slightly in March, it has shown slow but steady improvement since November 2015 when it bottomed at 6.8% y/y.

Prices of residential-land showed a more robust improvement, recording their fastest pace of growth in 19-month at 9.9% y/y after spending most of 2015 in negative y/y territory. After experiencing a mild correction in 2015, and after stabilizing the second half of the year, prices are showing firmness so far in 2016. In the investment sector, sales softened in March, recording KD 81 million in sales for the month, down 35% y/y. (Chart 4) March's number of transactions lagged as well, dropping by 29% from previous year.

Although accounting for 70% of the value of sales, whole buildings accounted for only 32% of the sector's 104 registered transactions in March. In other words, the number of less expensive single apartments (foe investment) continued to be the sector's main driver in recent months. The shift in the composition of the investment sales towards more single-apartments than buildings resulted in a 20% decline in quarterly KD sales from a year ago while the number of transactions improved by 3% y/y in Q1.6.

Prices in the investment-building sector improve further in March. The investment-building price index stood at 216 points, 6.7% above the previous year. (Chart 3) Prices could remain in check in the upcoming months as the number of vacant apartments continues to grow, based on recent data on homes and buildings published by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI). The 2% growth in vacant apartments in December 2015 compared to June 2015 could be exercising downward pressures on rentals (gauged by the housing rent component of the consumer price index) and ultimately on prices of buildings and apartments.

Sales for the quarter totaled KD 174 million, up 91% compared to 1Q15, with more than double the number of transactions recorded during the same period. The sector recorded sales of KD 57 million in March, including a KD 14 million transaction for a hotel in Salmiya. The value of loans approved by Kuwait Credit Bank in March amounted to KD 23 million, unchanged from February but 17% higher than the average value of loans approved in 2015. This was supported by a healthy increase in the number of approved loans to 536, the highest since April 2015.

**TABLE 1: REAL ESTATE SALES AND KCB HOUSING LOANS**

Real estate sales	Year average		2016			m/m		y/y	
	2014	2015	Jan	Feb	Mar	%	%	%	%
<b>Sales (KD mn)</b>	<b>355.8</b>	<b>253.5</b>	<b>213.7</b>	<b>257.8</b>	<b>235.0</b>	<b>-8.9</b>	<b>-28.8</b>		
Residential property	158.3	113.4	89.6	76.7	96.1	25.3	-47.4		
Investment property	151.0	102.2	96.3	91.1	81.8	-10.2	-34.9		
Commercial property	46.4	37.9	27.8	90.0	57.1	-36.6	164.6		
<b>Number of transactions</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>-40.1</b>		
Residential property	484	323	250	221	307	38.9	-45.2		
Investment property	143	120	105	106	104	-1.9	-29.3		
Commercial property	8	8	5	14	14	0.0	366.7		
<b>Transaction size (KD '000)</b>	<b>557.1</b>	<b>566.0</b>	<b>593.7</b>	<b>756.0</b>	<b>552.9</b>	<b>-26.9</b>	<b>18.9</b>		
Residential property	334.0	351.6	358.5	346.9	313.0	-9.8	-4.1		
Investment property	1084.7	881.6	917.0	859.5	786.6	-8.5	-8.0		
Commercial property	4,936.8	5,185.5	5,564.4	6,430.7	4,076.2	-36.6	-43.3		
<b>KCB housing loans</b>									
<b>Approved loans (KD mn)</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>23.7</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>23.5</b>		
New construction	20.8	15.5	10.9	15.2	12.6	-17.2	-17.6		
Purchase of existing homes	3.3	3.1	2.9	3.1	2.6	-16.3	-7.5		
Additions & renovations	1.3	1.4	3.4	5.4	8.7	62.0	575.2		
<b>Number of approved loans</b>	<b>423.3</b>	<b>379.5</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>27.0</b>		
New construction	303.3	229.2	157	225	185	-17.8	-17.8		
Purchase of existing homes	52.2	49.4	43	45	38	-15.6	-13.6		
Additions & renovations	67.8	100.9	132	207	313	51.2	104.6		
<b>Disbursed loans (KD mn)</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>27.7</b>		
New construction	13.1	17.5	17.3	16.6	23.2	40.3	20.2		
Purchase of existing homes	2.5	2.8	2.3	4.9	2.6	-46.7	-9.0		
Additions & renovations	1.2	1.8	2.2	3.1	5.1	67.9	148.9		

Source: Ministry of Justice, Kuwait Credit Bank

**Note:** Our real estate indexes database comprises 62,000 transactions. Each index combines monthly average prices (per sqm when possible) in select, more active, areas of Kuwait; it is then adjusted for volatility. The indexes are based in 2010, i.e. 2010 price index equals 100. The indexes are not adjusted for seasonality nor for number of business days. They also do not cover the commercial sector.



## BOUBYAN BANK OBTAINS APPROVAL FOR UP TO \$250 M SUKUK ISSUANCE

**KUWAIT:** Boubyan Bank announced that it has completed all the regulatory approvals to issue and market sukuk to strengthen its capital base through additional Common Equity Tier 1 Capital "CET1" instruments as per the instructions of Basel III through a mudaraba structure. The issuance size is expected to reach \$250 million. Boubyan Bank's Vice Chairman and CEO, Adel Al-Majed, stated that this would be the first sukuk issuance out of Kuwait since

2007, and the first sukuk issuance for a Kuwaiti Bank with the objective of strengthening its "CET1" capital.

He added: "Boubyan Capital, the investment arm of Boubyan Bank, is the global coordinator on this sukuk issuance together with two major international banks, HSBC and Standard Chartered Bank. In addition, Boubyan Bank has mandated Boubyan Capital, Dubai Islamic Bank, Emirates NBD Capital, HSBC, KFH Capital, National Bank of

Kuwait and Standard Chartered Bank as joint lead managers and bookrunners." Al-Majed emphasized the importance of Boubyan Capital's role in arranging and managing the sukuk issuance in cooperation with the major international financial institutions. Furthermore, he added that an international roadshow to major financial cities to market the sukuk will follow and includes London, Singapore, Hong Kong, Geneva, Zurich, Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

## GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF MONTHLY SALARY ACCOUNT AND RED ACCOUNT DRAWS

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank has announced winners of both Monthly Salary Account and Red Account draws, which took place on Tuesday, 26 April 2016 at 1pm, live on Marina FM's famous Diwaniya show, under the supervision of a Ministry of Commerce representative. Sarah Fahad Naser was the lucky winner of the Salary Account draw and Ohoud Salem Mhawesh won the Red Account draw prize for this month. Each of the two winners received cash draw prize of KD 1,000.

The new 2016 Kuwaiti Salary offer provides customers a guaranteed cash gift of up to KD 200 or up to 60,000 Gulf Reward Points upon their first salary transfer as well as receiving a Gulf Bank Signature Credit card free for life. In addition to the monthly draws, Salary Account offers quarterly car draws with the chance to win a new 2016 Cadillac. The new 2016 red

account is designed for high school, college and university students aged 15 to 25 years and offers a monthly cash draw prizes of KD 1,000 and quarterly car draws for lucky winners of a new 2016 Cadillac upon transferring their student allowance.

In addition, all Red card holders can enjoy a movie ticket for KD 2 only at Cinescape movie theatres (KNCC) seven days a week instead of the usual KD 3.5. Moreover, red account holders receive an ATM card and there is no minimum deposit required to open the account or a minimum balance charge. For further information about the Salary, Red accounts and prize draws, visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, or call Gulf Bank's Customer Contact Center on 1805805. General information about Gulf Bank's products and services can also be found at the Bank's website [www.e-gulfbank.com](http://www.e-gulfbank.com)



## KUWAITI INVESTMENT PARTNER, ABDULLA AL SHAHEEN SHOWCASES ACHIEVEMENTS

**FUJAIRAH:** HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Hamad Al Sharqi, Crown Prince of Fujairah, paid a visit to Oryx Industries headquarters, to review the achievements made by the Group over the last 12 months. His Highness was received on his visit by Sheikh Mohamed bin Suhaim Al Thani, Chairman of State Holding Group (Qatar) and majority shareholder in Oryx Industries in Fujairah, UAE. During the visit, Abdullah Al Shaheen, Chairman of Oryx Industries and Deputy Chairman and Managing Director of State Holding Group briefed His Highness, along with a number of government officials and businessmen, on the accomplishments made by the group and the new expansions achieved by its subsidiaries.

The Crown Prince visited the Group's quarries while being briefed on the Group's expansion projects that have contributed to boosting Fujairah's ranking as a major exporter of quarry products and building materials amongst the GCC countries in which Kuwait represents close to 10% of the emirate export markets.

Speaking on the occasion, Al Shaheen extended his gratitude and appreciation to His Highness for his efforts and contribution in advancing economic development in the Emirate of Fujairah. Al Shaheen added: "The investor-friendly climate in Fujairah, the consistent and stable legislative framework, the collaboration of stakeholders, the existing investment opportunities and the provision of

infrastructure and logistics facilities, have all served as the cornerstones for achievements made by the group, within a short span of time. The group is now considered as one of the top contributors to the emirate's ongoing urban and commercial development, through its operations in quarry products and ready-mix concrete."

The visit was followed by a press conference, in which Al Shaheen thanked His Highness and others in the delegation for their visit. Al Shaheen concluded: "The success of Oryx Industries has always been and will continue to be linked to the growth and development of the emirate." Qais Al Maskati, CEO and Managing Director of First Equity Partners and Member of the Board of Oryx Industries, said that the new developments seen over the last year have included many contributions made by the group's subsidiaries.

These include: the opening of Oryx Crushers, with a production capacity of 1,400 tons per hour; the launch of a new production line at Al Aali Crushers; and the expansion in the quarry's operational area to 2.8 square kilometers. These expansions will increase the production capacity of the two companies to over 12 million tons per annum. Other achievements made by the group over the last few years, through its subsidiary Oryx Trading, include the signing of contracts with many companies in the GCC region for the export of quarry products. "This has enabled Oryx Industries Group

to lead the way as one of the largest exporters of such products, from the Emirate of Fujairah," Al Maskati said.

With regard to developments seen in Oryx Mix, the company has been able to increase its market share to two thirds of the total ready mix concrete production, in the Eastern Coast of the UAE. All products of ready mix concrete are in compliance with the highest international standards. Large construction and infrastructure projects, such as hotels, high-rise buildings, airports and highways, already use Oryx ready mix concrete. This has enabled the company to build a strong and growing portfolio of clients, with recent projects based in Khorfakkan, Al Badiyah, Dibba Al Fujairah, Kalba and other cities in the Eastern Coast of the UAE.

Qatar-based State Holding, one of the major investors in Oryx Industries, has investments in industrial and real estate sectors across the MENA and European regions. Its prudent investment policy gives a special attention to growth and sustainability in all its investments. Bahrain-based First Equity Partners (FEP) manages a USD 3 billion investment portfolio and has eight offices across MENA and Europe. FEP manages all the subsidiaries of State Holding Group, which operate across different industry sectors such as steel, building materials, real estate, trading and SMEs for manufacturing.

## WINNERS OF GULF BANK'S AL DANAH DAILY DRAWS

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its Al Danah daily draws on 24 April 2016 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 10 April - 14 April 2016. The Al Danah daily draws include draws each and every working day for two prizes of KD1,000 per winner. Today is the last day for customers to open an Al Danah account or increase their deposits, as to enhance their chances of winning the KD250,000 cash prize.

The winners were: (Sunday 17/4) - Mohammed Khalifah Mohammed Al-Mulla, Abdulwahab Bader Al-Sayed Abdulwahab Al-Naqeeb; (Monday 18/4) - Abdo Ebraheem Neama, Abdullah Ahmed Bakheet Al-Raqem; (Tuesday 19/4) - Mohammed Marzouq Turkey Al-Azmi, Kholoud Ali-Hussain Al-Omar; (Wednesday 20/4) - Jaber Nasser Matar Sanad Al-Sharefi, Badriya Marzooq Dawood Al-Bader and (Thursday 21/4) - Abdulraheem Mansour Ali Al-Qattan, Mohammad Gulzar Nawab Khan.

Gulf Bank's Al Danah 2016 draw lineup includes daily draws (2 winners per working day each receive KD1000). Al Danah's 2nd Quarterly draw for the prize of KD250,000 will be held on the 30th of June and the 3rd Quarterly Draw for the prize of KD500,000 will be held on September 29th. The final Al Danah draw for 1 Million Kuwaiti Dinars will be held on 5 January, 2017 whereby the Al Danah

Millionaire will be announced. Five reasons why the Al Danah account is the Best: (1) Kuwait's single biggest yearly cash prize of KD 1 Million; (2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD500,000; (3) Two winners of KD1,000 every working day; (4) The most chances to win; (5) Only Bank that transfers your chances to win from year to year.

### Win Big, Live Big

Al Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al Danah winner.

Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the draw within two days. To take part in the Al Danah 2016 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must have an Al Danah account containing at least KD 200; customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, transfer on line, or call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance. Customers can also log on to [www.e-gulfbank.com/aldanahwinners](http://www.e-gulfbank.com/aldanahwinners), to find out more about Al Danah and its winners.

## MOHAMED NASER AL SAYER & SONS 'DIAMOND SURPRISES'

**KUWAIT:** Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Co (MNSS) - one of the Al Sayer Group Holding Companies, held an electronic raffle for Toyota Genuine Spare Parts "Diamond surprises" promotion to select the winners of the second draw at the Ministry of Commerce & Industry premises. Diamond Surprises promotion has build excitement and lot of interest among customers and since commencement has received an overwhelming response so far. 5 lucky winners who were selected from the first raffle draw were presented marvelous diamond prizes.

Names of the winners and the prizes won are as follows:

Wasmiah Abdullah Suliman Alweqaian - 0.90 carat (VS) diamond; Ahmad Kadim - 0.83 carat (VS) diamond; Shehzad Abdulaziz Ahmed - 0.73 carat (VS) diamond; Fawaz Doukhi Refaei Al Rasheedi - 0.50 carat (VS) diamond and Naser Salah - 0.40 carat (VS) diamond.

Toyota Genuine Spare Parts reputation and trust among customers are grounded on their highest standards of quality, durability and performance. They are designed to fit Toyota vehicle's exact specifications. Each part will fit perfectly

and meet the high quality standards of Toyota. The Spare Parts Winter Promotion commenced on the 14 February, and will end on 14 May 2016. Customers will enter one of the three draws with every KD 5 spent on Toyota Genuine Parts at any Al Sayer spare parts outlet or service facility during the promotion period and grab a chance to win

the attractive prize. The remaining draw of this promotion will be conducted during the month of May.

**TOYOTA**  
GENUINE PARTS

تويوتا  
قطع غيار أصلية



## HOW TO BOOST YOUR CAREER IN A BAD ECONOMY

The writing has been on the wall for some time: It's a competitive and tough world out there and in the complex labyrinths of the ever-evolving globalized corporate world, job security is a thing of the past. In fact, the 2015 Bayt.com Middle East Salary Survey shows that 21% of respondents claim that the average length of time they have held a job for was 2 years. So how do you ensure that your career survives, and even thrives, amidst the conflicting forces, turbulent currents and ongoing challenges out there? Here, the career experts at Bayt.com, the Middle East's leading job site, give you three surefire ways to inject some momentum into your career and get back on the right track:

### Set goals

On a routine basis, you need to sit back

and take stock of your career to make sure you are on the right track and have not been veered off-course. If you do not have a clear career roadmap, now may be the time to start thinking about your career aspirations and ambitions and formulate a game plan. Do you know where you want to be at the end of the year, in 5 years, in 10 years? It is far easier to pursue and measure your personal success if you have a vision of that success and a clearly defined path for getting there. As you plan your career development, take the time to get to know yourself and assess your skills, strengths, weaknesses and preferences.

Bayt.com Testshare a great way to evaluate your strength and weak points at minimal costs. Ask yourself whether you like what you do and what it is that you like and dislike about your job and career.

Sometimes, a complete career change may be in order if your likes, dislikes, competencies and aspirations push you in a different direction, or if the tests you take give you totally different results. In any event, clearly defining your career goals and setting milestones for your success will help you in achieving minor, yet significant, successes along the way.

### Learn a new skill or develop an old one

You should constantly be on the lookout for opportunities to reeducate yourself, sharpen your skill set and broaden your knowledge base. At the very least, you should aim to stay on top of industry trends and be well-versed with the latest in industry journals and publications. Stay abreast of the conferences and seminars in your field and aim to attend the ones that will

keep you at the cutting edge of your industry. You might also want to consider picking up a new skill or learning a trade you have always wanted to learn. Cross-training is becoming increasingly popular as different industries intermarry and technology becomes an indispensable part of our lives. Online courses, such as the ones on Bayt.com, are also a great, and cost-effective, way to enhance your skills in areas of your specialty or interest.

### Go the extra mile

Do you take the time to look back at your work and make sure it is of the highest quality and cannot possibly be improved on further? Do you always aim to exceed your boss's expectations and stretch your own limits? That extra hurdle past the finishing line is the stuff that makes a reputation. There are peo-

ple who are happy to meet goals, and others who look back at their work with great pride and accomplishment knowing they have set new standards and have given their company far more than would have been simply 'satisfactory'. Take ownership of your work and always ask how you can deliver the best possible product or service and help others on your team do the same. Be aware of what the competition is up to, and aim to present something superior.

### About Bayt.com

Bayt.com is the #1 job site in the Middle East with more than 40,000 employers and over 24,500,000 registered job seekers from across the Middle East, North Africa and the globe, representing all industries, nationalities and career levels. Post a job or find jobs on [www.bayt.com](http://www.bayt.com) today and access the leading resource for job seekers and employers in the region.

## US SPY COURT REJECTED ZERO SURVEILLANCE ORDERS IN 2015

**WASHINGTON:** The secretive US Foreign Surveillance Intelligence Court did not deny a single government request in 2015 for electronic surveillance orders granted for foreign intelligence purposes, continuing a long-standing trend, a Justice Department document showed.

The court received 1,457 requests last year on behalf of the National Security Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation for authority to intercept communications, including email and phone calls, according to a Justice Department memo sent to leaders of relevant congressional committees on Friday and seen by Reuters. The court

did not reject any of the applications in whole or in part, the memo showed.

The total represented a slight uptick from 2014, when the court received 1,379 applications and rejected none.

The court, which acts behind closed doors, was established in 1978 to handle applications for surveillance warrants against foreign suspects by U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies and grew more controversial after 2013 leaks by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden. The electronic surveillance often is conducted with the assistance of Internet and telecommunications companies. Civil liberties advocates have long derided the court for acting as a

"rubber stamp" for government surveillance operations. Government officials have said the Justice Department is careful about its applications and that sometimes orders are modified substantially by the court.

The court modified 80 applications in 2015, a more than fourfold increase from the 19 modifications made in 2014.

The memo also stated that 48,642 national security letters (NSL) requests were made in 2015 by the FBI. NSLs are a type of subpoena authority used to compel Internet and telecommunications firms to hand over customer data, such as web browsing history, email addresses and subscriber information.

One NSL often contains multiple requests for information, such as a sequence of emails believed relevant to an investigation.

The majority of NSL requests, 31,863, made in 2015 sought information on foreigners, regarding a total of 2,053 individuals, the memo stated.

The FBI made 9,418 requests for national security letters in 2015 for information about U.S. citizens and legal immigrants, regarding a total of 3,746 individuals, it showed.

The FBI also made 7,361 NSL requests for only "subscriber information," typically names, addresses and billing records, of Americans and foreigners regarding

3,347 different people.

National security letters have been available as a law enforcement tool since the 1970s, but their frequency and breadth expanded dramatically under the USA Patriot Act enacted shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. They are almost always accompanied by an open-ended gag order issued by the Justice Department barring companies from disclosing the contents of the demand for customer data.

The government also made 142 applications to the surveillance court for access to business records, and it did not deny any of those requests, according to the memo. — Reuters

## ARICA'S GIANT EYE IN THE SKY PROVING WORTH ITS SALT

**SUTHERLAND:** South Africa's SALT telescope has helped detect the first white dwarf pulsar, the latest co-discovery that has astronomers eager to use the largest optical telescope in the southern hemisphere to unlock the galaxy's secrets.

Quick reaction times, as well as being significantly cheaper than similar European or American facilities in producing the science are key competitive advantages, said a senior astronomer at the SALT consortium during a media visit.

"SALT is now living up to expectations, producing high-quality science data that probe the far reaches of the universe," said Ted Williams, a director at the South African Astronomical Observatory managing the site. Scientists know of neutron stars, large objects about the size of the Sun that have compacted down at the end of their lives to something about 10 km (six miles) across, the last stop before a black hole.

Williams said these incredibly dense objects have been known for decades to produce pulsars, which emit regular pulses of radio waves and other electromagnetic radiation at rates of up to one thousand pulses per second.

"But there is another class of compact objects called white dwarfs, bigger, the size of the earth. So rather than 10 kilometres in size we are looking at 6,000 kilometres and we've just discovered the very first white dwarf pulsar," he said of the previously

unknown celestial phenomena.

Situated atop a hill in the desolate Northern Cape around 350 km north of Cape Town, the \$43 million SALT telescope used its powerful spectroscopy light measurement tool to prove the existence of the white dwarf pulsar.

Shared by a consortium of partners from South Africa, India, America and Europe, SALT's queuing system allows it to interrupt routine observations and within minutes focus its 10-metre optical telescope on new discoveries, said Williams.

In February, SALT was the first major telescope to take a spectrum of a supernova in the nearby Centaurus A galaxy hours after its discovery.

It also helped reveal one of the biggest explosions ever recorded in the universe, 200 times more powerful than a typical supernova and believed to have shone at 570 billion times the brightness of the Sun.

"It is what we wanted for South Africa and for Africa, not to stay at the margins but actually at the centre and beginning to do world-class quality work," said Naledi Pandor, South Africa's science minister who visited the telescope on Friday.

Together with Australia, South Africa is also co-hosting the world's biggest and most advanced radio telescope, the \$2 billion "Square Kilometre Array" which will study the origins of the universe and help probe for extraterrestrial life. —Reuters



**BEIJING:** A woman sits near a display showing the dangers of hackers breaking into mobile devices during the Global Mobile Internet Conference in Beijing, China, Friday. The conference showcasing mobile internet technologies coincides with Beijing's Capital Internet Security Day. — AP

## TWITTER'S DESTINY IS STAYING SMALL? NOT SO FAST: INVESTORS

**NEW YORK:** Twitter gets lots of grief from investors because it hasn't taken over the world the way Facebook did, at least in terms of amassing users. But maybe it's destined to stay small, serving a vital, if limited, role for the public. Maybe Twitter just isn't meant to be an all-encompassing social utility. Maybe stock price is not the only lens through which a company can be valued. Twitter, perhaps even in spite of its difficult interface and site-specific lingo, has become a cultural force since its 2006 founding.

"I don't think at this point Twitter is ever going to reach the size of Facebook and I don't know if that necessarily matters," says Debra Aho Williamson, an analyst at research firm eMarketer. Assuming, that is, that Twitter can figure out some way to make money off people who read tweets but don't ever log into the service. Things got worse on Tuesday, when Twitter reported dismal user figures - 310 million, up from 305 million a year ago but down from 320 million in the fourth quarter. That makes it about one-fifth Facebook's size. It can't even brag about being larger than LinkedIn, its more buttoned-up (and buttoned-down) professional networking cousin.

While Twitter's per-share earnings beat Wall Street's expectations, revenue fell short. Revenue grew 36 percent to \$595 million from \$436 million a year earlier. Analysts polled by FactSet had expected \$607.9 million. Twitter's already-clobbered stock fell \$2.09, or 11.7 percent, to \$15.67 in after-hours trading. Ever since returned to helm the company he co-founded in 2006, CEO Jack Dorsey has insisted that Twitter needs to work harder at both attracting new users and giving occasional visitors more reasons to check back in. To date, neither has happened.

Yet Twitter has a firm hold on the public consciousness. Even non-users are at least aware of its existence, if not totally up to speed on its purpose. The Pope is on Twitter; so are President Obama and Beyoncé, along with a cadre of lesser celebrities. Unlike Facebook, a place for friends, family and near-forgotten grade school classmates, Twitter is a great place to follow actors, soccer players, late-night comedians and newsmakers to feel like you are in the know.

"Twitter's problem is that the management does not understand what they have," said Wedbush Securities analyst Michael Pachter, who argued that the company is still failing to retool itself for new users.

Calling the service "horribly complicated," Pachter rattled off a series of his own Twitter issues, even though he considers himself a power user. For example, he just got an email telling him how to "mute" people he follows. (Muting someone means you won't see their tweets in your timeline, although you still follow them. It's like a brush-off without the awkwardness.) "I didn't know you could mute somebody," he said. "How did I not know that?" Another frequent complaint involves Twitter's somewhat arcane 140-character limit, a relic of its early technology. To get around the limits, users have taken to posting screenshots of longer blocks of text. Dorsey has hint-

ed at expanding that limit, even tweeting a 1,325-character message - as a screenshot - on the subject back in January. So far, the limit remains unchanged.

Then there's the Twitter lingo, from hashtags to "at" symbols and the like. If Twitter wants to attract more grandmothers, it'll have

to lose the text-speak. Pachter called Twitter a "great product" that has gotten to where it is in spite of, not because of, its management. The users that have stuck around - all 310 million of them - have overcome obstacles such as poor interface, search and, he said, a "terrible functionality." —AP

## YAHOO CEO COULD GET \$55M IN SEVERANCE PAY IN POTENTIAL SALE

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer will walk away with a \$55 million severance package if the company's auction of its Internet operations culminates in a sale that ousts her from her job.

The payout disclosed in a regulatory filing Friday consists of cash, stock awards and other benefits that Mayer would get should she be forced out as CEO within a year after a sale.

Although Yahoo's board is still evaluating takeover offers, most investors are betting that the company will decide to sell its well-known brand and an Internet business that includes a popular email service and sections focused on sports and finance.

Mayer, a former Google executive, has been unsuccessfully trying to turn around Yahoo for nearly four years. Instead, Yahoo's long-running slump has deepened during her reign, making her pay a prickly topic among investors.

"I don't think this management team has done anything to merit a huge payout," said Eric Jackson, managing director of SpringOwl Asset Management, a Yahoo shareholder critical of Mayer's leadership.

Yahoo declined to comment beyond its filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The documents didn't explain the rationale for the severance packages covering Mayer and other Yahoo executives, although they are common at most publicly held companies as a way to maintain some stability during times of uncertainty. Mayer received a compensation package valued at nearly \$36 million last year under the SEC's accounting rules. Yahoo's board maintained in its filing that it was only worth about \$14 million as of April 1. The chances of a sale happening at Yahoo Inc. increased earlier this week when the Sunnyvale, California, company reached a truce with activist investor Starboard Value, an outspoken critic of Mayer's that has been pushing her to sell. Starboard CEO Jeffrey Smith is now one of three Yahoo directors on a special committee assessing the bids for the Internet business.

### DECISION

Although Yahoo's hasn't set a timetable



**LAS VEGAS:** In this Jan. 7, 2014, file photo, Yahoo president and CEO Marissa Mayer speaks during the International Consumer Electronics Show. — AP

## SULTAN TELECOM'S 'IZONE.SERVICES' JOIN HANDS WITH ENET FOR EASY PAYMENTS

**KUWAIT:** iZONE.services a service developed by Sultan Telecom Company have signed a cooperation agreement with Automated Services Network Company (eNet). This is a significant partnership towards making the payment of all services easier for all The Sultan Center customers via a wide network of eNet machines covering all areas of Kuwait.

This cooperation with eNet expresses the commitment of Sultan Telecom to create, develop and launch the best payments solutions and automated payment procedures for its ever growing customer base. This effortless, secure and peace of mind method of paying Through The Sultan Center branches are now available in Salmiya, Sharq, Hawally, Shaab, AlKout, Shuwaikh and Egalia.

Automated Services Network Co. (eNet) is Kuwait's first dedicated payment solution specialist, providing revenue collection system and consolidating payments for public and private sector organizations, ensuring easy payment of bills.

The services of (eNet) include telecommunication companies (Zain,

Wataniya, Viva- GCC - Egypt) where customers can recharge their prepaid lines, pay installments to Al- Manar Financing Company, Commercial Facilities Company, X-cite Alghanim, Al Soor, Al Mulla, Eureka and more.

Charity payments can be paid here to Awqaf, as well as buying of entertainment tickets and purchase of internet subscriptions, renewing satellite subscriptions, are among the numerous other services that are available. The Company's machines cover about 90% of Kuwait residential and industrial areas.

Sultan Telecom is one of the leading communications solutions and infrastructure companies in all sectors and is one of the major companies in Kuwait and has contributed in many major projects in Kuwait and abroad. The company has a branch in the State of Bahrain as well and has plans to grow to other countries as well.

"iZONE.services" has been developed by Arabian ITS an ISO 9001: 2008 certified company and is a subsidiary of Sultan Telecom and The Sultan Center Group.



## PUERTO RICO ZIKA CASES NOW INCLUDE 65 PREGNANT WOMEN, ONE DEATH

**SAN JUAN:** *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes are seen at the Laboratory of Entomology and Ecology of the Dengue Branch of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in San Juan, March 6, 2016.

*Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes are seen at the Laboratory of Entomology and Ecology of the Dengue Branch of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in San Juan, March 6, 2016.

Health officials on Friday confirmed the first US death of a patient infected with the Zika virus in Puerto Rico. The man, who was in his 70s, died from severe thrombocytopenia, a bleeding disorder caused by abnormally low blood platelets, which are needed for blood clotting.

Dr. Tyler Sharp of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Dengue Branch in San Juan told Reuters the patient had Zika virus disease, which included symptoms of fever, rash and body pain.

Shortly after those symptoms subsided, the man developed "bleeding manifestations" which sent him to the doctor for treatment. Sharp said the man was diagnosed with a rare Zika complication known as immune thrombocytopenic purpura or ITP, an autoimmune disorder in which the immune system attacks blood cells, called platelets.

Sharp said the ITP case followed the

same pattern as patients with Guillain-Barre Syndrome, a paralyzing neurological disorder linked to Zika infections in which the immune system attacks nerves. In both cases, the autoimmune attack occurs after symptoms of Zika have cleared.

Sharp said researchers are studying how Zika causes these rare disorders, and are looking to see whether they are caused by the same mechanism.

### Fact box: Why the Zika virus is causing alarm

"We are actively investigating that. It's very interesting scientifically. But this is something that is a significant cause of morbidity and now mortality here in Puerto Rico, where I live. These are my neighbors. It's of high public health importance that we figure this out and as quickly as we can design some interventions to stop it," Sharp said.

The death in Puerto Rico is the first US Zika-related death. Previously, Colombia reported three deaths among Zika patients who had symptoms consistent with ITP, Sharp said. Suriname has also reported one case of Zika-related ITP, and French Polynesia reported four such cases, but all of these patients survived.

Although deaths from Zika are rare, the Puerto Rico death "highlights the pos-

sibility of severe cases, as well as the need for continued outreach to raise health care providers' awareness of complications that might lead to severe disease or death," researchers said in a report published in the CDC's Morbidity and Mortality weekly Report.

In addition to the Zika-related death, Puerto Rico reported 683 confirmed cases of Zika, including 65 pregnant women with symptoms of the virus, the CDC said on Friday.

Of the confirmed cases, five patients developed Guillain-Barre syndrome and were hospitalized. Zika, a virus known to cause the birth defect microcephaly, first began spreading in Puerto Rico in December.

### Zika's origin and global spread

In Brazil, Zika has been linked to 1,198 confirmed cases of microcephaly, a rare birth defect marked by small head size that can lead to severe developmental problems in babies. Zika has also been linked to other severe birth defects and with stillbirth.

The World Health Organization declared Zika a global health emergency on Feb. 1. In addition to microcephaly, the agency says there is a strong scientific consensus that Zika can cause Guillain-Barre, a rare neurological syndrome.



**SAN JUAN:** *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes are seen at the Laboratory of Entomology and Ecology of the Dengue Branch of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on March 6, 2016. — AFP

US health officials said Zika remains a public health threat in Puerto Rico, with more cases expected throughout 2016. Residents of and travelers to Puerto Rico are urged to take steps to avoid mosquito

bites including the use of mosquito repellent, take precautions to reduce the risk of sexual transmission of Zika, and seek medical care for any acute illness with rash or fever. — Reuters



**TAMPA, Florida:** Winnie Money, 83, works at J.C. Newman on April 21, 2016. Money has worked at the factory for 42 years. — AFP

## FEARS NEW RULES COULD SEE US CIGAR FACTORY GO UP IN SMOKE

**TAMPA:** Eric Newman eases into an armchair on the top floor of his century-old factory, lights a cigar named after his grandfather, and ponders the prospect of his family legacy going up in smoke.

The 68-year-old Newman says new regulations on cigars expected any day now from the US Food and Drug Administration could snuff out his 130-year-old business, the J.C. Newman Cigar Company, by making it too costly and complicated to introduce new blends of cigars.

Health experts, however, welcome the government's plan to regulate a range of tobacco products for the first time, from tiny flavored cigars that appeal to young smokers, to e-cigarettes, hookahs and full-sized cigars.

"These regulations are killing us," says Newman, who has spent the last few years lobbying politicians for an exemption for his factory, the last making cigars in the Florida port city of Tampa, once known as the cigar capital of the world. "We are not the enemy. We are not the culprit. Please leave us alone. That is our big message to Washington."

### 'An art form'

One floor below, the noisy din of vintage machinery fills the factory, as workers flatten tobacco leaves and feed a complex array of moving mechanical parts, resulting in piles of thick, neatly stacked cigars.

Newman's grandfather, Julius Caesar Newman,

an immigrant from Austria-Hungary, started the family cigar business in Cleveland in the late 1880s. The company moved to the Tampa district of Ybor City in 1953. Today, the factory is a rare relic in that it still relies on the same machinery it has for years. Some of the equipment is up to 90 years old.

Tobacco is shipped in from Connecticut, Ecuador, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. The factory strips and humidifies the leaves, blends tobacco for various cigars, rolls them, packages them in cellophane and ships them.

About 65,000 cigars are rolled here every day by a team of 130 workers who earn an average of \$17 per hour. Newman says that of 13 billion large cigars sold in the United States every year, about 320 million are considered "premium cigars" like his. "We are like a fly on the elephant," says Newman. "But we are a craft industry. It takes a lot of skill. We are an art form."

### History of challenges

Tampa has been known as the world's fine cigar capital since 1886, though these days the crown might belong to Nicaragua or Honduras, according to Rodney Kite-Powell, curator of history at the Tampa Bay History Center.

"At its peak in the 1920s around 500 million cigars were produced in Tampa every single year, by hand," he says. "People coveted the Tampa cigar because of the quality." The industry suffered a series of blows—the Great Depression, two World

Wars, and the Cuban embargo in 1961 which cut off the source of its tobacco leaves.

Higher tobacco taxes and an increasingly health-conscious public have also eroded the cigar's popularity. Over time, the 150 factories that dotted the streets of Tampa faded away, leaving only J.C. Newman.

"It certainly seems that if the FDA's regulations come to pass that it will be one last blow to Tampa's cigar industry," says Kite-Powell. "The financial impact of that might be just too great to overcome."

### Appealing to young smokers

Health experts say wider regulations are needed to avoid a new generation of youth becoming addicted to products like battery-powered vaping devices, and cigars containing flavors like chocolate and strawberry.

"There is a lot of marketing now of cigars to younger people, and we are very afraid that that is going to lead them to then start smoking heavily," says Olveen Carrasquillo, chief of the division of general internal medicine at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

Even though people do not typically inhale cigar smoke, he says they are known to be dangerous. "A lot of people have misconceptions that cigars are somehow safer than cigarettes. They actually have the same cancer-causing chemicals," Carrasquillo says.

"And many studies have shown that cigars are also strongly linked to many types of cancer." An FDA proposal, announced in April 2014, considered including an exemption from the stricter rules for the type of premium cigars J.C. Newman specializes in, but exactly how "premium" would be defined remains unclear.

"Rulemaking is a complicated process and this proposed rule resulted in more than 135,000 comments," an FDA spokesman told AFP, declining to say when a final decision would be issued.

Once the rules are released, manufacturers would have two years to apply for marketing approval of their products. "Cigar manufacturers have claimed that the sky is falling because of this regulation," says Vince Willmore, spokesman for Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. "We think that they greatly exaggerated the impact in their efforts to weaken or avoid regulation."

### Fears of consequences

Back at the factory, Newman expects that the FDA will require tests on any new product made after 2007, which could take up to 5,000 hours and cost one million dollars. And even though his firm markets its products on the basis of tradition and quality, Newman says his business thrives by constantly coming out with new blends. Therefore, the rules could eventually force him out of business. "We are not the problem," Newman says. "But we could very well become an unintended consequence." — AFP

## WORSENING DEPRESSION MAY BE DEMENTIA CUE

**PARIS:** People over 54 who suffer from steadily-worsening depression may run a higher risk of developing dementia, according to new research published yesterday that suggested it may be an early symptom.

Other types of depression, such as one-off or recurring episodes, did not appear to pose a similar threat. "Only the group whose symptoms of depression increased over time was at an increased risk of dementia," said a statement by The Lancet Psychiatry, which published the results.

Doctors have previously noted a high correlation between depression and dementia in patients, though the nature of the relationship is not known. The new study claims to be the first to differentiate between types of depression. Some people experience a one-off depressive event and others have regular relapses. Some see their symptoms ease over time, others worsen, and some are chronic sufferers.

While some depressive events are a response to an adverse life event, others may be caused by a malfunction of brain chemicals or signaling. For the latest study, researchers analyzed data collected on 3,325 people aged 55 and over in the Netherlands over an 11-year period,

from 1993-2004, and tracked them for 10 years thereafter.

When the study started, all had symptoms of depression but none of dementia. By its end, 434 people had developed dementia, including 348 cases of Alzheimer's disease. The team divided the participant data into five different categories of depression. In the group of 255 people whose depression symptoms worsened over time, 55 developed dementia.

At 22 percent, this was "significantly higher", nearly 1.5-times, than the other groups—all of which had a dementia risk of about 10 percent. According to the World Health Organization, between five and 8 percent of people aged 60 and over are estimated to suffer from dementia at any given time.

The findings suggested that one-off severe depression, or recurring episodes, did not boost dementia risk, the authors said. It also meant that "increasing symptoms of depression in older age could potentially represent an early stage of dementia," according to the statement. And it implied that dementia and some forms of depression may have a common cause. — AFP

## COLOMBIA'S ILLEGAL MINING LINKED TO MALARIA OUTBREAK

**BOGOTA:** Colombia's widespread illegal mining is blamed for causing environmental damage and holding workers in slave-like conditions—and now is also being blamed for a malaria outbreak.

Critics point to stagnant water buildups at the clandestine sites and poor sanitary conditions at the workers' camps for an increase in mosquitoes spreading the disease, which has quadrupled in jungle regions of the hard-hit and impoverished western department of Choco.

"The country had more or less controlled its malaria problem... the death rate had dropped significantly," Health Minister Alejandro Gaviria said this week. "But because of illegal mining... we've had hotspots since last year and especially this year."

Speaking on RCN radio, Gaviria said that malaria was especially on the rise in Choco—which stretches from the border with Panama along a stretch of Colombia's Pacific coastline—as well as the Bajo Cauca area to the east.

The National Health Institute counted 18,524 malaria cases and about 300 cases of the disease's more severe strain. A year earlier, only 4,740 cases of malaria were recorded.

Outbreaks of malaria due to clandestine mining however is not new. "Population displacement linked to the exploitation of gold mines (and resulting deforestation) has previously created isolated epidemics of malaria" in Latin America, the Health Institute said.

Mining is a major source of revenue for Colombia. In 2012, the last year for which official figures are available, legal mining accounted for 2.3 percent of GDP, or \$8.5 billion. But authorities say that more than half of Colombia's mining sites are in fact illegal.

### Mosquito breeding ground

In these illegal mines, which help finance illegal armed groups, "excavators dig huge holes where water accumulates, perfect breeding grounds for malaria-carrying mosquitoes," said University of Antioquia researcher Ivan Dario Velez.

And the sites where the miners set up camp "usually lack public utilities and have very poor hygiene conditions, which encourages the spread of mosquito and thus the disease," he said.

Malaria symptoms include feverish headaches, chills, fatigue, nausea and vomiting. Last year, some 214 million people suffered from malaria, of which 438,000 died from the disease, according to the World Health Organization.

Most of those who died were children under five, the vast majority of them in Africa. The malaria death rate has dropped 72 percent in South America since 2000, and the WHO expects to eradicate the disease in eight Latin American countries by 2020.

The outbreak in Choco is also linked to a shortage of medicine to fight the disease, according to the health minister. Gaviria said about 7,000 doses of needed medicine are being sent to the department, the poorest in the country.

From 2015 to 2016, about 30 people died of malaria, most in isolated communities far from urban centers, according to the Office of the Ombudsman, which that warned this week of a "worrisome increase" in cases.

Separately, in February officials launched an investigation into the deaths of 37 children and the poisoning of 64 others in the Choco region. The victims suffered from symptoms said to be linked to mercury, which is commonly used in illegal mining. — AFP

## FIRST DRUG FOR DELUSIONS IN PARKINSON'S PATIENTS APPROVED

**WASHINGTON:** Federal health officials have approved an experimental drug to treat psychotic delusions and behaviors that often afflict patients with Parkinson's disease, the debilitating movement disorder.

The drug from Acadia Pharmaceuticals Inc. is the first drug for the condition, which affects approximately half of Parkinson's patients. An estimated 50,000 Americans are diagnosed with Parkinson's

each year, making it the second-most common neurodegenerative disease in the U.S.

The company's drug Nuplazid is part of the antipsychotic family of medications, including Abilify, Zyprexa and Seroquel, which are used to treat schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Like those drugs, Nuplazid will carry a boxed warning about the risks of death when used in older patients with dementia. The drugs are not approved for that use. Acadia is based in San Diego. — AP



**TAMPA, Florida:** Workers at the J.C. Newman cigar factory, using vintage machines, some 90 years old, make cigars on April 21, 2016. — AFP



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis meets US Vice President Joe Biden (R) in Paul VI hall at the Vatican on April 29, 2016. — AFP

## BIDEN GETS PAPAL BLESSING FOR HIS GLOBAL WAR ON CANCER

VATICAN CITY: US Vice President Joe Biden took his crusade against cancer to the Vatican on Friday and heard Pope Francis call for an "economic paradigm shift" where medical research is dictated by need rather than profit.

Biden, who lost his 46-year-old son Beau to brain cancer last year, has vowed to pursue a global push to accelerate cancer cures and treatments by marshalling private and public sector resources to combat it as well as rare diseases.

Biden, who flew to Italy from an unannounced trip to Iraq, and the pope, made back-to-back speeches to doctors and researchers from around the world who attended a Vatican conference on regenerative medicine called "Cellular Horizons".

In his address, Francis called on the scientific community to pay more attention to people afflicted with rare conditions, saying these patients often did not receive enough notice because the potential economic returns were deemed insufficient.

"We are called to make known throughout the world the issue of rare diseases, to invest in appropriate education, to increase funds for research, and to promote necessary legislation as well as an economic paradigm shift. In this way, the centrality of the human person will be rediscovered," he said.

Biden, a devout Catholic, has said he believes the world could be on the edge of a breakthrough in harnessing supercomputing and data analysis to find cures and therapies. "The truth is that today, more than any point in human history, we have a genuine opportunity to help more people across the world than ever before. And that's our obligation," Biden said.

The vice president echoed the pope's call for a universal effort to fight disease that put people before prestige and profit. "We should be sharing data the moment it's published, immediately, not hiding it behind paywalls that prevent information from being shared for a year or more," Biden said. The pope called for research founded on "solidarity, generosity, magnanimity, sharing of knowledge, respect for human life."

The Church teaches that life begins at conception and condemns embryonic stem cell research and therapy because it involves destroying

embryos. However, it permits adult stem cell research. Biden, who ruled out a bid run to be the candidate for the US presidency after his son died, delivered a highly emotional address tinged with personal memories of his family's fight to keep their son alive. "I wished I could have been the

president to preside over the fundamental change to cure cancer," he said.

David Howell Evans, the member of the Irish rock band U2 who is known as "The Edge" and whose daughter had leukemia, was in the front row with Biden. — Reuters

## NO NEED TO FAST BEFORE CHOLESTEROL CHECK

DENMARK: Most people don't need to fast overnight before getting their blood drawn for a cholesterol test, according to a group of experts. Cholesterol test results obtained one to six hours after a meal were not significantly different from results obtained after a fast, researchers found.

"It could be implemented tomorrow with no problems at all," said lead author Dr. Borge Nordestgaard, of the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. "Today, the key players for keeping the fasting procedure are the laboratories drawing the blood. They simply could change the procedure tomorrow, and then nobody would fast anymore. That is what we did in Denmark - and patients, clinicians and laboratories were all happy with the change."

Nordestgaard told Reuters Health in an email that doctors essentially just always had patients fast before a cholesterol test. "So people got used to it without questioning the fasting procedure," he said.

Typically, blood is drawn for a cholesterol test - known as a lipid panel - after a person has fasted for at least eight hours, the researchers write in the European Heart Journal. In 2009, Denmark began using non-fasting cholesterol tests. One advantage, the researchers say, is that forgoing fasting simplifies the process for patients, doctors and laboratories. Also, patients are more likely to get the test.

For the new analysis, the international team of researchers met twice in person to look at

data from a number of large studies, such as the Nurses' Health Study, the Copenhagen General Population Study and the Heart Protection Study.

The researchers found that not fasting, compared to fasting, didn't significantly change the levels of substances typically measured during a cholesterol test, including triglycerides, total cholesterol, LDL (or bad) cholesterol and HDL (or good) cholesterol.

"To improve patient compliance with lipid testing, we therefore recommend the routine use of non-fasting lipid profiles," the researchers write. "These recommendations represent a joint consensus statement from the European Atherosclerosis Society and European Federation of Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine involving 21 World medical experts from Europe, Australia and the US," said Nordestgaard.

The research team cautions that fasting cholesterol tests may be needed if a person has high triglycerides (or blood fats), is recovering from pancreatitis or is starting certain medications that can cause high triglycerides.

Nordestgaard said people should "stop fasting before a lipid profile test, or even better push their local laboratory to stop the requirement for fasting before cholesterol and triglyceride testing." Some specialists may resist, but "that also happened in Denmark, although very few were against the change," Nordestgaard said. — Reuters

## DOLE UNDER US PROBE AFTER DEADLY LISTERIA OUTBREAK

SPRINGFIELD, OHIO: Dole Food Co Inc said on Friday the US Department of Justice was investigating a deadly Listeria monocytogenes outbreak linked to packaged salad products from its processing plant in Springfield, Ohio.

Dole, the world's largest fruit and vegetable producer, said in a statement the agency recently contacted the company and "we will be ... cooperating with the DOJ to answer questions and address any concerns."

Listeria, a common bacterium that can be either harmless or pathogenic, can enter a processing facility via raw produce or other materials, and form colonies. Thirty-three people in the United States and Canada fell ill in the outbreak from May 2015 to February 2016. All were hospitalized and four died. One of those who succumbed to the infection lived in Michigan. It's not clear where the others lived.

In total, there were 14 cases of Listeria monocytogenes in five provinces related to the outbreak: Ontario had nine cases, Quebec two, New Brunswick one, Prince Edward Island one, and a Newfoundland and Labrador one.

Dole said on Jan. 22 it had temporarily suspended operations at the Springfield plant. It also issued recalls on all salad products pack-

aged at the facility. The plant reopened on April 21. tp-listeria-culture-cbc Listeriosis (Listeria monocytogenes) is a rare but serious infection caused by bacteria that can be found in produce like lettuce. (CBC)

Plant officials found evidence of Listeria contamination there as early as July 2014, Food Safety News (FSN) reported on Friday. A Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspection report obtained by FSN and reviewed by Reuters on Friday showed that Dole's tests of surfaces at the plant came back positive for Listeria on nine separate occasions in 2014 and 2015.

Dole said in its statement that the report dealt with issues that had already been corrected. The report, dated Feb. 5, said the plant's third-party laboratory had notified Dole about positive Listeria test results from internal samples taken on Jan. 5 and 7. But it did not say whether testing was done to determine whether the bacteria posed a threat.

"If you have ongoing, persistent contamination, that can indicate that you have a sanitation problem," Craig Hedberg, a professor of environmental health sciences at the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health, said in a phone interview on Friday. — Reuters



NEW YORK: Dole's products on display at a grocery store. — AFP

## BIOGEN, ABBVIE MS DRUG WINS EU GREEN LIGHT

EU: A once-monthly injection for multiple sclerosis from Biogen and AbbVie has been recommended for approval by European regulators, paving the way for its launch in the coming months.

The European Medicines Agency said on Friday its experts had endorsed Zinbryta, or daclizumab, for the treatment of relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis (MS), adding a new option to a range of

modern MS therapies. The positive opinion will now be referred to the European Commission, which normally grants marketing authorizations for medicines recommended by the agency within a couple of months. The self-administered, under-the-skin injection is also currently being reviewed by regulators in the United States, Switzerland, Canada and Australia. — Reuters



NEW YORK: A screen displays the share price for pharmaceutical maker AbbVie on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on July 18, 2014. — AFP

# CLINIC PAGE



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## ASSE MARKS WORLD HEALTH DAY



**A**merican Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), Kuwait Chapter is a premier voluntary, non-profit making Health, Safety and Environmental organization, which strives to provide professional guidance, training, consultancy and resources to the industrial and social sectors in the region.

As a part of continuous efforts in its professional journey, ASSE-Kuwait Chapter commemorated the world Health Day 2016. The event was organized at Mughal Mahal, Fahaheel where the ASSE Kuwait Chapter Secretary Jignesh Shah initiated the proceedings and Sampath Reddy President of the chapter gave the welcome address. Fadhel Al Ali, Chairman of the Kuwait Chapter emphasized the need of commemorating the World Health Day and the concerns on Diabetes amounts in the community in Kuwait. Health and Environment Committee Head Muhammad Alamgir briefed the theme "Eat Healthy: Beat Diabetes" and importance of the World Health day 2016. He also introduced the speakers Dr Punam Sharma, Preventive and occupational health officer of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), who has presented a health awareness session on 'Beat Diabetes - Facts and Tips' and Dr Praveen Kotwani, Occupational Health Consultant and Industrial Hygiene Specialist, who has presented "General Health Awareness" Ali Hassan Physical fitness Trainer from KOC Sports Centre demonstrated some fitness exercise for the audience and was well appreciated. Dinesh Dutta, Vice President gave the vote of thanks and the event was concluded with a dinner



## TIES CENTER INTRODUCES GREEK CULTURE, LANGUAGE

**T**IES Center strives for merging both eastern and western cultures. This Wednesday, on April 27th 2016, the Center hosted a diwaniya introducing the Greek culture and presenting the Arabic and the Greek language as well as the similarities between them. Aisha Al-Kandri began her narration about how she discovered the Greek Language. Then, a certified instructor of Greek Language and Literature, Dimitris Gkantidis travelled briefly the audience through the centuries of the Greek language and Calligraphy. Afterward, Aisha Al-Kandri presented details about the Arabic language and Calligraphy.

Using improvisation, the two speakers presented some loans and re-borrowings between the two languages. By the use of pictures, Aisha Al-Kandri and Dimitris Gkantidis structured a dialogue using the same words in both Arabic and Greek. They had a conversation about food, decorations, daily life tools, to the amazement of both the Arab and Greek families who realized how close both the two languages sound. The crowd enjoyed learning about words like 'Kanun' (musical instrument / rule) which has almost identical meaning in both languages. During the lecture I asked Gkantidis whether the influence of Christianity erased the ancient side of Greece. He answered that many ancient traditions are intact and others have mixed with the Christian religion and have managed to survive. Afterwards, I had a close interview with both speakers.

In a question about the proximity between the two cultures, Gkantidis explained that trade and cultural relations have been active for centuries with plenty historical, linguistic and archaeological evidence. Kandri added that her Greek professor taught her that Greeks are in fact Easterners in Europe and that both cultures are in fact related. When asked about the linguistic relations, Gkantidis said that both languages have been influenced up to a point by the Phoenician alphabet. The final question was if the future would bring Arabs and Greeks closer culturally and linguistically. Kandri said 'Why not?' being very positive. Gkantidis argued that the Syrian crisis, the investment interest and the increase of Arab tourists will in fact bring us even closer. Dr Teresa, the general manager of Ties Center thanked both speakers and gave them presents as an expression of gratitude for achieving TIES' goals.

## KLCK CONDUCTED 4TH ANNIVERSARY GATHERING



**T**he residents of Kerala Latin Community Kuwait (KLCK) conducted '4th Anniversary and Easter Gathering 2016' at Kuwait City Cathedral premises on 22nd April 2016. KLCK President Peter Mathew OFMCap presided over the function and the function was inaugurated by Bishop Camillo Ballin, Apostolic Vicar of Northern Arabia. KLCK vice president Somar Xavier welcomed the audience and KLCK Joint President Paul Manuel OFMCap made an inspirational speech. KLCK General Secretary Jolly Augustine presented the Annual Report. Senior Expatriate leaving Kuwait for good after 24 years in Kuwait were honored during the occasion. Vicar General Rev. Fr Mathews K Francis gave a felicitation speech.

During his inaugural speech the Bishop stressed to maintain equality among various communities. The annual KLCK

Souvenir magazine was released on the function by Peter Mathew presenting the first copy to Bishop Camillo Ballin.

The newly elected office bearers for 2016-18 were introduced and took pledge by lighting a candle. Prizes were distributed for the various events comprised of coloring competitions for children, Quiz competition contest, Indoor and Outdoor games which were conducted during the year made the program unique. The Anniversary program convener Kishore Simon proposed the vote of thanks.

Preparations for the smooth conduct of function were done under the supervision of various sub committees. The function concluded with various cultural extravaganza by KLCK inmates from different areas of Kuwait. The members felt well-nourished even before they were served with refreshments by the end of the program.



A farewell lunch was hosted recently in honor of outgoing vicars Rev Sunil Joy, Rev V S Skaria at Josekutty Kunjappan's house in Mangaf on April 23, 2016. The priests from Marthoma parishes graced the occasion. It was also well attended by parish members including KG Abraham and family. The felicitation was rendered by Jacob Channappetta.

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Loyal to its tradition of giving back to its esteemed customers by launching the most gratifying promotions such as giving away "30cars in 30days" or more than "half a million dollars cash", this time X-cite is offering direct rewards to all customers with unbeatable offers unseen in Kuwait by offering discounts on a wide range of electronics and home appliances from the world's most beloved brands, in addition to daily killer deals with limited time crazy dis-

counts up to 50 percent off.

The main challenge will be keeping track of the incredible offers available throughout X-cite's 18 showrooms and online store. Customers who don't want to miss those deals should follow their website xcite.com and social media channels where the daily deals will be announced; @xcitealghanim on Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat and Facebook: XcitebyAlghanim.

This exceptional campaign will run from May 1st until June 7th, 2016, so customers are highly encouraged to use this window of opportunity by fulfilling their electronic needs while benefiting from outstanding savings and exclusive deals.

**THE SULTAN CENTER CELEBRATES WORLD BOOK DAY**

The Sultan Center (TSC) hosted a special reading event on April 24, 2016 at its Sharq Mall location for the children of Al-Salam Nursery to celebrate World Book Day - an annual international event that aims to encourage children to explore the pleasure of reading. During this event, entertaining tales came to life as captivated youngsters enjoyed books read to them by engaging storytellers. All the children received book gifts as part of the celebrations.

Education and learning are concepts that contribute meaningfully to the betterment of society, and there's no better way for TSC to drive this valuable message than by participating in the World Book Day celebrations that are simultaneously held in over 100 countries around the globe. The aim of World Book Day is to nurture knowledge and expand minds, a core principal that TSC is committed to upholding. Lisa Al-Gharib, Marketing Manager at TSC said "Our commitment to social affairs sits at the core of TSC's values as a Kuwaiti company and we want to participate in driving the benefits of reading and education. We wanted to promote reading as a means for personal enrichment and enjoyment for all. The aim of World Book Day is to encourage children to explore the pleasures of books and reading by providing them with the opportunity to have a book of their own."

More than 20 children attended the event and participated in the interactive storytelling sessions. After these sessions concluded, each child received their own book, a practice upheld throughout the world on this annual event.

For the latest news and updates about World Book Day 2016, visit [worldbookday.com](http://worldbookday.com).



Indian Ambassador' wife Dr Gargi Jan held a South Indian lunch for some International Women's Group (IWG) members and Kuwait ladies to celebrate the advent of Nepali and Sri Lankan New Year, and to bid farewell to dear friend Gusti, who is leaving for Riyadh soon.

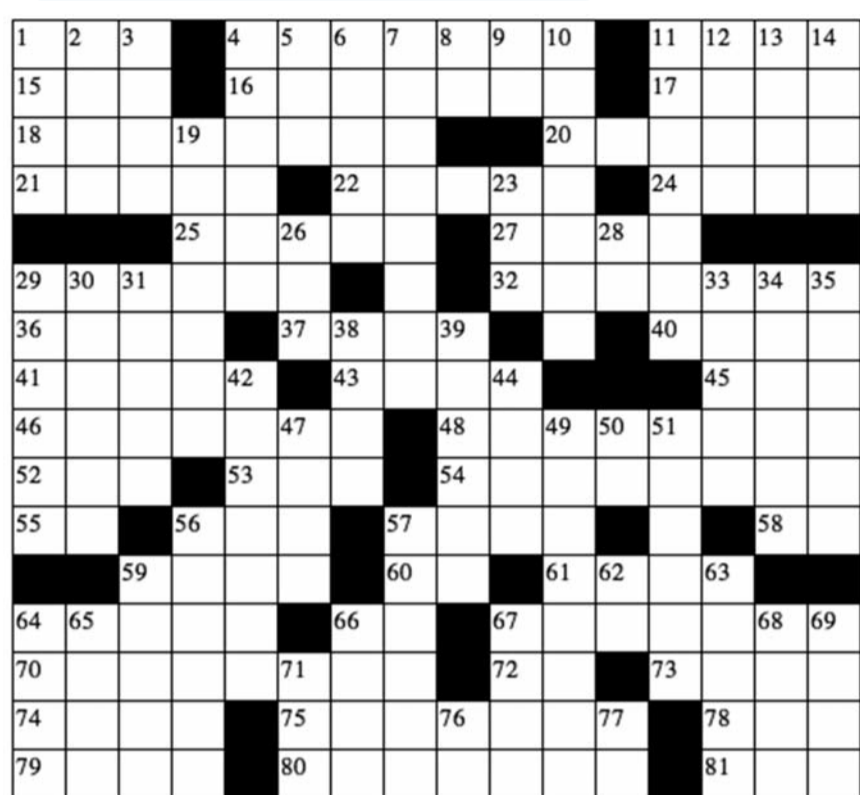








CROSSWORD 1243



ACROSS

1. Relating to or containing the azo radical.
4. A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
11. A releasing factor that accelerates the secretion of growth hormone by the anterior pituitary body.
15. An accidental happening.
16. Having or covered with hair.
17. Being or occurring in fact or actuality.
18. Or or related to the synthetic phase of metabolism.
20. A special loved one.
21. A rule made by a local authority to regulate its own affairs.
22. (Mexican) Ground beef and chili peppers or chili powder often with tomatoes and kidney beans.
24. A quantity of no importance.
25. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
27. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
29. (trademark) Nylon fabric used as a fastening.
32. Genus of tall smooth herbs of forested mountains of Europe and Asia minor.
36. (Old Testament) The eldest son of Isaac who would have inherited the Covenant that God made with Abraham and that Abraham passed on to Isaac.
37. An indistinct shapeless form.
40. Small European freshwater fish with a slender bluish-green body.
41. A column of wood or steel or concrete that is driven into the ground to provide support for a structure.
43. Of or relating to near the ear.
45. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
46. A person afflicted with paresis (partial paralysis).
48. Tuberosus or rhizomatous herbaceous perennials.
52. Either extremity of something that has length.
53. 10 hao equal 1 dong.
54. A system of clandestine printing and distribution of dissident or banned literature.
55. An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
58. A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
60. A public promotion of some product or service.
61. Offering fun and gaiety.
64. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
70. United States writer whose novels argued for social reform (1878-1968).
72. An associate degree in nursing.
73. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
74. English prelate noted for his pessimistic sermons and articles (1860-1954).
75. (of water depth) Measured by a line and plumb.
78. An inflated feeling of pride in your superiority to others.
79. Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
80. A flat tortilla with various fillings piled on it.
81. A shape that sags.

DOWN

1. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
2. (informal terms) "gave me a cockamamie reason for not going".
3. A translucent mineral consisting of hydrated silica of variable color.
4. A Dardic language spoken in northwestern Pakistan.
6. Any plant of the genus Erica.
7. Type of onion plant producing small clustered mild-flavored bulbs used as seasoning.
8. A ductile malleable reddish-brown corrosion-resistant diamagnetic metallic element.
9. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
10. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
11. The father of your father or mother.
12. Queen of the Olympian gods in ancient Greek mythology.
13. A sudden short attack.
14. Any wingless blood-sucking parasitic insect noted for ability to leap.
19. A structure in which one end is counterbalanced by the other (as in a bascule bridge).
23. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
26. An elegantly dressed man (often with affected manners).
28. Being nine more than ninety.
30. A parliamentary monarchy in southwestern Europe on the Iberian Peninsula.
31. (Scotland) A landowner.
33. Closed with a lace.
34. Someone who cuts and delivers ice.
35. Expose to fresh air, as of old clothing.
38. Informal or slang terms for mentally irregular.
39. Favoring one person or side over another.
42. Of or relating to the philosophical study of ethics.
44. Decapod having eyes on short stalks and a broad flattened carapace with a small abdomen folded under the thorax and pincers.
47. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
49. Not based on fact.
50. A complete metric system of units of measurement for scientists.
51. A genus of fern sometimes placed in its own family Azollaceae.
56. A performer who dances.
57. A genus of Sparidae.
59. A large heavy knife used in Central and South America as a weapon or for cutting vegetation.
62. The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
63. Yellow-fever mosquitoes.
65. Go "ding dong", like a bell.
66. A town in Hawaii on the island of Hawaii.
67. A small cake leavened with yeast.
68. An narrative telling the adventures of a hero or a family.
69. Air pollution by a mixture of smoke and fog.
71. (usually followed by 'to') Naturally disposed toward.
76. A unit of weight equivalent to 1000 kilograms.
77. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Today you will be able to tackle tasks that require real discipline. You are always in a practical mood and can find ways to teach others-whether you realize this or not. You may even be a teacher, but you perform the service energetically and at every opportunity. Be sure you praise others as often as possible, gaining happy students while you are navigating through the day. You may have some serious or contemplative moments. Lunch with friends brings with it the perfect opportunity to show off pictures of loved ones and talk of vacation plans-yours or those of others. Pace yourself while finishing a project this afternoon. This evening you may discover that your partner or loved one's ability to increase his or her finances is strengthened.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Ambition and achievement are qualities that you hold in special regard. This is a great time for getting ahead and gaining the attention you may need to move forward in your career. Going over your appointment book or calendar for today's schedule, you may find a little more scheduled than there is time. This may be the case quite often through the remainder of next month. Take a few minutes to slow yourself when you are feeling overwhelmed. You will enjoy the relaxation that takes the place of all that stress-you are able to think more clearly. You will enjoy positive attention from higher-ups soon. While gathered in a group this afternoon you can be quite witty. Tonight there are celebrations and surprises happen.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You will impress others with your problem-solving techniques. Higher-ups are watching and will remember your good works. Your tendency toward extreme behavior may make you feel you need to be secretive-careful. You will make great strides towards achievement in anything you want to accomplish if you can accept yourself as the wonderful human being that you are. Your inner resources and emotions are accentuated. Expect a sense of support and goodwill from those around you. There is a protective influence over your financial interests now. Be wise with entertainment costs and appraise the entertainment part of your budget. You may want to get some ideas from others as to how to go about investing or saving.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your sense of humor is sharp. You smile when you pick up the phone; the caller hears it in your voice. You are in top form when it comes to mental activity as well. You could be seen by others as just the person to be put in charge of some project requiring a conservative mind. Your timing should be perfect and those around you should find you most casual and able to handle most any situation. Others find you an uplifting person and easy to be with. You may have insights or breakthroughs with regard to your living situation or life circumstances. A drive to the country or nearby lake with loved ones could be in order after work. With no particular goal in mind for the evening you enjoy life and people around you.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is a chance to be put in a position to work closely with other co-workers today. This could be about a new project or a conference to get some new ideas out on the table. An independent or pioneering mental orientation takes on more importance in your life. Teaching, learning, communicating and social contacts have a way of outlining new directions in your life. There is much activity and involvement with these kinds of issues. General good feeling and a sense of support and harmony make this a happy time. A neighborhood gathering with people contributing to the meal makes for a fun barbecue or progressive dinner. This day and evening is filled with good feelings and there is a feeling of renewed appreciation of life.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Fresh challenges and initiatives light your interest. A new sense of self, a more assertive personal style and a more dynamic approach to life are the types of issues that begin for you now. You have new ideas of how to handle your own process of elimination concerning business matters. You are free this afternoon to create new business or increase the current productivity. This is all obvious to others just now and there may be questions or requests in the process. Do not try to push too hard. Beating the odds through cleverness is appealing and this may lead to an interest in all kinds of financial speculation. Romance and such creative pursuits as hobbies are outlets for much of your drive this evening. Don't wear your jewelry to bed... Enjoy comfort.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may become involved in group gatherings soon. This could mean a combined decision-making contribution or a debate of some sort. It may be difficult to relax at this time, particularly if you have a hard time being flexible. Be willing to compromise and all sorts of positive things will happen. Do not take chances or risks just now. Be satisfied with the ordinary and usual. Novel ideas or insights could be more damaging than useful. This afternoon friends may point you toward a new romantic interest without really realizing it. You may already be happily involved. This new person, however, may become a very good friend to you. New friends, good wine and perhaps a little entertainment ends a busy day in a most interesting way.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Plan to make some changes with regard to your financial picture this week and you will see positive results. This is a time of much passion and drive, perfect for starting something out or taking care of business. A community organization gets your attention this afternoon. Merge some volunteer work into your life-your service will be returned many times. You could be in the right place at the right time to add some positive insight into your own life. At home, you may find that you are quite appreciative of the people in your life and the people that have helped you learn and grow. You may also have some insight into some future changes you want to make. Consider eliminating a few expectations and find ways to become peaceful.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You are sensible when it comes to dealing and working with others and have many followers. You know just what to do and can act without haste. You are asked to make use of your common sense. People may need your help with some technical advice as well today. Your management and directional abilities are in high focus. Everyone takes their particular job seriously and will show their appreciation regarding your time and effort. Attending or giving a lecture or workshop can move you ahead now. You have been working on a new, low-fat snack recipe and may decide to complete this project tonight. Sharing your project with a family member brings many opportunities for you to enjoy each other's company. There are a few laughs to share.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Today is a great time to be with others and to work together. You could be asked to perform tasks that are not in your job description. Your willingness to help or find help does not go unnoticed. Your management and directional abilities are in high focus. You should be attentive to all the work you do, as there is a tendency to gloss over particular details. Be especially careful in your personal business dealings or purchases that may cause you to work longer hours in order to be debt free. Engaging in serious conversations between you and a sibling or close relative may create a healing this afternoon. This is a time to enjoy and appreciate your ties to others and to seek and promote harmony in the interaction between people.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Your inner resources are accentuated at this time. Clear decisions affecting others could be set forth at this time. Events may make it easy for you to be original, have breakthroughs and find new solutions to old problems. You may find yourself able to execute your ideas and put them into practice. Independence and an original flair for working are present now. There will be good news with regard to finances. This has been a pretty good month for you in that it has been particularly productive. You need to continue to be very discriminating in your eagerness today-meaning you can't do everything in one day. You either need help with projects or a different schedule. This evening there is time to be with friends and enjoy their company.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may experience a period of irritability this morning but a co-worker's sense of humor saves the day. Although this may be one of your more stressful days, it is also one of your more successful ones. Everything points to your taking the initiative this afternoon. You could feel great support from those around you. There is a real possibility for you to make headway in a difficult project today. Your creativity will stand out and the suggestions you make will have a positive response. Once you sit down to relax you may find that you actually feel you have accomplished what you set out to accomplish. Your communication skills are good and everything seems to be working together in a positive way. Eliminate as much stress as possible.

WORD SEARCH

Easter

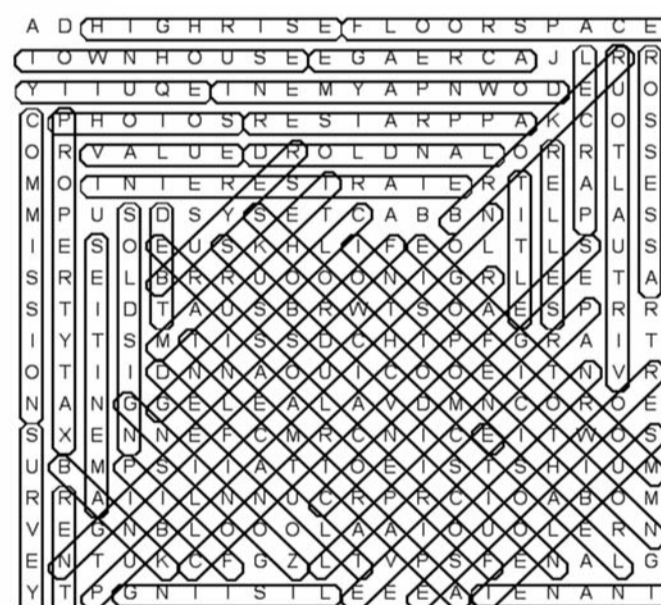
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 34 letters spell a secret message.



- |                     |                  |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| ASH WEDNESDAY       | DEATH DISCIPLES  | JESUS LAST SUPPER   | PENITENCE PRAYER |
| BREAD BUNNY         | EGG HUNT         | LENT MARY           | RESURRECTION     |
| CALVARY CELEBRATION | EUCHARIST FAMILY | MASS MEAL           | ROAST SACRAMENT  |
| CHOCOLATE CHRIST    | FASTING FESTIVAL | NEW TESTAMENT PALMS | SATURDAY SUNDAY  |
| CHURCH CROSS        | FRIDAY HOLIDAY   | PARADE PASSOVER     | THURSDAY TOMB    |
| CRUCIFIXION CUSTOM  | HOLY WEEK        | PENANCE             | TRADITION VIGIL  |

Yesterday Solution

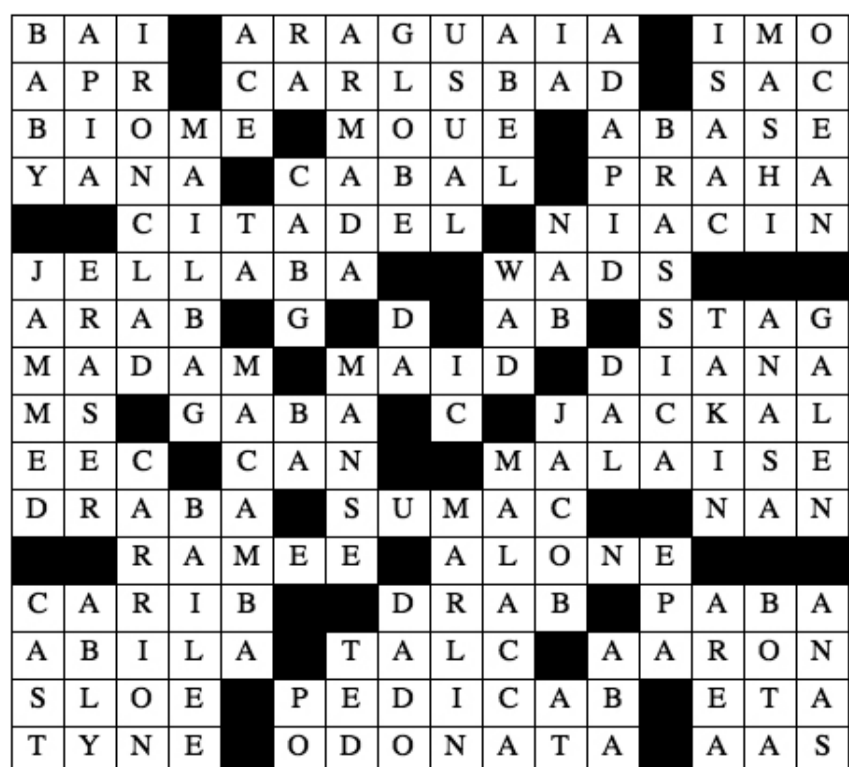
Real Estate 2



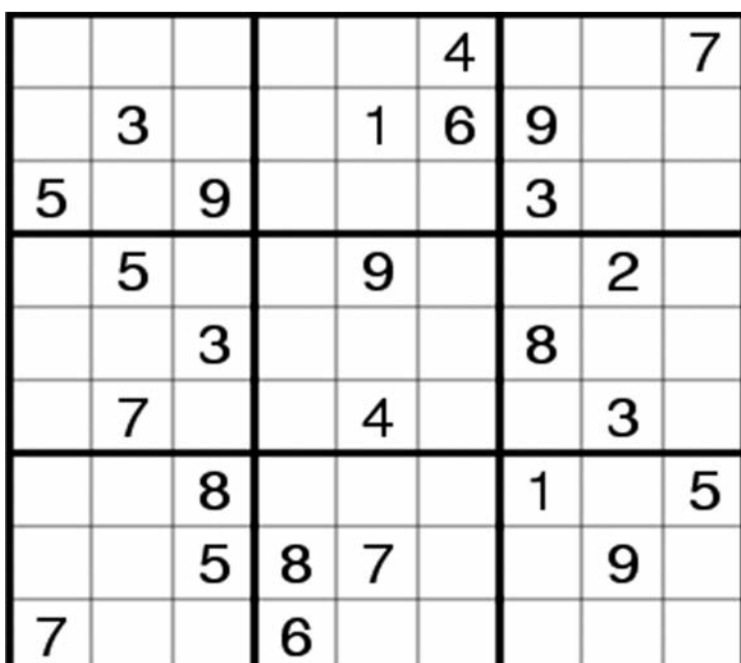
- |                       |                           |                             |                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| ACREAGE               | DEBT DEFAULT              | LANDLORD LEASE              | SELLER SHOW HOME      |
| AMENITIES             | DOWN PAYMENT              | LISTING MARKET              | SOLD SIGN SUBDIVISION |
| APARTMENT APPRAISER   | EQUITY EVICTION           | MORTGAGE PARCEL             | SURVEY TENANT         |
| ASSESSOR BANK         | FLIP FLOOR SPACE          | PHOTOS PRINCIPAL            | TITLE TOWNHOUSE       |
| BROKER BUYER          | FOR SALE SIGN FORECLOSURE | PROPERTY TAX PUBLIC AUCTION | VALUE VIRTUAL TOUR    |
| CLOSING COMMISSION    | HIGH RISE INSPECTION      | RENT ROW HOUSE              | ZONING                |
| CONDO FEES CONTRACTOR | INTEREST RATE             |                             |                       |

The hidden message is: ADJUSTABLE-RATE MORTGAGE

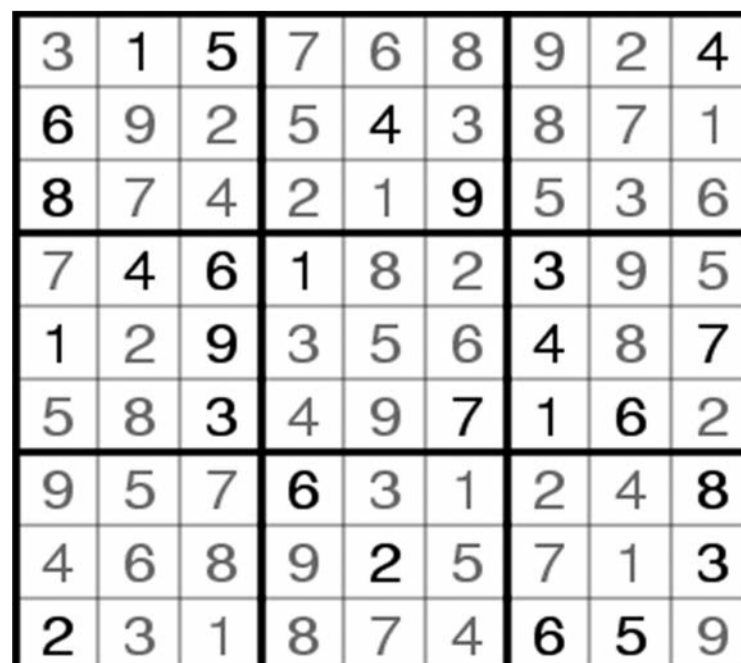
Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Table listing hospitals such as Sabah Hospital, Amiri Hospital, Maternity Hospital, Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital, etc., with contact numbers.

Clinics

Table listing various clinics like Kaizen center, Rawda, Adaliya, Khaldiya, Kaifan, Shamiya, Shuwaikh, etc., with contact numbers.



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

Table listing pharmacies by Governorate (Ahmadi, Jahra, Capital, Farwaniya, Hawally) with details on Pharmacy, Address, and Phone.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Large table listing international countries and their phone codes, including Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, etc.

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



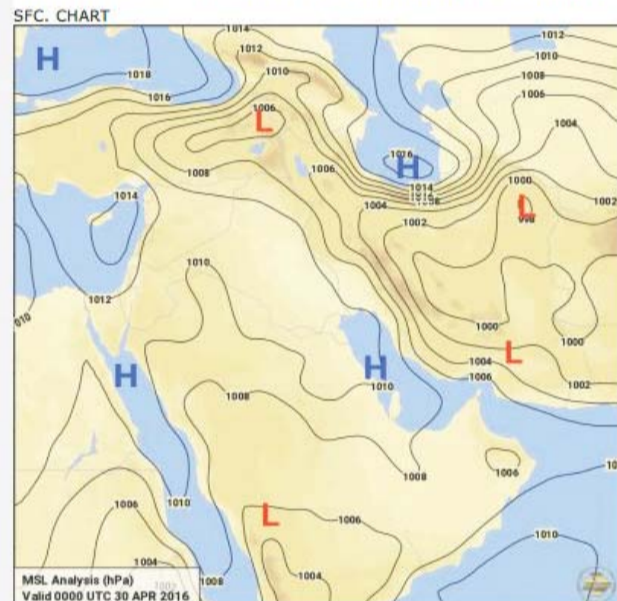
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630 Fax: (+965) 24348714 www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 30/04/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 30 °C

By Day: Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening gradually north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for scattered rain
By Night: Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 35 km/h



Four-Day Forecast

Table showing weather forecast for Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, including temperature, wind, and cloud conditions.

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Table with columns for Station, MIN °C, and Max °C, listing forecast data for various locations like Kuwait City, Jahra, etc.

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Table showing recorded weather data for yesterday, including Max Temp, Min Temp, Humidity, Wind Speed, etc.

Table showing Sunrise (05:07) and Sunset (18:23) times.

Prayer Times

Table listing prayer times for Fajr, Sunrise, Zuhur, Asr, Sunset, and Isha.



PRIVATE CLINICS

Large table listing various private clinics and their specialists, including Ophthalmologists, Plastic Surgeons, Paediatricians, Endocrinologist, etc., with names and contact numbers.

Summary table for contact centers: Psychologists, Soor Center, Kaizen center, Noor Clinic, William Schuilenberg.



NEW ORLEANS: The Tedeschi Trucks Band with special guests Billy F. Gibbons, right, and Jimmie Vaughan, back left, play on the Acura Stage at Jazz Fest on Thursday.



WASHINGTON: First lady Michelle Obama, joined by from left, Terence Blanchard, Bobby Watson, Dee Dee Bridgewater, and Herbie Hancock, speaks to high school students from across the Washington D.C. area in State Dining Room of the White House on Friday.— AP photos

## President **Obama** celebrates jazz at the White House



WASHINGTON: First lady Michelle Obama acknowledges musician Herbie Hancock as she speaks to high school students from across the Washington D.C. area in State Dining Room of the White House on Friday.

**P**resident Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama are celebrating International Jazz Day a day early with a concert at the White House.

Borrowing a line from trumpet player Dizzy Gillespie, who ran for president in 1964, Obama says he intends to turn the White House into the "Blues House" with Friday night's concert. Obama says he first obtained an appreciation of jazz when a father he "barely knew" came to visit him for about a month in Honolulu. He says his father took him to see jazz pianist Dave Brubeck in 1971.

Obama says the world that concert opened up for a 10-year-old boy was spectacular, and he was hooked. The concert features Aretha Franklin, Al Jarreau, Herbie Hancock and others and it was televised yesterday on ABC. — AP



WASHINGTON: First lady Michelle Obama speaks to high school students from across the Washington D.C. area in State Dining Room of the White House on Friday.



STOCKHOLM: Sweden's Queen Silvia and King Carl XVI Gustaf arrive for the Te Deum thanksgiving service in the Royal Chapel, during the king's 70th birthday celebrations yesterday.



STOCKHOLM: Sweden's Queen Silvia and King Carl XVI Gustaf arrive in an open carriage for lunch hosted by the City of Stockholm at the City Hall, part of the celebrations for the king's birthday yesterday.



STOCKHOLM: Sweden's Crown Princess Victoria, Princess Estelle and Prince Daniel arrive for the Te Deum thanksgiving service in the Royal Chapel, during King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden's 70th birthday celebrations yesterday.— AP



STOCKHOLM: From left, Princess Beatrix of Netherlands, Queen Margrethe of Denmark, Former King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sophia of Spain are seated as they attend the 70th birthday celebrations for King Carl Gustaf of Sweden yesterday.

## Sweden celebrates king's 70th with ABBA's 'Dancing Queen'

**R**oyals from around the world flew in, loyal Swedes lined the streets of Stockholm and the sounds of ABBA's "Dancing Queen" rang out from an army band on Saturday as Sweden celebrated King Carl XVI Gustaf's 70th birthday.

After a service in the palace chapel attended by the king's family and royal visitors from Japan, Spain, the Netherlands and Denmark, the outdoor pomp and celebrations for Sweden's monarch of 43 years included a tightly choreographed military parade. In the palace yard, children gave the king flowers before gun salutes rang out, and he went on a ride through Stockholm in an open horse-drawn carriage.

Under a clear blue sky, thousands of Swedes, some wearing plastic crowns, lined the route to City Hall. In the crowd were fans snapping cell phone photos and scouts in uniform, for the king is an honorary chairman of the World Scout Foundation.

At Stockholm City Hall, the king was visibly moved when he was greeted by a choir singing the Beatles hit "All You Need Is Love" - with the guests joining in. Guests included the former Dutch queen, now Princess Beatrix, of the Netherlands, Spain's

ex-King Juan Carlos, Denmark's Queen Margrethe and Japan's Princess Takamado.

Born on April 30, 1946, Carl XVI Gustaf ascended the throne in 1973 and married German commoner Silvia Sommerlath three years later. They have three children and five grandchildren, with Crown Princess Victoria next in line to the throne.

The king's popularity has dipped after newspapers alleged that he visited strip clubs, resulting in a poll showing that many believed he should abdicate in favor of the 38-year-old Victoria. He has dismissed quitting.

Swedish media, meanwhile, had feared the celebrations could be a possible target following reports that Iraqi authorities had told Sweden's security agency about alleged Islamic State militants who were reportedly planning an attack in Stockholm. — AP



STOCKHOLM: Spain's former Queen Sofia and King Juan Carlos arrive for the Te Deum thanksgiving service in the Royal Chapel during King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden's 70th birthday celebrations yesterday. — AP



STOCKHOLM: Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf, centre, surrounded by his family addresses well wishers, at the Royal Palace during the king's 70th birthday celebrations yesterday. — AP



STOCKHOLM: Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf, left and Prince Carl Philip walk, in the outer courtyard at the Royal Palace, during celebrations marking the king's 70th birthday yesterday.



STOCKHOLM: Sweden's Princess Sofia, left, and Prince Carl Philip arrive for the Te Deum thanksgiving service in the Royal Chapel during King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden's 70th birthday celebrations yesterday.—AP Photos



President of the United States, Barack Obama and Michelle Obama on a video call with Britain's Prince Harry and Queen Elizabeth II on Friday.



KENSINGTON PALACE, LONDON: President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama are greeted by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and His Royal Highness Prince Harry of Wales as they arrive at Kensington Palace in London on April 22, 2016. — AP photos

## Boom! Queen & Harry answer Obamas' Invictus Games challenge

It helps to have friends in high places when you're promoting an athletic event. That's certainly the case for Prince Harry, who released a video Friday promoting the upcoming Invictus Games for wounded veterans. The cast includes his grandmother Queen Elizabeth II as well as Barack and Michelle Obama, who Harry and his brother Prince William had over for dinner last week in London.

The video starts with Harry and the queen looking at an Invictus brochure when they get a video phone message from Mrs. Obama. It shows the Obamas accepting Harry's

challenge to the Invictus Games, with a man in uniform behind them saying "Boom!" The queen, bemused by the Americans, says, "Oh really? Please." Harry then says "Boom!" with a wicked grin. Elizabeth also made a widely-viewed promotional video with 007 star Daniel Craig for the 2012 London Olympics. — AP



KENSINGTON PALACE, LONDON: Queen Elizabeth II sitting with her grandson, Prince Harry as he says "Boom!" whilst receiving a video call from the President of the United States, Barack Obama and Michelle Obama on Friday. — AP



BURBANK, CALIFORNIA: Andrew McCarthy arrives at the Disney Media Distribution International Upfronts on May 17, 2015. — AP

## Andrew McCarthy is downright creepy in ABC's 'The Family'

Andrew McCarthy has been recognized in some pretty odd places. He was there when the Berlin Wall came down and was singled out by an East German guard as he tried to take a piece of the wall as a souvenir.

"It was chaos and these East German guards were pushing people back and this guard just looked at me, 'You! I'm just like, 'Everybody else is taking it, too!' He said, 'Catholic Boys,' which is a movie I did."

And he says his 1989 film, "Weekend at Bernie's," seems to be everywhere. For someone so recognizable, McCarthy, also known for roles in films like "St. Elmo's Fire," "Pretty in Pink," "Less Than Zero" and "Mannequin," has spent most of his time working behind the camera as a director.

"I love telling the whole story, and the older I've gotten the less interested I am in just my subjective point of view and worrying about what my hair looks like. It became boring to me to a certain degree. I was never particularly comfortable being the center of attention just on a personal level," he said in a recent interview.

McCarthy, 53, has directed episodes of TV series like "The Blacklist," "Orange is the New Black," "Gossip Girl" and the new ABC series "The Family" (Sunday, 9 p.m. EDT). He also has a role in that series, which stars Joan Allen, Rupert Graves and Alison Pill.

"The Family" is the story of a family torn apart when the youngest child goes missing. They assume he's been killed, and McCarthy plays the creepy neighbor, Hank Asher, convicted of the crime. Ten years later, a young man appears and says he's the missing child. McCarthy's character is released from jail, but will he be accepted as an innocent man?

McCarthy says that when he was approached to appear on "The Family," the character that really interested him was "this strange, disturbed, little man who lives next door."

"Hank is probably the most misunderstood guy in town and every mother's worst nightmare all in one," McCarthy said. "He has these really bad sexual predilections and yet he hates himself for having them. He's not just a monster going around doing evil. He's someone trying to fight against it. No one has more hate and contempt for him than himself."

Meanwhile, when he can fit it in, travel is McCarthy's favorite thing to do. "I prefer to travel alone. I love traveling with my family and my kids but ultimately I think I'm a solo traveler. ... Travel was the university of my life, I like to say. Travel changed my life." — AP

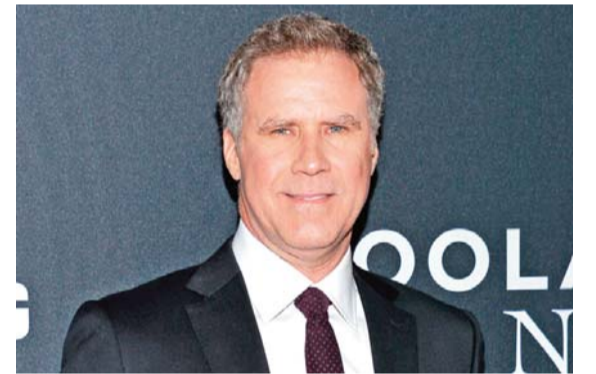
## Will Ferrell 'not pursuing' Reagan film, says spokesman

Will Ferrell is not pursuing a film project about President Ronald Reagan, a spokesman for the actor said Friday. The actor had read and considered the script for "Reagan" but had never committed to developing or starring in the comedic film, which had prompted a strong family backlash.

The script for "Reagan" had been described in a Variety report as a political satire about the president falling into dementia at the start of his second term.

Reagan's children Michael Reagan and Patti Davis, as well as the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation, issued statements against the idea of a film portraying dementia and Alzheimer's in a comedic fashion.

Ferrell's spokesman said that "Reagan" is "by no means" an Alzheimer's comedy. Reagan died of the disease in 2004. — AP



NEW YORK: Will Ferrell attending the world premiere of "Zoolander 2" on Feb. 9, 2016. — AP

## Bangkok ferris wheel catches fire, but no injuries reported

The ferris wheel at a newly opened dinosaur theme park in Bangkok caught fire on Saturday, but the park said no one was on it at the time, and no injuries were reported.

The fire broke out following an afternoon thunderstorm in the Thai capital. "At the time of the incident, no one was on the ferris wheel," the park said in a statement on its

Facebook page. "As standard protocol, we stopped all operations of the Dino Eye before the rain, which is one of our safety measures for Dinosaur Planet."

The statement did not include details on how long it took to extinguish the fire on the ferris wheel, called the Dino Eye. It said the park was investigating the cause of the blaze.

Photographs posted on social media showed fire rising from one of the capsules toward the top of the ferris wheel, as black smoke billowed up. Dinosaur Planet has been a popular attraction with residents and tourists since it opened a month ago in central Bangkok. — AP



BANGKOK: An empty passenger car of a ferris wheel burns at a newly opened dinosaur theme park yesterday. — AP



New York: Dylan O'Brien attends the premiere of "Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials" on Sept. 15, 2015. — AP

## 'Maze Runner' shoot delayed further due to star's injuries

Principal photography on "Maze Runner: The Death Cure" has been further delayed to allow star Dylan O'Brien more time to recover from injuries he suffered during the shoot in mid-March.

20th Century Fox said in a statement Friday that it looks forward to restarting production as soon as possible. O'Brien stars in the dystopian sci-fi franchise based on author James Dashner's novels. He was filming the third and final installment in the series in British Columbia when he was injured. A rep for the actor confirmed that the 24-year-old is recovering. Fox did not comment on whether or not the delay would impact the film's planned February 2017 release. O'Brien is also known for his role on TV's "Teen Wolf" series. — AP

## Palestinians seek Eurovision apology over banned flag

Yesterday a senior Palestinian official demanded an apology from Eurovision song contest organizers after the Palestinian flag was among a list of banned banners at next month's event in Sweden.

Palestine Liberation Organization second in command Saeb Erakat made the demand in a letter addressed to the president of the European Broadcasting Union, Jean-Paul Philippot. "The Eurovision song contest this year will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, the first EU member state in Western Europe to officially recognize the State of Palestine," Erakat wrote.

"Your decision is totally biased and unacceptable. We call upon you to immediately revoke this shameful decision. It's also equally necessary for the European Broadcasting Union to apologize to Palestine and to millions of Palestinians around the world."

Organizers of the annual contest have already come under fire from Spain, which condemned a ban on the Basque regional flag. "It is a constitutional, legal and legitimate flag and the Spanish government will defend it whenever needed," Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria said Friday.

Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo spoke to Madrid's ambassador in Sweden "so that he could immediately tell the organization that it is a constitutional flag and cannot be in that list," a ministry spokeswoman has said.

Eurovision has apologized to Spain and blamed the publication by mistake of a draft version of its flag policy listing banned banners, including that of the Islamic State group.

Under Eurovision rules, regional flags or those belonging to federated states, or including commercial, religious or political messages, are all banned. Those that are allowed are the flags of countries taking part in the contest and any other UN member state, as well as the EU flag and the rainbow banner that represents the LGBT movement. — AFP

## Pop classic 'Baby Baby' gets Tori Kelly reboot

A pop classic from the early '90s, Amy Grant's hit "Baby Baby," is getting a reboot 25 years later thanks to Grammy-nominated singer Tori Kelly.

A new version of the song featuring original vocals from Grant and new vocals from the "Should've Been Us" singer was released Friday digitally as the 1991 No. 1 song is being remade for a new generation.

"At least those of us who enjoyed the first run of it, we hear this version that Tori Kelly does and it just brings back all the best memories where that song was the backdrop," said Grant during an interview from her Nashville, Tennessee, home.

Grant was already a well-known Grammy-winning gospel singer before she crossed over to pop. She is now one of Christian music's most successful musicians, with six platinum and three multiplatinum albums and 10 Top 40 pop songs. "I was always trying to find a unique way to express a lifestyle of faith without being preachy," Grant said.

"Baby Baby," co-written with Keith Thomas and inspired by Grant's daughter Millie, made her the first Christian pop artist to have a No. 1 song. Her album "Heart in Motion" was

certified platinum five times. The song eventually became a worldwide hit, reaching top 10 charts in several other countries as well. In Nashville, she was mobbed by screaming teenagers and it became a fan favorite at her live shows.

"That song came out at a time when it just fit so comfortably in everybody's playlists," Grant said. The new version adds an R&B rhythm and beat over Kelly's vocal range, which Grant said impressed her immediately when she saw Kelly sing in the studio. "For Tori to be joining me on this song and then taking it to where it always wanted to go, to me that's fantastic," Grant said. — AP

Nashville: Singer Amy Grant poses for a portrait at her home. — AP



## 'Jungle Book' Dominating with \$38 Million Weekend

Showing serious staying power, Disney's "The Jungle Book" is dominating American movie going this weekend with an estimated \$38 million—the eighth-best third weekend of all time. That's more than four times the closest competitor, New Line's moderate opening for the Key and Peele action-comedy "Keanu" with \$9.2 million at 2,658 sites.

Open Road's launch of romantic comedy "Mother's Day" generated a modest \$8 million for a fourth-place finish behind the second weekend of Universal's "The Huntsman: Winter's War." Gramercy's "Ratchet & Clank" saw limited traction in its fifth-place opening with \$5.6 million.

Should Saturday's estimates hold, all three openers will finish the weekend at the lower end of recent forecasts while "The Jungle Book" remains an impressive draw at multiplexes with a decline of only 38% from its last frame. Stellar reviews

and strong word of mouth will have propelled the tale of an orphaned boy and talking animals to nearly \$248 million domestically in its first 17 days.

Directed by Jon Favreau, "The Jungle Book" took in \$10.2 million on Friday at 4,041 sites, tripling the take of the opening day for "Keanu." Should "Jungle Book" reach \$38 million this weekend, it will displace "Shrek 2" for the eighth-best third weekend total at the US box office.

The weekend is a prelude to what's widely expected to be a massive domestic opening on May 6 for "Captain America: Civil War" with a consensus forecast of nearly \$200 million. Disney-Marvel's superhero tentpole took in an impressive \$37.8 million from 30 international markets within two days on Wednesday and Thursday.

"Keanu," starring Jordan Peele and Keegan-Michael Key,

has generated solid reviews with a 76% "fresh" rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

"Mother's Day," starring Jennifer Aniston, Julia Roberts, Kate Hudson and Jason Sudeikis, and directed by Garry Marshall, is relying on star power with an ensemble includes Timothy Olyphant, Margo Martindale, Shay Mitchell, Britt Robertson, Hector Elizondo, Jack Whitehall and Jon Lovitz. Reviews for "Mother's Day," which opened at 3,035 sites, have been overwhelmingly negative with a 9% rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

Expectations have been muted for Gramercy's launch of "Ratchet & Clank," based on the 14-year-old video game franchise, that's opening at 2,891 locations. — Reuters



A screenshot from the Walt Disney movie 'The Jungle Book'

## Hollywood and D.C. Celebrate Journalism at Variety, Washington Post and SAG-AFTRA Event

The mix of glitz and government on the White House Correspondents Association dinner weekend can overshadow the purpose of the event: Journalism.

On the eve of the annual dinner, Variety teamed with The Washington Post, SAG-AFTRA and the SAG-AFTRA Foundation for a Celebration of Journalism, held at the Post's new headquarters in downtown D.C.

Members of the real-life Boston Globe Spotlight team from "Spotlight"—including Michael Rezendes and Walter "Robby" Robinson—were among those attending. This year's best picture Oscar winner, which chronicled their investigative reporting

that exposed the Boston archdiocese cover-up of clergy sexual abuse, continues to soak up acclaim. Related The 36 Biggest Names at the White House Correspondents' Dinner Surrounded by admirers, Robinson says he speaks an average of twice a week about the power of investigative journalism. "It's really heartening," he said. "The interest just continues." "Spotlight" director Tom McCarthy and screenwriter Josh Singer are expected in town on Saturday to attend the dinner.

Among those at the event were Nina Totenberg, "The West Wing" alums Dule Hill, Allison Janney and Lawrence O'Donnell; SAG-AFTRA president Gabrielle Carteris; "The Big Chill" alums

Jeff Goldblum and JoBeth Williams; CNN's Brian Stelter; Dan Balz, Chad Griffin, Hilary Rosen, Constance Zimmer, Cenk Uygur, Amy Dacey, Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.), Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) and Nina Lederman.

Washington Post publisher Fred Ryan was joined by the Post's Jason Rezaian, released in January after spending 18 months in an Iranian prison. Last year, many journalists were wearing "Free Jason" buttons at the dinner and surrounding events, calling attention to his captivity. — Reuters



LILLE, France: dancers of the "Bejart Ballet Lausanne" performing the Bolero by Maurice Ravel in Lille, to celebrate the 50-year anniversary of the company of French choreographer Maurice Bejart on November 26, 2004. — AFP

## Copyright expires on Bolero, world's most famous classical crescendo

Almost 90 years after it was first performed in Paris, the copyright runs out on today on one of the most popular and unique pieces of classical music, Ravel's "Bolero."

"We are accustomed to say that a performance of Bolero begins every 10 minutes in the world. As the work lasts 17 minutes, it is therefore playing at all times somewhere," said Laurent Petitgirard of France's Society of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers (SACEM). "And it is likely that we will hear it even more now, in advertisements or in films."

Written in 1928 and performed on November 22 of that year at Paris' Opera Garnier, the symphonic work, which grows steadily louder as it progresses, was originally a ballet piece ordered by Russian dancer Ida Rubinstein, a friend and sponsor of the French composer Maurice Ravel.

Immediately hailed by critics, it quickly became a worldwide success, even if the uniform melody and hypnotic, repetitive rhythm left some baffled. "It is a simple and direct piece of writing without the slightest attempt at virtuosity," said the French composer, who died in 1937.

Petitgirard described it as "an experimental piece, a precision mechanism and a demonstration of genius." But a contemporary of Ravel's, the French composer Florent Schmitt, slammed the Bolero as a "only error" in the com-

poser's career. Almost 90 years later, the work has been performed by some of the most prestigious orchestras in the world, under the baton of many of the top conductors, including Arturo Toscanini, Seiji Ozawa, Claudio Abbado and Pierre Boulez. It also inspired a multitude of choreographic works, the best known probably being one created by Maurice Bejart in 1961.

It has been used in numerous ad campaigns, by British ice skaters Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean in their gold medal-winning performance at the Sarajevo Olympics in 1984 — and when the characters played Dudley Moore and Bo Derek made love in Blake Edwards' film "10"

By some estimates Bolero has generated around 50 million Euros in royalties since 1960, part of more than 400 million for all of Ravel's works.

Ravel died unmarried and childless in 1937. His only heir was his brother Edouard, who died in 1960, unleashing a bitter and complex legal battle over the rights which at times has involved Edouard's nurse and her husband, great-nephews and even a legal director of SACEM. But today, the royalties will cease to be paid as Bolero enters the public domain and belongs to the world. — AFP

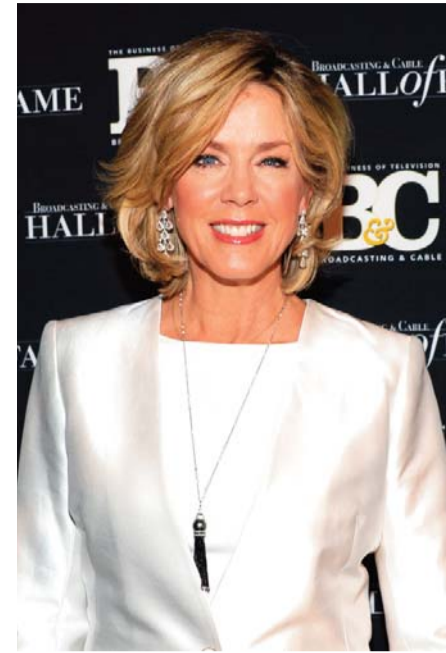
Feature



NEW YORK: Kelly Ripa, left, poses with Michael Strahan, her co-host on the daily television talk show "LIVE! with Kelly and Michael". — AP



Beverly Hills: Jimmy Fallon, left, and Jay Leno pose backstage at the 70th Annual Golden Globe Awards on Jan. 13, 2013.



NEW YORK: Deborah Norville attends 24th Annual Broadcasting and Cable Hall of Fame Awards on Oct. 20, 2014.



NEW YORK: Ann Curry attends the Cartier Collection dinner &amp; party at Skylight Clarkson Studios on Nov. 12, 2014.

# Strahan-Ripa breakup isn't TV's first botched transition

**L**ive with Kelly and Michael" host Kelly Ripa emerged from her brief "strike" this past week on stronger footing, having extracted an apology from Walt Disney Co. officials for giving her little advanced word that her co-host Michael Strahan was leaving for "Good Morning America."

She had briefly boycotted the popular daytime talk show, saying she had earned the right to better treatment. Her audience gave Ripa a standing ovation upon her return Tuesday, and ABC said Strahan was leaving nearly four months earlier than expected. It was hardly the first time television executives had botched a transition, nor the most spectacular. Here are some other dropped batons:

## The younger woman

Jane Pauley had been a mainstay on NBC's "Today" show for 13 years, first as co-host with Tom Brokaw and later with Bryant Gumbel, when the show's executives were seduced by a younger woman.

Deborah Norville, seven years Pauley's junior, lit up the screen on NBC's early-morning newscast. She was reassigned to "Today" in late summer 1989 with a big new contract, given a more prominent role than predecessor John Palmer. Norville was widely viewed as Pauley's successor, certainly to Pauley, who quit before she could be pushed out.

During her last show, on Dec. 29, the New York Daily News wrote that Pauley "often looked like she'd rather have been queued up in a 5-hour rice line in Bucharest." Most unfortunately, the show featured a long report on a horse that had been racing 11 years but had to be retired.

The optics were horrible. Women dominate the morning news audience, and "Today" was serving up their worst nightmare onscreen: a loyal woman approaching middle age pushed aside for a sexy new model. The show's ratings instantly fell behind ABC's "Good Morning America." They didn't recover until Norville left on maternity leave 19 months later and was herself displaced by Katie Couric.

Norville fought depression, then battled back as an author and host of "Inside Edition." "It was personally devastating to, in less than two years, go from 'NBC's fastest-rising star' to a pariah in television," Norville wrote for The Hollywood Reporter in 2012.

## Team coco

If you still have a "Team Coco" shirt in a back closet, you remember late-night television's worst transition. NBC thought it was being foresighted when it announced in 2004 that five years later, Jay Leno would retire as "Tonight" show host and be replaced by Conan O'Brien.

"I was blindsided," Leno recalled in a later "60 Minutes" interview, likening it to being told by a girlfriend that he was no longer wanted. He didn't feel much better five years later.



NEW YORK: From left, Meredith Vieira, Star Jones, Joy Behar and Barbara Walters on the set of "The View" on June 5, 2003. — AP

He vacated the late-night perch, and was given a prime-time show that not many people watched.

Meanwhile, "Tonight" ratings sank when after O'Brien took over and NBC executives worried that the quirky sensibility that worked for O'Brien's later-night show didn't translate to a more mainstream earlier audience. They floated a plan to cut the "Tonight" hour in half, giving part of Leno and part to O'Brien.

O'Brien rejected it early in 2010, and began negotiations for a contract buyout. With the axe near, O'Brien's "Tonight" show became white hot. Ratings soared, and his persona as the put-upon employee fueled superb comedy. Fans rallied around, buying "Team Coco" shirts, and Leno was brutalized regularly by fellow late-night hosts David Letterman and

Jimmy Kimmel as a turncoat, someone who couldn't give up his seat of power. Besides a reported \$45 million buyout, O'Brien earned another late-night gig at TBS, where he works today.

Leno's transition to Jimmy Fallon in 2014 went much more smoothly. Fallon was an immediate hit, and Leno gracious in his exit. Even then, though, he made sure to note that leaving wasn't his decision.

## Star time

Star Jones, panelist on daytime TV's "The View," surprised that show's audience in July 2006 by announcing after a commercial break that she would soon be leaving after 10 years.

"That's shocking to me," co-host Joy Behar said. It shouldn't have been. The show's creator, Barbara Walters, said later that Jones had known for months that the show was going in a different direction. Jones said in a magazine interview that appeared that day that she had been fired.

As Jones made her announcement, Walters sat at her side, glaring. To the proper television doyenne, few things were as important as appearances and the illusion that the ladies of "The View" were a convivial bunch. She told The Associated Press that day that Jones' announcement was a betrayal.

The next day, Jones was gone. Walters said Jones had been given time to find another job so the transition would appear smooth. "I would have loved for Star to have left and not said 'I was fired' and not make it look like the show was somehow being cruel to her," she said.

It was six years before she was welcomed back onto the ABC show as a guest. Even on a program that featured the colorful and combustible Rosie O'Donnell for two separate tenures, Jones had the most memorable flameout.

## Crying curry

Two decades after the Norville debacle, the "Today" show managed to top itself with Ann Curry's tearful exit.

Curry was a loyal soldier, reading the news for "Today" starting in 1997 and remaining after she was passed over for Meredith Vieira as co-host when Couric left in 2005. When Vieira quit in 2011, Curry earned the job next to Matt Lauer. Yet "Today" started fading in the ratings, running neck-and-neck with "Good Morning America" in the spring of 2012 after many years of dominance, and executives worried that Curry and Lauer had little on-screen chemistry.

They decided to replace her with Savannah Guthrie. Curry's final show made for excruciating television. She was in tears seated next to Lauer on the show's couch, telling viewers: "For all of you who saw me as a groundbreaker, I'm sorry I didn't carry the ball over the finish line. But man, I did try."

Again, the effect was immediate. ABC's "GMA" took over as morning television's favorite and while things have been looking up lately, "Today" remains in second place. Lauer's reputation with viewers took a beating, especially when Curry did little to discourage accounts that she partly blamed him for her demise. After reporting primarily on international stories, Curry left NBC News in January 2015.

"It was a hard time for everybody," Lauer told the Daily Beast in 2013. "I don't think the show or the network handled the transition well. You don't have to be Einstein to know that." — AP

## Prince's motorcycle jacket from 'Purple Rain' film on auction

**A** motorcycle jacket worn by the late pop star Prince in his 1984 film "Purple Rain," when he rides through the woods with the movie's leading lady, Apollonia, will be sold at auction, the company behind the sale said on Friday.

The V-neck jacket, which is black with white cross-hatching and has leather sleeves from the elbows down, will be presented for sale in Profiles in History's auction between June 29 and July 1 in Calabasas, California.

Brian Chanes, who handles client relations at Profiles in History, said the auction house received the jacket about six weeks ago, before the musician's unexpected death on April 21 at age 57.

Officials from the company had estimated the jacket would sell for between \$6,000 and \$8,000, but that was before Prince's death, which drew an outpouring of tributes for the seven-time Grammy-winner from President Barack Obama, Hollywood figures and fans worldwide.

"Now, all bets are off," Chanes said, adding that the jacket could fetch more than \$100,000.

Profiles in History officials said few items of Prince memorabilia have ever been offered for sale. The jacket was given to a make-up artist for Prince and Apollonia Koteru, a singer who starred as the pop star's girlfriend in the 1984 film "Purple Rain," and the make-up artist's sister is the consignor for the sale, said Jeff Hare, a spokesman for Profiles in History. The auction will be open to participants worldwide through the Internet, the company said. Prince's death at his home called Paisley Park near Minneapolis is under investigation by officials in Minnesota, but they have said there is no indication of suicide or physical trauma. — Reuters



CALABASAS, CALIFORNIA: Prince "Purple Rain" jacket is shown in this image released on April 29, 2016. — AFP



NEW YORK: Singer Bono and musician Nile Rodgers arrive at We Are Family Foundation's Annual Gala at the Manhattan Center on Friday. — AFP

## Bono, Jimmy Carter Feted at Nile Rodgers' 'We Are Family Foundation' Gala

**B**ono electrified the crowd on Friday night for Nile Rodgers' We Are Family Foundation's Annual Gala at the Manhattan Center in New York. The U2 frontman, who was awarded the charity's Humanitarian Award, belted out "Pride (In the Name of Love)," and "Beautiful Day" at the Hammerstein Ballroom event.

He then finished his set with "Mysterious Ways" before making a grand exit—vaulting off the stage, snaking his way through the crowd like an Irish Pied Piper and exiting through the front doors. In a heartfelt speech, the 55-year-old singer lauded the night's other big name honoree, former president Jimmy Carter.

"As a teenager I began to hear about this poetic figure who was running for President of the United States," he said. "[Carter] quoted Bob Dylan, who

was at that time the actual president of the United States, my United States."

Bono, an outspoken Christian, praised Carter for his beliefs. He recalled when Carter was asked where his moral compass came from and said, "he didn't quote an economist or philosopher or a pollster or pundit. He cited the Holy Scriptures. The most powerful man in the world humbled himself to submit to a higher power."

Bono mentioned that U2 bandmate the Edge is a huge Rodgers fan and would have loved to have jammed on stage with the Chic guitarist, but had another gig which he couldn't step away from. The gig in question was playing in the Sistine Chapel for the Pope.

"I said, 'I'm doing a gig at the Hammerstein Ballroom and we're going to turn it into the

Cathedral that it has been over the years for rock and roll music and hip hop and dance music and I am with the groove pope (Rodgers); to which the Edge had nothing to say," Bono recited to the delight of the audience.

Related Bono Joined by Patti Smith at U2's Paris Concert: 'We Are All Parisians' After Bono's spirited set, the man of the hour, Rodgers had brought the crowd to its feet as he and Chic performed hits like "Le Freak," "Dance, Dance, Dance," "Everybody Dance" and of course "We are Family."

The evening, which was hosted by Soledad O'Brien, raised over \$1 million which included a \$100,000 bid for the guitar Rodgers played at this year's Grammys. — Reuters



Al-Mirfa beach, Abu Dhabi: An Emirati fisherman throws his net during the al-Gharbia Watersports festival on April 30, 2016.—AFP

## 7 Things to expect from the 2016 Tony nominations

Now that we finally know what "Shuffle Along" is, Broadway can get down to what it does best: Gossiping and prognosticating about awards season. With nominations for the 2016 Tony Awards set to be announced May 3, here are seven things to look out for on Tuesday morning.

### 1. All "Hamilton," all the time.

The Tony nominations domination of the season's megahit, "Hamilton," is taken as a fait accompli. Can it match the record 15 nominations earned by "The Producers" in 2001? In that respect, "Hamilton" is handicapped by the lack of a sound design category, which existed in 2001 (and was won by "The Producers") but was eliminated from the Tonys in 2014. Whether "Hamilton" can approach the record depends on how deep nominators draw from the musical's supporting actor candidates. (See No. 7.)

### 2. Best Musical: Sure things and uncertainties

With "Shuffle Along" now deemed a new musical after

a period of uncertainty, the show seems sure to go head to head with "Hamilton" for the Tonys' top trophy. "Waitress" also looks poised to grab a nom. But that's where the certainties end. The final slot (or slots, depending on how the nomination voting goes) seem most likely to go to Andrew Lloyd Webber's first Broadway success in years, "School of Rock," or to Gloria Estefan bio "On Your Feet!" "American Psycho," which divided critics but has its adherents, could be a dark horse. Related Tony Awards: 7 Burning Questions About This Year's Race

### 3. Best Musical Revival: Tight race

With "Shuffle Along" no longer a factor, this category looks sewn up. "The Color Purple," "She Loves Me," "Fiddler on the Roof" and "Spring Awakening" will vie for the prize. All were well received, and each could make a strong claim for the title.

### 4. Best Play: Has "The Humans" eclipsed "Eclipsed"?

There are two sure nominees for this one: "The

Humans" and "Eclipsed." Both earned strong notices, but "Eclipsed" seemed to have receded from awareness somewhat, which makes "Humans" look like the one to beat. The respected "King Charles III" will get a nod, with the fourth slot probably going to "The Father."

### 5. Lead Actress in a Musical: Fiercely competitive

Voters are going to have a tough time with this one. Audra McDonald ("Shuffle Along"), Jessie Mueller ("Waitress") and Laura Benanti ("She Loves Me") each has a Tony to her name (or six, if you're Audra), and will probably be nominated again, facing off with Cynthia Erivo ("The Color Purple"), considered by many to be the frontrunner for the award. Likely to round out the category is Carmen Cusack of "Bright Star"—although Ana Villafane of "On Your Feet!" might slide in there as well.

### 6. Lead Actress in a Play: Names you know

Notable actresses stand poised to dominate this race. Jessica Lange ("Long Day's Journey Into Night"), Lupita

Nyong'o ("Eclipsed"), Michelle Williams ("Blackbird") and Laurie Metcalf ("Misery") could all nab noms. Linda Lavin ("Our Mother's Brief Affair") or Cicely Tyson ("The Gin Game") have the potential to take slot five.

### 7. Supporting acting categories: Lots of nominees from a handful of shows

The supporting actress in a play category could be filled by just two shows, "The Humans" and "Eclipsed," each with three solid contenders for a nomination. "Hamilton," meanwhile, has a wealth of possibilities for the supporting actor in a musical race, including Christopher Jackson, Daveed Diggs and Jonathan Groff. Ditto "Shuffle Along," whose four male stars—Brian Stokes Mitchell, Billy Porter, Brandon Victor Dixon and Joshua Henry—are all featured players. — Reuters

## Filmmaker Coppola cements legacy

Veteran filmmaker Francis Ford Coppola left a permanent mark on Hollywood on Friday, after his hands and feet were imprinted in cement to be displayed at the landmark TCL Chinese Theatre. The ceremony honored the 77-year-old Oscar-winning director's 50-year career, highlighted by films such as "The Godfather" trilogy and "Apocalypse Now" and five Oscar wins. It took place during Turner Classic Movies' annual Classic Film Festival in Hollywood, which will run through Sunday, where Coppola's films will be played.

"Maybe 40 years ago people might not have appreciated a film like 'Apocalypse Now,' which was kind of unusual to say the least," Coppola told Reuters about receiving the honor after so many

years in the industry. "If you're looking as an artist for some type of assurance that what you are doing is OK or going in the right direction then I think you have to wait for the judgment of time before you know."

Among those on hand were wife Eleanor, son Roman Coppola, sister Talia Shire and fellow director Peter Bogdanovich. — Reuters

**HOLLYWOOD: Director Francis Ford Coppola places his handprints in cement during a ceremony in the forecourt of the TCL Chinese theatre on Friday. — AFP**

