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## NO VISA TRANSFER FROM GOVT CONTRACTS TO PRIVATE SECTOR

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## ACTIVISTS CALL TO END SYRIA BLOODSHED



KUWAIT: Activists gather in front of the National Assembly yesterday for a candlelight vigil in solidarity with victims of bombardment in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** A group of young human rights activists staged a vigil at Irada Square opposite the National Assembly yesterday to express solidarity with children and civilians besieged in several areas in Syria. The sit-in was held under the title 'Syria Under Fire'. Demonstrators

demonstrated conveying their message to the world to stop the war and find immediate alternative peaceful solutions. "This is the least we can do for the Syrian people," they stressed, pointing out that wars always claim the lives of innocent and unarmed people like children, women and the elderly to make some political gains.

Demonstrators also expressed rejection of all regimes, tyrants and those killing their own people. "We are not here today to represent a certain sect, party or tribe - we are here today for humanity," they added, expressing strong rejection to wars and regional conflicts and called all Arabs to adopt the same concerns. They also called

for an immediate halt to the "massacres in Aleppo that have been documented through photos and videos while the international community turns a blind eye". Demonstrators also urged Arab regimes and particularly GCC leaders to intervene to resolve the problem and stop the killing of innocent people.

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Subaih yesterday denied reports that the door was open to transfer workers on government projects to the private sector. The minister added those holding domestic helper residencies are also not allowed to transfer to the private sector. She announced that meetings will take place before the holy month of Ramadan, which begins early June, to take new decisions and determine changes regarding the local demographic structure. She provided no further details.

Authorities are taking all necessary measures to ensure a balance in the labor market and the demographic structure with the aim to achieve development goals and pave the way for foreign investments in the country, Subaih said. She said that studies and research on the ratios of work permits for foreigners being conducted by the higher population committee and the manpower authority will continue. Foreign workers who have been hired by contractors operating a government project are required to leave the country immediately after the project is completed. Despite measures by authorities to control the demographic mix, the number of expatriates has swelled to around three million people, constituting about 70 percent of Kuwait's population.

Meanwhile, the government has asked the National Assembly to delay a scheduled debate on government-sponsored economic reforms in its session next week until further notice, said MP Ahmad Lari, rapporteur of the priorities committee. The request came because of the absence of the prime minister, who is currently leading a high-level delegation on a tour to four Asian countries.



Hind Al-Subaih

Continued on Page 13

## PM VISITS BANGLADESH



DHAKA: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah is received by Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed at the airport yesterday. Bangladesh is the first leg of an Asian tour that will take Sheikh Jaber and his accompanying delegation to Vietnam, South Korea and Japan. — KUNA

## IS KILLS US NAVY SEAL

**BAGHDAD:** The Islamic State group broke through Kurdish defenses in northern Iraq yesterday and killed a US Navy SEAL deployed as part of the US-led coalition against the jihadists. The attack came as the United Nations said that fighting with IS in northern Iraq could displace another 30,000 people, adding to millions who have already fled their homes. And in Baghdad, throngs of Shiite pilgrims braved the threat of bombings by IS, which have killed dozens of people in recent days, to take part in a major annual religious commemoration.

The sailor from the special operations force was at least the third coalition member killed by enemy fire in Iraq since IS overran swathes of the country in 2014. President Barack Obama hailed the 2011 withdrawal of American troops from Iraq as a major accomplishment of his presidency, but US forces have been drawn back into

combat in the country against IS. Pentagon spokesman Peter Cook said the death occurred during an IS attack on one of the Kurdish peshmerga forces' positions north of Iraq's jihadist-held second city Mosul.

A US defense official said the US SEAL's death was the result of "an orchestrated attack". A coalition military official said the American was killed at 9:30 am (0630 GMT) by "direct fire" after "enemy forces penetrated" the peshmerga line. The SEAL was a member of a "small team" that was present at a peshmerga encampment behind the original front line during the IS attack, which involved explosives-rigged vehicles, bulldozers and infantry, the official said. "They fought, but they're a small number and they're not supposed to be in direct contact," and they departed by American helicopter after the SEAL was shot, according to the official.

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## News

in Brief

### UN Yemen envoy bids to revive talks

**KUWAIT:** The UN envoy has met delegates of Yemen's warring parties separately in a bid to restart peace negotiations after a protest walkout by the government, the United Nations said yesterday. The government delegation quit on Sunday in protest at the rebels' seizure of one of the few loyalist army bases in the northern mountains in a blow to the peace talks launched on April 21. UN envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed met both government and rebel delegations late on Monday in a bid to find a swift resolution to the dispute over the rebels' seizure of the Al-Amaliqa base on Saturday despite an April 11 ceasefire. Foreign Minister Abdulmalek Al-Mikhlafi, who heads the government delegation, told Sky News Arabia there would be no more direct or indirect talks with the rebels until they withdrew from the camp and gave guarantees there would be no further breaches of the ceasefire.

### Oil to stabilize at \$50-60: KPI

**DUBAI:** The chief executive of Kuwait Petroleum International said yesterday that he expected oil prices to stabilize between \$50 and \$60 a barrel by the end of 2016 or early 2017, Kuwait's official KUNA news agency reported. It also quoted Bakheet Al-Rashidi as saying prices could reach \$80 a barrel in three to four years' time. Brent crude is currently around \$46 a barrel. "We think this increase in price is following the fundamentals of the market," he told KUNA. "It is an issue of supply and demand." KPI, also known as Q8, refines and markets fuel, lubricants and other petroleum products. It is an international subsidiary of state-owned oil and gas firm Kuwait Petroleum Corp.

## SAUDI MINISTER 'NOT SATISFIED' WITH FEMALE EMPLOYMENT RATE

### BINLADIN WORKERS TO BE PAID SOON

**RIYADH:** Saudi Arabia's labor minister is dissatisfied with the level of female employment in the conservative kingdom but their not being allowed to drive is not to blame, he said yesterday. Female Saudi unemployment rose last year to almost 34 percent while the overall jobless rate for Saudis fell to 11.5 percent, according to official figures cited by Jadwa Investment, a local securities firm. "We tried (during) the last four years to increase the female participation in the

labor market," Labour Minister Mufarraj Al-Haqbani told reporters. But still, "I am not satisfied at all" with their employment rate, he said.

The kingdom's ambitious Vision 2030 plan, released last week to diversify the economy away from oil, calls for increased female participation in the workforce and a lowering of overall unemployment to seven percent. More and more job sectors have opened to

Continued on Page 13



RIYADH: Saudi and foreign investors attend the Euromoney Saudi Arabia conference in the capital yesterday. — AFP

## BRIBERY FOR SERVICES RAMPANT IN MIDEAST

**DUBAI:** A new report released yesterday by an anti-corruption watchdog shows that on average, almost a third of the people in nine countries surveyed in the Middle East have had to pay a bribe to access some kind of public service. The poll by Transparency International also found that courts have the worst bribery rate out of six services that were surveyed. The watchdog interviewed nearly 11,000 people - or about 1,200 people in each of the nine countries - and found that bribery was especially rampant in Yemen.

In the impoverished Arabian Peninsula

country, 77 percent of respondents said they had to pay a bribe to access public services. The interviews in Yemen were carried out before the start of March 2015 Saudi-led airstrikes targeting Yemen's Shiite rebels, after which the country's crisis descended into war. Around 50 percent of people surveyed in Egypt, Sudan and Morocco said they paid bribes for public services.

Transparency International also surveyed people in Lebanon, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan and the Palestinian territories. The poll was carried out in direct interviews at various

times in 2014 and 2015, and gave a 3 percent margin of error. Public anger over corruption among government officials, social inequality and the lack of justice and transparency were catalysts of the 2011 Arab Spring movements that ousted longtime leaders in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya.

Transparency International's chief Jose Ugaz said that failing to stop bribery also affects people's human rights. "It's as if the Arab Spring never happened," he said in a statement accompanying the report.

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**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives a written message from Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, delivered by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez.



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with UAE's Ambassador Rahma Hussein Al-Zaabi, who delivered a letter from UAE Vice President Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives credentials of Cambodia's Ambassador to Kuwait. — Amiri Diwan photos

## AMIR RECEIVES MESSAGES FROM SAUDI KING, DUBAI GOVERNOR

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday received a written message from Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. The message, handed over to His Highness the Amir by Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Bin Ibrahim Al-Fayez,

tackled brotherly ties between the two countries and peoples, issues of common concern and the latest developments on regional and international scenes.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Amir received a written message from UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of

Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum inviting Kuwait to take part in the Expo 2020 Dubai, October 2020-April 2021. The UAE's Ambassador to Kuwait Rahma Hussein Rahma Al-Zaabi handed over the message to His Highness the Amir. Advisor at the Amiri Diwan

Mohammad Daifallah Sherar attended both meetings.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received at Bayan Palace credentials of newly-appointed ambassadors of Algeria, Cambodia, Tanzania, Republic of Korea, and Albania. Acting Prime Minister, Minister of

Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah attended the meetings.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah separately received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives credentials of Tanzania's Ambassador to Kuwait.



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives credentials of the Republic of Korea's Ambassador to Kuwait.



**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives credentials of Albania's Ambassador to Kuwait.



**KUWAIT:** Acting Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah meets with UN envoy to Yemen Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed and GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Zayani. — KUNA

## ACTING PREMIER MEETS UN YEMEN ENVOY, GCC CHIEF

**KUWAIT:** Acting Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met UN envoy to Yemen Ismael Ould Cheikh Ahmed and GCC Secretary-General Abdullah Al-Zayani at Bayan Palace yesterday. During the meeting, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled

and the GCC chief reiterated GCC support to the UN envoy's efforts in Yemeni peace talks held in Kuwait at present. Acting Deputy Foreign Minister Ahmad Nasser Al-Sabah and Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Dhari Al-Ajran attended the meeting. — KUNA

## SAUDI ARABIA WORKING TO BUILD MODERN SOCIETY: ENVOY

**KUWAIT:** Saudi Arabia is working hard to turn the society into a modern one, based on knowledge economy, the Kingdom's Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz bin Ibrahim Al-Fayez said. The Saudi Vision 2030 is based on building vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation, Fayeze told a press conference at the embassy yesterday.

The Kingdom is working on transferring its economy from a traditional one based on a sole source of income to another that lives on modern technical developments, the envoy said, noting that the real wealth is the human element.

Openness to the world does not at all imply that the Kingdom may offer concessions whatsoever, Fayeze stressed. Referring to similar plans announced by other Gulf states like Kuwait and the UAE, he said that it is a "complementary and symbiotic" matter. Any positive developments in the Kingdom will be reflected on sister countries like the GCC members. He pointed to the unprecedented falls in oil prices and global trends toward new and renewable energy, and stressed the necessity of interacting with changes and diversifying sources of income.

By 2030, the Saudi economy will have undergone radical changes, Fayeze said, highlighting the Kingdom's Arab and Muslim pivotal role. Vision 2030 is an ambitious plan that reflects enthusiasm and keenness by the Saudi leadership to promote the economy, he said. The Vision envisages increasing capacity to



**KUWAIT:** Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Al-Fayez speaks during a press conference at the embassy yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

welcome Umrah visitors from 8 million at present to 30 million annually, in addition to offering five per cent of the Aramco for public prescription, he said.

On Saudi women, the ambassador said that they had proved great success in various fields, especially education, and come to hold senior posts. Vision 2030 states that the "Saudi women are yet another great asset. With over 50 percent of our university graduates being female, we will continue to develop their talents, invest in their productive capabilities and enable them to strengthen their future and contribute to the development of our society and economy." — KUNA

## 'CAPITAL OF ISLAMIC CULTURE' COMMITTEE MEETS

**KUWAIT:** Celebrating Kuwait as the capital of Islamic culture for 2016 is a distinction that requires public and private sectors and civil society organizations to work hard to delineate that distinction to the rest of the world, a Kuwaiti official said yesterday.

Chairing a meeting of the committee in charge of organizing the events of the celebration, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah praised the National Council for Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL) on its efforts at preparing special activities for this much-touted occasion.

The meeting discussed the type of activities that could be held during the month of Ramadan to celebrate Kuwait as the capital of Islamic culture for 2016. Also, the meeting examined ideas for a logo commemorating this occasion and a proposal by the Central Bank of Kuwait regarding issuing a commemorative gold coin to mark the occasion.

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) selected Kuwait to be the capital of Islamic culture for 2016, along with two other capitals, the city of Male in the Maldives, and the city of Freetown in Sierra Leone. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah heads a meeting of the committee in charge of organizing the events of the celebration yesterday. — KUNA

## ABK AWARDED 'BANK OF THE YEAR' BY ARABIAN BUSINESS

**KUWAIT:** Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) won the 'Bank of the Year' award from Arabian Business, one of the foremost business magazines in the region. This prestigious award was received by Michel Accad, ABK's Chief Executive Officer, during a ceremony held on May 2nd, 2016 at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel. The Arabian Business Achievement Awards recognize and reward outstanding success, innovation and ethics in the region and in Kuwait.

The 'Bank of the Year' award acknowledges the Bank's tremendous efforts in presenting its customers with differentiated services and products through the implementation of its unique 'Simpler Banking' strategy, which aims to deliver a simple and straightforward customer experience, while offering clients better security, convenience and speed when managing their banking needs. The Bank also made several transformations throughout the past year, by deploying a series of enhancements and new developments to its systems and digital channels, along with substantial upgrades to its HR systems. ABK also introduced its new business strategy, vision and mission, coupled with the launch of its core values: Transparency, Integrity, Simplicity and Excellence - the four behavioral pillars around which the Bank bases its approach.

Commenting on the Award, Accad said: "It is an honor to be named 'Bank of the Year' by Arabian Business and to have our efforts and hard work recognized on a regional level. 2015 was truly a transformational year for us. We implemented some key business and service initiatives, acquired a bank in Egypt, and witnessed our 'Simpler Banking' strategy materialize.

"I would like to thank our Chairman, Talal Behbehani, and our Board for the unwavering support they have given us. I would also like to congratulate the ABK team members and the various departments that worked hand in hand to continuously deliver outstanding results. This is proof of what we can accomplish as one team and we are excited by ABK's future prospects."

ABK's acquisition of Piraeus Bank Egypt (PBE), which was completed in November 2015, is one of the major milestones in the Bank's development and growth. The new subsidiary will be rebranded ABK Egypt and the new identity will be rolled-out over the entire 39 branch network in the first half of 2016. For more information on Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait please visit [www.eahli.com](http://www.eahli.com) or contact an ABK a customer service agent via 'Ahlani' at 18998999.



**KUWAIT:** Michel Accad, ABK's Chief Executive Officer and Fawzi Al-Thunaiyan receive the award from Sheikh Mubarak Fahad Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

## KUWAIT STEADFAST IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS: MINISTRY

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait remains steadfast in its commitment to human rights, the Foreign Ministry said yesterday, noting that the issue of human rights is "no longer a national issue, but an international one."

Assistant Foreign Minister for Coordination Affairs Nasser Al-Subaih made the remarks at a workshop on the Arab tenets of human rights, organized by the ministry yesterday. Subaih underscored Kuwait's support of laws dealing with human rights, saying that such support stems from an unwavering conviction. Moreover, Chairman of the Arab

League's human rights committee Dr Hadi Al-Yami said that holding this workshop helps to facilitate work on human rights issues, as Kuwait is set to issue its first report on human rights.

Yami also described the report as a monumental step that will bring progress on the issue of human rights. The workshop, which features participation of a number of Arab human rights committees, tackles the Arab charter on human rights, in addition to discussions of reports submitted by Arab nations on the issue. — KUNA



**Nasser Al-Subaih**



## OPERETTA EMBODIES KUWAITIS'S UNITY: MINISTER

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Subaih extolled highly yesterday the presentation of an operetta titled 'These are my Children' by a group of people with special needs. The minister was attending the stage presentation of the operetta as part of her ministry's celebration of Kuwait as capital of Islamic culture for 2016.

The sentence "These are my children" was first enunciated by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah which subsequently became a catch phrase denoting the kindness of His Highness the Amir to

his people, the people of Kuwait, said Subaih, in a speech during yesterday's celebration.

She stressed in the speech the necessity for national unity, for exercising values of tolerance, acceptance of the other, and for working to ensure the security and stability of the nation by eschewing sectarianism and extremism.

She praised the contribution of people with special needs in making a rousing success of today's operetta which, among other things, was composed of patriotic musical numbers and sketches on themes of national unity. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Minister Hind Al-Subaih makes a speech during the celebration. — KUNA



**A class painting activity last Monday inside the NKPIS multi-purpose hall**

## CLASSES CONTINUE AS FILIPINO SCHOOL FACES LEGAL BATTLE

### LEAVE LEGAL ISSUE TO SCHOOL MANAGEMENT: PRINCIPAL

**By Ben Garcia**

**KUWAIT:** The New Kuwait-Philippines International School (NKPIS) vowed to continue operating in its current location even though the Ministry of Education had given it notice to vacate on April 28, 2016. In a statement sent to Kuwait Times yesterday by NKPIS' management, it explained the problem was an old issue between the ministry of education's private and qualitative sector and the school owner, and that the matter is still in court. The school management urged parents to continue to entrust their children to the school's management and assured parents of continued academic excellence.

In an announcement published by Kuwait Times on Thursday, April 28, 2016, the education ministry announced its intention to take necessary measures to evict NKPIS (from its current location in Jleeb Al-Shouyoukh) in accordance with a ministerial decree issued on May 29, 2008. The decision includes the eviction of NKPIS, that uses part of the government Hassan bin Thabit kindergarten, through administrative means. The announcement specifically mentioned the

last day of school for the students as Thursday, April 28, 2016.

However, the school is open and students continue to attend regular classes. "The NKPIS management earnestly urges parents and students to trust the school management as you have entrusted your children to the school. The school owner and its management have been initiating proper and legal procedures for the continuity of its quality education to children of Overseas Filipino Workers and some other nationalities in as much as its senior high school program (Grade 11 and 12) with four strands has just been approved and granted a provisional government permit by the Department of Education, Philippines," the school management said.

#### Assurances

It said the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait, through Ambassador Renato Pedro O Villa, supports the school. "Further, Deputy Chairman Talal Khalifa Al-Jeri and the Legal Manager of the Om Al-Qura Educational Establishment explained the issue to the parents sometime last year and gave assurances that the children are in

good hands. Om-Al-Qura is the biggest educational establishment in Kuwait with 17 schools and is capable of providing a place that can provide a better education to all the pupils and students of NKPIS," said school principal Dr Jesusa Cristina V Puno, appealing to parents and students to stay calm and leave the legal issue to the school management.

"On the other hand, I am happy because at least we are not facing a legal battle related to academics and quality of education or performance of the school. It is merely about the place we are currently occupying. As the principal of the school, I am not in a position to face the legal battle - it is all in the hands of the owner," Puno said.

Speaking to Kuwait Times on the phone, Abdullah Al-Basri, General Manager of the Ministry of Education's Administration for Private Education, said the ministry had cancelled the school premises' license. "We are sad to inform the parents that the school premises has been repossessed by the ministry of education. At any time, we'll retake that place, and have advised parents to transfer their children to other schools," Basri said.

## CABINET CONDEMNS SYRIAN REGIME'S AIRSTRIKES ON CIVILIANS IN ALEPPO

**KUWAIT:** The Cabinet condemned the Syrian regime's continued airstrikes on gathering places of civilians, residential areas and hospitals in Aleppo city over the last days. During its weekly meeting held late Monday under the chairmanship of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the cabinet stressed that these airstrikes, which killed and wounded several innocents, including children, violate all international charters and humanitarian laws, and run counter to Islam and all religions.

The ministers renewed their call for the international community to put an end to these humanitarian disasters and brutal crimes committed by the regime against the Syrian people. Afterwards, they discussed the latest political developments on both Arab and international levels. It hoped a speedy recovery for those injured and

stressed Kuwait's firm stance which rejects all criminal acts targeting the innocents and destabilizing nations.

The ministers said the State of Kuwait stressed that it stands side by side with Turkey and Turkish people in the face of criminal acts, and supports it in all measures taken to maintain its security. The cabinet also condemned the blast that hit Turkey's Bursa city last Wednesday and killed and wounded several victims.

#### E-governments

The ministers voiced their satisfaction about the progress made by Kuwait on the UN e-governments ranking report of 2016. Kuwait advanced from the 49th place in 2014 to the 40th place in 2016 out of 193 countries, and ranked third among the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council states after Bahrain and UAE.

Earlier, the cabinet reviewed the

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev's letter to His Highness the Amir, which addressed the bilateral relations and ways to enhance them in political, economic, and cultural fields. The cabinet reviewed Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak's letter to His Highness the Premier, which included an official invitation to His Highness the Premier to visit Malaysia.

Meanwhile, the cabinet reviewed the outcome of the recent visit of Australia's Governor-General Peter Cosgrove and his accompanying delegation to Kuwait, including his talks with His Highness the Amir. The cabinet also listened to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammed Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's explanation on the outcome of his participation at the 17th consultative meeting of GCC interior ministers, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. — KUNA

## GCC MINISTERS KEEN ON FINANCIAL, ECONOMIC CONVERGENCE: SALEH

**RIYADH:** The GCC Finance Ministers are keen on enforcing directives by the bloc's leaders for achieving financial and economic convergence among the member states, for pushing ahead the wheel of joint action for more integration and unity.

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Al-Saleh made the statement after the conclusion of the 102nd GCC Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee in Riyadh yesterday.

The meeting discussed several significant topics, including two draft accords on value-added tax (VAT) and selective tax in the GCC, Saleh said. He added that the 36th session of the GCC Supreme Council had entrusted the committee with completing procedures for approving and signing the two taxes by mid-2016 at the most.

Yesterday, the committee also tackled deleterious goods in the member states, including tobacco, and the importance of taking necessary measures to protect people's health. In the meantime, the GCC Ministers of



**Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh**

Finance will convene in an extraordinary meeting by the end of the month, Saleh said. The 102nd meeting addressed the ongoing arrangements for the coming GCC Consultative Summit. — KUNA

## KCCI: KUWAIT-TURKEY TRADE UP TO \$600 MILLION IN 2015

**KUWAIT:** The volume of trade exchange between Kuwait and Turkey stood at \$600 million in 2015, Deputy Director General of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Hamad Al-Omar said yesterday. In a statement to the press during a meeting with a Turkish commerce delegation, Omar underscored the quality of Turkish products, saying that they are on par

with international ones.

The meeting aimed to bolster exceptional ties between both nations, particularly in the realms of commerce and industry, Omar noted. Moreover, Omar said that the Turkish delegation highlighted the importance of investing in Kuwait, as the country's laws are very conducive to doing business.

The Deputy Director General of KCCI

also noted that the country's private sector is capable of contributing to economic and financial reforms, given the sector's expertise. Formed by way of an edict issued in 1959, KCCI is a public-benefit organization which bears the hallmarks of a private sector entity, as all companies that dabble in foreign commerce are affiliated with the chamber. — KUNA



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# ART COMPETITION GREAT EXAMPLE FOR SPREADING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Under the patronage and the presence of Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humud Al-Sabah, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, the closing ceremony of Kuwait Times' Students Art Competition will be held on May 15, 2016. The environmental art competition is held under the sponsorship of Zain, J W Marriott Hotel, Al-Batel "Casio" watches and Arabian Business Machines. "Kuwait Beautiful and Green" is the largest art competition for students in the Middle East for 11 years. It attracted more than 13,850 entries from 135 schools.

This competition is evidence of environmental awareness as the environment is the basis of development of any community. Also, it encourages the creativity of children and teaches them to preserve the wealth of future generations. Besides promoting environmental awareness, the competition seeks to encourage students to effectively take part in various environment-oriented activities with an ultimate goal of acquiring more knowledge and skills, a sense of responsibility as well as positive attitudes.

### Great example

"Kuwait Times' students' art competition is a great example of what individuals and the private sector can do to spread environmental awareness," Khaled Al-Batel, CEO of Al-Batel Watches, told Kuwait Times. Batel expressed his happiness to be one of the main sponsors to help the new generation be more talented and aware of the importance of the preservation of the environment. "The competition aims at encouraging students to take sustainability-related initiatives that help protect the environment. But this awareness will not be effective unless the government does something about it," he said.

"Government institutions must participate to put in place strict environmental laws that control bad behaviors, especially when you see cars parked on the grass during Friday prayers, people walking on lawns instead of the streets and barbequing in parks. They must activate the role of environmental awareness in several media to increase the

level of environmental awareness in order to protect the environment and human beings from negative effects," Batel said.

Batel noted that Kuwait Times has been helping talented children draw Kuwait as green and beautiful, but wished that the ministry of education participates and promotes this competition in all schools to spread awareness. He added that Al-Batel Watches is keeping up with the times by providing the youth and the young generation with their needs.

### Young generation

Al-Batel Group was founded in mid-1959. "Our target now is to focus on the young generation, and that is why we considered to sponsor Kuwait Times' art competition to showcase young students' talent," he added.

Al-Batel Group was established on Abdullah Al-Salem Street in Kuwait City by its founder Mohammed Abdullah Al-Batel, at a time when Kuwait was progressing towards advancement. This street was the main nerve for Kuwaiti businesses. The company started its history as a small shop selling wristwatches, wall clocks and alarm clocks. Watches at that time were imported in small quantities and Swiss watches were dominant due its



renowned history in manufacturing fine, quality watches. Under these circumstances, Batel decided to go on to achieve his big ambitions, which he succeeded in, by ranking the first among his competitors in this business, which made Al-Batel Group represent the most superior brands of Swiss watches, which progressed with time and gained class in the international market.

The 1960s saw the rise of Al-Batel Group, which grew rapidly with the opening of its new stores in the heart of Kuwait City, gaining a significant position in the watch business. Batel left no stone unturned to raise Al-Batel Group to new heights, and in the 1970s, he decided to expand his activities outside the city by opening new stores in Salmiya on a prime location on Salem Al-Mubarak Street and in Fahaheel.

### Tremendous growth

By the late 1980s Al-Batel Group had witnessed tremendous growth and owned 19

stores all over Kuwait, representing major international brands of watches, until the unfortunate event of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, which took place in 1990. However, when Kuwait regained its composure, Al-Batel Group survived the test of time, and Batel managed to continue with steady progress and a vision of the future.

Today, the group takes immense pride in the efforts put in by the great leadership of Mohammed Al-Batel in making Al-Batel Group a prominent cornerstone in the Kuwait market and representing the most renowned international brands in the world of exquisite watches, namely Raymond Weil, Louis Erard, Deitrich, 88 Rue Du Rhone, Casio and Rotary.

Al-Batel Group has been representing Raymond Weil watches for the past 30 years, Louis Erard watches for five years, Deitrich watches for five years and 88 RDR watches. Today, it owns 10 showrooms all over Kuwait, and is currently in the process of opening more showrooms shortly.

## 'OIL FIRMS IN LINE WITH HSE STANDARDS'

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait state-owned oil companies' operations are in line with international Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) standards, board chairman of the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) Kuwait Chapter (KC) said Monday. Fadhel Al-Ali said government oil companies were forcing private sector firms and contractors to abide by environmental and health standards matching international ones.

Speaking to reporters on sidelines of a ceremony to honor HSE excellence awards' winners on Monday, Ali said major oil projects like the environmental fuel and Al-Zour station were environmental-friendly. He said the awards were given to private companies and contractors working in oil and gas fields, and that ASSE was fully supporting these

annual award ceremonies through KC. The awards, he said, were like an ISO certificate because they were focusing on injuries, burns and accidents. Ali said 46 companies, which worked in Oman, the UAE and Kuwait, won the awards. He said Kuwaiti oil companies have been implementing HSE standards for the past 10 years thus contributing to less accidents and injuries.

Director of HSE Department at Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) Ali Khashawi said the HSE field was not affected by the spending cuts implemented in the oil sector. He said safety projects were related to Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) 2030 strategy. Khashawi said KNPC was working other oil firms to implement HSE projects. — KUNA

## WEAK DOLLAR BEHIND OIL PRICE HIKE LAST WEEK: ANALYST

**KUWAIT:** The weakness of US dollar was the main driver of the rise in oil prices over the last week, prompted by the production being affected in a number of areas, according to a Kuwaiti oil analyst. Mohammad Al-Shatti said yesterday that the market will be anticipating OPEC's announcement of production estimates, which generally will contribute to the price path, pointing to a recovery in crude oil prices of Brent that reached record levels and that they are poised to rise according to technical factors.

Shatti added that market fundamentals are relatively strong at the moment, "therefore, the prices are strong and I think, as many observers anticipate them falling and being subjected to volatility when the main factors that promote the rise are over, therefore, sustaining Brent crude oil prices around \$40 pb during the coming months, but maintain Brent at the level of \$50 would seem likely to occur between next October till December 2016."

He said that the fall in Brent crude oil prices



Mohammad Al-Shatti

to low levels early in 2016 is the real motive behind the producers' move for consensus to reach an agreement to stabilize production. He added that almost 80 percent of oil production in Russia can be commercially or economically when oil prices of crude are at \$20 a barrel. Shatti said that the reluctance of Russia to abide by an international agreement on production control throughout 2014 and 2015 when OPEC required that is due to the high price levels during that period, but the decline in Russian oil prices to below \$25 a barrel in January 2016 encouraged Moscow to join international efforts with Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and Qatar to conclude an agreement to adjust the supply.

He pointed out that according to credible reports, Russia has lost as a result of falling prices \$26 billion in 2015 and began to actually look at the mechanisms to assist it stabilize and support oil prices and alleviate the suffering of the Russian oil and gas industry by raising taxes. — KUNA

## PIC GETS LEED GOLD CERTIFICATE

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) was granted the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certificate from the US Green Building Council, PIC CEO Mohammad Al-Farhoud announced yesterday. The certificate was given to the company's administration building; becoming the first existing building to be awarded this certificate in Kuwait, Farhoud said in statement. Obtaining the certificate came from the company's application of an initiative to protect the environment and community care, for the benefit of workers and environmental protection, he said.

The LEED is one of the most popular green building certification programs, developed by the non-profit US Green Building Council (USGBC). It includes a set of rating systems for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of green buildings, homes and neighborhoods that aims to help building owners and operators be environmentally-responsible and use resources efficiently.

Founded in 1963, PIC is the first chemical fertilizer complex of its kind in the region. Today, PIC is a subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) and is a petrochemical industry leader in Kuwait and throughout the Middle East; and a growing leader worldwide. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) officials receive the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certificate from the US Green Building Council. — KUNA

## Q8 EXPANDING IN EUROPE: KPI VP

**BRUSSELS:** Vice President of the Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI), or Q8, Khaled Al-Mushaileh, said that Q8 is expanding in Europe by acquiring more assets and business. "In Europe, we have acquired assets in Italy and Luxembourg. In Belgium in the last quarter we acquired retail and direct business. We are also growing in Spain and the UK. This is our ambition to grow business in Europe and to go for the most profitable business," he said.

On Monday, Mushaileh attended the inauguration of a new blending plant in the Belgian port city of Antwerp. "This new Q8 blending plant is one of the biggest in Europe. This event is a sign of our growing business in Belgium," he said. "This is a plant for which everybody is very proud. We demolished the old plant and built the new one with a capacity for 125 million liters per year that can be expanded to 250 million liters," said the KPI's top official in Europe. "We are supplying to our different customers in Europe and outside Europe," he noted. — KUNA



Khaled Al-Mushaileh





KUWAIT: Scenes from a security crackdown carried out in Khaitan recently.

# HUNDREDS ARRESTED IN KHAITAN CRACKDOWN

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** A security campaign took place in Khaitan in the presence of Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Operations Affairs Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh and participation of Assistant Undersecretary for General Security Maj Gen Ibrahim Al-Tarrah. The area's surroundings were cordoned off and suspicious places were raided. The campaign resulted in the arrest of 255 persons in violation of residency laws, seven wanted on criminal cases, nine on civil cases, 50 absconders, 43 not carrying IDs and 70 with expired residencies. Seventy of the detainees are unskilled laborers. One person was carrying an expired visa, three had entered the country illegally, and two were arrested for vice crimes. All those arrested were sent to concerned authorities.

A statement by the Interior Ministry's security information department said that Abdullah Huwaidi, bedoon, was arrested following tips about his activity, and he was caught with 253 Captagon tablets. He was sent to concerned authorities.

### Jabriya campaign

Hawally governorate's prevention department carried out an inspection campaign on investment building basements in Jabriya to make sure they meet safety and security standards. Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) said in a statement that many grave violations were discovered that constitute a danger to residents of the buildings. Acting Deputy Director General for the Prevention Sector Brig Khalid Fahd said inspection teams found basements used for wrongful storage, fire equipment that were not operational and maintained, and dangerous wiring that was exposed and laid out randomly.

### Drug trafficking

Land border officers arrested a bedoon man for drug trafficking yes-



This handout photo shows a man arrested for drug trafficking.

## EXPAT CONTRACT OIL WORKERS END STRIKE

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** More than 1,200 contract oil workers, all expats, who downed tools and stopped work Monday over unpaid allowances ended the strike yesterday. The men all work on a KOC project site in Rawdatain, northern Kuwait.

The Ministry of Labor's Public Authority for Manpower convinced the workers to return to work after the company agreed to pay them their dues. Industrial action including strikes and work stoppages by expatriates are illegal in Kuwait.

Abdullah Al-Mutawteh, Deputy General Manager for Manpower Protection, stated yesterday that the

authority exerted great efforts to make the laborers end their strike. "The evaluation and follow up inspector of the work relations department Salem Al-Ajmi, the head of the collective conflicts department Mohammed Al-Azmi, and head of the conflicts department in Jahra Radaan Al-Hajiri went to the location this morning [Tuesday] to resolve the conflict peacefully," he noted.

"The company employing these workers promised to agree to all demands of the workers. The authority will follow up this case to make sure that the company fulfills its promises in order to protect the rights of the workers, and on the other hand organize the labor market," added Mutawteh.



## MINISTER URGES EXTENSIVE PREPS FOR TRAVEL SEASON

**KUWAIT:** Touring airport preparations for the onslaught of the summer travel season, Minister of Communications and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Essa Al-Kandari stressed yesterday the imperative to have all airport-related streamlining projects completed in record time.

This came out in a press statement issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), noting that the minister examined the projects on the expansion of departure and arrival halls, and the increase in passenger service

counters to more than double their previous numbers.

Furthermore, the minister looked over airport flight schedules, counseling officials to space these schedules out so that there would not be concentrations in some flight times causing passenger congestion at departure halls, said the statement. To ease the burden of waiting for departing passengers, the (DGCA) has expanded two waiting halls for such passengers where they can wait in comfort for their departing flights, said the statement. — KUNA

## LAWYER SUES FINANCE MINISTER OVER ALLEGED PUBLIC FUNDS VIOLATIONS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Lawyer Adnan Ahmed Al-Shatti yesterday filed a case accusing Finance Minister and chairman of the Kuwait Investment Authority Anas Al-Saleh and the authority's managing director Badr Al-Saad of facilitating public funds violations. Shatti claimed that Saad had deliberately prevented the investment authority from taking part in a bidding called by Kuwait Investment Company to increase the capital of Kuwait National Company for Real Estate Services and Investments to allow the National Industries Group that is owned by his brothers to purchase a considerable amount of shares.

Shatti's accusations confirmed statements recently made by the parliamentary public fund committee chairman MP

Abdullah Al-Turajji about Saad's abuse of his powers by having his brothers purchase Kuwait National Real Estate Company shares and preventing the state from making over KD 40 million in profits. Shatti added that Saad had a company he jointly owns with his brothers to purchase a piece of land for KD 4.2 million, then resold it to Kuwait National Real Estate Co for KD 6.25 million. "Saleh is responsible for Saad's actions because they are legally under his jurisdiction," he added.

### Murder suspect remanded

The public prosecution yesterday referred the suspect in the recent Sabah Al-Nasser murder to juvenile detention because he is under 18. Notably, the suspect, a 16-year-old Kuwaiti citizen, had a fight with an 18-year-old citizen and stabbed him to death.

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Al-Anbaa  
**MASTERS OF SEA,  
SLAVES OF OIL**

By Saleh Al-Shayegi

Oil prices have slightly increased over the past few weeks and are still fluctuating up and down after they dropped to below \$20 a barrel, and are now close to \$40. So, it is like a step forwards and two backwards. I will not write about others or another oil producing country besides our own, that unfortunately seems to be still not oil-weaned and still 'breastfeeding' on it.

Our country's 'oil age' is close to 70 years but it seems to be still clinging to its mother's breast, feeding on oil. It is not yet weaned, it has not yet reached puberty, youth or old age. It is still acting as if it is below two years old and needs to be breastfed day and night - before going to bed and on getting up.

Endless seas of oil have been used up the past 70 years, but our country never learned to swim in those running seas. What has Kuwait achieved by oil? Has it

**What alternative sources of income has Kuwait created? Unfortunately, NOTHING. For the past 70 years, we have been dealing with oil as an ATM.**

made any sustainable projects that would enable it do without oil or even make it a second, third or even secondary source of income?

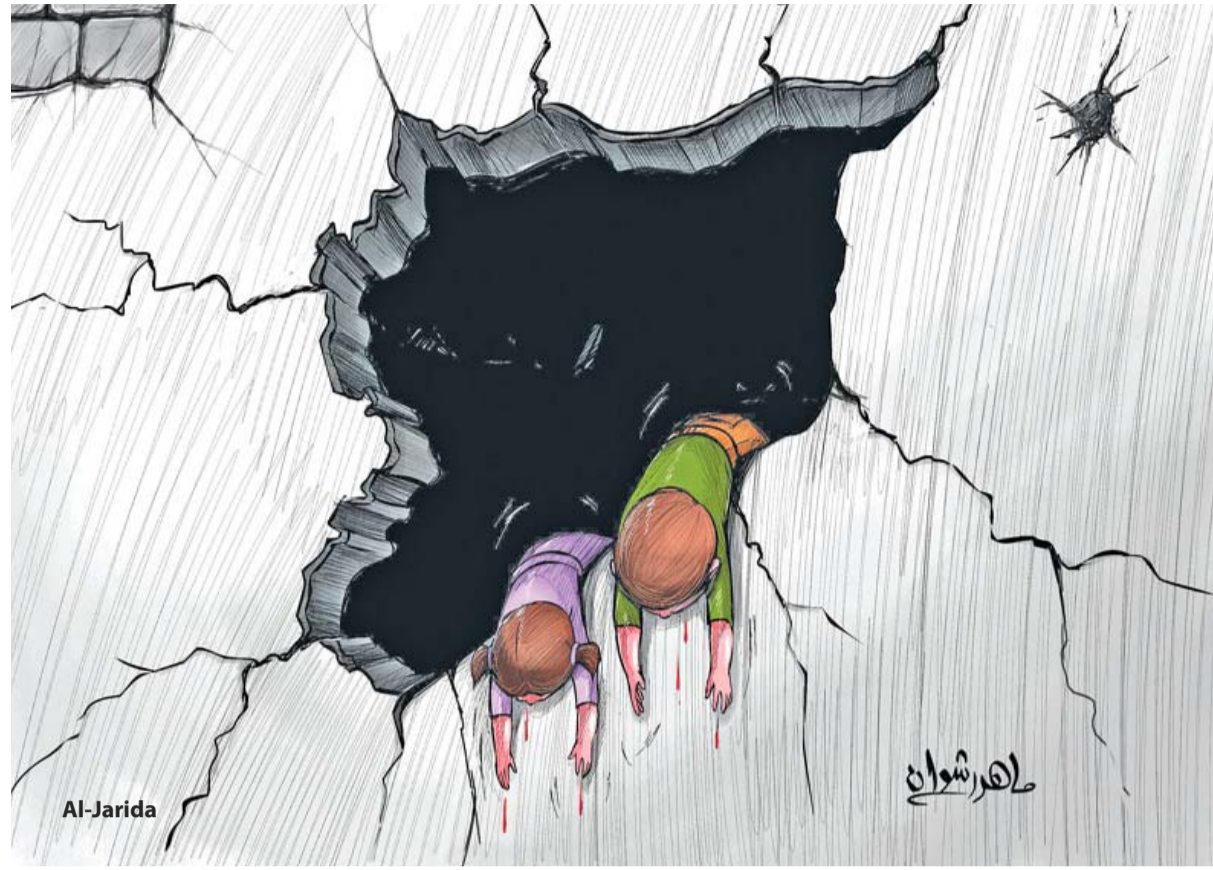
What alternative sources of income has Kuwait created? Unfortunately, NOTHING. For the past 70 years, we have been dealing with oil as an ATM, that whenever we need some money, we insert our ATM card, type the sum needed and take it out to spend it, then go back repeating the process over and over again. We have all, including the government, strongly believed in the saying: "Give and spend and God will send".

We have all been extravagantly and crazily spending without considering rationalization or conservation. The more citizens got satisfied, the more greedy for money they became, and thus cry out claiming to be needy. The government immediately responds, putting more money in their pockets, which only makes them more and more greedy and ungrateful.

Money was lost by the corrupt, bribe recipients and thieves who all grew richer while the country is getting poorer, or is almost there. Where are our wise plans for a future without oil to secure the country and its people's sustainability and dignity without begging - plans that would make these people live peacefully and work harder in their country without laziness as they nowadays do and as the government made them do by unwise irrational policies?

We once used to own the sea and became its masters, but now oil owns us and we have become its slaves!

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Jarida

**BACHELORS IN SALMIYA  
BLK 12 MUST LEAVE**

**KUWAIT:** Director General of Kuwait Municipality Eng Ahmad Al-Manfouhi formed a team from the municipality, Interior Ministry and residents from block 12 in Salmiya, and gave them two weeks to solve the problem of having bachelors living in the area.

Manfouhi said the process of interrupting power to violating homes rented to bachelors had already started, as direct orders were given to Hawally branch director and emergency team in cooperation with the Interior Ministry to carry out the necessary investigations to

remove the bachelors completely. He said the municipality will not hesitate in implementing the law especially in the issue of bachelors and will work hard to remove all violations. He said he will meet the area residents on May 12 to discuss the latest developments. — Al-Rai



Al-Nahedh and Al-Saleh with KFH and Zakat House officials

**KFH DONATES KD 7.5  
MILLION TO ZAKAT HOUSE**

**KUWAIT:** "Kuwait Finance House assumes its corporate social responsibility emanating from its sharia-compliant business model and its priority to serve the society and to support pro bono efforts exerted by official charity institutions. This contributes in the success of Kuwait social and civilized development," said Chief Executive Officer at KFH, Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh.

He applauded, during receiving Zakat House Director General Dr Ibrahim Al-Saleh and Deputy General Manager Kawthar Al-Musalam in presence of a number of officials from both sides where he handed them the cheque with a value of KD 7.514.278 million, the efforts of Zakat House in executing charitable projects that serve the community, indicating that such support reflects the bright image of Kuwait. He reiterated KFH's firm belief in the importance of constantly supporting the projects that serve the society,

noting that KFH has a proven track record in this regard.

Meanwhile, Zakat House Director General Dr Ibrahim Al-Saleh praised the positive role of KFH in supporting the Zakat House to execute its pro bono projects, while shouldering its humanitarian role in helping the poor and the needy. He confirmed that KFH's initiatives underline the bank's significant role in assuming social responsibility, and affirms its prestigious status as a world leading Islamic financial institution. Saleh said that the collaboration between Zakat House and KFH serves in achieving the social development, expressing his thanks and gratitude to KFH.

It is worth noting that the donated value will be distributed to cover several activities of the Zakat House in Kuwait, yet to supporting charity committees and societies working in the field of pro bono projects and humanitarian aid.

**KCCI MAKES FOUR PROPOSALS  
TO REDUCE PRICES AT CO-OPS**

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) recently made some proposals to help reduce prices in co-operative societies (co-ops) including reducing the time before co-ops paid suppliers' dues, not mandating them to provide certain amounts of free goods and leaving that to each supplier, regulating damaged goods' assessment to reduce cost on both sides and restudying the process of renting co-op shelves.

KCCI stressed that the four recommendations would have to be put into practice through a work plan to be studied

well by the price control committees in various co-ops that were also advised to reject any call for unifying prices in order to allow competition, freeing prices to cope with free trade principles, not mandating merchants to provide any documents, bills or bank transfer receipts to the co-ops union because this violates merchants' business secrets, and gradually excluding goods that are subsidized by the government, those with alternatives and luxury products like chocolates and sweets. — Al-Qabas

**PATRIOT SYSTEM  
CABLES STOLEN**

**KUWAIT:** Informed sources at the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) said thieves stole parts of aerial power cables that feed the Patriot missile system. They added that the system does not rely on the overhead cables as much as on its own generators.

The sources said MEW had asked many times over that its aerial lines be secured as they are continually stolen. They said thefts are repeated along portions of the Salmiya and Nayem lines.

They said the ministry is currently studying the idea of installing cameras on power lines to monitor them and give a warning as the thefts are being committed, and the idea is now under trial and if proven successful, it will be implemented.

The ministry said it has issued a tender to install steel columns instead of wooden ones to make it difficult for thieves to destroy and steal them. — Al-Rai

**PROBE IN GOLD  
SEALS 'THEFT'**

**KUWAIT:** Sources said that the precious metals sector at the ministry of commerce and industry discovered during an inventory that four seals used to mark gold were missing, besides the loss of quantities of platinum that were in six systems for marking this highly expensive metal. The ministry sent complaints to the public prosecution on suspicion of thefts and public funds squandering, as the missing items are considered public fund crimes.

The sources said the ministry has taken legal precautions to protect public funds and markets from any cheating that may take in precious items due to the loss of the seals. The commerce ministry has nearly 60 seals to mark gold, while the weight of gold that was marked in Kuwait during last week reached 35 tons that include all gold grades - 22 karat, 21 karat and 18 karat. — Al-Rai

**SMART METERS TENDER PLACED**

**KUWAIT:** Informed sources said the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) has begun preparations to implement the new tariffs for the two utilities as it put out a tender to devel-

op and operate the smart meters system and its communications network in Kuwait to implement this tariff on the investment sector as a start. Meanwhile, the ministry extended the

tender of supplying, installing, operating and maintaining turbines that operate on a compound cycle to increase power capacity at Subbiya station. — Al-Jarida

Al-Anbaa  
**SAUDI ARABIA'S  
FOUNDATION,  
MODERNIZATION AND RISE**

By Sami Al-Nisf

Historians and political observers can divide Saudi Arabia's modern history into three phases - foundation, uniting the kingdom and facing many challenges during the reigns of kings Abdul Aziz, Saud and Faisal, followed by the phase of modernization, education, agriculture, industry and expanding the two holy mosques during the reigns of kings Khaled, Fahd and Abdullah, and finally the third phase of comprehensive development and rise that witnessed Saudi Arabia's breakthrough as a major military, political and economic power starting with the reign of King Salman bin Abdul Aziz and will continue with his Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and the Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who brilliantly reviewed the kingdom's future vision a few days ago.

It is good to see that political leaders have visions. What is even better is for such visions to be serious, correct and real, and not only nominal. This was exactly what the world listened to during Prince Mohammed's interview with Turki Al-Dekheel on Arabiya TV, during which the latter asked serious and direct questions to get similar answers from the young prince.

By the beginning of the last century, the late king Abdul Aziz Al Saud achieved his visions of uniting Saudi Arabia, launching his endeavor from Kuwait to the far northeastern corner of Arabia and ending in Aseer in its far southeastern corner. His distinguished sons, kings Saud and Faisal, managed to continue maintaining Saudi Arabia's security and stability despite challenges in the 1950s and 1960s that toppled many monarchies but could not do the same with Saudi Arabia.

Then came kings Khaled, Fahd and Abdullah who launched the project of modernizing Saudi Arabia by dispatching hundreds of thousands of students on scholarships to the West, building universities, expanding the two holy mosques and building huge farms and factories that turned the kingdom into an outstanding country on the world map and Saudi Arabia joined the G20 club. Saudi Arabia also managed to rout terrorism that targeted its security.

Starting with King Salman's reign, he brilliantly managed to fill the gaps after US troops withdrew from the Middle East and changed alliances by creating Arab and Muslim alliances. Saudi Arabia also responded to the drastic fall in oil prices by launching the world's greatest economic project that the young Prince Mohammed announced with the aim of creating alternative sources of income other than oil, making use of the kingdom's unique location and it being an attraction for all Arabs and Muslims, visiting its holy sites, investing in public and private lands, Aramco's offer of a public subscription, launching military industries, supporting transparency and rationalizing governmental decisions by using governance, focusing on human development, encouraging tourism, investment, recreation, building the world's largest Islamic museum and granting 'green cards' or permanent residency to those living for long in Saudi Arabia, which is a pioneering idea that other GCC states and Arab countries can consider.

Finally, other GCC and Arabs states that mainly depend on oil revenues can consider this strategic vision and major roadmap to follow in Saudi Arabia's footsteps, because it would be better for Saudi Arabia and regional countries to all rise together.

Yes, this fantastic vision will face domestic and foreign obstacles that will be overcome by strong will, because what makes great countries is great leaders with great visions. Korea, Malaysia and Singapore had less potentials that Saudi Arabia has, and yet, with visions and hard work, they managed to achieve remarkable breakthroughs.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



**RENTS TO  
DROP SOON?**

**KUWAIT:** A number of real estate experts detected a 10 percent drop in apartment rentals in investment areas such as Salwa, Fahaeel, Mahboula and Fintas, and stressed that an increase of vacant newly-built buildings has helped reduce prices even beyond 10 percent in some cases. However, the experts remarked that the new buildings were not the only reason behind the drop, adding that laying off and deporting thousands of expats had played a major role because this directly affected apartment buildings' occupancy rates.

In this regard, member of the real estate union Qais Al-Ghanem expected rent values in investment buildings to suffer an extreme 'quake' over the few coming months because of these three factors - layoffs, deportations and new buildings. "Deported expats have left hundreds of apartments vacant and this has affected rent values," he added, expecting that rental drops would soon prevail and include various areas around Kuwait, which made many owners and investors fish for opportunities to rent their buildings to ministries and government bodies in order to have secured annual contracts signed before rent values drop further.

Moreover, Ghanem expected that the new electricity and water consumption prices would force tenants to seek alternatives such as living in remote areas or sending their families back to their home countries. Another well-informed real estate source said that current statistics show that around 7,000 new apartments had joined the market over the past four months and expected the number to jump to 15,000 by the end of the year. "This huge number will have its negative impacts on increasing supply far beyond demand and the only solution will be reducing rent values," he concluded. — Al-Rai

**Crime**

Report

**Five injured in gas  
cylinder explosion**

**KUWAIT:** Five Egyptian men were rushed to Jahra Hospital when a gas cylinder exploded in their Jahra residence. The interior ministry received a call about an explosion in Qasr, so police along with paramedics and firemen rushed to the scene and found five men were injured. Firemen are investigating the causes behind the incident.

**Friend beats friend**

A citizen beat his friend while drinking liquor inside a car, so both were detained at Salmiya police station. Police received a call about the fight in Salmiya, so patrols went there and brought the two men under control. The two are friends and a dispute took place that turned into a fight.

**Suicide attempt**

An Egyptian woman attempted suicide by drinking medicine in a Salmiya house. The husband said he found his wife unconscious with a variety of pills next to her, so he rushed her to hospital. The woman said her husband is not allowing her to travel, saying she wanted to see her family. — Al-Rai

**OOREDOO GOLD SPONSOR  
OF CONFERENCE OF ROADMAP  
TOWARDS SMART GOVERNMENT**

**KUWAIT:** Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of international Ooredoo Group, was the gold sponsor of the recent Conference of Roadmap Towards Smart Government, held at Marina Hotel, under the patronage of Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al Abdullah Al Mubarak Al Sabah, with positive participation of 36 government agencies.

The conference has addressed the concept of e-government, which has gradually developed over several stages, from offering e-services and connecting public sector and the private sector to creating a connected government and smart government. It also explained means of transition to a smart government and its work mechanism.

Mijbil Alayoub, Director of Corporate Communications at Ooredoo Kuwait said: "We are delighted to participate in the Conference of Roadmap Towards Smart Government, we believe that transition to a smart government will serve the interests of citizens and expatriates, and we look forward to seeing the official launch of the project. On this occasion, and on behalf of the company, I would like to thank all operators of the project and organizers of the Smart Government Excellence Award for holding this important conference."

"We at Ooredoo seek to be part of activities and initiatives that enrich the lives of individuals and communities where we work, particularly in the area of technology. We look forward to further engaging in all initiatives serving the interests of people and society in the near future." Added Alayoub

Ooredoo seeks to enhance cooperation with the government in order to support the application of technology in the state's various sectors and contribute to the development of different agencies.



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**When is a Boot on Ground not a Boot on the Ground?**

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## GAZA SEWAGE POISONS COASTLINE, THREATENS ISRAEL

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**BANGGAI:** This recent undated handout picture released by Indonesian police shows an Indonesian man holding a sex doll in Banggai in Sulawesi. Indonesian villagers thought they had been blessed when a beautiful doll turned up on a beach, believing it to be an angel fallen from heaven, only to discover it was an inflatable sex toy. — AFP

## INDONESIAN VILLAGERS 'MISTOOK SEX TOY FOR ANGEL'

**JAKARTA:** Indonesian villagers thought they had been blessed by an angel fallen from heaven when a beautiful doll washed up on a beach-only to discover it was an inflatable sex toy. Rapidly-spreading reports of a heavenly offering and fears of possible social unrest prompted a police investigation. Detectives who arrived in the remote spot soon punctured the theory of divine intervention. "When our officers arrived they saw that the 'fallen angel' was just a doll, it was a sex toy," local police chief Heru Pramukarno said.

Villager Pardin, who like many Indonesians goes by one

name, found the doll when he was fishing off the remote Banggai islands off Sulawesi in central Indonesia, police said. The discovery in March came a day after a solar eclipse swept across the area, a deeply spiritual experience in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country. This led superstitious locals to believe the two events were linked. Pardin took the partially inflated doll to his home in Kalupapi village, where it was treated with great reverence.

His mother gave the "angel" a fresh change of clothes and new Muslim headscarf to wear every day, and pictures

showed it sitting up in a chair and accompanying locals on a boat trip. Police decided to investigate after becoming concerned the increasing excitement about the "angel" could lead to unrest. "We were hearing many stories, such as that the 'fallen angel' was crying when she was discovered," Pramukarno said. The problem, it seemed, was the remoteness of Kalupapi. "They have no Internet, they don't know what a sex toy is."

After investigating, officers confiscated the doll and took it to the local police station, a move they said was intended to

stop false rumors from spreading. It is not the first time that a sex toy has been mistaken for something else entirely. In 2012 a Chinese TV station reported a rare mushroom with medicinal qualities had been discovered in a town during drilling for a new well, only for viewers to point out that the object was in fact a sex toy for men. Sex toys have also sparked police alerts in the past. Several years ago police in China's Shandong province launched a rescue operation to save what they believed was a woman drowning in a river, only to discover it was actually an inflatable sex doll. — AFP

## ISLAMABAD BLASTS 'IGNORANT' TRUMP

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan's Interior Minister has launched a blistering assault on "ignorant" Donald Trump after the Republican presidential frontrunner vowed to free the doctor who helped track down Osama bin Laden if he wins office. Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said the "government of Pakistan and not Donald Trump" will decide the fate of Shakeel Afridi, languishing in prison five years after his fake vaccination program helped the CIA track and kill the Al Qaeda leader. Khan spoke late Monday in response to an



**Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump**

interview with Trump on Fox News on Friday in which the billionaire claimed that if he became president he would have Afridi out of prison "in two minutes". "I would tell them, let them (him) out and I'm sure they would let them (him) out. Because we give a lot of aid to Pakistan," Trump said,

adding that Pakistan "takes advantage like everybody else".

Pakistan has historically been among the top recipients of US aid, receiving \$633 million in 2015 according to USAID and billions in previous decades. But Khan said the "peanuts" the US has given his country "should not be used to threaten or browbeat us into following Mr Trump's misguided vision of foreign policy". "Pakistan is not a colony of the United States of America," he said, adding that Trump's comment "serves to show not only his insensitivity but also his ignorance about Pakistan".

Afridi was accused of ties with militants and thrown in jail weeks after bin Laden's death in a US raid on the garrison city of Abbottabad on May 2, 2011. Details of Afridi's involvement are murky, but it is known that he ran a fake vaccination program that helped obtain genetic samples from the city which led the CIA to bin Laden. He was hiding there under the noses of senior Pakistani military officers. In response to Afridi's jailing a furious US Senate committee voted to cut aid to Islamabad by \$33 million — \$1 million for each year of his original sentence.

The sentence was later cut by 10 years, but since then US pressure for Afridi's release has tapered off. The doctor, who has always maintained his innocence, has no access to a lawyer and his appeal against the sentence has stalled. "We believe he's been unjustly imprisoned," US State Department spokesman Mark Toner said Friday when questioned about Afridi after Trump's interview. He said the US continues "to raise this issue at the highest levels" but has been given no firm assurances by Pakistan over Afridi's release. Trump also said during the interview that US troops should stay in Afghanistan "because it's adjacent and right next to Pakistan which has nuclear weapons". — AFP

## STEALING FOOD NOT A CRIME IF YOU ARE 'HOMELESS, HUNGRY'

**ROME:** Stealing a little food should not be considered a crime if you really need it, Italy's highest court has ruled. Ukrainian national Roman Ostriakov was living rough in the northern Italian city of Genoa in 2011 when he was caught trying to steal some cheese and sausage worth 4.07 euros (\$4.71) from a supermarket. He was found guilty of theft and sentenced to six months in jail and a handed a 100-euro fine. The state prosecutor appealed the sentence on a technicality, arguing that

he should not have been found guilty of theft, but rather attempted theft, because he had been caught before he had left the supermarket premises. But Italy's Supreme Court annulled the verdict. "The condition of the accused and the circumstances in which he obtained the merchandise show that he had taken the little amount of food he needed to overcome his immediate and essential requirement for nourishment," it said in a written ruling. — Reuters



**TOKYO:** A homeless rests under a pedestrian bridge in Tokyo on Constitution Day national holiday yesterday. — AP

## WOMEN IN THE CORPORATE WORLD

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GAZA: A woman makes her way with her donkey in sewage water in Mighraqa neighborhood on the outskirts of Gaza City. (Right) Sewage flows from an outlet into the sea in front of Shati refugee camp in Gaza City. — AP photos

## GAZA SEWAGE POISONS COASTLINE, THREATENS ISRAEL

**GAZA:** Each day, millions of gallons of raw sewage pour into the Gaza Strip's Mediterranean beachfront, spewing out of a metal pipe and turning miles of once-scenic coastline into a stagnant dead zone. The sewage has damaged Gaza's limited fresh water supplies, decimated fishing zones, and after years of neglect, is now floating northward and affecting Israel as well, where a nearby desalination plant was forced to shut down, apparently due to pollution. "It's certain that Gaza Strip's beaches are completely polluted and unsuitable for swimming and entertainment, especially in the summer," said Ahmed Yaqoubi of the Palestinian Water Authority.

Environmentalists and international aid organizations say that if the problem isn't quickly addressed, it could spell even more trouble on both sides of the border. But while Israel has a clear interest in Gazans repairing their water infrastructure, that would likely require it to ease restrictions on the import of building materials - which it fears the territory's Hamas rulers could divert for military purposes - and increase the amount of electricity it sells to Gaza.

Poor sewage treatment in Gaza is the result of a rapidly expanding population, an infrastructure damaged during wars with Israel and

a chronic shortage of electricity to run the wastewater plants that still function. In 2007, a sewage reservoir overflowed in a village in northern Gaza, drowning five people. An Israeli blockade that has restricted imports, coupled with Palestinian infighting and mismanagement by the Hamas-run government, has compounded the problems for the enclave's 1.8 million residents. Israel and Egypt have maintained a blockade of Gaza since Hamas, an Islamic militant group committed to Israel's destruction, seized power in 2007.

Nasser Abu Saif said he was once happy to live in a beachfront apartment in Shati refugee camp. Now, he avoids swimming in the fetid water near his house. "There are mosquitoes in the summer and even in the winter," he said. "It makes our lives unpleasant." Several aid groups have attempted to solve the sewage problem. Steen Jorgensen, country director for the World Bank in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, said the fatal sewage flood spurred his office to build a \$73 million sewage treatment plant nine years ago. He said the facility, meant to treat about one-fifth of Gaza's sewage, would already be operational if it had a reliable power supply.

Disagreements between Hamas and the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority over fuel taxes have left Gaza's only power plant func-

tioning at reduced capacity. Electricity from neighboring Israel and Egypt help alleviate the shortages, but usually there are only six to eight hours of power each day. "That's just not reliable enough for a sewage plant," said Jorgensen. He said foreign donors, including the United States, have promised to pay for a dedicated 3-megawatt electricity supply to the plant, but Israel so far has not consented.

COGAT, the Israeli defense body responsible for Palestinian affairs, said Israel supplies 125 to 140 megawatts of power a day to the Gaza Strip. "The decision of distributing the electricity falls under the responsibility of the Palestinians," COGAT wrote. In all, Gaza needs some 400 megawatts for its daily needs. Jorgensen said the World Bank plans to start running the plant in the coming months using backup diesel generators, which will increase the cost and leave sewage treatment vulnerable to fuel shortages. He said the plant will also have solar panels, but they will only generate a fraction of the needed power.

"If we don't get this operational, then I think it's going to be very hard to raise money for other necessary projects in Gaza," Jorgensen said. The German state-owned development bank KfW has funded the \$20 million rehabilitation of an older sewage plant in Gaza,

according to Jonas Blume, director of its West Bank office. Blume said the plant can only run half-days due to lack of power. Construction is scheduled to begin in August on an additional facility in central Gaza that could handle the sewage of up to 1 million people, Blume added. But he said Israeli security restrictions have slowed the work.

"At the end we get most of the material in, but it's a struggle, it takes time, and it causes delay, which leads to extra costs," he said. COGAT said deliveries of cement and wood have been suspended or slowed because Hamas diverts materials for "terror" purposes. The delays in sewage treatment are exacerbating a water crisis. Years of overdrinking Gaza's underground aquifer have allowed seawater to infiltrate into its only source of drinking water. Sewage flows into the aquifer as well.

"We can say that 100 percent of the water is not potable," said the Water Authority's Yaqoubi. More than 150 private water purification businesses have proliferated across Gaza to offer clean drinking water, he said. Eitemad Abu Khader lives with her four daughters in a cinderblock home surrounded by corrugated zinc north of Gaza City. Sewage collects in huge ponds next to their neighborhood. Abu Khader said she cannot afford purified water.

Instead, she and her daughters drink tap water and bear the consequences. "I spend my time from doctor to doctor, hospital to hospital," she said. "My daughters always have rashes."

On a recent afternoon, her oldest daughter, six-year-old Fayza, sat scratching her arm as insects hovered around them. There are signs that the problem is now beginning to affect Israel. Israeli Water Authority spokeswoman Ilana Keren said a desalination plant near Ashkelon, about 10 kilometers (6 miles) north of Gaza, was shut in January and February "because of the quality of the raw water."

She did not elaborate, but Gidon Bromberg, the Israeli director of the environmental group EcoPeace Middle East, said "there's no doubt" it was waste from Gaza. "There's no other source," he said. Bromberg warned that cholera, typhoid or other pandemic diseases could easily cross into Israel via the shared underground aquifer and the sea. "It's a single shared bathtub," Bromberg said. "There's 101 different ways for these bacterium to be transferred." Ashkelon deputy mayor Yoram Shefer said he fears that without a wider political settlement, the sewage issue will not improve, even though he believes the water is safe enough to swim in. "The Mediterranean sea is big. Not all (sewage) goes to Ashkelon," he said. — AP



ALEPPO: A Syrian man walks past destroyed buildings in Aleppo's Bab Al-Hadid neighborhood which was targeted recently by regime air strikes. Aleppo residents ventured out onto the streets, taking advantage of a lull in violence in the northern Syrian city as the United States pushed to salvage a ceasefire. — AFP

## A GENERATION OF SYRIAN KIDS WHO DO NOT COUNT

**BAALBEK:** Seven-month-old Nour lives in a tarpaulin tent pitched on a muddy patch of earth in Lebanon's Bekaa valley. The tent, one of a dozen in a small refugee camp, contains a metal stove, a prayer mat and worn rugs on the floor. A leather jacket and a plastic mirror hang from nails hammered into its wooden beams.

Swaddled in a faded pink blanket against the cold, Nour is the first of her Syrian parents' three children to be born as a refugee. Her family fled their native Homs at the start of Syria's civil war. Crammed two to a seat in a bus, her parents and two older siblings travelled 70 miles into Lebanon, where Nour was born. Now her mother and father, Asheqa and Trad, face a new challenge. They need to register Nour with a local government office in Lebanon by her first birthday in early September. A birth certificate is the crucial first step to securing Syrian citizenship. Without it, Nour could join a fast-growing generation of children who are stateless - lacking legal recognition as a citizen of any country.

But as Nour's parents are learning, even something as simple as registering a baby's birth is fraught with hurdles for a refugee in Lebanon. The country has more refugees per head of the population than any country in the world, but it is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and has not allowed the U.N. to set up formal camps for Syrians. Some politicians fret about the impact of mainly Sunni refugees from Syria on the country's sectarian balance. Power in Lebanon is carefully divided between Christians, Shi'ite Muslims, Sunnis and other groups.

Registering Syrian births could create a precedent for Syrians to settle in the country, they worry. Surveys by the United Nations refugee agency and the Norwegian Refugee Council suggest the number of children whose births remain unregistered in Lebanon could be as high as 50,000. Aid agencies see similar difficulties registering children in Jordan, Iraq and Turkey, which host millions of Syrian refugees between them. That means the number of Syrian children facing statelessness is likely to be much higher.

Those thousands of potentially stateless children are one way the wars in Syria and Iraq are reshaping the Middle East and its people for good. "If you look at the number of births that have happened ... I think we can be talking about hundreds of thousands who are potentially not

registered in the region as a whole," said Daryl Grisgraber, senior advocate for the Middle East at Refugees International, a humanitarian group that works for displaced and stateless people.

The UN says stateless children risk missing out on basic rights such as education and healthcare, can face difficulties getting a job and are exposed to abuse and even trafficking. To have Nour fully recognized as Syrian will involve a Kafkaesque process that requires trips to different government offices, negotiating checkpoints to get to Beirut, and approaching the Syrian embassy - something many refugees fleeing civil war are afraid to do.

Lebanon's social affairs ministry, which handles the refugee issue, said the steps required were "clear and proportionate." Nour's parents - they asked not to reveal their full names for fear of being targeted by Syria's warring factions or arrested by Lebanese authorities - are afraid of embarking on the process. They have not even tried to get her birth registered, despite understanding what that might mean down the line. "We're scared for her future," Asheqa, her mother, said. "We're afraid that if we want to return to Syria, we won't be able to take her in because she has no documents. Where's the proof that it's your child?"

### Taking flight

Asheqa and Trad abandoned their house about three months after the Syrian uprising against President Bashar al-Assad began in 2011. Like many buildings in Homs - a centre of the uprising - their home was later flattened to rubble in bombardments. "We found out the school next door was shelled and collapsed onto our house," said 25-year-old Asheqa. "We stayed with relatives nearby for a while, but there were 16 people under one roof, there was no work and the fighting intensified." The couple and their two children - daughter Rahaf, now 7, and son Marhaf, now 5 - fled for Lebanon, where they have squatted on farmland near the town of Baalbek ever since. When they left Syria, they took all their identity papers, marriage certificate and family booklet, and papers relating to their children.

"When the war ends, we're keen to go back. We're not exactly looking forward to it with nothing left, but we want to go back and rebuild," Asheqa said. Until Nour's birth is registered, however, they are stuck in exile. — Reuters

## PILGRIMS BRAVE BOMB THREAT TO FLOCK TO BAGHDAD SHRINE

### IS CLAIMS TWO BOMBINGS TARGETING PILGRIMS

**BAGHDAD:** A sea of pilgrims converged on a Baghdad shrine yesterday for an annual Shiite religious commemoration, defying fears of further bomb attacks by the Islamic State group. The days-long pilgrimage to mourn the 799 AD death of Imam Musa Kadhim came as Iraq wallowed in political limbo after the storming of parliament by protesters on Saturday. IS has claimed two bombings targeting pilgrims in recent days that have killed at least 37 people, but the attacks have not deterred crowds of black-clad faithful from marching and beating their chests in mourning.

"This pilgrimage represents a defeat for terrorism," said Mohammed Nayif, a 32-year-old from Babil province, south of Baghdad. "We are not afraid of the explosions and nothing will stop us," he said, as he marched with tens of thousands of devotees. Abbas Mustafa, 63, agreed, saying: "The explosions increased my resolve and my strength to challenge these (militants)." An official from the shrine said that "millions" of people participated in the pilgrimage in recent days. Many of the main thoroughfares in Baghdad are closed in the days leading up to the annual commemoration of Imam Kadhim's death, an important date in the Shiite Muslim calendar.

Yesterday morning, as the commemoration reached its peak, a compact crowd stretching as far as the eye could see followed a mock coffin through the streets leading to the shrine in Kadhimiyah in north Baghdad. Swarms of pilgrims, crying and shouting in grief during the symbolic funeral, lunged to touch the coffin as it lurched from one side of the street to the other. Kadhim is the seventh of 12 imams revered in Shiite Islam. The pilgrimage to his shrine has in recent years turned into a huge event that brings the capital to a standstill for days.

### Political impasse

IS has claimed multiple attacks in the Baghdad area targeting the pilgrims. A car bomb in south Baghdad killed at least 14 people on Monday, while 23 people died in a similar attack on the outskirts of the city two days before. The Sunni extremists of IS consider members of Iraq's Shiite majority to be heretics, and frequently target them in bombings. Iraqi forces have regained significant ground from IS, which overran large areas north and west of Baghdad in 2014.

But the jihadists still control a major part of western Iraq, and carry out frequent bombings in government-controlled areas. The pilgrimage and the attacks come as Iraq is mired in a weeks-long political crisis that saw demonstrators break into the capital's fortified Green Zone and storm parliament in an unprecedented security breach on Saturday. The protesters, angered by parliament's repeated failure to approve Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi's nominees for a new cabinet of technocrats, pulled down slabs from heavy concrete blast walls and scaled the barriers to enter the Green Zone.

The area is home to Iraq's main government institutions as well as various embassies, including those of the United States and Britain. Demonstrators withdrew from the Green Zone on Sunday, but they warned they would be back if their demands were not met. Abadi's efforts to replace the current cabinet



BAGHDAD: Shiite pilgrims carry a symbolic coffin at the holy Muslim Shiite shrine of Imam Moussa Al-Kadhim as pilgrims gather to commemorate his death at the northern neighborhood of Kadhimiyah in Baghdad, Iraq yesterday. — AP

of party-affiliated ministers has been opposed by powerful political parties that rely on control of ministries for patronage and funds. No clear plan of action has emerged from any of

the main players and several sources said Sadr himself has flown to neighboring Iran, the main foreign broker among Shiite political blocs in Iraq. — AFP

## WHEN IS A BOOT ON GROUND NOT A BOOT ON THE GROUND?

**WASHINGTON:** No one disputes that US military forces are fighting in combat in Iraq and Syria - except maybe President Barack Obama and some members of his administration. The semantic arguments over whether there are American "boots on the ground" muddy the view of a situation in which several thousand armed US military personnel are in Iraq and Syria. Obama has said more than a dozen times that there would be no combat troops in Iraq and Syria as the number of service members in those countries grows; last week, Defense Secretary Ash Carter acknowledged the military personnel there were in combat and "we should say that clearly." So, when is a military boot on the ground? And what does it all mean?

### Are US troops in Iraq?

Yes. More than 5,500 US service members. The Pentagon, however, counts them in different ways. Obama recently authorized an increase in the number of troops that can deploy to Iraq to advise and assist Iraqi forces in fighting the Islamic State. The cap was increased last week from 3,870 to 4,087. But a number of troops aren't counted against the cap because of the military's personnel accounting system. For example, troops assigned to the US Embassy for security or those sent to Iraq for temporary, short-term assignments are there in addition to the 4,087. Defense Secretary Ash Carter, in Stuttgart, Germany for a change-of-command ceremony yesterday, revealed that a service-

man had been killed in combat near Irbil in Iraq. A US military official, speaking on grounds of anonymity, said the American was killed while performing his duty as an adviser to Kurdish Peshmerga troops. He was killed by "direct fire" after Islamic State forces penetrated the Peshmerga's forward line. The official said the American was three to two to three miles behind the front line.

### Are US troops in Syria?

Yes. Last week the Pentagon announced an increase in the number of US forces working in Syria from 50 to 300. Those troops are working with local Syrian forces and are mainly Army Special Forces, but the latest increase will also include medical and logistics units. In Iraq there are advisers, trainers, special operations forces and others stationed at Iraqi bases, working with the Iraqi forces. Last week, Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced that some advisers would begin working with Iraqis at the brigade and battalion level. They had been working with Iraqis at the division headquarters level. The change would embed those teams of advisers with smaller units, who would likely be closer to the fight. In Syria, the US has about 50 special operations forces going into Syria from a base in a neighboring country to meet with local Syrian opposition forces. They aren't based in Syria, so they travel in and out, sometimes staying in the country for several days at a time. According to officials, the additional 250 forces will do the same thing. — AP



## ONCE A CLINTON STRONGHOLD, APPALACHIA NOW TRUMP COUNTRY

**ASHLAND:** When President Bill Clinton rolled into the small Appalachian town of Ashland, Kentucky, in 1996, cheering crowds lined the streets. Local boy turned country music star Billy Ray Cyrus performed a special version of his hit, "Achy Breaky Heart." And nearly 20,000 supporters attended a riverfront re-election rally, dozens collapsing from heat exhaustion in the August sun. Back then, this was unquestionably Clinton country. Today, it looks an awful lot more like Trump town.

Hillary Clinton was met in Ashland on Monday by just a handful of supporters and a lone heckler, who shouted: "Go home, Hillary! Nobody wants you here." Later on, hundreds of protesters stood in pouring rain, waved Donald Trump signs and chanted "Kill-ary" as Clinton toured a health center 80 miles to the south in Williamson, West Virginia. The unwelcome reception marks a striking political shift for the Clintons, who've long staked their electoral fortunes on working class white voters.

Her husband won the White House in 1992 by wooing Southern swing voters in places such as Kentucky, West Virginia and Tennessee, and Hillary Clinton swept all three states in her primary run in 2008 against then-Illinois Sen Barack Obama. Eight years later, Trump's connection with those voters could pose a threat to Clinton not only in the coal mining communities of Appalachia she visited on Monday, but also in parts of the Rust Belt and upper Midwest hit hard by the decline of domestic manufacturing.

### Demographic realities

"I know that my chances are pretty difficult to be honest," said Clinton, who vowed

to return to the region before the November election. "I'm here because I want you to know whether people vote for me or not, whether they yell at me or not, it's not going to affect what I will do to help." As she increasingly focuses her efforts on the general election, Clinton is trying to replicate the electoral strategy that twice boosted Obama into the White House by concentrating on wooing young, minority and female voters. That strategy, say Obama and Clinton aides, reflects the demographic realities of an increasingly diverse country where white voters make up a shrinking part of the electorate.

Trump may afford them new opportunities to expand what's known as the Obama coalition: her aides calculate the billionaire's penchant for controversy could lead her to enough support among minority and female voters to put traditionally Republican-leaning states such as Georgia, North Carolina and Arizona into play. "As an old duck hunter, I know the truth of the saying, 'You gotta hunt where the ducks are at,'" said Pula Begala, who helped engineer Clinton's victory in 1992. "President Obama understood this, as does Secretary Clinton."

But at the same time, Clinton's long history with the region means she and her husband aren't willing to give up on places such as Ashland. Her campaign explained her swing through the coal-mining region, which continued yesterday with stops in West Virginia and Ohio, as one that highlights her willingness to speak to the entire country - even those people who don't support her bid. Aides say she's unlikely to win either Kentucky or West Virginia in the primaries later this month or the general election next fall. — AP



**WILLIAMSON:** Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks at Williamson Health and Wellness Center in Williamson, W Va on Monday, May 2, 2016. — AP

# VENEZUELA OPPOSITION DELIVERS PETITIONS TO REMOVE PRESIDENT MADURO BLAMED FOR CRUSHING ECONOMIC CRISIS

**CARACAS:** Venezuela's opposition presented reams of signatures to election authorities Monday calling for a referendum to remove President Nicolas Maduro, who they say is to blame for a crushing economic crisis. Venezuelans fed up with food shortages, soaring inflation and now a paralyzing electricity crunch have flocked to sign a petition for a recall referendum, according to the opposition Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD). It said it had presented 1.85 million signatures-more than nine times the number needed to launch the referendum process-to the National Electoral Board.

MUD executive secretary Jesus Torrealba said 80 boxes packed with referendum petitions had been delivered to the board. "This is just the beginning of a road that will end in a recall referendum and the election of a unity government," he wrote on Twitter. Maduro has vowed to see off attempts to drive him from office. "We are not afraid of them," said Maduro's most powerful ally, lawmaker Diosdado Cabello on Monday. "We are going to check the signatures one by one."

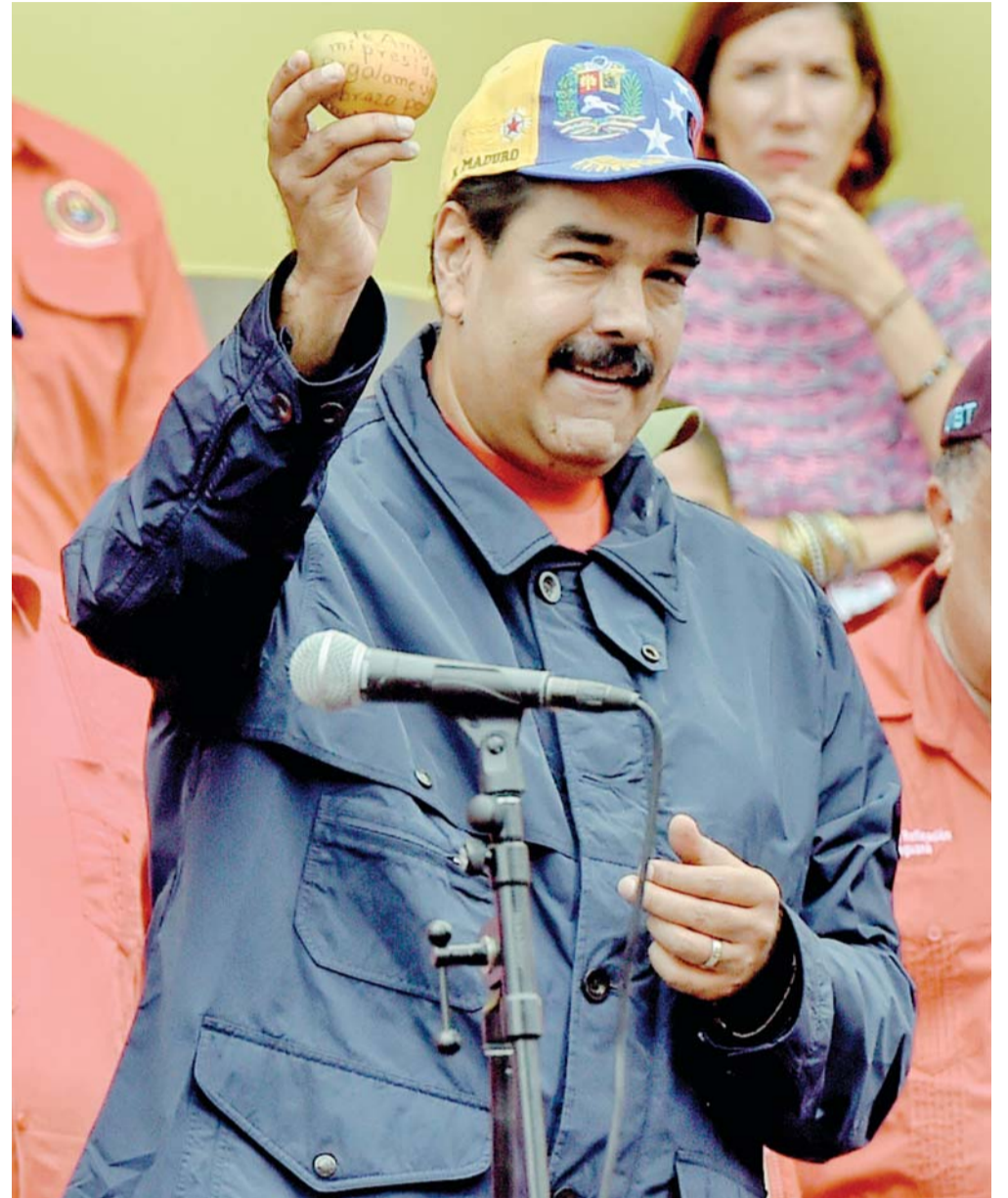
### Bias claims

Maduro's opponents are racing to hold a recall referendum before the end of the year. Under Venezuela's constitution, after January 2017 a successful recall vote would transfer power to Maduro's vice president rather than trigger new elections. The constitution gives the authorities five days to count the signatures collected by the opposition and five days to verify them. But electoral board official Tania D'Amelio suggested Sunday that process would begin only once the full 30 days allotted for circulating the petition had lapsed in late May.

The opposition accused her of bias in favor of Maduro. It said there is no need to wait because it had already gathered more than the required 200,000 signatures "in record time." If the electoral board accepts the signatures as valid far from a sure bet-the opposition will then have to collect four million more for the board to organize the vote. "We'll achieve that in record time, too," said Torrealba. Opposition leader Henrique Capriles, MUD's presidential candidate in 2013, said: "The referendum is ours, and it's the way to achieve the political change the country needs to escape this situation."

### Beer dispute

Maduro's government has taken a series of drastic measures to deal with the electricity crisis: four-hour daily blackouts across most of the country, a two-day public-sector workweek and school closures on Fridays. The power cuts sparked riots and looting last week in Venezuela's second-largest city, Maracaibo. On Sunday, the country also set its clocks forward half an hour to curb evening electricity demand. The country's biggest beermaker, Polar, stopped production at four breweries



**CARACAS:** Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro greets supporters during a march to mark International Workers' Day in Caracas. — AFP

Saturday, saying it had run out of barley. Maduro on Sunday ordered the state takeover of any companies that halt production over what he insists are trumped-up shortages invented by wealthy elites plotting against him. Inspectors visited two Polar breweries and several distribution centers Monday, escorted by soldiers, a source at the company said.

Once-booming Venezuela, which has the world's largest proven oil reserves, has plunged into economic chaos as global crude prices have collapsed. The import-dependent country faces acute short-

ages of food and basic goods like toilet paper due to a lack of foreign currency. The economy has been in recession since 2013 and shrank 5.7 percent last year. The government said inflation came in at more than 180 percent in 2015. Analysts estimate the actual inflation rate is much higher. The International Monetary Fund forecasts it will hit 700 percent this year. Maduro was elected president by a razor-thin margin in 2013. A recent poll found that more than two thirds of Venezuelans want him to leave office. — AFP

## TRUMP EYES KNOCKOUT BLOW AGAINST TED CRUZ IN INDIANA

**WASHINGTON:** Donald Trump is aiming for a thumping victory in Indiana to squelch lingering doubts about his viability as the Republican presidential nominee and pivot toward presumptive Democratic standard-bearer Hillary Clinton. The "stop Trump" movement faces a moment of truth in the Midwestern state, as the campaign of chief challenger Ted Cruz struggles to win over voters ahead of its potentially decisive primary. Polls open at 6:00 am (1000 GMT), and Trump urged voters in The Hoosier State to help him secure victory over Cruz.

"We have to put him away tomorrow folks," Trump told a crowd in South Bend on the eve of the vote. "The biggie is

going to be in Indiana because if we win Indiana it's over with folks, it's over with. And then we focus on Hillary Clinton." A new NBC poll showed Trump 15 percentage points ahead of Cruz, fresh evidence that the Texas senator's bid to block Trump was under threat. Cruz was counting on Indiana acting as a Trump firewall, blocking him from receiving the 1,237 delegates necessary to secure the nomination at the Republican convention in Cleveland in July.

Mathematically eliminated from winning outright, Cruz's goal is to snatch victory on a second ballot, when most delegates become free to vote for whomever they choose-but which will only be held if

Trump falls short of a majority. Trump has so far amassed 1,002 delegates, according to CNN's tally. He needs just under half of the 502 in play in the remaining 10 contests to lock in the nomination. The map currently favors the billionaire, who is polling well ahead in the largest states yet to vote, California and New Jersey.

With momentum favoring Trump-he has won the last six contests-Cruz put on a brave face, telling reporters he would stay in the race regardless of the Indiana outcome. "I am in for the distance," Cruz said. "As long as we have a viable path to victory, I am competing to the end." The underdog endured an awkward encounter in Marion, Indiana when he engaged Trump supporters who called on him to drop out. "You are the problem," said a man holding a Trump sign, just inches from Cruz. "Indiana don't want you." "Are you Canadian?" one of them challenged, referring to Cruz's birth in Calgary-a frequent line of attack for Trump.

Should the conservative senator fall short in Indiana, even his supporters see an extremely steep road ahead. Indiana's primary awards 30 delegates to the state's winner. The remaining 27 are awarded three each to the winner of the state's nine congressional districts. If Trump sweeps the state, "it could be over," former Cruz spokesman Rick Tyler acknowledged on MSNBC. But if Cruz pulls off an upset, he would be strongly positioned in California, Tyler noted, citing Cruz's formidable ground game and superior organization in The Golden State, which votes June 7 on the final day of the Republican race. — AFP



**WESTFIELD:** Heidi Cruz, wife of Republican presidential candidate, Sen Ted Cruz, R-Texas, talks with supporters during a campaign stop at Lincoln Square Pancake House yesterday in Westfield, Ind. — AP

## FINGERNAILS SPOTTED IN TRASH LED TO ARREST OF ALLEGED KILLER

**LOS ANGELES:** A serial killer preying on vulnerable young black women on the rough streets of south Los Angeles eluded police for two decades until someone rifling through a dumpster in 2007 noticed red fingernails poking out of a garbage bag. Inside was the body of Janecia Peters that provided clues connecting her slaying to nine others and eventually led to the arrest of a suspect in the "Grim Sleeper" slayings.

A prosecutor displayed charts, diagrams, photos and DNA test results to jurors Monday to make her case that Lonnie Franklin Jr. was a killer hiding in plain sight as he shot and strangled women, many prostitutes, and dumped their bodies in alleys not far from his home. "Ten young women," Deputy

District Attorney Beth Silverman said during closing arguments in Los Angeles Superior Court. "All of them cruelly murdered by that man."

Franklin, 63, a former garbage collector who also worked as a mechanic for the Los Angeles Police Department, could face the death penalty if convicted of the slayings of a 15-year-old girl and nine young women. He has pleaded not guilty to murder, and to attempted murder in the case of a woman who survived. Silverman spent hours discussing how ballistics tests showed that most of the women had been killed by the same gun, their bodies deposited in similar places and Franklin's DNA was found on victims and the zip tie of the

trash bag holding Peters' body.

But defense lawyer Seymour Amster said that prosecutors had built a circumstantial case using inferior science and that patterns they attempted to show were nothing more than illusions. He compared government work on the case to a rancher who calls himself a marksman after drawing bullseyes around bullet holes in his barn. Amster, who continued his argument yesterday, said Franklin was obsessed with sex and could have innocently spread his DNA to the breasts of murder victims because he often gave women bras and other garments. "His DNA is probably on more women out there than we'll ever know," Amster said, noting it wasn't a morality case. — AP

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## TURKISH COMMITTEE CLEARS CONTENTIOUS BILL FOLLOWING BRAWL PUNCHES THROWN; WATER BOTTLES HURLED

**ANKARA:** Punches were thrown and water bottles were hurled, but a Turkish parliamentary committee has approved a contentious ruling-party proposal to strip legislators of their immunity from prosecution. The proposed constitutional amendment, which could pave the way for the trial of several pro-Kurdish legislators on terror-related charges, was cleared by the committee late on Monday.

Pro-Kurdish party lawmakers walked out of the meeting following the brawl, which left one legislator with a dislocated shoulder and a second with a bloodied nose. Video filmed by legislators inside the committee room showed lawmakers throwing water bottles at each other and engaging in fist-fights. One legislator jumped into the fight from a table top and another was seen kicking an opponent.

Pro-Kurdish legislator Mithat Sancar was heard saying the party "would not be part of this theater that is being staged," before he and his colleagues left the meeting. The amendment, which still needs to be approved by the full assembly, was proposed by the ruling party, after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan accused the pro-Kurdish party, People's Democratic Party, HDP, of being an arm of outlawed Kurdish rebels and repeatedly called for their prosecution.

The move comes amid a surge of violence in Turkey's southeast after a fragile, more than 2-year-old peace process with the rebels collapsed. Hundreds of people, including close to 400 security force members, have died in the renewed fighting, which also displaced tens of thousands of people and left some towns and districts in ruins. The HDP, which backs Kurdish and other minority

rights, denies accusations that it is the political arm of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. It has called on the government to end security forces' operations in the southeast to resume peace efforts. The PKK is considered a terror organization by Turkey and its Western allies.

Although the measure would lift the legal immunities of all lawmakers who have legal cases pending against them, critics say the proposed amendment particularly aims to oust HDP lawmakers from parliament. The party's two co-leaders, Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yuksekdag, face possible prosecution for making statements last year in support of calls for Kurdish self-rule in southeastern Turkey. Five legislators were hurt last week on the first day of the discussions on the amendment, which also ended in a fight. — AP



**ANKARA:** Photo shows Turkish lawmakers pushing each other after a brawl erupted on the Assembly floor in Ankara, Turkey. — AP



**NAIROBI:** The body of a female lies trapped between collapsed slabs of concrete as rescuers search for bodies trapped in rubble at the scene of a collapsed residential building in the low-income suburb of Huruma in Nairobi. — AFP

## BABY PULLED OUT ALIVE 3 DAYS AFTER KENYA BUILDING COLLAPSE

### AT LEAST 21 CONFIRMED DEAD IN COLLAPSE SO FAR

**NAIROBI:** Rescue workers pulled out a one-year-old girl from the rubble of a building in Kenya's capital yesterday more than three days after it collapsed following days of heavy rain. At least 21 people have so far been confirmed dead after the six-storey residential block in Nairobi's poor Huruma district crumbled on Friday night. Police are questioning the owners after President Uhuru Kenyatta ordered them detained. "The child, who had been buried for about 80 hours, was found in a bucket wrapped in a blanket. She appeared dehydrated, and with no visible physical injuries," the Kenya Red Cross said in a statement. The fate of her parents was not clear. The girl was being treated in hospital.

The collapse of the building was the latest such disaster in a fast expanding African city that is struggling to build homes fast enough. Like many other cities in Africa, the population of Nairobi has climbed dramatically in recent years. The Kenyan

capital had almost 3.5 million people in 2011, about a third bigger than a decade earlier, according to UN figures. Governments have struggled to provide basic infrastructure and bureaucratic processes to ensure planning rules are met. Many Kenyans who come to the city in search of work end up in one of several slums, such as Kibera, made up of makeshift homes of wood and corrugated iron sheets.

Others live in slightly better off but still poor districts, like Huruma, where concrete buildings have risen rapidly amid potholed roads and ropery power supplies. Heavy rains have caused other collapses in Nairobi but without such high death tolls. The Interior Ministry said the Huruma building had been earmarked for demolition as it was built close to a river, but the order had not been carried out by local officials. It urged developers to adhere to safety standards. After visiting the site on Saturday,

Kenya's president ordered other buildings to be surveyed to ensure they were safe.

Rescue workers had said on Monday that the chances of finding more survivors was unlikely. About 136 people have already been saved from the wreck. Dozens of other people are still listed as missing, Red Cross spokeswoman Arnolda Shiundu said, adding it was not clear how many of those had escaped but had not yet been traced. Similar disasters have afflicted other African conurbations. In 2014, a church in Lagos, one of Africa's biggest cities, collapsed killing 115 people. A Nigerian coroner last year blamed poor construction. Poor and illegal construction has also often been blamed for the crumbling of apartment blocks in Egypt, where almost all Egyptians are crammed into the crowded Nile Valley and buildings are often extended with extra floors piled on top. — Reuters

## ARMED WITH RADIOS, C AFRICA VILLAGES COMBAT LRA REBELS

**OBO:** "Charlie Six, India One here... we're going to begin the check-in," says radio operator Joanick from his small studio in Obo, calling out to the surrounding villages in southeast Central African Republic. It's a daily meeting at dawn, when each village informs the base if it has been hit by an attack from rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) who have fled to the restive CAR after being driven out of Uganda. Obo, a small community of huts made from ochre-colored earth, is near the border with South Sudan and has little contact with the government in the far-off capital, Bangui.

Unlike much of the CAR, which was torn apart by sectarian violence between the mainly-Muslim ex-Seleka rebels and Christian vigilante groups, this isolated corner of the country is battling a different danger: renegade LRA fighters. So the people here have taken security into their own hands, and have become a bit high-tech. Since 2010, the US charity Invisible Children has given the village chiefs high-frequency radios and satellite telephones.

### 'Any kidnappings?'

In the Obo radio studio, suddenly a report of an attack comes in from Dembia, a few kilometres to the west. A group of assailants entered the village, stealing everything in the shops and burning down homes. "Burnt homes, okay," Joanick confirms what he's just heard and asks: "Any kidnappings?" "They captured three farmers," the Dembia operator answers, but then adds that they were later released.

Immediately an alert is sent to a small contingent of Centrafrican soldiers and two foreign forces based in Obo to fight the LRA: the Ugandan army, the main contingent of a regional African Union mission, and an elite US unit which provides logistical support. "As soon as we are informed, the three armies get together to decide on a plan of action," said Centrafrican Captain Petro Koni Zeze, explaining that usually the forces closest to the scene of the attack will intervene. The people in the region listen to a network of FM radio stations supported by organizations like Invisible Children and Catholic Relief Services, which broadcast messages about the LRA and also some directed at their fighters.

"When going to look for sticks to make fires, run away. When going out for water, run away," advises one message aimed at

rebel deserters, assuring them they will be looked after if they do flee. "All the chiefs have radios in the bush," said 17-year-old Solange, who arrived in Obo after five years of a forced marriage to a LRA leader. She said the LRA rebels would gather their captives around the radio and tell them the messages were lies, "but no one was fooled." Solange added that it was partly due to the radio messages that she mustered the courage to escape the clutches of the rebels.

### Wanted for war crimes

Since January, the LRA has abducted more than 200 people in the CAR, a quarter of them children, already double the number of kidnappings in 2015, according to a rights groups project called LRA Crisis Tracker. LRA rebels operate in small groups throughout the immense forest that extends across the CAR and neighboring South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. "They are well armed and especially skilled at hiding in the forest which is their playground," Captain Koni Zeze said.

US fighter planes and helicopters which make frequent rounds in the area and transport soldiers to the attacked villages have not been able to neutralize the LRA fighters. US forces have for years been hunting the fugitive LRA leader, Joseph Kony, indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including enlisting child soldiers, rape, sexual enslavement and pillage. Under pressure from the Americans, the CAR's newly-elected President Faustin Touadera in late March paid a visit to Obo, the first time the country's head of state has been there since independence from France in 1960.

One notorious LRA commander, Dominic Ongwen, has surrendered and was handed over to the ICC in The Hague, where he will face a war crimes trial. According to the United Nations, the LRA killed more than 100,000 people and kidnapped over 60,000 children, after first emerging in northern Uganda in the late 1980s. Remnants of the rebel force and its elusive leader have been driven out of Uganda and now operate in neighboring countries. Kony, who claims to possess mystical religious powers, has long been reported to be based in the Sudanese-controlled Kafia Kingi enclave. — AFP



**MOSCOW:** Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (right) meets with United Nations envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura in Moscow yesterday. — AFP

## EFFORTS TO SAVE SYRIAN TRUCE SHIFT TO MOSCOW

**MOSCOW:** Efforts to salvage Syria's ceasefire were to shift to Moscow yesterday as the country's second city of Aleppo reeled from a week of fighting that killed hundreds of civilians. A day after US Secretary of State John Kerry launched a desperate push in Geneva to breathe life into the stuttering truce, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was to meet the UN envoy Staffan de Mistura in the Russian capital. The two-month old ceasefire brokered by the United States and Russia is under severe threat and Kerry said on Monday that Washington and Moscow had made progress in trying to contain the bloodshed. Kerry gave some of his most downbeat comments yet after meeting de Mistura in Geneva, saying the conflict was "in many ways out of control and deeply disturbing".

The US and Russia have agreed to bolster the number of Geneva-based ceasefire monitors. Kerry told reporters, pledging to work "in the next hours" to rein in violence on the ground. In and around Aleppo, a week of

fighting has killed more than 250 people. Kerry accused President Bashar Al-Assad's regime of deliberately targeting three clinics and a major hospital last week. "The attack on this hospital is unconscionable," he said. "And it has to stop." There was a relative lull in the unrest later Monday, allowing some residents to venture out into the streets, AFP's correspondents in Aleppo said, with some even opening up shops.

Greengrocer Abu Nazem said he had not worked all of last week out of fear of air raids. "I decided to come back to work today but despite the calm I am still afraid. Sometimes I hear motorbikes going past and I dive for cover because I think it's a military plane," he said. Kerry said a bolstered group of ceasefire monitors will track violations "24 hours a day, seven days a week." A senior US diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the US, Russia and the UN have moved forward on a new ceasefire mechanism for Aleppo, but a deal was not complete. — AFP

## FRANCE CONTROVERSIAL LABOR REFORM REACHES PARLIAMENT

**PARIS:** The French government's contested labor reform bill finally reached parliament yesterday, having sparked two months of mass protests, but neither employers nor unions are happy. The government says the bill is designed to unlock France's rigid labor market and cut stubbornly high unemployment of around 10 percent—the issue that has dogged Socialist President Francois Hollande's four years in power. But since March 9, hundreds of thousands of people in cities around France have demonstrated against what they see as a reform weighed in favor of businesses.

With 12 months until the presidential election, the bill is likely to be the last of its size to be introduced by Hollande's government. It also has the unenviable record of being the reform that has brought the most Socialist supporters onto the streets during Hollande's rocky time in office. As lawmakers begin to examine the bill, unions and student organizations held another demonstration outside the National Assembly parliament building. Unions fear it will erode the cherished rights of workers on full-time contracts, while student organizations—who have been at the forefront of the protests—believe it will fail to create "real" jobs for young people.

### 'Labor market needs unlocking'

In response to the opposition, the government has watered down its original proposals, with the result that employers are now worried. Pierre Gattaz, the head of the employers' federation Medef, said the reform would hurt his members and "will fail to create jobs." "In its current state, the bill really scares us," he told RTL radio. "I would really like the lawmakers to go back to the initial spirit of the bill. 'This labor market needs to be unlocked. The whole world says so, Brussels says so and all the international organizations say so," he said. Labor Minister Myriam El Khomri will attempt to address those concerns when she speaks to parliament at the start of the debate around 1500 GMT. Police are

bracing for fresh clashes with protesters after many of the demonstrations against the bill descended into violence.

Authorities believe troublemakers—the so-called "casseurs," or breakers have mingled with protesters to foment clashes with riot police. Demonstrators on the other hand accuse the police of heavy-handedness which they claim is fuelling the violence. Participation in the demonstrations reached its peak on March 31 with nearly 400,000 people on the streets. In protests last Thursday, those numbers had fallen to 170,000. The reform was also the central theme of the traditional May 1 workers' march in Paris, which descended into clashes between masked protesters and police. Opposition to the bill also inspired the "Nuit Debout," or "Up All Night"

movement, which has grown to encompass a range of causes.

Christophe Sirugue, the Socialist lawmaker presenting the bill to parliament, said last week that several points still needed "clarification" but that he expected the bill to pass. Among the key remaining sticking points in the bill are measures to make it easier to lay off workers in lean times, and whether employers should be allowed to shed staff if their company is doing badly in France, even if its operations abroad are successful. Hollande continues to face opposition from within his own party. A group of Socialist lawmakers complained Monday that the package "is not in line with the reforms that one expects from a government of the left." "This bill is not useful for France or for the common good," they said in a statement. — AFP



**PARIS:** Students demonstrate against a labor bill that would make it easier to lay off workers and weaken some union powers yesterday in Paris. — AP



## NEW HIT-LIST THREATENS BANGLADESHI TEACHERS, POLITICIANS



**RAJSHAHI, Bangladesh:** Bangladeshi students take part in a protest against the killing of a university professor in Rajshahi yesterday. Bangladesh police are investigating a new hit-list that includes the head of a university, journalists and ruling party officials, after a series of gruesome killings. — AFP

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh police were yesterday investigating a new hit-list that includes the head of a university, journalists and ruling party officials, after a series of gruesome killings. Police said they were taking seriously the threat to kill 10 people listed in a leaflet that was sent to a press club in the northwestern town of Natore on Monday by a hitherto unknown group. Among those named was the head of Rajshahi University, where a liberal professor was hacked to death by suspected Islamists less than two weeks ago.

"The leaflet bears the name of Islami Liberation Front. It said it has launched a mission to kill the 10 people," Natore police chief Shymal Kumar Mukherjee said. "We don't know anything about this group. There are no previous information about this group. We have taken the matter seriously," he said. The Muslim-majority nation is reeling from a string of killings of secular and liberal activists and religious minorities by suspected

Islamist militants. The Islami Liberation Front said its objectives were to establish an Islamic caliphate in Bangladesh by toppling what it called the "repressive" government.

Police in the city of Rajshahi said they had provided security for those named and were investigating the authenticity of the threat. "We're giving special attention to these people," deputy chief of Rajshahi police Sardar Tamizuddin Ahmed said. Police said more than 1,000 students and teachers and students rallied on the Rajshahi University campus on Tuesday to protest at the murder of English professor Rezaul Karim Siddique, who was a poet and leading cultural activist.

Shortly after his killing, which has been claimed by the Islamic State group, two gay activists were hacked to death elsewhere. Their killings were subsequently claimed by a Bangladeshi branch of Al-Qaeda. Teachers and students have been boycotting classes at

the university since Siddique's murder on April 23, demanding justice and the arrest of the killers. "The killers must be brought to book immediately. The government must protect the teachers and liberal voices as we're all feeling insecure," the head of Rajshahi University Teachers Association, Shahid Ullah said.

Bangladesh's government has been criticized for not doing enough to stem the tide of violence, with at least 30 members of religious minorities, secular bloggers and other liberal activists, foreigners and intellectuals murdered in the past three years. It has rejected claims of outside involvement in the killings, saying neither the IS group nor Al-Qaeda have a presence in the country. Both the government and the police blame banned local militant groups for the attacks. A long-running political crisis in officially secular Bangladesh has radicalized opponents of the government and analysts say Islamist extremists pose a growing danger. — AFP

## CHRISTIAN HOME TARGETED IN BANGLADESH BOMB ATTACK

**DHAKA:** Unidentified attackers hurled crude bombs at the home of a Christian family in Bangladesh yesterday leaving two people injured, police said, amid rising attacks on religious minorities in the Muslim-majority nation. The attackers targeted the home just after midnight in the mainly Christian hamlet in Bangladesh's western Chuadanga area, injuring 45-year-old Alam Mondol on his verandah.

Local villagers tried to chase away the attackers who retaliated by throwing more of the small, homemade bombs, injuring another man. "Mondol was injured after (wooden) splinters hit his left hand and hip," local police chief Liaqat Hossain said. "Both the injured are Christians," Hossain said. Another officer, Chuadanga district chief Rashidul Hasan, said police suspect "attempted robbery" as the motive after the attackers "tried to break into his house and demand money."

But the attack comes amid a string of murders of Christians, Hindus and members of other religious minorities across the country by suspected militants, as Bangladesh reels from rising

Islamist violence. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the hacking to death on Saturday of a 50-year-old Hindu tailor by three unknown attackers. The jihadist group said the tailor "was known for blaspheming the Prophet Mohammed". Two gay activists were also hacked to death last week, attacks claimed by a Bangladeshi branch of Al-Qaeda, while a liberal English professor was killed days earlier.

Suspected Islamists have murdered at least 30 members of religious minorities, secular bloggers and other liberal activists, foreigners and intellectuals in Bangladesh in the past three years. The government denies that IS and Al-Qaeda are behind the attacks, saying they have no known presence in Bangladesh. The secular government and the police have instead blamed local banned militant groups for the attacks. A long-running political crisis in officially secular Bangladesh has radicalized opponents of the government and analysts say Islamist extremists pose a growing danger. Christians and Hindus make up less than 10 percent of Bangladesh's 160 million population of mainly Sunni Muslims. — AFP



**NEW DELHI:** Indian residents receive free food donated by a community kitchen on a hot afternoon in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

## SINGAPORE DETAINS BANGLADESHI SUSPECTED OF ISLAMIC STATE LINKS

**SINGAPORE:** Singapore has detained eight Bangladeshi workers on suspicion of planning attacks linked to the Islamic State group in their home country, authorities said yesterday. The Ministry of Home Affairs said the eight construction and marine workers were detained last month for allegedly being members of the group Islamic State in Bangladesh and are currently under investigation. It said they were arrested under the city-state's Internal Security Act, which allows for detention without trial in cases where public safety is threatened.

The ministry said the suspects had intended to join the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria as foreign fighters but discovered that it would be difficult to make their way there. The group then focused on returning to Bangladesh, where at least two more members are believed

to be based, it said. They made plans to "overthrow the democratically elected government through the use of force, establish an Islamic State in Bangladesh and bring it under ISIS' self-declared caliphate," it added, using another acronym for the Islamic State group.

"The group had also raised monies to purchase firearms to carry out their planned terror attacks in Bangladesh. The money has since been seized," it said. The ministry said an investigation revealed documents containing possible targets in Bangladesh and a list of government and military officials. It said the group's suspected leader, Rahman Mizanur, possessed guides on making weapons and bombs and also radical material from the Islamic State group and al-Qaeda that he used to recruit the others. — AP



**SINGAPORE:** This undated photo shows eight detained Bangladeshi nationals (top row left to right) Islam Shariful, Md Jabath Kysar Haje Norul Islam Sowdagar, Soham Ibrahim, Zzaman Daulat, (bottom row left to right) Sohel Hawlader Ismail Hawlader, Rahman Minazur, Miah Rubel, and Mamun Leakot Ali who were arrested for allegedly plotting terror attacks in their home country, in Singapore. — AFP

PARTS OF INDIA BAN DAYTIME COOKING  
MORE THAN 300 DIE OF HEAT

**PATNA:** With sizzling temperatures claiming more than 300 lives this month in India, officials said they were banning daytime cooking in some parts of the drought-stricken country in a bid to prevent accidental fires that have killed nearly 80 more people. The eastern state of Bihar this week took the unprecedented step of forbidding any cooking between 9 am and 6 pm, after accidental fires exacerbated by dry, hot and windy weather swept through shantytowns and thatched-roof houses in villages and killed 79 people. They included 10 children and five adults killed in a fire sparked during a Hindu prayer ceremony in Bihar's Aurangabad district last week. People were instead told to cook at night.

Hoping to prevent more fires, officials have also barred burning spent crops or holding religious fire rituals. Anyone defying the ban risks up to a year in jail. "We call this the fire season in Bihar," Vyas, a state disaster management official who goes by one name, said Friday. "Strong, westerly winds stoke fires which spread easily and cause great damage." Much of India is reeling under a weeklong heat wave and severe drought conditions that have decimated crops, killed livestock and left at least 330 million Indians without enough water for their daily needs. Rivers, lakes and dams have dried up in

parts of the western states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, and overall officials say that groundwater reservoirs are at just 22 percent capacity.

In some areas, the situation is so bad the government has sent tankers of water for emergency relief. Monsoon rains are still weeks away, expected to start only in June. At least 300 people have died of heat-related illness this month, including 110 in the state of Orissa, 137 in Telangana and another 45 in Andhra Pradesh where temperatures since the start of April have been hovering around 44 degrees Celsius (111 Fahrenheit). That's about 4-5 degrees Celsius (8-10 degrees Fahrenheit) hotter than normal for April, according to state meteorological official YK Reddy.

He predicted the situation would only get worse in May, traditionally the hottest month in India. The southern state of Andhra Pradesh is running ads on TV and in newspapers urging people to stay indoors during the hottest hours. Construction and farm laborers are advised to seek shade when the sun is directly overhead.

Huge numbers of farmers, meanwhile, have migrated to nearby cities and towns in search of manual labor, often leaving elderly and young relatives behind in parched villages.

This is the second consecutive year southern India has suffered from a deadly heat wave, after

some 2,500 people died in scorching temperatures last year. Though heat waves are common during Indian summers, authorities have done little to ensure water security or prepare urban populations for the risks. This year, Orissa's capital of Bhubaneswar and Maharashtra's city of Nagpur joined Gujarat's Ahmedabad in launching a heat wave program to educate people on how to stay cool, provide shelters and train medical workers on dealing with heat-related illnesses like sun stroke and dehydration. But most cities and states lack such programs.

This week, more than 150 leading Indian economists, rights activists and academics expressed their "collective anxiety about the enormous suffering of the rural poor" in an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The letter says the official response to the crisis has been "sadly listless, lacking in both urgency and compassion," and urges Modi to restore funding for a government program guaranteeing 100 days of paid work a year for the poor and unemployed. While the monsoon is not expected until June, weather experts hope there would be brief spells of light rain sooner. "The effect would last a few days, before temperatures start rising again," Indian Meteorological Department spokesman B P Yadav said. — AP

## FIRE DESTROYS HUNDREDS OF HOMES IN ROHINGYA CAMP

**YANGON:** A major fire yesterday damaged or destroyed the homes of nearly 450 Rohingya Muslim families living in a camp for people displaced by 2012 communal fighting in western Myanmar. The charred remains of wooden shelters and twisted metal roofs were visible through a thick haze of smoke after the fire broke out in the early morning, a stark reminder of dire living conditions for over 100,000 Rohingya confined to bleak camps in Rakhine state. Authorities said a cooking stove caused the blaze at the Bawdupa camp near the state capital Sittwe, with strong winds believed to have spread flames from house to house in the tinder-dry area.

A local police officer said the fire was extinguished after it charred 448 family dwellings. "We are still checking whether they were any injured. We do not know yet how many people are now homeless but local authorities are working on it," he said, asking not to be named. Some 140,000 people, mainly Rohingya, have been trapped in the grim displacement camps since they were driven from their homes by waves of violence between Buddhists and minority Muslims four years ago. The conflict left Rakhine state deeply scarred, effectively segregating communities on religious grounds and depressing the local economy. It also stoked wider Buddhist nationalism in Myanmar, which has seen outbreaks of anti-Muslim bloodshed in other areas in recent years.

Rakhine's Rohingya are labeled "Bengali" by hard-line Buddhists and many government officials, who brand them as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh

even though many can trace their ancestry back generations. Faced with apartheid-like restrictions that limit access to jobs, education and healthcare, thousands have braved perilous boat journeys in search of better lives in Malaysia and Indonesia. An exodus last year sparked a regional crisis and a crackdown on

smuggling routes. Last month at least 20 Muslims from a Rakhine displacement camp drowned when their boat capsized in choppy waters while it was travelling to a market in Sittwe. Passengers said they were forced to take the dangerous sea route because authorities ban them from travelling by road. — AFP



**BAWDUPA, Myanmar:** Fire engulfs the Rohingya Muslim Bawdupa camp near Sittwe, Myanmar's Rakhine state capital yesterday. — AFP

## INDIA POLICE HUNT MAN WHO SEXUALLY MUTILATED AND MURDERED A STUDENT

**NEW DELHI:** India police are hunting a man who sexually mutilated and murdered a student, an officer said yesterday, an attack which echoes the 2012 fatal gang-rape of a Delhi student that sparked mass protests. The 30-year-old university law student from a low social caste was attacked last Thursday at her home in the southern state of Kerala, with her mother discovering her body in a pool of blood.

"The suspect attacked and murdered her brutally and fled the scene quickly," police inspector general Mahipal Yadav, who is heading the investigation, said of the case reported on Tuesday in national newspapers. "There are indications that her intestines came out after severe violation by some foreign object," Yadav said. He said police suspect the victim was also raped but were awaiting a medical report. Police also suspect the victim from the town of Perumbavoor, 220 kilometers north of state capital Thiruvananthapuram, knew her attacker because there was no signs of forced entry to her home, he said.

India's media drew comparisons yesterday with the attack on the Delhi student who was raped by a gang of six including with an iron rod as she returned home from the cinema. The horrific nature of that crime drew global attention and unleashed seething public anger in India about high levels of sexual violence against its women. The incident led to an overhaul of India's rape laws, including the speeding up of trials and tougher penalties for offenders, but high numbers of assaults persist. The latest official figures show 36,735 rapes were reported across the country in 2014, although activists say the actual number is likely much higher with many crimes going unreported due to the social stigma they attract. — AFP



## DETAILS OF NORTH KOREA PARTY CONGRESS SECRET, BUT GOALS CLEAR

**TOKYO:** North Korea, the world's last great master of socialist spectacle, is likely to deliver a big one when its ruling party holds its first congress in 36 years later this week. What exactly is in store during the congress, which opens Friday and will be presided over by leader Kim Jong Un, remains a well-kept secret. But North Korea's advances toward becoming a truly credible nuclear power are sure to be touted along with claims of economic advances in the face of the toughest global sanctions it has been hit with in decades. Also not in doubt: Pyongyang wants the event to grab headlines around the world.

The normally well-sealed country has invited a horde of journalists from around the world to give the congress an international spotlight. The North has been promoting it relentlessly for months in its own state media and is vowing to make it a showcase of socialist success - both on the military and economic fronts. The Rodong Sinmun, mouthpiece of the ruling Workers Party of Korea, said in an editorial Saturday that since the last congress in 1980, North Korea

"proudly joined the ranks of advanced nuclear and space powers while demonstrating the might of the invincible politico-ideological, military and youth power and is now dashing ahead toward a socialist economic power and highly civilized nation."

### A big moment

But while the congress promises to be a big moment in front of foreign cameras for Kim, who has yet to venture abroad or meet with any world leaders, its larger significance may be domestic. Delegates for the congress will be brought in from all over the country for the political theater aspect of the event. They will likely generate a seemingly endless series of speeches hailing the party and its accomplishments, and will be tasked with formally appointing members of some key leadership committees. That will provide Kim the chance to get their formal stamp of approval on the lineup of lieutenants he has almost certainly already decided upon. The North has worked hard over the past several months to keep the event foremost in the minds of the nation.



**PYONGYANG:** Photo shows participants for the Seventh Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) arriving at a railway station in Pyongyang. — AFP

### 'Party of victors'

Even more so than usual, Pyongyang has been decked out with new posters, placards and decorations along its streets paying homage to the "motherly party" and the "party of victors." A 70-day "loyalty cam-

paign" was held in which North Koreans from all walks of life were called on to demonstrate their devotion to the regime by boosting productivity and joining in ideologically charged group events. The campaign ended on Monday, but masses of

Pyongyang citizens are still practicing in squares across the city for rallies to mark the congress, another typical way for the government to mobilize carefully orchestrated and highly photogenic shows of popular support and national unity. — AP



**SYDNEY:** Participants hold a candle light vigil for an Iranian refugee, who died after setting himself on fire, in Sydney. — AFP

## AUSTRALIA BLAMES ADVOCATES AFTER ASYLUM SEEKER SETS HERSELF ALIGHT

### ANOTHER ASYLUM SEEKER SETS HERSELF ALIGHT ON NAURU

**SYDNEY:** Australia blamed refugee advocates yesterday for "encouraging" asylum seekers held in remote camps towards acts of self-harm after a woman set herself on fire, while the United Nations renewed its criticism of Australia's harsh immigration policy. Australian officials said an unidentified 21-year-old Somali woman was in a critical condition after she set herself alight at an Australian detention camp on the tiny South Pacific island of Nauru on Monday, the second such incident in a week. A 23-year-old Iranian man also set himself on fire last week in protest against his treatment on Nauru and later died. The Somali woman has been transferred to Australia for treatment, officials said.

Under Australia's headline immigration policy, asylum seekers intercepted trying to reach Australia after paying people smugglers are sent for processing to camps on Nauru, which holds about 500 people, and on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea. They are told they will never be settled in Australia. The Papua New Guinea government ordered the Manus Island camp, which holds about 850 people, closed last week after its Supreme Court ruled the facility unlawful. The harsh conditions and reports of systemic child

abuse at the camps have drawn wide criticism inside and outside Australia and have become a major headache for Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull during campaigning for likely July elections.

Australia however has vowed there will be no change to the policy, which has been pursued by successive governments. Yesterday, Immigration Minister Peter Dutton acknowledged there had been a rise in cases of self-harm in the camps but accused refugee advocates of giving the asylum seekers false hope they would one day be settled in Australia. Her said some advocates were "encouraging some of these people to behave in a certain way." "The recent behaviors in Nauru are not protests against living conditions. They aren't protests against health care, they aren't protests against the lack of financial support," Dutton told a news conference in Canberra.

### 'Immense damage'

However, the peak UN body for refugees said such incidents in the camps, which hold asylum seekers fleeing violence in the Middle East, Afghanistan and South Asia, were a result of

Australia's tough offshore detention policies. "These people have already been through a great deal, many have fled war and persecution, some have already suffered trauma," the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Australia said in a statement. "The consensus among medical experts is that conditions of detention and offshore processing do immense damage to physical and mental health," it said.

A boat believed to be carrying asylum seekers from Sri Lanka had been intercepted near the remote Australian Indian Ocean territory of the Cocos Islands, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported later. If confirmed to be carrying asylum seekers, it would be the first such vessel to have arrived in Australian territory in almost two years. A spokeswoman for Dutton's office refused to confirm or deny such a vessel had been intercepted. The number of asylum seekers trying to reach Australia is small compared with those arriving in Europe, but border security has long been a major political issue and will almost certainly feature prominently again in elections likely to be held in July. — Reuters

## A YEAR ON, ASIA BOAT PEOPLE TRAPPED IN DESPERATE LIMBO

**BAYEUN:** One year after struggling ashore during Southeast Asia's human-trafficking crisis, Sonamia and hundreds of other desperate Rohingya migrants remain in limbo, forgotten footnotes as record numbers worldwide flee violence and persecution. Sonamia was among about 400 starving people plucked to safety off Indonesia from an overloaded green boat that became emblematic of the crisis, its emaciated passengers pleading for help as countries in the region rejected them in an impasse that triggered global outrage.

Under pressure, Indonesia and Malaysia eventually allowed Rohingya boat people to land, pending resettlement within a year. But none have been resettled, hundreds are stuck in camps and detention centres, and some have once again risked their lives by taking to the high seas at the hands of people-smugglers. "I have learned to wait," Sonamia, who goes by one name said at a temporary shelter in Bayeun village in Indonesia's Aceh province.

The 42-year-old is still tormented by nightmares of what was termed an appalling game of human "ping-pong", with boats bouncing between unwelcoming countries as food and water ran out. "I feel upset every time I recall that, because it felt like we were not human," he said. About 1,000 Rohingya, a Muslim minority that has fled persecution in mostly Buddhist Myanmar, were welcomed ashore in staunchly Islamic Aceh, but only around 300 remain. The rest are believed to have quietly sailed for Muslim-majority Malaysia attractive because of its relative affluence-where they face uncertainty as illegal immigrants.

### Bleak prospects

In Malaysia, 371 Rohingya who were

allowed in amid the crisis remain shut away in an immigration centre, government officials say. The United States has agreed to take 52, but resettlement prospects for the rest remain bleak, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says. Several hundred Bangladeshis were also among the boat people but most have been labeled economic migrants and are in various stages of being sent home. Last year's crisis began when Thailand discovered mass graves in a human-trafficking camp along its southern border and launched a crackdown on the brutal networks that ferry migrants to Malaysia.

The traffickers subsequently abandoned boatloads of migrants at sea, leaving several thousand to be rescued or swim ashore. Indonesia and Malaysia have not signed the UN refugee convention, complicating the already difficult resettlement process. The UNHCR says the process has become further paralyzed as Europe's own migrant crisis overwhelms countries that might normally accept refugees. "When you see the number of Syrians and others arriving by boat in Europe, and the crisis that the European countries are facing there, resettlement out of this region has to be seen in that context and it's very, very difficult now," Thomas Vargas, the UNHCR's representative in Indonesia, told AFP.

UNHCR officials-who complain they were not consulted beforehand on the one-year resettlement deadline-say that timeframe was unrealistic, especially given the long refugee queues. Malaysia already has about 158,000 registered asylum-seekers, including 55,000 Rohingya, though most are believed to be content to earn money working illegally rather than be resettled. Indonesia has more than 7,000 registered asylum-seekers. — AFP



**BAYEUN:** Photo shows a Rohingya family doing a video call with their family at the Rohingya housing complex in Bayeun in East Aceh. — AFP

## CHINA INVESTIGATES HOSPITAL DYING STUDENT FOUND ON SEARCH ENGINE

**SHANGHAI:** China's health ministry will investigate a hospital that a university student turned to for cancer treatment after seeking information on the Baidu Inc search engine, a state health commission said yesterday. The student, Wei Zexi, 21, died last month of a rare form of cancer and China's Internet regulator said on Monday it would investigate Baidu over the case. Wei had searched Baidu for the best place for treatment, finding a department under the Second Hospital of Beijing Armed Police Corps which offered an experimental treatment that ultimately failed, state media reported this week.

The health ministry, along with military health departments, would jointly investigate the hospital, the National Health and Family Planning Commission said in a short statement on its website. The ministry did not give further details about the investigation but said the case had drawn widespread public attention. Before dying, Wei accused Baidu online of promoting false medical information, and the hospital for misleading advertising in claiming a high success rate for the treatment, state radio said.

Baidu said in a statement it deeply regretted Wei's death, and it would

fully cooperate with the investigation. Reuters was not able to reach the hospital for comment. Baidu's shares dropped sharply after the investigation was announced on fears it may hit its advertising revenues and that it could face a sharp response from regulators who are keenly sensitive to healthcare-related scandals. In a separate statement, the ministry said an inter-agency team would be set up to crack down on hospital ticket "scalpers" and online healthcare touts, a grey market of buying and selling access to healthcare which has drawn public anger.

The healthcare system is plagued by touts trading appointment tickets outside hospitals and a murky world online of healthcare advertisements offering cheap medicine or access to unapproved or experimental procedures. Reuters reported in April ticket touts were defying a crackdown launched at the beginning of the year, casting light on the scale of the challenge China faces as it looks to overhaul a creaking, under-funded public health system. The ministry said it would speed up reforms, improve regulatory systems and standardize how operators published information to "get rid of the soil in which ticket scalpers and online touts survive". — Reuters

## INDIA FOREST FIRES FLARE CLOSE TO FAMOUS SHIMLA RAILWAY

**SHIMLA:** Forest fires raging in India's Himalayan region crept perilously close to a famous British-era railway track yesterday, as panicked residents fought off flames threatening to engulf their homes. Dubbed the "toy train" and dotted with tiny wooden stations, the narrow-gauge Kalka-Shimla railway in Himachal Pradesh state is a

UNESCO world heritage site attracting thousands of tourists each year.

"Our gangmen are keeping watch over the fires and dousing the flames if they are too close to the track," said Sanjay Parmar, a traffic inspector with Indian Railways. "Train services on the track have been delayed for two days due to the fire around the track," he

said. Fires sweeping through pine-forested areas drew closer to at least three towns across the northern state, famed for its snowy peaks and flowing rivers, while a boarding school was forced to evacuate.

"An alert has been sounded across the state and police, fire tenders and volunteers have been pressed into

service to put out the fires," senior police official Sanjay Kundu said. TV footage showed a family in the hill station of Kasauli trying to extinguish fires themselves using sticks and water. "We were up all night," a resident of Kasauli told NDTV television network. "We are trying to put out the fire on our own as there has been no help from the authorities so far." Usually mild lower parts of the state have seen temperatures soar to 42 C (108 F), with the capital Shimla hitting 29.8 C (86 F), about six degrees higher than normal.

Fires have also been raging in the forests of neighboring Uttarakhand state where at least eight people have died, local media reports said. Officials said it was unclear what started the fires but their intensity has been blamed on a severe drought gripping central and western India. The country is suffering its worst water crisis in years, with the government saying about 330 million people are suffering from drought after the last two monsoons failed. The Kalka-Shimla railway, which opened in 1903, follows a scenic 96-kilometre (60-mile) route that includes 103 tunnels, travelling on a winding track from the town of Kalka up to Shimla, the former summer capital during British rule. — AFP



**SHIMLA:** An Indian resident looks over jungle where a wildfire broke out near the northern hill town of Shimla in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. — AFP





An Indian boy follows a herd of goats on a parched water pond in Kaushambi, nearly 25 km from Allahabad, India, yesterday. Much of India is reeling under a weeks-long heat wave and severe drought conditions that have decimated crops, killed livestock and left at least 330 million Indians without enough water for their daily needs. — AP

## IS KILLS US NAVY SEAL

Continued from Page 1

Kurdish forces are deployed in Nineveh province, whose capital Mosul is IS' main hub in the country. IS attacked the peshmerga in multiple areas of northern Iraq yesterday in an attempt to "thwart the plan to liberate Mosul", said Jabbar Yawar, the secretary general of the autonomous Kurdistan region's peshmerga ministry. Iraq's Joint Operations Command said IS overran the Tal Asqof area and that the group employed suicide bombers.

Tal Asqof is a small Christian town whose population fled in 2014. According to the Kurdistan Region Security Council, the town was "completely cleared" of IS fighters later yesterday. Romeo Hekari, who heads a Christian unit fighting IS under peshmerga command, also said Tal Asqof was back under full control. The United States announced last month that it was deploying additional forces to Iraq, bringing the

official total to more than 4,000. The coalition is carrying out daily air strikes against IS, and while most American forces on the ground in Iraq play advisory and support roles, Washington has also deployed special forces to carry out raids against IS, and US Marines to provide artillery support. Two US military personnel had already been killed by the jihadists in Iraq: An American Marine by rocket fire in March and a special forces soldier who died of wounds received during a raid last October.

Obama repeatedly pledged that there would be no "boots on the ground" to combat IS, but the administration has since sought to define the term as meaning something other than American forces being on the ground and in combat. "They are wearing boots, and they are on the ground, but that... doesn't mean that they are in large-scale ground combat," State Department spokesman John Kirby recently told journalists. — AFP

## SAUDI MINISTER 'NOT SATISFIED' WITH FEMALE...

Continued from Page 1

women, whose workforce participation - though still relatively low - has risen over the past few years. But the kingdom has some of the world's toughest restrictions on females and is the only country where they are not allowed to get behind the wheel.

With limited public transport, women must rely on relatives to transport them, or pay a driver if they can afford one. While Saudi women "are highly qualified" and "ready to work", the work environment "is not yet that good for them" but will improve, Haqbani said on the sidelines of the Euromoney Saudi Arabia Conference. Asked whether allowing women to drive could help female employment, he said: "I don't think this is the reason for their participation" or not.

The issue in all cases is not one for the labor ministry. "What I care about is the labor, work environment" which the ministry is trying to improve, he said. A new initiative called "telework" allows women in isolated regions to work remotely in major cities, Haqbani said, without clarifying how this is achieved. Women's participation in the industrial sector is also rising, he said. "So we are trying to provide them with a good environment and less costly tools to encourage them to participate."

Haqbani also vowed yesterday to ensure the Binladin Group keeps a promise to resolve wage issues, amid reports of thousands at the building firm facing unpaid salaries and layoffs. His comments followed a Saudi newspaper report on Monday that Binladin Group, one of the world's largest construction companies, was laying off 77,000 foreign workers. The report in the Al-

Watan newspaper was the latest alleging tens of thousands of layoffs and unpaid salaries at the firm, which built some of the Gulf country's landmarks.

Saudi Binladin Group confirmed to AFP that some staff have been let go, but refused to provide any figures. "The company promised to solve all the issues related to the wages," Haqbani said. He did not confirm the number of affected employees but said the ministry's "top priority" is to ensure they get their salaries under the kingdom's wage protection system. "Once we notice a company delaying the salaries we will... send our inspectors," Haqbani said.

He said foreign workers facing wage problems can either stay with the company, transfer contracts to another employer, or leave the country and assign someone to follow their case with the firm. "The payment will never be forgotten even if they leave the country... and we as a ministry of labor will continue until we get the salaries of all the workers."

Sources in March told AFP that delayed receipts from the Saudi government, whose oil revenues dropped significantly over the past two years, have left employees of the kingdom's construction giants struggling while they wait for salaries. Saudi Binladin Group was also suspended by the government from new public contracts after a deadly crane accident in Makkah last September. Staff at another Saudi construction giant, Saudi Oger Ltd, have also complained of unpaid wages. Haqbani insisted the problem was not widespread. "We still have many expats coming to the country. Two cases will never be able to represent the situation of the labor market in Saudi Arabia," he said. — Agencies

## BRIBERY FOR SERVICES RAMPANT IN MIDEAST

Continued from Page 1

The poll results show that on average, almost one in three people surveyed paid bribes in dealings with courts, while one in four paid bribes to police - and around half or more of those who paid bribes to the courts and police had to pay multiple times.

About one in five people surveyed said they had to pay a bribe for public medical services. In Morocco, that figure was 38 percent. Transparency International noted the case of a man who called the watchdog's local anti-corruption hotline after he was told by a nurse to pay \$60 in addition to the hospital fee for his partially blind daughter to get an urgent brain scan. He was advised to call the attorney general's office and two undercover officers returned with him to the hospital, where the nurse was arrested and imprisoned for two months.

Around 30 percent of people polled in Lebanon said they paid a bribe for public services, while a staggering 92 percent said they thought corruption had increased. The Lebanon part of the survey was conducted before an eight-month-long trash collection crisis erupted in July 2015. Thousands protested and campaigners blamed corruption and government paralysis for the delay in solving

the problem. Speaking to AP over the telephone, Middle East regional coordinator for Transparency International Kinda Hattar said the institutions of justice and law enforcement should be the least corrupt because they should be the ones prosecuting corruption. "Unless the government and the state work for the independence of the judiciary ... then we will not be able to have a system that builds trust with the people," she said.

Though only nine percent in Tunisia and four percent of respondents in Jordan said they paid a bribe in the year preceding the survey, Hattar said there are often other problems that exist in Mideast countries that cannot be quantified and measured in surveys. One such issue, she said, is nepotism, or what is known as a "wasta" in Arabic. Getting a job or gaining access to public services can depend on a person's "wasta", or relationship with someone who is well-connected.

Report author Coralie Pring said the group was "particularly worried" about Lebanon, a country that has been without a president since May 2014, amid deep political divisions. "Across a number of different questions the public were very, very critical not only of government efforts in fighting corruption but also of a perceived high level of corruption across the public sector," said Pring. — Agencies

## NO VISA TRANSFER FROM GOVT CONTRACTS...

Continued from Page 1

As a result, the Assembly will discuss in its sessions next week the copyright law, a draft law allowing the government to naturalize up to 4,000 stateless people this year, the anti-money laundering law and others, MP Lari said. He said the Assembly might discuss amendments to the public tenders law if the financial affairs

committee completes its report. Head of the Assembly's educational committee MP Awdah Al-Awdah said yesterday the panel discussed with owners of some private schools the issue of raising school fees. He said the discussions will be completed on Monday. The committee also debated the private education draft law and will complete it later. It also discussed articles of a draft law to regulate government universities.

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## Washington Watch

US JEWISH AUTHOR  
CHABON TAKES ON  
ISRAELI OCCUPATION

By Joe Dyke

American author Michael Chabon's Jewish identity has long been central to his work. From 2001's Pulitzer Prize-winning "The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay" - the story of two Jewish cousins before, during and after World War II - to 2007's "The Yiddish Policemen's Union", Chabon's novels have delved into what it means to be Jewish, especially in America. Like many American Jews, Chabon has also long felt a connection to Israel, visiting the country first in 1992 with his Israeli-born wife, fellow author Ayelet Waldman.

But his most recent visit, which included a trip to the Palestinian territories with a number of prominent American authors, has raised hackles among some in the Jewish state. Its aim was to raise awareness of the effects of Israel's occupation of the territories, an issue Chabon says should be of particular resonance to Jews. "Part of what makes it uniquely horrible for me and what makes it distinct from apartheid is it is being done by Jews. I am a Jew," he told AFP by telephone after returning to the United States following last month's trip.

"(For) a people who went through such a horrific, prolonged persecution, to turn around and eventually oppress another people at such a mass bureaucratic level is somehow to me much more dismaying than apartheid - as horrible as apartheid was, and I am not trying to diminish it," Chabon's decision to become involved in campaigning against the occupation was steered by Waldman after a visit to the country of her birth two years ago.

## 'Grievous Injustice'

"She felt much more connected at a root level than she had ever expected," he said. "In a way that was a dismaying moment for her. She felt 'If I am going to feel at home here, then I also have to take on this occupation.'" Last month's tour saw writers including Dave Eggers and Pulitzer winner Geraldine Brooks meet Palestinians in east Jerusalem, Hebron and villages near Ramallah. Eggers also travelled to the Gaza Strip.

Israel has occupied the West Bank since 1967 and imposes a wide range of restrictions on its 2.5 million Palestinian residents. Several hundred thousand Israelis have also established settlements in the territories which the United Nations and much of the international community consider illegal. In an interview with Jewish American publication The Forward after the visit, Chabon, 52, described the occupation as the "most grievous injustice I've ever seen".

Picked up by some Israeli media, his comments sparked widespread discussion online and much criticism. Prominent pro-Israeli social media campaigner Arsen Ostrovsky said on Twitter that Chabon "clearly hasn't seen much in his life then". Author Jack Engelhard, writing for the Arutz Sheva Israeli news website, called his comments "sickening", saying they smacked of "someone knocked silly from too much American indulgence".

Many in Israel - especially on the right - bristle at criticism of the country by some American Jews, accusing them of not understanding the daily realities of living in the Jewish state. But Chabon denied any hostility to Israel. "This idea of me being an enemy of Israel or hating Israel - I was so biased in favor of Israel, and I think still am on some level, that I was prepared and preferred to ignore it (the occupation)," he said. "Because that is the only thing you can do if you want to hold on to your support in regard to Israel - you have to ignore it. The government knows that as well, so that is why they are working so hard to hide it and keep people, including ordinary Israelis, from ever having to see it."

## Editing Book on Occupation

The tour was organized in conjunction with Breaking the Silence, a group that provides a platform for military veterans and serving soldiers to describe what they say are disturbing aspects of their service in operations in the West Bank and wars in the Gaza Strip. Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Yaalon in March accused the group of treason, after they were alleged to have asked soldiers to disclose classified information. The organization denied the claims.

Chabon and Waldman will now edit a book written by 25 prominent authors focusing on different aspects of daily life under the Israeli occupation, with the proceeds going to Breaking the Silence and a local Palestinian group. Israeli officials declined to comment on the visit. Chabon - whose last novel "Telegraph Avenue" was released in 2012 and who wrote lyrics for more than half the songs on Mark Ronson's last album - is the latest in a long line of cultural figures that have come out either in favor or against Israel's policies. Artists such as former Pink Floyd star Roger Waters have called for new measures against the country, but Harry Potter author JK Rowling has opposed a cultural boycott. — AFP

PREMIER  
LEAGUE

## OPPORTUNITY, UNCERTAINTY AWAIT LEICESTER

By Tom Williams

As Leicester City's supporters awoke yesterday, fuzzy of head and bleary of eye after celebrating their fairytale Premier League triumph, the club were already entering a new sporting and financial dimension. It is estimated that Leicester's 5,000-1 success could be worth around £155 million (\$227.5 million) in revenue to the modest east Midlands club, up from £104.4 million for last year. The title, the first in Leicester's 132-year history, means Champions League football next season and access to lucrative global sports markets, but it also brings with it a dizzying change of status.

"This is going to really elevate them, at least for one season, to the next level commercially and you would expect that they'll be able to attract commercial sponsors that previously weren't available to them," Tim Bridge from financial consultants Deloitte's Sports Business Group told AFP. "But there is a financial cost - they'll have to invest in players in order to compete in the Champions League, they're going to pay out financial bonuses for winning the league - so it isn't just upsides."

The improbability of Leicester's achievement in winning the world's most popular domestic football championship, a year after narrowly avoiding relegation, is laid bare by the financial statistics. At around £57 million, their squad cost an eighth of Manchester City's - the most expensive in the division - and their estimated wage bill of £48.5 million ranks 17th out of the Premier League's 20 clubs. Their ticket prices are concordantly low, with a BBC study last year revealing that Leicester's lowest-priced £22 match-day ticket was the cheapest in the division.

They were already guaranteed a slice of the Premier League's eye-watering new £8 billion television rights deal and Champions League participation will bring in up to £35 million, rising to around £50 million if they reach the knockout phase. Leicester's surge to the Premier League summit saw their Facebook page grow by 540 percent, according to sports data and marketing firm Repucom, which made it one of the fastest-growing accounts in global sport. Worldwide television audi-

ences, meanwhile, have grown by an estimated 23 percent.

## Vultures

Leicester are unsurprisingly popular in Thailand, home of owners King Power, and are now well placed to exploit the Premier League's expansion into new commercial realms such as the United States and, in particular, China. Claudio Ranieri's men will get their first taste of international exposure when they tackle Barcelona and Paris Saint-Germain dur-

ing the star-studded International Champions Cup friendly tournament in July and August.

But keeping their team intact will depend on the club's success in fending off interest in players such as Jamie Vardy and Riyad Mahrez, both of whom recently signed new contracts. "Not only do we have more money coming into the game from broadcast contracts next season, so Premier League clubs will have more money at their disposal than ever before, but you've also got the influence of a major tournament in the summer (Euro 2016)," said Bridge.

"Transfer activity is likely to be the highest in value terms that it has ever been. The challenge for Leicester is, how do we keep hold of those players and how do we plan for the future in a sustainable manner?" Club vice-chairman Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha, known as Top, is adamant that Leicester will not cede their stars, telling Channel 3 television in Thailand that they are "not the team that will sell players". Leicester may need to tweak the shrewd recruitment model that saw Vardy and Mahrez acquired for a combined fee of just £1.4 million, but Top said that the club had already contacted transfer targets.

England's last first-time title-winners, Brian Clough's feted 1977-78 Nottingham Forest side, famously went on to lift the European Cup in the following two seasons. But the last unfancied team to win the title, Blackburn Rovers in 1995, collapsed to seventh in the league the following season, crashed and burned in the Champions League and were relegated four years later. Leicester's ability to manage the flood of commercial opportunities coming their way and resist the vultures circling above their players will go a long way towards determining which example they follow. — AFP



Leicester city fans celebrate outside the King Power Stadium in Leicester in central England yesterday after the team won the English Premier League on Monday. — AFP

## JOURNALISTS FACE MURDERS BUT KEEP WORKING

By Abdi Guled

For Abdiqadir Dulyar, simply reading messages sent to his phone can send shivers down his spine. His voice breaks as he reads a recent note: "Keep doing what you do, and we shall come to give you well-deserved award (death)." Dulyar, the Mogadishu director for the Somali television station Horn Cable, said often the threats lead him to avoid going home and he stays at his office for weeks at a time. The 40-year-old journalist said his fear heightened last week after unidentified gunmen opened fire on a car carrying journalists working for his television station in Mogadishu, although no one was hurt.

Somali journalists frequently receive threats and although many have been killed, police rarely investigate or provide adequate protection to reporters, according to Human Rights Watch, which marked World Press Freedom Day Tuesday by issuing a report on the dangers faced by Somali journalists. The deadliest country for journalists in 2015 was Syria where 14 were killed followed by France with nine deaths, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists. Seventy-two journalists were killed in 2015 and 10 have been killed so far this year.

In Turkey the country's main journalism association said World Press Freedom Day was not a day of celebration but a day for reflection, solidarity and "finding a way out" of the rapidly deteriorating state of media freedoms in the country. Since January, the government seized Turkey's largest circulation opposition newspaper, two journalists were put on trial for spying for their reports on alleged government arms smuggling to Syrian rebels and several pro-Kurdish journalists were detained over their reports on the fighting between government forces and the Kurdish rebels.

Yesterday, Turkish academic and columnist Murat Belge went on trial accused of insulting Erdogan in a column that suggested that the Turkish leader reignited a conflict against Kurdish rebels for electoral gains. He faces four

years in prison if found guilty under a law that critics say Erdogan is using aggressively to muzzle dissenting voices. "I am a member of one of Turkey's most populous clubs - the club of people who have insulted Erdogan," Belge said at the end of the hearing. Close to 2,000 cases have been opened against people - including journalists - accused of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. "The conditions are not there for the Turkish media to celebrate this important day," said Nazmi Bilgin, of the Turkish Journalists' Association. "It is not possible to celebrate freedom when you are not free." Bilgin said some 720 journalists had been fired so far this year while more than 100,000 websites have been blocked.

## Somalia

In Somalia, which for years has been one of the most dangerous countries for media workers, 59 journalists have been killed since 1992, soon after a civil war broke out in this horn of

Africa nation, according to the CPJ. The deadliest year for Somali journalists was 2012 when 18 were killed. In 2015, three journalists were killed, including Hindia Haji Mohamed, who worked for the state-run broadcasters and was the widow of a slain journalist. She died in December when a bomb blew up her car, an attack claimed by the Islamic extremist group Al-Shabaab. The murders of Somali media workers often happen in government-controlled areas that journalists generally consider safe, and reporters must watch their backs for attacks at all times. It does not help that they often face hostility from the government, said Human Rights Watch. There are signs that the Somali government is providing better protection for journalists.

Last month, the government executed a man convicted of assisting the murders of five journalists. A former journalist himself, the man had joined Shabaab to work as their press liaison and was known to have threatened

reporters he felt did not portray the insurgents in a favorable light. He was one of the few prosecuted by the Somali government, which been urged for years by rights groups to do more to protect journalists.

Despite relative stability in Mogadishu since the ouster of Shabaab in 2011, journalists say they still feel unsafe due to attacks by the militants and threats from government officials. Although African Union troops have helped to push Islamist extremists out of all Somalia's major cities, the rebels still carry out numerous attacks, hampering the government's efforts to rebuild the country. "There is the prospect of having a Somali free from oppression, but threats and intimidations against journalists continue and it is very grim - no group or government likes our work," said Dulyar, the broadcast journalist. Despite the dangers, Dulyar said he remains committed to journalism. "No matter what, I shall keep working," he said. "I shall remain being a messenger for the whole world." — AP



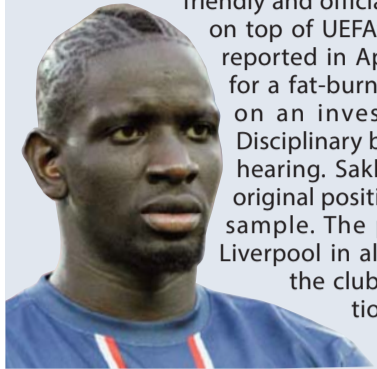
In this April 11, 2016 photo, Hassan Hanafi Haji, a former journalist accused of belonging to Al-Shabaab and involvement in the killings of five Somali journalists, is tied to a wooden post as he is prepared to be executed by firing squad, at a police academy in the capital Mogadishu. — AP

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### FIFA EXTEND SAKHO'S ANTI-DOPING BAN

**LONDON:** Liverpool and France defender Mamadou Sakho's 30-day suspension for failing an anti-doping test has been extended worldwide by world soccer governing body FIFA. The 26-year-old was banned for 30 days by European football governing body UEFA after testing positive for an illegal substance following Liverpool's Europa League tie against Manchester United on March 17. The new suspension covered all games, including domestic, international, friendly and official fixtures, FIFA said in a statement, and came on top of UEFA's original European ban. France's RMC radio reported in April that the centre back had tested positive for a fat-burning substance. His suspension is provisional on an investigation by UEFA's Control, Ethics and Disciplinary body, which is yet to announce the date of his hearing. Sakho chose not to challenge the results of his original positive test and did not ask for an analysis of his B sample. The player, who has featured in 34 games for Liverpool in all competitions this season, was dropped by the club as soon as it was informed of the investigation by UEFA. —Reuters



### INJURED MARSH LATEST AUSTRALIAN TO LEAVE IPL

**MELBOURNE:** Shaun Marsh has become the third Australian test player in three days to head home from the Indian Premier League after suffering a back injury playing for Kings XI Punjab. Marsh's younger brother Mitchell pulled out of the glitzy Twenty20 tournament with a side strain on Sunday, with captain Steve Smith following on Monday with a wrist injury. Left-handed batsman Marsh has been sore since a six-wicket loss to the Kolkata Knight Riders on April 19, Cricket Australia said on its website (cricket.com.au). Marsh's next chance of international duty is Australia's three-test tour of Sri Lanka in July and August. His brother Mitchell and Smith are due to play a triangular one-day tournament in the Caribbean next month. Meanwhile, Zimbabwe will host India for three one-day internationals and three Twenty20 matches in June, the country's cricket board said yesterday. All the matches will be played at Harare Sports Club with the ODIs scheduled to be played between June 11-15 and the Twenty20s between June 18-22.—Reuters

### HUGHES INSISTS CROUCH A VITAL PLAYER FOR STOKE

**SUNDERLAND:** Striker Peter Crouch is still an invaluable member of the Stoke City team despite his limited playing time this season, manager Mark Hughes has said. Crouch has dropped down the pecking order behind the likes of Bojan Krkic and Marko Arnautovic and has made just three Premier League starts this term, but played a key role in Saturday's 1-1 draw with relegation-threatened Sunderland. The 35-year-old set up Arnautovic for Stoke's opening goal, and Hughes praised his attitude and said he wasn't surprised by the work ethic he had shown. "Peter was really influential against Sunderland," the manager said. "I was really pleased with his performance." Crouch is yet to score in the Premier League this term, but Hughes indicated that his barren spell was down to a lack of first team opportunities. "I've disappointed him this season because we've brought players in and I've given players game time ahead of him just because they needed integrating into the Premier League," Hughes added. "Peter has probably missed out on a number of occasions as a consequence of that, but whenever you call upon him he still gives everything he's got," he said.—Reuters



Wings for Life World Run Activation with Daniel Ricciardo 2015 Australia - Melbourne.



Wings for life World Run.

## RECORD BREAKERS, ATHLETES, SUPPORTERS OF THE CAUSE RUN FOR THOSE WHO CAN'T WINGS FOR LIFE WORLD RUN

**DUBAI:** Participants from all walks of life will be running for those who can't at the upcoming Wings for Life World Run, which is an annual event organized by Red Bull. Last year, more than 60 thousand runnerS participated in the

race and this year, the ground breaking global charity run will take place in more than 34 countries in six continents. In the region, Dubai will be exclusively hosting the race for the second year in a row on May 8th at 3 pm.

Kuwait's Red Bull athletes Mohammed Burbayea (Jet Ski) and Mansour Al Safran (BMX), are eagerly participating in the run this year, both with a strong belief in the Wings for Life World Run's cause. "I'm extremely proud to be supporting the spinal cord cure researches and I urge everybody to participate in this race and support this noble cause," expressed Mohammed Jaffer.

Mansour Al Safran conveyed no less enthusiasm, he said: "It feels just great to be part of supporting this cause, or to merely be part of curing spinal cord injuries. I truly wish I could dedicate more to those suffering from it... I will be running for those who can't!"

Other participants include globally renowned sporting names such as ultrarunner Christian Schiester, the first runner to complete the 4 Deserts Race Series - a gruelling 1,000km course across four of the world's most inhospitable plains, racing driver Prince Abdulaziz Turki Al Faisal, Saudi Falcons' athlete and member of the House of Saud, and UAE-based German skateboarder Jan Hoffman, who recently skated the pipes of the Atlantis waterpark. This year will also see Elise Molvik, the first global winner of 2015, having run 54.79k on

Norway's stunning track, participating in Dubai.

#### RAISE AWARENESS

Renowned TV celebrity Mustafa Agha, Dubai's designated Catcher Driver, said: I am running for those who can't, to raise awareness and help the organization continue its research for finding a cure for spinal cord injuries. Join me on May 8th at 3 pm and run as fast as you can!"

Agha will be behind the wheel of the Catcher Car, chasing participants of Wings for Life World runners, continuing the tradition of the race's unique moving finish line with no idea of how long or how far he will drive.

The UAE leg of the run is organized in partnership with Emirates NBD, the leading banking group in the region, XDubai, Dubai-based ambassador for action sports, and Dubai Sports Channel, the 24/7 sports channel.

The list of global sponsors includes leading athletic-wear company Puma, as well as Garmin, developer of consumer, aviation, outdoor, fitness, and marine technologies for GPS, and BFGoodrich, one of the world's leading providers of high performance tires for a full range of driving experiences.



Christian Pfeifer in Wings for Life World Run.



Mohammad Burbayea Kuwait's Red Bull Athlete in Jet Ski.

Campaign Themed "Win Samsung Curved UHD 65" TV with KFH Cards"

KFH Launches New Banking Cards Marketing Campaign

Kuwait, April 25th, 2016: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) launched a new marketing campaign themed "Win Samsung Curved UHD 65" TV with KFH Cards" in an attempt to encourage clients to use KFH credit, prepaid and debit cards while making purchases in Kuwait and overseas.

For every KD 10 spent on their KFH cards, clients will get a chance to enter a draw and win daily Samsung Curved UHD 65" TV for 50 days ending June 14th 2016. KFH Credit and Prepaid cards used in domestic and international spends and KFH Debit cards used in international retail spends are eligible for the daily draw.

KFH strives to continuously offer its clients new promotions and discounts in order to distinguish them among peers, not to mention to further bolster bank's leading position in the field of banking cards.

KFH marketing campaigns play a significant role in underlining KFH's principles that include boosting sales, and benefitting clients and merchants.

This new campaign is part of KFH's efforts to reward its clients and grant them additional value; thus achieving customer satisfaction and boosting their confidence. The campaign also aims at enhancing the bank's presence especially that it dominates the largest market share in the field of banking cards.

65"

50 winners in 50 days

Curved UHD TV



بيت التمويل الكويتي  
Kuwait Finance House



Live the excitement  
Win Daily Samsung 65" Curved UHD Smart TV

Use your KFH credit, prepaid and debit cards and you may win a Samsung 65" Curved UHD Smart TV daily for every 10KD spent for 50 days!

- KFH credit and prepaid cards (domestic and international retail spends are eligible).
- KFH debit cards (international retail spent only are eligible).

kfh.com 180 3333



@kfhgroup



## EX-49ER STUBBLEFIELD CHARGED WITH RAPING DISABLED WOMAN

**SAN JOSE:** Former San Francisco 49er Dana Stubblefield was charged Monday with the rape of a "developmentally delayed" woman, prosecutors announced. The Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office said Stubblefield, a former defensive lineman for the San Francisco 49ers and Oakland Raiders, allegedly assaulted the woman on April 9, 2015, at his Morgan Hill home after interviewing her for a baby-sitting job. He is charged with five

felony counts and faces a "substantial prison sentence" if convicted.

A day before the assault, Stubblefield contacted the then 31-year-old woman on a baby-sitting website and arranged an interview, prosecutors said. "This was a crime of violence against a vulnerable victim," Deputy District Attorney Tim McInerney said. "She was looking for a job, and she was unconsciously assaulted." Bail for Stubblefield, 45, is set at \$250,000.

His arraignment is scheduled to take place within 24 hours.

According to a report by the Morgan Hill Police Department, the interview of the woman by Stubblefield lasted about 20 minutes. She later received a text from Stubblefield saying he wanted to pay her for her time that day, and she went back to the house, the San Jose Mercury News reported. After raping her, Stubblefield gave her \$80 and let her go. The woman

immediately went to the Morgan Hill Police Department and reported the rape. DNA evidence matched that of Stubblefield, the report said.

Stubblefield's attorney, Gary Winuk, said the sex was consensual and that his client is being unfairly targeted because of his wealth and celebrity. Stubblefield provided prosecutors with lie-detector results and with evidence that shows the sexual encounter last year was consensual, including proof that the woman asked his client for a job and money afterward, said attorney Ken Rosenfeld, who is also representing Stubblefield. "Dana Stubblefield is being unfairly targeted due to his celebrity and wealth by someone with full motivation to lie," Rosenfeld said. "Mr. Stubblefield passed a lie-detector test with flying colors and will present a full, vigorous defense against these false allegations."—AP

## COULD MAYWEATHER, PACQUIAO DO IT AGAIN?

**LAS VEGAS:** They met a year ago this week in a fight that was the richest ever, even if it disappointed most of the millions who watched it. Now there are rumblings, however slight, that Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao might be persuaded to do it again. "I would say there is a possibility a rematch happens, yes," promoter Bob Arum said Monday. "How big a possibility that is, I can't really measure."

Mayweather helped stir speculation over the weekend by saying in a Showtime interview that he might be persuaded to come out of retirement if the money was big enough. He said he had talked to Showtime and CBS about another fight and that "some crazy numbers have been thrown my way." Though Mayweather wasn't asked specifically about Pacquiao, the Filipino might be the only opponent who can help him reach those numbers. "If I came back, of course, it would have to be a nine-figure payday and probably a championship fight and a nine-figure payday," Mayweather said. Showtime executive vice president Stephen Espinoza said he is among the minority in boxing who believe Mayweather won't come back. But Espinoza said he also believes a second fight between Mayweather and Pacquiao would do well. "All of us here would love to see that fight again, or any other fight with Mayweather," Espinoza said. There wouldn't seem to be a great appetite among boxing fans for a rematch of the bout that sold 4.6 million pay-per-views, but got lousy reviews. Mayweather won the fight by unanimous decision, and afterward Pacquiao revealed he fought with a shoulder injury. Both fighters are also technically retired, and Pacquiao is in the middle of a

campaign for Senate in the Philippines that, if he wins, would make it difficult for him to fight again. But Pacquiao could be tempted by a chance to avenge his defeat. And Mayweather could be lured back into the ring not only by a big payday but a chance to break Rocky Marciano's 49-0 record and win fight No 50 in his pro career. "Obviously he's coming back," Arum said of Mayweather. "And I can't see him making the kind of money he's talking about with anybody other than Manny."

Both fighters have fought once since the big fight, with Mayweather beating Andre Berto last September and Pacquiao defeating Timothy Bradley last month. Both fights were pay-per-view busts, with sales in the range of 400,000, a tenth of what they sold in the ring together. Arum said the tepid box office performances were largely a result of a hangover from last May's fight. Many fans who spent a record \$99.95 to buy the fight at home felt they got taken by a lackluster bout that didn't come anywhere near living up to its hype.

Arum said it will be hard for either fighter to move forward without the other. "If they fight anybody else there's going to be that hangover," he said. "If they fight each other, people will be attracted to the fight. It won't do what the last fight did, but it might do 50 percent of the last fight." That would be enough to make Mayweather his nine-figure purse. It would also be enough to give Pacquiao a huge payday, if not the \$100 million or so he took from the Mayweather fight. And, as proven in the first fight between the two men that grossed some \$600 million, anything can happen in boxing if the money is right.—AP



**PITTSBURGH:** Matt Murray #30 of the Pittsburgh Penguins makes a save on T.J. Oshie #77 of the Washington Capitals in Game Three of the Eastern Conference Second Round during the 2016 NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs at Consol Energy Center on Monday in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. — AFP

## MURRAY MAKES HIS MARK AS PENGUINS THUMP CAPS

**WASHINGTON:** The Pittsburgh Penguins do not have a goal yet in the series from Sidney Crosby. Or a power-play goal. What they do have is a 2-1 lead over the Washington Capitals. And a player who barely played in the first five months of the season is the reason. Rookie goalie Matt Murray made 47 saves while standing up to Capitals' avalanche of shots, and the Penguins turned two goals a minute apart in the first period into a 3-2 victory on Monday in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference semi-finals. "It's about winning right now, and he is definitely playing well," Crosby said of Murray, who has won 12 of his last 13 starts.

Coach Mike Sullivan agreed, saying, "I thought he (Murray) was terrific. They had the puck all night and we didn't. They outplayed us in a lot of aspects of the game." Game 4 will be today in Pittsburgh. Patric Hornqvist and Tom Kuhnackl scored before the midpoint of the first period, and Carl Hagelin added a goal in the second to make it 3-0 and the Penguins, the NHL's best team over the last two months, held on to top the Capitals, easily the league's best team all season.

Alex Ovechkin scored his first goal of the season against the Penguins in the third period, and linemate Justin Williams scored in the final minute as the Capitals tried frantically to rally. However, it was not enough as the 21-year-old Murray, the youngest Pittsburgh goaltender to ever win in the postseason, improved to 5-1 in the playoffs. "You come here for a split, you're hoping for a split, they got one and now it's our turn. Excuses are for losers, and we're not losers and we're going to try to improve in Game 4," Williams said.

Murray's saves were the most by a Pittsburgh goaltender in a regulation-length playoff win.

"That's the way things are going to go sometimes," Murray said of the Capitals' huge shot advantage. "We can't worry about it. We've got to keep going forward and keep getting better as we go along." Murray, who began the season in the minors and played only four NHL games until March, made the difference as the Penguins were outshot 49-23 yet still controlled the scoreboard even as the Capitals controlled the stats sheet.

The Penguins, on the fringe of the playoff race much of the season, have won 20 of 24 games since March 8 — with Murray in net for 11 of the wins and are 6-2 in the postseason. Capitals goalie Braden Holtby made 20 saves. At least statistically, the Capitals were dominant from the start except in the number most important: goals. They doubled up the Penguins in shots for most of the first two periods—it was 28-14 after two yet Murray turned away scoring chance after scoring chance. Penguins defenseman Kris Letang appeared to be in the center of everything, and a pair of stretch passes by him led to two goals in exactly a minute.

Letang, who played a remarkable 35:22 in Pittsburgh's 2-1 win in Game 2 on Saturday, threw the puck up ice to rookie Conor Sheary to start a 3-on-2 break. Defenseman Trevor Daley's slap shot from the high slot deflected off Hornqvist's stick and into the net at 6:37 — Hornqvist's fourth goal in eight games. The Penguins kept the pressure on, and this time a Letang pass from deep in his zone began a 2-on-1 break, with 39-year-old center Matt Cullen's pass from the left circle deflecting off rookie Kuhnackl and past Holtby.

Later in the period, Letang leveled Capitals left winger Marcus Johansson with an apparent

shoulder hit to the head, putting Johansson out of the game briefly. "It's the playoffs, it's a lot more physical than the regular season," Letang said. The hit angered the Capitals, who are without suspended defenseman Brooks Orpik through Game 5 for his Game 2 hit to the head of Penguins defenseman Olli Maatta, who sat out on Monday. "I didn't see him coming, (and) he hit me from the blind side," Johansson said. "I just looked at it (on video), and he left his feet and hit me in the head. That's the kind of plays you want out of the league. It doesn't look good."

Asked if Letang should also receive a suspension, Johansson said, "Yeah, I'd say so." Several Capitals players later went out of their way to hit Letang, who was upset himself after Nicklas Backstrom clipped him with a knee to the head

following Letang's hit on Ovechkin late in the second. "Certainly it does (make you mad), when you see one of your own players on the ground, it's going to upset you," Backstrom said. "We want to try to hit him (Letang) all the time ... he played 35 minutes the last game."

However, while the Capitals were getting their shots, it was Pittsburgh that took advantage of its best scoring chances. Hagelin made it 3-0 at 15:03 of the second, knocking Nick Bonino's backhand pass to the crease across the goal line. "We got the lead early and kind of sat back," Letang said. Or exactly what the Capitals know they cannot do today sit around and expect goals to come from a lineup filled with scorers. "We've got to score more goals, and I've got a feeling we'll do it," Backstrom said.— Reuters



**HAMBURG:** Heavy weight boxers Kubrat Pulev, left, and Dereck Chisora face each other after a press conference in Hamburg, Germany, yesterday. Pulev and Chisora will fight on May 7, 2016 in Hamburg. — AP

## CRICKET ICON TENDULKAR MADE AMBASSADOR AFTER KHAN FUROR

**NEW DELHI:** Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar was named yesterday as one of India's goodwill ambassadors for the upcoming Rio Olympics following a furor over Bollywood star Salman Khan's appointment, which was slammed as inappropriate. Tendulkar said he accepted an offer from the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) to work alongside Khan, whose appointment triggered a row over whether an actor was best suited to promote sports people.

"I have had the privilege and honor of representing our nation for 25 years and I continue to bat for India off the field," the master batsman wrote in a letter to IOA chiefs. "The welfare of sportspersons and encouraging them to give their best is dear to me." The IOA named more ambassadors, including ace Indian shooter Abhinav Bindra and Oscar-winning musician AR Rahman, in the days after the controversy over Khan.

Olympic wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt had criticized Khan's appointment, saying the "Olympics is not a place to promote films". Indian sprint legend Milkha Singh had urged the government to intervene to overturn the decision. Khan, who was cleared last year of killing a homeless man in a hit-



Sachin Tendulkar

and-run crash, plays a wrestler in his upcoming movie "Sultan". The IOA has defended its decision. It says the 50-year-old actor, who currently faces a charge of illegally shooting protected antelope, is popular with young people. Tendulkar, widely revered in cricket-mad India, played 200 Tests and 463 one-day-internationals, knocking up a record 100 centuries in both formats, before retiring in 2013.—AFP

## FASEL WORRIED NHL PLAYERS WILL SKIP THE 2018 WINTER OLYMPICS

**SOCHI:** The head of ice hockey's international body says there's a strong possibility that NHL players won't be competing at the next Winter Olympics. International Ice Hockey Federation president Rene Fasel puts the chances at 60 percent that the NHL will decline to go to the 2018 Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, because of a lack of money to cover player insurance. In an interview with The Associated Press, Fasel said the IOC has canceled its contribution to player travel and insurance costs for Pyeongchang, leaving the IIHF facing a \$10 million shortfall and "begging" for money around the world.

"It's always difficult to get (to) the Olympics, the games," he said. "And now with some problems on our side, 50-50 is very positive. I would be more 60 percent that they are not coming." Negotiations and brinkmanship over finances are common in the lead-up to Olympic hockey tournaments. For the 2014 tournament in Sochi, Russia, the NHL's participation was assured only in July 2013, seven months before the games. But the IOC's refusal to cover player insurance adds an additional dimension for 2018.

While the IOC gives the IIHF around \$40 million of revenue each Olympics, Fasel insists that money is earmarked for developing hockey and wants national Olympic committees and hockey federations to plug the gap. The IOC pulled its extra subsidy because its leaders are "a bit scared that other (sports) federations will come and also ask for some compensation for traveling and insurance," said Fasel, who is also an IOC member and serves on its rule-making executive board.

"I think my idea is to work closer together with the national Olympic committees, as they have normally to pay transportation and insurance for the athletes when they come to the games, so I can imagine that some of the NOCs are also ready to spend some money there, so we have to go around and do some begging," he said. Fasel said the end of this year is the deadline to reach a deal because of the NHL's need to draw up a calendar for the Olympic season. "If you don't have the best, (the Olympics) will be a different competition for sure," he said, but warned: "At the end somebody has to pay. That's the question. On my side I will do everything possible to make it happen." Fasel also dismissed the suggestion that the NHL's revived World Cup of Hockey could offer some players less incentive



IIHF president Rene Fasel

to demand to be allowed to play at the Olympics. "There is nothing like the Olympics," he said. "I think for an athlete to win the gold medal is so different from winning the Stanley Cup. You can win the Stanley Cup every year." In Pyeongchang in 2018 and Beijing in 2022, the Winter Olympics move to Asia and away from the North American and European nations that have historically been the bedrock of hockey.

South Korea, which has built a team mixing import players with locals, plays in the second level of the IIHF's world championship and hopes not to be a walkover in 2018. China, however, is far less competitive. After losses to Iceland and Spain last month, China will be in the fifth tier for next year and in 2022 could become the first Winter Olympic host not to enter a hockey team - a situation which worries the IIHF, given China's potential to become a huge market for the sport. "One thing they do not like is to lose the face, so they cannot do that," Fasel said.

"I hope and I think they will have a Chinese player, Chinese team in Beijing in 2022. We cannot put them on the ice and they will be beaten 15, 20-nothing. We cannot do that." Things are looking up for China, with increased government interest and the Russia-based Kontinental Hockey League due to open a team there this year, but Fasel said the NHL is key to unlocking potentially vast commercial rewards in China. "A North American brand in China has a very special taste. We can see that with the NBA," he said. "I think what we need is to have a Chinese NHL player, like Yao Ming with basketball."—AP



## DORTMUND FANS TURN ON WANT-AWAY SKIPPER HUMMELS

**BERLIN:** Borussia Dortmund's Germany star Mats Hummels is facing the wrath of his team's angry fans, bitter that their club's captain has admitted he wants to play for rivals Bayern Munich. Despite helping Dortmund to a 5-1 rout of Wolfsburg, Hummels was booed and whistled by a section of home fans in their 81,359 sell-out stadium each time he touched the ball on Saturday.

The 27-year-old told Dortmund last Thursday that he wants to leave at the end of the season, with a year left on his contract, to join Bayern, who he left for Borussia in 2008. Bayern's chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge wants to agree a price with Dortmund for Hummels before the clubs meet in the German Cup final on May 21. But Dortmund's fans made their feelings known as they face

up to the reality of losing a third star to Bayern in three years. World Cup winner Mario Goetze left for Bayern in 2013 to be followed by star striker Robert Lewandowski a year later.

Several signs at Dortmund's Signal Iduna Park stadium during the Wolfsburg match simply read "Why?" - directed at Hummels. One huge banner on the stadium's packed south terrace read "The captain is the first to go overboard - best to do it immediately!" and the loudest jeers came from that area. Hummels brushed off the whistles in post-match interviews, but his face told a different picture during the game.

"I want to make it clear it wasn't 80,000, more like 8,000 or probably even less," he said. "I saw where they (the whistles) came from." Hummels received

some solidarity from his Dortmund team-mates. "It wasn't easy to hear for the whole team, and must have certainly been harder for him," said Borussia defender Marcel Schmelzer. "Mats deserves praise for handling it well." Micky Beisenherz, a columnist for current affairs magazine Stern and a Dortmund fan, wrote: "Dear Mats, you weren't really surprised by the mass tinnitus (whistling) from the south stand, were you? 'Real disappointed love', he added, referring to the club motto "Echt Liebe" (Real Love).

Dortmund's bosses have defended Hummels' want-away wish. "It was only a few of the fans who did that. I found it shameful and hope it won't be repeated," said Dortmund's director of sport Michael Zorc. "We have a basic rule at

Borussia Dortmund that no player in our jersey should be insulted or whistled." But Hummels can expect a similar reaction from Dortmund fans for their last two league matches at Eintracht Frankfurt and home to Cologne, plus the cup final against Bayern on May 21.

Bayern's ex-president Uli Hoenes did not help matters on Friday when he said it was Hummels who had approached the Bavarians, something Bayern then denied on Saturday. "On Friday there was oil thrown on the fire from Munich," said Zorc in the wake of Hoenes' claims. "I don't know what was behind it, but you can come to some conclusions."

To compound Hummels' situation, the German media has dragged up his comments from 2013, in reaction to Goetze's departure, implying it was motivated

only by money. "Everyone has seen how good our team is, I just think that there is little reason to leave us from a sporting perspective," Hummels said three years ago. But news of Hummels' possible arrival at Bayern has not gone down entirely well in Munich either. Morocco captain Mehdi Benatia, also a centre-back, has threatened to leave should Hummels arrive and rejoin Roma. Bayern paid Dortmund 37 million euros (US\$42.63m) for Goetze three years ago, while Lewandowski left on a free transfer. Dortmund chief executive officer Hans-Joachim Watzke has said Bayern will have to "dig deep in their pockets" to meet the undisclosed asking price. Hummels has a market worth of 38 million euros. "Either they pay the asking price or forget about it," said Watzke.— AFP

## WCUP - QATAR TESTING TURF ABLE TO SURVIVE DESERT SUN

**DOHA:** Critics say Qatar will be too hot to host the 2022 World Cup but it is determined to prove the grass is no greener elsewhere. Beyond the air-conditioned stadiums now slowly rising from the greener dust, how to keep the football pitches from withering away in the desert sun is a challenge that a motley group of botanists is trying to solve. Among date palms and empty warehouses in the scrubland outside the capital Doha, Yasser Abdulla Mulla manages a research centre where a botanist from New Zealand and several south Asian workers are nurturing 12 breeds of grass with water and fertilizer.

Wielding scythes and rakes, they are testing the mettle of the grass sprigs which the lab has flown in from around the world in 50-kilogram boxes. "We want a grass that is durable, attractive to the eye and can survive heat and humidity," said Mulla, the turf manager with Qatar's World Cup organizing committee. "Yes, we have summer winds and dust storms but all grass really needs is sun, water and fertilizer. We are looking for turf that can survive here in Doha and in the region." A current frontrunner, Mulla said, is a Bermuda called Latitude 36. Used by an American football team in Kansas City, it has fine blades so the ball skids smoothly across the grass.

Qatar's World Cup will be held in

November when temperatures still reach the mid-20 degrees Celsius (75 Fahrenheit) but the grass will run their stress tests through the Gulf summer. This is when temperatures typically range from 40 to 50 degrees Celsius (104 to 122 degrees Fahrenheit) and the turf will absorb an Olympics swimming pool worth of desalinated water every 10 days. Not everything is sunshine and seed sprouts, however. The tiny Gulf Arab nation's bid has grappled with corruption allegations and concerns about abuse of laborers taking part in the \$200 billion drive to lay down roads linking glittering new hotels to hulking stadiums.

A gardening company involved in the turf search has faced some of the same kind of allegations that have dogged the wider construction boom for the Cup. The 16 laborers working on the turf farm are employed by Nakheel Landscapes, a Qatari firm accused in a March Amnesty International report of housing workers in squalid accommodation and confiscating their passports. Asked about the criticism, Mulla said it was important to work with contractors to improve their labor practices - but as with the sporting extravaganza, the show must go on. "It's not about kicking someone out of your facility, you need to improve your contractors. What's the point if you kick them out?"—Reuters

## UEFA ADMITS KOSOVO IN A STEP TOWARD WORLD CUP

**BUDAPEST:** UEFA admitted Kosovo as its 55th member in a narrow vote yesterday, boosting its hopes of competing in the 2018 World Cup despite warnings from former ruler Serbia. The UEFA congress voted 28 to 24 with two votes declared invalid to accept Kosovo, which will also have a team at the Olympics for the first time at the Rio de Janeiro Games in August. FIFA will now decide at its congress in Mexico City on May 13 whether to become the last major sporting federation to admit Kosovo. The Kosovo Football Federation hopes that if FIFA gives its green light, it will get a late place in a European qualifying group for the World Cup in Russia in two years. "We are very happy today of course," federation president Fadil Vokrri said.

"Now we have to wait and see what FIFA decides in 10 days in Mexico, but we hope for the best, that we can compete in the World Cup." There were also new celebrations in Kosovo where the congress was broadcast live on four major TV channels and by radio stations. President Hashim Thaci said: "After three decades of isolation for Kosovo football, Kosovo's membership in UEFA marks a new page, a historic day. 'I strongly believe that the next step will be Kosovo's membership in FIFA," he added. Passionate speeches were made for and against Kosovo's membership at the congress.

Serbia's Football Association president Tomislav Karadzic said it would open up a "Pandora's Box" with other breakaway regions applying for membership. But Vokrri said UEFA had to vote for footballers. "What message are we sending the youth of Kosovo," the federation president told the congress before the vote. "Sixty percent of the population of Kosovo are aged under

27. Can we really keep them away from this privilege." Switzerland, which has several ethnic Kosovo players in its national team, including Xherdan Shaqiri, Granit Xhaka and Valon Behrami, also opposed the vote.

Though FIFA statutes would have to be changed, Switzerland and Albania fear they could lose players to the Kosovo national side. "It is unfair to put pressure on players," said Swiss Football Association general secretary Alex Miescher. "They will not have to choose for a country, but against one," he told the congress. European football officials did not rule out action by opponents of the vote at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. Kosovo was at the centre of a war between ethnic-Albanian and Serbian forces in 1998-99 and declared its independence from Serbia in 2008. It is now recognized by more than 100 countries, but it is not a member of the United Nations.

The Olympic appearance will be another victory in its battle for international recognition while the prospect of at least taking part in European club and international tournaments could see a new force emerge. "Kosovo has many football talents. We need to provide them with proper infrastructure. I believe that Kosovo's national team will be among the best in Europe," the Kosovo president said. UEFA membership is only the first stage of getting into the Champions League or the European Championship however. Its stadiums and clubs will have to be approved by UEFA's club committee and then the UEFA executive will have to football to let Kosovo onto the international stage. UEFA could also decide to keep Kosovo and Serbian teams apart in European competitions.— AFP



**SAN ANTONIO:** Russell Westbrook #0 of the Oklahoma City Thunder scores over Danny Green #14 of the San Antonio Spurs during game Two of the Western Conference Semifinals for the 2016 NBA Playoffs at AT&T Center Monday in San Antonio, Texas. —AFP

## THUNDER OUTLAST SPURS

**OKLAHOMA:** Russell Westbrook scored 29 points and handed out 10 assists as the Oklahoma City Thunder outlasted the San Antonio Spurs 98-97 on Monday in Game 2 of the Western Conference semi-final and tied the best-of-seven series at one win apiece. The series switches to Oklahoma City for Game 3 on Friday and Game 4 on Sunday before returning to San Antonio for the fifth game on May 10. Kevin Durant, who had 28 points, canned a floating jump shot off an assist from Westbrook with 33 seconds left to give Oklahoma City a 96-91 lead but the Spurs responded with an Aldridge 3-pointer, just his second of the season.

Westbrook then made two free throws with 18.3 seconds left to push Oklahoma City's lead back to four points, at 98-94. Aldridge hit three free throws after being fouled on a 3-point attempt with 13.5 seconds left to bring the Spurs to within 98-97. On the ensuing inbound play, San Antonio's Danny Green stole the ball from Durant and it was eventually passed in the corner to Patty Mills, who missed a 3-pointer with two seconds left. The two teams scrambled for the ball under the basket but the Spurs could not get off another shot.

Serge Ibaka, Enes Kanter and Steven Adams added 12 points apiece for the Thunder and Adams pulled down 17 rebounds. Aldridge led the Spurs with a season-high 41 points while Kawhi Leonard had 14 points on 7-of-18 shooting. Manu Ginobili hit for 11 points for San Antonio, which lost for just the second time at home all season. The Thunder flipped the script from its ragged Game 1 start by going right at San Antonio and building a 9-2 lead four minutes into the game. Westbrook had seven of Oklahoma City's first nine points while the Spurs floundered from the field in the early moments, missing seven layups and another shot five feet from the basket.

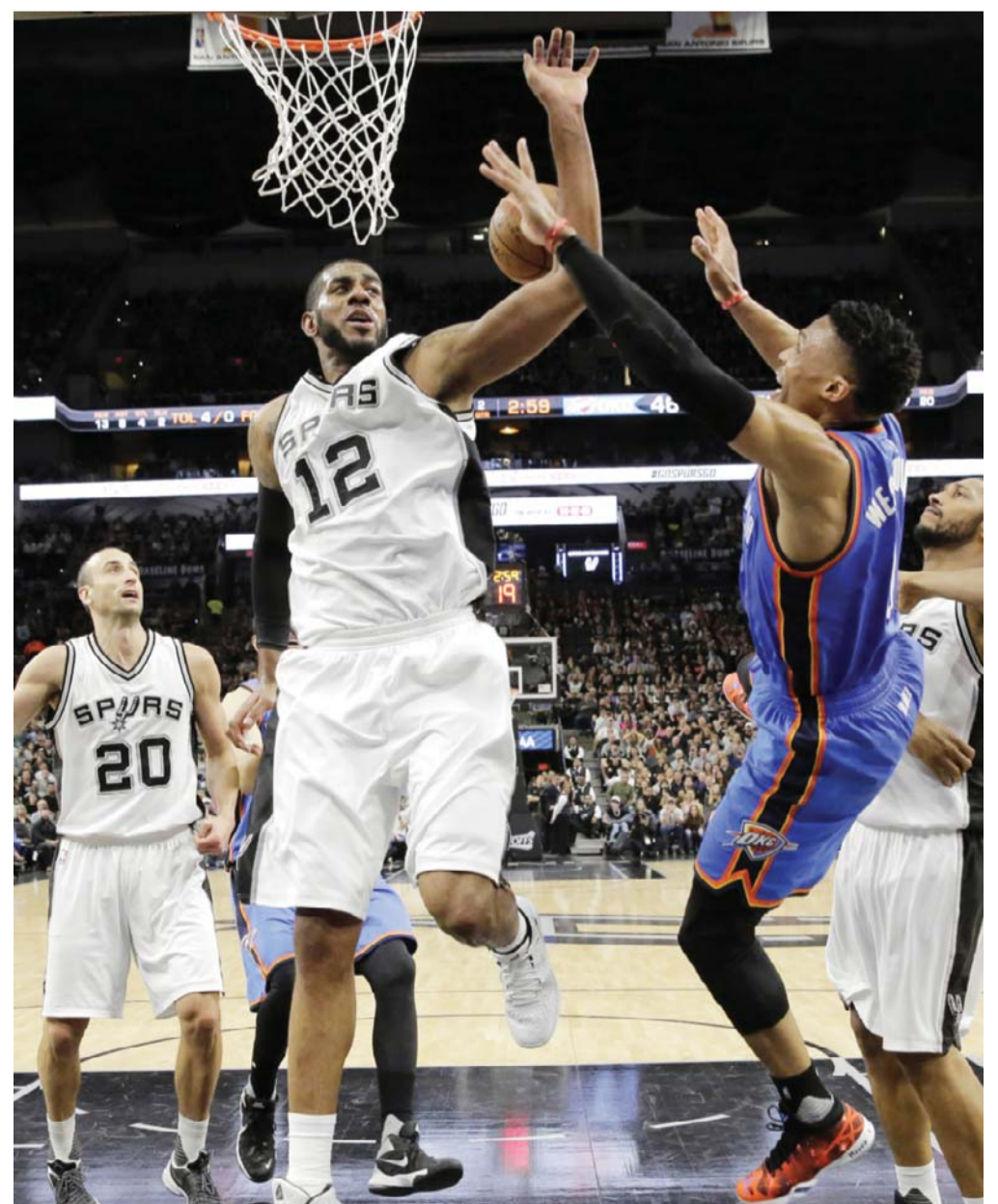
Oklahoma City's lead expanded to as much as 13 points through the remainder of the quarter. The Spurs' reserve players helped bring San Antonio to within nine points on a five occasions before a Ginobili 3-pointer with 1 second to play in the period cut the Thunder advantage to 29-21. The Thunder had 12 free-throw attempts, and made eight of them, in the first quarter while San Antonio did not go to the line. Three-pointers by Mills and Green in the first two minutes of the second quarter pulled the Spurs to within 29-27 and all but erased all the good early work by Oklahoma City.

Leonard hit his first basket of the game at the 8:13 mark of the quarter to tie the game at 33 and gave the Spurs their first lead since the first possession of the game, at 39-37, with a jumper a minute and a half later. The rest of the quarter was evenly played with the Thunder taking a 56-53 advantage at halftime. Westbrook led Oklahoma City with 18 point and Durant added

13. Aldridge paced San Antonio with 22 points on 9-of-11 shooting in 21 minutes of play. Oklahoma City outshot the Spurs 56.4-48.9 percent and had a 23-14 edge in rebounding. San Antonio was just 4-of-12 on uncontested shots in the first half; it was 17-of-23 on such attempts in the first half of Game 1.

Seven straight points by Westbrook in the middle of the third quarter pushed the Thunder's lead back to 11 points, at 75-64, at the

4:48 mark of the period. But the Spurs surged back again, ending the quarter on a 12-2 run to cut the Oklahoma City lead to 77-76. Durant scored five of the Thunder's first seven points in the first four minutes of the fourth quarter while the Spurs went almost five minutes without a point, resulting in an 85-76 Oklahoma City lead. But Green knocked down back-to-back 3-pointers to get San Antonio back to 85-82, setting the stage for a furious finish.— Reuter



**SAN ANTONIO:** San Antonio Spurs' LaMarcus Aldridge (12) breaks up a shot attempt by Oklahoma City Thunder's Russell Westbrook (0) during the first half in Game 2 of a second-round NBA basketball playoff series, Monday in San Antonio.— AP



**BUDAPEST:** Delegation members of Kosovo celebrate their UEFA membership after the 40th Ordinary UEFA Congress at the Hungexpo Fair Center in Budapest, Hungary, yesterday. — AFP



## ATLETICO MADRID RETURNS TO LEAD AP GLOBAL FOOTBALL 10

**LONDON:** Atletico Madrid led the Associated Press Global Football 10 yesterday after two victories in a week maintained its bid to win the Champions League and Spanish league. Atletico edged Bayern Munich 1-0 in the Champions League semifinals before beating Rayo Vallecano by the same score to stay level on points with Spanish league leader Barcelona. "Atletico Madrid love upsetting the big boys. They did that to Bayern Munich, eking out a 1-0 win ... thanks to their hard work and determination," Umaid Wasim of Dawn newspaper in Pakistan said.

"Diego Simeone's men then kept pace with Barcelona atop La Liga." Leicester was second. The Foxes drew 1-1 with Manchester United, but won the English title after Chelsea held Tottenham to a 2-2 draw on Monday. "I wish Leicester had won the Premier League title on the field and of their own doing rather than by having Tottenham play to a tie," Tom Timmermann of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in the United States said. "Not that it minimizes Leicester's title in any way - but doing it in a crowded stadium could have been a priceless moment." Real Madrid was third after drawing

with Manchester City in the Champions League and beating Real Sociedad, while Borussia Dortmund was fourth after thrashing Wolfsburg 5-1 and Barcelona was fifth after winning 2-0 at Real Betis. Villarreal, Southampton, Paris Saint-Germain, Juventus and Sporting Lisbon round out the top 10. Sadio Mane is at the top of the player vote after scoring a hat-trick as Southampton beat City 4-2 on in the Premier League on Sunday. Saul Niguez was second after his goal for Atletico against Bayern in the Champions League handed Diego Simeone's side a first-leg advantage, and Real Madrid forward Gareth Bale

was third. "Saul Niguez scored the most beautiful goal of this Champions League season and decided the first leg of the semifinals for Atletico," Francois Colin of De Standaard in Belgium said. Pierre Emerick-Aubameyang, Wes Morgan, Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Gonzalo Higuain, Eden Hazard, Adrian and Antoine Griezmann complete the top 10. Associated Press Global Football 10 Players:

- 1.Sadio Mane, 76 points.
- 2.Saul Niguez, 68.
- 3.Gareth Bale, 61.
- 4.Pierre Emerick-Aubameyang, 57.
- 5.Wes Morgan, 51.

- 6.Zlatan Ibrahimovic, 43.
  - 7.Gonzalo Higuain, 36.
  - 8.Eden Hazard, 33.
  - 9.Adrian, 26.
  - 10.Antoine Griezmann, 22.
- Teams:
- 1.Atletico Madrid, 89 points.
  - 2.Leicester, 74.
  - 3.Real Madrid, 67.
  - 4.Borussia Dortmund, 54.
  - 5.Barcelona, 53.
  - 6.Villarreal, 50.
  - 7.Southampton, 47.
  - 8.Paris Saint-Germain, 37.
  - 9.Juventus, 31.
  - 10.Sporting Lisbon, 25.



**LEICESTER:** Leicester City's Japanese striker Shinji Okazaki (L) is cheered by crowds of waiting fans as he arrives for lunch at an Italian restaurant in the centre of Leicester yesterday. — AFP

## FORSOOTH! JOY FOR RICHARD III AS LEICESTER SHOCK THE WORLD

**LONDON:** There was no shortage of superlatives yesterday after little Leicester City were crowned champions of the world's richest soccer league. New fans sprung up worldwide overnight, but few could explain the season's extraordinary events. A Bangkok monk said the power of Buddhism had lifted the Thai-owned club to victory, while some fans closer to home gave thanks to King Richard III, saying his reinvention in Leicester last year had sparked the magic. In a soon-to-be-published book "King Power", which also happens to be the name of the group that owns the soccer club, a re-imagined Richard III offers his Middle English analysis of Leicester's rise to glory under manager Claudio Ranieri. The author, who writes under the king's pseudonym, answered questions from Reuters in language somewhere close to that of another icon from the English Midlands, William Shakespeare, who wrote the tragedy Richard III and who died 400 years ago.

### Leicester's fortunes changed

"Tis not a prince's fate to brag or boast, so I beg your grace's pardon if I demur. All I shall say, when asked if king power brought this miracle to pass, is this: look upon the facts and figures pursuant on my reburial, mayhap they speak eloquent enough for themselves.

### Dare dream

When did I dare perchance to dream? 'Tis hard to be exact upon the point. Being a superstitious prince I would not tempt fate with outlandish hope too soon. The short

answer is when we turned over Man City 3-1 at their place back in February, when my Foxes went five points clear of chasing hounds.

### JAMIE VARDY - PROLIFIC STRIKER

'Tis a mystery to me, as 'tis to you. For who can see into another's mind or heart? That villainous scribe Shakespeare tried that trick with me, yet ne'er came close to unravelling the truth. All we know is that Jamie Vardy has been having a party for nigh on nine months - and that this gestation period is itself, God willing, about to whelp the party to end them all!

### WHAT IS THE SECRET?

'Tis insolence unbound to ask a king a secret to divulge, so I would not tell you even if I knew. But I will speculate a while, and say that all were discards, misfits and seeming mediocrities before as stars in Leicester's glittering firmament they were reborn. And so they were bereft of the ego, conceit and queenly tantrums that foster discontent among more vaunted squads. A wonderful bunch of lads, forsooth, on whom may the Lord smile.

### HOW WILL LEICESTER FARE?

'Tis ne'er easy, as any medieval king will tell ye, when battle is joined across the seas. Yet under Ranieri's wise aegis, I feel we shall prosper in Champions League, for he is most well travelled and knows the European game inside out. Not that we want Barcelona or Bayern in the opening round. — Reuters

## FIVE KEY PLAYERS IN LEICESTER'S SUCCESS

**LONDON:** For all the headline-grabbing exploits of top scorer Jamie Vardy and twinkle-toed winger Riyad Mahrez, Leicester City's fairytale Premier League title success has been very much a collective effort. AFP Sport highlights five players who have played major roles in securing the east Midlands club's first ever top-flight title.

### Kasper Schmeichel (DEN; goalkeeper)

A recent internet meme asserted that since Liverpool last won a league title, Peter Schmeichel had joined Manchester United, won five Premier League titles, retired, had a son and his son, Kasper, was on the verge of winning the league with Leicester. It was not entirely accurate-Schmeichel Jr was actually born in 1986, four years before the last of Liverpool's 18 championship crowns-but it highlighted the remarkable goalkeeping lineage in the Schmeichel family. Whereas Peter was an acknowledged great, Kasper has taken his time to reach the top, with a formative stint at Manchester City followed by a succession of loans and short-term spells before he arrived at Leicester in 2011. Now 29, the Denmark international does not possess his father's extraordinary physicality, but he has been an ever-present for Leicester this season, helping his low-scoring side record 15 vital clean sheets.

### Wes Morgan (JAM; centre-back)

The rock at the heart of the Leicester defense, Morgan joined the club from local rivals Nottingham Forest in January 2012 and was quickly installed as captain. Despite lacking pace, he is an authoritative presence and with Robert Huth has formed an old-school central defensive partnership founded upon strength, astute positioning and aerial dominance. The Jamaica international, 32, scored a key header in a 1-0 win over Southampton in April, during a run of seven clean sheets in nine games that effectively secured the title.

### N'Golo Kante (FRA; central midfielder)

A £5.6 million (\$8.2 million, 7.2 million euros) capture from French side Caen last year, Kante has astonished observers with his relentless energy, driving runs and extraordinary knack for recovering possession. Legendary former Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson described him as "by far the best player in the Premier League" and he was shortlisted for the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) Player of the Year award. He won his first France cap in March and is a near-certainty for a place in Didier Deschamps's Euro 2016 squad.

### Riyad Mahrez (ALG; winger)

The impish inspiration behind Leicester's success, Mahrez symbolizes the fairytale journey that the club have overtaken over the past 12 months. Signed from Le Havre for just £400,000 in January 2014, the rakish, velvet-footed Algerian winger flitted in and out of the team 12 months ago as Leicester fought to stay in the division, but this season he has been a sensation. His 17 goals-including stunning strikes against Chelsea and Manchester City, and a hat-trick against Swansea City-and 11 assists set up countless wins and saw him become the first African to be elected as England's Player of the Year by his peers. "Riyad is our light," said manager Claudio Ranieri. "When he switches on, Leicester change color."

### Jamie Vardy (ENG; striker)

Leicester's talisman, the hard-running and prolific Vardy has become the snarling face of Ranieri's team. The wiry Yorkshireman's rags-to-riches tale has seen him rise from non-league obscurity to top-flight record-breaker, England international and Football Writers' Association (FWA) Player of the Year in just four years, attracting the attention of Hollywood scriptwriters. —AFP

## LEICESTER'S OWNERS VOW TO KEEP UNLIKELY TITLE-WINNERS TOGETHER

**BANGKOK:** The owners of English soccer champions Leicester City say they will resist attempts by more glamorous rivals to lure away their title-winning players, after an unlikely triumph that has captured the imagination of fans worldwide. Duty-free magnate Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha became the first Thai owner of an English Premier League title-winning team on Monday night, when the only club capable of catching them, Tottenham Hotspur, were held to a 2-2 draw by Chelsea.

Leicester's journey from 5,000-1 outsiders to English champions has captivated soccer lovers everywhere, but also prompted predictions that the team could be broken up in the off-season as bigger clubs look to poach their best players. "We are not the team that will sell players for money," said Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha, the club's vice chairman and Vichai's son, in comments reported by Thai website Manager.

"So, I can confirm that we will keep all major players with the team, such as Jamie Vardy, Riyad Mahrez, N'Golo Kante or Kasper Schmeichel." Next season, in addition to defending their Premier League title, Leicester - who were playing in the second tier of English football when Vichai's King Power Group took over in 2010 - will compete in UEFA's lucrative Champions League. At least one prominent supporter, a Thai monk who has regularly blessed the team during their astonishing rise, believes they will have few problems taking on the giants of European soccer.

"I believe the power of Buddhism... given through the Buddhist monk and executives has created teamwork and unity in the team," Phra Prommangkalachan said. "With their clear minds, it has brought concentration, ability, and determination for them to go to the international arena. At the moment, they will be able to thrive anyway because of their strong minds and they will continue to win on the international stage." Vichai is a regular devotee of Phra, the 63-year-old assistant to the abbot of Bangkok's Traimit Temple, and took him to Britain to bless the stadium and the team.

### SECOND TEAM

Whilst the English Premier League is wildly popular across Southeast Asia, Thai fans had not taken much notice of unfashionable Leicester before this season, preferring to follow established names like Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal. But the "Siam Foxes" support base has ballooned with the team's success. The Leicester City Thai Facebook page had nearly 600,000 likes as of Tuesday, compared with



**LEICESTER:** Leicester City's Thai owner and chairman Vichai Srivaddhanaprabha (C) is cheered by crowds of waiting fans as he arrives for lunch at an Italian restaurant in the centre of Leicester yesterday, the day after Leicester City won the English Premier League title. Thousands celebrated and millions around the world watched in wonder as 5,000-1 underdogs Leicester City completed arguably the greatest fairytale in sporting history by becoming English Premier League champions. — AFP

5,000-6,000 at the start of the season, said corporate relations manager Rattananuch Lohachala. Many Thai fans have adopted Leicester as their second team. "We know that we are not always the first team on their mind," said Rattananuch. "But we are number-two and we are happy about that."

For the Thai fans that Leicester have attracted, the strong team ethic that saw them beat bigger-spending rivals to the title is part of the club's appeal. "They don't need to have the big shots or superstar players in the team, but they rely on great teamwork," said fan Korawit Thaemphet, outside King Power's Bangkok headquarters. Many punters were skeptical of Leicester's success right up until they won the title, and fans worry about their chances of repeating the success. "This is great but I think it's only for this season," said Thaweevat Ingkathachai, a student who switched to following Leicester from Liverpool last season.

"I can't believe next season they can be champions again," he said. "The big teams will be back." Bookmakers seem to agree. Paddy Power's

website was offering odds of 33/1 for Leicester to win the title again next season - and just 14/1 for them to be relegated from the top flight. More than 1,000 fans had gathered at King Power on Sunday for the team's last match, when the company laid on free food and beer. King Power is planning a celebration at the same venue in Bangkok when the team plays their next game on May 7, Rattananuch said.

Replica shirts have sold out in Britain and Thailand, a missed opportunity for Vichai and King Power and driving fans to Thailand's counterfeit market. "Leicester shirts are selling as well as Barcelona shirts," said Sompot Thavornchareon, working at a sports shirt stall in Bangkok's weekend Chatuchak market. Shirts at the stall sell for 250 baht (\$7.17), a fraction of the price of the official shirt 1,800 baht (\$51.65). "I wish I had known they would do that well," said another vendor Net, whose shop in the shadow of Bangkok's National Stadium sells official merchandise and has run out of Leicester shirts. "I would have ordered hundreds at the start of the season." — Reuters

## IS LEICESTER'S 5,000-1 UPSET GREATEST SPORTING SHOCK?

**LONDON:** At the start of the English football season last August, bookmakers in Britain were offering odds of 5,000-1 against Leicester City winning the Premier League. 5,000-1? Now, let's put that into perspective. The bookies offered odds 10 times more generous than the Loch Ness Monster would be discovered. Or more than twice as generous that Kim Kardashian would become US president. It was only 2,000-1 that Elvis would turn up alive and well.

Should Presley materialize now, what price he would be wearing the shirt of Leicester City, who were crowned champions on Monday after Tottenham Hotspur failed to beat Chelsea? For everybody has bought into the idea that, as Leicester's most celebrated son, former England captain Gary Lineker, has suggested: "We could be celebrating the greatest sporting upset of all time." There are countless contenders for that accolade, from James "Buster" Douglas knocking out the seemingly invincible world heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson in 1990 to a team of US soccer part-timers beating mighty England 1-0 at the 1950 World Cup in Brazil.

These, though, were very different sensations: one-off, one-day, never-to-be-repeated flashes in pans; shocks fashioned over a couple of hours that live in the memory for a lifetime. Such as the time a lineup of American college students downed the professional and suppos-

edly unbeatable Soviet hockey machine in the 1980 Olympic final, the fabled 'Miracle on Ice'. Every now and again these short, sharp shocks for the ages test our credulity. Last year the sports world gasped as the South African Springboks, eternal rugby powerhouses, were beaten by Japan's rising sons in the World Cup.

The point about Leicester's fairytale, though, is that it was fashioned not on one day nor even over one month of a tournament, like Denmark's wholly unlikely European Championship victory in 1992 when they were drafted in as late substitutes. The Foxes' tale is one of sustained and fantastic improbability, stretching into incredulity, that has nurtured a nation's imagination and its love of an underdog for almost nine marvellous months. Here were the no-hopers, the relegation survivors who, with a makeshift collection of journeymen, bargain-basement signings and unlikely over-achievers all overseen by a likeable coach that few fans wanted, downed the best and richest teams in a league dominated by a mega-wealthy elite.

### UNFASHIONABLE AND OVERLOOKED

Leicester had been through more than a century of league football without winning the top-flight title. Unfashionable and overlooked in the east Midlands, they had been overshadowed by their city's Europe-conquering rugby

team. Yet, fantastically, Claudio Ranieri's motley crew have triumphed against the might and money of Manchester United and City, Chelsea and Arsenal, the quartet who had carved up the Premier League title for the previous 20 years. Which other sports teams have defied such odds for month after month over an entire season? In soccer, it happens rarely but always wonderfully. Montpellier in France's Ligue 1 (2012), Kaiserslautern in Germany's Bundesliga (1998) and AZ Alkmaar in the Netherlands' Eredivisie (1981) have been similarly unfashionable conquerors.

Perhaps the best comparison was when Italy boasted the strongest league in the world and, in 1985, modest little Hellas Verona, like Leicester a Cinderella club whose collective strength was greater than the sum of its modest parts, enchanted a nation by winning Serie A's 'Scudetto'. In English football, Leicester's feat has echoes of another unsung provincial Midlands club, Nottingham Forest who, in 1977-78, became English champions for the only time in their history a year after scraping into the top flight.

With a band of stalwarts supposedly past their prime and the odd authentic champion thrown in, such as goalkeeper Peter Shilton, a magical mix was produced by the great alchemist, manager Brian Clough, who had worked a similar wonder with Derby County to win the title in 1972. What Clough's Forest went on to achieve with back-to-back European Cup triumphs was one of sport's most monumental accomplishments but that 1978 league win still did not have the same miraculous feel of Leicester's as, at that time, they were the eighth different club in 12 seasons to lift the title.

It felt possible back then-just as when Ipswich Town won the old second division and first division titles in successive years in 1961 and 1962 — for a smaller club to gate-crash the elite over a season. These days, though, it feels so unlikely that Leicester's triumph may even have put a new phrase in the sporting lexicon. One of Britain's prospective rowing team for the Olympics, Jonny Walton, who hails from Leicester, recently mused about his chances of striking gold and said he now lived by a new mantra. "It's called: 'Doing a Leicester'," he explained. "And I'm crossing my fingers to 'do a Leicester' at the Olympics." In other words, making an impossible sporting dream possible. — Reuters



**Leicester city fans celebrate outside the King Power Stadium in Leicester yesterday. — AFP**



## LEICESTER CITY - FROM AN IMPENDING DOOM TO UNIMAGINED GLORY

**LONDON:** In April last year Leicester City were seven points adrift at the foot of the Premier League and seemingly going down. After pulling off an incredible escape, they have produced an even more astonishing story by winning the title for the first time in one of the biggest upsets in the history of sport. Here are the key moments in the club's annus mirabilis.

### 2015

March 21. Leicester lose 4-3 at Tottenham Hotspur to find themselves bottom, seven points adrift. They have won four of their 29 games. Jamie Vardy scores - his second goal of a season that eventually produced five goals in 37 appearances.

March 26. The remains of King Richard III, discovered under a Leicester car park, are reburied in the city's cathedral - later seen as the turning point in the club's fortunes.

April 4. The fightback begins with a 2-1 home win over West Ham United.

April 25. A 1-0 victory at relegation rivals Burnley makes it four wins in a row and hauls Leicester out of the bottom three.

May 16. A goalless draw at Sunderland confirms Leicester will remain in the Premier League with a game to spare.

May 24. Leicester end the season in style by thumping Queens Park Rangers 5-1. Having won four of their first 29 games they won seven and drew one of their final nine to finish 14th in the 20-team league.

QPR, Burnley and Hull are relegated. Aston Villa, Sunderland and Newcastle escape by the skin of their teeth.

June 17. James Pearson, son of manager Nigel, is one of three Leicester players sacked by the club after their involvement in a racist, sexual incident with three local women during the club's "goodwill tour" of Thailand.

June 30. Nigel Pearson, hero of the city a month before, is fired amid rumours of a fallout with the club's Thai owners related to the sacking of his son.

July 13. Italian Claudio Ranieri is appointed manager of his 15th club.

Aug 8. Ranieri's Leicester kick off the new season with a 4-2 home win over Sunderland.

Sept 26. Leicester's six-game unbeaten start to the season is brought to an emphatic end with a 5-2 home defeat by Arsenal.

Nov 21. Leicester win 3-0 at Newcastle United and go top of the league.

Nov 28. Leicester draw with Manchester United. Vardy is on target and becomes the first player to score in 11

consecutive Premier League games.

Dec. 23. Leicester win 3-2 at Everton to secure top spot at Christmas-eight of the last 11 teams in that position have gone on to win the league.

### 2016

Jan. 13. After a relatively dry spell of a defeat and two draws that launched a thousand "bubble has burst" conversations, Leicester are back to winning ways with a 1-0 success at title rivals Tottenham Hotspur.

Jan. 16. A scrappy 1-1 draw at Aston Villa is enough to put Leicester back on top of the table, ahead of Arsenal on goal difference.

Feb. 6. "And now you're going to believe us, we're going to win the league!" roar the Leicester fans, and few people are arguing as, four days after beating Liverpool 2-0, they destroy Manchester City 3-1 at the Etihad.

Feb. 14. The dream is on hold as Danny Welbeck comes off the bench to snatch a stoppage-time 2-1 win for Arsenal.

Feb. 27. The beginning of "phase two" as, with opponents wising up to Leicester's quick-fire counter-attacking game, they are forced to tough it out, starting with a scruffy 1-0 win at Norwich City.

April 10. An impressive 2-0 victory at Sunderland means Ranieri's side have kept five successive clean sheets and are seven points clear with five games remaining.

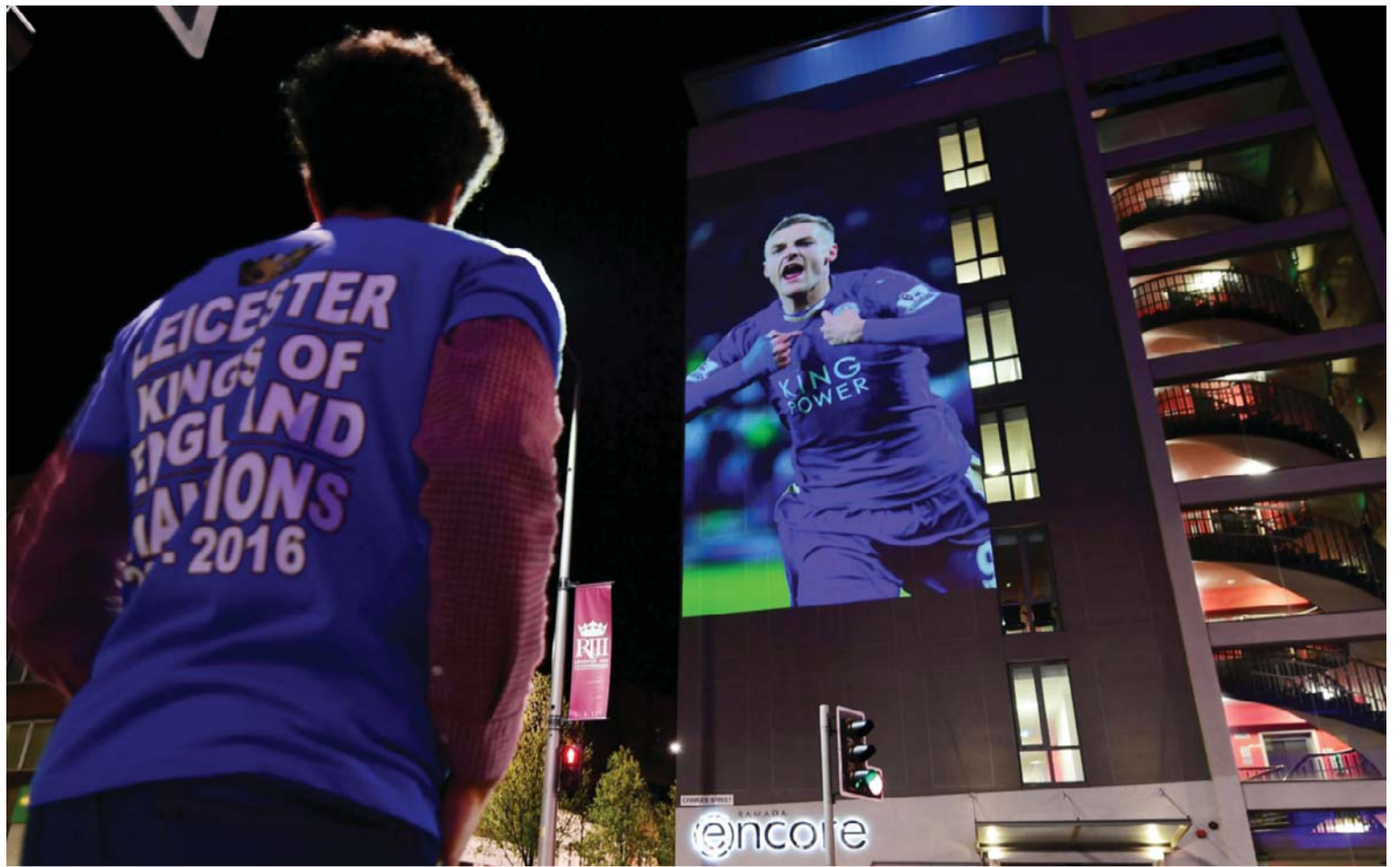
April 17. Trailing 2-1 at home to West Ham, with Vardy sent off, Leicester are handed a last-gasp penalty lifeline that Leonardo Ulloa grabs to snatch a 2-2 draw, lifting the roof off the King Power stadium.

April 24. Leicester shrug off the absence of suspended Vardy to hammer Swansea City 4-0. To complete a great day, Riyad Mahrez is named PFA Player of the Year. Vardy, midfielder N'Golo Kante and centre-back and captain Wes Morgan are also included in the PFA Team of the Year.

April 25. Tottenham, the only team who can catch them, are held 1-1 at home by West Bromwich Albion, leaving Leicester needing a maximum of three points from their last three games to secure the title.

May 1. Leicester draw 1-1 at Manchester United to inch closer to the trophy.

May 2. Spurs need to win all three of their remaining games to have a chance of taking the honors but after leading 2-0 at last year's champions Chelsea, they are pegged back to 2-2 and the title goes to Leicester.— Reuters



**LEICESTER:** A Leicester City football fan looks up at a large projection of an image of Leicester City's striker Jamie Vardy on the side of a building as the city celebrates their team becoming the English Premier League champions in central Leicester, eastern England, on Monday. —AFP

## AMAZING LEICESTER CELEBRATE FAIRYTALE TITLE SUCCESS

**LONDON:** Leicester City's Premier League title dream became reality on Monday as their only remaining challengers Tottenham Hotspur drew 2-2 at Chelsea to complete one of the greatest ever sporting achievements. The result provoked an outpouring of celebration in the provincial English city and as far away as Thailand and Japan, with Leicester's players having watched nervously on television along with Foxes fans packed into local bars 160km away.

Goals from Tottenham's Harry Kane and Son Heung-min had looked like extending the title race to the penultimate week of what has been an unforgettable season. Gary Cahill gave Chelsea a lifeline just before the hour, however, and substitute Eden Hazard's superb 83rd-minute equalizer ended Spurs' slim title hopes to the delight of Leicester and their former Chelsea manager, Italian Claudio Ranieri. As tempers flared at the end of a red-hot London derby at Stamford Bridge, television pictures cut away to Leicester's players celebrating in the living room of their striker Jamie Vardy, whose 22 goals have under-pinned his side's challenge.

Elsewhere in Leicester, the city's biggest ever party began in earnest, with hundreds of fans gathering outside the stadium and thousands more celebrating in pubs and bars. Leicester's unlikely journey from no-hopers to English champions has captivated sports fans worldwide, nowhere more so than in Thailand, home of the club's owners King Power. Defender Wes Morgan, who scored his side's equalizer in the 1-1 draw at Manchester United

on Sunday, summed up the mood. "Nobody believed we could do it, but here we are, Premier League champions and deservedly so," he told Leicester's website. "Saturday can't come quickly enough. I can't wait to get my hands on the trophy."

With two games left, Leicester are seven points ahead of Tottenham and Saturday's home match against Everton will be a glorious lap of honor. In one of the most unpredictable Premier League seasons ever, Tottenham had been hoping to win a first English league title since 1961, but fell short in agonizing circumstances at Stamford Bridge where they have not won in 26 years. "First of all, congratulations to Leicester City and to Claudio Ranieri. A fantastic season," Spurs manager Mauricio Pochettino said. "I'm very disappointed but now we have to fight for second place. It's a massive, amazing season for Leicester, Claudio the players and the fans. They deserve it."

### OUTSIDERS TRIUMPH

Unfashionable Leicester, 5,000-1 outsiders at the start of the season, have become English champions for the first time and are the first club to win a maiden English title since Nottingham Forest in 1977-78, having left the likes of Manchester City and United, Chelsea and Arsenal in their wake. Oddly, the biggest match in Leicester's history was one they were not involved in as the final act of an absorbing title race was played out in west London between last year's champions

and a Tottenham side who have refused to give up the chase. But Ranieri's intrepid team had already done the damage, churning out results to stay top of the table since Jan. 23 while their rivals fell by the wayside. Since losing to Arsenal on Feb. 14, they won seven and drew three of their next 10 games. Incredibly, Leicester spent half of last season bottom of the league before a late surge lifted them clear of relegation. With Ranieri replacing Nigel Pearson as manager, they continued that momentum and from being pre-season tips for the drop, became unlikely title contenders as former non-league journeyman Vardy scored in a record 11 consecutive Premier League games. Even when they hit the top in January, many thought Leicester would fade, as they did in 1963, the last time they were in with a chance of the title. As the chasing pack thinned, however, a youthful Tottenham stayed in the hunt for a first title since 1961 but Leicester's draw at Manchester United put the trophy within touching distance.

Hazard's late goal against bitter London rivals Spurs sealed the destiny of the title, prompting an outpouring of congratulations from a captivated nation. "People will be talking about this in 100 years time," Sky Sports pundit and former Liverpool player Jamie Carragher said. Former England striker Alan Shearer won the title in 1995 with Blackburn Rovers. "For a team like Leicester to come and take the giants on with their wealth and experience—I think it's the biggest thing to happen in football," he said.— Reuters



**LEICESTER:** Leicester City's Italian football manager Claudio Ranieri (R) is mobbed by fans as he leaves an Italian restaurant after having lunch with team-mates in the centre of Leicester yesterday the day after winning the English Premier League title. —AFP

## RANIERI TURNS BACK THE CLOCK TO MAKE LEICESTER CHAMPIONS

**LONDON:** Harking back to a previous era and ripping up a text book full of received wisdom, Leicester City's remarkable title triumph has been founded on a footballing philosophy that many had consigned to the dustbin. The statistics of a stunning campaign tell an astonishing tale of how Leicester have turned the clock back by shunning possession and glorying in the long ball to a pacy striker, while spinning rotation in favor of a settled, almost self-selecting side. Leicester have played more long balls than almost any team in Europe, their average possession is one of the lowest in the Premier League and they have started fewer players over the campaign than any of their title rivals.

To many eyes, it is a simple formula for success and one that was common among English sides in the 1980s, yet Leicester's approach had been almost discarded from the modern game. In an era of European football dominated by Barcelona, who guard the ball with an almost infinite zeal and rarely pass further than the nearest team mate, Leicester have shown that being direct need not be a relic of a bygone age. A report last month by the Football Observatory research group at the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES) in Switzerland said Ranieri's side have played more long balls this season than all but two teams in Europe's big five leagues.

With 6.9 percent of Leicester's passes being classified as long by the study, the Foxes blaze a trail for the Premier League

and only mid-table German sides Darmstadt (10.7 percent) and Ingolstadt (7.8 percent) are more willing to go direct. It has certainly not been a tactic adopted by the other four leaders of Europe's major leagues with Bayern Munich, Paris St Germain, Barcelona and Juventus having the lowest long ball percentages of all clubs, varying between 1.1 and 1.6 percent.

The long ball, so long associated with less skilful and more physical sides, has been used ruthlessly by Leicester to target the pace of striker Jamie Vardy, whose 22 goals have played a huge part in propelling the club to the summit and also earned him the Footballer of the Year title on Monday. Leicester have averaged 45.4 percent possession in their league matches this season, according to STATS (www.stats.com). Only two Premier League sides, Sunderland and West Bromwich Albion, have averaged less.

Their 335.5 passes on average per match and 72.4 percent passing accuracy both rank as the third lowest in the league. Their title rivals, in contrast, have all sought to dominate the ball. Arsenal hogged possession the most, averaging almost 56 percent, but Manchester City (55.2), Manchester United (55.1) and Tottenham Hotspur (54.7) are not far behind. With most of Leicester's rivals boasting bigger squads and deeper pockets, Ranieri's side have also shown that 'rotation', another buzzword of modern football, is not a prerequisite for a title challenge.— Reuters

**Live** Matches on TV (Local Timings)

**UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE**

**Real Madrid v Manchester City 21:45**

beIN SPORTS 1 HD  
beIN SPORTS 2 HD  
beIN SPORTS 6 HD

## LEICESTER STAND TO GAIN UP TO \$365 MILLION WINDFALL

**LONDON:** Leicester City have the chance of making anything between 150 million pounds (\$220 million) and 250 million pounds (\$365 million) from their sensational Premier League triumph, according to sports marketing experts. The city of Leicester in England's Midlands should also expect to enjoy a huge commercial boost after its hometown team wrote the unlikely story of sporting success, one that has captured headlines around the world. Yet though the club known as the Foxes will gain this substantial windfall, they still have a long way to go to join the true big-money elite of world football.

The club that had never won the top-flight crown in its history will cash in through the 90 million pounds in prize money from the Premier League, and money from competing in Europe's Champions League next season, as well as increased TV and match day revenue. With Leicester's increasing attraction to sponsors as the champions of the Premier League, which possesses remarkable global appeal, it could all be worth as much as 150 million pounds to the club, said the sports and entertainment intelligence firm, Repucom yesterday.

Other experts have put the estimates much higher with some British media reports suggesting that the figure could be much nearer 250 million pounds, particularly if Leicester's success proves to be more than a one-season wonder. Leicester's TV audiences have soared by over 23% globally this season and because of the excitement inspired by their run to the title, audiences in the UK have grown from 785,000 to over one million per game. In Italy, the numbers watching Leicester's games have doubled, largely thanks to the interest generated by the club being managed by Italian coach Claudio Ranieri.

"Leicester's media values have jumped by 30 percent globally whilst in the US they have grown by over 70 percent, showing first-hand the increase in value to current and potential sponsors," Repucom said. Leicester's first appearance in the lucrative Champions League will also make a vast difference to their coffers in the region of 36 million pounds. As well as increased TV exposure, it will generate increased revenues from group stage fees, a proportion of the competition's market pool and a participation bonus, totalling 33 million pounds, as well as 3 million pounds performance bonus.—Reuters



**LEICESTER:** Leicester City's football player Jamie Vardy (L) is cheered by crowds of waiting fans as he arrives for lunch at an Italian restaurant in the centre of Leicester yesterday. —AFP

## VARDY'S RAGS TO RICHES RISE A VICTORY FOR THE DREAMERS

**LONDON:** In years to come when people recall how Leicester's City intrepid Foxes turned sporting logic on its head to become champions of England it will be Jamie Vardy's rags to riches tale that may sound the most implausible. It will also offer hope to the thousands of young dreamers tossed aside every year by English football's shiny academies.

Because Vardy, whose goals have fired Leicester to the Premier League crown, proves there are gems lurking in the weed-strewn wilderness of the lower leagues, that rejection as a teenager does not represent a dead-end on the pathway to glory. Six years ago, having been discarded by Sheffield Wednesday for being too small, he was playing for Stocksbridge Park Steels, earning beer money in the seventh tier of English football and working 10-hour shifts at a carbon fibre factory.

A conviction for assault meant he played with an electronic tag on his ankle. It smacked of another hard-luck story, but scroll his career forward, through FC Halifax and Fleetwood Town and a Football League debut for Leicester at the age of 25, and Vardy is the hero of one of sport's greatest upsets. No wonder Stocksbridge are naming a stand after him and televi-

sion crews from all over the world have been descending on the modest club. There is even talk of Hollywood interest. The story might not end there either. Having fired 5,000-1 shots Leicester to the title, what price the 29-year-old helping England win Euro 2016 in France?

"It just goes to show what can happen if you keep your head down, keep working away and praying for that big break to come around," Ian Wright, who also came through the minor leagues on his way to becoming an Arsenal great, said. While some of Vardy's goals this year have been world class, the volley against Liverpool a great example, it is old-fashioned hard work that has served him so well. "He's not changed his style of play and his strengths have always stayed the same," Simon Garner, Vardy's strike partner at FC Halifax, said recently.

"Jamie terrorizes back fours with his pace and he plays with no fear. When he was in the team you always knew you had a chance. He can win games on his own." Neil Aspin, who signed Vardy for FC Halifax, recalls going to watch him play for Stocksbridge. "Straight away I could see he had something," Aspin, who is now in charge at Gateshead, said.—Reuters



# Sports

Record breakers, athletes of the cause Run for Those Who Can't



UEFA admits Kosovo in a step toward World Cup



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RANIERI TURNS BACK THE CLOCK TO MAKE LEICESTER CHAMPIONS

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MUNICH: Bayern Munich's Spanish midfielder Xabi Alonso (left) scores the opening goal during the UEFA Champions League semi-final, second-leg football match between FC Bayern Munich and Atletico Madrid yesterday. — AFP

## ATLETICO OUST BAYERN TO REACH FINAL

**MUNICH:** Atletico Madrid reached the Champions League final for the second time in three seasons yesterday, going through on away goals after a 2-1 defeat at Bayern Munich, in which both sides missed a penalty, with the tie finishing 2-2 on aggregate. Atletico, who will face either city rivals Real Madrid, who beat them in the 2014 final, or Manchester City, who meet in the second semi-final today, also spoiled Bayern's treble chances after the Spaniards won the first leg 1-0 last week.

Bayern took the lead with a Xabi Alonso goal in the 31st minute but Atletico levelled through Antoine Griezmann's seventh goal of the compe-

dition in the 54th. Robert Lewandowski set up a dramatic finale with his 74th minute goal but it was not enough. Thomas Mueller missed a first-half penalty for Bayern and Atletico's Fernando Torres had an 85th minute spot kick saved as Bayern suffered a third straight elimination by a Spanish team at this stage in their three seasons under Pep Guardiola.

"They were better, but we scored an away goal, which was important. We need to keep grounded and first of all think of the Liga before the final," said Griezmann, whose side are level on points with leaders Barcelona in the Spanish title race. Guardiola, in his final Champions League

home game at Bayern before his move to Manchester City for next season, started with defender Jerome Boateng, who returned from a three-month injury break on Saturday, and Franck Ribery, himself back from injury.

With a newly-discovered intensity, the Bavarians were dominant in the first half, successfully navigating through the Spaniards' high pressing game and grabbing their first chance with a Lewandowski header in the 12th minute. The Poland striker narrowly failed to connect inside the box while Arturo Vidal's left-footed effort was plucked out of the air on its way to the top corner by keeper Jan Oblak. Oblak came to the rescue

once more in the 20th, denying Lewandowski from close range, but the Spaniards looked rattled, with the tables turned and Bayern doing the pressing and having 12 shots compared to Atletico's two by the half hour. Xabi Alonso finally got Bayern a deserved lead, his low free kick clipping Atletico's Jose Maria Gimenez to beat Oblak and cancel out Atletico's first-leg advantage.

Bayern pushed for a second goal before the break and thought they would have it when Javi Martinez was brought down by Gimenez in the box to earn a penalty three minutes later. However, Oblak saved Mueller's spot kick and Lewandowski's effort from the rebound to keep

the Spaniards in the game. Atletico stunned the home crowd after the break with their first real chance of the game when Frenchman Griezmann linked up with Fernando Torres and charged through to beat Neuer with a fine finish.

With Bayern now on the backfoot and needing two more goals to advance, Atletico grew bolder and Juanfran's shot on the hour sailed narrowly wide. Lewandowski put Bayern back in front on the night with a close-range header to trigger a dramatic finale but, even after Neuer saved Torres' spot kick, the Germans could not find another goal and their Champions League hopes were over. — Reuters



MADRID: Spanish player Rafael Nadal returns a ball to Russian player Andre Kuznetsov during the Madrid Open tournament at the Caja Magica (Magic Box) sports complex yesterday. — AFP

## NADAL, MURRAY THROUGH IN MADRID

**MADRID:** Fourteen-time Grand Slam champion Rafael Nadal stretched his perfect start to the European clay-court season to 11 matches with a routine 6-3, 6-3 win over Russia's Andre Kuznetsov to reach round three of the Madrid Masters yesterday. Defending champion Andy Murray began his defence of the title with a 7-6 (7/3), 3-6, 6-1 win over 37-year-old Czech Radek Stepanek to remain on course for a semi-final meeting with Nadal. Fresh from victories in Monte Carlo and Barcelona, Nadal will continue his quest for a fifth title in Madrid against American Sam Querrey or France's Lucas Pouille tomorrow.

Nadal is looking for a record 50th career clay-court title in the Spanish capital and was rarely troubled by the world number 39 Kuznetsov. The Spaniard raced into a 3-0 first-set lead and one break was enough to seal the set as he staved off break points in the fourth game. Kuznetsov made a more positive start to the second to lead 3-2, but was blown away as Nadal, ominously for his rivals later in the week, found his rhythm to win the last four games.

Nadal's path to the final was eased as his potential quarter-final opponent Roger Federer withdrew due to a back injury on Monday. However, he could face Murray in the last four in a repeat of last year's final. Murray needed three sets to overcome Stepanek, but eventually got the job done in just under two-and-a-half hours on court. Eleventh seed Milos Raonic also booked

his place in the last 16 with a 6-4, 6-7 (3/7), 6-2 win over Ukrainian Alexandr Dolgopopolov.

World number one Novak Djokovic begins his campaign after a three-year absence in Madrid on Wednesday against Borna Coric. Frenchman Gael Monfils continued his fine form after losing to Nadal in the final of Monte Carlo last month as he saw off Kevin Anderson 6-4, 6-1. Controversial Australian Nick Kyrgios set up an enticing second-round clash with fourth seed Stanislas Wawrinka as he battled past Argentine Guido Pella 7-6 (9/7), 6-4. A dreadful week for Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov continued as he exited in the first round 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 to Pablo Carreno Busta two days after defaulting in the final of the Istanbul Open for a racquet-smashing tirade. And former US Open champion Juan Martin del Potro scored an impressive 7-6 (7/5), 6-3 win over in-form 14th seed Dominic Thiem.

In the women's Madrid Open there was a better day for the favorites after a series of high-profile exits left just five seeds left in the draw. World number seven Simona Halep thrashed Karin Knapp 6-1, 6-1 to set up a third-round clash with Tímea Babcsinszky as the 10th seed overcame Ekaterina Makarova 6-4, 5-7, 6-4. Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro booked her place in the last 16 with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Germany's Sabine Lisicki. Sam Stosur and Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova also reached the third round without having to hit a ball as 11th seed Lucie Safarova and Camila Giorgi withdrew. — AFP

## CUBS OVERPOWER PIRATES 7-2

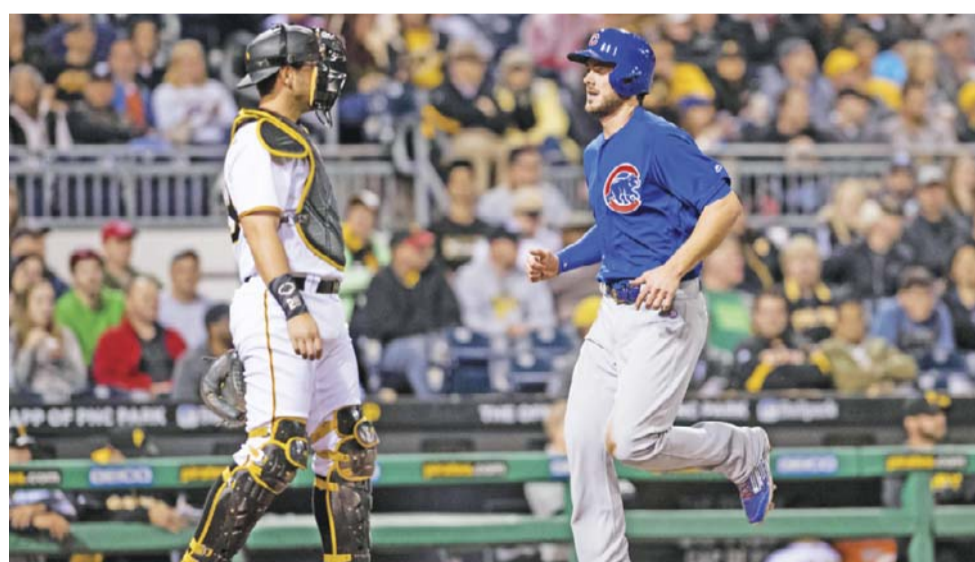
**PITTSBURGH:** Jason Hammel raised his record to 4-0 and Anthony Rizzo hit two doubles as the Chicago Cubs beat the Pittsburgh Pirates 7-2 on Monday night. Hammel's ERA rose to 1.24 after entering the game with a National League-leading 0.75 mark. He gave up two runs and five hits in five-plus innings with three strikeouts and one walk. His streak of five straight starts of allowing one run or fewer ended. Rizzo hit an RBI double and scored in the third inning as the Cubs went ahead 2-1, then doubled again during a four-run fifth that pushed the lead to 6-1. The Cubs improved to 18-6, tops in the major leagues, and avoided losing consecutive games for the first time this season while winning for the fifth time in six games.

### NATIONALS 2, ROYALS 0

Gio Gonzalez and the Washington bullpen combined on a five-hitter, Ryan Zimmerman and Daniel Murphy drove in first-inning runs and the Nationals beat Kansas City. Gonzalez (2-1) scattered four hits and a pair of walks over six innings in his latest smooth start. He's only allowed four earned runs combined in his first five outings. Sammy Solis needed eight pitches for a spotless seventh, and Shawn Kelley and Oliver Perez combined to strike out three straight after a leadoff double in the eighth. Jonathan Papelbon breezed through a perfect ninth as the Nationals followed up a sweep of the Cardinals with their fourth straight win.

### METS 4, BRAVES 1

David Wright, Yoenis Cespedes and Lucas Duda hit home runs in the first inning as New York teed off, sending Bartolo Colon and the Mets over Atlanta for their ninth win in 10 games. The Mets' homer barrage came in a span of 16 pitches. The Braves have hit just five homers all season, by far the fewest in the majors for the team with the worst record in the big leagues. A few weeks shy of his 43rd birthday, Colon (2-1) pitched eight scoreless innings. He coasted to his 220th career victory, breaking a tie with Pedro Martinez for the second-most among Dominican-born pitchers and trailing only the 243 by Hall of Famer Juan Marichal. Colon gave up seven hits, six in the first three innings, walked none and struck. He threw 99 pitches - 77 strikes - in the longest outing by a Mets starter this year. He was 4-0 against Atlanta last season.



PITTSBURGH: Kris Bryant #17 comes in to score on an sacrifice fly ball by Ben Zobrist #18 of the Chicago Cubs in the fifth inning during the game against the Pittsburgh Pirates at PNC Park on Monday in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. — AFP

### CARDINALS 10, PHILLIES 3

Adam Wainwright pitched six innings and hit a three-run home run - the first of five for St. Louis - as the Cardinals snapped a four-game losing streak. Matt Adams, rookie Aledmys Diaz and Randal Grichuk added solo homers and Kolten Wong hit a two-run homer to help St. Louis overcome a 3-0 deficit and avoid its first five-game slide since losing seven straight from July 26-31, 2013. Wainwright, who has struggled since missing most of last season with an Achilles tendon injury, has won two straight. Wainwright (2-3) was the last Cardinals pitcher to get a win after yielding four runs over 5 1/3 innings in an 11-4 rout at Arizona on April 27. In this victory, Wainwright pitched six innings, allowing three runs and five hits. He improved to 6-2 in 11 career starts against the Phillies.

### TWINS 6, ASTROS 2

Brian Dozier broke out of a slump with three hits and Minnesota snapped Dallas Keuchel's 17-game home winning streak with a victory over Houston. Keuchel (2-4) allowed five runs on five hits with three strikeouts in 4 1/3 innings and struggled with his command for the third time this season, walking five. The Cy Young winner

hadn't lost at home since Aug 10, 2014, against Texas. Dozier snapped a 0-for-16 slump with a double in the first and singled to start the three-run fourth as the Twins ended a four-game losing streak. Jose Berrios (1-1) earned his first career win, giving up two runs on three hits with eight strikeouts in 5 1/3 innings in his second major league start. Berrios was tagged for five runs in four innings in his first start.

### GIANTS 9, REDS 6

Cincinnati roughed up Johnny Cueto in his return to Great American Ball Park, but San Francisco rallied against the Reds' historically bad bullpen, riding Brandon Crawford's three-run homer to a victory. Joey Votto hit a three-run homer as the Reds piled up six runs in the third inning off Cueto, who got a warm welcome from his former teammates and fans before the game. It was Cueto's worst showing since he gave up eight runs during Kansas City's 11-8 loss at Toronto in the AL Championship Series last season. The Reds' bullpen tied history while letting a 6-3 lead slip away. Brandon Belt and Gregor Blanco singled in runs off JC Ramirez (0-2) in the seventh. Crawford connected off Drew Hayes for his third homer and an 8-6 lead. — AP



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RIYADH: Saudi Minister of Finance Ibrahim Al-Assaf addresses the audience during the Euromoney Saudi Arabia conference in the capital Riyadh yesterday. The two-day conference focuses on Saudi Arabia's economy and the called economic plan "Vision 2030". — AFP

# SAUDI PLANS SWEEPING MARKET REFORMS

## BOURSE TO EASE RULES FOR FOREIGNERS UNDER ECONOMIC PLAN

**DUBAI:** Saudi Arabia announced a string of reforms to its stock market that could attract billions of dollars of fresh foreign money and smooth sales of state assets as the kingdom grapples with damage to its finances caused by low oil prices.

When Riyadh opened its bourse to direct foreign investment last June, it took a cautious approach, imposing tight ownership limits and minimum qualifications for overseas institutions to reduce the risk of them destabilising the market. Reforms announced yesterday suggested authorities are now courting foreign money more aggressively. Last week, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman outlined sweeping plans to cut the kingdom's dependence on oil exports.

Among his plans are a privatisation program that will include offering a stake of under 5 percent in national oil giant Saudi Aramco. The Saudi stock market could have trouble absorbing the shares without an infusion of

foreign money. "This is a very good piece of news and supportive of the stock market in the medium- to long term," Sebastien Henin, head of asset management at Abu Dhabi's The National Investor, said of Tuesday's announcement. "It may clear the road for the possible listing of Aramco shares...All in all, this will align the bourse with international markets and encourage foreign investors to allocate funds to Saudi shares."

Each foreign institutional investor will be allowed to own directly a stake of just under 10 percent of a single listed company, up from a previous ceiling of 5 percent, the Capital Market Authority (CMA) announced. Other restrictions were scrapped, including a ceiling of 10 percent on combined ownership by foreign institutions of the market's entire capitalisation. All foreign investors combined will still be limited to owning 49 percent of any single firm. To qualify as a foreign institutional investor in Saudi Arabia, each asset manager

will only need to have a minimum of \$1 billion of assets under management globally, instead of \$5 billion. The CMA said it would now accept investments by new types of foreign institution including sovereign wealth funds and university endowments. The regulator also said it had approved the introduction of securities lending and covered short-selling to the stock market, which would give investors more options to hedge their purchases against market downturns. Meanwhile, the Saudi Stock Exchange will introduce during the first half of 2017 the settlement of trades within two working days of execution, the bourse said.

At present, trades must be settled on the same day. This has inconvenienced foreign investors in particular as they must have large amounts of money on hand before trading, which can be hard given Riyadh's time zone and its Sunday-Thursdays business week. Many big emerging markets have settlement after two days.

### MSCI ENTRY

Saudi Arabia wants to join international index compiler MSCI's emerging markets index as soon as in 2017, because many global funds base their investments on that index. Officials have conceded same-day settlement is an obstacle to inclusion.

MSCI is expected to say in June whether it will review Saudi Arabia for possible inclusion in the index, and the reforms announced yesterday could help to sway its decision. Nevertheless, the Saudi stock market did not react positively to the announcement; its index was 1.4 percent lower in late trade.

One reason is that the reforms will take considerable time to materialise. The CMA said its new foreign ownership rules, and a date for them to take effect, would be revealed only by the end of the first half of 2017. A deeper reason is that despite last June's opening to foreign institutions, overseas funds have so far not been very keen to

put their money into Saudi Arabia; total direct and indirect foreign investment accounts for less than 1 percent of the \$408 billion stock market, bourse data shows.

Low oil prices, as well as the inefficiencies of Saudi firms and the greater dynamism of other emerging economies, have diverted money from the kingdom. It may take years before it becomes clear if the economic reform drive will change this.

At the end of 2015, only nine foreign institutions had obtained licences to invest directly in the Saudi market. The Middle East head of a big international fund manager, declining to be named because of commercial sensitivities, said this number would not necessarily rise sharply when restrictions were eased.

"You can ease regulations as much as you want, but the value proposition of Saudi Arabia needs to be strong enough to make it worthwhile for institutional investors to come in," he said. — Reuters

## REFORMS FAIL TO LIFT SAUDI STOCK MARKET, GULF DIPS

### MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

**DUBAI:** Gulf stock markets fell back yesterday because of lower oil prices and a lack of positive drivers, while Saudi Arabia's bourse failed to get an immediate boost from reforms designed to stimulate trading and draw fresh foreign money. Brent crude futures fell about 1 percent yesterday after a 3 percent drop on Monday, encouraging Gulf investors to take profits on stock market gains made over the past several weeks.

The Saudi index fell 1.2 percent as petrochemical blue chip Saudi Basic Industries lost 2.4 percent. Jarir Marketing fell 1.5 percent and Saudi Hollandi Bank lost 1.9 percent as both stocks went ex-dividend.

The Capital Market Authority said it would lower the minimum assets-under-management requirement for foreign institutions investing directly in the market, and ease foreign ownership restrictions. For example, each foreign investor will be allowed to own a stake of just under 10 percent of a single company; previously, the ceiling was 5 percent. Meanwhile, the Saudi Stock Exchange said it would introduce the settlement of trades within two working days of execution, a reform that could help the

market join MSCI global indexes. Currently, settlement is same-day, which is inconvenient for many foreign investors.

The reforms will not be implemented before 2017, and other factors such as high valuations and low oil prices have also been deterring foreign investors, so the market did not react.

Dubai's index sank 1.8 percent, while Abu Dhabi dropped 2.0 percent as some banks remained soft after last week's disappointing first-quarter earnings, with Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank losing 4.3 percent. Qatar fell 1.5 percent as real estate firm Ezzan Holding, which lost 2.7 percent on Monday after reporting its first-quarter earnings, dropped a further 3.8 percent.

Egypt's market, reopening after two days of public holidays, tumbled 3.1 percent after the April purchasing managers' index for that country showed new orders and output continuing to decline, while the Egyptian pound slipped further in the black market. Orascom Telecom Media sank 6.8 percent, continuing a slide triggered by its reporting a big loss for 2015 late last week. — Reuters

## SAUDI-IRAN SPLIT MUDDIES OPEC LONG-TERM STRATEGY

**DUBAI/LONDON:** OPEC has yet to agree on a long-term strategy as Saudi Arabia objects to a proposal from arch-rival Iran that the exporter group aim for tighter control of the oil market, sources said, pointing to deep divisions over the way forward.

The OPEC board of governors met on Monday in Vienna to discuss the latest draft of its LTS. While they made progress on some issues, OPEC kingpin Riyadh disagreed with Tehran's proposal to include "effective production management" as a challenge for the group, two OPEC sources said.

"Iran and Saudi did not agree," said one source, who declined to be identified. Iran, according to an earlier draft of the LTS seen by Reuters in November, had proposed that the first of 10 challenges OPEC listed for itself - "sustaining oil market stability" - be tweaked to refer to managing supply.

"The first challenge could be expressed in a more clear way as follows: 'Sustainability of oil prices at optimal levels as well as maintaining effective production management, in light of dynamic market conditions,'" Iran wrote on the

earlier draft. At stake, fundamentally, is whether the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries puts its traditional role of fixing supply to prop up prices - a position favoured by Iran and other members such as Algeria - at the top of its agenda.

Or, in response to rising supply outside the group, OPEC steps back from attempting to manage the market - a view in line with the thinking of Saudi Arabia, which led a shift in OPEC strategy in November 2014 when the group refused to cut output.

The debate matters for the oil industry and wider economy as oil prices, which began a slide from over \$100 a barrel in June 2014 due to oversupply, deepened their collapse in response to OPEC's decision not to cut. Crude hit a 12-year low in January this year and is now trading around \$45.

That policy shift continues to divide the group, with members disagreeing about the need to support a fair oil price and boost revenues. The earlier LTS draft seen by Reuters carried annotations from Iran and Algeria for measures to support prices such as a price tar-

get or floor and a return to OPEC's quota system. Saudi Arabia and its Gulf OPEC allies oppose a return to quotas, which were dropped in 2011.

The long-term report is prepared by OPEC's research team in Vienna and traditionally cautions that it does not articulate the final position of OPEC or any member country on any proposed conclusions it contains. OPEC officials will meet again this year in an attempt to reach agreement on the long-term strategy, sources said. Two OPEC sources described the areas of disagreement as relatively small.

Still, the likelihood of a return to production management by OPEC appears remote. Last month, a deal to freeze output by OPEC and non-member producers fell apart after Saudi Arabia demanded that Iran participate.

Iran has refused to limit production as it seeks to regain market share following the lifting of Western sanctions in January, although sources have said Tehran would do so once output has recovered to the pre-sanctions level. OPEC's oil ministers hold their next meeting on June 2 in Vienna to discuss output policy. — Reuters



# PHILIPS TO SPIN OFF LIGHTING BRANCH IN 'HISTORIC' IPO

OFFERING, LISTING SUBJECT TO MARKET CONDITIONS

**THE HAGUE:** Electronics giant Philips announced yesterday it was floating its lighting arm on the stock market in a "historic" initial public offering, aiming to spin off at least a quarter of the division's shares.

"The offering would consist of a sale of existing shares only held by Royal Philips, the current sole shareholder of Philips Lighting. The offering and listing, and their timing, are subject to, among other factors, market conditions," the Amsterdam-based Philips said in a statement.

Philips in late 2014 announced it was selling off its core lighting business-a mainstay of its income for more than a century-to focus more on medical equipment.

But since then Philips said it has been examining its options, hesitating between a straight sale and an IPO in the Amsterdam stock exchange. Philips said it would retain the majority stake in the lighting arm "with the aim to fully sell down over the next several years" as it shifts its focus to healthcare products.

"Today's announcement is a historic one for Philips as we aim to separate our company into two market-leading companies focused on capturing opportunities in the health technology and connected LED lighting solutions markets respectively," Philips chief executive Frans van Houten said in the statement.

"Philips Lighting is well-positioned as a stand-alone company," he added. After the

announcement, shares in Philips fell by around 1.7 percent in mid-morning trade to around 23.50 euros (\$27.20) per share on a sluggish Amsterdam stock exchange's AEX index.

Philips sold its first light bulb a few years after it was founded in 1891, but for the past dozen years has increasingly shifted its focus on medical equipment, which now accounts for more than 40 percent of sales. Philips said it was making the move into medical technology where margins are strong and less vulnerable to competition from emerging markets.

Its lighting business, which produces LED lights, halogen and fluorescent lamps and other electronic components, however remains a major money-spinner, selling

products in around 180 countries.

Last year Philips Lighting raked in 646 million euros in earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation, the company said.

It has manufacturing plants in more than 20 countries and holds a patent portfolio of over 14,000 patent rights. A household name around the world for home appliances, Philips said in April it had earned 37 million euros (\$41.5 million) in net income for the first quarter, compared with 100 million euros in the same period in 2015.

The group however in January announced net profit in 2015 up by 55 percent to 645 million euros, compared to 415 million euros in 2014. — AFP

## News

in brief

### ADS Securities has \$13bn of bond issues lined up in UAE

**ABU DHABI:** Abu Dhabi financial firm ADS Securities has mandates to arrange bond issues worth \$13 billion this year as governments and companies raise capital to cope with falling oil prices and a stuttering global economy, its chief executive said yesterday. While governments, particularly in oil-producing countries, have begun to borrow from the international bond market to plug budget deficits, companies are also tapping debt markets to fund expansion. "There are lot of issuances coming up in this region and beyond due to the drop in oil prices and restructuring in the UAE, Gulf and globally," Philippe Ghanem told Reuters at a company event.

### Egyptian pound stable at auction

**CAIRO:** The Egyptian pound was stable at a central bank auction yesterday but weakened on the black market. The central bank sold \$119.6 million a 8.78 per dollar, far from the black market rate of around 11.05 per dollar that two traders quoted on Tuesday. They did not give volumes of trade. Last week, traders on the black market quoted 10.40/10.50 to the dollar. The United Arab Emirates has allocated \$4 billion to Egypt, half of it in investment and half as a central bank deposit to support cash reserves, the UAE state news agency WAM reported last month. Egypt, which relies heavily on imports, has been facing a dollar shortage since the popular uprising in 2011 drove away tourists and foreign investors, major sources of hard currency. In an attempt to close the gap between official and black market rates, the central bank devalued to 8.85 per dollar from 7.7301 in March, while announcing a more flexible exchange rate policy. It later strengthened the pound to 8.78 per dollar, where it has remained since.

### Ezdan mandates banks for planned \$2bn sukuk

**DUBAI:** Qatar's Ezdan Holding has mandated HSBC and Dubai-based Mashreq as joint global coordinators for its planned \$2 billion sukuk program, the property developer said yesterday. Barwa Bank, Emirates NBD Capital, HSBC and Mashreq will be joint lead managers and book runners for the issue, Ezdan said in a bourse statement. The banks will arrange a series of fixed income investor meetings in Asia, the United Arab Emirates and Britain starting tomorrow, it said. Any issue will be subject to market conditions, Ezdan added. The developer, which was founded by members of the ruling Al-Thani family, last month received shareholder approval to raise \$2 billion through sukuk issuance.

### Gulf Capital buys Multibrands, has \$250m to spend in 2016

**DUBAI:** Private equity firm Gulf Capital has bought Saudi Arabian food and drinks distributor Multibrands and plans to spend around \$250 million this year across mainly defensive sectors, its CEO said yesterday. "We have a record deal flow and expect two or three more deals in 2016 and are looking at defensive sectors such as healthcare and business services, as well as energy," Karim El Solh said. "We are very optimistic as we have \$1 billion in dry powder and today is the perfect time to be scouting [for deals] as there are more opportunities and valuations are coming down." Abu-Dhabi-based Gulf Capital bought Multibrands from Kuwaiti businessman Fozan al-Fozan for an undisclosed price. With Multibrands, Gulf Capital, which manages more than 13 billion dirhams of assets, is seeking to tap into one of the largest and fastest growing non-oil sectors in Saudi Arabia. The food and beverage sector is expected to grow from around \$56 billion currently to \$83 billion by 2020, Gulf Capital estimated.

### Qatar CB sells 1.5bn riyals T-bills, yields up

**DUBAI:** Qatar's Central Bank said yesterday it sold 1.5 billion riyals (\$412 million) of Treasury bills in a monthly auction as yields rose from last month's sale. The bank sold 500 million riyals of three-month bills at a yield of 1.38 percent, receiving 975 million riyals of bids. At April's auction, three-month bills were sold at 1.31 percent. It sold 500 million riyals of six-month bills at 1.45 percent, getting 850 million riyals of bids, compared to last month's 1.27 percent. It also sold 500 million riyals of nine-month bills at 1.44 percent, receiving 1 billion riyals of bids, against 1.38 percent. Earlier this week, the central bank invited banks to bid for 2 billion riyals of T-bills. Between January and March, it cancelled monthly sales of T-bills because of tightening liquidity in the banking system due to low oil prices. Since then, liquidity appears to have improved somewhat. The May auction roughly coincided with the maturation of 1.5 billion riyals of T-bills, bankers said.

# RISKS RISE AS HEDGE FUNDS PLACE RECORD BET ON OIL

US GASOLINE CONSUMPTION RUNNING AT A RECORD

**LONDON:** Hedge funds increased their net long positions in Brent and WTI derivatives by 7 million barrels to a record 663 million barrels in the week ending April 26.

Even though oil prices have already risen by roughly \$20 per barrel (70 percent) from their low in January, hedge funds are more bullish than at any time since oil prices started slumping in the summer of 2014. Hedge funds and other money managers held futures and options contracts equivalent to 791 million barrels of crude betting on a further rise in prices and just 128 million barrels gambling on a fall.

The record net long position in crude easily surpasses previous peaks set in May 2015 (572 million barrels) and June 2014 as ISIS fighters threatened the oilfields of Iraq (626 million barrels). Large concentrations of long or short positions are often followed by a sharp reversal in prices when holders try to lock in their profits by liquidating some of their positions, triggering a rush for the exit.

The accumulation of such a large net long position over the last 17 weeks could indicate an increasing risk crude prices will

pull back and give up at least some of their recent gains in the short term. Crude prices have been closely correlated with the accumulation and liquidation of hedge fund positions in Brent and especially WTI since the start of 2015. Traders and analysts are divided over whether hedge funds and other money managers are now fully invested in crude, heightening the risk of reversal, or could still increase their position further.

Since the start of the year, hedge funds have added almost 195 million barrels of additional long positions in Brent and WTI, while cutting short positions by 235 million.

The brutal squeeze on former hedge fund short positions has been at least as important as the emergence of fresh long positions in pushing prices higher. But with hedge fund short positions down from a recent peak of 392 million barrels in the second week of January to just 128 million barrels there are not many more short positions to squeeze.

On the long side, hedge funds have already amassed a record number of contracts. Past experience indicates that this

could be a close to their maximum position. But oil prices are less than half of the level that they were in June 2014, so the dollar amount of hedge fund positions is still relatively modest, which could indicate they have further scope to add long positions. On balance, the hedge funds' record net long position has shifted the balance of price risks towards the downside in the short term.

But it has to be set against the fundamental supply-demand picture, where the balance of risks appears to be shifting to the upside ("Oil rally is not just about hedge funds", Reuters, April 29).

US gasoline consumption averaged 9.2 million barrels per day in February, stronger than expected, according to monthly data published by the U.S. Energy Information Administration on April 29.

US gasoline consumption is running at a record for the time of year. Record gasoline consumption in the United States is consistent with separate data showing traffic volumes on US highways rising by between 5 percent and 6 percent year-on-year in February. Even if the strength of implied gasoline demand and driving in

February was flattered by baseline effects, there is no doubting the underlying strength of fuel demand from US motorists.

At the same time, US oil production has fallen by more than 3 percent over the last 12 months and is down almost 570,000 barrels per day (6 percent) from its peak ("Petroleum Supply Monthly", EIA, April 29). So far this year, the hedge funds and market fundamentals have both been pushing in the same direction.

The liquidation of previous hedge fund short positions and accumulation of long ones has accelerated a rise in crude prices that would probably have occurred in any event given the gradual rebalancing of the physical crude market. But it is no longer obvious hedge funds and fundamentals will work in the same direction in the next couple of months.

There is now some tension between hedge fund positioning (which suggests price risks are biased to the downside in the short term) and the tightening supply-demand balance (which indicates price risks could still be tilted to the upside). — Reuters

## HIGHER OUTPUT PUSHES OIL LOWER ON SUPPLY GLUT FEARS

**LONDON:** Oil fell yesterday, as rising output from the Middle East and North Sea renewed concerns about a global supply overhang. Brent crude futures were trading 37 cents lower at \$45.46 per barrel at 0919 GMT, retreating from earlier gains. US crude futures were also down 37 cents at \$44.41 per barrel.

Iraq said its oil shipments from southern fields averaged 3.364 million barrels per day (bpd) in April, up from 3.286 million in March. Production from top exporter Saudi Arabia was 10.15 million bpd in April, but sources said it may return to near-records of 10.5 million bpd soon.

Iran is also raising output following an end to sanctions in January, having increased its exports to almost 2 million bpd from a little over 1 million bpd at the start of the year.

Daily supply of North Sea

Brent crude oil, which contributes to the futures benchmark, will rise in June to its highest in four months, up 17 percent from May, according to monthly loading programs provided by trading sources. "There are enough supply stories out there to slow or temper any gains," Richard Mallinson, analyst at Energy Aspects said, though he added lower supply from the United States should be supportive to prices in the longer term.

US production has slumped from a peak of around 9.6 million bpd in June 2015 to below 9 million bpd now, according to government data. This helped lift crude by nearly 70 percent from decade lows hit in early 2016. Demand worries also returned to the horizon after China's factory activity shrank for a 14th straight month in April. — Reuters



**SYDNEY:** People walk past the Reserve Bank of Australia building in Sydney yesterday. Australia's central bank yesterday cut its cash rate by 25 basis points to a historic low of 1.75 percent, with the move triggered by lower-than-expected inflation. — AFP

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

#### ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.830
Indian Rupees	4.562
Pakistani Rupees	2.880
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.068
Nepali Rupees	2.847
Singapore Dollar	225.410
Hongkong Dollar	38.881
Bangladesh Taka	3.845
Philippine Peso	6.417
Thai Baht	8.660

#### GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.470
Qatari Riyal	82.891
ani Riyal	783.784
Bahraini Dinar	801.380
UAE Dirham	82.175

#### ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	32.220
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	34.353
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	2.111
Tunisian Dinar	151.560
Jordanian Dinar	425.030
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.011
Syrian Lira	2.150
Morocco Dirham	31.915

#### EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	301.600
Euro	347.440
Sterling Pound	442.450

Canadian dollar	241.470
Turkish lira	108.680
Swiss Franc	316.310
Australian Dollar	232.250
US Dollar Buying	301.800

#### 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	0.433645	0.442645
Czech Korune	0.004782	0.016782
Danish Krone	0.042426	0.047426
Euro	0.0340102	0.0348102
Norwegian Krone	0.033469	0.038669
Romanian Leu	0.086515	0.086515
Slovakia	0.008969	0.018969
Swedish Krona	0.033556	0.038556
Swiss Franc	0.307764	0.317964
Turkish Lira	0.102437	0.112737
<b>Australasia</b>		
Australian Dollar	0.220684	0.232184
New Zealand Dollar	0.204449	0.213949
<b>America</b>		
Canadian Dollar	0.234933	0.243433
US Dollars	0.297500	0.302000
US Dollars Mint	0.298000	0.302000
<b>Asia</b>		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003427	0.004001
Chinese Yuan	0.045043	0.048543
Hong Kong Dollar	0.036813	0.039563

Indian Rupee	0.004319	0.004709
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002755	0.002935
Kenyan Shilling	0.003102	0.003102
Korean Won	0.000254	0.000269
Malaysian Ringgit	0.073552	0.079552
Nepalese Rupee	0.002874	0.003044
Pakistan Rupee	0.002659	0.002939
Philippine Peso	0.006360	0.006640
Sierra Leone	0.000067	0.000073
Singapore Dollar	0.221218	0.227218
South African Rand	0.015238	0.023738
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001688	0.002268
Taiwan	0.009227	0.009407
Thai Baht	0.008311	0.008861
<b>Arab</b>		
Bahraini Dinar	0.793432	0.801432
Egyptian Pound	0.029671	0.034789
Iranian Riyal	0.000083	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000191	0.000251
Jordanian Dinar	0.421375	0.428875
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000151	0.000251
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020707	0.044707
Nigerian Naira	0.001241	0.001876
Omani Riyal	0.776957	0.782637
Qatar Riyal	0.082131	0.083344
Saudi Riyal	0.079540	0.080490
Syrian Pound	0.001278	0.001498
Tunisian Dinar	0.147935	0.155935
Turkish Lira	0.102437	0.112737
UAE Dirhams	0.081133	0.082282
Yemeni Riyal	0.001363	0.001443



## NO RESPIRE FOR JAPAN AS YEN SOARS TO 18-MONTH HIGH

**LONDON:** The yen jumped to a 18-month high against a weak dollar yesterday, extending gains that have undermined Japanese officials' attempts to reflate the developed world's most stagnant economy. The yen also rose sharply against the Australian dollar, up 1.7 percent after the Reserve Bank of Australia cut interest rates to record lows.

The yen has now risen over 12 percent against the dollar this year, extending gains after the Bank of Japan kept monetary stimulus unchanged last week. Further gains are likely to fan talk of further easing by the BOJ sooner rather than later, traders said, as Japanese politicians also signalled concerns about the currency's run-up. Media reports said Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and French President

Francois Hollande had described sudden moves in foreign exchange rates as undesirable.

Abe will also visit Italy and Germany in a European tour some believe he will try to use to set the stage for possible intervention in currency markets as Japan prepares to host a G7 meeting later this month. Attendees at previous G7 meetings have frowned upon interventions, and Tokyo is sensitive to criticism that it is trying to engineer a weaker yen through ultra-loose monetary policy.

But traders said a sharp rise towards 100 yen per dollar could prompt action, even during Japan's Golden Week holidays. The dollar has been on the defensive with the US Federal Reserve seen in no hurry to raise rates. Yesterday, the dollar index fell as

far as 91.919, its lowest since January 2015. "Broad-based dollar weakness is reinforcing the problem of a stronger yen for Japanese policymakers," said Lee Hardman, currency strategist at Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi. The greenback fell to 105.50 yen yesterday, its lowest since October 2014, as worries over subdued inflation and tardy global growth returned and pushed investors to the safety of low-yielding, liquid currencies. The euro, another low-yielding currency, rose 0.6 percent against the dollar to \$1.1616, its highest since August.

The Reserve Bank of Australia earlier joined other developed nation central banks in easing policy, cutting by 25 basis points to 1.75 percent amid falling inflation. The market had been split on whether the

RBA would ease policy, meaning many investors sold the Australian dollar when it did. The Aussie tumbled 1.8 percent against the yen and 1.4 percent against the dollar to \$0.7556. "At least the Australian central bank will be happy with the reaction in the currency. For the Bank of Japan and the European Central Bank, the rise in the yen and the euro is definitely not welcome," said Niels Christensen, FX strategist at Nordea. Last week, the yen produced its biggest weekly gain since 2008 - more than 5 percent against the dollar - as the BOJ held off from expanding its stimulus. The US Treasury Department called current dollar-yen conditions "orderly" - widely interpreted as a signal to Japanese officials not to intervene to weaken the yen. — Reuters



**HONG KONG:** (L to R) Sally Chen, resident representative in Hong Kong, Changyong Rhee, director of the Asia and Pacific Department, Ranil Salgado, division chief for Asia and Pacific and Rhoda Weeks-Brown, deputy director of the Communications Department for the International Monetary Fund (IMF), pose for a photo before a press conference in Hong Kong on the IMF's regional economic outlook for Asia and Pacific yesterday. — AFP

## CHINA, JAPAN GROWTH TO SLOW SHARPLY IN 2016, WARNS IMF

**HONG KONG:** China and Japan's economies are expected to slow sharply over the next two years but Asian growth will remain strong as domestic demand takes up the slack from weak global trade, the IMF said yesterday. Government stimulus measures, lower commodity prices and low unemployment will help drive regional expansion, the International Monetary Fund said, and called on leaders to push on with reforms.

However, in its Regional Economic Outlook for Asia and the Pacific, the Fund also warned of several external challenges, from weakness in advanced economies, weak global trade and increasingly volatile global financial markets.

Since its previous outlook on the region in October, global markets have seen wild volatility, with worries over China's economy and plunging oil prices hammering shares in January and February, wiping trillions off valuations. While there has been a slight recovery since March, investors remain on edge. "Asia remains the most dynamic part of the global economy but is facing severe headwinds from a still weak global recovery, slowing global trade, and the short-term impact of China's growth transition," the Fund said.

"To strengthen its resilience to global risks and remain a source of dynamism, policymakers in the region should push ahead with structural reforms to raise productivity and create fiscal space while supporting demand as needed."

The Fund predicted growth in Asia to come in at 5.3 percent this year and next, down from its previous forecast of 5.4 percent. China's economy, the world's second biggest and a crucial driver of global growth, is tipped to expand 6.5 percent this year - the lower end of Beijing's target - and 6.2 percent in 2017.

The figures are well down from the 6.9 percent seen in 2015, which was the slowest rate in a quarter of a century, but slightly better than the IMF's October outlook.

"While Asia remains the global growth engine, the external environment is becoming much more difficult," said Rhee Chang-Yong, director of IMF's Asia and Pacific Department, speaking to reporters yesterday.

### Japan tipped for recession

The Fund noted China's leadership is trying to transform the country's growth driver away from a reliance on government investment and exports to one dominated by domestic consumption. It also warned of the spillover effects of China's slowing growth on other economies that rely on the country to drive their own expansion, including weaker trade and commodity prices.

"Overall, the region has become more sensitive to the Chinese economy," it said. Countries with strong China trade relations had suffered the greatest repercussions from its stocks rollercoaster, Rhee told reporters.

"When the China stock market moved quite significantly (last year)...the financial spillover was higher in countries with strong trade links with China," he said. Rhee also warned that policy makers would have to balance the expansion of credit with the strain it could cause to corporates and banks.

"We have to build strength during turbulent times," he said. Japanese growth is tipped to slow, with the Fund saying exporters would be hit by the strengthening yen - which is at 18 month highs against the dollar and slowing trade with China.

It halved its growth outlook for Japan to 0.5 percent in 2016 and tipped it to shrink 0.1 percent owing to an expected consumption tax rise, while it also cited the long-running problem of an ageing population and a huge debt mountain. The lower outlook comes days after the Bank of Japan refused to ramp up its stimulus program despite a string of weak data that have raised questions about Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's faltering drive to kickstart growth. The report said India would grow 7.5 percent this year and next, unchanged from its previous prediction and the fastest rate among the world's big economies, as low oil prices, government investment and a pick-up in domestic consumption offset weak exports. In South Korea, growth was forecast to rise to 2.7 percent this year and to 2.9 percent in 2017 - up from 2.6 percent in 2015 and again boosted by domestic demand. Australia's growth is expected to remain stable at 2.5 percent in 2016 and pick up in 2017. — AFP

## EUROZONE GROWTH FORECAST CUT AS GLOBAL RISKS, BREXIT LOOM

### FRANCE, SPAIN AND ITALY ON COURSE TO BREAK BLOC'S RULES

**BRUSSELS:** The EU cut yesterday its eurozone growth forecasts for this year, warning that global risks including the slowdown in China and the danger of Britain leaving the bloc were harming the economic recovery. The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, also warned that major member states France, Spain and Italy were on course to break the bloc's rules on public spending.

Warning of increased global risks for the 19-country single currency area as it continues its sluggish recovery, the Commission trimmed its 2016 forecast to 1.6 percent from 1.7 percent.

The commission also said that the eurozone growth would accelerate to 1.8 percent growth next year, instead of the earlier forecast 1.7 percent. "Growth in Europe is holding up despite a more difficult global environment," said EU Economic Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici, who unveiled the forecast at a press conference in Brussels.

"The recovery in the euro area remains uneven, both between member states and between the weakest and the strongest in society. That is unacceptable and requires determined action from governments, both individually and collectively."

Eurozone nations are still dealing with the threat of a new crisis in debt-hit Greece, which nearly crashed out of the currency a year ago, as wrangling continues over its huge bailout.

The EU warned that the "uncertainty surrounding the forecast is extraordinarily high", suggesting major revisions to the outlook could be expected in the future. "External risks include the possibility that slower growth in emerging markets, particularly China, could trigger stronger spillovers or turn out worse than expected," the commission's forecast said.

### UK referendum 'uncertainty'

It also pointed to domestic problems in Europe that posed "considerable" risks, including the slow pace of reforms "and the uncertainty ahead of the UK's EU referendum". These dangers "could prove to be stronger than expected", the commission warned. Britain's own economy faces risks from the June 26 referendum with the EU firmly slashing its growth outlook for the UK.

It projected annual growth of 1.8 percent in 2016 and 1.9 percent in 2017, compared to its earlier forecast in February of 2.1 percent for both

years. Moscovici said that the forecast was based on Britain remaining in the EU. The commission said inflation would also continue to be very low and far off the 2.0 percent target at the European Central Bank. The Commission slashed its inflation forecast for the eurozone to 0.2 percent in 2016 and to 1.4 percent in 2017.

The ECB has cut interest rates to zero percent, beefed up its controversial bond-buying program and made vast amounts of cheap loans available to banks in a bid to jumpstart inflation. Nonetheless, inflation in the eurozone was negative 0.2 percent in April. The commission forecasts also set up a tense battle with France and especially Spain over its public spending plans for this year and next.

The EU warned Spain's deficit would reach 3.9 percent in 2016, way off the 3.0 percent of GDP limit for member states that Madrid said would be met this year. Meanwhile, the EU said France would break a promise made to Brussels to meet the 3.0 percent threshold by 2017. The commission said the French deficit would reach 3.2 percent of output without new reforms. — AFP

## UK MANUFACTURING SHRINKS IN APRIL

**LONDON:** British manufacturing output unexpectedly shrank to hit its lowest level in three years in April, a survey showed yesterday, suggesting the economy will slow further before next month's in-out European Union membership referendum. With uncertainty surrounding the June 23 vote, factories are also struggling with a weaker global economy and a slowdown in the oil and gas industry, a major customer.

Sterling fell and gilt futures rose after the Markit/CIPS manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index fell to 49.2 from 50.7 in March, the first time since March 2013 it has fallen below the 50 mark that separates expansion from contraction. It was below even the lowest forecast in a Reuters poll of economists. "The sharp drop to a three-year low and another month of reported job cuts could be the clearest sign yet that referendum uncertainty is starting to weigh on the real economy," Lee Hopley, chief economist at EEF, a manufacturers' lobby, said.

Manufacturing failed to boost the overall economy for most of the past year and the latest survey suggested the recovery will continue to rely on Britain's dominant services industry.

A Markit survey of the services sector is due tomorrow. Economists at UBS said the economy could lose momentum between April and June more sharply than their current forecast for quarterly growth of 0.3 percent. Growth slowed to 0.4 percent in the first quarter from 0.6 percent in late 2015, putting the country in the unusual position of lagging France.

A measure of employment in the manufacturing survey was below the 50 mark for the fourth straight month, the latest sign that the labor market is losing steam.

"We expect that sentiment will continue to worsen in Q2 16 as the 23 June referendum on EU membership draws nearer as businesses become even more cautious with regard to hiring, spending decisions and investment," Barclays said in a note. Markit said new orders in April matched February's three-year low and new export orders contracted for the fourth straight month as the global economy slowed.

The Bank of England has pointed to signs that uncertainty surrounding the EU referendum is curbing investment while recent data suggests that caution is affecting the labor market. Yesterday, two separate surveys painted a weak picture of salaries on offer for new hires. Britain's average advertised salary was little in March from February and down 2 percent versus a year ago, online jobs search engine Adzuna said. A separate survey by job site CV Library showed the average salary fell 3.4 percent in April from March. — Reuters

## PHILIPPINE PRESIDENTIAL FAVORITE DUTERTE CAUSING MARKET JITTERS

**MANILA:** Philippine presidential favorite Rodrigo Duterte's vague economic plans and threats to kill thousands of criminals are spooking the financial markets, with one business leader warning yesterday the trash-talking politician would bring anarchy. The key Philippine Stock Exchange index fell yesterday for the fifth consecutive day, a stretch that began after Duterte made a speech before top business leaders in which he joked about his penis and vowed to pardon himself for mass murder.

Ramon del Rosario, head of the prestigious Makati Business Club that hosted Duterte last week, wrote a column Tuesday in the Philippine Daily Inquirer criticising the candidate's "distinct lack of respect for the rule of law".

"Without the rule of law, there will be chaos and anarchy, and no confidence in our country. Without confidence, there will be no investments, and without investments, there will be no jobs," del Rosario wrote.

With the key stock exchange index down 1.62 percent since Duterte's speech, analysts said

investors were nervously waiting to learn more about his economic policies. "They are not sure about his economic platform because Duterte has always emphasized his campaign on corruption and not what he would do about the economy," research chief April Lee Tan of Manila-based securities firm COL Financial told AFP.

"That uncertainty is causing a lot of investors to stay on the sidelines and wait and see how a Duterte presidency would pan out." Duterte, 71, enjoys a double-digit lead in the polls over four opponents ahead of Monday's national elections.

This is despite shocking the political establishment with his profanity-laced speeches, which have included cursing the pope and a joke about raping an Australian missionary who was murdered in a 1989 prison riot. Analysts say his promises of quick fixes to crime and other deep-rooted problems resonate with voters who feel the six-percent economic growth delivered under President Benigno Aquino has failed to improve their lives. — AFP



**RENNES:** People stand in front of riot policemen as protesters occupy the People's house yesterday in Rennes, western France, during a protest against the government's planned labor law reforms. — AFP

## Taiwan Trade Meeting in Kuwait

One-on-One Trade Meeting with 12 Taiwanese Companies

May 11 (Wednesday) 2016

7<sup>th</sup> Floor - 1:00PM To 8:00PM

Golden Ballroom - Sheraton Hotel Kuwait

Beauty Products	Health Food
Cosmetics	Hair Treatment
Skin Care	Make-up

### Contact us:

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# STOCKS SLIDE AS CURRENCY GAINS QUESTION POLICY

**LONDON:** The dollar slid to its lowest against major currencies in well over a year yesterday, a move led by further gains in the yen that threw an uncomfortable spotlight on central banks' attempts to boost growth through aggressive policy easing. Australia's central bank joined the growing line of those adding stimulus, surprising many investors by cutting interest rates to a record low of 1.75 percent. That hit the currency but lifting the country's shares.

Almost every other major stock market around the world fell. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan hit a three-week low, Europe's major indices shed as much as 2 percent and emerging market stocks fell 1.2 percent. US futures pointed to a fall of almost 1 percent at the open on Wall Street.

European financials fell more than 3 percent, hit by a string of weak first quarter earnings reports from banks and the euro's burst

to an eight-month high above \$1.16. European bank stocks are down more than 20 percent so far this year.

Shares in German lender Commerzbank fell almost 10 percent after profits slumped in the first quarter. "The numbers for the first quarter did not come in well ... however external factors that have also hit other banks hard appear to be the main reason for that," said Landesbank Baden-Wuerttemberg analyst Ingo Frommen.

Shares in Swiss bank UBS were down 8 percent, also after first quarter results. Europe's FTSE 300 index of leading 300 shares and Germany's DAX shed almost 2 percent, both falling to their lowest in nearly three weeks. In currency markets the yen rallied towards 105 per dollar, its highest in 18 months. It was as low as 122 a few months ago, and the sharp gains since will do nothing to relieve deflationary pressures in Japan.

The dollar index, a measure of the dollar's value against a basket of major currencies, fell to 92.00. It was last there in January 2015. The yen has accelerated its ascent since the Bank of Japan surprised markets last week by keeping monetary policy unchanged in the face of growing headwinds for its economy.

### US YIELDS FALL

Japan is in the middle of its Golden Week series of holidays. Markets were closed on Friday and will be closed from Tuesday to Thursday this week. In Australia, stock markets cheered the rate cut with the benchmark index easily the outperformer in Asia and extending gains to close up more than 2 percent on the day.

The Australian dollar dropped sharply,

falling below 0.76 against the greenback from 0.77 earlier.

Bond yields fell across the board, with the fall in US Treasury yields outpacing the decline in European yields. The US curve was down as much as 6 basis points, and the benchmark 10-year yield was at 1.81 percent. After raising interest rates in December for the first time in nearly a decade, the Federal Reserve held monetary policy steady last week. While it kept the door open to a hike in June, it gave no signal that it was in a hurry to tighten further given the economy's slowdown, even as the labour market has improved.

"The Fed still thinks growth will be just over 2 percent this year but, on the evidence of Q1, it seems more likely that the eurozone will scale 2 percent, not the US," said Steve Barrow, head of G10 strategy at Standard bank.

"The upshot is that market expectations for US growth might be too high - as investors take their cue from the Fed's forecasts - while those for the eurozone are too low." Crude oil prices lost ground, with US crude futures down 1 percent at \$44.32 a barrel. Spot gold got a boost from the weak dollar, briefly rising above \$1,300 an ounce. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report									
Tuesday 03 May 2016									
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Number of Trades	
Price Index	+ 2.87	5,375.36	5,372.49	5,378.00	5,361.00	101,808,204	12,024,000		
Weighted Index	+ 0.49	303.28	303.07	303.50	301.99				
HSX 100	+ 0.70	852.82	854.55	855.00	850.00				


Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	-0.0
WABUS	44.0	43.0	2,200,000	96,000	70	44.0	+0.0
IPD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300	-0.0
NAFESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700	-0.0
EMERCO	30	28.5	107,322	40,200	31	30	+2.5
OPF	43.0	41.5	8,000,000	341,000	107	42.5	+0.5
AGAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	-0.0
HSX 100	854.55	852.82	270	100,117	1	854.55	+2.80

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
KFONC	162	162	10,000	2,640	2	162	-0.0
BPCC	540	540	1,000	1,620	1	540	+10.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	-0.0
ALQUBAIN	274	274	200,000	55,012	10	274	-0.0
Blue Water	101,808,204	101,808,204	101,808,204	12,024,000	1,000		

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
ALMADINA	38.5	37.5	647,022	241,000	177	38.0	-0.5
KIP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	-0.0
ALMADINA	38.5	37.5	647,022	241,000	177	38.0	-0.5
ALMADINA	38.5	37.5	647,022	241,000	177	38.0	-0.5



**National Bank of Kuwait**  
Financial Markets  
Daily Report  
At 02:00 PM Previous Day

Global Stock Indices					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Year's Performance %
Dow Jones	17,773.64	17,891.16	117.52	▲	0.66
NASDAQ	4,775.36	4,817.59	42.23	▲	-3.79
S&P 500	2,045.30	2,081.43	16.13	▲	0.70
Financial Times	6,241.89	6,171.60	-70.29	▼	-1.13
DAX	10,123.27	9,934.94	-188.31	▼	-1.86
CAC 40	4,442.75	4,369.37	-73.38	▼	-1.65
Nikkei 225	16,446.05	16,147.38	-298.67	▼	-3.11
Hong Kong	1,340.55	1,299.94	-40.61	▼	-3.03
Hang Seng	21,047.05	20,676.94	-370.11	▼	-1.85
Straits Times	2,838.52	2,811.20	-27.32	▼	-0.96

MENA Stock Indices					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Year's Performance %
Kuwait	5,372.49	5,375.36	2.87	▲	0.05
Saudi Arabia	6,716.49	6,648.06	-68.43	▼	-1.02
Dubai	3,385.31	3,324.00	-61.31	▼	-1.81
Abu Dhabi	4,469.81	4,382.11	-87.70	▼	-1.96
Bahrain	1,112.71	1,109.46	-3.25	▼	-0.29
Qatar	10,092.07	9,939.03	-153.04	▼	-1.52
Oman	5,952.10	5,983.99	31.89	▲	0.54
Jordan	1,154.42	1,149.22	-5.20	▼	-0.45
Libanon	2,097.09	2,104.34	7.25	▲	0.35
Egypt	7,773.23	7,595.46	-177.77	▼	-2.29
Morocco	9,908.40	9,894.53	-13.87	▼	-0.14
Tunisia	5,404.85	5,395.24	-9.61	▼	-0.18

Global Currencies Exchange Rate							
Currency	Kuwait Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen
Kuwait Dinar	12.3632	3.3107	2.8585	2.2568	3.1376	350.21	4.3729
Saudi Riyal	0.08089	0.2678	0.2312	0.1825	0.2538	28.33	0.3537
US Dollar	0.30205	3.7343	0.0634	0.6817	0.9477	105.78	1.3208
Euro	0.34983	4.3251	1.1582	0.7895	1.0979	122.56	1.5315
Sterling Pound	0.44311	5.4782	1.4670	1.2666	1.3906	155.22	1.9393
Swiss Franc	0.31872	3.9404	1.0552	0.9108	0.7191	111.65	1.3937
Japanese Yen	0.00286	0.0353	0.0095	0.0082	0.0064	0.0090	0.0125
Australian Dollar	0.22840	2.8272	0.7571	0.6530	0.5156	0.7175	00.09

MENA Currencies Exchange Rate							
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwait Dinar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham
US Dollar	0.30205	3.7343	0.3740	3.6260	0.3831	3.6574	8.7700
Kuwait Dinar	3.3107	12.3632	1.2383	12.0046	1.2685	12.1086	29.0349
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08089	0.1002	0.9710	0.1026	0.9794	2.3485
Bahraini Dinar	2.6736	0.070756	0.9840	9.6944	1.0244	9.7784	23.4473
Qatari Riyal	0.2758	0.08330	1.0299	0.1032	0.1057	1.0087	2.4186
Omani Riyal	2.4100	0.78035	9.7466	0.9762	9.4639	9.5459	22.8098
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08259	1.0210	0.1023	0.9914	0.1048	2.3979
Egyptian Pound	0.1140	0.03444	0.4258	0.0426	0.4135	0.0437	0.4170

Global Interest Rates					
Currency	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year	
Kuwait Dinar	0.00	1.19	1.44	1.63	1.94
US Dollar	0.40	0.43	0.63	0.90	1.23
Euro	-0.37	-0.34	-0.27	-0.15	-0.02
Sterling Pound	0.48	0.50	0.58	0.74	1.02
Swiss Franc	-0.80	-0.77	-0.73	-0.64	-0.52
Australian Dollar	2.07	2.04	1.81	1.78	1.73
Canadian Dollar	0.00	0.94	0.93	1.06	1.14

Global Bond Yields					
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year	
United States	0.75	1.28	1.80	2.68	
Europe	-0.50	-0.33	0.21	0.93	
United Kingdom	0.47	0.92	1.54	2.34	

Commodities					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Year's Performance %
Kuwait Oil	39.52	39.56	0.04	▲	0.10
Brent	45.09	44.00	-1.09	▼	-2.42
West Texas	44.80	44.70	-0.10	▼	-0.22
Gold	1291.21	1295.10	3.89	▲	0.30
Silver	17.53	17.51	-0.02	▼	-0.14

For more information, call Global Investment House on 1 80 42 42, www.globalinvest.net



## CHINA MANUFACTURING WEAKENS IN APRIL: SURVEY

**BEIJING:** Chinese factory activity weakened further in April, a private survey indicated yesterday, as muted demand and market weakness hit the struggling export-oriented sector. The Purchasing Managers' Index by Caixin, which tracks activity in the country's factories and workshops, fell to 49.4 for April, a 0.3 point drop from the month before and the 14th consecutive month of decline.

A reading above 50 signals expanding activity, while anything below indicates shrinkage. He Fan, chief economist at Caixin Insight Group, said all of the index's categories worsened month-on-month, indicating that the world's second-largest economy "lacks a solid foundation for recovery and is still in the process of bottoming out."

"The government needs to keep a close watch on the risk of a further economic downturn," he added. The key manufacturing sector has been

struggling for months in the face of sagging global demand for Chinese products. The Caixin figures showed that new export work fell for the fifth straight month and factories continued to shed workers at a rate "only fractionally slower" than the post-financial crisis record set in February, it said.

The figures were darker than official data released Sunday, which showed expansion for the second successive month at 50.1. The Caixin reading puts a greater emphasis on smaller firms than the official statistics. Analysts said the official reading in April argues against extra stimulus to avoid fuelling housing prices or flooding sectors already over capacity with cheap credit. "As investment recovered, the property market turned around and infrastructure construction speeded up," the National Bureau of Statistics said in a statement.



**BERLIN:** People read classified papers from the ongoing US-EU trade talks, presented to the public by Greenpeace in a glass container near the Brandenburg Gate, in Berlin yesterday. — AFP

Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said the latest data were disappointing and weaker than expected, but nevertheless reiterated an upbeat view on the short-

term outlook for China's economy. "There are few signs in the latest readings that the ongoing property rebound, a key driver of the recent recovery, is losing steam," he said in

a note, adding that the figures do not "alter our view that China is in the midst of a cyclical rebound that should continue for at least another couple of quarters".

Beijing has been trying to retool its economy to encourage domestic consumption, and move away from infrastructure investment and exports as the main drivers of growth. But the transition is proving bumpy and the growth slowdown has alarmed investors worldwide.

Chinese stock markets shrugged off the latest figures, with the benchmark Shanghai Composite Index up 1.60 percent by the noon break yesterday. China's economy, a vital driver of global expansion, grew 6.9 percent last year, its weakest rate in a quarter of a century. Leaders have targeted a growth range of 6.5-7.0 percent this year. — AFP

## TTIP: A PROPOSED TRADE TREATY IN TROUBLED WATERS

**WASHINGTON:** Will the ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, the world's largest trade pact, ever see the light of day? After leaks from the closed-door negotiations surfaced Monday, a deal between the Americans and the Europeans looks less likely as skepticism over the agreement grows on both sides of the Atlantic. Engaged in tough trade negotiations since mid-2013, the United States and the European Union tried to downplay the trove of TTIP documents put online by Greenpeace, describing them as "misleading" and deploring "wrong" interpretations of them.

But the fact remains: Despite the efforts of US President Barack Obama, who wants to clinch the trade deal by the end of the year, success is looking increasingly unlikely. A halt in the TTIP negotiations is "the most probable option," a top French trade official said on Tuesday, blaming Washington for the impasse. Given France's weight in the EU, "there cannot be an agreement without France, and much less against France," said Matthias Fekl, a junior minister responsible for representing Paris in the talks. Edward Alden of the Council on Foreign Relations, a US think tank, said the most striking element of the leaked documents was that it showed "the two sides are still so far apart in the negotiations, that there are such big issues that remain unresolved."

With the TTIP, the United States and the 28-nation European Union want to topple regulatory and tariff barriers to trade and investment.

There are plenty of thorny issues to tackle, from market access to opening up the EU services sector and improving European access to US government procurement projects.

Negotiators wrapped up the 13th round of talks in New York on Friday said they had made progress in the talks, as is customary. But there was a sense of irritation on the European side about the US refusal to open access to its public procurement. "We need to reach a similar level

of progress in market access procurement as we have already done in tariffs and services in order to move the negotiations towards the endgame," said Ignacio Garcia Bercero, chief negotiator for the European Commission.

### 'A period of tremendous uncertainty'

The clock, however, is ticking. An ardent defender of TTIP, Obama will leave the White House in January and his successor, who will be elected in November, could be less inclined to promote free trade-an issue that has fallen out of favor with a public distraught over jobs lost overseas. The situation is hardly less politically sensitive in Europe where there are deep suspicions that the deal will erode ecological and health regulations to the advantage of big business. "If the deal cannot be concluded under the Obama administration, further progress in the talks likely will have to wait after the different European elections in 2017," said Harvard law professor Mark Wu, a former official at the US Trade Representative which is representing Washington in the negotiations.

Next year, general elections will be held in both Germany and France, where debate over the TTIP is intense and could feature in their respective campaigns. French leaders appear to have already given in to skepticism, after a week in which Prime Minister Manuel Valls and President Francois Hollande toughened their tone and pledged to oppose any accord that lacks guarantees on quality standards for health, the environment and French agriculture, among other issues. Germany also has ratcheted up pressure, predicting the proposed deal "will fail" if Washington refuses to make concessions in the protracted talks. And the possibility that Britain could decide to leave the EU in a June 23 referendum is yet another cloud hanging over the talks. "It's a period of tremendous uncertainty for trade policy in both the US and Europe," said Alden.—AFP



**HONG KONG:** A general view of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) building in Hong Kong. HSBC's net profit was down 18 percent at \$4.3 billion in the first quarter, the bank said yesterday, affected by "extreme levels" of market volatility early in the year. — AFP

## HSBC Q1 PROFIT DROPS ON MARKET VOLATILITY

### CHINA GROWTH SLOWDOWN RAISES CONCERNS

**LONDON:** HSBC yesterday said its net profit fell almost a fifth in the first quarter, with Europe's biggest bank hit by "extreme levels" of markets volatility, while bad loans doubled.

Equity and currency markets from Asia to the Americas were sent into meltdown at the start of the year as a growth slowdown in China and plunging oil prices fanned concerns about the world economy. In comments included in the earnings statement, HSBC chief executive Stuart Gulliver said the group's performance in the January-March period "was resilient in tough market conditions that affected the entire banking sector". The first two months of the year saw "reduced client activity" in foreign exchange and stocks, with a partial recovery in March, added the British bank that is focused on Asia. HSBC said its net profit fell 18 percent to US\$4.3 billion (3.7 billion euros) in the first quarter compared with one year earlier, while revenues were down four percent at almost \$14 billion. Bad loans surged \$692 million to \$1.16 billion year-on-year, related to the energy and mining sectors.

HSBC shares rose however, with traders welcoming the group's better-than-expected pre-tax result.

The bank added that it was on track to reach cost targets after a radical overhaul announced last year.

"It's tough out there for banks, and HSBC is no exception, particularly seeing as it is increasingly focusing its business on Asia, which is a weak market right now," said Laith Khalaf, senior analyst at London-based stockbrokers Hargreaves Lansdown. "However... things weren't quite as bad at HSBC as investors had feared." Although pre-tax profits were down 14 percent at \$6.1 billion, the result beat analysts' consensus forecast of \$4.3 billion. In early London deals, HSBC's share price was up 0.3 percent at 454 pence. The capital's benchmark FTSE 100 index was down 0.6 percent overall. HSBC last year announced a radical overhaul to cut costs that included shedding 50,000 jobs worldwide, exiting unprofitable businesses and focusing more on Asia.

Gulliver said there was growing momentum in the bank's Asia businesses, with "strong business wins" after HSBC's investment in the region. But, like many global banks, it has continued to face turmoil in global financial markets, while stricter regulations have driven up costs. "One of the headwinds

HSBC has been battling is a deterioration of its loan book, with impairment costs doubling from last year, led by problems with borrowers in the energy and mining sectors," said analyst Khalaf.

### US probe

HSBC meanwhile revealed in February that it is one of the banks being investigated by the US Securities and Exchange Commission in relation to its hiring practices in Asia-Pacific.

It came as the bank tried to move beyond recent scandals, including the rigging of foreign exchange markets. Last month HSBC distanced itself from the Panama Papers leaks, which listed the bank as one of the institutions that helped set up the most off-shore accounts. The trove of documents from Panama-based law firm Mossack Fonseca revealed the vast extent of global tax evasion, putting the spotlight on how politicians and tycoons manage their money. HSBC meanwhile announced earlier this year that it would keep its headquarters in London, despite concerns about growing regulation in Britain and an upcoming vote on whether it should leave the European Union. — AFP



**SYDNEY:** A view shows the central business district of Sydney yesterday. Australia's central bank yesterday cut its cash rate by 25 basis points to a historic low of 1.75 percent, with the move triggered by lower-than-expected inflation. — AFP

## AUSTRALIA CRACKS DOWN ON GLOBAL FIRMS AVOIDING TAX

**CANBERRA:** Australia yesterday unveiled a further push to crack down on tax avoidance by multinational companies, imposing a 40 percent penalty rate on firms that shift profits offshore.

The revenue-raising measure, which is similar to the so-called "Google Tax" introduced by Britain last year, was a key part of the nation's annual budget. It is forecast to raise Aus\$3.9 billion (US\$2.95 billion) over the next four years when combined with a broader tax avoidance package.

The package includes stronger protections for whistleblowers and harsher penalties for multinationals that fail to meet tax compliance or disclosure obligations. "Everyone has to pay their fair share of tax, especially large corporates and multinationals, on what they earn here in Australia," Treasurer Scott Morrison told parliament in his budget speech in Canberra.

"New measures... include embracing a new diverted profits tax, as implemented in the United Kingdom, that taxes multinationals on income they have sought to shift offshore at a penalty rate of 40 percent, that is higher than the current company tax rate (of 30 percent)."

The government added that Aus\$679 million would be allocated to the Australian Tax Office over four years to set up a taskforce focused on clawing back revenue from international firms as well as wealthy people. There

has been a global push, including in Australia, for large local and international companies to stop using sophisticated structures to avoid or lower their tax payments, which has seen governments lose billions of dollars.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has estimated national governments miss out on US\$100-240 billion, or four to 10 percent of global tax revenues, every year due to the tax-minimizing schemes of multinationals.

Australia last year introduced several measures targeting international tax avoidance, including lifting transparency requirements that include disclosures required for private companies with turnover of Aus\$200 million. Large multinationals, including tech giants such as Google and Microsoft, have also been hauled before a parliamentary committee on corporate tax avoidance to explain their tax structures.

The drive by Morrison to boost revenues came as Canberra sought to rein in its deficit, which was forecast in the budget papers to reach Aus\$37.1 billion, or 2.2 percent of GDP, in 2016-17.

Government income in the resource-dependent country has been eroded by falling commodity prices as demand from Australia's largest trading partner China wanes, and from lower-than-expected income tax receipts amid weak wages growth. — AFP

## LIBERTY HOUSE TO SUBMIT BID FOR TATA STEEL UK

**LONDON:** Metals group Liberty House will submit a letter of intent to buy the British assets of Tata Steel yesterday, a spokeswoman said, in the first concrete bid since the Indian conglomerate put the business up for sale, threatening thousands of jobs. India's Tata group announced plans to sell its entire UK steel operation in March, leaving the government battling to save an industry that has been hurt by cheap Chinese imports, soaring costs and weak demand.

Keen to avoid the loss of 10,000 jobs, the government has offered hundreds of millions of pounds in support to potential buyers, including the option of it taking a 25 percent stake in the firm alongside other buyers. Liberty's Executive Chairman Sanjeev Gupta had been the first businessman to express an interest in Tata's loss-making assets which include the huge Port Talbot steel plant in Wales, and yesterday the firm said it would submit a bid.

"We can confirm that Liberty will submit a letter of intent to Tata Steel today and has put in place a strong internal transaction steering committee and panel of leading external advisers to take the bid forward," the spokeswoman said. "We hope to make a further short statement later today."

Another group to emerge as potential buyers has come from Port Talbot itself where a management team have appointed advisers to work on a buyout plan. The group, Excalibur Steel UK, has named Tata's UK strip products director Stuart Wilkie as chief executive, according to a Companies House filing. — Reuters

## LUFTHANSA SHARES PLUNGE ON FIRST-QUARTER LOSS

**FRANKFURT:** Lufthansa shares nosedived yesterday after the German airline said one-off effects and price pressures pushed it into a loss in the first three months of the year. Lufthansa shares were among the biggest losers in morning trade on the Frankfurt stock exchange, shedding nearly six percent in a market that was down by around 1.4 percent.

Lufthansa said in a statement that it booked a net loss of 8.0 million euros (\$9.2 million) in the period from January to March, compared with a profit of 425 million euros a year earlier.

But the airline pointed out that the year-earlier figure had been boosted by one-off financial gains.

At an underlying level, earnings before interest and tax (EBIT) showed a loss of 49 million euros, compared with a much deeper loss of 144 million euros a year earlier. First-quarter revenues slipped by 0.8 percent to 6.92 billion euros. "We have seen a solid start into the new business year," said chief financial officer, Simone Menne.

The airline is also benefitting from further fuel cost reductions, she said. "We are seeing significant pricing pressure at our passenger airlines, and even more at Lufthansa Cargo. But the substantial unit cost reduction at our passenger airlines has more than made up for the pricing declines," Menne said.

Lufthansa said it did not expect to see any easing of the pricing pressures in the passenger and cargo transport sectors. "The trends we have seen in the last few months are likely to continue throughout the present quarter," said Menne. "The intensity of the competition and the resulting pricing pressures will not ease. This is why it is important that we continue to work consistently on our cost positions," she said. Looking ahead to the full year, Lufthansa said its forecasts remained unchanged. "We expect to achieve an adjusted EBIT slightly above the previous year result of 1.8 billion euros," the company said.

"This forecast does not, however, include the negative result impacts of possible strike actions." — AFP



# KES TO HIGHLIGHT DIVERSIFICATION OF KUWAIT'S ECONOMIC BASE

## EIGHTH SCIENTIFIC FORUM TO BE HELD ON MAY 10

**KUWAIT:** Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may God protect him, Kuwait Economic Society (KES) organizes its eighth scientific forum titled "Kuwait and Diversification of the Economic Base" that will be held on Tuesday May 10th 2016.

A statement issued by Kuwait Economic Society clarified that KES is aiming through this forum to carry out its national role in shedding the light on the most important economic challenges facing the country. The society is also seeking new methods and directions that will help in the economic diversification. As well as, new sources of income through various sectors. Furthermore, the society is keen on discussing the current challenges facing the local economy, in which there will be a deliberation about the groundwork for the requirements of the diversification of the economic base in Kuwait. Moreover, KES is intended to use the forum as a platform and a roadmap buildup by local voluntary efforts of cadres. In order to raise effective recommendations to the decision makers.

### The sessions of the Forum

Within the framework of the society's keenness on discussing the most significant economic aspects of the forum, which will eventually contribute to the diversification of the economic base, KES has invited an assembly of specialists, innovators, and senior speakers to participate in the sessions of the forum. Where the forum will include three main sessions intended to further discuss 11 detailed topics, in which it will be addressed and tackled by several speakers in the field of economy.

The first session of the forum will address "The Current Economic Challenges", which will



**KUWAIT:** Member of the Board of Directors and Head of the Organizing Committee Abdulwahab Al-Rushaid.

include three main topics one of which is the "Demographic Challenge and the Crisis of Employment and Unemployment" that will be given by Dr Mohammed Ali Al-Ramadan. The second topic is "The Imbalances of the Public Financials" that will be delivered by Dr Abbas Al-Mejren, followed by the third topic "The Weakness of the Public Administration and The Dominance of the Public Sector" that will be given by Dr Khaled Mahdi.

Whereas the second session, titled "Diversification Requirements" will demonstrate four topics including "The Development of Infrastructure", in which it will be given by Engineer Ashwaq Al-Mudhaf, followed by "The

Appropriate Legislative Environment and Effective system of Litigation" that will be delivered by Dr. Fahad Al-Zumaya'a. Followed by a topic titled "Human Capital Development" that will be given by Dr. Moudhi Al-Hamoud. Afterwards the fourth topic will be discussed by Bader Al-Humaidhi, in which the topic is titled "Partnership, Privatization and Stimulating Economic Policies".

The third and final session, titled "Diversification the Economic Base" will consist of four topics. Initiated by a topic under the title of "The Option of the Financial and Commercial Center" that will be delivered by Manaf Al-Hajri. Followed by a topic delivered by Dr. Ahmed Al-Kawaz, titled "The Most Promising Sectors of the Economy". Afterwards the Counselor Khalid Al-Hashash will be delivering a topic under the title "The Choice of Knowledge Economy". And the last topic that will be discussed in the forum by Engineer Mohammed Al-Shatti is titled "The Base of the Oil Industry".

On his part, the Member of the Board of Directors and Head of the Organizing Committee of the Forum, Abdulwahab Mohammed Al-Rushaid stated: "The participation of the experienced and specialized persons in the Eighth Scientific Forum will contribute fundamentally to the exchange of expertise, which in return will assist us in finding effective solutions to the current economic situation." It is noteworthy that following the three sessions, there will be declaration of the final statement that collectively gathers a compendium of most important findings of the sessions. Along with an overview of the recommendations derived from the discussions, in which it is aimed to address and tackle the current economic challenge.



## VIVA RECOGNIZED AS 'BEST TELECOM COMPANY 2015' BY ARABIAN BUSINESS

**KUWAIT:** VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced that it has been awarded by Arabian Business organization as "Best Telecom Company", in recognition of exceptional performance in 2015 during an event held in Jumeirah Hotel in Kuwait, in presence of leaders and executives from investment and economic world.

On this occasion, Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Director of Corporate Communications at VIVA said, "We are proud to receive such appreciation from an esteemed organization as Arabian Business. VIVA aimed since inception at making a leap in the telecom market and

offering its customers a new experience through innovative products and services."

Al-Essa added, "We are proud to be the first leading telecom company to launch the Voice Over Long Term Evolution (VoLTE) for the first time in Kuwait and the Middle East. This is in addition to VIVA's commercial presence across Kuwait, which was expanded to 70 branches, enabling us to be closer to our customers and to meet the growing demand for our products and services. The "International Quality & Productivity Centre" also recognized our achievements this year, as "Best Contact Centre Experience" and "Best Network Experience".

# MAZDA KUWAIT SALES UP 20% IN Q1, 2016

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Automotive Imports Co WLL (Kaico) - Al Shaya and Al Sagar, the exclusive distributor for Mazda vehicles in the Kuwait since 1969, announced today its great sales achievements with nearly 20 percent increase in new car sales during the first 3 months of 2016 compared to last year.

Mazda's growth has been powered by a new range of 6th generation products. The Mazda2 +225 percent, Mazda3 +142 percent, MazdaCX5 +267 percent, MazdaCX9 +138 percent and BT 50Pro +214 percent have recorded strong sales.

Ashish Tandon, General Manager, KAICO stated: we are very proud of our results, and would like to thank the Mazda Team who have worked very hard and have exerted great efforts. He also said, "We are on track to increase our market share and volume in 2016 with the positive momentum at the beginning of the year".

Mazda's design philosophy is built on four

pillars - KODO design, Jinba Ittai ( Driving Experience ), Skyactiv (Engine, transmission and frame ) and class leading Safety features.

Ahmed Kahwaji General Sales Manager stated: We are very proud of these great figures, this result comes from the confidence and demand for our products and services, which is getting better every day. We are constantly working on achieving excellence in all aspects of our operations and providing an outstanding customer experience. We would like to invite our customers to our showroom and check out our great offers and deals that are ongoing."

The all new Mazda MX5 has just arrived into our showrooms, also known as Miata Roadster winner of two prestigious awards- World Car of the Year 2016 and World Car Design of the Year Award in USA. It is for the first time in the history of the award that both awards have been won by a single car. The new MX5 is also winner of the 10 best cars 2016 - car and driver.



## ALGHANIM INDUSTRIES INTRODUCES 'MI' TO KUWAIT ASIA'S NUMBER 1 MOBILE BRAND

**KUWAIT:** Alghanim Industries proudly announced it will be the exclusive distributor of Mi phones in Kuwait. The launch event took place on May 2 at the Sky Lounge, Radisson Blu Hotel in the presence of the Senior Director- Category Management at Alghanim Industries Rohit Gandotra, the GM of Mi Men's official distributor - Task FZCO Ravi Mathew as well as major distributors, media and tech influencers.

Mi is a Chinese brand established in 2010 as internet and smart technology company with various range of products including highest technology smartphones. Despite its short operating lifecycle, Mi phones have now become China's number 1 mobile brand and are competing against major international mobile competitors. The reason behind its widespread success is that its mobile phones are produced with high quality materials similar to that of main industry competitors but with affordable pricing, in addition to the Mi User Interface (MIUI), providing Android users with a high quality experience. The success of Mi phones is not limited to its home country as it is now dominating the Asian market. It recently entered the MENA region as well, starting with UAE and KSA where it has also achieved remarkable success.

Rohit Gandotra, commented on this occasion: "We are very excited to announce that Alghanim Industries will be the exclusive distributor of Mi phones in Kuwait marking its leadership role. Alghanim Industries always strive to bring latest top notch products into Kuwait as part of our



Rohit Gandotra

commitment to customers to meet the current market trends."

Ravi Mathews also added that "Mi is not just a mobile company, it stands for Mobile Internet and we will be pleased to introduce the whole ecosystem of smart and connected products in Kuwait through the partnership with Alghanim Industries."

Alghanim Industries are very excited to introduce Mi phones into the Kuwaiti marketplace, starting with the Mi 4i and Mi Note models as well as the more economic Red range such as Redmi Note 2 and the Redmi 2 and soon to launch Mi5. The part-

nership with Task FZCO highlights Alghanim Industries commitment to always bringing top notch products into the local market, as they believe Kuwait deserves the best and most innovative products.

Alghanim Industries is one of the largest, privately-owned companies in the Gulf region. Originally founded in 1932 by Yusuf Ahmed Alghanim in Kuwait, the company has since grown into a multi-billion dollar conglomerate, employing over 14,000 people in 30 businesses, and present in 40 countries across the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Asia. Alghanim Industries is a market leader in almost every major sector of its operations. These sectors include engineering, retail, automotive sales and services, insulation and pre-engineered steel building structures, logistics and warehousing, fast moving consumer goods, food & beverage, oil & gas, office automation, advertising, insurance, consumer credit and travel. This range of business activities has allowed it to develop long-standing partnerships with more than 300 global brands, such as AC Delco, American Express, Avis, British Airways, Costa Coffee, General Motors, Honda, Saint-Gobain and recently Wendy's. Alghanim Industries has also created successful regional businesses such as Safat Home, a lifestyle and home furniture concept and X-cite by Alghanim Electronics, a leading electronics player in the region.



Ravi Mathew

## BURGAN BANK TO ROLL OUT ITS NEW CORE BANKING SYSTEM



**KUWAIT:** Burqan Bank, Kuwait's second largest commercial bank by assets, announced yesterday that it will be upgrading its current banking system to a new banking platform in order to better serve its clients. The system upgrade will occur over the period of Thursday May 5 to Saturday May 7.

Customers might face system interruptions in banking services on Thursday 5, Friday 6, and Saturday 7th of May 2016 due to the migration to the new system. In addition, all branches will be closed on the evening of Wednesday 4th of May. The Airport Branch will be fully closed on Thursday 5th and Friday 6th May and will reopen on Saturday 7th May for customers.

Burqan Bank extends its appreciation to all customers for their patience and continuous support especially during the implementation period of the new system.

Burqan Bank will continue to receive customers' enquires regarding the new system through its branch network and call center 1804080.





## BITCOIN CLAIM RIPPLES THROUGH VIRTUAL CURRENCY WORLD

**NEW YORK:** The world of virtual currencies was stunned Monday when Australian entrepreneur Craig Wright claimed to be the creator of the Bitcoin. The shockwaves were clear as crypto-currency specialists gathered in New York for a conference on the blockchain technology behind Bitcoin and similar virtual forms of money. "It's nicer if we keep the myth," said Dirk Avau, founder and chief executive of the financial tech firm Intellect Technologies, at the Consensus 2016 conference. "If the myth now is broken, it's unfortunate. It was a wonderful story about an inventor who managed to change the world."

Wright was named by three media outlets—the BBC, The Economist and GQ magazine—and posted a blog on his website claiming credit for creating Bitcoin, a digital currency created by supercomputers and then traded online or exchanged for goods and services by a peer-to-peer network of computers. Little biographical detail is known about Wright, who describes himself as a cyber-security expert and was born in Brisbane but, according to The Economist, has now moved to London.

### Skepticism, disbelief

At the New York conference and elsewhere, the news was greeted by some with disbelief. Matthieu Riou, founder of the blockchain tech platform BlockCypher, said he believes Wright was "part of the whole thing" but not the sole creator of Bitcoin, which has been attributed until now to someone using the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto. "I don't think that he did it by



Photo shows a Bitcoin ATM. — AP

himself," Riou told AFP at the conference. Jason Park of the South Korean-based software firm Korbit echoed the view that "Nakamoto was not a one person." Park added that Bitcoin "is already run by a community not one person," and argued that "there is no founder."

BlockCypher chief executive Catheryne Nicholson said she was not persuaded by the news, saying Wright could remove any doubt by producing the "keys" that unlock the Bitcoin cryptographic codes. "I don't believe him, I am still skeptical," she said. Since the Bitcoin was launched in 2009, it has gained

notoriety as a shadowy currency for illicit transactions. But the blockchain technology behind Bitcoin, which offers verifiable online ledgers, has been touted as a way to potentially transform banking and other kinds of financial transactions.

A consortium of global banks including Morgan Stanley, HSBC, UBS, Credit Suisse, Barclays, Societe Generale and Commerzbank are working with the finance tech startup R3 to use blockchain technology for a wide range of applications. Others moving forward include Bank of America, Citigroup and Goldman Sachs, which is work-

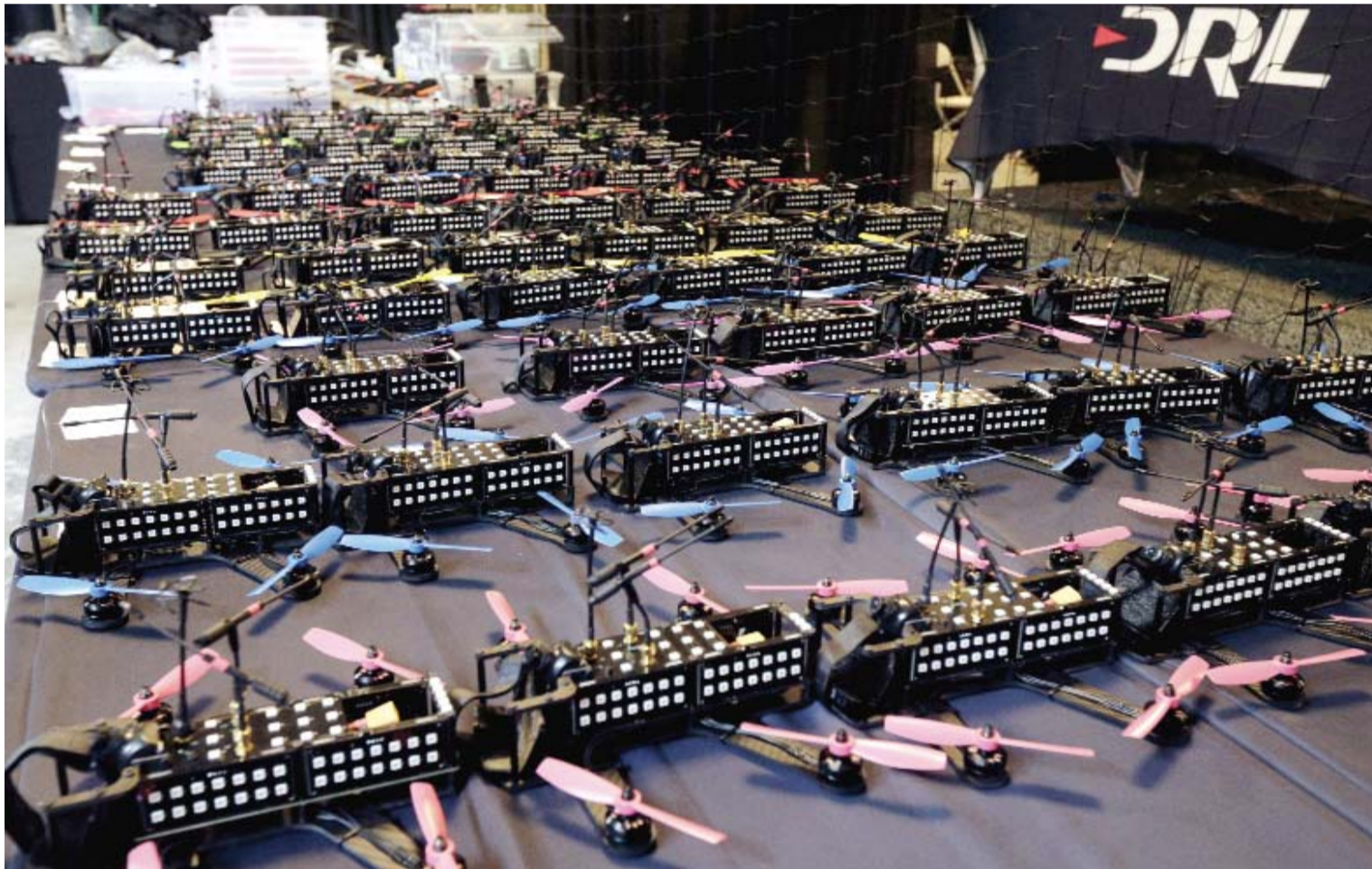


WASHINGTON: File photo shows bitcoin medals in Washington. Australian entrepreneur Craig Wright on May 2, 2016 identified himself as the creator of Bitcoin, following years of speculation about who invented the pioneering digital currency. — AFP

ing on its own virtual currency. Jeffrey Wallis of Noble Markets said the news about the creator doesn't matter. "The space has already moved on regardless of the identity of the person," he said. "It's irrelevant because the momentum of the Bitcoin has extended beyond one individual... This is an industry."

Gabriele Domenichini of the Italian-based blockchain association Assobit said the news could be a "disruption" that impacts the value of the Bitcoin, but only in the short term.

"The price has dropped a little bit. This is another attempt to disrupt the Bitcoin world but I don't think it's a substantial disruption," he said. "If it's really him, the impact could be really big because he got something like one million Bitcoin." Domenichini said there are 15 million Bitcoins in circulation but only 14 million can be spent. "The person who claims to Satoshi is a target because he's got \$450 million and he doesn't have the protection needed," he added. — AFP



CALIFORNIA: Photo shows drones readied prior to races held by the Drone Racing League at a vacant mall in Hawthorne, Calif. In drone racing, a crash means bits of plastic go flying, a replacement is grabbed, and no harm done. For now, bragging rights are the main stakes. Drone racing leagues would love to follow sports like poker into the mainstream with big TV audiences and sponsorships. But getting sponsors and fans is also a race against time. — AP

## MOVE OVER DRONES, DRIVERLESS CARS - UNMANNED SHIP UP NEXT

### PENTAGON SHOWS OFF LARGEST UNMANNED SURFACE VESSEL

**SAN DIEGO:** It's not only drones and driverless cars that may become the norm someday - ocean-faring ships might also run without captains or crews. The Pentagon on Monday showed off the world's largest unmanned surface vessel, a self-driving 132-foot ship able to travel up to 10,000 nautical miles on its own to hunt for stealthy submarines and underwater mines. The military's research arm, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, in conjunction with the Navy will be testing the ship off the San Diego coast over the next two years to observe how it interacts with other vessels and avoids collisions. Unlike smaller, remote-controlled craft launched from ships, the so-called "Sea Hunter" is built to operate on its own.

"It's not a joy-stick ship," said DARPA spokesman Jared B Adams, standing in front of the sleek, futuristic-looking steel-gray vessel docked at a maritime terminal in the heart of San Diego's shipbuilding district, where TV

crews filmed the robotic craft. "Sea Hunter" relies on radar, sonar, cameras and a global positioning system. Unmanned ships will supplement missions to help keep service members out of harm's way, Adams said.

Besides military leaders, the commercial shipping industry will be watching the ship's performance during the trial period. Maritime companies from Europe to Asia have been looking into developing fleets of unmanned ships to cut down on operating costs and get through areas plagued by pirates. During the testing phase, the ship will have human operators as a safety net. But once it proves to be reliable, it will maneuver itself - able to go out at sea for months at a time. With its twin diesel engines, it could go as far as Guam from San Diego on a mission, developers say. There are no plans at this point to arm it.

"There are a lot of advantages that we're still trying to learn about," program manager Scott Littlefield said. The idea in the commercial sec-

tor has sparked debate over whether it's possible to make robotic boats safe enough. The International Transport Workers' Federation, the union representing more than half of the world's more than 1 million seafarers, has said it does not believe technology will ever be able to replace the ability of humans to foresee and react to the various dangers at sea.

Others have expressed concern about hackers taking control. Military officials have been working on hacker-proof protections and say it's possible to make ships cyber-secure. The "Sea Hunter" was built off the Oregon coast, and it moved on a barge to San Diego's coastline. The prototype can travel at a speed of up to about 30 mph and is equipped with a variety of sensors and an advanced optical system to detect other ships. The program to develop the ship cost \$120 million, though DARPA officials say the vessels can now be produced for about \$20 million. — AP

## OCULUS RIFT DELAYS FLATTEN VIRTUAL-REALITY FAN FERVOR

**LOS ANGELES:** Virtual reality, oddly enough, isn't immune to the problems that arise in practical reality. Just ask would-be fans of the Oculus Rift headset, many - possibly most - of whom are still waiting for their \$600 gadgets more than four weeks after they started shipping. The delay, naturally, has sparked online grumbling and even some data-based activism, including the creation of a crowdsourced spreadsheet for tracking who received their prized VR gear and when. Some longtime supporters of Oculus have declared themselves alienated by the company's inability to deliver; others have defected to rival VR systems, or are at least considering it.

Christian Cantrell, a software engineer and science-fiction author in Sterling, Virginia, put in his pre-order roughly 15 minutes after Oculus started accepting them in January - and is still waiting. It's been a "bummer," he says, because he passed up buying a rival headset, the HTC Vive, hoping to be part of a VR "renaissance" with Rift. "I've been kind of like an Oculus believer," he says. "But if they bump it again, I might just order a Vive." It's too soon to say how the delays will affect Oculus, much less the overall acceptance of VR, a technology that submerges users in realistic artificial worlds. (Early VR "experiences" consist primarily of video games.)

In other contexts, big companies like Apple have managed to weather shortages and shipping delays for products such as the Apple Watch and its new iPhone SE. But some find the Rift delays intolerable, especially given that Oculus is no fledgling startup, but part of Facebook - the social network bought it two years ago for \$2 billion. "There's an element of inexcusable incompetence going on," says J.P. Gownder, a Forrester Research analyst, who placed his preorder in the first 10 minutes but

doesn't expect his Rift until mid-May.

Experienced hardware manufacturers would have set up suppliers months or years in advance to avoid these types of problems, Gownder says. The fact that Oculus managed to bundle its launch with more than three years to prepare, plus the backing of Facebook, is "scandalous," he says. Oculus, which has blamed the delays on an "unexpected component shortage," declined to comment on specifics. It told the AP in a statement it has moved to address the shortage and expects deliveries to accelerate in coming weeks. By way of apology, Oculus said it will offer free shipping to customers who ordered before April 1.

Few have been as disappointed as some of the company's earliest supporters. Back in January, Oculus founder Palmer Luckey announced that 5,600 of the company's first Kickstarter backers would be eligible for a free headset. He then tweeted on the eve of first deliveries that the gifts would "start arriving" two days before others, giving the impression Kickstarter backers would get theirs first.

It didn't happen. Unhappy customers gathered on Reddit to complain and to figure out where they stood in line; one poster catalogued the frustration on a crowdsourced spreadsheet. While not necessarily representative of the entire Oculus customer base, that data shows that of the 131 early Kickstarter backers who submitted responses, only 28 report receiving a unit. Of 1,399 pre-order customers, just 165 say they got a Rift. The virtual reality boom is just getting going, and the competition is growing. Sony will release its PlayStation VR headset later this year. Google is expected to expand on its primitive Cardboard viewer, and recent Apple acquisitions suggest that it may also be jumping into the field soon. — AP

## APP TO IDENTIFY POOREST GIRLS IN INDIA CAN HELP PREVENT TRAFFICKING: CHARITY

**MUMBAI:** A tablet-based application that helps to identify some of the poorest girls in eastern India has the potential to prevent human trafficking, early marriage and child labour, according to a charity which has developed the app. The GPower, or Girl Power, app developed by Accenture Labs and the charity Child in Need Institute (CINI), has been used to track more than 6,000 families in 20 villages in West Bengal.

The application sets out a series of questions on health, nutrition, protection and education to determine the vulnerability of the respondent. "The technology helps us identify the most vulnerable of the girls in minutes," CINI's assistant director Indrani Bhattacharya told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "So we can plan our intervention and bring immediate solutions to prevent the occurrence (of traffick-

ing, child marriage and child labour), rather than trying to do something after the fact."

The questionnaire takes about 30 minutes to complete and the analysis takes minutes. Based on the information collected, a community worker decides whether girls are candidates for government welfare schemes, counselling or vocational training, Bhattacharya said. West Bengal is both a source and a transit state for women and children trafficked into the sex trade. The state accounted for about a fifth of India's 5,466 cases of human trafficking reported in 2014, according to official data. Many of the victims are from rural areas in the state or from neighboring Bangladesh, lured by the promise of good jobs or marriage. Instead, they end up sold into prostitution in cities such as Mumbai and New Delhi. — Reuters

## SOLAR-POWERED PLANE LANDS IN US ON ROUND-THE-WORLD FLIGHT

### FLYERS USED MEDITATION, HYPNOSIS IN TRAINING TO STAY ALERT

**LOS ANGELES:** A solar-powered airplane midway through a historic bid to circle the globe completed the tenth leg of its journey on Monday, landing in Arizona after a 16-hour flight from California, the project team said. The Swiss team flying the aircraft in a campaign to build support for clean energy technologies hopes eventually to complete its circumnavigation in Abu Dhabi, where the journey began in March 2015. The spindly, single-seat experimental aircraft, dubbed Solar Impulse 2, arrived in Phoenix shortly before 9 pm, following a flight from San Francisco that took it over the Mojave Desert.

The flight would have taken a conventional airplane just two hours, but the solar craft's cruising speed, akin to that of a car, required pilots to take up meditation and hypnosis in training to stay alert for long periods.

Occupying the tiny cockpit for the trip was project co-founder Andre Borschberg, who alternates with fellow pilot Bertrand Piccard at the controls for each segment of what they hope will be the first round-the-world solar-powered flight. Borschberg was the pilot for the Japan-to-Hawaii trip over the Pacific last July, staying airborne for nearly 118 hours.

That shattered the 76-hour world duration record for a non-stop, solo flight set in 2006 by the late American adventurer Steve Fossett in his Virgin Atlantic Global Flyer. It also set new duration and distance records for solar-powered flight. The feat, however, dealt a setback to the Solar Impulse, which suffered severe battery damage, requiring repairs and testing that grounded it in Hawaii for nine months. Piccard completed the trans-Pacific crossing last month, reaching San Francisco after a

flight of nearly three days, more than three times the 18 hours Amelia Earhart took to fly solo from Hawaii to California in the 1930s.

The biggest difference is that the propeller-driven Solar Impulse flies without a drop of fuel, its four engines powered solely by energy collected from more than 17,000 solar cells built into its wings. Surplus power is stored in four batteries during the day, to keep the plane aloft on extreme long-distance flights. The carbon-fiber plane, with a wingspan exceeding that of a Boeing 747 and the weight of a family car, is unlikely to set speed or altitude records. It can climb to 28,000 feet (8,500 m), and cruise at 34 to 62 miles per hour (55 to 100 km/h). In a precursor of their globe-circling quest, the two men completed a multi-flight crossing of the United States with an earlier version of the solar plane in 2013. — Reuters



ARIZONA: Swiss pilot Andre Borschberg leaves the cockpit after successfully landing the Solar Impulse 2 at the Phoenix Goodyear airport in Phoenix, Arizona on May 2, 2016. — AFP



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Call MSAL hotline 128



**PHARMACIES**  
ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlis Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

**INTERNATIONAL CALLS**



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

**STATE OF KUWAIT**  
DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630  
Fax: (+965) 24348714  
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DAY: Tuesday

03/05/2016

Issue Time: 07:00

**Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours**

**BY DAY:** Hot with light to moderate southerly changing to north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 32 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear

**BY NIGHT:** Fair with light variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h

WEATHER WARNING			No Current Warnings	
STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.	SFC. CHART 03/05/2016 0000 UTC	
KUWAIT CITY	37 °C	28 °C		
KUWAIT AIRPORT	42 °C	24 °C		
ABDALY	43 °C	24 °C		
BUBYAN	40 °C	23 °C		
JAHRA	42 °C	25 °C		
FAILAKA ISLAND	37 °C	25 °C		
SALMIYAH	39 °C	27 °C		
AHMADI	40 °C	28 °C		
JAL ALIYAH	42 °C	24 °C		
QAROH ISLAND	34 °C	26 °C		
UMM AL-MARADEM	34 °C	26 °C		

4 DAYS FORECAST						
DAY	DATE	WEATHER	Temperatures		Wind Direction	Wind Speed
			MAX.	MIN.		
Wednesday	05/04	Hot	43 °C	24 °C	NW-VRB	08 - 28 km/h
Thursday	05/05	Hot + scattered clouds + blowing dust	43 °C	24 °C	NW	15 - 40 km/h
Friday	05/06	Clouds to increase + scattered light rain	39 °C	23 °C	VRB	08 - 22 km/h
Saturday	05/07	Partly cloudy + raising dust	40 °C	24 °C	SE	15 - 40 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	
Fajr	03:37
Sunrise	05:04
Zuhr	11:45
Asr	15:21
Sunset	18:25
Isha	19:49

RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT	
MAX. Temp.	41 °C
MIN. Temp.	21 °C
MAX. RH	35 %
MIN. RH	09 %
MAX. Wind	S 53 km/h
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR.	00 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. U.P.0

2016/05/03 02:51 UTC V1.00 T2.3 2-1/ع.خ.ف.ت



**PRIVATE CLINICS**

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr. Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr. Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gupare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam	23845955
Dentists	
Dr. Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR. Mohammed Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid	MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC
Assistant Professor Of Medicine	Head, Division of Cardiology
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Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib	2611555-2622555
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# IN PACIFIC NATION OF PALAU, JELLYFISH LAKE LOSING NAMESAKE

**WELLINGTON:** The big question at Palau's Jellyfish Lake: Where are all the jellyfish? Part of a UNESCO World Heritage area, the saltwater lake has long been a source of wonder for tourists, who have delighted in snorkeling among the millions of golden jellyfish that can fill the water as thick as corn chowder. But some tourists in recent weeks have struggled to find even a single jellyfish, prompting at least one tour operator to suspend its trips.

Scientists blame a severe drought, coupled with hotter temperatures caused by the El Nino weather pattern, a warming of parts of the Pacific Ocean that changes weather worldwide and tends to push up global temperatures. While scientists say there's every chance jellyfish numbers will rebound when conditions improve, they also worry that global warming poses a long-term threat to the delicate ecosystem of Palau, a tiny western Pacific island chain.

About a month ago, scientists at Palau's Coral Reef Research Foundation estimated the numbers of golden jellyfish at the lake had declined from about 8 million to 600,000. Since then, the numbers have dropped further. "Just the past couple of weeks, the numbers have drastically declined," said Collin Joseph, a coastal manager for Palau's Koror State. He said the adult jellyfish have pretty much died out completely, while some juveniles remain. The decline is particularly concerning because the

jellyfish in the lake are a unique subspecies that have developed in isolation from their lagoon ancestors.

Koror State Governor Yositaka Adachi last week decided to keep the lake open, at least for now. He said in a statement that rainfall in the area over the past four months was the lowest in 65 years, but that there remained enough polyps, which produce jellyfish, to ensure the population could eventually recover. But some aren't waiting for that. "Many tour companies including ours that have been taking guests to the lake have not seen any jellyfish," Sam's Tours wrote in an April 22 note to its sales partners. "We at Sam's Tours have therefore decided to suspend our tours to Jellyfish Lake with immediate effect until further notice."

Scientists are still trying to figure out exactly how the hot and dry conditions are affecting the jellyfish. Governor Adachi wrote that the lack of rain had reduced runoff into the lake, which had affected the tiny plants and animals the jellyfish consume. The Coral Reef Research Foundation also noted the lack of rain had caused the lake to become saltier than ever previously recorded, in monitoring which dates back to 1998. "The exact cause of the decline in the population of golden jellies is not yet understood, but it is clear at present that young (jellyfish) are not surviving very long after release by the bottom-dwelling polyp stage," the foundation

wrote in an April Facebook post. It added: "The golden jelly population could be on the verge of crashing" to the point where there were no more swimming about the lake.

The foundation noted the population had crashed once before, in 1999, but had rebounded 18 months later because some polyps had survived. Jellyfish Lake is unusual in being a small body of seawater surrounded by land. Channels to the sea remain deep in the limestone rock beneath the lake. Below about 13 meters (40 feet), the lake has little oxygen and high concentrations of hydrogen sulfide, making it dangerous for scuba divers. Due to their isolation from the ocean, five marine lakes in the area have produced five different subspecies of golden jellyfish.

Scientists say a common myth about the jellyfish in the lake is that they don't sting, when in fact they can give swimmers a mild sting, which can be compounded by prolonged exposure. Los Angeles-based photographer and model Amber Arbucci discovered that in 2013, when she completed a 7-hour naked photo shoot in the lake for her collection "The Girl at Jellyfish Lake." "I was so stung my eyes were swollen and I could barely walk," she told The Wall Street Journal. She wrote on her website, however, that she still found the jellyfish filled with charm - "powerful, and yet so fragile all at the same time." — AP



**PALAU:** Golden jellyfish swim in Jellyfish Lake in Palau. Part of a UNESCO World Heritage area, the saltwater lake has long been a source of wonder for tourists, who have delighted in snorkeling among the millions of golden jellyfish which can fill the water as thick as corn chowder. — AP



**BERLIN:** German Greens politician Hans-Christian Stroebale (center) reads classified papers from the ongoing US-EU trade talks, presented to the public by Greenpeace in a glass container near the Brandenburger Gate, in Berlin. Greenpeace published documents showing that the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) poses 'major risks for climate, environment and consumer safety'. — AFP

## SCIENTISTS WIN \$3 MILLION FOR DETECTING EINSTEIN'S WAVES

**NEW YORK:** Researchers who helped detect gravitational waves for the first time, confirming part of Albert Einstein's theory in a landmark moment in scientific history, will share a \$3 million Special Breakthrough Prize, according to the prize's selection committee. The Breakthrough Prizes for scientific achievements were created by Russian billionaire Yuri Milner along with several technology pioneers, including Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and Google co-founder Sergey Brin.

In February, a team from the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) announced a pair of giant laser detectors had measured the tiny ripples in space and time first theorized by Einstein a century ago, capping a decades-long quest. Einstein predicted gravitational waves as part of his seminal theory of general relativity, which explained gravity as distortions in both space and time caused by bodies of matter.

LIGO's three founders - Rainer Weiss, Kip Thorne and Ronald Drever, who dedicated much of their careers to gravitational wave detection - will share \$1 million. More than 1,000 contributors to the project will also split \$2 million equally. "That's much more modern and much more the way that physics gets done," said Weiss, a professor emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, of the decision to honor the entire team. "You can't credit just the three of us for this."

Researchers said the gravitational waves came from the collision of two black holes, the extraordinarily dense objects that Einstein's theory also predicted. The black holes, both many times the mass of the sun, were located 1.3 billion light years from Earth. The waves should unlock new ways to understand the cosmos, including black holes, neutron stars and the mysteries of the early universe. "For us to spend basically a half-century since the three of us started working in this field, to have it actually be pulled off successfully in the manner we dreamed - it was really remarkable and wonderful," said Thorne, who is retired from the California Institute of Technology. "I'm forever grateful to the team that got it done."

The winners will be honored at a December ceremony, when the regular annual awards for physics, life sciences and mathematics will also be announced. The Special Breakthrough Prize can be conferred at any time to mark "an extraordinary scientific achievement." Edward Witten, a prominent physicist who heads the physics prize selection committee, said the discovery's magnitude warranted immediate recognition. "There are a lot of basic things about Einstein's theory of relativity that seemed like science fiction when I was a student," Witten said. "This is the first time we've seen the full force of Einstein's theory of gravity at work." — Reuters

## POLICE ARREST GUARDS OVER RHINO POACHING

**GUWAHATI:** Indian police said yesterday they have arrested four forest guards on suspicion of helping to cover up rhino poaching in a national park visited by Britain's Prince William and his wife last month. The arrests relate to an incident last year, but came as wildlife officials said a gang of poachers armed with automatic weapons had killed another rhino on Monday in the Kaziranga National Park in the northeastern state of Assam.

The four arrested guards were suspected of covering up the killing of a rhino last November, Kaziranga wildlife warden Suvasish Das told AFP by telephone. Police said they had failed to report the killing and had buried the carcass with its horn removed. "Based on specific information, we managed to recover the carcass on Monday after digging up the site," said a senior police officer, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"This led to the arrest of seven people including the four forest guards." The other three are locals living around the park, home to the world's largest concentration of rare one-horned rhinoceroses. At least seven rhinos have been killed there so far this year. Across the state, the figure is 13. Images of the park, a major tourist attraction, shot around the world last month when Britain's Duke and Duchess of Cambridge went on safari and fed rhino and elephant calves there during a tour of India and neighboring Bhutan. — AFP



**GUWAHATI:** This file photo shows Indian forestry officials as they stand near the carcass of a one-horned rhinoceros which was killed and dehorned by poachers in Burapahar, a range of the Kaziranga National Park, some 250kms east of Guwahati. Indian police said yesterday, that they have arrested four forest guards on suspicion of helping to cover up rhino poaching in a national park visited by Britain's Prince William and his wife last month. — AFP

## ESPINOSA NOMINATED AS UN CLIMATE CHIEF

MEXICO EX-FM TO OVERSEE PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT

**OSLO:** Former Mexican Foreign Minister Patricia Espinosa has been nominated to be the new UN climate chief, helping to bolster a 2015 Paris Agreement to shift the world economy from fossil fuels, officials said yesterday. Christiana Figueres, a Costa Rican who is stepping down in July after a six-year term as head of the UN Climate Change Secretariat, wrote in a Tweet that UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had nominated Espinosa to succeed her. The Bonn-based Secretariat said the appointment needs to be approved by an 11-member UN bureau, whose members represent groups of governments worldwide and is now led by French Environment Minister Segolene Royal.

The bureau has no record of challenging nominations by the Secretary-General, diplomats say, even though some had expected that the job would shift from Latin America. Espinosa, aged 57 and who works as Mexico's ambassador to

Germany, won high marks for presiding at annual UN climate negotiations in Cancun, Mexico, in 2010 when she was foreign minister. Delegates gave her a standing ovation after she brokered a deal to get negotiations on limiting global warming back on track after the failure of a fractious 2009 summit in Copenhagen.

Those 195-nation talks culminated in December 2015 with a deal at a Paris summit to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2100, shifting to cleaner energies such as wind and solar power. The job of the new UN climate chief will be to oversee and strengthen that agreement. The United Nations says the Paris deal, built from voluntary national limits on greenhouse gas emissions, is too weak to achieve a goal of limiting a rise in temperatures blamed for stoking more droughts, floods, heatwaves and rising sea levels. — Reuters

# CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times  
248 33 199



Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem  
فهد علي المخيزيم



Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال  
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM



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





00:25 Rob Roy
02:40 Behind Enemy Lines
04:10 The Hills Run Red
05:40 Death Rides A Horse
07:35 The Night They Raided Minsky's
09:15 The Magnificent Seven
11:20 The Indian Fighter
12:50 One Summer Love
14:30 The Beast Of Hollow Mountain
15:50 The Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course
17:20 Empire Of The Ants
18:50 The Man In The Iron Mask
21:00 Breaking Bad
22:00 Dracula 2000

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

With Morgan Freeman
10:23 Invent It Rich
11:08 How The Universe Works
11:53 Mega Builders
12:38 Mythbusters
13:23 Through The Wormhole
With Morgan Freeman
14:10 Ecopolis
14:57 Food Factory
15:20 Food Factory
15:44 How The Universe Works
16:31 Mega Builders
17:18 Ecopolis
18:05 Mythbusters
18:50 Secret Space Escapes
19:40 How The Universe Works
20:25 Through The Wormhole
With Morgan Freeman
21:15 Ecopolis
22:00 Secret Space Escapes
22:45 How The Universe Works
23:35 Mythbusters



WISH I WAS HERE

WISH I WAS HERE ON OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

13:50 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
14:15 The Lion Guard
14:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
15:10 Miles From Tomorrow
15:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
16:00 Sofia The First
16:25 Jungle Cubs
16:50 Aladdin
17:15 The Lion Guard
17:40 Goldie & Bear
18:05 Miles From Tomorrow
18:30 Sofia The First
19:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
19:30 The Lion Guard
20:00 Goldie & Bear
20:30 Sofia The First
21:00 Jungle Cubs
21:25 Aladdin
21:50 Gummi Bears
22:20 Lilo And Stitch
22:50 Zou
23:05 Henry Hugglemonster
23:20 Calimero
23:35 Zou
23:50 Loopdidoo

18:00 El News
19:00 House Of DVF
20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:00 Chopped
02:00 Cutthroat Kitchen
03:00 Man Fire Food
04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Chopped
07:00 Man Fire Food
07:30 Man Fire Food
08:00 Chopped
09:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
09:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
10:00 The Kitchen
11:00 Trisha's Southern Kitchen
11:30 Trisha's Southern Kitchen
12:00 Chopped
13:00 The Pioneer Woman
13:30 The Pioneer Woman
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Man Fire Food
15:30 Man Fire Food
16:00 Chopped
17:00 The Kitchen
18:00 Trisha's Southern Kitchen
18:30 Trisha's Southern Kitchen
19:00 Chopped
20:00 Guy's Grocery Games
21:00 Private Chef
21:30 Valerie's Home Cooking
22:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
23:00 Iron Chef America

10:10 Get Your Act Together
11:05 Coach Trip
11:35 Harry's South Pole Heroes
12:30 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover
13:25 Emmerdale
13:50 Coach Trip
14:20 Coronation Street
14:45 The Jonathan Ross Show
15:35 The Queen's Worst Year
16:30 Black Work
17:25 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
18:20 Emmerdale
18:45 Coach Trip
19:10 Coronation Street
19:35 The Queen's Worst Year
20:30 Black Work
21:25 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
22:20 Coronation Street
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover

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

00:20 Shipping Wars
00:45 Shipping Wars
01:10 Lost In Transmission
02:00 Ice Road Truckers
02:50 Ax Men
03:40 American Restoration
04:05 American Restoration
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Lost Worlds
06:00 Mountain Men
06:50 Swamp People
07:40 Ax Men
08:30 Shipping Wars
08:55 American Restoration
09:20 American Restoration
09:45 Banger Boys
10:35 Counting Cars
11:00 Counting Cars
11:25 Lost Worlds
12:15 American Pickers
13:05 Storage Wars
13:30 Storage Wars
13:55 Fight Gear
14:45 Shipping Wars
15:10 Shipping Wars
15:35 Shipping Wars
16:00 Mountain Men
16:50 Swamp People
17:40 Ice Road Truckers
18:30 Lost Worlds
19:20 American Pickers
20:10 Pawn Stars
20:35 Pawn Stars
21:00 Duck Dynasty
21:25 Duck Dynasty
21:50 Pawn Stars
22:15 Pawn Stars Australia
22:40 Grave Trade
23:30 Duck Dynasty
23:55 Duck Dynasty

00:10 Get Your Act Together
01:05 Emmerdale
01:30 Coach Trip
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Jonathan Ross Show
03:25 Murdoch Mysteries
04:20 Murdoch Mysteries
05:15 Harry's South Pole Heroes
06:10 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover
07:00 Coach Trip
07:30 Murdoch Mysteries
08:25 Murdoch Mysteries
09:20 The Jonathan Ross Show

00:10 Dream Cruises
01:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces

00:10 Brain Games
01:00 Cesar To The Rescue
02:00 SuperCar Megabuild
02:55 Secrets Of The King Cobra
03:50 Brain Games
04:45 24 Hours In A&E
05:40 Filthy Riches
06:35 Mega Factories
07:30 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
08:25 Building Wild
09:20 24 Hours In A&E
10:15 SuperCar Megabuild
11:10 The Yard
12:05 Dirty Rotten Survival
13:00 Building Wild
14:00 Showdown Of The Unbeatables
15:00 Megastructures
16:00 SuperCar Megabuild
17:00 The Yard
18:00 Dirty Rotten Survival
19:00 Mine Kings
20:00 SuperCar Megabuild
20:50 The Yard
21:40 Dirty Rotten Survival
22:30 Megastructures
23:20 Filthy Riches

00:10 National Geographic Channel HD

00:10 Nat Geo People HD

00:10 Dream Cruises
01:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces

01:50 Top Tables, Top Cities
02:15 Sara's New Nordic Kitchen
02:40 Tom's Istanbul Delight
03:05 Glamour Puds
03:30 Glamour Puds
03:55 David Rocco's Dolce India
04:20 Maximum Foodie
04:45 Maximum Foodie
05:10 Food School
05:35 Rustic Adventures Italy
06:00 Rustic Adventures Italy
06:25 Carnival Eats
06:50 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
07:40 Top Tables, Top Cities
08:05 Sara's New Nordic Kitchen
08:30 Tom's Istanbul Delight
08:55 Glamour Puds
09:20 Glamour Puds
09:45 David Rocco's Dolce India
10:10 Maximum Foodie
10:35 Maximum Foodie
11:00 Food School
11:25 Rustic Adventures Italy
11:50 Rustic Adventures Italy
12:15 Carnival Eats
12:40 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
13:35 Bondi Rescue Outback Adventure
14:30 Tom's Istanbul Delight
14:55 Glamour Puds
15:25 Glamour Puds
15:50 David Rocco's Dolce India
16:20 Maximum Foodie
16:45 Maximum Foodie
17:15 Grandma's Boy
17:40 Rustic Adventures Italy
18:10 Rustic Adventures Italy
18:35 Carnival Eats
19:05 Glamour Puds
19:30 Glamour Puds
20:00 David Rocco's Dolce India
20:25 Maximum Foodie
20:50 Maximum Foodie
21:15 Grandma's Boy
21:40 Rustic Adventures Italy
22:05 Rustic Adventures Italy
22:30 Carnival Eats
22:55 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces

00:20 Deadly Instincts
01:10 Man And The Wild
02:00 Africa's Creative Killers
02:50 I, Predator
03:45 Caught In The Act
04:40 Outback Wrangler
05:35 Africa's Creative Killers
06:30 I, Predator
07:25 Caught In The Act
08:20 Outback Wrangler
09:15 Race Of Life
09:40 Race Of Life
10:10 Nordic Wild
11:05 Animals Gone Wild
12:00 Monster Fish
12:55 Intimate Enemies
13:50 I, Predator
14:45 Caught In The Act
15:40 Dangerous Encounters
16:35 Race Of Life
17:00 Race Of Life
17:30 Nordic Wild
18:25 Animals Gone Wild
19:20 Caught In The Act
20:10 Dangerous Encounters
21:00 Race Of Life
21:25 Race Of Life

00:30 The Muppets
01:00 Breaking In
01:30 Comedians
02:00 The Big C
02:30 Louie
03:00 The Carmichael Show
03:30 Living With Fran
04:00 \$#!1 My Dad Says
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 Suburgatory
06:00 The Bernie Mac Show
06:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:00 \$#!1 My Dad Says
08:30 Suburgatory
09:00 The Carmichael Show
09:30 The Last Man On Earth
10:00 Playing House
10:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 Your Family Or Mine
12:30 \$#!1 My Dad Says
13:00 Suburgatory
13:30 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
14:00 Living With Fran
14:30 The Last Man On Earth
15:00 Playing House
15:30 The Muppets
16:00 Breaking In
17:00 Your Family Or Mine
18:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:30 My Big Fat Greek Life
19:00 Mad Love
19:30 Mad Love
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 The Muppets
21:30 Breaking In
22:00 Comedians
22:30 The Big C
23:00 Louie
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

00:30 The Muppets
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19:30 Mad Love
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 The Muppets
21:30 Breaking In
22:00 Comedians
22:30 The Big C
23:00 Louie
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

00:10 Dream Cruises
01:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces



00:00 Once Upon A Time
01:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
02:00 The Flash
03:00 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
04:00 Good Morning America
05:00 Once Upon A Time
06:00 Once Upon A Time
08:00 Prison Break
09:00 The Voice
10:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
11:00 24
12:00 Prison Break
13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
14:00 Live Good Morning America
16:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
18:00 Prison Break
19:00 Minority Report
20:00 The Flash
21:00 Blindspot
22:00 Empire
23:00 Mr. Robot



00:00 300: Rise Of An Empire
02:00 The A-Team
04:15 Age Of Dinosaurs
06:00 Transformers: Age Of Extinction
09:00 Transit
11:00 R.I.P.D.
13:00 Turbulence
15:00 Transformers: Age Of Extinction
18:00 Snow White And The Huntsman
20:15 Armageddon
23:15 Tombstone



00:00 All The Wrong Reasons
02:15 50 First Dates
04:00 At Middleton
06:00 My Father The Hero
08:00 Man Of The House
10:00 At Middleton
12:00 50 First Dates
14:00 Bad Parents
16:00 Man Of The House
18:00 Orange County
20:00 Identity Thief
22:00 Wish I Was Here



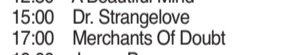
01:00 One Last Look
03:00 Short Term 12
05:00 Foreverland
07:00 1911
09:00 The Truth About Emanuel
11:00 Foreverland
13:00 Short Term 12
15:00 Barefoot
17:00 The Truth About Emanuel
19:00 Nightcrawler
21:00 Blood Ties
23:30 Suite Francaise



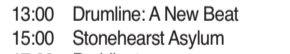
01:00 Eight Below
03:00 Mulan
04:45 The Mighty Ducks
06:45 Oz The Great And Powerful
09:00 Ice Princess
11:00 Tinker Bell And The Legend Of The NeverBeast
13:00 The Shaggy Dog
15:00 The Gabby Douglas Story
17:00 Night At The Museum: Battle Of The Smithsonian
19:00 Treasure Planet
21:00 First Kid
23:00 The Gabby Douglas Story



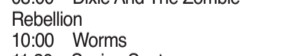
00:00 The People vs Larry Flynt
02:30 A Beautiful Mind
05:00 Boyhood
08:00 Belle
10:00 Evita
12:30 A Beautiful Mind
15:00 Dr. Strangelove
17:00 Merchants Of Doubt
19:00 Jersey Boys
21:30 The Sixth Sense
23:30 Jayne Mansfield's Car



00:00 Annabelle
03:00 Not Safe For Work
04:30 Billy Elliot The Musical
07:15 Believe
09:00 The Two Faces Of January
11:00 Persecuted
13:00 Drumline: A New Beat
15:00 Stonehearst Asylum
17:00 Paddington
19:00 Whiplash
21:00 A Little Chaos
23:00 Ouija



01:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
03:00 Marco Macaco
04:30 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
06:00 Miffy The Movie
08:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
10:00 Worms
11:30 Saving Santa
13:00 Marco Macaco
14:30 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
16:00 The Heart Of The Oak
18:00 Worms
20:00 The Adventurer: The Curse Of The Midas Box
22:00 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
23:30 The Heart Of The Oak



01:00 Premier League Darts
04:30 Golfing World
05:30 Live PGA European Tour
07:30 The PGA Tour Champions Highlights
08:30 Inside The PGA Tour
09:00 European Tour Weekly
09:30 Live PGA European Tour
10:30 Golfing World
12:30 The PGA Tour Champions Highlights
14:30 Inside The PGA Tour
15:00 Live Snooker World Championship
19:00 The PGA Tour Champions Highlights
20:00 Inside The PGA Tour
20:30 European Tour Weekly
21:00 Live Snooker World Championship



00:45 Mountain Monsters
01:40 In Search Of The King
02:35 Tanked
03:25 Queens Of The Savannah
04:15 Gator Boys
05:02 Treehouse Masters
05:49 In Search Of The King
06:36 Swamp Brothers
07:00 Swamp Brothers
07:25 My Cat From Hell
08:15 In Search Of The King
09:10 Treehouse Masters
10:05 Tanked
11:00 My Cat From Hell
11:55 Bondi Vet
12:25 Bondi Vet
12:50 In Search Of The King
13:45 Gator Boys
14:40 Treehouse Masters
15:35 Tanked
16:30 Queens Of The Savannah
17:25 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
18:20 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
19:15 Tanked
20:10 Animal Cops South Africa



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



00:00 Violetta
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Violetta
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:00 Violetta
05:45 The Hive
06:00 Mouk
06:00 Lolirock
06:25 Sofia The First
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
07:40 Jessie
08:05 Shake It Up
08:30 Shake It Up
08:55 Hannah Montana
09:20 Hannah Montana
09:45 Girl Meets World
10:10 Girl Meets World
10:35 A.N.T. Farm
11:00 A.N.T. Farm
11:25 Jessie
11:50 Jessie
12:15 Whisker Haven Tales With The Palace Pets
12:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
12:45 Fish Hooks
13:10 Austin & Ally
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:00 Liv And Maddie
14:15 Liv And Maddie
14:40 Dog With A Blog
15:10 Dog With A Blog
15:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
16:00 Sofia The First
16:25 Jungle Cubs
16:50 Aladdin
17:15 The Lion Guard
17:40 Goldie & Bear
18:05 Miles From Tomorrow
18:30 Sofia The First
19:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
19:30 The Lion Guard
20:00 Goldie & Bear
20:30 Sofia The First
21:00 Jungle Cubs
21:25 Aladdin
21:50 Gummi Bears
22:20 Lilo And Stitch
22:50 Zou
23:05 Henry Hugglemonster
23:20 Calimero
23:35 Zou
23:50 Loopdidoo



00:00 I Escaped My Killer
01:00 The Haunting Of...
02:00 The Haunting Of...
03:00 Cursed: The Bell Witch
04:00 I Escaped My Killer
05:00 The Haunting Of...
06:00 I Didn't Do It
07:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
08:00 Crime Stories
09:00 Frenemies
09:30 Frenemies
10:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
11:00 The First 48
12:00 The FBI Files
13:00 I Didn't Do It
14:00 Crime Stories
15:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
16:00 Britain's Biggest Heists
17:00 The First 48
18:00 The FBI Files
19:00 I Didn't Do It
20:00 Crime Stories
21:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
22:00 Bill Cosby: The Women Speak
23:00 The Jail: 60 Days In



00:20 Fast N' Loud
01:10 You Have Been Warned
02:00 Troy
02:50 Superhuman Science
03:15 Superhuman Science
03:40 GI Dough
04:05 Storage Wars Canada
04:30 Auction Hunters
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 Fifth Gear
06:00 Outback Truckers
06:50 Wheeler Dealers
07:40 Fast N' Loud
08:30 GI Dough
08:55 Storage Wars Canada
09:20 Auction Hunters
09:45 How Do They Do It?
10:10 Fifth Gear
10:35 You Have Been Warned
11:25 Troy



00:25 Eastenders
00:55 New Tricks
01:55 New Tricks
02:50 Silent Witness
03:45 Waking The Dead
04:40 Eastenders
05:10 Doctor Who
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Doctors
07:00 Eastenders
07:30 Stella
08:15 The Paradise
09:10 Doctor Who
10:00 Doctors
10:30 Eastenders
11:00 Death In Paradise
11:55 Stella
12:45 The Paradise
13:40 Doctor Who
14:30 Doctors
15:00 Eastenders
15:30 Death In Paradise
16:25 Dickenson
17:15 Doctor Who
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:05 Death In Paradise
20:00 Hobby City
21:00 Stag
21:55 Silent Witness
22:50 Orphan Black
23:50 Doctors



00:00 Charlie Rose
01:00 Bloomberg West
02:00 First Up With Angle Lau
03:00 First Up With Angle Lau
04:00 Trending Business



THE A TEAM ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

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

12:15 Superhuman Science
12:40 The Carbonaro Effect
13:05 GI Dough
13:30 Storage Wars Canada
13:55 Auction Hunters
14:20 Outback Truckers
14:45 Wheeler Dealers
15:10 Wheeler Dealers
16:00 Fast N' Loud
16:50 GI Dough
17:15 How Do They Do It?
17:40 Salvage Hunters
18:30 For The Love Of Cars
19:20 What On Earth?
20:10 Storage Wars Canada
20:35 Auction Hunters
21:00 Salvage Hunters
21:50 For The Love Of Cars
22:40 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown
23:30 Wheeler Dealers

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



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



00:20 Through The Wormhole
01:00 With Morgan Freeman
01:08 China 24
01:55 How The Universe Works
02:42 Ecopolis
03:29 Mythbusters
04:16 Invent It Rich
05:03 How The Universe Works
05:50 Mega Builders
06:37 How Do They Do It?
07:00 How Do They Do It?
07:23 Mythbusters
07:28 Ecopolis
08:53 Mega Builders
09:38 Through The Wormhole



00:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
02:20 El News
03:15 Christina Milian Turned Up
04:10 Christina Milian Turned Up
05:05 Christina Milian Turned Up
06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
07:50 Style Star
08:20 El News
09:15 Giuliana & Bill
10:15 Giuliana & Bill
11:10 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
11:35 #RichKids Of Beverly Hills
12:05 El News
13:05 WAGs
14:05 Bolched
15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
16:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
17:00 Fashion Bloggers
17:30 Fashion Bloggers



00:10 Get Your Act Together
01:05 Emmerdale
01:30 Coach Trip
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 The Jonathan Ross Show
03:25 Murdoch Mysteries
04:20 Murdoch Mysteries
05:15 Harry's South Pole Heroes
06:10 Peter Andre's 60 Minute Makeover
07:00 Coach Trip
07:30 Murdoch Mysteries
08:25 Murdoch Mysteries
09:20 The Jonathan Ross Show



WHIPLASH ON OSN MOVIES HD









B-Boy C-Sick holds the trophy.



Final battle featuring C-Sick vs Primo.



B-Boy C-Sick performs on stage.

## RED BULL BC ONE CYPHER 2016 KUWAIT C-SICK 'BREAKS' THE RECORDS WITH 3 REPEATED WINS

B-Boy C-Sick's head-spinning antics and power moves won him the Red Bull BC One Cypher Kuwait for the third consecutive year with a performance that left 15 of the top-level B-Boys in town behind. The stage was on fire with Kuwait's best 16 B-Boys jumping and spinning for the coveted prize. The event, which took place at Radisson Blu was judged by break-

ing legends B-Boy Cico (Italy), B-Boy Roxrite (Mexico) and B-Boy Nabil (France). As the pulsing music by DJ Flash B boomed through the outdoor stage, the B-Boys competed in 14 sizzling head-to-head battles - bouncing, dropping, and popping back up again towards the end of each round. More than 300 spectators gathered to witness the explosive atmosphere - the

crowd was going crazy and the B-Boys were getting more fierce and whirling up madly to the beat and the applause of the crowd. The 2016 final battle was a repeat of the 2015 final between B-Boy Primo and winner, B-Boy C-Sick and was as intense. However, C-Sick's non-stop moves seemed in control and within the rhythm, taming down his opponent and achieving a third consecutive

win. After outperforming 15 of the best B-Boys, C-Sick will now double his efforts in training to represent Kuwait in the World Final in the city of Nagoya, Japan. "It is a great pleasure to be the winner of Red Bull BC One Cypher Kuwait for the 3rd time. I am looking forward to the final in Japan in order to best present Kuwait in the World Final," said B-Boy C-Sick, the winner.

While many competitions focus on crew battles, Red Bull BC One's one-on-one, single elimination battle format focuses on talents and strength of the individual dancer and judges score the B-Boys on their battle strategy, power moves, dance foundation, fresh routines and overall style.



## MAKE MARINA HOTEL KUWAIT: YOUR ONE-STOP-DESTINATION FOR WEDDINGS

The magnificent Shaikha Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Theater and Hall of Marina Hotel Kuwait, nestled in the heart of Salmiya with a spectacular seaside location, is your one-stop-destination for all weddings. No matter what size wedding you are planning, Marina Hotel offers couples a truly memorable wedding to suit any type of wedding festivity.

Having a great layout and capacity of up to 500 persons, the Shaikha Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Theater and Hall is an ideal place for your special event. The hall unravels beauty and flexibility with its expert wedding planning team who devote their attention to every detail ensuring that your wedding will surpass all expectations. The package is further complemented with an award winning culinary team comprising of dedicated chefs who constantly explore delivering tailor made menus and bringing to the hotel's guests a wide range of exciting experiences to each event. Wedding guests can enjoy the wide variety of scrumptious delicacies from the elaborate buffet at Shaikha Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Theater and Hall.

The memories of your wedding day will last a lifetime and Marina Hotel Kuwait will ensure that your special day is perfect. The hotel is delighted to offer guests exclusive wedding packages across the year, which include accommodation for one night in a beautiful superior room and a romantic candle-lit dinner and breakfast in the room for the bride and groom. For the wedding



celebrations, a custom-made, three-tier wedding cake is offered. Such a momentous occasion that unites husband and wife must be conducted in a venue that can provide only the finest setting. This includes the most delightful cuisine and a magnificently decorated ballroom. With a venue that can also bring back treasured memories of lavish wedding celebrations from previous generations, today's weddings at the Shaikha Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Theater and Hall are among the most extravagant and memorable weddings

imaginable. Combining unparalleled excellence in service and hospitality with outstanding presentation and personal service, the hotel holds a reputation as an expert in turning your wedding celebration into a truly magnificent event.

If you are looking for a beautiful wedding ceremony venue, the wedding package at Marina Hotel is available all through the year. For more information, please visit our website: [www.marinahotel.com](http://www.marinahotel.com).

未来への回路—日本の新世代アーティスト

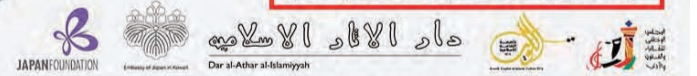
الطريق إلى المستقبل:  
فن الجيل الجديد من الفنانين اليابانيين

Passage to the Future:  
Art from a New Generation  
in Japan



2016 مايو 31 إلى 8 مايو 2016  
8 May to 31 May 2016

Opening Ceremony 19:00~, 8th May



## THE SULTAN CENTER ORGANIZES CRICKET TOURNAMENT FOR STAFF

As part of The Sultan Center's commitment to supporting a healthy lifestyle and fostering a sense of team spirit amongst its employees across the company, TSC Together organized its annual cricket tournament which was held at Khaitan Cricket field on 9th, 16th and 23rd April 2016.

Over the course of the three-day event, a total of 16 teams showcased great enthusiasm and a sense of teamwork as they competed against each other to grab the Championship title. The series of challenging matches observed a large crowd of employees, their families and friends, who cheered for their favorite teams which made the event even more exciting.

Hawally Team proudly raised the Cricket Championship trophy as they gained victory against the Telecom Team who bagged the Second place, while Fahaheel Team stood at the Third place. Mohammed Reyyan was awarded the title of the Best Bowler and Rahim Abdulrahim got the Best Batsman title, both a part of the winning team - Hawally. Sayed Anwar from Head Office Team was awarded as the Highest Scorer and Anwar Kathat from Telecom Team was the Man of the Series. The Head Office Team won the award for the Best

Uniform. Commenting on the event, Hani Ismael - Group Human Resources Director for TSC said: "It was amazing watching our fellow partners in the field, playing in the cricket tournament, a game that involves short-term tactics and long-term strategy. The players showcased great team spirit, competitiveness and joy. These are the attributes that reflects the values that we live in the workplace at TSC and illustrates the objective of organizing such tournaments that always support the TSC Together strategy. We also aim to provide more such opportunities to the employees to increase interdepartmental interaction and bonding beyond work. Congratulations to the champions and off course to all the teams who participated in making this tournament a great success."

The recently established TSC Employees Sports and Social Committee aims to foster team spirit along with the opportunity to share common activities. TSC Together members worked diligently to deliver a successful event, for all TSC employees to enjoy in an environment that embraces teamwork through fun and engaging activities.

## AIP OFFICIALS CALL ON INDIAN AMBASSADOR

Officials of Association of Indian Professionals (AIP) called on Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain and briefed him of the election of new Executive Board of the AIP, Kuwait. AIP's new Chairman Umesh

Sharma presented the list of the new office-bearers to the ambassador. Umesh Sharma is the new chairman and Dr Kamlesh Kumari is the new general secretary. Other Executive board members are:

Treasurer: Umesh Shahani, Joint Secretary: Sajeev K Peter, Jagdish Joshi and A R Subbaraman are executive members.







Mohammad Al-Duwailah, Senior Manager of Capital Markets at KFH



Group photo with the participants.

## KFH SPONSORS SEMINAR AT AUK ON PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF SUKUK IN FINANCIAL MARKETS

Following the presentation by the Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Chairman, Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq, at the American University of Kuwait (AUK) in October, KFH has elected to sponsor a Sukuk Seminar entitled "Practical Applications of Sukuk in the Financial Markets". This comes as part of their CSR and Youth Education Initiative. The seminar was delivered by Mohammad Al-Duwailah, Senior Manager of Capital Markets at KFH. The seminar was organized by the Center for Continuing Education (CCE) in coordination with the College of Business and Economics (CBE), which provided review of outline, content and seminar materials.

CBE was keen in having committed senior students, particularly in Accounting, Economics and Finance, participate in this seminar. Although the majority of participants were AUK business students, few faculty mem-

bers and several external stakeholders (adult learners) attended the seminar as well. The seminar was held at the Auditorium, where CCE capped enrollment at 40 to ensure close interaction and engagement.

The 4-hour seminar introduced participants to Sukuk as an alternative savings and investment option, and covered topics such as the types and structures of Sukuk, primary and secondary markets of Sukuk, risks associated with Sukuk, and an assessment of newly emerging trends in the Sukuk markets. Attendees also learned about the practical applications of Sukuk in financial markets.

As the market is currently \$300 billion-strong, and growing, and the fact that almost half of banks in Kuwait are Islamic, the seminar was ideal for business students with career ambitions in the investment and banking sectors. Students who attended the seminar received Certificates of Participation, cosigned

by KFH and CCE. "Success of this 4-hour seminar is potentially a stepping stone for further on-campus educational and training opportunities which can add value to the portfolio of skills and enrich the learning experiences of our students," said Dr Ali Aljamil, Chair of the Department of Economics, who coordinated CBE efforts.

"As we strive to achieve AACSB accreditation, this seminar strongly supports our pursuit and sends a message about our commitment to the academic and business community at large. I admire and appreciate KFH's Youth Education Initiative. I am very proud of and optimistic for our continued AUK-KFH collaboration and hope it will become a model for the town-and-gown relations in Kuwait," added Professor Jin Wang, Dean of the College of Business and Economics.



Images from the workshop.



## ESF ROCKS AUDIENCE WITH 'GREASE'

This year's major school production at the English School Fahaheel (ESF) was the spectacular musical 'Grease,' which was staged on two nights at the school's Lloyd Webber Theatre. The amazing music was obviously the highlight of this timeless production as the songs were beautifully rendered by the entire cast some of whom are Drama and Music IGCSE and A/S Level candidates. The music of 'Grease' was played by the talented band on drums, bass guitar and piano.

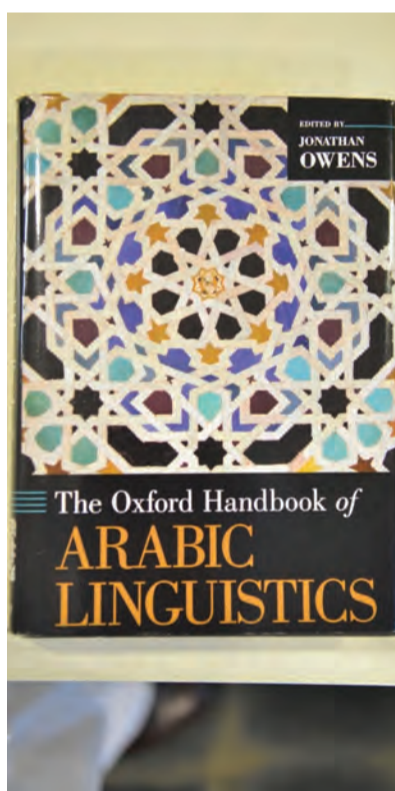
The cast was headed by Sara Shuaiber who played Sandy and Jared Munar played Danny. Reem Zeidan did an amazing job as Rizzo. Hiba Jamal played Marty, Sara Noun was Jan and the Beauty school dropout Frenchie was played by Farah Ghoubar. Mahmoud did an outstanding job as

Kenickie as the audience clapped and cheered as he sang the timeless 'Grease Lightning.'

As the curtains opened the specially constructed set took us back in the time to the rocking 50s as the drama of Grease unfolds. The props even included a replica of the Grease Lightning car!

Many months of preparation went into bringing this production to the audiences. A big thank you to the Director Mullah, Music Director Ms. Van Zitters and Kippie for the amazing choreography without which Grease wouldn't be the same. A big thank you also to all parents, students and ESF staff who helped make this production possible.

## GUST HOLDS LECTURE ON ARABIC LINGUISTICS



(From Left) Dr Talal Al-Jassar, Dr Jonathan Owens, Shobhita Kohli.

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) held a lecture recently titled "Linguistic Principles: Why Should We Study Arab Grammarians?" The lecture was given by Dr Jonathan Owens from the University of Bayreuth in Germany, and was organized by Dr Talal Al-Jassar, a Lecturer in Arabic Language and Linguistic at the College of Arts of Kuwait University.

The lecture aimed to inform students on the interest of the western studies about Arabic grammar; the speaker explored the Arabic linguistic traditions by explaining the methodology of famous Arab linguists, such as Ibn Al-Sarraj, Ibn Al-Anbari and Sibawaih, and compared it to similar ideas from contemporary western lin-

guistic logic. Following his lecture, Dr Owens presented a copy of his book, "The Handbook of Arabic Linguistics", to Library Director Shobhita Kohli. Dr Jonathan Owens is a renowned Professor and a widely published author in the field of Arabic Linguistics. His past experience includes working with the Center for Advanced Study of Language as a Senior Research Scientist at the University of Maryland in the United States. As well as teaching in numerous Arabic speaking countries and Sub-Saharan Africa, such as Libya, Jordan and Nigeria. Dr Owens is currently the President of Arab Studies at the University of Bayreuth in Germany.



Professor Dr Jonathan Owens

## AOU OPENS ADMISSION FOR SUMMER SEMESTER

The Public Relations and Media Unit at the Arab Open University (AOU) - Kuwait Branch announced that AOU opens admissions for the summer semester of the academic year 2015/2016 through applying online via [www.aou.edu.kw](http://www.aou.edu.kw) in one of the following BA degrees (Business Administration, English language and literature, Information Technology and Computing).

Ghazi Al-Enezi, Head of Public Relations and Media Unit at AOU- Kuwait Branch, said the University welcomes all students who are willing to join it, adding there are certain admission conditions to apply such as high school certificate with 60 percentage or 2.00 GPA or above, and the students with less

percentage or GPA may apply with the exception of receiving their high school certificate 4 years prior to their admission plus 4 years of work experience. He pointed out that students must have a scientific major high school to apply for Information Technology and Computing Major.

He also affirmed that the AOU Kuwait Branch strives to apply the vision and mission of the University to be a pioneering in building the knowledge and science society, which seeks to develop and disseminate knowledge and build expertise according to international quality standards irrespective of time and space in order to contribute to preparing required manpower for suitable development in Kuwait.



Ghazi Al-Enezi

### Bangladesh Embassy

#### BANGLADESH EMBASSY CLOSURE

The Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in Kuwait will remain closed on Thursday, May 5, 2016 on the occasion of Holy Shab-e Me'raz.





The International Women's Group (IWG) hosted a monthly meeting during which the spouse of the Ambassador of Jordan to Kuwait gave a demonstration about her country's culture and traditions.

# IWG'S CALENDAR OF EVENTS



The International Women's Group (IWG) hosted an event to welcome its new members who joined this year.





The International Women's Group (IWG) hosted a monthly meeting during which the spouse of the Ambassador of Russia to Kuwait gave a demonstration about her country's culture and traditions.



The International Women's Group (IWG) hosted a monthly meeting during which the spouse of the Ambassador of Peru to Kuwait gave a demonstration about her country's culture and traditions.







Model Jourdan Dunn in Balmain.



Singer Demi Lovato in Moschino by Jeremy Scott



Supermodel Cindy Crawford.



Model Alessandra Ambrosio in Balmain.



Ivanka Trump in Ralph Lauren jumpsuit-dress combination.

# MET FASHION EXHIBIT EXPLORES DIALOGUE BETWEEN HAND AND MACHINE

While metallics reign on the tech-heavy Met Gala Red Carpet



Supermodel Karolina Kurkova in a Marchesa creation and accompanied by co-designer of the brand Georgina Chapman.

For decades, argues Andrew Bolton, the star curator of blockbuster fashion exhibits at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, we've all been looking at fashion through a flawed prism. We've assumed, he says, that hand-made garments are better, purer, fancier, more luxurious. And that machine-made garments are inherently inferior, even mediocre.



We're wrong, Bolton says, and his new Met exhibit opening this week, "Manus x Machina: Fashion in an Age of Technology," seeks to prove that the machine is an "equal protagonist" to the hand in creating the best fashions of our recent past, our present and our future. "To me, it doesn't matter if a good designer makes a garment by hand or by machine," he said in a recent interview. "It's really about what result you want, what's your desired effect, and sometimes you can achieve it better by machine than by hand. So this exhibit (aims) to debunk the myths ... but also to come up with a new paradigm for fashion."

Bolton introduced his new exhibit to the media on Monday just hours before the annual Met gala, the hugely star-studded charity gala run by influential Vogue editor Anna Wintour for her 18th time this year. The evening brings in millions for the museum, and the red carpet is always a dizzying display of luminaries of film, music, sports and of course fashion.

Regular folks who aren't famous enough to score an invite to the gala can simply come see the exhibit beginning May 5. They'll be greeted, first, by a stunning wedding dress by Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel's 2014 couture collection with a massive golden train that, for Bolton, exemplifies the best sort of hand-



Actress Kate Hudson in a custom dress by Donatella Versace.



Canadian TV presenter Keltie Knight.

machine fusion. The dress - made of a synthetic fabric called scuba knit - was hand-molded, machine-sewn, and then hand-finished, with intricate embroidery in pearls and gemstones that form a glittering baroque pattern. "In total, the train required 450 hours of workmanship," Bolton says - and yet the machine process was as integral to the overall effect as the handiwork.

Bolton says he was inspired to create the exhibit, which covers fashions from as early as the late 19th century to the present, when he examined Yves Saint Laurent's famous 1965 "Mondrian" dress, reflecting the linear designs of the Dutch painter, in the museum's archives. "We discovered it was made almost entirely by machine," he said Monday. He was surprised.

Some of the garments in "Manus x Machina," which is sponsored by Apple, are made mostly by hand, and some mostly or even entirely by machine. But most of them - from a diverse grouping of the world's greatest designers - are a combination of both.

The British designer Gareth Pugh, for example, presents two dresses from his recent collection that are made of plastic drink-



Actor and co-host of this year's event Idris Elba wearing Tom Ford.



Recording artist Zayn Malik with his girlfriend supermodel Gigi Hadid both wearing Versace.

NEW YORK: Beyonce in a custom latex Givenchy creation by Riccardo Tisci. — AP photos





Actress Sarah Jessica Parker and TV personality Andy Cohen.



Reality Star Kim Kardashian in Balmain.



Singer The Weeknd with girlfriend model Bella Hadid both in Givenchy by Riccardo Tisci.



Uma Thurman in a Tommy Hilfiger gown and brooch by Cartier.



Model turned Actress Emily Ratajkowski



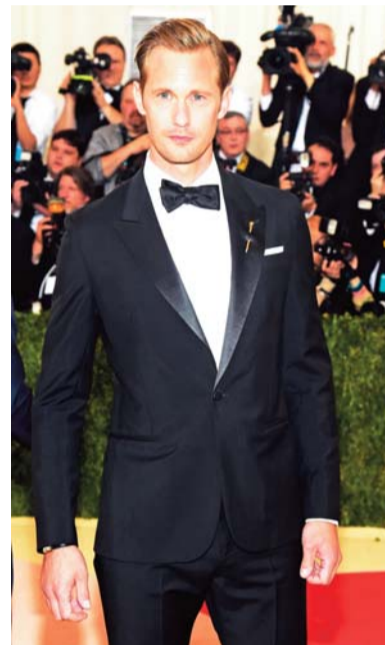
American Vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour in a Chanel Spring 2016 Couture dress and daughter Bee Shaffer in Alexander McQueen by Sarah Burton.



Lupita Nyong'o donning a custom Calvin Klein dress.



Actress Clara Danes in a Zac Posen creation.



Actor Alexander Skarsgard.



Actor Jared Leto in a custom Gucci creation.



Actor Andrew Rannells.

ing straws, one in all black and one in all white. "Every straw was cut by hand," the designer explains in accompanying notes. They were attached, each individually, to a shift of machine-sewn black silk and wool.

On the more classic side, there's a 1953 Dior haute couture dress - machine sewn, and hand-finished with stunning artificial flowers, clover and grass in green, pink and purple silk floss. One would be hard pressed to imagine there's a machine-made element to it, but that's Bolton's point: Haute couture and ready-to-wear are overly strict definitions, in his view.

"The gap is diminishing," he said in the interview. "Think about Sarah Burton (of the Alexander McQueen label). The embroidery is unbelievable, but it's still seen as ready-to-wear. To me the primary difference between haute couture and ready-to-wear is fit. Couture has always been about making a piece of clothing designed to fit one body, and ready-to-wear is about creating standardized sizes to fit many body types. But in terms of the finishing, in terms of the craftsmanship involved, that gap is diminishing. Do we even NEED two categories?"

As if to prove Bolton's point, a section of the exhibit on lace-work includes the most traditional of items - an 1870 Irish wedding dress, for example, of hand-crocheted cotton lace, designer unidentified - and the most modern, but equally intricate. One white dress looks like it's made of laser-cut leather, but actually it's crafted from foam. The garment, by designer Thom Browne, was cut by a machine, sewn by a machine, and finished by a machine. "It's very rare for me to make an item of clothing in which the hand is absent entirely," Browne writes. But he adds: "I love the precision and perfection of machine-made clothes just as much as I love the imprecision and imperfection of handmade clothes."

**The Red Carpet**

The Met Gala red carpet gleamed on Monday with sparkly metallics and shiny, futuristic-looking fabrics as stars paid homage to this year's technology-centered theme.

As always, guests included stars of film, music, television, sports, politics and of course fashion. And one of the biggest was Beyonce, who provided the finale to the red carpet show, just like last year. The pop superstar - with husband Jay Z nowhere in sight - wore a peach-hued, puffed-sleeved latex gown by Givenchy. Asked how difficult it was to get into the gown, the singer replied that it was "a lot easier than last year," referring to her barely there look from last season, also by Givenchy.

Katy Perry wore a black Prada with clunky gold embellishments and a long train, an old-school Tamagotchi digital pet on her belt as what she called her "tech contribution," and her hair done in a high black beehive. Taking the exhibit's theme to the next level, Karolina Kurkova wore a "cognitive dress" in partnership between Marchesa and IBM. The dusty blue tulle gown with a high-low hemline included 150 hand-placed LED lights. The dress changed hues based on an IBM analysis of various emotions expressed by users on social media.

And "Homeland" actress Claire Danes also wore a tech-driven garment - a "fiber optic" organza Cinderella gown in dove gray by Zac Posen. Her husband, actor Hugh Dancy, happily explained to onlookers the science behind Danes' illuminated dress, which Posen said was made "from fiber-optic woven organza which was sourced from France." Fashion's doyenne Anna Wintour, the powerful Vogue editor who was running the Met gala for the 18th year, kicked off the red-carpet proceedings in a fringed, white body-hugging gown by Chanel.

The strong show of silver, copper and other metallic looks - emphasizing the machine part of the evening's equation, as well as referencing technology - included Poppy Delevingne in low-cut silver tiered spangles and jewels on a Marchesa gown.

On the eve of the Tony Award nominations, Sarah Jessica Parker honored the anticipated big winner, "Hamilton," with her own Founding Father coat and knee-length pants with gold buttons, all based on the look of Hamilton himself in the first act of Lin-Manuel Miranda's megahit musical. The look was created by designers Fernando Garcia and Laura Kim of the Monse label. Parker said she had already known she wanted to wear trousers. Then, attending a recent performance of "Hamilton" with her two daughters, it came to her. She found herself examining the proportions of the men's costumes, designed by Paul Tazwell. "And I said, that's what I'm doing," she recounted. Parker paired the look with blue heels, adorned with brooches she found in her own closet. Uma Thurman paired her creamy Tommy Hilfiger gown with a huge vintage brooch from Cartier pinned to one shoulder strap. Kylie Jenner wore Balmain for an Old Hollywood gown in silver, while her sister Kendall boasted a slinky Versace gown with a blue and white geometric design and sexy side cutouts. Lupita Nyong'o donned a custom Calvin Klein Collection jade sequin dress with velvet straps, her hair standing high in a conical hairdo. Ivanka Trump, meanwhile, chose a red Ralph Lauren jumpsuit-dress combination.

There were some attention-getters among the men, too. Idris Elba, one of the evening's co-hosts, wore a white tie and black tails from Tom Ford. So how does he get ready for the Met Gala, he was asked? "Take your time. Make sure your shirt's down and the whites of the cuffs are out," he said. Zayn Malik and the silver metal arms on his dark suit appeared to channel the Winter Soldier, as in the movie "Captain America: The Winter Soldier." Or a droid. Take your pick. He escorted Gigi Hadid. Jared Leto wore a custom Gucci white tailcoat with a white evening shirt and white bowtie, completing his look with a hand-carved black lacquer cane with a silver and crystal embellished cat head detail. He also had Florence Welch, in Gucci, as his date. — AP

## Pieces from the 'Manus x Machina: Fashion in the Age of Technology' exhibit



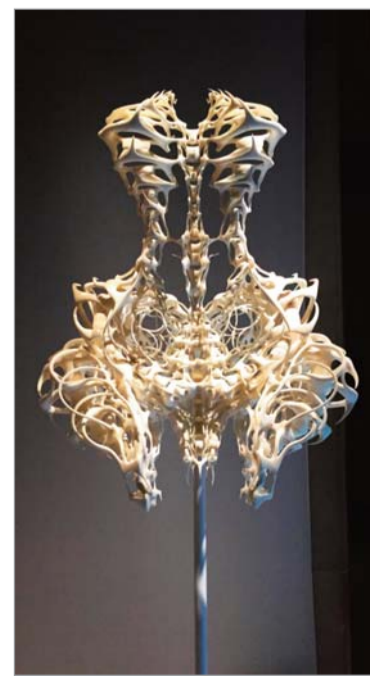
A woman looks at dresses displayed as part of the exhibit.



NEW YORK: A wedding gown train by Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel's 2015 Patrimoine Collection is displayed as part of the "Manus x Machina: Fashion in the Age of Technology," exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Monday.—AP photos



An embroidered gown is displayed as part of the exhibit.



A 3-D printed dress by Iris van Herpen.



A machine-made dress by Thom Browne, made of EVA foam, is displayed as part of the exhibit.



# ICONIC launches its Summer 2016 Collection

Summer 2016 at ICONIC presents an array of trends for the new season. ICONIC's women's collection comprises of this season's must-haves.

The key trends in the women's collection this season include RebelSoul filled with distinctive designs, materials and craftsmanship with a jet set aesthetic that combines with stylish elegance. Expect preppy yacht clubbing essentials and clingy knit dresses with their sexy strappy backs. There is high emphasis on fabrics like modal, lace, knit and linen. Simple, clean silhouettes mark a key trend in the season in a color palette of tangerine, beige and navy. Key Pieces include Suede Wrap Culottes, Suede with eyelet detail tank top and patterned lace Maxi with Eyelet criss-cross detail.

Rhythm cascade - TEA AT RITZ is a collection of pleated, high-waisted dresses to accentuate the female form, while contrasting textures on ladylike ensembles lend an eccentric ambience to this look. Both demure and daring this collection is laced with bursting blooms with fresh aesthetics of colors like valiant poppy. Key pieces include lace and print mix fit and flare dress embroidered lace peplum top.

Tribe beat- RIVER GAUCHE is a trend which draws inspiration from Parisian Left Bank girls' unapologetically bohemian, free-spirited way of life, creating a new take on 1970s-influenced looks. Classic looks are reworked with contemporary details and volume, while kick-flares are cropped and more streamlined, modernizing the look. The collection's delicate aesthetic intertwines with the African tribal energy with use of soft and bold colors like champagne, and Tibetan red. Key Pieces include Tassel suede sleeveless jacket and tassel suede asymmetrical pencil skirt.

The New West collection, step out in chic separates and flowing silhouettes with bohemian undertones. The look is inspired by the 70's boho trend with the classic shapes taking center stage in a clean and streamlined casual line. A must have for the season, look dreamy in all white and white paired with indigo for the perfect summer. Can't go wrong in patterned lace, viscose jacquard, and cotton gauze and crushed crepe. Embroidered lace, china mosaic tile inspired print are some such details that create that statement. Key Pieces include Printed Kimono top, Lace wide leg trousers and Strappy lace maxi dress.

Poolside glam is influenced by tropical and Latin themes, this trend intermixes Caribbean florals, rich foliage and for an electrifying mix of color and print creating an elusive combination of styles with fabrics such as silky chiffon, high density crepe being used in key pieces



Pieces from ICONIC's Summer 2016 Collection

like evening gown, jumpsuits, blazers, dresses. Glam factor is upped with the use of embellishments and snake trims for that touch of drama in a rich color palette of green, almond brown and caviar black. Key Pieces include One shoulder jumpsuit and Column maxi dress with metal snake trim.

Asian Fantasia is all about bold fusion of exotic orient and Sicilian suave. Cultural representation is big in the collection as clothes can be seen depicting a parade of dragons, swallows darted through bamboos and Chinese emperors clothes. Having said that, the pieces do not lose their integrity as commercial ready to wear pieces inspite of the heavy oriental influence. Colors are red, yellows mixed harmoniously with whites and blues. The shapes are very relaxed to give a feel of ease as fabrics are dobies and knits structures. The look and feel of the collec-

tion is cross pollinating with modernism and athleticism. Key Pieces include Eastern floral & Palaces Prints T-shirts and vests, Base Ball varsity Shirt, Knit Textured Shirts and Suits

Refined Nautical nautical trend takes its references from the 50s with a mystical and edgy outlook. Expect to see a sharp and tailored look for the man with the collection leaning towards casual tailoring with contemporary silhouettes. Shake up your nautical look with prints that will make a bold statement like sea monster repeats, tattoo like placement's and standard nautical imagery. Color palette is wide with cowhide, medieval blue and chambray blue as the key colors for the trend. Key Pieces include Double breasted jacket, Ankle length trousers and Coated joggers

TROPICOOOL is a vibrant trend that never fails to add that spunk to your wardrobe. The tropicool trend spells a long

idyllic tropical holiday with the collection consisting of functional and accessible clothing. Prints dominate the trend with tropical prints with palm trees, big florals and leaves prints on key pieces. Key Pieces include Floral T shirts, Sun dried color shirts, Printed Shorts, Laundered Walk Shorts

Bright color dyed Joggers, Blocking and Destination graphics Head over to ICONIC and shop our latest Spring Summer collection available at The Avenues, The Mall, Level 1 and at Salam Mall in Salmiya .Opening Soon in Sama Mall.

## Odom's father kicked out of home after Khloe stopped paying his rent

Joe Odom, 62, has moved back to Brooklyn from Los Angeles after Khloe - who called off her divorce to Lamar last year following his collapse at a Nevada brothel - allegedly cut him off.

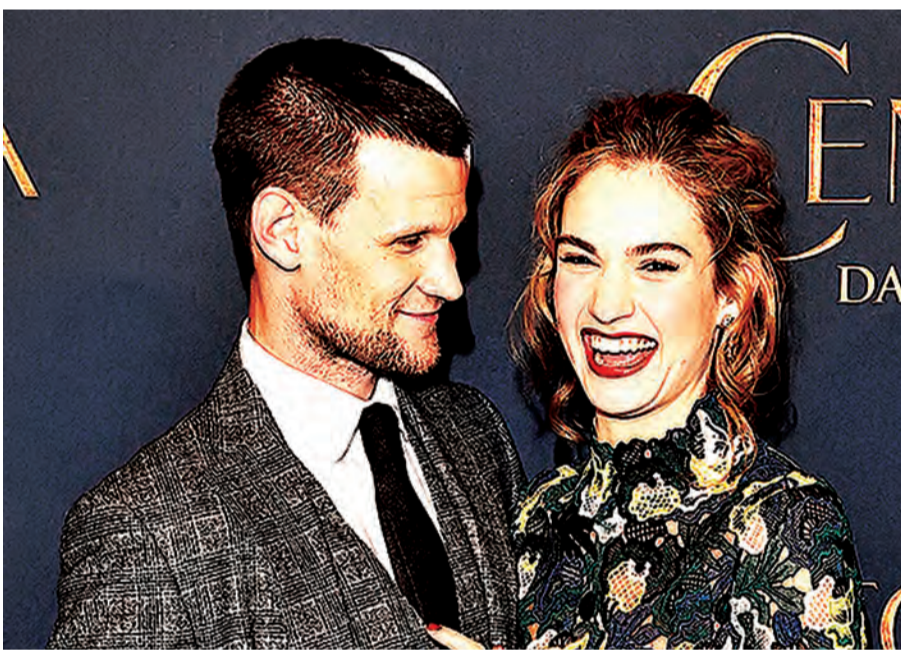
He told the New York Post's Page Six: "Khloe didn't even have the guts to tell me herself that my rent wasn't going to be paid anymore. She got the guys who handle Lamar's money to call me and they said the rent wouldn't be paid, I gotta move

and my phone was going to get cut off. She disrespected me. She decided to kick me out of my home when Lamar was in hospital in Nevada."

Khloe has been looking after Lamar while he recuperates following his collapse after a drugs and alcohol binge, but Joe insists he just wants to look after his son. He said: "I just wish I could be at his side in LA to support him, but Khloe doesn't want me there," the broken-up father said.

"Whenever I call him, she answers. She must be checking his texts, too. I can't always get through to him anymore. She may be Lamar's wife, but I'm his father. She shouldn't have cut me out of his life like she has."

Former basketball player Lamar Odom and his father Joe Odom.



Actors Matt Smith and Lily James.

## Matt Smith and Lily James have moved in together

The couple - who have been dating for two years - are living together in Matt's London home and couldn't be happier. A source told the Sun on Sunday: "They are head over heels and both think they have found the one. Lily moved into Matt's London home and there's been no arguing over who's hogging the bathroom cupboards - yet."

Meanwhile, Lily, 27, previously revealed she loved working with Matt, 33, on comedy horror movie 'Pride and Prejudice and Zombies'. She said: "He just made me laugh

all the time. I actually loved being able to talk about work. It was great that he had to propose to me [in the movie]."

Lily also admitted she was initially reluctant to join the Burr Steers-directed movie, but was convinced after reading the script. She said: "When I saw the e-mail from my agent, I was like, 'This sounds terrible!' Then within 20 pages of the script, I thought, 'This is so cool! Somehow these two worlds join together, and it's a riot.'"

## Jane Fonda: TV Acting is 'An entirely different animal'

The stars of Netflix's "Grace and Frankie" celebrated new beginnings at its season two premiere Sunday afternoon with a screening at the Harmony Gold Theatre in West Hollywood.

The two episodes screened included the show's usual mix of comedy and pathos. The series picks up moments after the end of season one as Sol (Sam Waterston) is returning home to Robert (Martin Sheen) after having sex with ex-wife Frankie (Lily Tomlin). No spoilers here, but as in life, a curveball is thrown that interrupts the main characters' best laid plans.

Tomlin said she and longtime friend and costar Jane Fonda have gotten along famously for more than 35 years-without having "too many quarrels." Fonda, best known for her film roles, described television acting as foreign territory for her. "Episodic TV is an entirely different animal: being in every episode, working very long hours, not entirely knowing the arc of the entire season, having to learn lines very quickly," she shared.

Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin's Off Screen Friendship Led to 'Grace & Frankie' Waterston-who led 'Law & Order' for 16 years - offered advice about what he's learned from a long career in television acting. "The opportunity to have a good time should never be turned down," he revealed.

The after-party was an intimate gathering at The Church Key, where Fonda was surrounded by friends at her booth. Enjoying the party from her section, Fonda occasionally put her head on boyfriend Richard Perry's shoulder and chatted with guests such as singer-songwriter Carole King.

Waterston added, "When I first started out, I did nothing but comedies and I was afraid I'd get stuck there. So I struggled and got myself taken seriously, then no one would let me tell a joke. Finally, someone's letting me tell a joke again and it's really good." Waterston was all smiles as he mingled with friends and well-wishers, while attorney Gloria Allred chatted and took photos with "Grace and Frankie" co-creator and exec producer Marta Kauffman and her kids. Kauffman's daughter, Hannah, is an associate producer on the show, and her son, Sam, works on the music.



More cast members schmoozing included a glowing, pregnant June Diane Raphael with husband Paul Scheer, Ernie Hudson (returning this season as Frankie's boyfriend,) Peter Cambor, Baron Vaughn, Ethan Embry and Brooklyn Decker. Season two of the Netflix original series debuts May 6 on Netflix. — Reuters

LOS ANGELES: Jane Fonda (L) and Lily Tomlin (R) attend the Season 2 Premiere of Grace and Frankie on Sunday. — AFP



Kit Harington on the set 'Game of Thrones' where he plays the role of Jon Snow.

## 'Game of Thrones': Kit Harington Breaks Silence After Jon Snow Reveal

(SPOILER ALERT: Do not read until you've watched the second episode of season six of "Game of Thrones," titled "Home.")

The wait is finally over. After almost a year of suspense, "Game of Thrones" finally revealed Jon Snow's fate on Sunday night's episode. The Lord Commander is alive, after all, despite star Kit Harington's insistence that he died in the season five finale at the hands of the Night's Watch and Alliser Thorne. He apologized for lying to fans in an exclusive interview with Entertainment Weekly as part of this week's cover story on his revival.

"Sorry!" Harington said, when asked by EW what he'd like to tell his fans. "I'd like to say sorry to lying to everyone. I'm glad that people were upset that he died. I think my biggest fear was that people were not going to care. Or

it would just be, 'Fine, Jon Snow's dead.' But it seems like people had a similar to the 'Red Wedding' episode-kind of grief about it. Which means something I'm doing-or the show is doing-is right."

In "Home," Davos Seaworth (Liam Cunningham) convinces the sorceress Melisandre (Carice van Houten) to resurrect Jon Snow. "Do you know of any magic that could help bring him back?" he asks her. She washes his body, cuts his hair and trims his beard before reciting an incantation. Her efforts initially seem to be in vain, but Jon soon opens his eyes and takes panicked breaths. — Reuters



# Malabar Gold & Diamonds opens its 150th outlet globally

**B**ollywood Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan launched 150th outlet of Malabar Gold & Diamonds on 30 April in the presence of M.P. Ahammed, Chairman -Malabar Group; Asher. O, Managing Director - India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; KP Abdul Salam, Group Executive Director, Malabar Gold & Diamonds; other well-wishers, guests and invited media.

A huge gathering of over 20,000 residents of Belgavi thronged the venue to witness the inauguration and to see their favorite celebrity. This elegant showroom conveniently located in Belgavi is the 81st store in India and 150th internationally. Like all other Malabar Gold & Diamonds outlets, this showroom will

also display a significantly large collection of traditional as well as contemporary jewelry in gold, certified diamonds, platinum and precious stone jewelry from across the world that can hold you spell-bound with their awe-inspiring beauty for the jewelry lovers in India.

"It is indeed a proud moment for all of us at Malabar Gold & Diamonds. The inauguration of our 150th store reaffirms our leadership in jewelry retailing and is a strong motivator to continue our journey in achieving many such landmark milestones in the future as well," said Ahammed.



Bollywood Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan and Mr. M.P. Ahammed, Chairman of the Malabar Group launched 150th outlet of Malabar Gold & Diamonds by cutting the ribbon on the 30th of April.



NEW YORK: Kate Upton arrives at The Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute Benefit Gala on Monday. — AP photos

## KATE UPTON is engaged

**K**ate Upton has announced her engagement to baseball star Justin Verlander. The 23-year-old supermodel and actress took to the red carpet at last night's Met Gala in New York City to show off her ring. She tells E! News that the 33-year-old Detroit Tigers pitcher asked her just before the baseball season started and she's "excited to finally be able to share it with the world."

E! reports that Upton and Verlander have been dating for more than three years. As for a date for the nuptials, Upton tells E! they're simply "enjoying the engagement period." — AP



NEW YORK: Kate Upton wears an engagement ring as she arrives at The Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute Benefit Gala on Monday.

## Obama not offended by comedian's language



WASHINGTON: Larry Wilmore, left, guest host from Comedy Central, and first lady Michelle Obama, right, listen to the National Anthem at the annual White House Correspondents' Association dinner at the Washington Hilton on Saturday. — AP

**T**he White House said on Monday that President Barack Obama wasn't offended by comedian Larry Wilmore's use of a racial slur at Saturday night's White House Correspondents' Association dinner. Wilmore concluded his remarks noting progress on race and how much it meant to him that a black man was president. He concluded: "Yo Barry, you did it, my n——. You did it."

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said he talked with Obama, and Obama appreciated the spirit of racial progress Wilmore was trying to convey. Earnest said the White House didn't see Wilmore's speech beforehand. Earnest also said he's confident Wilmore used the word by design and was seeking to be provocative. But Earnest said any fair reading makes clear that Wilmore's sentiments of racial progress "came from a genuine place."

Wilmore, on his Comedy Central show Monday, noted: "Like the president himself, the reaction was mixed," a joking reference to Obama's black father and white mother. "I completely understand why people would be upset about that," Wilmore said on "The Nightly Show." "It's a very charged word - I get it."

He said one critic, former CNN host Piers Morgan, had misquoted him by saying Wilmore used the word ending in "er." Instead, Wilmore pointed out he used it ending in "a," which he said was a term of endearment some black people use between each other to take back the power of the word to denigrate. — AP

# Hollywood film to revisit events on Chappaquiddick in 1969 that rocked the Kennedy political dynasty

**D**uring a week in which the eyes of the nation were focused on NASA's first moon landing, a tragic drama played out on a tiny Massachusetts island that would have political ramifications for decades to follow. The late Democratic Sen. Edward Kennedy's actions, explanations and motives in the hours and days after a car he was driving slipped off Chappaquiddick's Dike Bridge on July 18, 1969, killing Mary Jo Kopechne, have been explored in numerous articles, books and documentaries. Now, the groundwork is being laid for an independent feature film that will perhaps rekindle questions lingering for nearly a half-century.

Australian-born "Zero Dark Thirty" star Jason Clarke will portray Kennedy in "Chappaquiddick" - the film's working title - and John Curran, whose credits include "The Painted Veil," will direct, said the movie's co-producer and Apex Entertainment president and chief executive Mark Ciardi. Production is slated to begin around Labor Day with a tentative release in late 2017.

"In some parts it will be educational, that, wow, in 1969 this happened, with the moon landing in the backdrop, this event happened and how everything kind of played out after that," said Ciardi, noting that younger generations may know little about the story.

Concentrating on the immediate aftermath of the

accident, the film will contain elements of political and legal intrigue, but Ciardi adds: "I certainly wouldn't characterize it as just a political movie at all."

Kennedy went to Martha's Vineyard to race in the Edgartown Regatta and that evening attended a party at a rented house on serene and picturesque Chappaquiddick, which is separated from the Vineyard by a narrow strait and accessed by a small, barge-like ferry. Guests included Kennedy friends and several women, including Kopechne, who had worked on the presidential campaign of his brother Robert F. Kennedy, assassinated a year earlier.

Kennedy and Kopechne, 28, left the party together and a short time later the car plunged into Poucha Pond. Kennedy escaped from the submerged vehicle and said he made several futile attempts to rescue Kopechne, who was trapped inside.

Kennedy, who later described his failure to report the incident to police for nine hours as "indefensible," pleaded guilty to leaving the scene of an accident and was given a two-month suspended sentence. A grand jury was convened but no indictments were returned.

Chappaquiddick would cast a long shadow over Kennedy's storied US Senate career and likely helped thwart hopes of winning the presidency.

In his memoir, "True Compass," published shortly after his death from brain cancer in 2009, Kennedy acknowledged that many people remained skeptical and others "contemptuous" of his explanations surrounding the accident. "I've had to live with that guilt for forty years," Kennedy wrote. "But my burden is nothing compared to her (Kopechne) loss and the suffering her family had to endure."

Producers are currently scouting locations for filming, according to Ciardi, who would not say if Chappaquiddick itself was a possible site. Local officials say no request has been made to film on the island, which has changed little over time. The only vague reminder of the long-ago events are guardrails added to Dike Bridge to help prevent similar tragedies.

Kennedy's widow, Victoria Reggie Kennedy, did not return a call seeking comment on the film. Ciardi said he has not reached out to the Kennedy family and isn't concerned about any potential backlash. "What you try to do is have a portrayal of a story that, you know, feels fair and accurate," he said. — AP



EDGARTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS: The wreckage of US Sen. Edward Kennedy's car after being pulled from the water next to the Dike Bridge on Chappaquiddick Island in Martha's Vineyard on July 19, 1969.



EDGARTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS: A photographer standing on the Dike Bridge on Jan. 7, 1970.



EDGARTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS: Mary Jo Kopechne, who was killed after US Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., drove a car off the Dyke Bridge on Chappaquiddick Island in Martha's Vineyard on July 18, 1969.



HYANNIS PORT, MASSACHUSETTS: US Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., arriving back at his home, after attending the funeral of Mary Jo Kopechne in Pennsylvania on July 22, 1969. — AP photos





GAZA: Palestinian children play on a tree as the sun sets on May 2, 2016, in the Jabalia refugee camp. — AFP

## 'Magnificent 7' revives forgotten story of black cowboys

From the chiseled, insouciant Robert Mitchum and the rugged, laconic Clint Eastwood to John Wayne, the most celebrated cowboy of all, Hollywood's Western icons are invariably strong, brooding-and white.

The roles they play, too-legendary frontiersmen like Jesse James, Billy the Kid and Wyatt Earp-are typically ranchers, lawmen or outlaws battling for money or land on behalf of White America.

It is little surprise then that the racial

as his leading man. "I said it needs to be an event and it needs to be something we haven't seen-and more diverse. I said Denzel should play the lead role," Fuqua said during a recent visit by AFP to his Los Angeles edit suite.

Fuqua's film is a reimagining of the 1960 western starring Steve McQueen-which in turn was a remake of Akira Kurosawa's Japanese-language epic "Seven Samurai."

Released in the United States through Sony in September, the movie follows

### Compounding ignorance

"Now it's just not the white cowboy, the white soldier, but it's all of us together. It's white, black, Asian, Indians. It doesn't matter anymore... We all have to come together to fight tyranny," said Fuqua, 50.

The most cursory glance at documents chronicling America's pre-civil war period reveals that Fuqua's vision of the Wild West accords much more closely with reality than John Sturges's original "Magnificent Seven."

Many of the slaves brought over in the 17th and 18th centuries, familiar with cattle herding from their homelands in West Africa, carved out better lives on the open range. Black cowboys were working on ranches throughout Texas by the early 19th century, and many more were employed after the civil war to break horses and herd cattle across the rivers.

Yet this period is almost universally misrepresented as a part of "white history" in American schools, according to Jim Austin, president of the National Multicultural Western Heritage Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. "What we found is that if you talk to some (modern) cowboys they'll say 80 percent of the cowboys were actually people of color," Austin told AFP.

The accurate figure is probably closer to 40 percent across the Western Frontier, he said, while other historians put it at a more conservative one in four, and only in some parts of Texas.

### True America

Austin points to "The Lone Ranger," a fictional masked gunslinger on TV and radio-

and eventually cinema-who battles outlaws with his Native American sidekick Tonto, as an example of Hollywood compounding ignorance over race in the Old West.

The character is widely believed to have been inspired by Bass Reeves, a real-life black lawman who, legend has it, went through his entire career without being shot, despite bagging 3,000 outlaws.

"Hollywood took Bass's story and they flipped it, from an African-American man six feet two inches (1.88 meters), black hat, black horse, sidekick a Native American, always got his man-and turned it into 'The Lone Ranger,'" Austin said.

The historian said Hollywood feared prominent black characters would scare away white audiences, although studies of modern day movie going consistently show that films with diverse casts tend to do better at the box office.

The Oakland Black Cowboy Association, which stages an annual parade to raise awareness of the role of non-whites in settling the Old West, points out that people of all nationalities plied the great cattle trails and built the railroads.

The California group's spokesman, Andre Alporter, said Hollywood's predominantly white producers, writers and directors tend to "create stories and images that uplift them as a race. They are the heroes, they wear the white hats, they go into exploding buildings and save the planet," he said. "It's like white men did it all: I thought of it, I invented it, I created it, I built it. And that's not a representation of true America." — AFP



**HOLLYWOOD:** Denzel Washington arriving for the photo call of "Brooklyn's finest" at the Venice film festival on September 08, 2009. — AFP photos



**VENICE:** US director Antoine Fuqua poses during the photo call of "Brooklyn's finest" at the Venice film festival on September 08, 2009. — AFP photos

makeup of America's real Wild West-a melting pot of Europeans, Chinese, Mexicans, Native American and blacks-remains one of the country's best-kept secrets.

Filmmaker Antoine Fuqua, who is in post-production for the hotly-anticipated "Magnificent Seven" remake, is one of a few big directors pushing back, having cast long-time collaborator Denzel Washington

Quentin Tarantino's Westerns "Django Unchained" and "The Hateful Eight" among the few Hollywood hits about black cowboys. "The Magnificent Seven," which also features South Korea's Lee Byung-hun as well as white A-listers Ethan Hawke and Chris Pratt, follows the well-worn trope of a band of heroes defending a community against unscrupulous bandits.

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"I'm excited to be coming back to Cannes especially with this movie 'Hands of Stone' that I'm so proud of," said De Niro. "This movie is uplifting, triumphant and a good time for audiences, so I'm looking forward to seeing my friends from across the world of cinema in joining us for this fun event."

"Hands of Stone" is vintage De Niro. Anyone who knows

Bob, knows what a passion he has for boxing and his huge input into this movie made it very realistic and smart," added Harvey Weinstein.

He added: "On behalf of the company, we are thrilled that the Festival de Cannes chose to honor Bob this year with a special screening. It promises to be a fun time and a fantastic night to pay tribute to one of the great men of our industry." — Reuters

## Daniel Adams Forms \$50 Million Spiderworx Fund

Film director Daniel Adams and Nashville music producer Michael Flanders have teamed up to create Spiderworx Media, a \$50 million fund to produce theatrical motion pictures over the next several years.

"An L.A. Minute," co-written by Adams and former National Lampoon and High Times editor-in-chief, Larry "Ratso" Sloman, will be Adams' first film to under the partnership. The pic is a "satirical look at fame, success, the star-making machinery and the karma that attaches to all those who worship at the altar of celebrity," according to Adams.

Adams served 21 months in Massachusetts state prison for inflating expenses to obtain production tax credits on "The Lightkeepers," starring Richard Dreyfuss and Blythe Danner, and "The Golden Boys," starring David Carradine. He was released in 2013.

"L.A. Minute" will be for sale at Cannes. Spiderworx recently signed a deal with Hyde Park International, a division of Ashok Amritraj's Hyde Park Entertainment Group, to exclusively represent international sales.

"We are fully financing all of our films and are now actively making offers to actors for 'An L.A. Minute' and are looking forward to creating a full slate of films," Flanders said. The entity will also serve as a music publisher and fund. Flanders-the former head of Arctic/BMG Australia-will produce every project.

Adams will direct most of the projects, but will occasionally step back and hire other directors. Harris Tulchin ("The Devil's Double") has been appointed legal and business affairs council to Spiderworx and will serve as a producer on each project as well. Addams also directed "A Fool and His Money," starring Sandra Bullock; "The Mouse," with John Savage; and "Primary Motive," top lined by Judd Nelson. — Reuters

## Cannes Sets 'Hands of Stone' Special Screening as Tribute to Robert De Niro

Jonathan Jakubowicz's "Hands of Stone," one of The Weinstein Company's biggest swings of 2016, will receive an Official Selection Special Screening at this year's Cannes Festival as a tribute to Robert De Niro.

The May 16 Screening will be held in the Palais des Festivals' Grand Theatre Lumiere. Produced, distributed and sold internationally by The Weinstein Company, "Hands of Stone" tracks the rise to glory of Panamanian boxing legend Roberto Duran (Edgar Ramirez) and his celebrated

fighters with Sugar Ray Leonard. De Niro plays this manager and coach, Ray Arcel.

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Legendary Actor Robert De Niro