



Privatization only includes secondary oil industries: MP



EU proposes visa-free travel for Turks, but no 'free ride'



Riding on the Dubai property rollercoaster



Real tame Man City to reach Champions League final



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SPEAKER SAYS MP DASHTI'S SICK LEAVE CONSTITUTIONAL

'FUGITIVE' LAWMAKER LASHES OUT AT OPPONENTS



Min 25°
Max 42°
High Tide 09:20 & 21:54
Low Tide 02:50 & 15:51

conspiracy theories

WHY NOT THE WHOLE COUNTRY?



By Badrya Darwish
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Nothing thrills me like the suggestions of our honorable gentlemen in the parliament. I wish one day I wake up and see a suggestion in favor of Kuwait or the people living in Kuwait. It looks like all their suggestions are for private interests.

The latest of these brilliant ideas was a proposal made by five parliamentarians demanding full and complete segregation at all the universities, training institutes, authorities, etc. They want segregation not only in the classrooms, but also demand that the government build entirely separate campuses so that the university or school has full separate services including separate paths, separate courtyards, separate laboratories, separate libraries, separate teachers, separate registrars, separate everything.

I have a suggestion - why don't they ask to divide the country too? Why not just create a women's country and a men's country? We suggest that the prime minister also assign us a female shadow prime minister. In support of this idea, I also suggest that they close all social media outlets in Kuwait because men and women talk to each other there freely, share photos, share stories, etc. And since separating the Internet is impossible, we should just stop it completely.

Should we turn Kuwait into a Taliban-country? Are we a Taliban parliament? Instead of trying to segregate our children, why don't we teach them to respect each other? If kids mix from kindergarten or even earlier, they don't grow up having complexes or feeling awkward around the opposite sex. Instead of teaching our children self-control, we deny them normal interactions and then expect them to act normal.

May I remind the honorable gentlemen that we are not living in the 13th century. We are living in an era where the whole world is a village and no one travels more than Kuwaitis - we're lucky in this. So is there segregation wherever we fly and wherever we visit? Is there segregation in London or Paris or New York or Dubai or even in Makkah where we go for hajj and umrah?

Children grow up to work and boys and girls need to be able to work together professionally without feeling insecure or scared. These ideas are taking Kuwait backwards when other conservative countries are demanding to open up. Already, we are facing too many struggles. So wake up please and think of the future of Kuwait and developing the country to achieve its greatness.



DHAKA: HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets President of Bangladesh Mohammed Abdul Hamid yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 2)

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said yesterday that a request by controversial MP Abdulhameed Dashti for sick leave is in line with the constitution. The announcement saves Dashti from a vote in the Assembly to strip him of his parliamentary membership for not attending five consecutive Assembly sessions without a valid reason.

But the speaker said that constitutional experts informed him that the request by Dashti, who has been outside the country for several months, is constitutional and attested by concerned authorities. Accordingly, Dashti will be considered as having sick leave as he claimed in the request and no action will be taken against him.

Dashti left Kuwait apparently to escape action by the public prosecution over lawsuits filed by the government and some Arab embassies for harshly criticizing Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. The speaker said that Dashti's sick leave is legal in accordance with article 24 of the internal charter and those who have a different opinion can submit amendments to the article. He said being speaker of the Assembly, he is obliged to apply the constitution as he was told by the constitutional experts about the issue.

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NOTICE TO OUR READERS

On the occasion of the Israa and Miraj holiday, Kuwait Times' offices are closed today. Hence, there will be no issue published tomorrow. Out next issue will hit the newsstands on Saturday, May 7, 2016.

TRUMP URGES UNITY, EYES CLINTON CLASH

HUNT ON FOR RUNNING MATE • CRUZ, KASICH BOW OUT • SANDERS WINS INDIANA

ECB SCRAPS €500 NOTE

FRANKFURT: The European Central Bank yesterday said it would stop producing and issuing 500-euro banknotes, amid fears that the violet-colored bills were favored by criminals for money laundering and even terrorist financing. The bank is to stop issuing the €500 bills (\$580) around the end of 2018 although those currently in circulation will remain legal tender. Existing bills can also be exchanged at national central banks of eurozone nations for an unlimited period of time, added the ECB, announcing its decision to scrap the denomination after "taking into account concerns that this banknote could facilitate illicit activities".

The largest denomination banknote in the single currency area is one of the world's most valuable bills, alongside the 1,000 Swiss franc (\$1,045, €910) note. It is physically also the biggest than the five other euro banknotes and believed to be favored by criminals for moving large sums of money around without the authorities' knowledge. "Such notes are the preferred payment mechanism of those pursuing illicit activities, given the anonymity and lack of transaction record they offer, and the relative ease with which they can be transported and moved," according to a recent Harvard University study.

Because of its size and portability, the €500 note has become so prized in underground finance that it can trade at more than its face value, and has become known in some circles as a "Bin Laden", the study said. A million euros worth of €500 notes weigh just 2.2 kg and pack easily into a laptop bag, while the same sum transported in €50 denomination comes up to 22 kg and requires the usage of a large sports bag.

The €500 note is "used more for hiding things than buying them," said French Finance Minister Michel Sapin in March. "It is used more to facilitate transactions which are not honest than to allow you and me to buy food to eat," he said. France is pushing to step up the fight against terrorist financing in the

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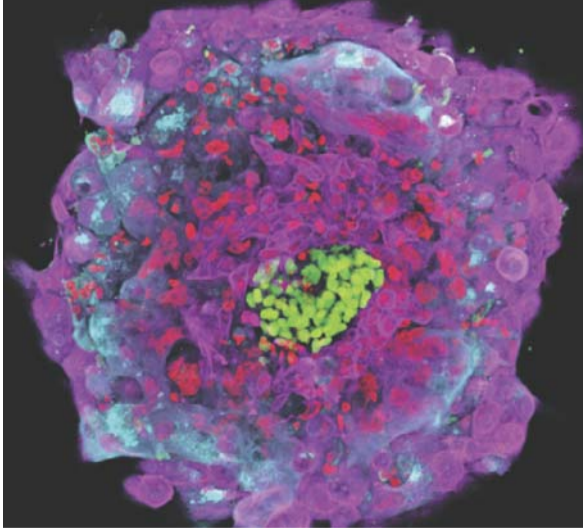


NEW YORK: US Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump waves after speaking in New York on Tuesday following the primary in Indiana. — AFP

WASHINGTON: Billionaire Donald Trump pledged yesterday to unify the fractured Republican Party as he looked beyond the bruising primary season to a November clash for the White House with likely Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. Trump's path to the GOP presidential nomination is now clear after his commanding victory in Indiana's primary on Tuesday pushed his chief opponent Ted Cruz out of the race. His lone remaining rival John Kasich was expected to throw in the towel later yesterday, bringing the curtain down on one of the most contentious, chaotic and vicious nomination battles in generations, one in which Trump pummeled no fewer than 16 rivals into submission.

"Now we'll unify the party. We're going to get people together," the 69-year-old Trump told Fox News early yesterday. "I think we'll beat Hillary Clinton." Trump also began discussing the idea of his possible running mate, telling ABC News he wanted "a person with political

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This microscope photo shows a human embryo 12 days after fertilization in-vitro, with different cell types marked by separate colors. — AP

BREAKTHROUGH IN HUMAN EMBRYOS CULTURED IN LAB

PARIS: Scientists reported yesterday they had grown human embryos in the lab for nearly two weeks, an unprecedented feat that promises advances in assisted reproduction, stem-cell therapies and the basic understanding of how human beings form.

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RIYADH'S \$22.5BN METRO ON TRACK

RIYADH: A \$22.5 billion urban rail and bus system for the congested Saudi Arabian capital is on track, Riyadh's governor said yesterday, as other projects in the kingdom are delayed. "No, no, it's OK," Prince Faisal bin Bandar told reporters. "The project is going very well" and according to plan, he said on the sidelines of a ceremony to mark the end of digging part of the underground railway tunnel. Prince Faisal spoke after riding a golf cart into a smoothly bored and reinforced tunnel from what will be Malaz station in south Riyadh.

For the moment, the future station on Line Three is still a rectangular hole in the ground, about a block long, and carved out of the rock for several floors down. The governor said that what he saw underground was "assuring" and one-third of the metro is now complete. At the ceremony, he saw the cutting tool from a tunnel boring machine rise out of the

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RIYADH: Foreign engineers work yesterday at a construction site of a section of the capital's \$22.5 billion metro system. — AFP

YEMEN FOES RESUME DIRECT PEACE TALKS

KUWAIT: Yemen's warring parties resumed face-to-face peace talks yesterday after a three-day break triggered by a walkout by the government delegation, the United Nations said. It is only the second round of face-to-face talks in the hard-won negotiations to end a devastating conflict that has killed more than 6,400 people and displaced 2.8 million since March last year. "The plenary session has started. All are present including the government delegation," the UN envoy's spokesman, Charbel Raji, told AFP.

The negotiations, which began on April 21, broke off on Sunday after the government delegation quit in protest at the apparent surrender of one of the few loyalist bases in the northern mountains to Iran-backed rebels. UN envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed

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His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah heads Kuwait's delegation during official talks with Bangladeshi officials led by Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed.

KUWAIT, BANGLADESH SIGN ACCORDS TO BOLSTER COOPERATION IN VARIOUS FIELDS

DHAKA: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Bangladesh's counterpart Sheikh Hasina Wazed yesterday attended the signing ceremony of a host of accords to boost bilateral cooperation in various fields. The ceremony followed official talks Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak held with Sheikh Hasina at the presidential palace in the capital Dhaka.

The first accord tackles encouragement and mutual protection of investment, and was signed by Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Bader Hamad Al-Essa and the Bangladeshi Minister of Industries Amir Hossain Amu, and Foreign Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali.

Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled

Suleiman Al-Jarallah and Undersecretary of Bangladesh Foreign Ministry Mohammad Mozammel Khan signed an agreement on mutual entry visa exemption for holders of diplomatic and special passports. Jarallah also signed an accord for military cooperation with Lieutenant General Muhammad Mahfouz El-Rahman, Armed Forces staff officer at the Prime Minister's office.

A fourth agreement was then signed for amending a loan from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) to Dhaka for financing Paira Bridge (Lebukhali Bridge). KFAED Director General Abdulwahab Ahmad Al-Bader and Bangladesh's Finance Ministry Undersecretary for Economic

Affairs Mahmoud Bijum signed it.

During the talks that preceded the ceremony, the two sides reiterated the necessity of enhancing trade exchange and investment, as part of the deep-rooted bilateral ties. They also exchanged views on the regional and international issues of common concern, in particular peace and stability in Asia and the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the two countries urged joining international efforts to resolve crises and realize stability worldwide, so that humanity would enjoy a dignified life. They reaffirmed bilateral cooperation for combating terrorism. The talks were attended by the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Premier, and from the Bangladesh

side a host of ministers and senior officials. Also yesterday, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah visited the National Martyrs' Memorial.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Prime Minister met with President of Bangladesh Mohammed Abdul Hamid at the presidential palace. During the meeting, Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak handed the President a letter from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah inviting Abdul Hamid to visit Kuwait. In addition, the letter tackled bilateral ties and issues of common concern. The meeting was attended by the official delegation accompanying His Highness the Premier. — KUNA



Minister of Education Bader Al-Essa signs an accord with Bangladeshi Minister of Industries Amir Hossain Amu.



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and Undersecretary of Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry Mohammad Mozammel Khan sign an agreement on mutual entry visa exemption for holders of diplomatic and special passports.



DHAKA: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with Bangladesh's counterpart Sheikh Hasina. —KUNA photos



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah delivers a letter from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to President of Bangladesh Mohammed Abdul Hamid.



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah signs an accord for military cooperation with Lieutenant General Muhammad Mahfouz El-Rahman, Armed Forces staff officer at the Prime Minister's office.

KFAED OFFERS BANGLADESH FURTHER \$51 MILLION LOAN FOR PAIRA BRIDGE

DHAKA: The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) yesterday signed a loan agreement worth KD 15 million (\$51 million) with the government of Bangladesh as part of financing a major bridge there. The Paira Bridge (Lebukhali Bridge) is expected to contribute positively to social and economic development in southern Bangladesh.

KFAED Director General Abdulwahab Ahmad Al-Bader and Bangladesh's Finance Ministry Undersecretary for Economic Affairs Mahmoud Bijum signed the agreement during His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-

Hamad Al-Sabah's current visit to the South Asian country. A first loan agreement worth KD 14 million (\$48 million) was signed in March 2012 between KFAED and Dhaka for the bridge.

The Lebukhali Bridge, to be constructed over the river Paira, will streamline the flow of goods and people, directly linking south Bangladesh to the capital Dhaka. Total costs of the project, whose length hits 1,470 meters and width 76.19 meters, are estimated at KD 44.4 million (\$151 million). It is expected to be completed by mid-2019. The 23-year loan signed today includes a four-year grace period with interest rate of

1.5 percent, in addition to 0.5 percent administrative fee annually.

With yesterday's agreement, KFAED has thus offered the government of Bangladesh 23 loans totaling KD 151 million (\$513.4 million). In addition, KFAED has presented three technical donations worth KD 423,000 (\$1.44 million) to Dhaka to fund technical and economic feasibility studies for transport projects. KFAED has supervised a donation worth \$10 million presented by the State of Kuwait to Bangladesh, from the Goodwill Fund allocated for food security in Muslim countries. — KUNA

INFO MINISTER IN RAMALLAH SATURDAY ON LANDMARK VISIT

KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah is set to commence a historic visit to Ramallah in West Bank on Saturday. The minister will head a Kuwaiti delegation participating in the 10th session of the Palestinian International Book Fair, where Kuwait has been chosen as 'Guest of Honor'.

Speaking on the visit, the minister touted relations between Kuwait and Palestine and their peoples as 'firm', saying that the Palestinian invitation to Kuwait as 'Guest of Honor' reflects the fact that the Palestinian side holds the State of Kuwait in high esteem.

He added that during his visit to Ramallah he would meet Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and other senior Palestinian officials in order to look into various cooperative fields, expecting closer cooperation and coordination between both sides in the future.

Sheikh Salman said his visit to Ramallah recalls a similar visit to Palestine by First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on September 14, 2014 which at the time was considered the first such visit by a high-ranking Kuwaiti official to Palestine since 1967.

Palestinians' rights

On the issue of the Palestinian cause, the Kuwaiti Minister of



Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah

Information said Kuwait has backed the rights of the Palestinian people in multiple ways, be that politically or economically or culturally or through the media.

A vivid instance of that backing is the huge undertaking by the ministry of Information to publish a compendium on the history and culture of the city of Al-Quds or Jerusalem written by Palestinian authors.

On Kuwaiti-Palestinian cultural ties, the minister said they go back to the mid-thirties when Kuwait invited the first group of Palestinian teachers to teach in Kuwaiti schools in 1936, right

after the establishment of an education department in the country. In fact, two Palestinian teachers were given the duty to run the department from 1937 to 1940, said the minister.

Furthermore, three Palestinian female teachers were among the first hired to teach at the first Kuwaiti elementary school for girls in the country in 1937, said the minister, noting that much cultural activities by Palestinians in Kuwait over the years received substantial support by the Kuwaiti government.

One such recent activity took place on October 26, 2014 at the Dasma Theater, organized by Kuwait's National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), celebrating Palestinian Cultural Days in Kuwait, said the minister.

Kuwait's pavilions

Regarding Kuwait's participation in the 10th Palestinian International Book Fair, the minister noted the pavilion of NCCAL and that of the celebration of Kuwait as the capital of Islamic culture for 2016 as well as an exhibition on Kuwaiti national heritage.

Further, the minister said that a Kuwaiti cultural week in Palestine, slated for May 8-12, will showcase a number of Kuwaiti intellectuals, poets, and authors along with a display of Kuwaiti postage stamps organized in conjunction with the Kuwait Philatelic Society. — KUNA

VIETNAM - KUWAIT CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS

By Vietnam's Ambassador to Kuwait Nguyen Hong Thao

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations (January 10, 1976), His Highness the Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah will pay an official visit to Vietnam from 5-7 May 2016. This will be one of the first official visits of international leaders at the highest levels to Vietnam after the successful session of the National Assembly XIII. A number of agreements will be signed during the upcoming visit, such as on culture, aviation transport, sports cooperation and between two Chambers of Commerce and Industry, reaching a new milestone in the long history of bilateral relations.

For a long time, Vietnam and Kuwait have enjoyed very friendly relations and traditional cooperation. The peoples of two countries share common aspiration for independence, freedom and peace. Over the past difficult times, the people of Vietnam always received valuable assistance and strong solidarity from government and the people of Kuwait. Kuwait is one of the first countries in Middle East to establish its diplomatic ties with Vietnam right after its reunification of Vietnam in 1975. In 1993, Vietnam has chosen Kuwait to open its first trade representative office in Middle East. After opening embassy of Vietnam to Kuwait in 2003, Kuwait was the very first nation among GCC to open its embassy in Ha Noi and its Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City in 2007. Kuwait's Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid the official visit to Vietnam in May 2007 and afterward Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Tan Dung was the first Vietnamese high-ranking leader to visit Kuwait in March 2009.

Developing relations

Looking back at the development of the Vietnam-Kuwait relations during the past 40 years, we

are proud that this relationship is built on the foundation of friendship, mutual respect and deep understanding of the two Governments and Peoples and today, the relationship continues to grow strongly in many areas.

In terms of economic relations, the two countries have made positive progress. Kuwait Economic Development Fund Arab (KFAED) has started to fund development projects in Vietnam since 1979. Until now, the Fund has granted \$160 million for total 13 infrastructural construction and development projects in rural, remote areas in Vietnam. This is a valuable support for Vietnam in implementing the National Target Program to respond to hunger eradication and poverty reduction as well as contributing to the overall goal of enhancing the quality of life for people in some localities. In March 2016, KFAED has signed the loan Agreement for the project of providing equipment for Chau Doc general hospital in An Giang Province, with \$11.55 million, if completed will contribute to improving the quality of health care for people in An Giang and neighboring areas in the Mekong Delta.

In investment sector, Kuwait ranks the first among Middle Eastern investors in Vietnam. Kuwait contributed 35.1 percent (over \$3 billion) for Nghi Son Refining and Petrochemicals Project worth \$9 billion. The project was signed in 2008 between PetroVietnam, International Petroleum Group of Kuwait and two partners Japan, including Idemitsu Kosan Corp and Mitsui Chemicals Inc. and has committed to supply 100 percent crude oil for the plant in the long term. Construction is expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of 2016 and commercial operations are expected to commence in mid-2017 with a refining capacity of 200,000 barrels per day.

Trade relations

On trade relations, Kuwait is also one of the largest trade partner of

Vietnam in the region with two-way trade volume averaged \$700 million during 2011-2014. The main export items of Vietnam to Kuwait include seafood, agricultural products, wood, iron and steel products, fabrics, textiles, footwear, mobile phones and accessories... In 2015, it was the first time for the export turnover of Vietnam (by origin country) to the Kuwait market higher than one from South East Asian countries, with more than \$544 million.

Kuwait is also a potential market for Vietnam workers with higher wages, social welfares, health services than ones in the Gulf countries. At present, there are 700 Vietnamese employees working in the fields of construction, services... The number will be continually increased after the two countries signing the new labor agreement. Vietnam is also emerging as a tourism destination for resort with many beautiful beaches attracting Kuwaiti citizens.

In 2016, Vietnam and Kuwait celebrated the 40th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations with many activities in the fields of politics, economy and culture, contributing to enhancing the understanding between the two peoples and promoting the traditional, innovative and opened Vietnam. Achievements through the past 40 years are a great asset and a critical foundation to create new momentum for the relations of traditional friendship Vietnam - Kuwait in the coming years. With the firm belief, on behalf of the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the State of Kuwait, I would like to congratulate the best to the country and the people of Kuwait, and wish them a peaceful and prosperous future under the wise leadership of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait. May the relations of friendship and cooperation between Vietnam and Kuwait be further consolidated and developed, for the benefits of the two peoples, for peace, stability and prosperity in the region and in the world.

PRIVATIZATION ONLY INCLUDES OIL-RELATED INDUSTRIES: MP

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Chairman of the parliament's priorities committee MP Yousef Al-Zalzal said that he was surprised at what he described as some attempts to frighten people with privatization, saying that it was internationally adopted by many countries to support their respective economies. "Privatization in the oil sector will not include oil wells and refineries," he stressed, explaining that it would only include some oil-related industries and that this would help make use of oil in establishing local industries and factories instead of only exporting crude oil.



MP Yousef Al-Zalzal

Health cards

Speaking to visitors at his diwaniya in Dasma, Zalzal stressed his concern over the retirees' health insurance issue and held the State Audit Bureau responsible for delaying the project of retirees' health cards although the finance ministry had already allocated a KD 86 million budget for the project including KD 20 million for this year alone. Zalzal also said that the committee had met representatives from the health and finance ministries as well as from the State Audit Bureau to discuss the delay and found that the State Audit Bureau was behind halting the project over a lack of budget.

Domestic helpers

Commenting on the domestic helpers' company law that was recently approved by the cabinet, Zalzal stressed that Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) should have formed the company, but the project was rejected by the government until further studies are made. "I do hope the study is over within the maximum of two weeks because Ramadan is approaching and some labor offices have already started taking advantage of the growing demand and increased the cost of bringing in a housemaid to over KD 1,500 in some cases," he underlined.

Dashti's leave

Commenting on MP Abdulhameed Dashti's leave from parliament, Zalzal stressed that a lawmaker has the constitutional right to apply for leave. Zalzal added that the government's economic reform plan included

recommendations that had been repeatedly made by international financial and economic organizations, such as the World Bank, that recommended immediate economic decisions to avoid reducing Kuwait's credit rating. "Many of the points mentioned in the plan had already been approved in 2010 parliament," he stressed.

South Mutlaa City

In other news, Hill International Construction Company has won a tender to provide consultancy for running the South Mutlaa City development project, Kuwait's first smart city. It is expected that the housing authority would sign an \$83 million worth contract with Hill before the end of this month. Notably, the project is due to be finished by 2019 to include 30,000 housing units and accommodate 400,000 people.

Farwaniya cafes

Meanwhile yesterday, Farwaniya municipality's director Mohammed Al-Arabi stressed that all violating cabins in Farwaniya restaurants and cafes had been removed in March and April and stressed that the ones that still exist were those matching municipality rules and regulations. "Monitoring practices inside those cabins is the Ministry of Interior's responsibility," he stressed. Notably, a few bloggers had circulated tweets claiming that some youth were involved in vice activities in some Ardiya cafes and restaurants.



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Trade Union Federation Chairman Salem Al-Ajmi (center) attends the signing ceremony.

KTUF SIGNS DEAL TO FOLLOW UP EXPAT LABOR COMPLAINTS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Trade Union Federation (KTUF) recently signed an agreement of cooperation between the legal mediation group and KTUF's expatriate labor office by which the former provides legal consultancy, files cases and follows up labor-related litigations, namely those related to expatriate labor complaints and grievances. In this regard, KTUF Chairman Salem Shebeeb Al-Ajmi said that signing this agreement was another achievement of the expatriate labor office, which was established in 1993 to take care of expatriate workers of various nationalities through individual or joint complaints they might file.

Saving millions

For the second time, the petroleum and petrochemical industries employees union's secretary Hazem Yousif Al-Enezi announced launch-

ing a new initiative to rationalize spending in the oil sector and said that the proposal would help save millions without jeopardizing oil sector employees' gains and incentives. Enezi explained that the initiative relies on cancelling the article determining salaries in the tenders and contracts signed with contractors. He added that experiences over the past 10 years showed that tenders' values usually went high because of this article.

No strike

Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) Undersecretary Mohammad Bushehri strongly denied social media reports about ministry employees going on strike yesterday and gathering outside their offices in the ministry corridors.

Landline bills

The Ministry of Communication yesterday

urged all subscribers to pay their landline bills to avoid May's programmed service disconnection after going through the standard warning procedures. The ministry explained that a recorded warning message would be sent to subscribers on Sunday, May 8 followed by a second one on May 15 and then the line would be disconnected on May 22 unless subscribers paid their bills.

Further, the ministry explained landlines are automatically included in the programmed disconnection system when bills reaches KD 50 for house landlines and KD 100 for commercial landlines in addition to subscribers whose debts had been already rescheduled to pay by installments and they fail to pay the due one. The ministry added that subscribers who do not pay their annual subscription fees for over six months would also be included in the system. Notably, subscribers can pay their bills at: www.moc.kw and www.e.gov.kw. They can also inquire about their bills by calling 123.



KUWAIT: A truck collided with a sedan on Wafra road. The sedan's driver was pronounced dead on the scene.

MOTORIST KILLED IN WAFRA ROAD ACCIDENT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A citizen was killed in an accident between a sedan and a truck on Wafra road. Wafra rescue team led by Captain Humoud Sief responded to the scene after the accident was reported. The victim, Kuwaiti in his thirties, was found dead on the scene. The truck's Asian driver was injured and taken to hospital for treatment. The victim's body was recovered by the coroner. An investigation was opened to determine the circumstances behind the accident.

Fire

A fire broke out in a power transformer in Salmiya, and

Salmiya firemen responded with South Salmiya fire center in support. The fire was put out, and no injuries were reported.

Swindler caught

Ardiya detectives arrested an Ethiopian man who swindled people by promising them to get domestic helpers, but disappeared as soon as he got the deposit. A security source said Ardiya police station received several complaints from citizens and expatriates about the suspect's activities, so a team was formed that was able to identify and arrest the suspect. The suspect said he made people believe he can hire domestic helpers for them at a lesser cost and took KD 160 to KD 200.



KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) yesterday concluded a training course for heads of departments and fire stations titled 'Keys for Professional Leadership.' — By Hanan Al-Saadoun



Firefighters tackle a blaze in a transformer in Salmiya.



In Brief

GHANEM RECEIVES HEAD OF PALESTINE COMMITTEE

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem yesterday received in his office the visiting head of the Palestine Committee at the Jordanian House of Representatives MP Yehia Al-Saud, and an accompanying delegation. The latest developments on the Palestinian scene and the recurrent Israeli aggression against unarmed Palestinians featured high on the agenda of the meeting. They also discussed means of stirring regional and international parliamentary action to combat Israel's non-stop violations. — KUNA



INDONESIA WELCOMES KUWAITI INVESTORS

KUALA LUMPUR: Indonesia Investment Coordination Authority (BKPM) welcomed desires by Kuwaiti investors to invest in the oil and animal resources sectors, expressing readiness to enhance bilateral relations in all aspects of investment. The remarks were made during a meeting between Kuwait Ambassador to Indonesia Abdulwahab Al-Saqer and President of BKPM Franky Sibarani, a statement from Kuwait Embassy in Indonesia said. — KUNA



SUDANESE NGO PRAISES KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Khartoum-based Munazzamat Al-Da'wa Al-Islamiia (the Islamic Call Organization) Abdulrahman Suar Al-Thahab acclaimed Tuesday the leading role of Kuwait in providing aid to needy people worldwide. In a statement following a meeting with Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society Dr Hilal Al-Sayer, Suar Al-Thahab also lauded KRCS's humanitarian role especially in African countries. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



BALI: An aerial view showing rice fields in Bali, Indonesia. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

SHEIKHA FARIHA URGES CARE FOR ARAB WOMEN REFUGEES

CAIRO: It is crucial that maximum care and attention be given to refugee and displaced women and children caught up in wartime conditions in the Arab region, said President of the Kuwaiti Society for the Ideal Family Sheikhha Fariha Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday. She made those statements on the sidelines of her participation for the second day in the Arab Women's Conference which deals with the plight of Arab refugee women in the Middle East region.

She said she was confident that the conference would come up with recommendations as to concrete plans aimed at protecting women refugees in the region, especially those currently living in precarious conditions outside their homelands. These refugees should be attended to with care until their eventual return to their home countries, she said. Begun last week, the conference goes on for three days, focusing on, among other things, the role of the private sector and civil society in helping Arab women refugees and their children and families get back on their feet and carry on a normal life as soon as practicable.



Humanitarian role

Earlier, Sheikhha Fariha affirmed Kuwait's continued humanitarian role aiming to contributing to resolving refugees' crisis in the Arab region. She referred to Kuwait's key role towards the Syrian refugees' crisis when it hosted three international humanitarian pledging conferences for Syria and rallied support to support Syrians.

She expressed her satisfaction about the "effective" participation at the three-day conference which features some ministers, experts and specialists to focus on suffering of internally and externally displaced women.

Meanwhile, Saleh Al-Naham, the society's Vice President, underlined in a similar statement to KUNA the significance of the event and its resolutions to be in favor of settling the issues which interest the internally and externally displaced females. He said the society's role is to take part in such conferences which pay attention to the Arab families which suffer from displacement.

The Kuwaiti delegation headed by Sheikhha Fariha has a working paper on Kuwait's role in backing social and humanitarian issues, he added. He pointed to efforts of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah aiming to support humanitarian issues. He urged Arab media to shed light on the issues of internally and externally displaced women amid social and humanitarian challenges facing the Arab region. — KUNA

KFH CONTINUES TO SERVE CLIENTS DURING HOLIDAY

ELECTRONICALLY AND THROUGH AIRPORT BRANCH

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced that it is ready to fulfill its commitments towards its clients during the Prophet's Ascension holiday.

The bank will continue to offer various services for its clients in Kuwait and overseas through its website that offers over 150 e-services, in addition to the airport branch and other service channels that provide clients with necessary services round the clock.

Moreover, the Call Center will be ready to receive calls from clients throughout the day, and will work relentlessly to overcome any problems that might face clients in Kuwait and overseas.

In addition, KFH continues to offer its IVR service on 1803333 that is available throughout the day. Clients can call to make account transactions, ask for financial transaction, pay bills, purchase cards to recharge cell phone, and other services.

Further, clients can take advantage of KFH's ATM machines that are avail-



KFH branch

able at all vital locations. KFH offers Mobi Baitak vehicles that serve as mobile branches that allow people to deposit and withdraw cash in addition to other usual transactions. Mobi Baitak will be available during the holiday in the areas of Alfarwaniya Cooperative Society, Aliya Hospital in

Almahboula, Ali Subah Alsalem Cooperative Society in Om Alhayman, Al-Ahmadi Showroom and Bnaider Park. KFH has additional technical privileges, such as allowing clients to conduct basic banking operations through smart phones on kfhonline application.



Mobi Baitak



KFH Headquarters

Kuwait Digest

COMBATting TERRORISM

By Labeed Abdal



local@kuwaittimes.net

A recent meeting of G7 countries' ministers of foreign affairs took place recently in Hiroshima, Japan, which included major industrial countries like US, Britain, Germany, Italy, France, Canada and the host country, Japan. It led to issuing a joint statement on their agreement on a number of regional and international issues including terrorism, refugees and North Korea's nuclear issue. This agreement is highly important to discuss complicated, unsolved and multiparty and interest-conflicting international issues.

The meeting tended to prioritize combatting terrorism, and the statement issued afterwards condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Turkey, Belgium and other places worldwide and called for setting an agenda for the group in view of the

What matters is really making decisive and applicable decisions as soon as possible, especially over refugees.

recent North Korean nuclear experiment, which was deemed dangerous and provocative.

The G7 also considered the refugee and immigrant influx at the highest rates since World War II and agreed that this called for decisive reaction from the international community. The group also declared its stance on Syria and Iraq and discussed various other topics such as climate change, fighting corruption, combatting drugs and international health, that all required decisive stands.

What matters is really making decisive and applicable decisions as soon as possible, especially over refugees, especially since some group members can reduce regional disputes by supporting or countering them. An immediate international measure has become urgent for issues that cannot hold out any longer, such as international assaults or crimes that involve fear that crime traces might be lost or that those committing them might hide evidence.

The other major thing is avoiding contradiction and double standards when international justice is required as represented by the statue of the blindfolded woman carrying the scale of justice without any prejudices, especially when international decisions are needed.



KUWAIT: Eaman Al-Roudhan receives the Media Excellence Award for Technology and Information.



Eaman Al-Roudhan speaks during a session at the Arab Media Forum.



Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah visits Zain's booth.

ARAB MEDIA FORUM HONORS EAMAN AL-ROUDHAN WITH MEDIA EXCELLENCE AWARD

KUWAIT: The organizing committee of the Arab Media Forum presented Eaman Al-Roudhan with the Media Excellence Award for Technology and Information, being the first woman appointed to a Chief Executive Officer role within a Kuwaiti telecommunications company. The honoring came during the commencement ceremony of the 13th edition of the forum that was held under the patronage of His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The forum, sponsored by Zain for five consecutive years, has proven itself to be one of the region's most prominent events that attend to Arab Media. The event brings together many ministers, media executives, journalists, academics, authors, actors, businessmen, and social figures from all around the Arab world. Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al-Roudhan, along with ex-Minister of Telecommunications of the State of Qatar Dr Hissah Al-Jaber and Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the Public Authority for Communications and Information Technology Engineer Salem Al Uthaina, participated in a discussion panel that was held under the title: 'Media: The Basics of Communication and Integration.'

Advancing communication

During the discussion panel, Roudhan highlighted the relationship between Media and telecommunication channels and the role of technology in advancing communication within the community: "we cannot overlook the important role Technology plays in advancing communication within members of the society, as it is considered an integral part of the media development process."

Roudhan continued: "the nature of the media channels used in every time period defined the

society at that time. The change from verbal communication to written communication took centuries, while change into digital and social media only took a few years, and this is a result of the superfast advancement of technology in recent years'.

Roudhan went on to shed light on the role of telecom operators in protecting the privacy of users: "cooperation between telecom operators and the Public Authority for Communications and Information Technology is a crucial step for protecting the privacy of users. But it is important to point out that protecting privacy is a joint responsibility, especially in light of the late technological advancements. Sometimes users unintentionally allow their privacy to be breached by downloading certain applications on their smartphones".

Roudhan also discussed the efforts of telecom operators in investing in network infrastructures: "we aspire to offer a superior telecommunications experience through highly efficient services. Keeping pace with the latest global innovations introduced to the technology world is vital, especially with the wide spread of apps and OTT services".

Quality and efficiency

Roudhan concluded by showcasing the nature of the relationship between telecom operators and the regulator, which "defines the quality and efficiency offered in the market. A strong relationship between operators and the regulator will definitely reflect on offering a superior customer experience within the telecom sector". Zain participated in the forum through its dedicated

booth, where the company welcomed visitors to discuss the various ways in which different communication mediums can enhance the development of current media tools in the Arab region.

Zain's sponsorship and participation in this forum highlights its social commitment, as the company believes in the importance of the role press and media plays in the development of com-

munities. Zain will continue supporting this very important sector which carries significant and informative messaging to the public at large and the communications world as a whole.

NATO AGREES TO KUWAIT MISSION

BRUSSELS: NATO announced yesterday that it has agreed to accept the request of the State of Kuwait to designate the Embassy of the State of Kuwait to Belgium as Mission to NATO. The Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Belgium will therefore be the Head of the Mission of the State of Kuwait to NATO, noted the Alliance in a statement. "The State of Kuwait is a very active member of NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, established in 2004," it said. NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, launched at the Alliance's Summit in the Turkish city in 2004, aims to contribute to long-term

global and regional security by offering countries of the Arab Gulf bilateral security cooperation with NATO.

Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General, welcomed closer cooperation between the Alliance and Kuwait during his first official visit to Kuwait last February. Speaking at the site of the future NATO-Kuwait Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Regional Centre, Stoltenberg praised Kuwait's commitment and vision in bringing NATO closer to the Gulf region. NATO also agreed today to accept the request of Bahrain, Qatar and Jordan to designate their embassies as missions to NATO. — KUNA

KRCS BEARS SURGERY COST FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE

BEIRUT: The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), in coordination with the Lebanese Red Cross, has paid the expenses of a complicated surgery for a Syrian refugee in Lebanon. "The surgery to remove cancer from pancreas of a Syrian refugee is part of the KRCS' initiatives to diversify its humanitarian and relief aid to Syrians in Lebanon," Relief Operations Coordinator of the Lebanese Red Cross Yusuf Botrous said. He expressed gratitude for the

KRCS efforts and initiatives to alleviate the suffering and meet the needs of the war-traumatized Syrian refugees in Lebanon, especially in the health-care sector. The KRCS has borne the cost of several medical care services for a considerable number of Syrian refugees during the past two years, including complicated and expensive operations such as kidney transplant and dialysis and prostheses installation, he said. — KUNA



CBK CONCLUDES RADISSON BLU ANNUAL PAINTING COMPETITION

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) announced concluding its 21st annual Radisson Blu Painting Competition. CBK sponsored and organized the event, held at Radisson Blu Hotel. CBK had invited all its First Account and Youth@Tijari account holders aged 10 to 18 years, in addition to school students from all over

Kuwait to take part in the competition. The theme of this year's competition was 'The World is My Home'. The best 25 entries were selected and participants were rewarded KD 50 each. The conclusion and awarding ceremony was held at Abdul Hussein Ma'rafi Hall, Radisson Blu Hotel.

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News

In Brief

MPs propose total coeducation ban

KUWAIT: A number of lawmaker proposed an amendment that gives the government the power to force a coeducation ban at all schools, colleges and other educational facilities in Kuwait - including private ones. The amendment, proposed by MPs Humoud Al-Hamdan, Dr Awdah Al-Ruwai'e, Dr Mohammad Al-Huwailah, Ali Al-Khamees and Hamdan Al-Azmi, bans the 'mixing' of male and female students in classrooms, laboratories, libraries and anywhere else inside an educational facility. — Al-Qabas

Visa termination

KUWAIT: The Manpower Public Authority is studying the possibility of allowing employers to lodge complaints against employees who extend their leaves abroad, which ultimately could lead to having the worker's visa canceled. Under the current law, a residency visa is automatically canceled if its holder stays outside Kuwait for six months or more. Under the proposed plan, an employer would lodge a complaint against a worker who overstays his designated annual leave period outside Kuwait without valid excuse. If the worker is found to be 'absconder', he or she would have their visa terminated, according to sources. — Al-Anbaa

Health insurance

KUWAIT: A health source said revenues expected from health insurance during the current financial year 2016-2017 will reach nearly KD 103 million. He said the expected revenues saw an increase over estimations of fiscal year 2015-2016 by KD 11.630 million, pointing out the ministry started implementing health insurance in 2000 by collecting fees according to law 1/1999 regarding health insurance for foreigners and fees for health services. — Al-Rai

Traffic cases

KUWAIT: Security sources said there are plans to cancel the reference of traffic cases by the investigations department. Security sources said that following a meeting of Director General of the Investigations Department Major General Fahd Al-Dousary with insurance companies' representatives, he decided to contact the traffic department to send investigators to the traffic department for six months to train them on how to deal with traffic accidents and determine material damage of vehicles involved. — Al-Anbaa

Autism causes

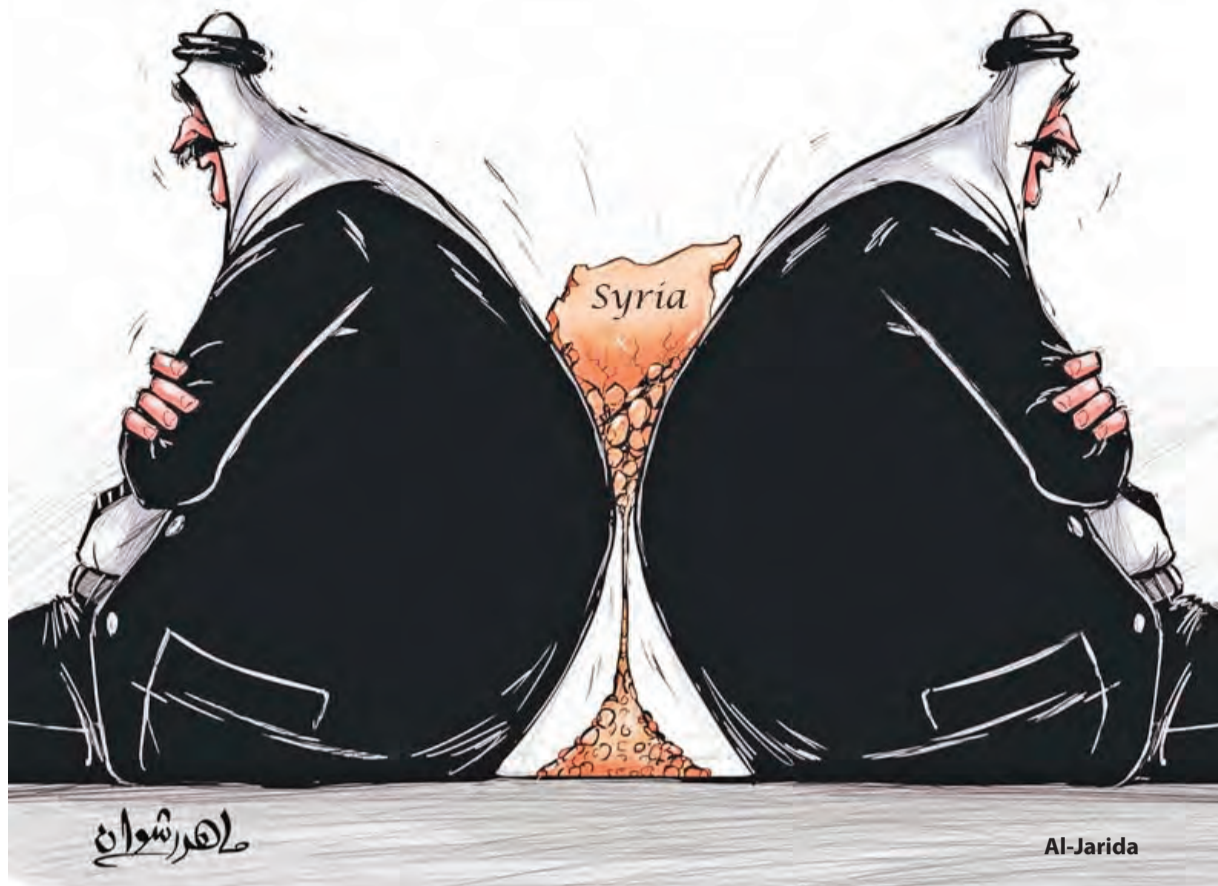
KUWAIT: The Ministry of Health plans to conduct a study on the genetic causes of autism after the percentage of the disease in Kuwait reached 1.5 percent, ministry sources said. The study, the first of its kind in the Gulf Cooperation Council region, will start soon and includes taking samples from around 50 Kuwaiti families who have autistic children. — Al-Anbaa

40 gas stations

KUWAIT: Kuwait plans to build 40 gas stations in the 2016/2017 fiscal year with a total cost of KD 80 million, or KD 2 million each. The project will be financed through the Small and Medium Enterprises Fund in order to allow Kuwaiti youths to manage the gas stations "for the first time in Kuwait," sources said, adding that the fund is also considering building 54 more gas stations through 2020. — Al-Anbaa

Licenses revoked

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry canceled 902 out of 1,251 licenses issued for domestic labor recruitment offices since the General Department of Domestic Labor was established in 1992, Director Brigadier General Mohammad Al-Ajmi said. The files of these officers were 'blocked' in the ministry's systems in order to prevent them from recruiting labor, he added. — Al-Anbaa



SALMIYA BACHELORS GIVEN 3-DAY ULTIMATUM TO EVICT

KUWAIT: Responding to complaints filed by citizens living in block 12 in Salmiya concerning being surrounded by 'bachelors', the municipality recently launched a campaign in the area, giving bachelors three-day eviction ultimatums before disconnecting electricity as instructed by municipality director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi. Head of the inspection team Ritadh Al-Rabee' said that the team distributed 20 warning notices to house inhabited by bachelors and said that electricity would be disconnected and owners would be fined. He added that once the ultimatum is over, the municipality teams would be escorted by a police force to evict residents. "The law will be equally applied to everyone without any wasta," he stressed, noting that if any officials intervene, their names and positions would be reported to the municipality director. — Al-Rai

NO KUWAITI COMMERCIAL DEALINGS WITH HEZBOLLAH

KUWAIT: Kuwait Central Bank and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said there are no bank and company dealings with Hezbollah, which is labeled as a terrorist organization, as well as banned Iranian entities based on international resolutions. Two documents by the Central Bank and the ministry said Kuwaiti banks as well as local companies are complying with not dealing with any names on the sanctions lists issued by the United Nations, and that the ban extends not only to lists of the Security Council, but also to persons and commercial blacklisted by the Assets Management Agency at the US Treasury Department. Based on that, all local banks and companies do not deal with Iranian commercial entities or companies or individuals that belong to Hezbollah. The Central Bank said despite the fact that the list of the US Treasury Department is not internationally binding, the Central Bank has committed local banks, exchange companies and investment companies not to deal with countries and businesses mentioned in the US treasury list. — Al-Qabas

BIG PRICES INCREASE COULD HIT CO-OPS

KUWAIT: A co-operative expert warned against a sudden catastrophe in prices that will hit food and staple products if the co-operative (co-op) sector is considered as a commercial one and the new electricity tariffs is applied to it, which is a big increase over the current rate. Chairman of the Board of Mishef Co-op Abdelrahman Al-Qaderi called for avoiding this danger that threatens food security in the country through the retail sector, which co-ops run 90 percent of it, especially that companies are looking into the new power situation to demand increase in prices. He said a co-operative pays around KD 57,000 for power each year, and will be forced to pay around KD 700,000 based on the new commercial tariffs, which is a huge amount and will reflect on the products' prices. He said there is a serious move to take this issue to the highest levels to avoid harm for the consumers and cooperatives at the same time. — Al-Anbaa

TREES UPROOTED FROM SHUWAIKH PARK

KUWAIT: A total of 163 citizens from residential Shuwaikh submitted a petition to the municipality and electricity ministers as well as several MPs in which they condemned Kuwait Municipality's action when it uprooted trees Tahalof Park in block 1 on April 25 in order to transfer a power transformer there. The petition stated the residents' rejection of clearing any part of the park for any reason, and insisted the transformer be moved somewhere else so that the damage can be repaired. Meanwhile, several Shuwaikh residents said the municipality's action in Tahalof Park was not the first of its kind, as they began in 2011, after one of the area's new residents asked for moving the transformer which is close to his house somewhere else, and the municipal council decided to move it to that park, which is something rejected by residents who consider it an encroachment on their rights. — Al-Qabas

40,000 NEW HOUSING UNITS

KUWAIT: Southern Saad Al-Abdullah City will join the new cities' map after the Cabinet decided carrying on with the project, bearing in mind that the project will provide over 40,000 housing units, and along with other new residential cities, help solve housing problems and spare citizens the need to wait long years before they can get houses, and thus, reduce the cost of the millions-worth rent allowance. In its recent meeting, the Cabinet decided proceeding with the Southern Saad Al-Abdullah City project after the obstacle of the strategic underground water reserves was tackled, said governmental sources, noting that decision was made after consulting many technical and scientific bodies including KISR, which emphasized that the project could be built without harming underground water reserves. — Al-Rai

IT'S RAINING FISH

KUWAIT: A citizen saw a newspaper story and photo of dead fish found in the desert with a caption written by the photographer that read: "Skies do not rain fish!" This caption reminded me of an incident that took place in Kuwait in 1952, that is 63 years ago, when my late friend Abdul Aziz Al-Monayye told me that one of his friends claimed that he had read an old book telling stories about the sky raining huge amounts of fish that filled all yards and roofs. "This is true," I told him, but he strongly refused to believe the story. "Yes, what your friend told you is absolutely true and skies might also rain oranges," I told my baffled friend. Asking me how such things could be true, I explained that some hurricanes may pass by a certain lake full of fish and when its vortex columns touch the surface of the water, they suck up amounts of the fish into the sky, carrying them for certain distances and that they might later fall on the ground. "This is how skies can rain fish," I told him. "Those hurricanes may pass by some orange fields and similarly carry oranges into the sky and then drop them on the ground, making the sky seem as if it is raining oranges," I added, and my late friend was convinced with my explanation. "In such cases, I think I can later on tell an untrue anecdote or joke claiming that some children were playing in a park in China when a hurricane passed, carried them away and dropped them somewhere else, making the sky seem as if it was raining CHILDREN," he concluded with a smile. — Translated by Kuwait Times

State of Kuwait
Ministry of Commerce & Industry
Consumer Protection Affairs

LEXUS Recall

LX470 (2003-2006)

PRODUCT	MODEL NAME MODEL YAER	FRAME NUMBERS RANGE	
		FROM	TO
	LX470 2003 - 2006	JHT00W933523533	JHT00WX64018146
NUMBER OF UNITS: 559			
DEFECT	Curtain shield Airbag operating system check calibration during the condition of rollover.		
REMEDY	Distributor will contact all the owners for the corrections for these units.		
CONTACT	Hotline: 1803803 www.lexus.com.kw Please book an appointment to serve you better		

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PALESTINIANS WITH 'CARD' CAN GET VISA

KUWAIT: The issue of the Palestinian passport may have been resolved to grant its holders an iqama (residency) permit. The issue was raised as a problem that hinders bringing in Palestinian teachers with whom the education ministry plans to sign contracts with next year. Interior Ministry Assistant Under secretary for Nationality and Passports Maj Gen Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah said the Interior Ministry reached a solution allowing those holding Palestinian passports to reside in the country like other Arabs provided that they have an "outlet crossing card" that Palestinians living in the Palestinian territories have. "We did not grant residencies to holders of this passport before except in limited cases and with exceptions, so we stipulated the crossing card be available to expand granting residencies on this passport," he said. — Al-Rai

Al-Anbaa

THE PUBLIC INSTITUTION FOR SOCIAL SECURITY

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

The Public Institution for Social Security is the first institution in the history of Kuwait where the individual feels dealing with it with comfort and respect of his person and time. It is the institution that Hamad Al-Jouan laid its first bricks and ran it ably before his assassination attempt. The social security institution remained unique for many years, and still maintains much of its previous reputation, despite all what it experienced from theft of its assets, and we believe its current management will restore its splendor and reputation. Circumstances had it that after nearly 40 years, I go back to the Credits and Savings Bank, now Bank of Credit, to process a real estate sale transaction. As soon as I entered and interacted with its employees and felt the way they deal with people and their performance, be it through smiling and true welcome or through what they use among the best computer programs, I feel that I am inside an establishment that respects the mind and time of the patron, and it is not less in its level and that of its workers from social security. The scene inside made wonder about the miserable condition of all state buildings be they ministries, authorities or others, especially those the citizen and expat are compelled to continually go to such as social affairs, commerce and interior. Why do our police stations and ports remain the same as they were half a century ago? Even at citizen service centers, you feel depressed when you enter them, and some of them look like a market because of the crowds and noise inside. I do not know why all those establishments failed in becoming a copy of the social security or the credit bank, especially that the country is one and the government is the same and the people are the people, and the National Assembly is as is! So why the difference? The reason without a doubt is due to who manages those departments or establishments, because who accepts to having the ministry's offices dirty, old and rundown without him exerting any efforts in changing the situation, is most probably an uncaring person, and maybe his living circumstances are similar to the way his department is. Returning to the credit bank, which I toured while waiting for my transaction to be completed, I found that all those who I asked from the coffee boy to the security man, as well as going past 10 employees, all know the full name of the bank manager, and this is something, according to my experience, is not common, because of the carelessness the citizen is characterized with, and indicates the positive relation that links the higher administration with the various ranks of employees. I also found that everyone I asked about the role of Salah Al-Mudhaf, Director General of the Bank, in creating the current positive work atmosphere, said he is behind all changes in the bank in the past few years, and they have all respect and love for the man. It is not possible to reproduce those like Mudhaf and many of the sincere leaderships, but why do not senior state administrators follow their lead, and this is directed to the heads of ports and the international airport as examples on the bad situation in many of our establishments. — Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime Report

Officer took bribes to pass transactions illegally
KUWAIT: Security sources said a lieutenant colonel was sent to a disciplinary council after receiving reports about that he was receiving bribes for processing transactions, most of them residences. The source said when it was proven that the lieutenant colonel received illegal money, he was referred to the disciplinary council, which is about to issue its report on the case.

Thief caught
An Indian man was arrested for robbing his compatriots, and was found in violation of residency law. A security source said police received several complaints from Indians robbed after being threatened in Jleeb Al-Shuyiukh by a person and gave them his details. Police monitored the suspect for a period of time before putting him under arrest.

Man chased
A citizen told Sabah Al-Nasser police that three other citizens were after him and threatened to harm him. The 20-year-old citizen was very frightened when he told police that he was being chased, adding they escaped when he entered the police station. Police are working on the case.

Fight
Two citizens, a Jordanian, an Indian and two bedoons were brought under control by police in Fahaaheel after they were involved in a fight because of differences over the sale of a car. A police patrol noticed a large gathering, and when they approached it they found out there was a fight, so they arrested the fighters.

Domestic violence
A Filipina woman accused her Egyptian husband of stealing gold bracelets and beating her in their Abu Halifa apartment. The woman told Abu Halifa police when she discovered the theft, he beat her badly and sustained injuries mentioned in the medical report she submitted.

Sheep stolen
A citizen sought the help of Jahra police when his animal pen was broken into and six sheep were stolen. He said he was robbed twice before but did not complain. The citizen, whose pen is in Jal Al-Reyah in north of the country, told police he is fed-up with the thief who stole the animals for the third time, adding that the thefts took place as the guard is on leave. Detectives are investigating. — Al-Rai

Kuwait Times International

THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2016

EU BACKS TURKEY VISA-FREE TRAVEL, FINES FOR REFUSING REFUGEES

BRUSSELS: The EU yesterday gave conditional backing to visa-free travel for Turks under a migrant deal and unveiled new asylum rules including fines for countries that refuse their share of refugees.

In its latest bid to tackle the biggest migration crisis since World War II, the European Commission proposed making countries pay a "solidarity contribution" of 250,000 Euros (\$290,000) per refugee they decline to take. Turkey has threatened to tear up a March agreement to take back migrants from Greece if the EU fails to keep its promise to allow nearly 80 million Turkish citizens to travel without visas to Europe. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said visa-free travel could herald a "new page" in the often troubled relations between the EU and Ankara, but



ANKARA: Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu (L) and Turkish EU Affairs Minister Volkan Bozkir (R) hold a press conference yesterday. — AFP

warned Brussels to "stick to its promise". European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans said the EU's executive arm would recommend the plan so long as Ankara meets the remaining criteria by the end of June.

Turkey still has five more benchmarks to go on the EU's list of 72 — which include biometric passports and human rights issues—despite making "impressive progress" in recent weeks, Timmermans said.

"There is no free ride here, and we are clear about what remains to be done," Timmermans told reporters, in response to criticism from several EU states that the deal is too soft on Turkey's rights record. The 28 EU member states and the European Parliament must also approve the visa scheme, which is by no means a foregone conclusion. MEPs yesterday demanded a "written guarantee" from the

Commission that all steps had been fulfilled before it would vote, while Manfred Weber, head of the leading centre-right group in parliament, said it was "too early" for the visa proposal.

Under the plan, Turkish citizens would be allowed to make 90-day visits to Europe's 26-country Schengen passport-free area for business or tourism without needing a visa. Also yesterday the Commission unveiled its long-awaited proposal for replacing its outdated asylum system with a mechanism for relocating refugees in a crisis.

The so-called Dublin rules currently in force have been criticised as obsolete and unfair to countries like Greece, the main entry point for the 1.25 million migrants who have entered the bloc since last year. The arrival of a wave of humanity fleeing conflict in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere has caused severe tensions in an EU already facing economic and strategic challenges.

Under the Dublin rules, migrants seeking asylum must lodge their application in the country where they first arrived, and should be returned there if they try to move elsewhere in the bloc. Timmermans said the new mechanism would be activated only in times of crisis, and countries that show they temporarily cannot take any asylum seekers under the mechanism should show "financial solidarity", he added. The Commission set the figure at 250,000 Euros per asylum seeker.

'Blackmail' claim

Hungary quickly dubbed the fines plan "blackmail". Its hard line Prime Minister Viktor Orban has led opposition from mostly eastern EU states to taking in more refugees. Germany has led the way for the rest of the EU, in taking more than one million asylum seekers in 2015.

The EU last year approved a separate scheme to share out 160,000 refugees around the bloc but less than one percent of that number has been redistributed so far. Brussels hopes the asylum reform will work in tandem with the EU-Turkey deal, as a result of which numbers of arrivals in Greece have dropped dramatically since it came into force on March 20.

Under the deal the EU also agreed to speed up Turkey's long-stalled membership bid in addition to promising visa liberalization. But many EU states still have concerns about the legality of the agreement and the human rights situation in Turkey, where an increasing number of journalists and critics of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have been prosecuted. — AFP

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DR CONGO ANNOUNCES PROBE INTO OPPOSITION USE OF US MERCENARIES

KINSHASA: DR Congo's justice minister said yesterday he had ordered an investigation into the alleged use of foreign mercenaries by opposition politician Moïse Katumbi, a likely contender in a presidential poll due this year.

Alexis Thambwe Mwamba said Katumbi's camp was recruiting mercenaries specialized in "training and the use of weapons, as security guards or bodyguards", using a "network with a company based in Virginia in the United States".

The minister told journalists he had given orders to the general prosecutor to

open a judicial case in the southeastern former province of Katanga. "We have documented proof that several former American soldiers are currently in Katanga in the service of Mr Katumbi."

On April 24, four members of Katumbi's entourage including an American were arrested in DR Congo's second city Lubumbashi, the capital of Katanga, and transferred to Kinshasa. Thambwe accused American "ex-corporal Lewis Darryl of having tried to force a police barrier during an opposition protest" in Lubumbashi on Friday and "having tried to flee during his

transfer from Ndjili airport to Kinshasa."

The minister said seven other former American soldiers and at least two South Africans had been staying in residences belonging to Katumbi, "for reasons that the inquiry will clarify". Katumbi was formerly governor of the southeastern province of Katanga, which has since been split into several different administrative regions.

He joined the opposition in September after quitting as governor and leaving the party of President Joseph Kabila. Popular and charismatic, the 51-year-old wealthy businessman is also head of the presti-

gious Tout-Puissant Mazembe football club, three-time winner of the African Champions League.

A coalition of opponents of Kabila announced Sunday that Katumbi would run in the presidential election, though he has not personally confirmed his candidacy. On Friday the politician accused the regime of targeting him with "false allegations", drawing reference to the "supposed recruitment of foreign mercenaries in Katanga province" and a report, by a TV station close to the government, of "the existence of training camps".

Authorities are under pressure from the international community to hold the polls as planned in November before Kabila's second and constitutionally last mandate ends, but this appears increasingly unlikely. DR Congo's political climate has grown increasingly tense, with Kabila's opponents accusing him of seeking to extend his stay in power. The country has been in crisis since Kabila's re-election in late 2011 in polls marred by irregularities and massive fraud. Kabila assumed power after his father, president Laurent Kabila, was assassinated in 2001. — AFP

BRAZIL ATTORNEY GENERAL WANTS PROBE AGAINST PRES. ROUSSEFF

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil's attorney general has asked the country's highest court to authorize an investigation into embattled President Dilma Rousseff over obstruction of justice allegations, according to major Brazilian news organizations.

The country's top newspapers and the Globo television network said late Tuesday that Rousseff was among 30 people target-



BRASLIA: Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff pauses during a ceremony launching an agricultural plan that allocates billions of dollars to farmers at Planalto presidential palace yesterday. — AP

ed by Attorney General Rodrigo Janot's requests. Others included ex-President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Solicitor General Jose Eduardo Cardozo, as well as opposition politician Aécio Neves, who lost to Rousseff in the 2014 presidential race, and House Speaker Eduardo Cunha.

A spokeswoman at the attorney general's office told The Associated Press yesterday that the agency was not commenting. Janot's request adds to problems buffeting Rousseff. The Senate looks likely to vote next week to suspend her and move forward with impeachment. If that happens, Vice President Michel Temer would take over for six months or until the conclusion

of the impeachment trial. The media reports say Rousseff is suspected of trying to undermine the snowballing investigation into corruption at the state-run oil company Petrobras by appointing her predecessor, Silva, as her chief of staff this year. Silva's nomination was later suspended.

Rio de Janeiro's O Globo newspaper reported that Janot's request accuses Silva of being the ringleader behind the massive scheme that saw top construction firms pay bribes in exchange for inflated contracts with Petrobras, with some of the money ending up in the coffers of political parties from across the ideological spectrum. The case has already ensnared leading politicians and businessmen.

"This criminal organization could never have functioned for so many years and in such a wide and aggressive manner within the federal government without ex-President Lula's taking part in it," the newspaper quoted Janot's petition as saying.

The reports say the requests grew out of the plea bargain testimony by Sen. Delcídio do Amaral, formerly the government's leader in the Senate, who was detained after recordings emerged suggesting he was plotting to spirit a key player in the Petrobras scandal out of the country.

Silva and Rousseff have repeatedly denied any wrongdoing. Rousseff yesterday cast doubt on Amaral's testimony, saying the senator "is in the habit of lying." She added that the leaked news of Janot's requests appeared to have been timed to do maximum damage to her and her close collaborators.

The Senate's impeachment commission was expected to vote this week on whether to recommend impeaching Rousseff, with the decisive vote by the full Senate slated for next Wednesday. Teori Zavascki, the Supreme Court justice in charge of the Petrobras investigation will decide whether to honor Janot's requests, though the news reports say there is no timetable for a decision. — AP



ANZAC, ALBERTA, CANADA: Cots are set up on the gym floor at an evacuee reception center, operated by the regional municipality of Wood Buffalo yesterday. — AP

RESIDENTS EVACUATED AS FIRES THREATEN CANADA OIL SANDS TOWN

FORT MCMURRAY, ALBERTA: A wildfire forced the evacuation of the Canadian oil sands city of Fort McMurray, Alberta, destroying 80 percent of the homes in one neighborhood and extensively damaging property in a number of others, officials said Wednesday, warning that it could get worse in the coming hours.

More than 80,000 residents were ordered to flee as flames moved into a city that's in the middle of the wilderness, destroying whole neighborhoods. No injuries have been reported.

Unseasonably hot temperatures combined with dry conditions have transformed the boreal forest in much of Alberta into a tinder box. The wildfire threat ranged from very high to extreme in different areas.

An overnight update from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo said the Beacon Hill suburb in the south end has suffered the most damage from flames with 80 percent of the homes lost. A dozen trailers on one street in the neighborhood of Timberlea have gone up in flames, with serious losses are reported in the Abasand and Waterways suburbs. Some homes have been lost in four other neighborhoods.

Fire chief Darby Allen told the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. on Wednesday that parts of wooded areas of the city are still burning but no structures were currently on fire. But Allen said he's worried about the plumes of smoke he sees outside his window and worried about the wind and its direction. "It could be even more devastating unfortunately," he said.

Firefighters were working to protect critical infrastructure, including the only bridge across the Athabasca River and Highway 63, the only major route to the city in or out. Forestry manager Bernie Schmitte told reporters overnight that there was still danger from "very high temperatures, low relative humidities and some strong winds." Canadian Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale said in a statement Wednesday he is watching the situation with "great concern" and said "situation is fluid and evolving rapidly." He noted the federal government is monitoring the situation carefully, including the military.

Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan, in a conference call from Germany early Wednesday, confirmed a formal request for assistance has been received from the Alberta government. What form that will take - at least on the military side - is still being determined and they are expecting to hear soon about the kind of equipment and personnel required.

"We're making all assets available," he said. Alberta Premier Rachel Notley called it the biggest evacuation in the history of the province. Residents were panicked. "When you leave ... it's an overwhelming feeling to think that you'll never see your house again," said resident Carol Christian, who drove to the evacuation center with her son and their cat.

"It was absolutely horrifying when we were sitting there in traffic. You look up and then you watch all the trees candle-topping ... up the hills where you live and you're thinking, 'Oh my God. We got out just in time.'"

Fort McMurray is the heart of Canada's oil sands region. The Alberta oil sands are the third largest reserves of oil in the world behind Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. Most oil sands projects are well north of the community, while the worst of the flames were on the city's south side. The Regional Municipality of Wood said evacuees who are north of Fort McMurray should stay north because they are safe.

Suncor, the largest oil sands operator, said it is reducing production at its regional facility - about 15 miles north of the city - so as "to allow employees and their families to get to safety."

Resident Breanna Schmidt said evacuating almost felt like "an apocalypse." "We had to literally drive through smoke and fire, vehicles littered all over the sides of the road, and we had to drive as fast as we could and breathe as little as we could because the smoke was so intense and we could feel the heat from inside the vehicle," she said.

Former National Hockey League player Doug Sulliman said he could see from his apartment balcony that both sides of the highway south were engulfed in flames and estimated hundreds of homes in Beacon Hill suburb over the hill were destroyed. "You could hear the pop, pop, pop because of the propane tanks. The fire was just consuming these houses. It just

destroyed the whole community," he said.

He decided the best place to stay was the apartment, but he was forced out three hours later. "I woke up just in time," he said in a phone interview. "Smoke had come into the apartment, but not bad. When I opened the door to the hallway it was burning my eyes and when I went outside it was burning my throat."

He said the highway opened and it was bumper to bumper and said there were many cars on the side of the road because service stations were out of fuel. He said RV campsites were destroyed. "There was a Shell gas station that blew up and a Denny's next door. There was nothing but the foundation and it was still smoldering in flames," he said. The blaze had burned since Sunday and seemed on its way to being neutralized Tuesday morning, but it overwhelmed firefighters when winds shifted quickly and drastically mid-afternoon Tuesday. Pictures and video on social media depicted a hellish scene of fire jumping roads and burning debris pitched into the paths of cars as frantic residents, lined up bumper to bumper, scrambled and fumbled to find their way through the thick gray haze.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his thoughts are with Alberta and said he's offered the premier the federal government's full support. He encouraged Canadians to support friends and donate to the Red Cross. "We will be there for them," Trudeau said. Oil sands work camps were being pressed into service to house evacuees. — AP



HOEXTER-BOSSEBORN, GERMANY: An aerial photo of the house of the incriminated couple taken yesterday. — AP

GERMANY: WOMAN SAYS SHE WAS HELD BY HORROR HOUSE COUPLE

BERLIN: A woman has told German investigators that she was held captive for around three months and was physically abused by a couple who are in custody for the deaths of two other women, police said yesterday.

Investigators traveled to the Berlin area Tuesday to hear the woman's account of her dealings with the couple - a man and his ex-wife who still lived together. Authorities believe that the couple from a village near the western town of Hoexter held another woman for nearly two months and abused her so badly that she died in April. They have also said they believe the couple killed and dismembered a victim in 2014.

The 51-year-old woman in the Berlin area, who wasn't identified, said she answered a personal ad placed by the husband in August 2011 and traveled to their house, police in western Germany said in a statement. She wasn't attacked during that three-week visit and stayed in touch with the man.

The woman returned to the couple's home at the end of 2011. She said she was locked inside the house with "no possibility of fleeing" and was physically abused by both suspects, according to police.

In March 2012, they said, she was taken to a station and put on a train home following a "significant physical dispute." She didn't contact police at the time because of threats of further violence. The woman contacted police on Friday after seeing pictures of the house in German media. The suspects have been under investigation since April 21, when they called an ambulance after their car broke down and rescuers found a woman inside suffering from head injuries and other abuse. She died shortly afterward in a hospital and doctors alerted authorities to the signs of abuse.

Prosecutors said at a news conference Tuesday that their motive is still unclear, but it appeared to be more about power and control than sexual reasons. — AP

FEDS INDICT COP AND ALLEGED MEMBERS OF GANGSTER DISCIPLES

ATLANTA: Alleged members of the Gangster Disciples, including high-ranking leaders and an Atlanta-area police officer who prosecutors say claimed to be a hit man for the gang, have been charged with racketeering in a federal indictment unsealed yesterday.

The indictment filed in federal court in Atlanta last week names 32 people accused of participating in coordinated criminal activity, including drug trafficking, robbery, carjacking, extortion, wire fraud, credit card fraud, insurance fraud and bank fraud. Authorities plan a

1 p.m. news conference to discuss the charges.

Federal authorities in Memphis, Tennessee, have also announced a news conference "regarding the indictment of multiple alleged members of the Gangster Disciples," said Louis Goggans, spokesman for the US attorney's office there.

The Gangster Disciples is a violent gang that began in Chicago in the 1970s when the Black Disciples and the Supreme Gangsters merged, the Atlanta indictment says. It's a highly structured and hierarchical organiza-

tion divided into geographic groups.

Charged in the indictment is Vancito Gumbs, who prosecutors say was a member of the Gangster Disciples while also serving as a police officer in DeKalb County, just outside Atlanta. Gumbs said in August that he killed people as a hit man for the gang, the indictment says. He traveled with another gang member last fall to "take care of GD business" and called another gang member in October to warn him to stay away from a sports bar that police were raiding and that the other

gang member frequented.

DeKalb County police spokesman Major Stephen Fore declined to comment on Gumbs' indictment until a 1 p.m. news conference. The national leader, known as the chairman, is in prison and is identified in the indictment as L.H. Board members are the highest ranking gang members after the chairman, and at least one of them, Shauntay Craig, is charged in the Atlanta indictment. State-level leaders are called governors. Regional leaders, who oversee several states, are called governors of

governors. Among those indicted in Atlanta were three people who prosecutors say served as governors of governors at various times: Alonzo Walton oversaw a region that included Georgia, Florida, Texas, Indiana and South Carolina; Terrance Summers oversaw Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina and Florida; and Adrian Jackson was governor of governor for the western states, including California.

It was not immediately clear whether any of those named in the indictment had lawyers who could comment on the charges. — AP



FORT MCMURRAY, ALBERTA, CANADA: Smoke rises from a wildfire outside on Tuesday. — AP

INDIAN PARLIAMENT ACCEPTS LIQUOR TYCOON'S RESIGNATION

NEW DELHI: India's parliament yesterday accepted Vijay Mallya's resignation of his seat, after the embattled liquor tycoon resubmitted his letter in line with the correct procedures.

The 60-year-old multimillionaire left India for Britain on March 2 owing more than \$1 billion in unpaid loans, and is being investigated by India's financial crimes agency. The government has revoked his passport and asked Britain to deport him, but Mallya told the Financial Times last week he had no plans to leave and wanted to reach a "reasonable" settlement with Indian banks.

Mallya had resigned from his seat in parliament's upper house-or the Rajya Sabha-Monday but his resignation was rejected after chairman Hamid Ansari

raised doubts over the veracity of his letter sent from Britain.

Ansari's spokesman Gurdeep Singh Sappal confirmed yesterday that Mallya's resignation had been accepted. "Hamid Ansari... accepts resignation of Vijay Mallya, resubmitted unconditionally and as per correct procedure," he wrote on Twitter. "Second resignation letter was sent in original. SG (solicitor general) confirmed from Mallya that resignation tendered was genuine, voluntary and unconditional."

Last month, the Rajya Sabha's ethics committee had recommended his expulsion from parliament over huge bank defaults. On Monday, Mallya said in his letter that he did not want his name to be "further dragged in the mud" and called the accusations against him "false

and baseless".

Critics say the government has not done enough to tackle the issue of wealthy individuals such as Mallya, once dubbed the King of Good Times for his lavish lifestyle, failing to repay bank loans.

The debts relate to Mallya's now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines, which shut down in 2012 having never made a profit.

Last month an Indian court issued an arrest warrant for him after he repeatedly failed to appear before investigators looking into Kingfisher's finances. A two-time independent MP, he also ran a liquor empire and is a part-owner of the Force India Formula 1 team. His Twitter profile now describes him as a "former member of parliament". — AFP



NEW DELHI: Vijay Mallya arrives at Parliament House on August 7, 2013. — AFP



PYEONGTAEK, SOUTH KOREA: A building is burned after a fire where residents, including US servicemen, used a blanket to catch a woman and her three children as they jumped to safety. — AP

PEOPLE HOLDING BLANKET SAVE MOM, KIDS FROM FIRE IN SOUTH KOREA

NO ONE WAS KILLED

SEOUL: Residents and US military personnel in a South Korean city rescued a woman and her three children from a fire by safely catching them with a blanket as they fell four floors, fire officials yesterday.

About 10 people held the blanket and persuaded the woman to drop her children from a fourth-floor window and then jump herself before

rescue workers arrived at the scene last week in the city of Pyeongtaek, said Moon Sang-hyeon from the Songtan Fire Department.

The children - aged 1, 3, and 4 - were not hurt and their mother, a 30-year-old Nigerian, suffered only minor injuries, Moon said.

The four-story building stood on a narrow alley near a busy outdoor market and a US military

base, which made it difficult for fire trucks to reach the scene quickly, Moon said. "Usually, it's safer to be patient and wait for fire workers to come, but in this case, everything worked out for the best," Moon said.

One of the Americans who assisted in the rescue was initially trapped herself, according to Osan Air Base, where all of the Americans involved work. Staff Sgt. Cierra Rogers, 731st Air Mobility Squadron administrative assistant, was inside the building when she smelled smoke. Unable to use the doors, she kicked out a window to reach the patio. "From then I made a decision because you can easily die from choking on smoke," Rogers said in an account posted on the base website.

She tried to climb down using wires attached to the patio, but fell about 4.5 meters (15 feet) to the ground. The other US personnel who had noticed the fire rushed to her aid. Tech Sgt. Stefan Haynes, 51st Force Support Squadron passport official, then saw the mother and children. A father of five kids, he told himself, "No, this not going to happen." The base's website said the Osan personnel involved in the rescue returned a couple of days later to meet the father, who expressed his gratitude.

Rogers suffered a deep cut from the broken glass. Firefighters arrived a short time later and rescued another woman from a third-floor bathroom, but there were no more injuries, Moon said. — AP



PYEONGTAEK, SOUTH KOREA: Residents, including U.S. servicemen, use a blanket as they catch a woman and her three children as they jump to escape a fire. — AP

BANGLADESH CAPITAL ON ALERT AHEAD OF WAR CRIMES VERDICT

DHAKA: The Bangladesh capital was on high alert yesterday ahead of a Supreme Court verdict on the nation's top Islamist leader that could clear the way for his execution for war crimes within days.

Jamaat-e-Islami party leader Motiur Rahman Nizami, 73, will likely face the gallows in less than a week if the court dismisses his final appeal Thursday over crimes committed during the country's independence war.

Police said they had stepped up security in Dhaka ahead of the verdict because of fears of Islamist violence, although they added there were no specific threats from any group. "We've enhanced security in the capital. Officers have been kept on alert," Dhaka Metropolitan Police spokesman Maruf Hossain Sorder told AFP.

Nizami was originally convicted of murder, rape and orchestrating the killing of top intellectuals as a militia leader during Bangladesh's 1971 war of independence against Pakistan.

The Supreme Court upheld the verdict in January this year, but Nizami's lawyers filed a final appeal. Previous convictions of Jamaat officials triggered the country's deadliest violence in decades, with around 500 people killed, mainly in clashes between Islamists and police. "There will be extra security at the Supreme Court and at important sites in the city," assistant commissioner of police Shiblee Noman told AFP. The judgment comes as the Muslim-majority nation reels from a string of killings of secular and liberal activists and religious minorities by suspected Islamist militants.

In the last two weeks alone, two gay rights activists, a liberal professor and a Hindu tailor who made derogatory comments against the Prophet Mohammed have been hacked to death. Nizami, Jamaat's leader since 2000 and a former government minister, could still avoid the gallows if he is granted clemency by the president. — AFP

KOREAN AIR CHIEF SUED BY PILOTS FOR BELITTLING THEIR JOBS

SEOUL: The head of Korean Air, who just resigned as the chief organizer of the 2018 Winter Olympics, was sued Wednesday by his carrier's pilots for allegedly demeaning their work.

The airline's pilot union filed a defamation lawsuit with the Seoul district court against Cho Yang-Ho over a Facebook posting the chairman made in March, a Korean Air spokesman said.

Responding to a Korean Air pilot who backed a pay rise demand by detailing the complex pre-flight checks required of the cockpit crew, Cho posted that flying a modern passenger plane on auto pilot was "easier than driving a car." "Don't flaunt yourself too much. Even a dog would laugh. You are talking big as if you were a Lindbergh who crossed the Atlantic Ocean," Cho wrote.

The posting infuriated Korean Air pilots already embroiled in a protracted wage dispute, and the union decided to take the matter

to court. The airline spokesman described the lawsuit as "irresponsible."

Cho was already in the headlines Tuesday when he resigned as head of the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games Committee, citing "critical financial issues" with Hanjin shipping which, like Korean Air, is part of the tycoon's Hanjin Group.

Cho's daughter Cho Hyun-Ah was jailed last year following a meltdown on board a Seoul-bound Korean Air flight that had just left the gate in New York. As the plane was taxiing to the runway, Cho, sitting in first class, became enraged when a flight attendant served her some nuts in a bag, rather than on a plate.

She lambasted the chief steward over the behavior of his cabin crew and then ordered the plane back to the gate so he could be ejected. She was eventually convicted of hampering the plane's operations and violence against cabin crew members. — AFP

MALAYSIA SEARCHES FOR FOREIGNERS MISSING IN SEAS OFF BORNEO

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian authorities are searching for three foreigners who were missing in waters near the Philippines where a spate of recent kidnappings have taken place, a coast guard official said yesterday.

The official cautioned there was so far no cause to suspect the abduction of the foreigners, who went missing late Monday along with a Malaysian off the state of Sabah on Borneo island. The missing were identified as Spanish nationals David Hernandez Gasulla and Martha Miguel, and Hong Kong citizen Tommy Lam Wai Yin. The Malaysian was identified only by one name, Ella. "We believe they experienced an engine problem and could be drifting in their small fiber boat. The area they were trav-

elling is quite safe," Mohamad Zubil Mat Som said. He said the four missing people had been travelling near Borneo island's northern tip. Two Malaysian warships, several smaller boats, and a helicopter were among the assets deployed in the operation, he added.

Islamic militants from the Abu Sayyaf group have been blamed for repeated kidnappings off Sabah of about 20 people. Among the recent incidents, 10 Indonesian sailors were snatched from their tugboat in late March. They were released on Sunday. Just over a week ago, however, Abu Sayyaf militants beheaded Canadian tourist John Ridsdel, for whom they had demanded \$21 million in ransom. — AFP

BEIJING'S TOP PAPER REMINDS TAIWAN'S NEW LEADER THERE'S JUST 'ONE CHINA'

BEIJING: Taiwan's president-elect's pledge to maintain the status quo with China is "empty talk" unless she recognizes the self-ruled island as part of China, the country's top newspaper said, as Beijing keeps up the pressure ahead of her inauguration.

China regards democratic Taiwan as a wayward province to be taken back by force if necessary and wants the new government to stick to the "one China" policy agreed upon with the outgoing China-friendly Nationalist government.

Beijing distrusts Tsai Ing-wen's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which it believes supports formal independence for Taiwan. Tsai assumes the presidency on May 20 after winning a January election by a landslide.

In an editorial to be published on Thursday, but carried on yesterday evening by the official Xinhua news agency, China's ruling Communist Party's People's Daily described current relations between China and Taiwan as "turbulent."

Taiwan stands at a critical juncture of either accepting what is called the "1992 consensus" - referring to Beijing's cherished "one China" principle that includes Taiwan as part of China - or taking an unclear stance and refusing to abandon support for Taiwan independence, the paper said. "Since 1949, though the two sides of the Taiwan Strait are yet to be unified, the reality that the mainland and Taiwan both belong to one China has not changed, and cannot change," it said.

Defeated Nationalist forces fled to Taiwan at the end of a civil war with the Communists in 1949. Tsai has always said she will maintain the status quo with China but has not elaborated on how she will engage Beijing beyond broad principles. She said again last month she will maintain the status quo, but that her policy will be based on democratic principles and transcendent party politics.

Her predecessor, the outgoing President Ma Ying-jeou of the Nationalists, signed landmark trade and economic agreements with China and had a historic meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in neutral Singapore last year.

The People's Daily said denying the "1992 consensus" would inevitably cause a change in ties with Taiwan. "The so-called 'maintenance of the status quo' promised by Taiwan's newly elected leader is only empty talk," it added. "The responsibility for the consequences caused can only be accepted by the DPP authorities."

Only the most important People's Daily editorials are released the night before they appear in the newspaper, in a sign of the importance the party attaches to Taiwan. — Reuters

BANGLADESH BLOGGER SEEKS US HELP AS THREATS ESCALATE

WASHINGTON: When Bangladeshi blogger and social activist Ashif Entaz Rabi hosted a TV talk show about a slaying of a publisher by Islamic extremists, he faced a torrent of threatening phone calls. He says young men with earpieces started loitering outside his workplace, and a militant website urged followers to "send this Ashif to Allah."

But Bangladeshi authorities told him they couldn't protect him, saying he'd need the kind of security usually reserved for the prime minister to keep him safe. Instead, they told him to take care of himself, and write something good about Islam and the government.

Rabi, 37, is in Washington at the invitation of a human rights group, calling attention to the dozens of writers and bloggers who fear they could be the next victim of a wave of savage attacks on liberals and religious minorities in Bangladesh. The violence has had a chilling effect on freedom of expression in the traditionally moderate Muslim nation.

Tuesday marks World Press Freedom Day, and a coalition of rights groups are calling for a U.N.-backed inquiry into the killings because Bangladesh's government has failed to address the situation. They say "an atmosphere of complete impunity" in the South Asian nation is emboldening the killers. Since the beginning of 2015, at least nine intellectuals, academics, writers, bloggers, and activists have been hacked

to death in targeted assassinations.

Rabi attended the annual White House Correspondents' Association dinner at the weekend, and met Tuesday with a top State Department envoy on human rights, Tom Malinowski, to discuss the deteriorating climate of tolerance in Bangladesh. He's also hoping to find a way to secure sanctuary in the US for himself and his immediate family.

"It's better that the international community do something rather than just make statements. It's no use just issuing letters, as the prime minister (of Bangladesh) does not care," Rabi told The Associated Press on Monday.

Secretary of State John Kerry called Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Thursday, urging Bangladesh to protect those at risk. He also offered US sup-

port for the investigation into the slaying last week of Xulhaz Mannan, a US Agency for International Development employee and gay rights activist.

Since December, the US has said it is considering providing temporary sanctuary to some individuals at immediate risk. The State Department said Tuesday in some cases it is working with nongovernment groups to reach out to individuals who may be under threat and need emergency assistance.

A broader concern for Washington is that transnational jihadist groups could gain a foothold in Bangladesh despite the nation's traditions of secularism, free speech and respect for its Christian and Hindu minorities.

Nearly all the attacks have been claimed by groups like the so-called Islamic State and various affiliates of al-Qaida. The government, however, has denied that these groups have a presence in Bangladesh, and has blamed the violence on the political opposition.

While there have been some arrests, authorities have struggled to make any headway in naming those planning the attacks. Mahbub Hassan Saleh, deputy chief of mission at the Bangladeshi Embassy in Washington, said in an email that the government is determined to bring to justice perpetrators of recent killings of bloggers, teachers and religious minorities. — AP



WASHINGTON: Bangladeshi blogger and social activist Ashif Entaz Rabi stands outside the White House on Tuesday. — AP

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Seventh Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea



The Workers' Party of Korea, the ruling party and guiding force of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is striving to hasten final victory for the building of a thriving socialist country, holding fast to independence, Songun and socialism as its permanent strategy. In this situation it made public that its Seventh Congress will be convened in 6 May this year.

To look back, the congresses of the WPK with a history spanning 70 years were epoch-making events for strengthening the WPK and advancing the revolution and construction of the country.

The Inaugural Congress of the Central Organizing Committee of the Communist Party of North Korea, the predecessor of the WPK, held in October 1945 was a historic event that brought about a radical turn in building a new society and shaping the Korean people's destiny. Established soon after the country's liberation from the Japanese military occupation on August 15, 1945, the Party presented the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution as its immediate task. It then successfully led democratic reforms, distributing crop fields to their tillers, nationalizing major industries and enforcing a labour law and a law on sex equality; it also launched mass movements including the general ideological mobilization movement for nation building, thus awakening the masses to their ideological consciousness and rousing them to the building of a new society. This brought about a radical change in the appearance of the country, once a backward colonial and semi-feudal one, in a short period of time.

The Second Congress of the Workers' Party of North Korea held in March 1948 set up a new milestone in further strengthening the unity and cohesion of the Party and consolidating it in quality, and roused the whole people to carrying out the tasks for the first period of transition to socialism. When the US unleashed the Korean war (1950 - 1953) against the DPRK to stamp out the country in its cradle—actually it was only less than two years after its founding (September 9, 1948)—the Party called the army and people to the struggle for victory in the war, thus defeating the US-led 16 allied imperialist forces and defending the sovereignty and dignity of the country with honour. And by carrying out the postwar reconstruction on the ruins of war in a matter of three years, it demonstrated once again the might of the country to the US imperialists who had claimed that Korea would never be rebuilt within one hundred years. The Third Congress of the Workers' Party of Korea, which was held in April 1956, presented the task for completing the laying of the foundations of socialism. By organizing and mobilizing the people, the Party carried out the agricultural cooperativization and socialist transformation of private and capitalist trade and commerce in a short period of time, thus establishing an advanced socialist system in the country and developing it into a socialist industrial and agricultural state with firm foundations of an independent national economy.

At the Fourth Congress of the WPK held in September 1961, the Party reviewed the successes achieved in the socialist revolution and construction and advanced an ambitious programme of the First Seven-Year Plan for reaching the goal of socialism. Amid the acute situation at home and abroad created by the Cuban Missile Crisis and the incident of the Gulf of Tonkin, it achieved the epochal success of converting the country into a socialist industrial state while building up the economy and defences simultaneously.

At the Fifth Congress of the WPK held in November 1970, it set out the Six-Year Plan, another ambitious programme, and the tasks for hastening final victory of socialism and nationwide victory of the Korean revolution and continuously developing the Party. The country strenuously promoted the three revolutions ideological, technological and cultural thus making a great progress in the struggle for hastening final victory of socialism and laying a firm foundation for accelerating the modelling of the whole society on the Juche idea in a comprehensive way.

The Sixth Congress of the WPK, held in October 1980, was a significant meeting which unfolded a blueprint for achieving prosperity unprecedented in the history of the country.

The congress defined modelling the whole society on the Juche idea as the general objective of the Korean revolution and presented the tasks for implementing the line of three revolutions ideological, technological and cultural together with ten long-term objectives of socialist economic construction that should be attained in the 1980s. Had the long-term objectives been realized, the DPRK would have joined on its own terms the rank of nations leading the world in economic development. However, the Party faced an unexpected situation. At the end of the 1980s socialism started to collapse in several countries and the US-led imperialist allied forces took that opportunity to concentrate their anti-socialist offensive against the DPRK.

In this arduous period, the Party, upholding the banner of Songun, crushed the offensive of the imperialist allied forces and defended socialism. Furthermore, it opened up a new era of building a thriving socialist country.

The cause of building a thriving country is advancing dynamically in the DPRK now in the face of moves of



the US and its followers to isolate and suffocate it. In recent years, the single-hearted unity of the whole society, more powerful than an atomic bomb, has been consolidated remarkably, and numerous model, standard factories have been built in the era of the knowledge economy and the work of putting production lines on an informatized and modern basis has been promoted in a positive way amid the flames of the industrial revolution in the new century; all these are giving a fresh impetus to developing the overall economy and improving the people's standard of living. The successive launch of indigenous satellites demonstrated the unfathomable strength of the country, and successful H-bomb test provided a sure guarantee for defending the sovereignty of the country, the right to existence of the nation and the peace and security of the region against the nuclear threat by the US.

The upcoming Seventh Congress of the WPK will review in a comprehensive way the brilliant successes it achieved in the revolution and construction under the leadership of Kim Il Sung, eternal President of the DPRK, and Kim Jong Il, eternal General Secretary of the WPK, in the previous period and unfold a bright blueprint for hastening final victory of the Korean revolution under the leadership of Kim Jong Un, First Secretary of the WPK. We extend congratulations to the Seventh Congress of the WPK, which will constitute a historic watershed in carrying out the cause of socialism by the Korean people.

Will of the Workers' Party of Korea

Since its founding on October 10, 1945, the WPK has led the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its people along the road of the socialist cause by braving every manner of challenges and trials of history. Accomplishing the cause of independence of the masses, the cause of socialism is the steadfast faith and will of the WPK.

Its 70-year history proves this.

It has continuously strengthened the motive force of the cause of socialism and enhanced its role.

It has trained the masses of the people, who had long suffered from exploitation and oppression, poverty and rightlessness, into an independent motive force of history, who carve out their destiny independently and creatively by awakening them ideologically and rallying them organizationally. And it turned the whole society into a socio-political organism by awakening the whole people including the workers, peasants and intellectuals with socialist ideology and rallying them behind it organizationally and ideologically and based on moral obligation.

Today, in the DPRK, the WPK firmly occupies the central position of society, and the masses are united around it with one mind and one will.

The WPK has led the people to display their inexhaustible creativeness in socialist construction.

In the complicated circumstances created immediately after the country's liberation (August 15, 1945) from Japanese colonial rule, it formed various mass organizations, and established a people's government, enabling the people to become masters of politics and the country. And it awakened the masses to their ideological consciousness and aroused them to the building of a new society by launching a general ideological mobilization movement for nation building, emulation drive for increased production and anti-literacy campaign. Thus the country was able to eliminate the remnants of Japanese colonial rule and successfully carry out democratic reforms including land reform and nationalization of key industries.

It has advanced lines and policies in conformity with the people's aspirations and the country's specific situation in every period and at every stage of the revolution and construction, and thus led the cause of socialism along the road of victory.

In the 1950s, in order to carry out agricultural

cooperativization, an important link in the whole chain of the socialist revolution, it advanced an original policy of reorganizing the form of the rural economy along the socialist lines prior to its technical transformation and adhered to the principle of relying firmly on poor peasants, strengthening alliance with middle peasants and restricting and transforming rich peasants. In this way, it carried out agricultural cooperativization, a serious social reform, successfully in a matter of four to five years. It also accomplished socialist transformation of capitalist trade and commerce with success.

It put forward the basic line of socialist economic construction of giving priority to the development of heavy industry while simultaneously developing light industry and agriculture, the line of building a self-reliant national economy and the line of building up the economy and defences simultaneously, and roused all the people to their implementation, thus turning the country into a socialist industrial state, a powerful socialist country independent in politics, self-sufficient in the economy and self-reliant in national defence, in a short period of 14 years.

The WPK has consistently adhered to and applied revolutionary principles in the whole course of carrying out the cause of socialism.

It established the socialist system and has consolidated it in keeping with the people's demand for independence and their interests and in conformity to the nature of the cause of independence of the masses. And the more intensified the imperialists' anti-socialist offensive became to infringe upon the independent interests of the masses, the more firmly the WPK held fast to and implemented the revolutionary principles. In the closing years of the last century, socialism was frustrated in several countries, the US-led imperialist allied forces made persistent efforts to isolate and stifle the DPRK, and President Kim Il Sung, the founding father of socialist Korea, passed away; to make matters worse, unprecedented natural calamities hit the country for several consecutive years. At that time the West, clamouring that "north Korea is on the verge of collapse," even worked out the timetable. However, the WPK held the banner of Songun higher and safeguarded socialism. By dint of its Songun politics, the DPRK tided over the worst trials and advanced dynamically towards a higher target of building a thriving socialist nation.

Today, the cause of socialism in the DPRK is being steadily defended by Kim Jong Un, First Secretary of the WPK. Under his leadership, all the people are creating world-startling miracles and innovations in the building of a thriving socialist nation day after day to bring final victory earlier.

Through their life experience, the people of the DPRK have cherished socialism as their lifeline and are confident that only victory and glory are in store for them on the road of following the WPK.

As the WPK leads it full of unshakeable faith and will to carry out the cause of socialism, the DPRK will be ever victorious.

The Invincibility of the Workers' Party of Korea

The WPK has won worldwide recognition as the invincible guiding force of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

For seven decades since it was founded on December 10, 1945 it has registered only victories despite the upheavals of history. Then what are the factors in guaranteeing its invincibility?

First, the WPK is guided by a great ideology.

Its guiding ideology is Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism whose essence is the Juche idea.

Setting out in his teens on the road to liberate the country from Japanese military occupation, Kim Il Sung authored the Juche idea in the early days of his revolutionary activities. Holding aloft the banner of the Juche idea, he organized an armed struggle to overthrow Japanese colonial rule and accomplished the historic

cause of Korea's liberation. Immediately after that, he founded the WPK whose guiding ideology was the Juche idea.

Guided by this ideology, the WPK ensured that the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution was carried out with success and the DPRK, the first democratic people's republic in the East, was established. It also led the service personnel and civilians to defeat the US, who boasted of being the "strongest" in the world, during the Fatherland Liberation War in the 1950s and build a socialist power, independent, self-sufficient and self-reliant in national defence, on the debris of the war.

As it has held fast to the principles of the Juche idea, the WPK has advanced the cause of socialism vigorously, without making any mistake or error in its lines and without vacillating or wavering in the face of trials.

Even when the countries affiliated with the CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) collapsed one after another following the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, the DPRK remained unperturbed because it had maintained its independent line as required by the Juche idea. The WPK led the revolution and construction according to its own principles and as suited to the specific conditions of the country without kowtowing to big countries or imitating others blindly. The anti-socialist forces the world over made concerted efforts to threaten the DPRK militarily and blockade it economically, but could not bring the socialist power to its knees.

Second, the WPK has achieved the rock-solid unity and cohesion of its ranks.

Kim Jong Il, chairman of the DPRK National Defence Commission who was carrying forward President Kim Il Sung's ideology and cause, developed the WPK into an invincible organization.

From the mid-1960s, when he started working at the Central Committee of the WPK, he focused on developing it into a steel-strong organization whose members act as one, firmly united around their leader. He formulated President Kim Il Sung's revolutionary ideas as Kimilsungism and established a well-regulated work system and strict discipline whereby the whole Party acts as one with the leader's ideology and will as its guideline.

As a result, the WPK has been developed into a party whose members are single-heartedly united around their leader. In such a party there is no room for any alien political faction or ideology.

There are many countries and political parties in the world but there is no other party than the WPK, whose organizational and ideological foundations have been built up with the leader as the centre and where the monolithic ideological and leadership system has been firmly established on the basis of one guiding ideology.

Third, the WPK enjoys unreserved support and absolute trust of the masses of the people.

It takes responsibility for their destiny and looks after them with maternal affection. It strives to reflect most correctly their demands and interests in its lines and policies. It maintains giving top priority to the people's interests and working with devotion for their benefit as the supreme principle underlying its activities.

The harmonious whole of the leader, the WPK and the masses cannot be found elsewhere in the world.

"Let the whole Party go among the masses!" and "We serve the people!" these slogans reflect the people-oriented policy of the WPK that believes in them as in heaven and does its best for their interests.

The Korean people absolutely trust and support the lines and policies of the WPK. They regard its Songun politics as a means of safeguarding their destiny and socialism in the fierce showdown with the imperialists, and its line of building a thriving socialist nation as a way for realizing all their dreams and ideals, and are devoting their all to their implementation.

Last but not least, the WPK has been led by outstanding leaders.

President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il led the WPK for several decades, performing immortal exploits in developing it.

Today it is demonstrating its invincible might under the leadership of Kim Jong Un who is carrying forward the ideology and cause of his predecessors faithfully. He has formulated Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism as the guiding ideology of the WPK and set modelling the whole society on Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism as its ultimate programme. This is a manifestation of his unshakeable determination to carry forward and accomplish the ideology and cause of President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il.

His mode of building and leading the WPK and directing its activities is exactly the same as that of his predecessors. He is developing their ideology and cause on the highest level without any deviation and without any concession. He has elucidated that the permanent strategy of the Korean revolution lies in marching straight along the road of independence, the road of Songun and the road of socialism as indicated by President Kim Il Sung and Chairman Kim Jong Il. The unshakeable aim of the WPK is to build a thriving socialist nation and achieve national reunification true to their intentions.

A statesman with youthful vigour and courage, Kim Jong Un epitomizes the dignity and invincibility of the WPK

BREAKTHROUGH IN HUMAN EMBRYOS...

Continued from Page 1

Besides opening a window onto the first steps in the creation of an individual, the findings in parallel studies may help explain early miscarriages and why in vitro fertilization has such a high failure rate. The research also showed for the first time that newly-forming human embryos can mature beyond a few days outside a mother's womb, something that was previously thought to be impossible.

But the widely hailed results also set science on a collision course with national laws and ethical guidelines, experts cautioned. Up to now, a so-called "14-day rule" - which says that human embryos cannot be cultured in the lab for more than two weeks - has never been seriously challenged simply because no one had succeeded in keeping them alive that long. In this case, the scientists destroyed the embryos to avoid breaching that limit. The findings were published in Nature and Nature Cell Biology. Next to nothing is known about how the small, hollow bundle of cells called a blastocyst - emerging from a fertilized egg - attach to the uterus, allowing an embryo to begin to take shape. "This portion of human development" - called implantation - "was a complete black box," said Ali Brivanlou, a professor at The Rockefeller University in New York, and the main architect of the Nature study.

Building on previous work with mice, Brivanlou and colleagues concocted a chemical soup and scaffolding to duplicate this process "in vitro", or in a petri dish. "We were able to create a system that properly recapitulates what happens during human implantation," said Rockefeller scientist and lead author Alessia Deglincerti. As hoped, the blastocyst grew, beginning to divide into the different types of cells that eventually give rise to a fetus and its placenta.

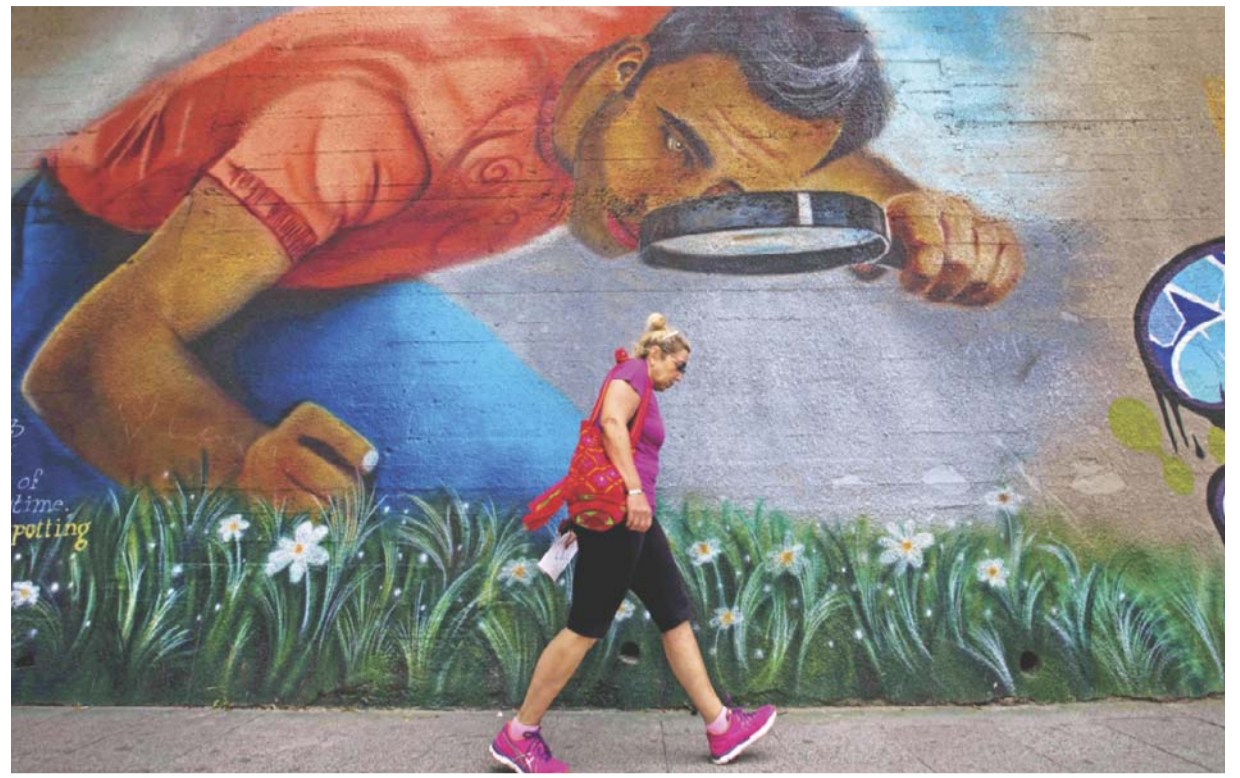
But unlike earlier experiments, in which growth has rarely continued beyond seven days, the embryos showed an unexpected ability to self-organize. "Amazingly, at least up to the first 12 days, development occurred normally in our system in the complete absence of maternal input," Brivanlou said in a statement. It had long been assumed that this transformation could not persist detached from the mother's uterus. "Up to now, it has been impossible to study implantation

in human embryos," said Magdalena Zernicka-Goetz, a professor at the University of Cambridge and an author for both studies. "This new technique provides us with a unique opportunity to get a deeper understanding of our own development during these crucial stages and helps us understand what happens, for example, during miscarriage."

The breakthrough is also likely to provide a boost to research on the use of embryonic stem cells to treat certain diseases. "Only with this knowledge, specifically from human cells, can we control their ability to become cell types useful for drug screening or transplantation," said Gist Croft, also from Rockefeller University. Scientists not involved in the research hailed the results as a major milestone. "Both studies clearly demonstrate the incredible intrinsic ability of the embryo to organize itself as it starts to create the body plan - even in the absence of a mother," said Harry Moore, a professor of reproductive biology at the University of Sheffield in England.

Allan Pacey, also of Sheffield, said they could "revolutionize our understanding of the early events of human embryo development." Along with most experts commenting on findings, Pacey said ethical concerns are likely overblown. "It will not open the door to couples being able to grow babies in the laboratory - this is not the dawn of a Brave New World scenario," he said. But the scientific community and regulators will still be faced with a decision on whether to lift or extend the 14-day rule, which is law in a dozen countries, and accepted practice in five others, including the United States and China.

Most scientists argue for a loosening of the regulations. "Given the potential benefits of new research in infertility, improving assisted conception methods, there may be a case in the future for reconsidering this," said Daniel Brison, head of the department of reproductive medicine at the University of Manchester. But there remains a "slippery slope" problem, commented another expert. "If we do not use a 14-day rule, what limit will we use?" asked Henry Greely, director of the Center for Law and the Biosciences at the Stanford School of Medicine in California. "Twelve weeks or so as in many European abortion laws? Viability - at around 23 weeks - as in US abortion law? Human development is a seamless process," he added. "But ultimately lines need to be drawn." — AFP



A woman walks past graffiti in Beirut yesterday. Graffiti artists have been trying to re-engage disillusioned youth in a debate about the country's latest wave of political turmoil. — AP

ECB SCRAPS €500 NOTE

Continued from Page 1

aftermath of the bloody series of attacks in Paris in 2015. But resistance to the abolition of the €500 banknote runs high in neighboring Germany, where most people still prefer to make payments in cash even for big ticket items like electronic goods.

When the euro was created, it was Germany that had been keen to have a €500 bill because it was of a similar size denomination as its 1,000-deutschmark banknote. In Europe's top economy, where credit cards were only accepted in major electronic chains late last year, opponents of the note's abolition are concerned that it would

simply be the first step in scrapping cash altogether, replacing it with electronic payment systems that can be completely monitored by authorities.

Some experts have also suggested that dropping the €500 note would contribute little to fighting crime. "Organized crime isn't stupid. Most money is laundered without cash via bogus companies," said Friedrich Schneider, an expert on the shadow economy at the University of Linz in Austria in interviews to a number of German media recently. According to ECB statistics, the €500 bills account for just three percent of the total number of banknotes in circulation, but 28 percent of the total value. — AFP

YEMEN FOES RESUME DIRECT PEACE TALKS

Continued from Page 1

said the two sides had agreed that a monitoring committee supervising an April 11 ceasefire would launch a fact-finding mission into the rebels' takeover of the Al-Amaliq base in Amran province, one of their strongholds.

The committee will submit a report within 72 hours with practical recommendations that all sides pledge to carry out, Ould Cheikh Ahmed said. Foreign Minister Abdulmalek Al-Mikhlafi, who heads the government delegation, has demanded a rebel pullout. The United Nations stressed the need to strengthen ceasefire monitoring committees on the ground, particularly in and around battleground third city Taz, where loyalist troops have been under siege for months, trapping tens of thousands of civilians.

Human Rights Watch, which has been deeply critical of alleged violations of the rules of war by the government and its supporters in a Saudi-led military coalition as well as the rebels and their allies, called for justice for the victims from the UN-brokered talks in Kuwait. It urged the warring parties to "support inter-

national investigations, transitional justice and victim compensation as key elements of any agreement." "The armed conflict in Yemen has been characterised by numerous violations of the laws of war by all sides, which have not been investigated nor have resulted in any redress for victims of unlawful attacks," the New York-based watchdog said.

Despite a Saudi-led military intervention in support of the government launched in March last year, the rebels and their allies still control the capital, as well as much of the northern and central mountains and Red Sea coast. The United Nations says that most of the civilians killed in the conflict in the past 14 months have died in Saudi-led bombing raids.

HRW accused the coalition of carrying out "indiscriminate air strikes" against civilian areas even as rebels "committed various abuses". "It's crucial for the Yemen peace talks to address past atrocities as well as future political arrangements," said HRW's Middle East director Joe Stork. "A mechanism should be put in place to investigate abuses, prosecute those responsible and assist the victims," he said. — AFP

TRUMP URGES UNITY, EYES CLINTON CLASH

Continued from Page 1

experience" to compliment his own business acumen. "I would like to have somebody that could truly be good with respect to dealing with the Senate, dealing with Congress, getting legislation passed."

A new CNN poll looking ahead to the next phase of the White House race however found Clinton, hoping at 68 to become America's first female commander-in-chief, leading the billionaire real estate mogul. The former secretary of state has 54 percent support to 41 percent for Trump, the poll showed - her largest lead since July. Clinton suffered a shock loss in Indiana to her challenger Bernie Sanders, who has pledged to remain in the race until the end despite an extremely steep hill to climb, with the former first lady far ahead in the all-important delegate race. "The Clinton campaign thinks this campaign is over. They're wrong," Sanders said in a statement as he vowed to "fight until the last vote is cast."

Several prominent Republicans were nevertheless refusing to support Trump in November despite his status as the presumptive White House nominee. Those refusals highlight the continued tensions within the GOP, which has been at a loss to describe the stunning ascent of a brash billionaire who was given no chance of winning when he launched his campaign last June. "If we nominate Trump, we will get destroyed... and we will deserve it," tweeted Senator Lindsey Graham, a Trump rival whose campaign fizzled.

Trump expressed optimism he could line up sufficient support in the Republican ranks - although he suggested some wounds were still too raw to heal right away. "I am confident that I can unite much of it. Some of it I don't want," he told NBC, citing the harsh verbal attacks made by unnamed rivals and party grandees during the primary

process. "Honestly, there are some people I really don't want. I don't think it's necessary."

Trump pivoted to his expected showdown with Clinton on Nov 8. "Bernie Sanders said that she's got poor judgment. And she does," Trump said on MSNBC, as he poked into the long-running controversy over Clinton's use of a personal email account and private server while she was secretary of state. "You look at the email scandals, she shouldn't even be allowed to run," he said. "She should suffer like other people have suffered who have done far less than she has."

Tuesday's contest in the Midwestern Hoosier State was the final firewall thrown up by Republican heavyweights to keep the brush, name-calling Trump from locking up the party's nomination. But as the race was called overwhelmingly in Trump's favor, Cruz conceded to supporters in Indianapolis that he no longer had a viable path forward. "We left it all on the field in Indiana," Cruz said as he suspended his campaign. We gave it everything we've got, but the voters chose another path." It was a stunning denouement for the 45-year-old archconservative Texas senator, who had insisted he would press on to the final day of the Republican race. Having amassed 1,053 delegates, Trump was already in a favorable position to reach the magic number needed to avoid a contested party convention in July. With Cruz and Kasich out of the race, nominee Trump is a foregone conclusion.

"I believe Donald Trump will ultimately get chosen, and he's going to join the party," Republican National Committee chief Reince Priebus said yesterday, in an extraordinary embrace of a candidate the party establishment had fought tooth and nail to stop. "We need to get behind the Republican nominee, and that's what I'm going to try to do for the next several months." — AFP

RIYADH'S \$22.5BN METRO ON TRACK

Continued from Page 1

ground at a site on Line Five where digging has been completed "before the scheduled time". The metro employs seven such machines, whose cutting tools resemble monster-sized heads from an electric shaver, several metres in diameter. "This project... is now going very quick," one manager at the site told AFP. Construction on the Riyadh Metro began in late 2013 and is targeted for completion by the end of 2018, much more quickly than similar projects in other countries. It is the biggest infrastructure project in the history of the Saudi capital. Work on the metro intensified just before the oil revenues on which Saudi Arabia depends began to drop sharply.

The collapse in global crude prices by more than half since mid-2014 left the world's biggest oil producer with a record budget deficit last year and a projected

shortfall of \$87 billion this year. As a result, the government imposed unprecedented subsidy cuts on fuel, electricity and water. It delayed some major projects and held up receipts to contractors.

Last week, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman released the wide-ranging Vision 2030 plan to diversify the economy away from oil. It calls for "high quality" public transport to help improve urban life. Three foreign consortiums are building the metro, with France's Alstom, Canada's Bombardier and Germany's Siemens among the major participants.

The metro's six lines will cover 176 km, supported by a bus network of 1,150 km. About 40 percent of the system will be underground. Work on the above-ground elevated railway is noticeable throughout the sprawling city of 5.7 million, where concrete supports and railway platforms are going up, forcing motorists into constant detours. — AFP

SPEAKER SAYS MP DASHTI'S SICK LEAVE...

Continued from Page 1

Commenting on the announcement, Dashti lashed out at his opponents, accusing them of not paying any attention to respecting the law and human rights. Dashti is facing a large number of cases in connection to attacking Saudi Arabia and Bahrain which are being investigated by the public prosecution. The general

attorney has already issued several arrest warrants against him and also ordered his detention for 10 days when he returns to the country. In another development, Ghanem said that the delay of the debate of the government's economic reform vision was made at the request of the government. He said the vision does not need the approval of the Assembly but it will require legislation which should be submitted for approval.

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THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
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ESTABLISHED 1961

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Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
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'BONGBONG', THE SON,
LEADS MARCOS REVIVAL
IN THE PHILIPPINES

By Martin Petty and Manuel Mogato

MANILA: For the son and namesake of late Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos, winning the vice presidency in next week's election is as much about restoring his family's tainted image as it is about making the country a better place. "Bongbong", as Ferdinand Marcos Jr is known, has been leading most opinion polls ahead of the May 9 election, marking the revival of a name synonymous with martial law, torture and billions of dollars of plundered wealth. A poll published on Wednesday had him slipping to second place for the first time, but he was just two points behind Congresswoman Leni Robredo.

Marcos Jr, 58, says his family is not the only issue and his popularity comes from public disenchantment with a political establishment that emerged after his father's overthrow in the iconic "people power" revolution in 1986. "We keep hearing about all these wonderful things happening to our economy and yet people are poor," he said in an interview. "That's where the frustration comes from... There's clearly a desire for something different."

Unlike most other countries, elections for the Philippine president and vice-president are held separately and the two can be political rivals. The maverick mayor of the southern city of Davao, Rodrigo Duterte, 71, is leading opinion polls for president. The senior Marcos was president of the Philippines for two decades, including nine years as the head of a martial law government.

Later governments have documented 75,000 cases of torture, illegal detention and disappearances in those years. The rule by the senior Marcos and his wife Imelda, known for her lavish lifestyle and thousands of pairs of shoes, has been called a kleptocratic "conjugal dictatorship". The family fled to exile in Hawaii after the ouster, where the senior Marcos died in 1989. After that, the widespread hatred of the Marcos family began to ebb.

Bongbong Marcos returned from Hawaii in 1991 and rebuilt the family's political base in its stomping grounds of Ilocos Norte province, serving as governor, congressman and senator. His mother Imelda is seeking re-election next week to the House of Representatives from a district in the province, while his sister Imee is seeking re-election as the provincial governor. Political strategist Pastor "Boy" Saycon says the Marcos years were not all that bad, although he spent three months in jail at that time when the government rounded up student activists. "There was this discipline being instilled," he said. "Because that's the problem of our country today - there is no discipline."

Enforced Vacation

If Bongbong wins the number two spot, he will be firmly in line to contest the presidency in a later election. Marcos gets irritated by the suggestion that the presidency is his goal. He calls the vice presidency a natural step and describes himself as a reluctant politician who had to clear the family name. "When we came back from our 'enforced vacation' we were the issue, and so to answer that we had to be also in the political stage," Marcos said. "There was very little else we could do if we were to somehow be able to continue to be able to work and to do something, and part of it is also to defend ourselves."

There are old scores to settle between Marcos and another dynasty, the family of outgoing President Benigno Aquino. Aquino's father and namesake was a fierce critic of the Marcoses and his assassination in 1983 ignited the people power revolt. The president's late mother Corazon Aquino led the people power uprising before taking the presidency.

Aquino has tried to derail Marcos's bid for vice-president. In October, the president said he had faith the public would reject Marcos and in February, timed with the 30-year anniversary of the revolution, the government announced it would sell gems, property and stocks confiscated from the Marcoses and would seek the return of \$1 billion via court cases at home and overseas.

But Marcos has opened up a clear lead in the most recent opinion polls and his anti-establishment platform is resonating with young Filipinos born long after the rule of his father. But for some of the older generation, the prospect of his family's return to the forefront of national politics is an embarrassing, retrograde step. "People from the outside cannot understand why Filipinos are putting Marcos back into power," said political analyst Dindo Manhit. "We never learn." Bongbong Marcos rejects common narratives of oppression and failed government in his father's rule. "There are many positive things to talk about from during that time," he said. "So that's what we do. It's fairly simple." — Reuters

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PRINCE MAKES BOLD CHALLENGES TO OLD WAYS

By Samia Nakhoul, William Maclean and Angus McDowall

Saudi Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman got a standing ovation when he visited a gathering of Saudi youth last month. Last week, after hearing about his economic plans in a meeting with religious leaders, one of the kingdom's most conservative sheikhs tweeted a smiling selfie of himself with the prince. Whether the 31-year-old son of King Salman will achieve his goal of modernising the kingdom's economy is the subject of animated debate on social media, in office buildings and at coffee shops here.

The plans, aimed at ending dependence on oil by 2030, require shaking up a bureaucracy that has stymied changes in the past, challenging powerful religious conservatives and building up a private sector currently reliant on state spending. Diplomats and economists say the program, which relies on the private sector driving growth and providing new sources of revenue to the state via new taxes and fees, will be exceptionally difficult to implement.

"Saudi Arabia is far away" from its economic goals, said Steffen Hertog, an economist at the London School of Economics (LSE) who studies the kingdom. The prince's close aides acknowledge the difficulties. Some ruling family members fear too rapid economic changes could cause social unrest or tension inside the Al Saud dynasty, Saudi analysts say. Yet in this country of 20 million Saudis and 10 million expatriates, the rise of Prince Mohammed - who runs economic, defense and oil strategy - underscores a dramatic shift towards a leadership seemingly more in tune with the needs of a country where 70 percent of the population is under 30.

It is the first time that effective power has passed from the royal gerontocracy of rulers

to a third generation of a family founded by the prince's grandfather, known as Ibn Saud. King Salman still has the final word, but he has delegated nearly unprecedented powers to his son. That has meant changes in style and substance. Prince Mohammed works 16-hour days - unlike the more sluggish schedules of his older predecessors - and has appointed business people and economic experts instead of other royals to top jobs.

Many younger Saudis see the rise of a man who is usually referred to as "MbS" as evidence their generation is at last playing a role in a country whose patriarchal traditions had made power the province of the old. "I'm so excited! I want him to be our king now. I mean he's open-minded, has a great plan and maybe a little handsome," said Najla, 20, who did not wish to give her family name. That backing, and widespread fears about plunging oil prices, is providing MbS with an important springboard for his efforts. When in December, he and his team raised petrol prices - a step previous administrations had hesitated to take for fear of public backlash - Saudis took the move in stride.

The lack of protests surprised MbS, according to people close to the prince, but also helped convince him that Saudis were ready for a change. Jihad Al-Najjar, one of those who lined up outside petrol stations that night to fill up on the lower cost fuel, said he understood the country could no longer afford such subsidies. "It's not the real price," the 22-year-old medical student said.

Abdulaziz Al-Sager, head of the Jeddah and Geneva-based Gulf Research Centre, says there is a growing recognition among Saudi leaders that the oil-based economic system is not sustainable. That will necessarily lead to social and political change. "You cannot do the economic change and the transformation without some sort of political change," he says. "That raises the question of what sort of a new social contract we are going to have."

Confidence

Few had heard of Prince Mohammed before his father, 80-year-old son of modern Saudi Arabia's founder, became the kingdom's 7th monarch in Jan 2015. Today, Prince Mohammed is second in line to rule behind Mohammed bin Nayef, a cousin who is crown prince and, as Interior Minister, head of internal security. Unlike many other royals, Prince Mohammed did not go to school abroad but graduated from King Saud University with a law degree. Informed Saudis who follow royal affairs say he is the favored son of King Salman, who made him his personal adviser at a very young age.

In his few public appearances with journalists, the powerful prince projects confidence. He listens to questions in English but speaks through the Royal Court's interpreter, and sometimes corrects the interpreter's phrasing of English translations. His picks for top cabinet positions and senior advisers have leaned more heavily on former businessmen than those of former administrators, which relied more on professional bureaucrats.

Last week, Prince Mohammed officially unveiled Saudi Vision 2030, his blueprint to move the economy decisively from that he called it "addiction to oil" towards the private sector. The phased removal of subsidies on fuel, water and electricity - part of the welfare lavished on Saudis, of whom about four out of five workers hold public sector jobs - is already underway. The new plan includes earning non-oil income from private investment and privatization and setting up the largest sovereign wealth fund in the world. The idea is to create millions of new jobs and raise the participation of women in the workforce from 22 currently to 30 percent by 2030.

The plans also include selling a stake of less than 5 percent in Saudi Aramco, the state oil giant, and placing the proceeds and the

company in the Public Investment Fund (PIF), along with other assets that could eventually create an investment vehicle worth up to \$3 trillion. Another ambitious target is to locally source 50 percent of Saudi military procurements - part of the third largest defense budget in the world - by 2030, up from a mere 2 percent now.

Many diplomats, analysts and economists say the magnitude of the goals - including the primary one of ending dependence on oil by 2020 - defy credibility. "To achieve the economic goals, the kingdom would need a thriving non-oil private sector that caters to private demand, offers sufficient productive jobs for nationals and produces substantial non-oil exports of goods and services," said the LSE's Hertog, who has written a book about how the Saudi government works.

Religious Conservatives

There are social challenges because some of Prince Mohammed's ambitions, including giving women a bigger economic role, will anger religious conservatives, the source of the most dangerous threats to Al Saud rule since the kingdom was founded. Some had hoped, for example, that Vision 2030 would include moves to lift the ban on women driving, which it did not. Answering a question on it, the deputy crown prince said the issue was a social rather than religious question, therefore it was up to society to decide.

Moreover, the country's education system is traditionally regarded as under the thumb of religious fundamentalists who, among other things, insist on the cloistering and segregation of women, hindering their ability to enter the workforce. Some older Saudis, ruling family members and Saudi businessmen fear that Prince Mohammed's plans to streamline the kingdom's bureaucracy could cause social fractures if they fail to maintain comfy living standards or soothe conservatives. — Reuters

HOW ZUMA, THE SMILING SPY, CONTROLS S AFRICA

By Joe Brock and Ed Cropley

As head of intelligence for the outlawed African National Congress during apartheid, Jacob Zuma neutralized perceived traitors and sidelined opponents to shore up his position, people who worked with him say. Decades later, as South Africa's President, he hasn't lost his touch. Lamooned in the media, jeered in public and now facing calls from inside and outside the ANC to resign over millions of rand of improper state spending on his private home in Nkandla, the 73-year-old's grip on power seems like it should be weaker than at any point since his election in 2009.

Yet he endures, thanks to skills honed decades ago in the exiled ANC underground, promoting little-known officials who do his bidding to powerful positions within the security and intelligence portfolios, politicians who work around Zuma say. He has also changed the way the party votes on internal appointments, including making members photograph ballot papers to prove their allegiance.

Critics, including former cabinet ministers and top commanders of the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), say Zuma's administration also demotes opponents and intimidates dissenters. One example: Public Protector Thuli Madonsela, a constitutionally mandated anti-corruption watchdog investigating the spending on Zuma's home, became the subject of an intelligence ministry probe into allegations she was a CIA spy.

Zuma's spokesman Bongani Majola did not respond to multiple requests for com-

ment on this article or for an interview with Zuma. ANC spokesman Zizi Kodwa also did not respond. Intelligence Ministry spokesman Brian Dube denied that security institutions were being misused. "These allegations are not new. They have been made before and remain unsubstantiated," he told Reuters in answer to emailed questions.

One senior ANC source, who did not wish to be named for fear of retribution, said the key to Zuma's power was his lock over the party, regardless of his standing among the public. "So-called experts have been saying Zuma is finished for years but they don't have a clue how politics here works," said the ANC official. "People ask, how does Zuma survive? No one asks, how does Vladimir Putin survive?"

'The Grindstone'

Zuma, whose Zulu middle name, Gedleyihlekisa, means "the one who smiles as he hurts you", joined the ANC in 1959. The son of a policeman and domestic worker from what is now rural KwaZulu Natal, he had little formal education. After 10 years on Robben Island alongside Nelson Mandela, he fled apartheid South Africa to emerge in the late 1980s in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, as deputy head of the ANC's secret police and head of the 'Green House', its intelligence unit.

One of his main tasks was to unmask informants and traitors within the ANC and MK, wielding the resources of the ANC secret police, known as iMbokodo or "The Grindstone". The Stuart Commission, an internal ANC inquiry into unrest in 1983 in guerrilla camps in Angola, described

iMbokodo as "the most notorious and infamous department in the camps and perhaps in the whole movement".

The report, available on the ANC's website, painted a picture of the ANC security services as a state-within-a-state, feeding off rumor and "not working for the security of the general membership and interests of the movement". According to historian Stephen Ellis in his 2012 book, "External Mission: The ANC in Exile 1960-1990", Zuma's time in Lusaka shaped the rest of his life. "For the remainder of his political career, this experience in charge of intelligence was to be Zuma's key institutional base," Ellis wrote.

Ronnie Kasrils, intelligence minister between 2004 and 2008 under Mbeki and an anti-apartheid veteran, spent years in the ANC underground and intelligence circles alongside Zuma. "The first people he appointed were in his security team," said Kasrils, who has publicly called for Zuma to resign. "It was vital that Zuma had the heads of intelligence to do his bidding. It gives you the ability to dig up dirt on politicians and keep a close eye on opponents," he said.

One such appointment was David Mahlobo, an unknown provincial hydrologist with no security experience, as intelligence minister in 2014. The ministry had traditionally been assigned to ANC high-fliers with impeccable "struggle credentials" such as Kasrils or Lindiwe Sisulu, the forthright daughter of ANC stalwart and close Mandela friend Walter Sisulu. "Mahlobo was a likeable guy but a surprise appointment," Kasrils said. "Zuma wanted someone young and green who is dependent and won't question him."

Another was Nkosinathi Nhleko, a fellow

Zulu whom Zuma appointed police minister in 2014. When Madonsela, the Public Protector, published a damning report on renovations Zuma had made with public money to his Nkandla home, including the building of a swimming pool, Zuma asked Nhleko to open an inquiry. Nhleko said the pool was a fire-fighting resource, backing up his conclusion with a video of firemen using the pool to pump jets of water.

The Right People in Place

Another appointment that startled observers was the selection last year of small-town mayor David van Rooyen as finance minister, a promotion that sent the rand into a tail-spin and resulted four days later in his dismissal. In total 35 ministers and 38 deputy ministers have been appointed during Zuma's term of office, far more than any other South African leader since apartheid. At the same time, senior ANC figures have been moved out of the party's top decision-making body, the National Executive Committee (NEC).

"A major problem is the 'juniorization' of appointments to ensure compliance and loyalty," Siphwe Nyanda, a top MK commander and communications minister fired by Zuma in 2010, told Reuters. Zuma has also changed the way members are elected to the NEC's "Top Six", a body that ultimately chooses the party president. Under a so-called "slate" voting system, trusted delegates to the 5,000-member ANC conference held every five years are told who they should vote for and are expected to confirm they have obeyed with a photo of their ballot, two ANC sources said. — Reuters

EX-SCOTLAND SCRUM-HALF CUSITER HANGS UP BOOTS

LONDON: Former Scotland scrum-half Chris Cusiter announced his retirement from professional rugby yesterday with immediate effect. Cusiter, 33, joined English Premiership side Sale after previous stints with Glasgow, Border Reivers and Perpignan, with whom he won the French Top 14 championship in 2009. He won 70 caps for Scotland between 2004 and 2014 and toured New Zealand with the British and Irish Lions in 2005. "This is the right time to hang up my boots and move on to the next challenge," said Cusiter in a statement released by Sale. "Playing for Scotland 70 times was more than I could have dreamed of growing up learning how to play rugby at Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen. "The memories of playing for Scotland and touring New Zealand with the British and Irish Lions will be with me forever, and I am grateful for all the incredible experiences I have been afforded through rugby." Cusiter's next venture will be the establishment of an alcohol retail business selling Scotch whisky in Los Angeles. — AFP



SRI LANKA'S LINE-UP FACES 'HUGE MENTAL CHALLENGE'

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's rookie batting line-up faces a "huge mental challenge" in adapting to English conditions as they bid to pull off a repeat of their historic series win over their hosts, coach Graham Ford said yesterday. Sri Lanka are returning to England for the first time since 2014 when they posted their first away series victory over Alistair Cook's side in Test cricket and then won an ODI series and a one-off T20 international. But their line-up has been severely weakened in the interim by the retirements of Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene, arguably the two greatest batsmen that Sri Lanka have ever produced. Speaking ahead of their departure to London, Ford was "quietly confident" his squad would acclimatize to the conditions awaiting them at the start of the English summer but acknowledged it would be a steep learning curve. "As far as our batting goes, having lost a couple of senior players (Sangakkara and Jayawardene), obviously young players have come in," said Ford, who is overseeing his first Test series since returning for a second spell as coach. — AFP

LUCA TONI RETIRES AT END OF 'TERRIBLE' VERONA SEASON

MILAN: Veteran Italian striker Luca Toni will hang up his boots after a final Serie A game with Verona against Juventus on Sunday, after announcing his retirement from football yesterday. The 2006 World Cup winner has scored a total of 156 Serie A goals for eight different clubs throughout a storied career that also saw him star for Bayern Munich and become the Bundesliga's top scorer in the 2007-2008 season. Last season Toni, at 38 years old, became the oldest player to win Serie A's top scorer (Capocannoniere) award—an accolade he shared with Inter Milan striker Mauro Icardi when both finished on 22 goals. Verona were relegated from Serie A last week having spent most of the season at the foot of the table and Toni admitted the north-eastern club's troubles this season had prompted his decision. "After so many years of playing football, 22 in the professional ranks, I think the time has arrived for me to say goodbye," Toni told a press conference. — AFP



WHITE SOX COOL OFF BOSTON RED SOX MOORE STRUGGLES, RAYS FALL TO DODGERS 10-5

CHICAGO: Jose Quintana pitched eight crisp innings for his third straight win, and the AL-leading Chicago White Sox cooled off the Boston Red Sox with a 4-1 victory on Tuesday night. Jose Abreu had two hits and three RBIs as Chicago ran its record to 19-8 with its third straight win. It has won nine of 11 overall to keep up with the major league-leading Cubs, revving up the anticipation for an intriguing summer in the Windy City. Hanley Ramirez's one-out homer in the fifth halted Quintana's scoreless streak at 20 1/3 innings, but the left-hander bounced back by retiring Travis Shaw and Chris Young on a pair of grounders. Quintana (4-1) allowed four hits, struck out five and walked none while lowering his ERA to 1.40. David Robertson finished for his ninth save in 10 chances.

CUBS 7, PIRATES 1

Jake Arrieta dominated the Pittsburgh Pirates yet again, scattering two hits in seven shutout innings as Chicago defeated Pittsburgh. Seven months after shutting the Pirates down in the NL wild card playoff, Arrieta allowed only singles to Sean Rodriguez in the second and Francisco Cervelli in the seventh. Arrieta (6-0) struck out five and walked two while lowering his ERA to 0.84. He became the second six-game winner in the major leagues after Chris Sale of the Chicago White Sox. Kris Bryant had three hits for the Cubs, who have won seven of eight and moved five games ahead of Pittsburgh in the NL Central. Jon Niese (3-1) gave up six runs and nine hits over five innings while losing for the first time since the Pirates acquired him from the New York Mets in an offseason trade.

ROYALS 7, NATIONALS 6

Lorenzo Cain capped a three-run ninth inning with a two-out single to left, bringing home Mike Moustakas and giving Kansas City a victory. Tanner Roark lasted into the eighth inning for Washington, but he was relieved by Felipe Rivero with runners on the corners and one out. Eric Hosmer grounded into a fielder's choice to make it 6-4. Rivero got through the rest of the inning and turned the lead over to Jonathan Papelbon (1-1), who served up back-to-back singles to start the ninth. After Omar Infante struck out, Moustakas came on to pinch hit and guided a single through the left side to knot the game 6-4. Alcides Escobar kept the line moving with a single to center, and Cain ripped a liner into the gap in left-center.

BRAVES 3, METS 0

Matt Wisler wiped out New York with eight innings of one-hit ball and Mallex Smith hit a rare Atlanta homer off a scuffling Matt Harvey. Asdrubal Cabrera's clean single to center field with one out in the fifth was the lone hit for the defending NL champions. Wisler (1-2) walked two, struck out four and beat the Mets for the third time in his two-year career. AJ Pierzynski added an RBI double and the Braves, with the worst record in the majors at 7-19, won for the third time in five games following an eight-game skid. Harvey (2-4) didn't feel well Monday and was given fluids to help him recover Tuesday afternoon, Mets manager Terry Collins said.

PHILLIES 1, CARDINALS 0

Aaron Nola threw seven innings and Ryan Howard homered to lead Philadelphia to a victory. Philadelphia has won seven of eight while St. Louis has lost five of six. Jeanmar Gomez recorded his ninth save in as many

opportunities after Hector Neris struck out the side in the eighth inning. Nola (2-2) allowed two hits and struck out seven in an 111-pitch stint. He has a string of 20 consecutive scoreless innings dating to April 22. Nola, who retired the last 10 batters, has given up one run or fewer in four of six starts this season. Howard, a St. Louis native, drilled a first-pitch offering from Michael Wacha (2-2) over the wall in right in the sixth inning. He has 22 homers in 66 games against St. Louis and has 12 homers in 36 games at Busch Stadium.

ASTROS 6, TWINS 4

Jason Castro and George Springer hit homers and Houston held on for a victory. Castro hit his first homer of the year to lead off the three-run third inning, and Springer hit a shot that bounced off the railroad tracks in left field and out of the stadium to cap the three-run fourth. Castro's home run was knocked down by a fan and never made it over the wall into the Crawford Boxes, but it was called a homer, and after a lengthy review, it was confirmed. Jose Altuve and Springer walked after Castro's blast before Carlos Correa knocked an RBI double and Alex Meyer (0-1) uncorked a wild pitch to score Springer and give the Astros a 3-2 lead.

ORIOLES 4, YANKEES 1

Mark Trumbo hit two home runs, Chris Tillman scattered five hits over seven innings and Baltimore extended New York's losing streak to six games. Trumbo hit a solo shot in the second inning and his eighth of the season with a runner on in the fifth. Both homers were off Luis Severino (0-4), who yielded only two long balls in his previous four starts. Tillman (3-1) allowed one run, matched his career high with nine strikeouts and walked four. The right-hander also fanned nine in his last start, against Tampa Bay. Brad Brach worked the eighth and Darren O'Day finished for his second save. Didi Gregorius drove in the lone run for the last-place Yankees, whose six-game skid matches their longest of last season. New York fell to 8-16, including 3-9 on the road.

BLUE JAYS 3, RANGERS 1, 10 INNINGS

Justin Smoak's first two home runs of the season, a tying drive in the ninth inning and two-run shot in the 10th, led Toronto over Texas. Rougned Odor homered on Marco Estrada's second pitch of the game, the first lead-off home run of Odor's big league career. The lead stood until Smoak connected on Shawn Tolleson's third pitch of the ninth inning, a drive over the scoreboard in left center-field. Edwin Encarnacion singled against Phil Klein (0-1) leading off the 10th, Troy Tulowitzki struck out and Smoak homered to left. Toronto won despite going 0 for 9 with runners in scoring position. Joe Biagini (1-1) pitched two innings of two-hit relief for the win, completing a six-hitter.

INDIANS 7, TIGERS 3

Francisco Lindor hit a three-run homer, scored three times and fell a triple short of the cycle, leading Cleveland to a victory. Lindor singled in the first inning when Cleveland scored three times, doubled and scored in the third and homered in the fifth as the Indians ended Detroit's five-game winning streak. Josh Tomlin (4-0) remained unbeaten in four starts, allowing two runs in six innings. Justin Verlander (2-3) gave up seven runs in five innings. The Indians beat the Tigers for the fourth straight time this season.

DODGERS 10, RAYS 5

Trayce Thompson, Joc Pederson and Yasiel Puig homered as Los Angeles pulled out of an offensive funk with a victory over Tampa Bay. Howie Kendrick had four hits, including a two-run double that broke a fifth-inning tie, to help left-hander Scott Kazmir (2-2) get his 100th win. The RBIs were the first of the season for Kendrick, coming in his 59th at-bat. Only Tampa Bay's Logan Morrison has more at-bats (64) this season without driving in a run. Thompson hit a two-run homer in the second inning and added a two-run single off Matt Moore (1-3) to finish a four-run fifth. Pederson hit a solo shot with two outs in the second, and Puig added a three-run homer off Ryan Webb in the ninth.

GIANTS 3, REDS 1

Jeff Samardzija went eight innings to win his third straight start - a career first - and San Francisco rallied for two runs in the eighth inning against Cincinnati's historically bad bullpen. Cincinnati's bullpen gave up at least one run for the 21st consecutive game, surpassing the 2013 Colorado Rockies for the major league record, according to information provided by the Reds from the Elias Sports Bureau. With the game tied 1-1, Kelby Tomlinson drove in the go-ahead run with an infield single off Caleb Cotham (0-1). Gregor Blanco followed with another run-scoring single, putting the Giants in position for their fifth straight win at Great American Ball Park. Samardzija (4-1) had been 0-5 in his last nine starts against the Reds, but limited them to three hits - including Adam Duvall's homer - to end the slump.

MARLINS 7, DIAMONDBACKS 4

Ichiro Suzuki's two-run pinch-hit single put Miami ahead in the sixth inning to rally past Arizona. Miami trailed 4-1 before scoring four runs in the sixth, when three Arizona pitchers combined to give up three walks and a hit batsman. Suzuki's one-out single put Miami up 5-4 and improved his career average with the bases loaded to .383. Marcell Ozuna hit a two-run homer for Miami, his third in as many games. Christian Yelich drove in two runs with a fielder's choice and his second homer. Arizona's Wellington Castillo hit a two-run homer off Justin Nicolino (2-0), who won despite allowing four runs in six innings. A.J. Ramos pitched a perfect ninth for his eighth save.

MLB results/standings

Cleveland 7, Detroit 3; Chicago Cubs 7, Pittsburgh 1; Baltimore 4, NY Yankees 1; Toronto 3, Texas 1 (10 Innings); Miami 7, Arizona 4; Atlanta 3, NY Mets 0; LA Dodgers 10, Tampa Bay 5; San Francisco 3, Cincinnati 1; Chicago White Sox 4, Boston 1; Milwaukee 5, LA Angels 4; Houston 6, Minnesota 4; Philadelphia 1, St. Louis 0; Kansas City 7, Washington 6; Seattle 8, Oakland 2.

American League Eastern Division

	W	L	PCT	GB
Baltimore	15	10	.600	-
Boston	15	11	.577	0.5
Toronto	13	15	.464	3.5
Tampa Bay	11	14	.440	4
NY Yankees	8	16	.333	6.5

Central Division

Chicago White Sox	19	8	.704	-
Detroit	14	11	.560	4
Kansas City	14	12	.538	4.5
Cleveland	11	12	.478	6
Minnesota	8	19	.296	11

Western Division

Seattle	15	11	.577	-
Texas	15	12	.556	0.5
Oakland	13	15	.464	3
LA Angels	12	15	.444	3.5
Houston	9	18	.333	6.5

National League Eastern Division

Washington	18	8	.692	-
NY Mets	16	9	.640	1.5
Philadelphia	16	11	.593	2.5
Miami	13	12	.520	4.5
Atlanta	7	19	.269	11

Central Division

Chicago Cubs	19	6	.760	-
Pittsburgh	15	12	.556	5
St. Louis	13	14	.481	7
Milwaukee	11	15	.423	8.5
Cincinnati	10	17	.370	10

Western Division

San Francisco	15	13	.536	-
LA Dodgers	14	13	.519	0.5
Colorado	12	14	.462	2
Arizona	12	16	.429	3
San Diego	11	16	.407	3.5

BREWERS 5, ANGELS 4
Chris Carter hit two long home runs and drove in three, Junior Guerra won his first career major league start, and Milwaukee rallied from an early four-run deficit to beat Los Angeles. With the Brewers trailing 4-0, Carter's two-run homer in the third caromed off the black batter's backdrop in center. His solo shot in a three-run fifth to deep left-center off starter Nick Tropeano (1-1) put Milwaukee up for good. Guerra (1-0), who was called up from Triple-A Colorado Springs this



HOUSTON: Houston Astros second baseman Jose Altuve (27) and shortstop Carlos Correa celebrate the Astros' 6-4 victory over the Minnesota Twins in a baseball game on Tuesday, May 3, 2016, in Houston. — AP

week, allowed seven hits and four runs in six innings. The Angels nearly spoiled Guerra's night after loading the bases in the seventh with two walks and a single and nobody out. Reliever Michael Blazek escaped the jam after Cliff Pennington popped out and Yunel Escobar bounced into a double play.

MARINERS 8, ATHLETICS 2

Robinson Cano, Kyle Seager and Leonys Martin hit home runs and Hisashi Iwakuma pitched seven solid innings for Seattle. Iwakuma (1-3) took a shutout into the sixth inning and allowed four hits to end a career-worst, four-game losing streak dating to last September. He walked two and struck out three. Norichika Aoki and Adam Lind drove in runs for the Mariners, who have won 10 of 13 games. Aoki has hit safely in all 14 games he's had an at-bat against the A's. Kris Davis homered and Jed Lowrie had two hits and drove in a run for the A's, who have lost five of seven and have dropped six consecutive series to the Mariners. Sonny Gray (3-3) allowed a career high-matching seven runs and 11 hits in his seven-plus innings.

PADRES 6, ROCKIES 3

Matt Kemp and Brett Wallace hit back-to-back home runs and Andrew Cashner recovered from a shaky first inning to lead San Diego. Kemp's homer in the fourth was the first hit of the game against Rockies starter Eddie Butler, who retired the first 11 batters. Wallace followed with an opposite-field shot into the first deck in left. Cashner (2-2) gave up a home run to the first batter he faced, Charlie Blackmon, and fell behind 2-0 in the first inning. Colorado added a run in the second when Trevor Story singled home DJ LeMahieu. Having exited his last outing after 2 2/3 innings, Cashner lasted six innings while allowing three runs and six hits. He walked three and struck out six. Butler (0-1) allowed five runs over 5 2/3 innings while striking out three and walking one. — AP



KANSAS CITY: Kansas City Royals Salvador Perez (13) douses Lorenzo Cain and Mike Moustakas at the end of a baseball game against the Washington Nationals at Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City, Mo on Tuesday, May 3, 2016. Moustakas tied the game and Cain drove the game-winning run in the ninth inning to beat the Nationals 7-6. — AP

ADIDAS HOOKS STRUGGLING GOLF BUSINESS INTO THE ROUGH

FRANKFURT: Adidas said yesterday it would sell off its golf equipment brands, as it published "record" quarterly results showing a strong performance in the United States, a key market for the German sports giant. Following a "strategic review" of its golf business, Adidas said it would "actively seek a buyer" for some of its top equipment brands, including TaylorMade, Adams and Ashworth.

The firm said it would focus on selling golf shoes and clothing through its Adidas Golf brand. "Now is the time to focus even more on our core strength in the athletic footwear and apparel market," said Herbert Hainer, the firm's chief executive. The golf business has proved to be an Achilles heel for the firm with sales plunging amid a sharp decline in the Russian market. Due to the subsidiary's poor performance, Adidas

was twice forced to downgrade its annual forecasts in 2014, spoiling any boost from the Football World Cup in Brazil.

Despite restructuring efforts, the golf business saw sales decline by 1.7 percent in the first quarter to 275 million euros (\$316 million). With the sale of the golf division, the firm appears to be concentrating on its core brands of Adidas and fitness specialists Reebok. At the same time, Hainer

confirmed "record" results for the first quarter, with a 59-percent rise in net profit to 351 million euros. Hainer said he was "particularly pleased" with the performance in the United States where sales rose by 22 percent when currency fluctuations were taken into account. Adidas is traditionally the world's number two in terms of sports equipment, behind Nike, but has seen the gap with its rival widening recently. — AFP

FOOTBALL CONCUSSIONS AND RESUMING PLAY VARY BY AGE

CHICAGO: Younger football players are more likely to return to the field less than a day after suffering concussions than those in high school and college, according to a new study. Only 10 percent of young players with concussions resumed football that soon, but the results are concerning and suggest a need for more sidelines medical supervision and better recognition of concussion symptoms in children, said sports injury researcher Zachary Kerr, the lead author.

He directs an injury surveillance program at Datalys Center for Sports Injury Research and Prevention, Inc., an independent group in Indianapolis. "Younger kids may struggle to describe" their symptoms, and health effects from concussions may not show up right away, Kerr said, citing possible explanations for the study findings. Much of the attention on sports concussions has focused on professional football and in college, but there's a need for more prevention efforts and research at all levels including among the youngest players, Kerr said.

The study also found differences in concussion symptoms depending on players' age, offering guidance for parents, doctors and coaches in assessing injured players. The NCAA and USA Football, the national governing body for amateur football, helped pay for the study, published Monday in JAMA Pediatrics. The researchers say it's the first study to compare concussion symptoms and return-to-play times at all three levels.

The details

The study involved injuries reported by athletic trainers during practices and games from 2012 through 2014. The data included more than 200 programs at the youth, high school and college level. Youth teams involved players aged 5 to 14 in Pop Warner and USA Football programs. A total of 1,429 concussions were reported during the three seasons. Concussions during games were most common in college players, averaging almost 4 per 1,000 games; the rate was 2 per 1,000 games among youth players and almost 2 per 1,000 among high school players. The rate in practices was less than 1 per 1,000 at all three levels.

The symptoms

An average of about six symptoms occurred with concussions in college and high school players. Youth players had slightly fewer symptoms and were the least likely to lose consciousness, although blackouts were rare at all levels. Dizziness, headaches and loss of balance were among the most common symptoms at all levels. College players were most likely to have amnesia and disorientation; high school players were most likely to have noise sensitivity and excessive drowsiness. Insomnia was more common among high school and college players but rare at the youth level.

Return to play

At all levels, most players were sidelined for at least a week. Time away from the sport of at least a month was most common among high school players - about 20 percent, versus 16 percent of youth players and 7 percent of college players. Fewer than 1 percent of high schoolers returned to play less than 24 hours after injury, compared with almost 5 percent of college players and 10 percent of youth players. The American Academy of Pediatrics and other doctor groups recommend that athletes avoid returning to play until all concussion symptoms have disappeared. The study notes that procedures for youth players required athletes to get a doctor's approval before returning to play.

Reaction

USA Football spokesman Steve Alic said the study "underscores the importance of informing coaches and parents about concussion recognition and response." He noted that being aware of concussion symptoms and managing them appropriately is part of the group's Heads Up football program, which says players with suspected concussions should be evaluated by a health professional and not be allowed to return to play until they get medical clearance. Pop Warner spokesman Brian Heffron said coaches in the popular youth program's leagues receive the Heads Up training and that their players have far fewer concussions than those in youth football programs without that training. — AP



CALIFORNIA: Portland Trail Blazers' Mason Plumlee (bottom left) dunks over Golden State Warriors' Andrew Bogut (top left) and Andre Iguodala during the first half in Game 2 of a second-round NBA basketball playoff series on Tuesday, May 3, 2016, in Oakland, Calif. — AP

WARRIORS SHOW CHAMPION CLASS, HEAT MELT TORONTO HEAT BREAK RAPTORS AFTER LOWRY HEROICS

LOS ANGELES: The Golden State Warriors produced a scintillating fightback to overpower the Portland Trail Blazers and take a stranglehold on their Western Conference semi-final series on Tuesday. The reigning NBA champions overturned an 11-point fourth quarter deficit to outscore their opponents 34-12 and clinch a 110-99 win at the Oracle Arena. The victory gives Golden State a formidable 2-0 lead heading into game three in Portland on Saturday.

With Stephen Curry missing once more with a knee injury, it was left to Klay Thompson to provide the offensive threat. The 26-year-old had an off night, missing 13 of 20 shots, but came good when it mattered with five three pointers to finish with 27 points. Warriors coach Steve Kerr was pleased with the way his side responded after a slow start which saw them trailing by 17 points at one stage in the second in the second quarter. "We turned around what was a pretty bad game for us but we had enough time to get back," Kerr said, citing the defensive performance of backup center Festus Ezeli and Draymond Green.

Green added 17 points with 14 rebounds and seven assists while Andre Iguodala added 15 points from the bench. "Festus just made things a little tougher on their guards," Kerr said. "Between Festus and Draymond those guys did a great job of protecting the paint. But everyone deserves credit, not just those two." Andre (Iguodala) kept us in the game in the first half when things weren't going too well. Klay stayed with it. He had a rough start to the game but really came up huge." Damian Lillard topscored for Portland with 25 points, adding six assists and four rebounds. CJ McCollum was close behind with 22 points and two assists.

Lowry buzzer-beater in vain

In Toronto, Miami regrouped superbly after Kyle Lowry's game-tying buzzer-beater saw the Raptors force overtime at 90-90. Lowry's remarkable 39-foot leaver with the final play appeared to signal a momentum shift in Toronto's favor. However, Miami regained their composure and roared back with eight unanswered points to lead 98-90 and eventually win 102-96. The win gives Miami a 1-0 lead in the series with game two coming on Thursday.

Miami coach Erik Spoelstra hailed his team's



TORONTO: Miami Heat guard Dwyane Wade (3) collides with Toronto Raptors guard Cory Joseph (6) during the second half in Game 1 of a second-round NBA basketball playoff series on Tuesday, May 3, 2016, in Toronto. — AP

mental strength after they closed out the win in overtime, bouncing back from Lowry's spectacular three-pointer. "Kyle Lowry's three, as soon as it left his hands, I think everyone in the building kind of had an idea that would go," Spoelstra said. "From that point on, I was extremely proud of the group. "To get knocked down on the canvas like that, the air punctured out of your body, to show the mental resolve to come back and take control of overtime—that's great mental toughness that I think we showed from there." Goran Dragic had a game-high 26 points for Miami. Dwyane Wade finished with 24 points, six rebounds and four assists while Joe Johnson added 16 points and seven rebounds.

For Toronto Jonas Valanciunas scored a team-

high 24 points and 14 rebounds while DeMar DeRozan added 22 points, six rebounds and four assists. Terrence Ross scored 19 points off the bench. Lowry's three-pointer was a rare moment of class amid a disappointing display which saw him finish with only seven points. Raptors coach Dwane Casey is adamant the Toronto talisman can come good. "Even though he didn't shoot the ball well, he was effective down the stretch," Casey said. "He got stuff done. I thought his bulldog tenacity set the tone for us defensively. We know he's not shooting the ball well, he's not making plays with shots that he normally makes. "But we have to believe in him, we do believe in him, and he's going to come out of it." — AFP



CALIFORNIA: San Jose Marauders youth football players play sports mascots during half-time of an NFL football game between the San Francisco 49ers and the Arizona Cardinals in Santa Clara, Calif. The first concussion study of its kind found youth football players are more likely to return to play less than a day after injury than those in high school and college. — AP

KHAN WOULD JOIN BRITISH GREATS WITH ALVAREZ WIN

LONDON: Amir Khan will have to produce one of the greatest displays ever seen by a British boxer if he is to beat WBC middleweight champion Saul Alvarez in Las Vegas on Saturday, according to Ricky Hatton. The 29-year-old, like fellow Briton Hatton a former light-welterweight world champion, has moved up two weight divisions - putting on the best part of 10 kilos - to take on flame-haired Mexican Alvarez, whose only defeat in 48 fights came against Floyd Mayweather Jr in 2013.

Khan is a huge underdog against Alvarez, nicknamed Canelo (the Spanish word for cinnamon) because of his hair, but Hatton believes he could pull off an upset. "It's a big ask. He has the tools to do it and I hope he does it, but it's a massive, massive ask to keep out of trouble for 12 rounds against Alvarez who has improved so much since the Mayweather fight," Hatton said. "If he does pull it off, going from welterweight to middleweight and winning the title, it would be one of the best wins in British boxing history I think." Hatton knows first hand the dangers of moving up a weight. He suffered his first career defeat when Mayweather knocked him out in a WBC welterweight world title bout in Las Vegas in 2007 and was never the same fighter again.

According to the 37-year-old Hatton, who is now a boxing promoter having hung up his gloves in 2012, Khan must not get involved in a slug fest with the more powerful Alvarez and use his superior movement to stay out of trouble. "It's a fight that I didn't think would be made," said Hatton, whose stable includes upcoming British heavyweight Nathan Gorman. "Amir always has good fights, but he needs to make this one boring. "If he tries to have a go with this lad, I don't think he needs me to tell him, he needs to use his speed, move, move. The moment he stops moving those feet, he will be in trouble because Alvarez is a big puncher."

Hatton's concern is that by putting on some extra pounds to move up, Khan may have slowed down for what will be his first fight in a year since beating American Chris Algieri. "I don't think it's the hand speed. It's the foot speed. Amir is not a fighter like Mayweather, he is more straight backed. "He has to use his feet to be defensive. Alvarez's feet are not the quickest, whether Amir can maintain the speed when he puts the weight on I'm not sure." Khan, who won the WBA light-welterweight title aged 22, having been a lightweight silver medalist at the Athens Olympics, has lost three of his 34 fights. — Reuters

CBK SPONSORS AUK TEAMS

KUWAIT: Within its activities in community service and those designed to boost sports awareness amongst various communal sects and university students, Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) has continued to support and sponsor sport teams at the American University in Kuwait (AUK) in the second semester of 2015-2016. Sports activities include; soccer, indoor soccer, basketball, volleyball, tennis and table tennis teams. Speaking on the occasion, CBK's Assistant Manager for Publicity and PR Amani Al-Wer' said that CBK had always sponsored various educational, cultural and students' sports activities in various school stages as well as in universities by providing the sportswear they use in local and foreign competitions.





JEONJU: South Korea's Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors midfielder Han Kyo-Won (right) fights for the ball with China's Jiangsu FC midfielder Yang Xiaotian (left) during their AFC Champions League group E football match in Jeonju yesterday. — AFP

AFC Champions League

CHINESE BIG-SPENDERS JIANGSU CRASH OUT

SEOUL: Goals from Ricardo Teixeira and Jo couldn't save Jiangsu Suning as the Chinese big-spenders crashed out of the AFC Champions League with a 2-2 draw against Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors yesterday. In their final Group E game, Jiangsu's Asian-record signing Teixeira cancelled out Leonardo's opener, and ex-Manchester City striker Jo made it 2-1 to the visitors after half-time.

But Lim Jong-Eun equalized coolly for Jeonbuk on 68 minutes and it proved vital for the 2006 Asian champions from South Korea, who grabbed the point they needed to reach the last 16. It was heartbreak for Dan Petrescu's Jiangsu, who splurged 50 million euros (\$57.5 million) on Teixeira and also splashed out on Jo and Chelsea's

Ramires in their bid for glory. They join reigning champions Guangzhou Evergrande in departing what has been a mixed campaign for Chinese teams, despite a world-leading spending spree on players earlier this year.

However, Shandong Luneng will fly the Chinese flag alongside Sven-Goran Eriksson's Shanghai SIPG in the last 16 after they rounded off Group F with a 0-0 draw against Buriram United. FC Tokyo pipped Jiangsu to second spot in Group E and go through with Jeonbuk after Ryoichi Maeda scored twice to hand them a 2-1 win over Vietnam's Binh Duong. After a quiet start in Jeonju, Leonardo drilled Jeonbuk ahead from the penalty spot in the 19th minute after Choi Chul-Soon was

clumsily fouled by Yang Xiaotian.

But Teixeira equalized for Jiangsu just five minutes later when he volleyed a ricocheting free-kick into the roof of the Jeonbuk net. After a foul on Ramires, Jo converted the game's second penalty nine minutes after half-time to make it 2-1 to Jiangsu, but Jeonbuk were level again in the 68th minute. In a well-worked corner move, a flick-on found Lim lurking at the back post and he neatly cushion-volleyed what transpired as a vital goal for Jeonbuk in front of their home fans. Elsewhere Adriano struck his 10th goal of the competition as FC Seoul lost 2-1 away to Sanfrecce Hiroshima for their only defeat of Group F, but still finished top regardless. — AFP

FIFA INVESTIGATORS SEEK LIFE BAN AGAINST WEBB

GENEVA: FIFA's ethics investigators said Tuesday they were seeking a lifetime ban from football against the body's former vice president Jeffrey Webb, who has already pleaded guilty to a raft of corruption-related offences in US court. Investigators at world football's governing body completed a probe into Webb's alleged offences last month and have submitted their findings to judges at the ethics committee's adjudicatory chamber, a FIFA statement said. The committee recommended Webb be sanctioned with "a life-long ban from all football-related activities," the statement added. Webb rose to become president of the football confederation of North and Central America and the Caribbean (CONCACAF), and was close to FIFA's disgraced ex-boss Sepp Blatter.

The 51-year-old Cayman Islands-British citizen was among those arrested in a dawn raid at a Zurich luxury hotel in May last year by Swiss police acting on a US warrant. In November, he pleaded

guilty in a New York court to racketeering, conspiracy, wire fraud and money laundering. He promised to forfeit more than \$6.7 million in assets and is to be formally sentenced next month. Webb has been confined to house arrest in the US since July. FIFA lawyers have complained that he has continued to live a lavish lifestyle, funded in part by the bribes and kickbacks he got through his role at FIFA.

FIFA's US lawyers have sought a court order to demand his accounts be audited, with funds possibly frozen and returned to his victims. During a year of unprecedented scandal at FIFA, the ethics committee has pursued multiple former high-ranking officials, notably Blatter and his one-time heir apparent Michel Platini, who have both been suspended for six years over ethics violations. Blatter was replaced as FIFA president in February by ex-UEFA secretary general Gianni Infantino, who has vowed to clean-up graft. — AFP



Jeffrey Webb

CHINA SPORTS MINISTRY HAILED ON THE CARPET OVER GRAFT MEASURES

BEIJING: China's top graft-busting body rapped the sports ministry again yesterday for not taking the country's sweeping campaign against corruption seriously enough, summoning in 17 ministry discipline officials to discuss the problem. Corruption in international sport is in focus due to US and Swiss probes into soccer's world governing body FIFA, as well as doping scandals that have rocked tennis and athletics.

China, which is aggressively seeking to stamp out graft in Communist Party and government ranks, has also sought to eject corrupt elements from its sports establishment, particularly within soccer, which has been hit by match-fixing scandals. The country was hit by two new sports graft scandals last year, with probes into deputy sports minister Xiao Tian, who sat on China's Olympics committee, and another into the then-volleyball chief. The ruling Communist Party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said its inspectors attached to the sports ministry had sent teams to departments dealing with swimming and gymnastics, among others. It summoned in 17 officials in charge of enforcing party discipline to find out if they were following party rules on fighting corruption, the watchdog said. The inspection found that some ministry departments still did not sufficiently understand that the fight against corruption would never

cease and that some people were less than enthusiastic about enforcing party discipline. "Conscientiously resolve the difficult points and problems," it said. "Remove oversight blind spots."

The statement gave no details about specific problems it had found or people who may be punished. Chinese sports minister Liu Peng warned last year that China had to ditch its gold obsession if it really wanted to weed out corruption. Chinese athletes bagged the most gold medals at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, a feat accompanied by a wave of national pride, the culmination of China's "100 year dream" to host the world's most prestigious sports event. At the London Olympics four years later, China came second to the United States in the medals table.

Olympic medals are generally won by a minority of government-supported athletes who receive huge backing from the state and a failure to perform is accompanied by massive public pressure and hand-wringing back home. While China is far from being a winter sports power, Beijing, along with the neighboring city of Zhangjiakou, will host the 2022 Winter Olympics. In March, President Xi Jinping said China must hold a Winter Olympics that is "clean as the snow", in an indirect reference to the scandals with Xiao and another former top official linked to the Olympic bid. — Reuters

SUNDOWNS SET TO CLINCH THE TITLE AFTER WITS DRAW

JOHANNESBURG: Wits could only draw 2-2 at Mpumalanga Black Aces Tuesday, opening the door for Mamelodi Sundowns to clinch a record-extending seventh South African Premiership title. Sundowns visit relegation-threatened Pretoria University yesterday for a local derby and victory will give them an unassailable eight-point lead with two rounds remaining.

Unfashionable Johannesburg outfit Wits thought they had snatched a late win and a title race lifeline when Sibusiso Vilakazi put them 2-1 up on 88 minutes in north-eastern city Nelspruit. But Zamxolo Ngalo turned party-pooper in the final minute at Mbombela Stadium, poking the ball in at the far post after a corner was nodded into his path. It was a thrilling finish to a lively match in which Thabo Nodada side-footed fifth-place Aces ahead after eight minutes. Wits

responded with a string of attacks and deservedly leveled on 34 minutes when Vilakazi scored with a looping header off a Daine Klate cross.

Burly Portuguese Joaquim Lupeta-deputising for injured English striker James Keene-squandered several chances to put Wits in front during the second half. But all was forgiven when slick passes by Klate and Mozambican Elias 'Domingues' Pelembe sent Vilakazi through to score from close range. Wits' bench had not ceased celebrating when Ngalo equalized to leave Sundowns needing two points from three games to bank the 10 million rand (\$690,000, 600,000 euros) first prize. Drawing did guarantee Wits second place in the Premiership for the first time and qualification for the 2017 CAF Champions League with Sundowns. — AFP

KLOPP CHASES LOST SPARK IN EUROPA VILLARREAL REUNION

LONDON: Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has vowed that his team will rediscover their mojo in time for today's Europa League semi-final second leg at home to slick Spanish opponents Villarreal. After a 1-0 first-leg defeat, Klopp saw a much-changed side beaten 3-1 by Swansea City on Sunday and goes into the biggest game of his seven-month tenure on the back of the first successive losses of his Anfield reign.

Including a 2-2 draw against Newcastle United, Liverpool have now gone three games without victory in all competitions, but Klopp is confident that they will rediscover their poise when the moment comes. Reflecting on the defeat by Swansea, he told the Liverpool website: "We played like we played and I saw it for the whole 90 minutes and there was not a lot I enjoyed, to be honest. "We have to think about it and we have to recover, which is very important, and we will play much, much better than we did on Sunday."

"We have to accept the result, which is what we do, and then we work and we will be better today." Following the euphoria of the astonishing 4-3 second-leg win over Borussia Dortmund in the previous round, Liverpool found themselves drawn into a more cagey affair in last week's first meeting with Villarreal. After both teams had hit the post,

Liverpool looked set for a creditable draw, only for an injury-time counter-attack to culminate in Adrian Lopez giving Villarreal a slender advantage.

Seeking to reach a first continental final since the 2007 Champions League decider, Liverpool approach the second leg needing to cancel out Villarreal's lead but without exposing themselves on the counter. With the defeat at Swansea having damaged their chances of qualifying for next season's Europa League via the league, winning this season's competition, which will yield a place in next season's Champions League, has now taken on even greater importance. Klopp made eight changes for the trip to the Liberty Stadium and is expected to restore players including goalkeeper Simon Mignolet, midfielder James Milner and forward Roberto Firmino to his starting XI.

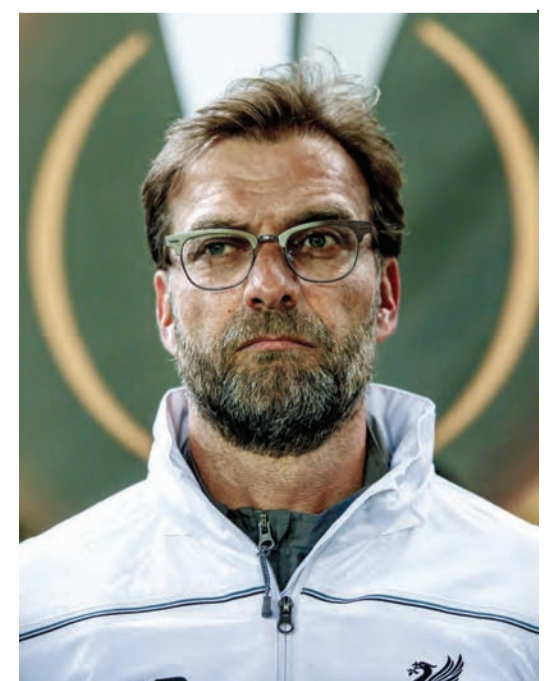
'Chance of a lifetime'

There is also a possibility that he will be able to call upon German midfielder Emre Can, who reportedly returned to training ahead of schedule on Monday after spraining ankle ligaments against Dortmund. Liverpool remain without captain Jordan Henderson, whose season has been ended by a knee ligament injury, and central defender Mamadou Sakho, who has been

provisionally suspended by UEFA after failing a drugs test.

Striker Divock Origi, who scored twice across the two legs against Dortmund, remains sidelined with an ankle problem. Villarreal travel to Liverpool full of confidence after securing a return to the Champions League for the first time in four years with a 2-0 win at Valencia in La Liga on Sunday. Coach Marcelino, whose club have never reached a major final, could even afford the luxury of making 10 changes at the Mestalla from the side that beat Klopp's men in the first leg.

He has a fully fit squad to choose from as Ivorian international Eric Bailly has overcome the hamstring injury he suffered in the first leg to travel with the rest of the squad. "Today we have the chance we have been waiting for all our lives," captain Bruno told the club's website. "It is a step the club still hasn't been able to take and we will face up to that challenge in the best way possible. We will be at 100 percent to achieve this objective." Europa League winners for the past two seasons running, Sevilla are in the driving seat in the other semi-final following a 2-2 first-leg draw away to Ukrainian side Shakhtar Donetsk. The victorious semi-finalists will meet in the final at Basel's St Jakob-Park stadium on May 18. — AFP



Liverpool's German coach Jurgen Klopp

FANS EVERYWHERE EMBRACE LEICESTER'S TITLE SUCCESS

LEICESTER: The partisanship that usually defines soccer in England seemed to be temporarily set aside as Leicester City's players were acclaimed as the People's Champions. The unlikely run to the Premier League title has been embraced also by football fans around the world who followed the remarkable transformation of little Leicester from relegation candidate to champion.

Thai connections

Leicester was a second-tier club when it was bought in 2010 by the King Power duty free company, which is owned by Thai billionaire Vichai Srivaddhanapbha. The Bangkok headquarters of King Power staged a screening of Sunday's draw with Manchester United, attracting about 1,000 supporters. The trophy was eventually clinched late Monday by second-place Tottenham's draw at Chelsea, giving Leicester an insurmountable seven-point lead in the premiership. When the Premier League trophy is presented to Leicester this weekend, it will be decorated with ribbons in the blue of Leicester and the yellow of Thailand's royal house.

Leicester on the map

The highest Leicester had finished in the English top flight before winning the title this week was second in 1929. And few people beyond England paid much attention to the Foxes until this season. "All the people around the world are asking for Leicester," celebrated manager Claudio Ranieri said Tuesday. "The second team in Italy is Leicester, in Thailand the first team is Leicester," the 64-year-old Italian added. "I've received letters from Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil, everywhere (saying) 'Leicester, Leicester, what a legend.'" The Premier League has discovered it doesn't require the elite of Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal to be involved in the title race for the competition to have global atten-

tion. Premier League chairman Richard Scudamore said he has seen fans globally "turning onto the Leicester phenomenon." "Ultimately if people are winning, people latch onto them," Scudamore told the BBC.

Acclaimed in Italy

Ranieri is a hero at home in Italy after engineering Leicester's glory within a year of taking the job, his first topflight title in management. Above an image of Ranieri depicted as the Roman emperor Claudius, Tuesday's front page of the Gazzetta dello Sport newspaper read: "King Claudio." Matteo Renzi, the Italian premier, said Leicester's title showed "fairytale simply come true." "For those who followed Mr. Ranieri all season, saying every Sunday with less and less belief, 'It's impossible, today is a day for the history books,'" Renzi said.

Backing in Britain

Leicester's victory is a rare domestic soccer success that seemed to spark affection rather than the usual acrimony. Twitter reported an 86 percent spike in usual activity in Britain as Leicester clinched the title. Prime Minister David Cameron acclaimed an "extraordinary, thoroughly deserved" first top-flight title for the 132-year-old club. Even London-based Jose Mourinho was joining in the celebrations. Mourinho was fired by Chelsea in December directly after his championship-winning team lost to Leicester. "I lost my title to Claudio Ranieri and it is with incredible emotion that I live this magic moment in his career," said Mourinho, who replaced Ranieri as Chelsea manager 12 years ago for his first stint in charge. Chelsea captain John Terry, who played under Ranieri at Stamford Bridge, wrote on Instagram that he is a "real gentleman and a top manager."

Leicester celebrates

Thousands of fans descended on



BANGKOK: Chief monk at the Wat Traimit Withayaram temple Phra Prommangkalachan prays in a room with Leicester City memorabilia in Bangkok, Thailand. The Buddhist temple has turned overnight into a venerated site for Leicester City's fans, at least in Thailand. After all, it was Prommangkalachan, who some months ago had predicted that the team, which was a 5,000-1 outsider at the start of the season, will win the English Premier League title. — AP

Leicester's King Power Stadium on Monday night to celebrate the title win. "I woke up this morning and had to check my phone because I thought I was dreaming," said Harry Phillips, a 21-year-old student. "I saw

dozens of photos from last night with thousands of people celebrating and realized it wasn't a dream and it was like I felt that feeling of us being champions again." As Leicester secured the championship on

Monday, fan Mark Selby was winning his own a world title - in snooker. "I don't know what's more of a shock," Selby said. "Me winning the title twice or Leicester becoming the champions." — AP

HAZARD REDISCOVERS PASSION FOR FOOTBALL

LONDON: Chelsea's Belgium forward Eden Hazard said he had recovered his passion for the game after scoring a stunning equalizer to end Tottenham Hotspur's Premier League title hopes on Monday. The 25-year-old came on at half-time in the ill-tempered derby and showed a glimpse of the form that made him England's Player of the Year last season when he curled a Diego Costa pass into the top corner to ensure Leicester City were champions.

Hazard, who played a key role in Chelsea's title-winning campaign last term, has endured a disappointing season, with injuries and poor form restricting him to three league goals. "Recently, I have rediscovered the pleasure to play. When you're injured it's hard to get that pleasure back. I played 45 minutes and I

gave my maximum," Hazard told Chelsea's website (www.chelseafc.com). "It's been a complicated season for Chelsea and for me. It hasn't been like last season but we have three matches left and we want to finish well by winning all three."

The Belgian, who will be in action at Euro 2016 which starts next month, said the intense derby atmosphere against Spurs helped inspire him to produce his best display of the season. "I like matches like that when they're very hard and there is so much rivalry between the two teams. It allows me to find my best form. It's football at its best," he added. Chelsea are ninth on 48 points and visit Sunderland and Liverpool before finishing the season at home to champions Leicester, managed by their former coach Claudio Ranieri. — Reuters



LEICESTER: Leicester City's football player Jamie Vardy is pictured in the chocolate on a 'Vardicino' coffee at the Bru coffee shop in central Leicester, eastern England. — AFP

METHODOLOGY BEHIND LEICESTER: THE RANIERI WINNING BLUEPRINT

LEICESTER: Claudio Ranieri is still struggling to comprehend how he managed to transform Leicester from 5,000-1 outsiders to Premier League champions. "You have to leave a little more (time) and taste slowly, slowly like a good wine. Savor it," Ranieri said. "Maybe now is too early to think what we have done. Maybe in one or two years it could be better to understand." But for a half hour Tuesday, the genial manager did set out in detail the blueprint behind this improbable path to glory. Highlighting the team ethic, there is little self-aggrandizement from the 64-year-old Italian who has broken up the established order of English football. This is the methodology.

Ridiculed appointment

The first obstacle at Leicester was winning over the doubters after his surprise hiring in July. "Claudio Ranieri? Really?" tweeted former Leicester striker Gary Lineker. Leicester had only just survived a scrape with relegation and yet gambled by replacing the fired Nigel Pearson with a manager who was humiliatedly dismissed from his previous job with Greece after losing to the Faeroe Islands. "What can you do when you train three days before a match?" Ranieri recalled of his ill-fated, short spell as a national team coach. "I have to get into the brain of the players slowly to understand, to bring them the same philosophy and go together."

At Leicester he would have time to achieve just that in his second stint in the Premier League. Ranieri lost his job at Chelsea after failing to deliver the Premier League title 12 years earlier, but just avoiding relegation was the Leicester objective. On a pre-season trip to Austria, Ranieri

gained the first lengthy insight into a team that won six out of its last eight games under Pearson to stay in the Premier League. "I said to them ... It is difficult to understand 25 people. It is important you understand only me. If we link very well we can do something good," Ranieri recalled. Still, there were concerns about Ranieri's plans, including fears there would be two training sessions a day. "Don't worry, I want to continue with your style and I will add my knowledge," Ranieri recalled telling the squad. "Then I will change slowly with my ideas."

Tweaking tactics

Ranieri decided in pre-season that a 4-4-2 formation best suited the team better than Pearson's 3-4-1-2. "Because a lot of teams play with 4-3-3 if you play three at the back you end up with three against one and I don't like that so much," Ranieri said. While having the poor possession statistics, the speed of Leicester on the break has unsettled opponents. "I watched (winger Riyad) Mahrez during last season and every time he made a difference he was on the right side and he cut inside," Ranieri said.

"Then I knew very well (Marc) Albrighton could make a lot of crosses on the right but I had to choose between him and Albrighton. Then I changed and I put Albrighton on the left and Riyad Mahrez on the right so they can come inside." Speed on the counterattack was another asset, he said. "So I told them we are like the RAF (Royal Air Force). We are so fast and they believed in this ... when we were losing 2-0, (drawing) 2-2 ... man that generates a lot of enthusiasm and confidence (to win) and everything started to go better and better and better." — AP

GUARDIOLA RUES ANOTHER CHAMPIONS LEAGUE EXIT

MUNICH: Pep Guardiola views his three-year reign at Bayern Munich as a failure having again failed to steer the Bavarians to the Champions League final. But the Spaniard insisted after the Bavarian giants went out to Atletico Madrid on away goals that he has "given his life" to Bayern whom he will leave at the end of the season for Manchester City. Bayern lost the semi-final first leg 1-0 in Spain, and went out on away goals despite beating Atletico 2-1 in return match in Munich on Tuesday.

Antoine Griezmann's crucial goal for Atletico made the difference as the tie finished 2-2 on aggregate. Xabi Alonso and Robert Lewandowski netted for Bayern on a night when both teams missed penalties in Munich. Bayern again exited the semi-finals in Europe to Spanish opponents after losing to Barcelona in 2015 and were also dumped out of the last four by Real Madrid in 2014. Guardiola was asked if he viewed his time in Munich as a failure despite winning five trophies so far, including two German league titles. "Yes, in terms of what we have won," he replied.

"It was my goal to win the Champions League final with Bayern after doing it with Barcelona (in 2009 and 2011). "Perhaps we have helped the players, maybe it's not enough, but it was the important thing for me. "I've given my life for this club, I've fought and done my best, the people

can say what they want, but it was really an honor to work with these players." Bayern can become the first team to win four consecutive German league titles if they beat Ingolstadt on Saturday and then face Borussia Dortmund in the German Cup final on May 21. But Guardiola, who will coach Manchester City next season, says the chance to win the double does not make up for the disappointment of another semi-final exit.

Atletico 'deserve' final

He hopes his replacement, Carlo Ancelotti, can now win the European title next season with Bayern. "Of course we want to win the German Cup, we also want to win the league, but it won't change my opinion of my time here by winning the cup," said Guardiola. "Titles are numbers, statistics are statistics. I wanted to reach the (Champions League) final, I haven't managed it, I hope Carlo can do it next season. "We haven't managed it, we're sad, but we have to prepare for the league game at Ingolstadt." Guardiola said he had no regrets in his team selection having recalled Thomas Mueller, Frank Ribery and Jerome Boateng in three changes from the side which lost the first leg. "You are disappointed when you don't play well. When you go home feeling you have not given all. Today I don't feel like that," he said. "We just didn't achieve our goals. "We tried our best, but I don't have the



Bayern Munich's coach Pep Guardiola

feeling we let the fans down. "We prepared well, but Atletico deserve to reach the final."

'Bitter result'

Bayern captain Philipp Lahm said the squad regretted failing to reach the European final in Guardiola's swansong season. "The team isn't to blame, we tried everything, but unfortunately it wasn't enough," said Lahm. "We failed to get the goals at the right time. "It's a bitter result that we haven't been able to reward ourselves and the coaching staff for the work over the last three years." Having missed his first-half penalty,

Mueller was left to rue the chances that got away.

"Football is sometimes so extreme," said the 26-year-old. "We did a lot right and only a few things wrong, unfortunately it wasn't enough. "I haven't experienced many nights like this here, the sting goes very deep. "Of course, I am disappointed not to have converted the penalty." Goalscorer Robert Lewandowski admitted it was hard to bow out having won in Munich. "It's hard to accept, because we had deserved the win," said Lewandowski after Bayern failed to score a crucial third goal. "To go out like that hurts." — AFP

RANIERI IS THE 'KING OF ENGLAND', SAYS MUM

MILAN: Claudio Ranieri's triumph with Leicester City in England has more than made amends for being sacked by Roma, according to the Italian's 96-year-old mother. "I'm sorry about how it finished for him at Roma: we've always been a big Roma-supporting family," Renata Ranieri told La Repubblica newspaper on Wednesday. "He took over (at Roma) when the season had already started. He didn't earn the respect of his own city... and I'm disappointed it finished like that for him. "But now, he's the king of

England and he's getting compliments from all around the world."

Ranieri went to Rome to have lunch with his elderly mother on the day Leicester clinched their historic Premier League title when Tottenham failed to beat his former club Chelsea on Monday. It was only two hours, but it gave her 64-year-old son "time to relax" and reflect on an unforgettable season at the tail end of what has been a storied, and not always successful, career for the coach known as the

"Tinkerman." Ranieri's achievements with Leicester have resonated around the world, especially in his native Italy. Sacked by Juventus before the end of the season in 2009, Ranieri was appointed Roma coach months later after Luciano Spalletti quit after two opening defeats. It looked a dream appointment for the man who grew up supporting Roma while working as a butcher's boy before embarking on a modest playing career. But despite Roma going 24 games unbeaten, Ranieri's popularity plummeted when they lost the title and the Italian Cup final to Jose Mourinho's treble-winning Inter Milan. After a 1-0 Cup final defeat to Inter, Mourinho mocked Ranieri for showing his players the 'Gladiator' film in a bid to inspire them to victory.

Defeat to Inter in the Italian Super Cup final the following season preceded a negative series of results and Ranieri quit Roma in February 2011. Five years after the bittersweet experience, Ranieri's coaching acumen is now being applauded around the world. "I started crying at the end of game," his mother said of Chelsea's 2-2 draw with Tottenham. Although Ranieri was scheduled to be flying while Monday's Premier League game was underway, the Italian reportedly watched the game live after Leicester president Vichai Srivaddhanapbha laid on a private flight.

"I only heard from Claudio later on because I was busy taking calls from grandsons and cousins. He was very happy, like everyone was: now we can all relax," added Renata. Defying odds of 5,000-1 to prevail ahead of England's glamour clubs in a way that turned Leicester's unheralded players into household names, even Ranieri's mother had doubts. "I didn't expect him to win, but the players he had under him are all good lads. It wasn't a little team he was in charge of, but they trained like true professionals," she said. — AFP



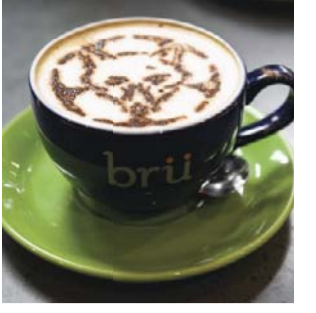
LEICESTER: Leicester City's manager Claudio Ranieri (centre) controls the ball during a training session at Leicester's training ground in Leicester, England. Leicester clinched the most improbable title of the Premier League era when second-place Tottenham was held to a 2-2 draw at Chelsea on Monday night. — AP

Sports

Heat melt Toronto as Warriors show champion class



Methodology behind Leicester: The Ranieri winning blueprint



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BEWARE MEAT FROM CHINA, MEXICO PLAYERS WARNED

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MADRID: Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo (right) vies with Manchester City's Argentinean defender Nicolas Otamendi (center) and Manchester City's French defender Eliaquim Mangala during the UEFA Champions League semi-final second leg football match at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium yesterday. — AFP

REAL EDGE CITY TO SET UP ALL-MADRID FINAL

MADRID: Real Madrid will face Atletico Madrid in the Champions League final for the second time in three years after overcoming Manchester City 1-0 in their semi-final second leg yesterday. Brazilian midfielder Fernando deflected Gareth Bale's cross into his own net after 20 minutes at the Santiago Bernabeu for the only goal of the tie after the first leg ended goalless. Ferdinandinho came closest to taking City to their first ever Champions League final when his shot clipped the outside of the post a minute before half-time. Real beat Atletico 4-1 after extra-time in Lisbon two years ago to win the competition for a 10th time and will be hoping for a repeat when they face Diego Simeone's men in Milan on May

28. The hosts were given a huge boost before kick-off as Cristiano Ronaldo made his return after a three-game absence due to a thigh injury. By contrast, City were dealt a massive injury blow inside 10 minutes when captain Vincent Kompany was forced off once more with a muscle problem in an injury-disrupted campaign. Eliaquim Mangala was forced on to deputise for Kompany, but City's makeshift defense wasn't overly troubled despite the presence of Ronaldo and an in-form Bale in the first 45 minutes. Ronaldo was looking to equal his own record of 17 Champions League goals in a season, but sent his first chance well over the bar with a header from Dani Carvajal's cross. However, Madrid got

the luck they needed to swing the tie in their favour with their next attack as Bale was played in on the right of the City box and his intended cross spooned up off Fernando and into the far corner to leave Joe Hart helpless.

Inexperience

The difference in European pedigree between the clubs couldn't have been starker as Madrid were playing in their 27th semi-final, whilst City were in the last four for the first time. That inexperience looked to be taking hold as City enjoyed decent spells of first-half possession without troubling the Real defense. However, they came within inches of finding the crucial

away goal just before the break when Kevin de Bruyne picked out Ferdinandinho and the Brazilian midfielder's low driven shot clipped the outside of the post.

The goalmouth action was all in City's box early in the second period as Hart was called upon to keep his side in the match. Luka Modric spurned a huge chance to put the tie to bed when he fired straight at Hart as the Croatian seemed surprised himself not to have been flagged offside.

Hart also kept out a Ronaldo header and fierce drive from the edge of the box as Madrid pressed. Bale then saw a looping header come off the bar as, just as in the first leg, Madrid con-

stantly caused City problems from set-pieces. City boss Manuel Pellegrini turned to the pace of Raheem Sterling and Kelechi Iheanacho in place of the ineffectual Yaya Toure and Jesus Navas for the final quarter.

And Pellegrini's men nearly snatched the goal they needed a minute from time when top scorer Sergio Aguero's first serious effort of the tie dipped onto the roof of the net. Real keeper Keylor Navas then injured himself in scurrying from his goal to clear a long through ball. Yet, despite a frantic finale, Madrid continued their record of not conceding a goal at home in the Champions League this season to progress to their 14th European Cup final. — AFP

REFRESHED DJOKOVIC MAKES WINNING RETURN TO MADRID

MADRID: Novak Djokovic stepped up his preparations for the French Open as the top seed beat teenager Borna Coric 6-2, 6-4 in his opening match at the Madrid Masters yesterday. The world number one, who lifted the trophy in the Spanish capital five years ago, has not played in Madrid since 2013 when he lost his opening match to Grigor Dimitrov. The Serb's success over Croatian youngster Coric was his first clay win of 2016 following a loss in Monte Carlo to Jiri Vesely almost a month ago.

"Second match on the clay-court season for me - the first one didn't go so well for me," Djokovic said. "I had some time to recuperate emotionally and mentally. I needed that more than physically because it has been a very successful but very demanding start of the season, first four months. I played a lot of matches. I performed very solid in opening round, few things could have been better against a young player that I never played against."

Djokovic will next face Spanish specialist Roberto Bautista Agut after the 15th seed defeated fellow countryman Feliciano Lopez 6-3, 5-7, 7-5. Elsewhere, Nick Kyrgios dumped out 2013 finalist Stan Wawrinka, with the Australian seeing off the Swiss 7-6 (9/7), 7-6 (7/2) in the second round. Wawrinka, the fourth seed, managed 11 aces but was unable to break the Kyrgios serve while losing his own four times. "It was generally a good match, I had chances in the first set," Wawrinka said. "He was serving well in the big moments. He played better on a few important points. His serve was tough to read. It was a high-

level match but a few points can make the difference." Japanese sixth seed Kei Nishikori was helped by a collapse from Fabio Fognini as the Italian served for victory - Asia's top player completed a 6-2, 3-6, 7-5 fightback win. "After the first set, he started playing better than me. In the third, he deserved to win. I don't know what happened to him in the last couple of games. I had a little luck, so I tried to keep up my confidence."

Czech eighth seed Tomas Berdych showed fitness after a stomach virus, advancing over Denis Istomin 6-3, 6-3, while world number nine David Ferrer beat Denis Kudla 6-4, 4-6, 6-4. French 16th seed Gilles Simon will line up against Andy Murray in the next round on Wednesday after a defeat of Estoril finalist Pablo Carreno Busta 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Azarenka Pulls Out

The women's Madrid Open was hit by a high-level injury defection as fourth seed and two-time finalist Victoria Azarenka quit before her match due to lower back pain. The premature exit handed a place in the quarter-finals to qualifier Louisa Chirico. Azarenka, from Belarus and the winner of back-to-back titles in March at Indian Wells and Miami, had advanced at the Caja Magica with a pair of straight-set wins, losing just 11 games. The world number five lost Madrid finals in 2011 and 2012. Her withdrawal came on the day that holder and two-time champion Petra Kvitova lost in the third round, going out to Australian Daria Gavrilova 6-3, 6-4. There are now no top five women's seeds left in



MADRID: Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic returns a ball to Croatian tennis player Borna Coric during the Madrid Open tournament at the Caja Magica (Magic Box) sports complex yesterday. — AFP

the event. Number six Simona Halep heads the field after she beat Swiss 10th seed Timea Bacsinszky, a title-winner at the weekend in Morocco, 6-2, 6-3. Azarenka joins Roger Federer in pulling out of one of the final major tune-ups prior to the May 22 start of the French Open due

to back problems. "I tweaked my back in my first match, it was cold that day," said Azarenka. "In my second match, I was in a lot of discomfort. I thought a day off would help, but today during a hit it came back again. I just don't feel I'm able to compete today."

Azarenka was unsure if she would be able to play Rome, which begins on Monday. "I want to make a smart decision for the big picture," she said. Romanian Irina Begu beat Christina McHale 6-7 (6/8), 6-4, 6-4 while Sorana Cirstea defeated German Laura Siegemund 6-4, 7-6 (11/9). — AFP

Kuwait Times BUSINESS

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Inspired by prison canteen, first
Palestinian food truck rolls in

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Obama faces looming
trade row with China

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Lexus Hybrid owners:
say Thanks a Million!

SAUDI FIRMS COPE WITH AUSTERITY BUT MORE PAIN LIES AHEAD

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DUBAI: An ariel view shows the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower, dominating the Dubai skyline. For more than 10 years Dubai property prices have been on a roller coaster, creating and wiping out fortunes, but recently they appear to have run out of steam. — AFP

RIDING ON THE DUBAI PROPERTY ROLLER COASTER DUBAI'S MARKET IS DRIVEN BY OVERSEAS DEMAND

DUBAI: For more than 10 years Dubai property prices have been on a roller coaster, creating and wiping out fortunes, but recently they appear to have run out of steam. The Gulf emirate shot to prominence as an attractive real estate market after opening up special freehold zones for foreign buyers in 2002. Prices peaked in 2008, driven mainly by speculative investments, but later nosedived as finances dried up because of the global financial crisis, shedding half the sector's value.

Renewed demand boosted values and rents at breakneck speed between 2012 and 2014, stirring fears of yet another bubble until prices headed south again, though more slowly this time. Last year prices fell by an average of 12 percent, according to Craig Plumb, head of MENA research at property consultancy Jones Lang LaSalle. "The market is having something of a soft landing at the moment, so

the prices have been now falling for over a year... We think the market will continue to drop a little bit more, but not as much as it already has," he said. "We think that most of the decline we've already seen."

Dana Salbak, head of MENA research at Knight Frank property consultancy, put the 2015 drop in residential prices at 10 percent. "We saw a slowdown in the residential sector. We saw prices dip about 10 percent over 2015. Not so much in the first quarter of the year," she said. Dubai's market is driven by overseas demand which has fallen as currencies weakened against the US dollar to which the UAE dirham is pegged, pushing up prices, Plumb said.

"Real estate in Dubai is now more expensive for buyers holding other currencies," Knight Frank said in its 2015 report. Indians top the list of foreign investors in Dubai prop-

erty. In 2015, they spent more than 20 billion dirhams (\$5.4 billion) out of a total of 135 billion dirhams. British and Pakistani buyers followed with 10.8 billion dirhams and 8.4 billion dirhams respectively. Iranians spent 4.6 billion dirhams, Canadians 3.7 billion dirhams and Russians 2.7 billion dirhams.

Indirect pressure from oil

The Indian rupee, the euro and the Russian ruble have all dropped significantly against the dollar. Dubai property has also been affected by a slowing economy that has created fewer jobs, which in turn means not as many people arriving to demand housing, Plumb said. And although its economy does not rely on Dubai's dwindling resources of oil, the plunge in oil revenues for the UAE and other Gulf states has exerted indirect pressure. The drop in oil prices and the economic slow-

down have "impacted investors' sentiment, their willingness and appetite to invest," said Salbak. "They adopted a cautionary approach."

But a collapse like the 2009 crash is probably not on the cards. "We don't think there is very much likelihood of the market collapsing in a spectacular sense. Our forecast is for another decline of between five and 10 percent in 2016," said Plumb. He said the market would bottom out by the end of 2016. "We see them (prices) stabilise at these new rates, which is a good sign, a sign that the market has reached the bottom of the cycle," said Salbak, adding that prices should pick up next year. She argued that government pledges to maintain increased investments in infrastructure construction send "positive signs for the market that the government is still committed to this sector, to the real estate sector, to construction".

Mohamed Alabbar, chairman of Emaar Properties which developed major Dubai projects including Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest tower, also sounded optimistic. "We are in the long-term business. Cycles come and go," he said, adding that the current drop in prices is "OK". "We are in business, it is not that bad," he said after unveiling plans to build an even taller tower.

Alabbar argued that it was good prices did not experience a "drastic (and) crazy 2007 increase" during post-crisis recovery. "Everybody wants prices to increase, but I think they have to be affordable," he said. "I think the balance between supply and demand... is very encouraging." Salbak also said supply is "currently being controlled", with developers "more cautious and wary of the need to phase out their delivery of projects, in line with demand". — AFP

SPANISH BANKS LAUNCH NEW WAVE OF JOB CUTS, CLOSURES

MADRID: Spanish banks, which slimmed down after a property boom went bust in 2008, are once again closing branches and slashing jobs as their profitability is hit by stiff competition. The country's three biggest lenders—Santander, BBVA and Caixa Bank—last week all posted lower first quarter net profits, especially in Spain, which is grappling with a jobless rate of 21 percent. Santander, the euro-zone's biggest bank by market capitalization, plans to close 450 smaller branches and cut 1,400 jobs in Spain, about five percent of the staff in its home market, through voluntary departures.

It expects the move will save between 75 and 110 million euros (\$126 million) per year from 2017. Barcelona-based CaixaBank, Spain's third-largest bank, plans to cut 500 of its 32,500 jobs in the country through early retirement agreements as it seeks to trim its salary costs. "We fear that the job cuts in the banking sector have not ended," Ignacio Soto of the UGT union, one of Spain's largest, told AFP. Spain has the densest bank branch network in western Europe, with 8.6 branches per 10,000 residents, according to consultancy Roland Berger. The average in the entire European Union is five branches per 10,000 residents.

The country's banking network already underwent a deep restructuring after the collapse of a decade-long property bubble in 2008 sent the Spanish economy, the euro-zone's fourth largest, into a tailspin. The crisis led Spain

to take a 41.3 billion euro loan from the European Union to restructure its banks which were saddled with property and loans whose value had plunged. Between 2008 and 2015 the sector shed 75,000 of its roughly 278,000 jobs and more than 13,000 branches closed their doors, according to the Bank of Spain. Struggling regional savings banks merged or were brought by Spain's large lenders.

Price war

Banks began to perform better after Spain returned to growth in 2014 as demand for loans for both consumers and businesses rose. Lenders reduced their exposure to the troubled real estate sector. Spanish banks' bad debts as a percentage of total loans fell from 13.6 percent in December 2013 at the height of the crisis to 10 percent in February.

The rate is still two times higher than the average in the euro-zone. While households are willing to spend more, they remain cautious when comes time to take out consumer loans, said Isidro Soriano of the Roland Berger consultancy. To attract quality customers—professionals with high salaries and small and medium-sized businesses—banks have launched a "price war" which reduces their margins, said Renta4 analyst Nuria Alvarez. The European Central Bank's cuts to interest rates as it tries to spur growth have also hurt Spanish lenders' profitability as it has led to lower payments on loans for consumers and businesses. —AFP

AHLI UNITED BANK REPORTS A PROFIT OF \$154.6 MILLION

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank BSC (AUB) reported a net profit attributable to its equity shareholders of \$154.6 million for the quarter ended 31 March 2016. The net profit reflected an increase of 5.0% in Q1/2016 as compared to the net profit figure of \$147.2 million achieved in Q1/2015. The Q1/2016 net profit also represents a 31.0% improvement over the Q4/2015 trailing quarter reported profit of \$118.0 million. The Basic Earnings per Share in Q1/2016 were 2.3 cents, compared to 2.2 cents in Q1/2015.

Despite continuing weak economic trends into 2016, AUB continued to grow its operating income underpinned by an effective balance sheet management strategy, with net interest income (NII) rising by 5.5% to US\$ 201.3 million during the quarter. Total operating income grew by 6.3% from US\$ 263.9 million to US\$ 280.5 million. The cost income ratio improved to 28.1% (Q1/2015: 28.5%).

Solid asset quality levels were sustained with the non-performing loans ratio standing unchanged at 1.8% (31 December 2015: 1.8%) while the specific provision coverage ratio stood at 84.0% (31 December 2015: 84.6%). The total provi-



AUB Chairman Hamad Al-Humaidhi

sion coverage ratio, inclusive of collective impairment provisions, was 181.8% as at 31 March 2016 (31 December 2015: 181.9%). The Group's Return on Average Equity (ROAE) for Q1/2016, increased to 17.6%, compared to the ROAE of 17.5% achieved in the first quarter of 2015. Return on Average Assets also increased to 2.0% for Q1/2016 (Q1/2015: 1.9%).

Hamad Al-Humaidhi, AUB Chairman, commented: "AUB continued its strong and steady performance in Q1/2016 underpinned by the viability of the Bank's core regional business model based on diversification and cross border flows". "In March 2016, the Bank succeeded in expanding its geographic reach further by opening its fully owned subsidiary Ahli United Bank Limited (AUBL) in Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC), UAE. AUBL is the first bank in the GCC region to receive the Category 1 License from Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA).

This launch enables AUB to offer corporate banking, private banking, wealth management, trade finance, treasury and cross-border financial products and services to its clients based in the UAE as well as in the wider Middle East region. All these products and services are available on a conventional as well as a Shari'a compliant basis through AUBL. The launch of AUBL represents an important addition to the AUB group banks and a key step forward in pursuing its defined strategy of targeted regional expansion, with emphasis on increasing cross border business flows." added Al-Humaidhi.



Lexus Hybrid owners: Thanks a million!

KUWAIT: Lexus announced it has sold over 1 million hybrid vehicles since the world's first luxury hybrid vehicle, the RX 400h, went on sale in April 2005. This major milestone has been achieved by Lexus' firm commitment to hybrid technology with more than a decade of development experience and a wide range of hybrid models. "The hybrid drive system continues to be our core vehicle technology to help reduce CO2 emissions, while providing a pleasurable driving experience. We have set ambitious environmental goals for 2050, and hybrid popularity worldwide is extremely important if we are to achieve those goals. I am pleased that over 1 million customers worldwide have put their faith into our hybrid line-up," said Tokuo Fukuichi, President of Lexus International.

Speaking on this occasion, Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative of Middle East & North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said "Our hybrid technology delivers not only great fuel efficiency and low CO2 emissions, but it also provides a smooth, comfortable and engaging driving experience, which leads

to the highest satisfaction rates from our customers. We truly appreciate the support of our customers and their faith in our hybrid vehicles, which has enabled us to reach this major milestone."

After the debut of the RX 400h, the brand gradually expanded its hybrid lineup by launching the first luxury hybrid sedan, the GS 450h, in 2006, followed by many other popular models like the powerful luxury hybrid sedan, LS 600h, and the luxury hybrid compact, CT 200h. The latest RX 450h model is also representative of Lexus' excellence for hybrid performance.

The model has redesigned powertrains, sophisticated safety technologies, driver aids as well as new convenience and technology features, while standing out with its sharp lines and contemporary styling to create a futuristic new look. Earlier this year, Lexus premiered its latest hybrid model, the LC 500h, which features a new generation performance hybrid technology called Multi Stage Hybrid System (MSHS). The MSHS expands further hybrid advantages by delivering more power, greater acceleration, traction and higher efficiency.



News

in brief

Nigeria starts oil production outside of Niger delta states

LAGOS: A Nigerian firm has said it has started oil production from an offshore field in the commercial city of Lagos, the first output outside the country's oil hub in the Niger delta. "Yinka Fawcett Petroleum Co Ltd (YFP) is pleased to announce that it has commenced production of crude oil from its Aje field located in block OML 113 offshore Lagos," it said late Tuesday. YFP did not disclose the volume of current output from the field but said the company has capacity to produce 40,000 barrels per day. "Oil produced from the Aje field will be stored on the Front Puffin which has production capacity of 40,000 barrels of oil per day and storage capacity of 750,000 barrels," it added in a statement. Production began after more than 25 years of exploratory, appraisal and developmental activities in the field, making Lagos-Nigeria's commercial capital-an oil-producing state.

UAE's Dana Gas Q1 net profit halves

DUBAI: Abu Dhabi-listed energy firm Dana Gas reported a 50 percent drop in first-quarter profit yesterday that it blamed on lower hydrocarbon prices and reduced output in Egypt and Kurdistan. Dana made a net profit of \$6 million in the three months to March 31. This compares with a profit of \$12 million in the prior-year period, it said in a statement, and resumes an earnings slump. In 2015, Dana Gas reported falling profits in the first and second quarters and losses in the third quarter before posting a big jump in profit in the final three months of last year after it booked a one-off gain relating to an arbitration case. Dana's first-quarter revenue was \$82 million, down from \$115 million. Lower hydrocarbon prices accounted for \$28 million of the revenue drop, it said. The company is one of the largest oil and gas investors in Iraqi Kurdistan. In November, the company said it had won an international arbitration award against the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Abraaj exits its investment in Tunisian pharma firm via IPO

DUBAI: Abraaj Group has exited its investment in Tunisia's second largest pharmaceutical company Unimed through an initial public offering (IPO) on the Tunis Stock Exchange, the Dubai-based private equity investor said yesterday. Unimed's IPO was priced at 11.8 Tunisian dinars a share, and was oversubscribed by 32.6 times, Abraaj said in an emailed statement. Unimed specializes in sterile dosage forms, such as intravenous solutions, and ophthalmic products for global companies including Pfizer and Mylan. Abraaj and its partner French development agency Proparco reduced their stake ahead of Unimed's IPO through a partial sale to a consortium of investors, Abraaj said in December. The consortium of investors included Washington-based SQM, Blakeney Asset Management and the Tunisian-Kuwaiti Consortium of Development.

Societe Generale profits outstrip expectations

PARIS: French bank Societe Generale posted stronger-than-expected profits yesterday, sending its shares sharply higher. Like its domestic rival BNP Paribas which reported its earnings a day earlier, Societe Generale benefited from strong income from French and international retail banking and fewer loans going bad, but investment banking suffered from an adverse market environment. Exceptional items, mostly a revision of the value of Societe Generale's liabilities, helped boost net profit. Societe Generale's net profit rose 6.5 percent to 924 million euros (\$1.1 billion), against analysts' expectations centring on 884 million euros. Once exceptional items were stripped out, net profit slipped 0.5 percent. The bank's shares soared 3.9 percent in morning business on the Paris stock exchange, where the CAC 40 index was flat overall. "The robustness of French banks is being confirmed," brokers Aurel BGC said in a note. Loan risk reduction by 14.5 percent was a major factor behind Societe Generale's performance, the bank said, adding the risk level was now the lowest since the 2008 financial crisis.

LIBYA'S EAST TESTS MUSCLE WITH OIL SHIPMENT, TROOP DISPATCHES

EAST TRIES TO SELL OIL WITHOUT TRIPOLI'S PERMISSION

BENGHAZI: By defiantly attempting to export their own oil and dispatching troops towards the centre of the country, Libya's eastern factions may be gambling on force as they bid for a larger stake under a UN-backed unity government. It could be a costly bet, one that ignites renewed conflict between east and west over territory, slashes oil production, and pushes Libya closer to a split that has threatened the country since the uprising that ousted Muammar Gaddafi five years ago.

The unity deal, signed in December despite opposition from hardliners, was meant to end the divide between rival governments in Tripoli and the east who have vied for control over the country and its oil resources since 2014, backed by competing factions of former anti-Gaddafi rebels. But in an ominous early sign of a possible new showdown, eastern and western factions have sent separate armoured columns towards Gaddafi's home town Sirte, now in the hands of fighters from Islamic State.

Western powers see the unity government as the best hope for ending the chaos. The

Government of National Accord (GNA) has slowly begun to establish itself in the capital since arriving a month ago. But it has done so with the help of armed factions from the western city of Misrata that backed the previous Tripoli government, hardening suspicions among easterners that they will be sidelined. A claim by the GNA's Presidential Council to leadership over any unified campaign against Sirte drew angry responses from the east, where hardliners already harbored federalist ambitions.

"The nation is facing internal and external conspiracies ... to destroy the army and support the militias in Tripoli," said Ali al-Qatrani, an ally of the eastern military and one of two Council members who have suspended their membership. The eastern government's parliament, the House of Representatives, already repeatedly failed to vote to accept the unity government, after rejectionists blocked attempts to even hold a ballot. Last month, a new oil company set up by the eastern government attempted to ship its first exports of oil without permission from Tripoli. The United Nations responded by blacklisting

the tanker carrying 650,000 barrels of crude.

On Tuesday, the east prevented a tanker from loading on behalf of the Tripoli-based National Oil Corporation (NOC), a move that puts production from eastern fields at risk. Tripoli's NOC has kept the oil industry running since Libya's 2011 uprising, with the income channeled through the Tripoli-based central bank to pay salaries across the country. "If they can show that the east can sell its own oil and earn its own revenue, that is a hugely damaging step which would lead to reinforcing the view in the east that they can go it alone," said a Western diplomat.

Regional rivalries

After Gaddafi's fall, a gulf between east and west has slowly widened, especially after an alliance of Islamist-leaning Tripoli and Misrata militias took over the capital in 2014 and created their own self-declared government. The government that had been in place before that revolt decamped to the east, and most of the armed groups that prowl Libya's streets ended up siding with one of the two competing alliances.

As they vied for control of dwindling oil revenues over the past two years, the eastern government tried to set up parallel branches of the National Oil Corporation and the central bank. It also appointed a former Gaddafi ally, General Khalifa Haftar, as the head of its armed forces, the Libyan National Army (LNA). His role in any national military force as a possible defense minister or army chief has become one of the most divisive problems.

For two years Haftar has been waging a campaign, primarily in Benghazi, the biggest city of the east, against Islamist militants and other former rebels who view him as an Egyptian-backed relic of the old regime with presidential ambitions. The military leadership has its own divisions, but after a long deadlock the LNA has made significant gains in parts of Benghazi since February, boosting Haftar's popularity and emboldening his political allies. Residents returning to their homes in areas of Benghazi retaken by the army say they have Haftar and the LNA to thank. Shop assistants offer troops free food and cigarettes, and children pose for photos with soldiers in uniform. — Reuters



RAMALLAH: Palestinian Khaldun serves food to customers at his food truck called 'Food Train' which he runs with his friend Abderrahman in the West Bank city of Ramallah. — AFP

INSPIRED BY PRISON CANTEEN, FIRST PALESTINIAN FOOD TRUCK ROLLS IN

RAMALLAH: Inspired by their time working in an Israeli prison canteen, two Palestinians have launched a food truck in the West Bank city of Ramallah, in a first for the occupied territories. It's not quite the captive audience they were used to, but Khaldun al-Barghuthi and Abderrahman Al-Bibi's brightly colored van is drawing attention-and hungry patrons-on the pavements and in the parks of the West Bank's political centre. Barghuthi, who spent eight years in an Israeli prison, and Bibi, who spent nine, served food to fellow inmates during their time in jail. They said they served time for "resisting the Israeli occupation" but refused to provide further details.

Barghuthi, who was freed at the beginning of this year, said it was no coincidence that he decided to open a mobile business-dubbed the "Food Train"-following his release. "I had to get on the move after so much time spent in a small cell, I was tired of the long hours of boredom and I wanted to move all the time, like a train," he said, filling a baguette with grilled chicken and diced onions. The colourlessness of prison life, with its monotone brown and blue uniforms, also inspired the van's psychedelic

paint job in red, blue, orange, purple and yellow, he said.

Setting an example

Street stalls flogging falafel, grilled corn cobs or Turkish coffee are a common part of any Palestinian street, but a restaurant in a truck with two fridges and a stove, powered by four huge solar panels, was unheard of before the Food Train. Although such food trucks are all the rage in cities from New York to Paris, the two friends had to ask the Palestinian ministry of transport to issue its first licence for their mobile restaurant.

Serving Middle Eastern street food alongside hot dogs and sandwiches, the truck has proven surprisingly popular. "We didn't expect to have so many customers this fast," said Barghuthi. Since opening the truck three weeks ago, the two men take turns at the stove from 8:00 am until midnight, seven days a week. Barghuthi, sporting a neatly trimmed black beard and an apron tied around his neck, said that in general they park next to "universities or public gardens, and sometimes employees ask us to come in to their industrial zone." — AFP

ROYAL DUTCH SHELL'S PROFIT SLIDES ON LOWER OIL PRICES

LONDON: Royal Dutch Shell yesterday announced an 89-percent drop in net profit for the first quarter, blamed on slumping oil prices, adding that investment would be lower than expected. Profit after tax stood at \$484 million (421 million euros) in the January-March period, down from \$4.43 billion in the first quarter of 2015, the Anglo-Dutch energy group said in an earnings statement. Stripping out exceptional costs and changes to the value of Shell's oil stockpiles, profit retreated 58 percent to \$1.55 billion. Shell, which recently completed a mega takeover of smaller British rival BG Group, added that it planned this year to invest less than had been forecast.

"We continue to reduce our spending levels, to capture cost opportunities and manage the financial framework in today's lower oil price environment," Royal Dutch Shell Chief Executive Officer Ben van Beurden said in the statement. "The combination with BG is off to a strong start, as a result of detailed forward planning before the completion of the transaction. This will likely result in accelerated delivery of the synergies from the acquisition, and at a lower cost than we originally set out." However van Beurden noted

that capital investment would be around \$30 billion this year, down from an estimate of \$33 billion.

The revised spending level would meanwhile be some 36 percent lower compared with the combined investment of Shell and BG during 2014. In early trading following the results, the price of Shell's 'A' shares fell 0.40 percent to 1,748 pence on London's benchmark FTSE 100 index, which was down 0.5 percent at 6,155.17 points overall. "Royal Dutch Shell has taken a dramatic hit to revenues, but continues to maintain its dividend despite the storm that has hit global commodity prices," said Laith Khalaf, senior analyst at stockbroker Hargreaves Lansdown. He added that the faster-than-expected drop in capital expenditure "shows that the company is making operational progress in adapting to lower prices."

The global oil market had nosedived from above \$100 in mid-2014 to 13-year lows of around \$27 in February, plagued by the stubborn supply glut. But prices have since rebounded to trade around \$45 a barrel. The slump in prices has caused energy groups worldwide to cut spending, slash jobs and sell assets. — AP



THE HAGUE: A flag bearing the company logo of Royal Dutch Shell, flies outside the head office in The Hague, Netherlands. — AP

SAUDI FIRMS COPE WITH AUSTERITY BUT MORE PAIN LIES AHEAD

Q1 EARNINGS OF TOP 50 LISTED FIRMS SHRINK 3 PERCENT

DUBAI: Saudi Arabian companies are faring better in an era of austerity than many investors feared, but they face more pain in the coming months as gains from cost-cutting and efforts to improve efficiency become more difficult. The world's largest oil exporting country is in the grip of a protracted adjustment to low crude prices, which have caused a state budget deficit of nearly \$100 billion and forced the government into spending cuts.

For decades, almost every corner of the economy has depended on lavish flows of petrodollars, so the austerity is bad news for Saudi corporate earnings. Last December, the government announced its harshest set of measures so far, in the form of subsidy cuts that raised domestic prices of gasoline, electricity, water and the natural gas feedstock used by the petrochemicals industry. The first-quarter earnings of listed Saudi companies, released over the last few weeks, show that many are managing to avoid a steep slide in profits.

The combined net profits of the 50 biggest companies by capitalization, which account for the vast bulk of all earnings in the stock market, fell only 3.0 percent from a year ago to 19.88 billion riyals (\$5.4 billion), Reuters calculations show. That was much better than the expectations of many analysts, who had believed profits might drop at least as steeply as they did in full-year 2015, when earnings shrank 13.9 percent. Nevertheless, there were big differences in first-quarter performance between individ-

ual sectors, with industries directly exposed to consumer demand, such as retailing, hit hard.

Statements by the companies attributed much of their better-than-expected earnings to cost-cutting and gains in operational efficiency - processes that cannot continue indefinitely if they want to grow. That suggests the decline in profits could accelerate later this year or next. "Companies were able to benefit from the easy wins of cutting back on excess spending this time around," said Jassim Al-Jubran, senior analyst at Aljazira Capital in Riyadh. "But the next several quarters will prove companies will be scavenging for top-line growth and undergoing massive restructuring as they face further pressure from austerity."

Banks, Petchems

Most of Saudi Arabia's 12 listed banks beat analysts' expectations in the first quarter as their combined earnings rose 0.6 percent to 10.01 billion riyals, a slowdown from 7.2 percent growth in all of 2015. Provisions for bad loans, while generally slightly greater than a year earlier, were not as large as feared. Many analysts, however, think provisions could rise in the coming quarters as austerity continues to hurt the economy. Major construction company Saudi Binladin Group, for example, has been laying off thousands of workers and bankers believe a restructuring of some of its debt is possible. Another concern for banks is slowing deposit

growth because of reduced inflows of petrodollars. Total bank deposits shrank 0.6 percent from a year earlier in March; as recently as last year, they were growing at double-digit rates.

"Many believe that 1Q16 results for banks in particular were a 'lagging' indicator, not forward-looking i.e. results are more reflective of pre-subsidy change days," said one Saudi economist who works with the government, declining to be named because he is not authorized to speak to media. "In coming quarters you will start to see defaults increasing and banks getting into a mess, so results will worsen." Earnings of the top 10 petrochemical companies shrank 8.9 percent in the first quarter to 4.33 billion riyals, but that was much better than in 2015, when low product prices due to cheap oil slashed their profits 36.9 percent.

Saudi Basic Industries Corp, one of the world's largest petrochemical groups, reported a 13.2 percent drop in first-quarter profit to 3.41 billion riyals, but that was better than analysts' average forecast of 2.84 billion. "In general, gross margins were able to come ahead of expectations because producers were able to control costs, both operational and general," said Jubran.

So far, the impact of the subsidy cuts on petrochemical firms' margins has been far lower than analysts and even the companies themselves had expected, said Jubran. But he warned that some firms were still enjoying low feedstock

prices and these would eventually rise in an environment of austerity.

"Part of the current strategy adopted by companies to improve efficiency and slash costs may prove to be unsustainable, because if current prices of feedstock, which some players continue to use at discounted prices, increase then margins will compress in future quarters." The earnings of retailers reveal the effect of austerity on consumer demand in the kingdom, as some of its 10 million foreign workers are laid off and sent back to their home countries. While there have been no major lay-offs of Saudi citizens so far, their purchasing power has been curbed by less generous bonuses and overtime payments, while economic uncertainty has made them more cautious about spending.

Retailing chain Fawaz Alhokair, which owns franchise rights for brands including Mango, Zara and Banana Republic, barely broke even in the January-March quarter with its net profit plunging 98 percent. This drop was partly due to unusually strong sales in the year-ago quarter, when public employees received a bonus of two months' salary to mark the accession of King Salman, but it also reflected deteriorating consumer sentiment. Mohammad Al-Shammasi, head of asset management at Derayah Financial, said domestic-focused Saudi companies would face more pressure on their margins as consumers became more price-conscious and firms offered discounts to attract them.— Reuters



JOYALUKKAS HONORED - 'BEST SERVICE PERFORMANCE BRAND'

DUBAI: The eponymous Joyalukkas Jewelry received the Dubai Service Excellence Scheme (DSES) Award for 'Best Service Performance Brand' from the Dubai Department of Economic Development at the Dubai World Trade Center. The Dubai Service Excellence Scheme is an initiative of the Department of Economic Development to promote excellence in customer service standard in the private sector and recognize businesses that provide excellent service for their customers. The DSES is designed to gain customer's confidence and make the experience of 'Shopping in Dubai' a pleasurable one. This scheme binds all participating businesses to a common code of business ethics and core criteria for customer service excellence.

"I embarked on my entrepreneurial journey in the UAE with a simple goal: to be the best and world's favorite jeweler. Thanks to the visionary rulers of UAE and their dynamic nature, I was able to grow 'Joyalukkas' brand to be, one of the biggest and best jewelry brands in the world. I sincerely thank H.H. Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and the DSES for bestowing us with this honor and motivating us to keep at our path of excellence. I also thank our customers and my committed team of employees for their patronage and support in helping us make this happen," said Joy Alukkas, Chairman & MD, Joyalukkas Group.

'Joyalukkas' is a brand that has constantly strived on innovation to ensure they offer a delightful shopping experience to customers at all time. Under the vision and business

acumen of its founder, Joy Alukkas, the jeweler has launched various initiatives at their many jewelry outlets to enhance the shopping experience of customers, like the intensive training programs for staff and a unique loyalty program for customers. Joyalukkas has been the first jewelry chain to initiate such programs to ensure they offer customers the best at all times. The brand has also retained its Super brand status in the UAE for the past 7 years in a row.

Some of the other prestigious awards received by Joy Alukkas, include an award presented by, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President & Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, under the Dubai Quality Awards program for creating and maintaining international standards across all business operations & departments, HE Sheikha Lubna Bint Khalid Al Qasimi has also presented to them, on behalf of Retail ME the 'Best Retailer of the Year', Middle East.

Joy Alukkas is no stranger to accolades, in his 29 years at the helm of, one of the world's most successful business empire. And it is no wonder his vision and passion for excellence has driven his entrepreneurial journey from a single jewelry showroom in Abu Dhabi to a multi-billion empire spanning jewelry, retail, fashion, money exchange, realty and aviation industries in 11 countries. In such a brief span of time, the Joyalukkas brand has become a household name. The Group enjoys the loyal patronage of over 10 million customers in the UAE, India, UK, Singapore, Malaysia, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the USA.

ARAB COMPANIES SHOWCASE PRODUCTS AT SAO PAULO SUPERMARKET ASSOCIATION FAIR

DUBAI: The Arab-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce (ABCC) has facilitated the participation of Arab companies at the Apas Fair held by the Sao Paulo Supermarket Association (Apas) from May 2 to 5, 2016 at Expo Center Norte, Sao Paulo. Leading companies from the UAE, Jordan, and Tunisia are participating in the event and showcasing their products in the ABCC stand which span 98 square meters on the expo's white pavilion.



Dr Michel Alaby

The stand showcases a wide variety of commodities from various companies to give a sample of popular Arabic products. Three Tunisian companies are represented as well as the Agricultural Investment Promotion Agency (Aipia). Delegates from eight Jordanian companies are also present at the stand, while a liaison officer from Dubai Exports, the emirate's export promotion agency, are representing 15 local companies.

Dr Michel Alaby, Secretary General and CEO, Arab-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce, said, "We are excited to participate in the 2016 edition of the Apas Fair which is one of

the leading export and import platforms. The Fair is widely sought after and drew 138 international exhibitors and welcomed 494 foreign visitors from 56 different countries in 2015. We are optimistic that this year's event will be even more successful.

The ABCC will be at their disposal to act as a bridge between exporters and importers and we believe this is an important part of our active efforts to further cultivate ties between the two countries." The companies' participation is primarily aimed at showcasing their products and specialties in Brazil such as olive oil, dates and spices to throw the spotlight on best-selling products across the region and attract potential buyers. In addition, the Arab enterprises will be selling items such as chocolates, rice, cakes, candy, beverages and camel's milk. They will also offer plastics for packaging, air conditioning systems, and perfumes.

The import of olive oil from Arab countries by Brazilian companies has increased more than 600 per cent in 2014 to 2015, according to statistics from the Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade (MDIC) and ABCC. The country that exported the most olive oil to Brazil was Tunisia. In 2014, the country sold USD 104,000 for Brazil. In 2015, that figure jumped to \$1 million. As part of the delegation's program of activities during their visit to Brazil, Arab executives will also pay a visit to the cereal wholesale hub near Sao Paulo's Municipal Market to talk business with olive oil and date importers. Participating Jordanian companies will also look for potential suppliers and partners in line with their efforts to import goods and products in the near future.

NISSAN BAGS THREE AWARDS

DUBAI: Nissan has won an impressive trio of awards at 2016's Middle East Car of the Year Awards (MECOTY). The Maxima took top honors in the Best Large Sedan category and the Patrol scooped up Best Large SUV, while the Patrol Desert Edition was awarded Special King of the Desert. "Once again the region's motoring experts have voted Nissan as the best in certain categories," said Samir Cherfan, Managing Director of Nissan Middle East. "Each time we win, it proves that we're delivering on our promise of 'Innovation that Excites'. You might think that, having won so many times, we would be complacent by now but the opposite is true - it means we're doing the right thing and we intend to continue in that direction. As our products get better, our trophy cupboard gets fuller and Nissan is always honored to win at MECOTY."

Middle East Car of the Year is the region's longest established and most prestigious awards ceremony, voted for by experts and the public alike to give a real representation of popularity across the board. For 2016 the awards took place alongside the inaugural Abu Dhabi International Motor Show, which attracted more than 40,000 visitors to the UAE capital's ADNEC (Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre) between 31 March and 2 April.

The judges, handpicked from across the GCC and Lebanon, were joined by a public vote for a new category this year: King of the Desert, which the Patrol Desert Edition won outright. "This is the ultimate version of Nissan's legendary flagship," commented Cherfan. "I feel it richly deserved this victory. Conceptualised and developed under the expert eyes of the Middle East's most famous and influential motorsports personality, Dr Mohammed bin Sulayem, this is a car that was developed specifically for our unique region and its terrain. No other manufacturer has gone to these lengths, to give customers exactly what they need and want, and both the public and jury votes for this special award rightly recognize that."



MEZZAN HOLDING'S QUARTERLY REVENUE HITS KD 55.7 MILLION

KUWAIT: Mezzan Holding KSC, one of the largest manufacturers and distributors of food, beverage, FMCG and pharmaceutical products in the Gulf yesterday announced the company's financial results for Q1 2016. Quarterly revenue increased to KD55.7 million, representing a 5.3% increase on the same period in 2015 and the highest quarterly revenue in the company's history. Net profit was 4.8% lower at KD5.2 million for the three months ended March 31, 2016.

Mezzan Holding CEO, Garry Walsh, said: "Performance for Q1 was in line with our expectations with Revenue growth of 5.3%, driven by broad based growth across our Food and Non Food businesses. Net profit declined to KD5.2 million, down 4.8%, driven by the anticipated impact of declines in our Catering business and additional taxes not present in Q1 2015, prior to the listing of Mezzan Holding shares on the Kuwait Stock Exchange.

We were pleased with our overall performance given some of the macro-economic challenges across the markets we operate in. Our consumer staple portfolio, which generates more than 70% of our revenue, demonstrated its resilience in these challenging market conditions, while new business, distribution gains and market share gains in some of our key businesses added to the growth momentum.

Our Full Year outlook continues to be High Single Digit/Low Double Digit Revenue growth with some leverage on the Net Profit line, which is in line with the targets we set ourselves at the beginning of the year. As previously communicated, we expect to see a stronger second half to the year, as new business comes on stream and we begin to lap the Catering declines in the second half of 2015. We will continue to invest prudently in our brands and infrastructure to ensure we deliver quality products to our customers and consumers, while continuing to spend wisely, seeking maximum shareholder value."

Financial Performance Review

Food Business Line: The Food Business Line accounted for 66.9% of Group Revenue and comprises Manufacturing and Distribution (47.8% of Group Revenue), Catering (11.2%) and Services (7.9%). Revenue reached KD37.2 million, an increase of 2.7% compared with the same period in 2015.

Manufacturing and Distribution: Q1 Revenue increased 5.5%, with broad based growth across our key operating units. This was largely driven by our company owned brands, rather than our partner brands.

Catering: Q1 Revenue declined by 15.6% due to the completion of long term contracts in Kuwait, which were highlighted in previous earnings releases. Our catering business in Qatar and UAE performed well and we expect them to make continued progress.

Services: Q1 Revenue increased by 19.6% driven by growth in our tender business in Jordan, offset by declines in our Afghanistan business due to troop withdrawals. As indicated in previous communications, the nature of the tender business in Jordan will result in quarterly fluctuations.

Non-Food Business Line: The Non-Food Business Line accounted for 33.1% of Group Revenue and comprises FMCG and Pharmaceuticals (30.3% of Group Revenue) and Industrials (2.8%). Revenue reached KD18.4 mil-

lion, an increase of 11.0% compared with the same period in 2015.

FMCG and Pharmaceuticals: Q1 Revenue grew by 12.5% as all our key agencies performed well.

Industrials: Industrials revenues declined by 2.7% driven by oil price-driven declines in KLOC, our oil refining business.

Regional Business Highlights

KUWAIT: Q1 Revenue grew by 5.8%, despite the impact of losses in the Catering business. FMCG and Food Manufacturing and Distribution helped drive double digit growth, excluding Catering.

UAE: Q1 Revenue declined by 8.3% as macro-economic headwinds impacted the discretionary elements of our portfolio, although the non-discretionary parts of our business fared better.

QATAR: Q1 Revenue grew by 15.9% with our Water and Catering businesses both posting double digit growth.

Jordan: Q1 Revenue grew by 71.7% as we tendered successfully for new UN/WFP business.



DELL AND EMC COMBINE TO FORM DELL TECHNOLOGIES

By Islam Al-Sharaa

LAS VEGAS: Dell Inc and EMC Corporation have signed a definitive agreement under which Dell, together with its owners, Michael S Dell, founder, chairman and chief executive officer of Dell, MSD Partners and Silver Lake, the global leader in technology investing, will acquire EMC Corporation, while maintaining VMware as a publicly-traded company. The new company will be called Dell Technologies. The company's client business will still be called Dell, while the enterprise operation will be Dell EMC.

The transaction creates the industry-leader in the extremely attractive high-

growth areas of the \$2 trillion IT market with complementary product and solutions portfolios, sales teams and R&D investment strategies.

The transaction combines two of the world's greatest technology franchises - with leadership positions in servers, storage, virtualization and PCs - and brings together strong capabilities in the fastest growing areas of the industry, including digital transformation, software defined data center, hybrid cloud, converged infrastructure, mobile and security.

The combination of Dell and EMC provides unmatched ability to address large and small customers' rapidly changing crit-



ical IT needs. Digital transformation is driving disruption across all industries; transition from traditional on-premise to hybrid public/private cloud infrastructure; and need to balance agility, mobile workforces with persistent security threats. The company will offer customers a broad, end-to-end product portfolio spanning all key computing, networking and storage segments - both legacy and emerging - to address customers facing technology-driven disruption.

LAS VEGAS: Michael S Dell, founder, chairman and CEO of Dell and EMC Chairman and CEO Joe Tucci.



BEIJING: A woman tries out an iPhone at an Apple retail store in Beijing, China yesterday. — AP

APPLE LOSES CHINESE LAWSUIT OVER IPHONE NAME

BEIJING: Apple Inc has lost a legal fight with a Chinese company that a Beijing court says is allowed to use the iPhone name on wallets and handbags. The court said Apple failed to prove iPhone was a "famous brand" in China before the local company applied for a trademark in 2007, an official legal newspaper reported. Such status under Chinese law might limit its use on other products.

The ruling in late April allows Xintong Tiandi Technology to keep using the iPhone name, according to the Legal Daily, which is published by the ruling Communist Party's legal affairs committee. The company registered the name for use on handbags, mobile phone cases and other leather goods. Phone calls to the Beijing

Higher Level People's Court were not answered. China is Apple's second-biggest market after the United States, though first-quarter sales in the Greater China region fell 26 percent from a year earlier.

Apple's iTunes and iBooks services also have been suspended in China, though the company said last month it hopes to resume operation soon. Apple applied to trademark iPhone for computer- and software-related goods in 2002, according to the Legal Daily.

Xintong Tiandi applied to use the name on wallets and leather goods two years before Apple's smartphones went on sale in China in 2009, it said. Apple filed suit in 2012 challenging the Chinese company's use of the name. — AP

RICH, POWERFUL WARN ROBOTS ARE COMING FOR YOUR JOBS

LOS ANGELES: Some of the richest, smartest and most powerful humans have an important message for the rest of us as they convened this week to discuss pressing global issues: The robots are coming. At the Milken Institute's Global Conference in Beverly Hills, California, at least four panels so far have focused on technology taking over markets to mining - and most importantly, jobs.

"Most of the benefits we see from automation is about higher quality and fewer errors, but in many cases it does reduce labor," Michael Chui, a partner at the McKinsey Global Institute, said on Tuesday during a panel on "Is Any Job Truly Safe?"

The four-day annual conference, which began on Sunday, has 3,500 invite-only participants exploring "The Future of Human Kind." Technology has not only done away with low-wage, low-skill jobs, some of the more than 700 speakers said. They cited robots operating trucks in some Australian mines; corporate litigation software replacing employees with advanced degrees who used to sift through thousands of documents prior to trials; and on Wall Street, the automation of jobs previously done by bankers with MBAs or PhDs.

"Anyone whose job is moving data from one spreadsheet to another ... that's what is going to get automated," said Daniel Nadler, chief executive of Kensho, a financial services analytics company partly owned by Goldman Sachs Group Inc. "Goldman Sachs will be in here in 10 years, JPMorgan will be here. They're just going to be much more efficient in terms of operating leverage and headcount," he added. Big banks have slashed tens

of thousands of jobs in recent years as businesses like bond trading have become less profitable. Under tremendous pressure from investors to boost profits, but unable to grow revenue much, banks have increasingly turned to technology to reduce costs.

A Citigroup Inc report in March suggested that more pain is on the way for financial industry staff. Citi's analysts predicted a 30 percent drop in banking jobs across the United States and Europe over the next decade. Milken panelists noted technology's impact on work far beyond Wall Street.

Martin Ford, an author and entrepreneur, argued that while the so-called gig economy has created temporary jobs for independent contractors, the next step is to get rid of them. The ride-hailing service Uber, for example, is investing heavily in building cars that do not need drivers, he said.

David Siegel, co-chairman of the quantitative hedge fund Two Sigma, blamed technology for income problems that have led to political upheavals around the world over the past several years. "One of the big causes for the stagnation of middle class wages is essentially because of clever computer programs," Siegel said during a panel about artificial intelligence.

Some panelists were less dire in their assessments. Billionaire investor Steve Cohen said it would take a while before robots replace stockpickers like himself. Kate Mitchell, co-founder of Scale Venture Partners, said freelance sites have allowed workers to supplement their income. "It is easy to villainize technology," she said, "but there is a lot of opportunity there at the same time." — Reuters

MEET THE NEXT SPORT OF THE MODERN AGE: DRONE RACING

HAWTHORNE, California: Decked out in high-tech goggles, pilot Steve Zoumas dives low and sees the final gate zooming toward him: A 20-foot-tall metal-framed box ringed with neon. Boom! His sight goes black. The crowd lets out a collective "Whoa!" as pieces of his aircraft, which has just smashed into a concrete barrier, go flying.

Zoumas is just fine, though; it's his drone that's toast. The pilot takes off his goggles and crosses to the pilots' lounge for the replay. Once again his quadcopter drone, a buzzing machine roughly the size of a loaf of bread, zooms daringly around obstacles and through hairpin turns; once again, it meets its demise. "I was pushing it that lap," says Zoumas, a 31-year-old construction company owner. "I just wanted to put on a show for the crowd."

Welcome to drone racing, a would-be sport in which men, and a few women, fly remote-controlled drones against competitors at up to 80 miles per hour along looping courses with hairpin curves and drops. Many races take place in open fields, but here, racers and spectators have gathered in an abandoned, rubble-strewn mall set up with course-marking gates across two floors. Fans sit on bleachers behind protective mesh, passing around antenna-equipped goggles to see the pilot's view. Big-screen TVs show off unique camera angles while glowing copters whizz by, emitting the high-pitched hum of weed whackers on steroids.

Labor of love

Racing is a labor of love for many pilots. Many are born tinkers, and spend hours customizing their drones with new parts or building them from scratch. Some say they have spent more than \$10,000 on frames, motors, batteries, propellers and camera mounts.

Fred Loo, a 31-year-old pilot known as "Flying Bear," says he and his wife even put off having kids so he can spend more time racing. He says he'd give up his high-paying Silicon Valley job in a heartbeat if he could figure out how to fly drones for a living.

Of course, that's the sticking point. Drone racing is still something of a guerrilla sport, even though ESPN has agreed to air a drone special on its ESPN3 channel this fall. Money is tight, and most pilots have to keep their day jobs. While high-profile races such as the World Drone Prix, held in Dubai last March, pay out as much as \$250,000 to the winning pilot, such affluence feels very distant here in the shell of the Hawthorne Plaza mall.

That could change if drone racing hits it big, attracting a mass audience and the sponsors who want to sell them stuff. Serial entrepreneur Nick Horbaczewski, who founded the Drone



HAWTHORNE, California: This March 19, 2016, photo shows Drone Racing League founder and CEO Nicholas Horbaczewski at the vacant Hawthorne Plaza mall in Hawthorne, California. — AP

Racing League last year, thinks he knows how to pull that off. The trick, he says, is making the audience feel the same thrill as the pilots. That's why his league lights up each quadcopter and its pilot's goggles with matching colored LEDs, which help spectators track the tiny speeding drones. It's also why pilots wear T-shirts emblazoned with nicknames like "KittyCopter," "Rekrek" and "Zoomas." Pilot backstories and slick editing build up the drama for videos put online.

The fast-talking 35-year-old helped turn "Tough Mudders," a quirky half marathon in which people pay to slog through artificial quagmires, into a \$100-million-plus business as its chief revenue officer. He sank his own money into the drone league last year, though he also raised \$8 million from the likes of Miami Dolphins' owner Steve Ross, the talent business Creative Artists Agency and media giant Hearst.

Turbulence ahead

But there is plenty of turbulence ahead. Similarly promising quasi-athletic leagues have crashed and burned before. Take professional paintball, which seemed like a sure-fire winner at its peak in 2005. A sport in which combatants shoot at one another across an obstacle-strewn field promised a built-in audience of gun enthusiasts and video gamers.

Paintball thrived for several years, airing its own show on ESPN3 and drawing sponsors like

Budweiser, Monster energy drinks and the U.S. Army. Then manufacturers of paintball equipment consolidated and cut back on ad spending. Interest in the sport dwindled, and its main league folded in 2014.

Further complicating things, multiple drone-racing leagues are vying for attention. Horbaczewski's major competition is the International Drone Racing Association, which last month announced it'll have a special on ESPN3 in the fall. There are a handful of other big leagues around the world, and grassroots races pop up all the time. The hodgepodge of organizations has bewildered would-be sponsors, frustrating some who found the experience of backing a race a sinkhole for time and money. Multitrotor Superstore, a Santa Cruz, California-based online retailer of drone parts, already sponsors pilots like Loo with discounts and access to new gear at grassroots events.

But owner Michael Silveira says he spent \$20,000 sponsoring the IDRA's U.S. National Drone Racing Championships last year, to disappointing results. His company's logos weren't displayed as agreed at an after-party he helped pay for, he says. That would have stung more had promised crowds actually turned up for the event. Attendance was less than 100, although he'd been told to expect 10,000 fans. "That hurt quite a bit," Silveira says. "Now we're a little hesitant about doing things." — AP

REQUESTS FOR DATA RISE SHARPLY UNDER SECRETIVE US SURVEILLANCE ORDERS

WASHINGTON: FBI requests for customer records under a secretive surveillance order increased by nearly 50 percent in 2015, according to a US government transparency report published this week. Internet and telecommunications companies in 2015 received 48,642 requests, up from 33,024 reported in 2014, for data via so-called National Security Letters (NSLs). The NSL is a tool used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to gather phone numbers, email and IP addresses, web browsing histories and other information.

An NSL does not require a warrant and is usually accompanied by a gag order. The amount of actual written orders issued decreased in 2015, however, from 16,348 to 12,870. One NSL often contains multiple requests for information, such as a series of email addresses believed relevant to an investigation, where each address counts as one request.

The year-to-year statistics may not be entirely precise due to changes in reporting requirements ushered in last year under a surveillance reform law passed by Congress, sources familiar with the process said, but they indicate general trends.

The majority of NSL requests, 31,863, made in 2015 sought information on foreigners, regarding a total of 2,053 individuals, according to a Justice Department memo sent to Congress, while the amount of requests on US persons declined. A US government source said the rise in NSL requests is in part attributable to efforts by militant groups such as Islamic State to use multiple accounts across several different communications platforms.

Islamic State, which has recruited known cyber experts from European countries and published treatises on communications security, is well known for using Twitter and other services

to recruit and radicalize new adherents.

Andrew Crocker, a staff attorney with Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital rights group, said the secretive nature of NSLs make it "impossible to know how substantial" government claims justifying their use are because they "aren't tested in public."

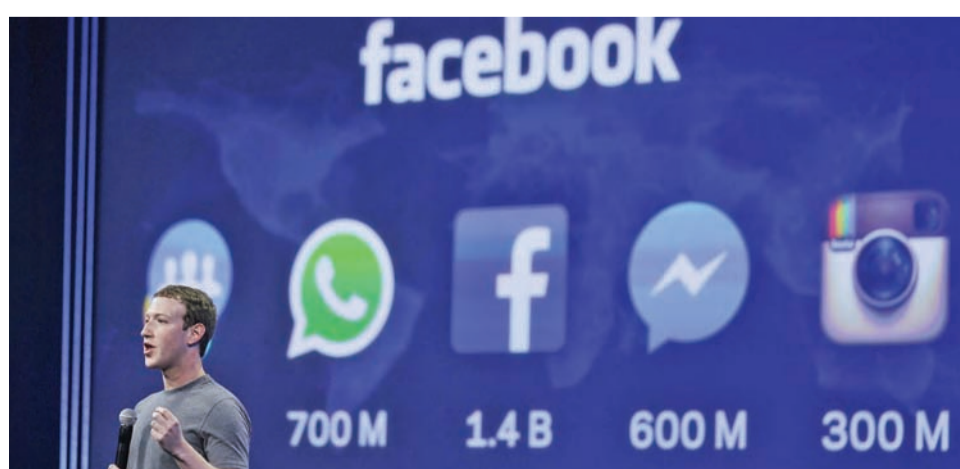
NSLs are a type of subpoena authority used to compel Internet and telecommunications companies to hand over customer data. They are almost always accompanied by an open-ended gag order issued by the Justice Department barring companies from disclosing contents of the demand for customer data.

In March, the online forum Reddit removed a notice from its transparency report indicating it had begun receiving NSLs, prompting concern from its users and privacy advocates. The FBI declined to comment Tuesday on the report. — Reuters

FACEBOOK CEO URGES BRAZILIANS TO DECRY WHATSAPP BLOCK

SAO PAULO/RIO DE JANEIRO: Facebook Inc's Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg called on Brazilians to demand his company's WhatsApp messaging service never be blocked again after an appeals court on Tuesday overturned the application's second suspension in five months. In a post in English on his Facebook page, the US billionaire and Facebook founder urged Brazilians to gather outside Congress in the capital Brasilia yesterday to rally in favor of legislation that would prevent Internet services from being blocked.

WhatsApp was cut off in Brazil at 2 pm (17:00 GMT) on Monday after a judge in the remote northeastern state of Sergipe ordered Brazil's five main wireless operators to block access to the app for 72 hours. The reason for the order was not made public. The suspension of WhatsApp's text message and Internet voice telephone service for smartphones was lifted after about 24 hours when an appeals judge on Tuesday ruled in favor of an injunction by the company's lawyers, the court said in a statement. Some 100 million users were affected. "You and your friends can help make sure this never happens again, and I hope you get



involved," Zuckerberg wrote on Facebook. He also posted a link to a petition, calling efforts to block communication "very scary in a democracy." The suspension highlighted growing international tensions between technology companies' privacy concerns and national authorities' efforts to use

social media to gain information on possible criminal activities.

The same judge in Sergipe ordered the imprisonment of a Brazil-based Facebook executive in March in a dispute over demands to access the company's encrypted messaging service as part of

a drug trafficking investigation. California-based WhatsApp had said in a statement on Monday that it was "disappointed" at the judge's decision to suspend its services. It said it had done the utmost to cooperate with Brazilian tribunals, but it did not possess the information the court was requesting. Matt Steinfeld, a Facebook spokesman, said WhatsApp executives were meeting this week with law enforcement and judicial officials in Brazil to improve communication and clarify that the company cannot see users' encrypted messages and does not store them after transmission.

Brazilians angered

It was the second time in five months that WhatsApp in Brazil has been suspended. A Sao Paulo state judge ordered it shut down for 48 hours on Dec. 15, after Facebook failed to comply with an order. Another court lifted that suspension shortly afterward. Monday's suspension angered many in Brazil, where the service is used by individuals, companies and federal and local governments to send messages and share pictures and videos. Cost-conscious Brazilians are avid users of

free messaging apps, and WhatsApp is by far the most popular - installed on more than 90 percent of Android devices. As some Brazilians sought an alternative messaging system, rival Telegram said on Monday that it suffered technical problems under the weight of demand. It said it received more than a million new user requests.

Letícia Mendes, a 20-year-old shop assistant in Rio de Janeiro, said she was frustrated by the suspension because it could force people to use pay services. "It is really bad," she told Reuters. "It is just a way of getting more money out of us, when we already have to pay for so many things." The suspension came as a congressional commission on cybercrime in Brazil debated changes to the 2014 legislation governing the use of the Internet. Lower house deputy Esperidião Amin, the rapporteur of the commission, said his proposed reform would help avoid shutdowns of this kind by allowing the blocking of specific individuals or IP addresses suspected of illicit activity, rather than the access of all users. "It is less dramatic than withdrawing the service from the whole of the Brazilian population," he told Reuters by telephone. — Reuters

INDIA TELLS TOBACCO INDUSTRY TO ADOPT STRICT WARNINGS

NEW DELHI: India's highest court yesterday ordered cigarette manufacturers to comply with controversial new rules requiring bigger health warnings on packets that sparked weeks-long factory shutdowns.

The tobacco industry has taken the government to court, arguing that the directives aimed at deterring smokers with graphic images of diseased lungs and mouth tumors are too harsh.

In force since April 1, the stringent rules mandate an increase in the size of health warnings from the current 20 percent of the surface of a cigarette packet to up to 85 percent.

The Supreme Court on Wednesday transferred all of the petitions, some brought by makers of cheap, hand-rolled cigarettes known as beedis, to a different court in the southern state of Karnataka.

The court said manufacturers have to comply in the meantime with the government's rules. "All petitions pending in

various high courts stand transferred to the Karnataka High Court," Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose said. "It is expected that all petitioners will comply with the 2014 amendment rule." Health activists welcomed the court's stance as a step towards reducing smoking-related deaths in a country where one in three adults uses some form of tobacco.

"I think it's a very positive step, definitely the judiciary has taken a very strong stand on public health," Dr Monika Arora, a director at the Public Health Foundation of India, told AFP. "Evidence from multiple studies has recommended larger and stronger warnings and as of now it's the law of the land." But India's tobacco industry says the rules are too difficult to implement and will lead to an increase in the smuggling of illegal cigarettes at the cost of local jobs.

On April 1 the Tobacco Institute of India, an industry body, said its members

would be shutting their factories owing to "ambiguity" over the rules, leading to estimated losses of 3.5 billion rupees (\$53 million) a day. Many have since resumed production.

The tobacco industry complained that the new requirements were unclear after a parliamentary panel earlier this year said the size of warnings should only be increased to 50 percent. "We understand the consumption of tobacco is harmful but we have to safeguard the interests of 50 million poor people associated with the tobacco trade," Dilip Gandhi, chairman of the parliamentary panel, told AFP recently. "Those who want to smoke will smoke despite the size of the warning."

Up to 900,000 Indians die every year from causes related to tobacco use, according to government figures, and researchers have warned that figure could reach 1.5 million by the end of the decade without more deterrence. — AFP



NEW DELHI: A selection of packets of cigarettes are displayed at a stall. — AFP

KOREA'S LOTTE MART DROPS RECKITT BENCKISER GOODS AMID STERILIZER SCANDAL

SEOUL: A large South Korean retailer stopped ordering Reckitt Benckiser items yesterday and some e-commerce sites halted sales of goods made by the British giant after its humidifier sterilizers were linked to deadly lung injuries.

During an emotional news conference on Monday in Seoul, the head of the company's South Korean unit accepted responsibility, although some victims and their families and supporters said it came too late. Ata Safdar, head of Reckitt Benckiser in South Korea and Japan, bowed several times in apology. As he spoke, a man stepped on to the stage shouting expletives and slapped him on the back of the neck.

South Korea said last year that 92 people were believed to have died from causes related to the humidifier products - not all of them made by Oxy Reckitt Benckiser, the former name of the group's South Korean arm.

South Korea says 530 people registered claims of lung ailments from using humidifier sterilizers made by various companies. The government banned the products, which it believes were only sold in South Korea, in 2011.

Humidifiers are widely used in offices and homes across north Asia where the winters are dry. The sterilizers, in liquid form, were added to the water. "This is not an issue just for the Korean branch and the victims but for the head of the main office to get on his knees and apologize to the victims," Choi Ye-yong, who heads the Asian Citizens' Center for Environment and Health, told reporters on Wednesday.

Lotte Mart, part of Lotte Shopping and one of South Korea's biggest discount store chains, stopped ordering Reckitt Benckiser products from Wednesday, company spokesman Yoon Ji-yoon told Reuters. Lotte Mart was among supermarket chains that sold since-banned humidifier sterilizers under their own brand, and last month made its own public apology.

South Korean e-commerce companies Coupang and Ticketmonster Inc said on Wednesday they would stop selling Reckitt Benckiser products. Its global brands include Dettol antiseptic wash and Durex condoms.

South Korean prosecutors, who have opened a criminal investigation into makers of the sterilizers, arrested a university professor on suspicion of fabricating data in a report for Oxy Reckitt Benckiser, a prosecution official involved in the case told Reuters.

The South Korean unit of Reckitt Benckiser did not have immediate comment when asked about the arrest, although Safdar said on Monday the company does not "condone wrongful behavior" and that it was cooperating with prosecutors.

Choi and Kim Deok-jong, the father of a five-year-old boy who died in 2009 from lung disease linked by the South Korean government to the use of humidifier sterilizers, plan a protest at Thursday's Reckitt Benckiser shareholders' meeting in London, the activist group said.

Reckitt Benckiser spokeswoman Patty O'Hayer said in London the company respected everybody's right to demonstrate. "We have stepped up and acknowledged our responsibility in this tragedy and are working hard to make amends and to address the issues of all those who have been impacted," she told



SEOUL: Ata Safdar, Head of Reckitt Benckiser Korea and Japan, bows his head during a news conference to apologize over deadly lung injuries linked to the use of the humidifier sterilizers, some marketed by the firm on May 2, 2016. — AFP

Reuters by phone.

The company's South Korea unit generated 2014 sales of 257 billion won (\$223 million), according to online data citing NICE Information Service. Reckitt Benckiser Korea declined to provide local sales figures, although globally the group posted revenue of 8.87 billion pounds (\$12.9 billion) in 2015.

"We have accepted full responsibility for the role that this product played in these health issues, including deaths, in Korea and while we

acknowledge that we cannot repair the harm that has been done, we have stated our continuing intention to do whatever we can to provide full resolution to these cases," Reckitt Benckiser said on its website after Monday's apology.

According to Reckitt Benckiser, the humidifier sterilizer product was launched in South Korea in 1996 by Oxy, a company it bought in 2001 to form Oxy RB. The local company's name was changed in 2014 to Reckitt Benckiser Korea. — Reuters

PUBLIC SMOKING BAN IN ETHIOPIA'S CAPITAL

ADDIS ABABA: A ban on smoking at public gatherings has been announced by the mayor of Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, according to local media reports yesterday.

The new law makes smoking illegal in bars, cafes, restaurants, schools, hospitals and stadiums as well as cultural and religious events, but smoking on the streets is still permitted. Tobacco advertising is also banned, according to the state-controlled Fana Radio.

"Due to tobacco, people are dying and being exposed to several health hazards," said mayor Diriba Kuma. "For these reasons, the public have the responsibility to fight tobacco smoking in public gatherings. Offenders face a fine of 2,000 Ethiopian birr (\$92), rising to 2,500 Birr (\$116) for smokers who send children under the age of 18 to buy cigarettes for them. Addis Ababa is applying a law passed by Ethiopia's parliament in 2014 that has so

far only been implemented in the northeastern town of Mekelle, where it has been rigorously enforced with local authorities reporting a sharp decline in tobacco consumption.

The law will be more difficult to apply in the large and growing capital, home to around four million people. Tobacco use in Africa (excluding South Africa) increased by nearly 70 percent between 1990 and 2010, according to research by the American Cancer Society.

With the number of African smokers predicted to increase by 40 percent by 2030 many tobacco companies see Africa as a growing market with fewer restrictions than in parts of Europe and North America.

Several countries, including Kenya and Niger, have introduced restrictions on smoking in public places in recent years, but enforcement of the bans is often lax. — AFP

GERMANY RELAXES RULES ON USING CANNABIS FOR MEDICAL PURPOSES

FRANKFURT: The German government gave the go-ahead yesterday to relax rules on cannabis use by the seriously ill from early next year if they have no other treatment options.

Dried cannabis flowers and cannabis extracts will be available in pharmacies on prescription and the public health system will cover the cost, according to the draft bill that is expected to come into force from spring 2017.

Other countries that allow cannabis use for medical purposes include Italy and the Czech Republic. Some US states have decriminalized cannabis completely. Portugal has decriminalized all drugs for

personal use, but does not allow cannabis use for medical purposes.

Until now, seriously ill people in Germany with cancer, AIDS, Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis could only access cannabis with special approval and had to pay themselves. "Our aim is that seriously ill people are treated in the best possible way," Health Minister Hermann Groehe said in a statement. The government is to set up specially supervised plantations to grow cannabis and will import what it needs for now. IBISWorld, a market research firm, projects sales of marijuana for medical use to increase to \$13.4 billion in 2020 from \$3.6 billion in 2015. — Reuters

FLU STRIKES FEWER INFANTS WHEN PREGNANT WOMEN GET VACCINATED

NEW YORK: Infants have a much lower risk of getting influenza when their mothers are vaccinated against the virus during pregnancy, a US study confirms. Doctors recommend flu vaccinations for pregnant women because the virus is linked to complications like preterm births, and because it helps protect babies from catching the flu before they're able to get vaccinated at six months of age.

Before six months, babies born to vaccinated mothers were about 64 percent less likely to have flu symptoms and 70 percent less likely to have confirmed infections than infants born to women who didn't get vaccinated during pregnancy, the study found.

"This large study provides more evidence that when women are immunized against influenza during pregnancy, their infants are much less likely to be diagnosed with influenza in their first six months of life," said lead study author Dr. Julie Shakib, of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

But overall, just 10 percent of mothers reported getting the flu vaccine during pregnancy, the study also found. "Pregnant women may be concerned about harm, but they need to understand that there is strong evidence that getting vaccinated against influenza during pregnancy protects both themselves and their babies from serious harm," Shakib added by email.

To assess the prevalence and outcomes of flu vaccination during pregnancy, Shakib and colleagues analyzed data gathered from 2005 to 2014 on almost 500,000 mothers and babies.

At the time of delivery, researchers asked women if they'd been vaccinated during pregnancy. Roughly 23,000 women said they had done this, while about 222,000 said they had not.

In the first six months of life, 32 infants born to vaccinated women developed flu-like symptoms, compared with 834 babies born to unvaccinated mothers, researchers report in the journal Pediatrics.

During those first six months, 20 babies born to vaccinated women had laboratory-confirmed influenza, as did 638 infants

whose mothers didn't get vaccinated, the study also found.

Researchers also looked at how waves of pandemic H1N1 strains of influenza circulating in 2009 and 2010 influenced vaccination during pregnancy. Over four flu seasons before the pandemic, about 2.2 percent of mothers got vaccinated during pregnancy. Afterward, the average vaccination rate rose to 21 percent, with more than half of pregnant mothers getting the flu vaccine during the final flu season in the study.

One limitation of the study is its reliance on mothers to accurately recall and report whether they got vaccinated during pregnancy, the authors note. They also lacked data on when in pregnancy women received vaccines, or what strains of the virus were covered by the inoculations.

Even so, the study adds to a growing body of evidence showing how well flu vaccination during pregnancy works for protecting babies against the virus, said Dr. Matthew Kronman, an infectious disease specialist at Seattle Children's Hospital and the University of Washington who wasn't involved in the study. "We know that pregnant women and infants are at especially high risk of severe disease with influenza," Kronman said by email. In the US alone, about 100 to 150 children die of influenza each year, he added.

When pregnant women get the flu, they're at increased risk for hospitalization, intensive care and death compared to women who aren't pregnant, said Dr. Leonardo Pereira, a maternal-fetal medicine specialist at Oregon Health and Science University who wasn't involved in the study. "Non-vaccinated women who get the flu are also contagious and can infect other people in the community," Pereira added by email.

The flu risk begins even before women leave the hospital after delivery. "When a mother who refused the flu vaccine delivers, her newborn baby is more likely to contract influenza and more likely to require hospitalization compared to babies born to mothers who were vaccinated during pregnancy," Pereira said. — Reuters

APPLE GETS GOOGLE X LAB CO-FOUNDER FOR HEALTH PROJECTS

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple confirmed Tuesday that it has hired robotics star and Google X lab co-founder Yoky Matsuoka to work on health projects.

Matsuoka, a winner of the MacArthur genius award, last year left her job as a vice president at Google-owned Nest. Her plan to take a job at San Francisco-based one-to-many messaging service Twitter was derailed last year by a "life-threatening illness," Matsuoka wrote in an online post at medium.com.

"A new future has begun to fill my mind again," she wrote at the time, saying medical treatment was working and she had yet to work out new plans for her future. "When you get another chance at life, there's an opportunity to start from scratch and I feel so lucky to have this." Matsuoka will answer to Apple chief operating officer Jeff Williams, who oversees health projects, including software kits that let application makers or researchers take advantage of capabilities of the iPhone and the Apple Watch.

The MacArthur Foundation website described Matsuoka as a leader in the field of neurorobotics, a field that combines robotics with how the human nervous system coordinates muscle and skeletal movements.

In 2009, she helped start Google X Lab devoted to "moonshots" such as self-driving cars and Internet-linked eyewear. Matsuoka became part of the Nest team after Google bought the startup two years ago. — AFP

US-FUNDED ABSTINENCE PROGRAMS NOT WORKING IN AFRICA

CALIFORNIA: The US funds abstinence and faithfulness education in sub-Saharan Africa to prevent HIV transmission, but a new study suggests the investment doesn't lead to less risky sexual behaviors in that area.

When researchers looked at the number of sexual partners in the past year, age at first sexual intercourse and teenage pregnancy, there were no differences between countries that did or did not receive the funding. "Changing HIV risk behaviors is hard to do, and the limited resources available for HIV prevention should be used carefully and directed towards programs that are likely to be effective," said senior author Dr. Eran Bendavid, of the Stanford University School of Medicine in California.

The US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) defines the components of its "ABC approach" as abstinence, be faithful and correct and consistent condom use. Generally, the results of abstinence and faithfulness education programs are mixed, the researchers write in Health Affairs. Also, the effectiveness of these campaigns in sub-Saharan Africa remain unknown. In that part of the world, there were nearly 26 million people living with HIV in 2014, according to the World Health Organization. The region accounts for about 70 percent of new HIV infections

around the globe.

Yet, PEPFAR invested more than \$1.4 billion in abstinence and faithfulness programs between 2004 and 2013. For the new study, the researchers looked at whether abstinence and faithfulness program funding was tied to changes in high-risk sexual behaviors among 477,694 people under age 30 in 22 sub-Saharan African countries between 1998 and 2013 - including 14 countries that received PEPFAR funding.

The funding did not seem to affect the number of sexual partners in the past year, age at first sexual intercourse or rates of teenage pregnancy. US studies too have found no or minimal effects of abstinence education on high-risk sexual behaviors and HIV incidence, the researchers say.

In a statement emailed to Reuters Health, a PEPFAR spokesperson said the initiative's approach and investments have continuously evolved based on scientific evidence. "Current prevention science demonstrates that a combination package of evidence-based behavioral, biomedical, and structural prevention interventions, tailored to the populations and geographic areas with the greatest burden, is most effective in addressing the epidemic," said the spokesperson.

Bendavid said in an email that solid evidence supports adult male circumcision,

antiretroviral therapy, prevention of mother-to-child transmission and pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention. "These are all evidence-based alternative preventive

methods," he said. The researchers say investing in evidence-backed programs could lead to improvements across the population. — Reuters



NEW DELHI: In this file photo Indian taxi drivers and owners shout slogans against Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal during a protest on May 4, 2016, against the banning of diesel cabs in the Indian capital. Hundreds of taxi drivers and owners took to the streets of New Delhi to protest a court order banning diesel cabs from plying the roads of the world's most polluted capital. The ban would impact some 27,000 diesel taxis registered in Delhi, including app-based cab operators Ola and Uber. — AFP

EU'S HIGHEST COURT UPHOLDS RESTRICTIVE NEW LAW ON CIGARETTES

EU: Europe's highest court yesterday upheld a tough EU law that will standardize cigarette packs, ban menthol flavoring and restrict e-cigarette advertising, paving the way for its adoption this month and dealing a blow to Big Tobacco.

The EU Court of Justice's rejection of a legal challenge brought by Philip Morris International and British American Tobacco (BAT), could weigh on profits for the industry and sets a precedent for other governments to crack down on a habit that causes nearly six million deaths a year worldwide. "The court finds that, in providing that each unit packet and the outside packaging must carry health warnings ... the EU legislature did not go beyond the limits of what is appropriate and necessary," the court said in its decision. The legal challenge, which was also support-

ed by Japan Tobacco International and Imperial Brands, can now be taken no further and the Tobacco Products Directive (TPD) will take effect on 20 May, though wholesalers and retailers will be given a year's grace to sell stocks manufactured before that date.

The TPD will ban menthol cigarettes by 2020, standardize packs and impose rules on e-cigarettes, such as limits on nicotine strength, tank size and advertising. The court's validation of TPD bodes poorly for another case tobacco companies have brought against the UK government over its new law aimed at reducing the lure of smoking by forcing tobacco to be sold in uniformly drab packs with no branding.

That law is also due to take effect this month, with the English High Court expected to issue a

decision in the coming weeks. Britain's ability to enforce stricter plain packaging is also covered by the TPD.

Impact unclear

Shares of BAT and Imperial, the two big tobacco firms that trade in London, were each down by about 1 percent. Imperial also reported weaker than expected sales volume yesterday.

Imperial Chief Executive Alison Cooper told reporters that the new rules would affect different European markets to varying degrees and could lead to an increase in illicit trade. "Our view on this is that clearly consumers will be making some different choices given some of the changes in the market," Cooper said, adding that Imperial had budgeted tens of millions of

pounds for implementation.

The impact of TPD remains unclear because of limited precedent. When it comes to plain packaging, only Australia serves as an example. In the year after implementation in Australia in December 2012 sales of mainstream and premium brands fell, but value brands rose, suggesting that smokers traded down to cheaper alternatives. Yet there was a significant increase in tobacco tax at the same time, so it's hard to isolate the impact of the switch to plain packaging.

Morningstar analyst Philip Gorham said that margins will be at risk in the UK, with potentially lower sales growth if pricing power is undermined. Ireland and France have passed similar bills aiming to enforce plain packaging. — Reuters

JOHNSON & JOHNSON ORDERED TO PAY \$55 MLN IN TALC-POWDER TRIAL

MISSOURI: Johnson & Johnson (JNJ.N) was ordered by a US jury on Monday to pay \$55 million to a woman who said that using the company's talc-powder products for feminine hygiene caused her to develop ovarian cancer.

The verdict, which J&J plans to appeal, was the second straight trial loss for the company, which is facing about 1,200 lawsuits accusing it of not adequately warning consumers about its talc-

based products' cancer risks.

Following a three-week trial in Missouri state court, jurors deliberated for about a day before returning a verdict for Gloria Ristesund. She was awarded \$5 million in compensatory damages and \$50 million in punitive damages.

J&J spokeswoman Carol Goodrich said the verdict contradicted 30 years of research supporting the safety of cosmetic talc. The company intends to

appeal and will keep defending its products' safety, she said. Ristesund said she used J&J's talc-based powder products - which include the well-known Baby Powder and Shower to Shower Powder - on her genitals for decades. According to her lawyers, she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and had to undergo a hysterectomy and related surgeries. Her cancer is now in remission.

Jere Beasley, whose firm represents Ristesund, said his client was gratified with the verdict. The jury's decision should "end the litigation" and compel J&J to settle the remaining cases, he said.

J&J shares were down 18 cents in after-hours trading to \$112.57. The verdict followed a \$72 million jury award from the same court in February to the family of a woman who died from ovarian cancer after years of using talc powder for feminine hygiene.

That verdict, which J&J is appealing, sparked renewed interest in talc-powder lawsuits among plaintiffs' lawyers, as well as consumers familiar with J&J's powder products. But scientists have told Reuters the evidence of a real danger is inconclusive.

Plaintiffs in talc litigation, which is concentrated in Missouri and New Jersey state courts, have accused J&J of failing for years to warn that talc was linked to an increased risk for ovarian cancer. J&J has said it acted properly in developing and marketing the products.

The only other case to be tried involving talc powder and ovarian cancer resulted in a mixed verdict in South Dakota federal court in 2013. While those jurors found J&J was negligent, they awarded no damages to the plaintiff, whose cancer was in remission at the time of the trial. — Reuters



LONDON: In this file photo Britain's Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge (C) speaks with guests during a reception at Spencer House in London yesterday. The Duchess of Cambridge undertook her first engagement as Patron of the Anna Freud Centre by attending a lunch reception supporting the development of a new centre of excellence for children's mental health. — AFP

US KILLS 39,000 TURKEYS IN OUTBREAK OF MILD BIRD FLU

MISSOURI: US authorities destroyed 39,000 turkeys in Missouri due to an outbreak of a mild form of avian flu, the World Organization for Animal Health said on Tuesday, as officials remained on alert for new cases.

State authorities also have begun a quarantine and taken surveillance measures around the farm in Jasper County that was hit with the H5N1 strain of the virus to watch for other cases, according to the Missouri Department of Agriculture. All commercial flocks within a 10-kilometer radius of the farm have tested negative, the department said.

The outbreak, which was detected late last month, is considered low pathogenic, meaning it is not as contagious or deadly as other varieties of the disease. Such strains are still a concern to agriculture and health officials because they can mutate into more dangerous, highly pathogenic forms of the virus.

Japan has banned imports of poultry from the area around the infected farm, and Kazakhstan has banned imports from Jasper County unless they are heat-treated to a required temperature, according to United States Department of Agriculture notices.

In January, an Indiana turkey flock was thought to have become infected with highly pathogenic flu when a less dangerous strain mutated. More than 400,000 birds around the infected farm were eventually culled to contain the outbreak.

Last year, almost 50 million chickens and turkeys died in the United States because they were infected with a fast-moving outbreak of highly pathogenic bird flu or killed to contain the disease.

Birds from the infected Missouri flock will not enter the food system, according to the USDA. In some outbreaks of low pathogenic flu, infected poultry can be slaughtered for meat if they have time to recover from the disease and test negative for it. However, the Missouri flock was a week away from going to slaughter when it was infected and there was not enough time for that process, the USDA said.

The agency said it is treating the Missouri infection as it would any other low pathogenic flu case. Wild birds are thought to spread the virus to farms through feces and feathers dropped from the air. The strain found in Missouri had its lineage in North American wild birds, officials said. — Reuters

POLLUTED AIR MAY UP RISK OF MANY CANCERS

HONG KONG: For elderly people in Hong Kong, long term exposure to fine-particle air pollution is tied to an increased risk of dying from many cancers, including breast, liver and pancreatic cancer, in addition to the expected lung cancer risk, according to a new study.

"We assumed a number of sites would be affected, but outside of the expected lung and upper GI cancers, we were unsure which cancers would show an association, so this really helps highlight the breadth of involvement of particulates in the development of cancer," said co-lead author G. Neil Thomas, from the Institute of Applied Health of the College of Medical and Dental Sciences at The University of Birmingham in the UK.

Ultrafine particles can pass into the blood stream and have the potential to impact any part of the body, Thomas told Reuters Health by email. The researchers began following more than 66,000 people age 65 and older in Hong Kong between 1998 and 2001 and tracked them through 2011. They used satellite data and site monitors to estimate fine particulate matter in the air at the subjects' homes.

They focused on fine particulate matter, or PM2.5, which is produced by motor vehicles, power plants and other industrial combustion, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency. After accounting for smoking status, the researchers found that as a subject's home exposure to fine particles in the air increased, so did the risk of dying from any cancer, including cancer of the upper digestive tract, liver, bile ducts, gall bladder and pancreas.

As fine particulate concentrations increased by 10 micrograms per cubic meter, a woman's risk of dying from breast cancer increased by 80 percent, while a man's risk of dying from lung cancer increased by 36 percent, according to a report released by the journal Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention.

"Biologically there is no reason to suggestion such observations wouldn't apply to younger people," Thomas said. "It is important though to remember that cancers are chronic diseases and thus it takes years between the exposure to the particulates to the development of a diagnosable cancer."

Data from other populations and countries has been similar, he said. According to the Clean Air Act

in the US, the average annual concentration of fine particulate matter in the air should be 15 micrograms per cubic meter or lower. In Hong Kong, average annual particulate matter should not exceed 35 micrograms per cubic meter according to the Air Pollution Control Ordinance.

"In Hong Kong the PM2.5 concentrations are not comparable to those in North America or Europe," said Giulia Cesaroni of the epidemiology department of the Regional Health Service of the Lazio Region in Rome, Italy, who was not part of the new study. "The (World Health Organization) suggested a limit value of 10 micrograms per cubic meter for PM2.5, and study participants are exposed to a mean value of 34 micrograms per cubic meter." "However, associations between air pollution and cancer risk have been found in other settings at low concentrations," Cesaroni said.

The EPA provides air quality index forecasts for the US at airnow.gov. Particulate matter can cause cancer because it often contains toxic chemicals and causes inflammation, among other mechanisms, Cesaroni told Reuters Health by email. — Reuters

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PAGE

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
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إستشاري أطفال
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NBK FAMILY ENJOYS OPEN DAY AT SIRRB CIRCUIT

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) organized a special open day for its staff and their family members and friends at Sirrb Circuit. NBK employees and their families enjoyed the open day that was filled with all types of activities and entertainment. NBK staff and their family members participated in a carting race. The

winner team has been awarded. The weather was nice and excitement filled the air as children, and even parents, took part in the many fun activities available there. The open day event provided a unique opportunity for NBK employees to openly mingle and enjoy various entertaining activities.



ISK CLASS OF 1990 HOLDS FAMILY PICNIC

The Class of 1990, (XII Standard) ISK (Salmiya) organized a picnic along with their families in Kabd on April 8. The day commenced with Floyd Paes, who was the compere, giving a warm welcome to all those gathered. The speech was followed by games which were organized by Calida and Atish for tiny tots, teenagers, ladies and gents. DJ Val entertained everyone with his lovely music. The families were treated to a scrumptious breakfast, lunch, tea and dinner which was well organized by Juzer and Qaiser. Special thanks to the efforts made by Joji

John, President of ISK 1990 and most importantly to all the main sponsors who did a great job in preparing and setting up the things to make sure that everyone had a great time. They were awarded with plaques for their valued contribution. At the close of the day prizes were distributed to the winners of the games. The ladies were given individual gifts while the ISK boys received caps with ISK 1990 logo embroidered on them. Everyone enjoyed it so much that they are looking forward to the next get-together.

AGILITY KUWAIT WINS ASSE AWARDS

Agility, a leading global logistics provider, recently received two awards from the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) for the fifth year in a row. Agility received a gold award for its outstanding Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) performance. The company also received a special award for its corporate social responsibility program.

For the health, safety and environment award, Agility was named the winner based on the company's HSE management program in warehousing. This program has contributed to an exceptional safety track record at Agility with global injury rates reduced by 80 percent in the last few years. Agility's recordable injury rates and lost work day incidents rates are among the lowest in the industry. Agility was also recognized for its comprehensive corporate social responsibility program for the second year in a row.

Ali Mikail, Agility Senior Vice President, Area Kuwait

and Levant, said: "We are pleased to be recognized with these prestigious awards year on year. These wins highlight Agility's long-standing commitment to health and safety management as well as to giving back to the communities where we do business. They also demonstrate the efforts of our employees that have made a personal commitment to ensure that we maintain the highest safety standards, give back to our communities, and remain mindful of the planet and our environmental impact."

The American Society of Safety Engineers-Gulf Cooperation Council HSE Excellence Award is presented by the American Society of Safety Engineers - Kuwait chapter, a non-profit voluntary organization, to recognize leadership and excellence, and to encourage exceptional performance in the field of health, safety, and environment in private sector companies in the Gulf region.



AIP ORGANIZES FANCY DRESS COMPETITION



The Association of Indian Professionals (AIP), Kuwait organized an inter-school fancy dress competition for Indian school students in Kuwait with the theme of 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' (Clean India Mission).

Students from Indian Community School, (Junior) bagged the first prize in the group category while children from Fahaeel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School (FAIPS-DPS) became the runners up.

Raed M Nasser Akhlaq from Carmel School and Amatullah Khokhar from FAIPS-DPS were adjudged the winner and the runner-up respectively in the solo category.

In the group category, Afrah Quadri Syeda, Shambhavi Ekbote, Shreelakshmi Binumon, Aateka Nadeem, and Kaveri Amith Nath from ICSK Junior conceptualized the idea of cleanliness and hygiene through a symbolic representation, bagging the first prize. The second prize winners are: Sharda Sujit Nair, Arwa Zafar, Anirudh Srinivas, C H Satvik Ram and Khushi Sarvesh. Participants were bona-fide students from various Indian schools in Kuwait. Participants were divided into two categories - solo and groups. There were 16 entries in solo category and eight in group category.

Earlier, Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain inaugurated the competition by lighting the lamp in the presence of AIP Chairman Umesh Sharma, General Secretary Dr Kamlesh Kumari, Treasurer Umesh Shahani, Joint Secretary Sajeev K Peter and Executive member A. R. Subbaraman. In his inaugural address, Ambassador Jain underlined the importance of cleanliness in our daily lives and cautioned that this may not be an easy task. However, he was optimistic that if consistent efforts are made, it can be accomplished. He appreciated the efforts being made by AIP in this direction.

Umesh Sharma, in his presidential address, stressed on cleanliness and



apprised the audience that Mahatma Gandhi was the first person to advocate for cleanliness. Sharma thanked the ambassador and the judges for their valuable time. Sharma also thanked all executive committee members for their efforts and contributions to make the program a success.

Dr. Kamlesh Kumari, in her welcome address, covered the activities undertaken by AIP. She also highlighted significance of picking up the theme for the fancy dress competition. Dr. Kamlesh requested the audience to join AIP in order to serve Indian community more efficiently.

Rajpal Tyagi, Chaitali Banerjee Roy and Dr Navniit Gandhi were the judges. Shivani Rajeev Menon anchored the event. Trophies

and certificates were awarded to the winners and runners up of both the categories by Jain and by Sharma.

Certificates of appreciation were given to all the participants by Dr Kamlesh Kumari, Rajpal Tyagi, Chaitali Banerjee Roy and Dr Navniit Gandhi. Shivani was awarded a certificate of appreciation and a gift for her excellent performance as an anchor. Sajeev K. Peter proposed a vote of thanks. The program was successful in generating awareness in young minds about cleanliness and reminding them the importance of keeping their environment clean. The colorful and thought-provoking program underlined AIP's commitment to the community adding yet another feather in its cap.



Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah (left) and MP Rakan Al-Nisf attend the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Guests pictured in attendance.

LOYAC'S 'PEACE AND TOLERANCE THROUGH ART' PROJECT CONCLUDES

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: A project titled 'Peace and Tolerance Through Art' organized by Loyac concluded yesterday at its headquarters in Kuwait City. The project aimed at spreading and reinforcing the culture of life, happiness, forgiveness and celebrating differences. Loyac is a non-profit organization working towards the overall development of the Kuwaiti youth. The event was attended by National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of Oil Anas Al-Saleh, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Minister of Planning and Development Affairs and Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Subaih and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Speaking at the ceremony, Ghanem said the 'peace of art' project emphasizes the humanity of Kuwaitis under the leadership of Humanitarian Leader His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. "Loyac offers a model of the admired social responsibility role which other institutions have to follow," he said.

The 'Peace and Tolerance Through Art' project, launched several months ago, encourages participants to use art, especially painting on empty oil barrels, to promote peace and raise the society's, and particularly the youth's, awareness about tolerance, peaceful coexistence and constructive dialogue.

Empowering the youth

Loyac Chairperson and Managing Director Fareah Al-Saqqaf noted one might think why oil barrels in particular? "The answer is that God blessed us with petroleum as our source of fortune and luxury, then with this we were able to empower our youth and help those around us. Thus, our nation became worthy of being a center of humanity. And since petroleum is a non-renewable



Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem speaks at the event.



Loyac Chairperson and Managing Director Fareah Al-Saqqaf delivers a speech.

source that one day will run out, with its empty barrels we are able to sustain an everlasting wealth, which is far greater and more important than petroleum - our youth. Therefore, we will continue with this project and we will strive for it to be the basis upon which a new economic sector is built, which brings together the artist, the craftsperson and the industrialist - all in one project from which everyone will benefit just as the Arab woman and child will benefit by setting part of its income for humanitarian projects in those countries that suffer the woes of war," Saqqaf said.

"God created each of us with unique fingerprints for us to be different, even though we come from the same

source, and created all forms of life so we can all complement one another, making life richer and more beautiful, which will make us realize that respecting our differences is sacred. This is what we wanted to convey to our youth," she asserted.

Sheikh Salman said Loyac plays a remarkable social and humanitarian role in Kuwait. He said he is eager to support all youth initiatives and hopes that the entire Arab world will have a brighter future free from terrorism, wars and disputes. The peace project saw participation by over 17 notable artists along with aspiring Loyac artists. The painting sessions took place every week in Qubliya School.



Palestinian Ambassador Rami Tahboub (left) and French Ambassador Christian Nakhle in attendance.



Officials pictured with Loyac members honored during the event.



Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah listen to a demonstration given by Loyac Chairperson and Managing Director Fareah Al-Saqqaf while touring an exhibition held during the event.



Loyac members perform onstage.



WORLD BOOK DAY CELEBRATED AT ICSK KHAITAN



The Indian Community School Kuwait, Khaitan, celebrated World Book Day with enthusiasm and joy from 17th April, 2016 to 21st April, 2016. It was a celebration of authors, illustrators, books and most importantly a celebration of reading. The main aim was to encourage children to explore the pleasures of books and reading. A special assembly was conducted to mark the importance of books. Students performed various activities including skits, speeches and Power Point presentations. Students of class VIII were dressed up as different characters and presented a skit which was the highlight of the program. The whole school was decorated with charts, display materials and famous quotes of great writers. As a part of the celebration, students made colorful badges marking World Book Day.



- 00:30 Stevie
02:15 Madhouse
03:45 Doubt
05:30 The Apartment
07:35 Follow That Dream
09:25 Big Screen
09:40 Manchu Eagle Murder
Caper Mystery
11:05 Little Sister
12:40 Solarbabies
14:15 The Apartment
16:20 Movers And Shakers
17:40 Sharks' Treasure
19:15 Cannon For Cordoba
21:00 Breaking Bad
22:00 The Real Howard Spitz
23:45 Madhouse

- 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

- 08:53 Kings Of Construction
09:38 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
10:23 Invent It Rich
11:08 How The Universe Works
11:53 Kings Of Construction
12:38 Mythbusters
13:23 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
14:10 How It's Made
14:33 How It's Made
14:57 Food Factory USA
15:20 Food Factory USA
15:44 How The Universe Works
16:31 Kings Of Construction
17:18 How It's Made
17:41 How It's Made
18:05 Mythbusters
18:50 Secret Space Escapes
19:40 How The Universe Works
20:25 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman



Starting from scratch never tasted so good.

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY JON FAVREAU
CHEF



CHEF 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 Loopedoo

- 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
19:50 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



- 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
06:00 Once Upon A Time
07:00 24
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



- 01:30 Truth Or Die
03:30 Snow White And The Huntsman
06:00 Turbulence
08:00 X-Men Origins: Wolverine
10:00 Snow White And The Huntsman
12:15 388 Arietta Avenue
13:45 Armageddon
16:30 Flightplan
18:15 X-Men Origins: Wolverine
20:15 Sabotage
22:15 Duplicity



- 00:00 We'll Never Have Paris
02:00 Orange County
04:00 Bad Parents
06:00 Man Of The House
08:00 Chef
10:00 Bad Parents
12:00 Orange County
14:00 Hope Springs
15:45 Chef
17:45 Mystery Men
20:00 Textuality
22:00 Hot Tub Time Machine 2



- 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



- 01:00 What If
03:00 Persecuted
05:00 Druimine: A New Beat
07:00 Stonehearst Asylum
09:00 Paddington
11:00 Salingor
13:15 Dragonheart 3: The Sorcerer's Curse
15:00 Son Of Batman
17:00 Breaking In
18:45 Jupiter Ascending
21:00 The Forger
23:00 The Necessary Death Of



- 01:30 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
12:30 Golfing World
13:30 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



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



- 00:00 Sustainable Energy
00:30 The Edge
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 My Haunted House
01:00 The Haunting Of...
02:00 The Haunting Of...
03:00 The Haunting Of...
04:00 The Haunting Of...
05:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
06:00 The FBI Files
07:00 Beyond Scared Straight
08:00 The FBI Files
09:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
10:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
11:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
12:00 Surveillance Oz
12:30 Surveillance Oz
13:00 Homicide Hunter
14:00 The First 48
15:00 Beyond Scared Straight
16:00 The FBI Files
17:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
18:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
19:00 Homicide Hunter
20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
21:00 Monster In My Family
22:00 I Married My Killer
23:00 The Jail: 60 Days In



- 00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:10 You Have Been Warned
02:00 The Pop Illusionist
02:50 Superhuman Science
03:15 Superhuman Science
03:40 Game Of Pawns
04:05 Storage Wars Canada
04:30 Auction Hunters
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 Fifth Gear
06:00 Yukon Men
06:50 Wheeler Dealers
07:40 Fast N' Loud
08:30 Game Of Pawns
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 The Pop Illusionist



- 00:15 Eastenders
00:55 New Tricks
01:50 New Tricks
02:45 Silent Witness
03:45 Orphan Black
04:35 Eastenders
05:10 Doctor Who
06:00 Doctors
06:30 Doctors
07:00 Doctors
07:30 Eastenders
08:00 Death In Paradise
08:55 Upstairs Downstairs
09:50 Doctor Who
10:40 Doctors
11:10 Eastenders
11:40 Death In Paradise
12:35 Upstairs Downstairs
13:30 Doctor Who
14:20 Doctors
14:50 Eastenders
15:25 Death In Paradise
16:20 Dickinson
17:10 Doctor Who
18:00 Doctors
18:30 Eastenders
19:05 Death In Paradise
20:00 Hobby City
21:00 Stella
21:55 Silent Witness
22:55 Orphan Black
23:40 Doctors



- 00:00 Charlie Rose
01:00 Bloomberg West
02:00 First Up With Angie Lau
03:00 First Up With Angie Lau
04:00 Trending Business
05:00 Trending Business
06:00 Asia Edge



FLIGHTPLAN ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 07:00 Bloomberg Markets: Middle East
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 Superhuman Science
13:05 Game Of Pawns
13:30 Storage Wars Canada
13:55 Auction Hunters
14:20 Yukon Men
15:10 Wheeler Dealers
16:00 Fast N' Loud
16:50 Fifth Gear
17:15 How Do They Do It?
17:40 Salvage Hunters
18:30 For The Love Of Cars
19:20 Diamond River Hunters
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 Fast N' Loud

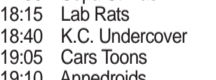
- 02:05 Calimero
02:20 Zou
02:30 Loopedoo
02:45 Art Attack
03:10 Henry Hugglemonster
03:20 Calimero
03:35 Loopedoo
03:45 Art Attack
04:25 Henry Hugglemonster
04:35 Calimero
04:50 Zou
05:00 Loopedoo
05:15 Art Attack
05:35 Henry Hugglemonster
05:50 Calimero
06:00 Zou
06:20 Loopedoo
06:35 Art Attack
07:00 The Hive
07:10 Zou
07:25 Loopedoo
07:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
08:05 Sofia The First
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



- 06:00 Booster
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 Booster
11:20 Booster
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
19:30 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



- 06:00 Booster
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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
19:30 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



- 00:00 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 Botched
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



- 00:10 Brain Games
01:00 Cesar To The Rescue
02:00 Super 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 Super 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 Super Megabuild
17:00 The Yard
18:00 Dirty Rotten Survival
19:00 Mine Kings
20:00 Super Megabuild
20:50 The Yard
21:40 Dirty Rotten Survival
22:30 Megastructures
23:20 Filthy Riches

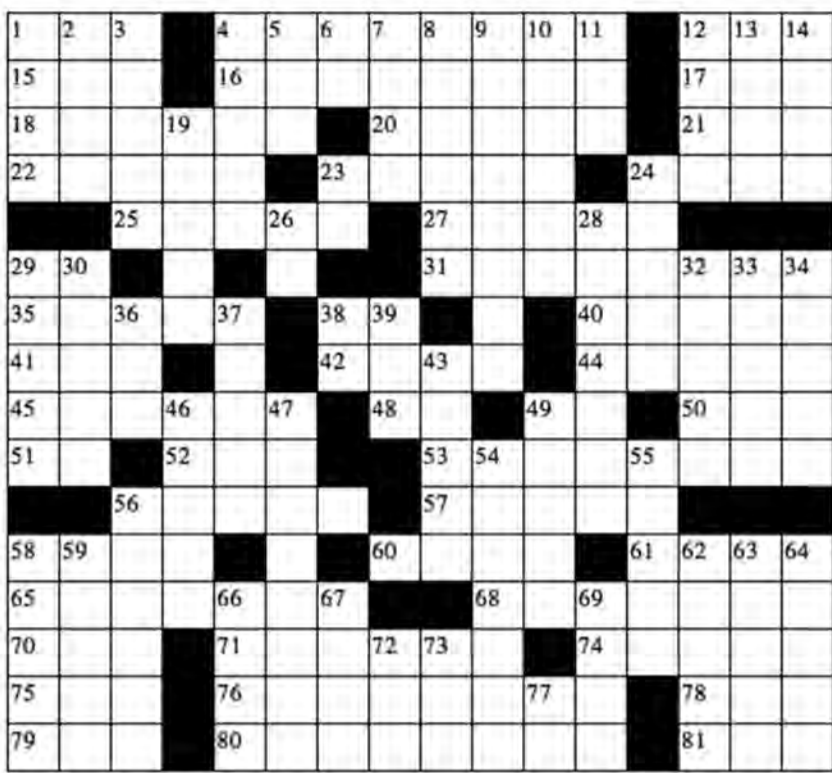


- 00:10 Dream Cruises
01:00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces



WHAT IF ON OSN MOVIES HD

CROSSWORD 1245



ACROSS

- A humorous anecdote or remark.
- Free from germs or pathogenic organisms.
- 100 pyas equal 1 kyat.
- A strong emotion.
- Worthy of adoration or reverence.
- A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
- A histamine blocker and antacid (trade name Zantac) used to treat peptic ulcers and gastritis and esophageal reflux.
- A trade language widely used in Chad.
- The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
- A unit of resistance equal to a billionth of an ohm.
- An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
- Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
- A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- A port city is southern Indonesia.
- English biochemist (born in Germany) who discovered the Krebs cycle (1900-1981).
- A heavy wooden pole (such as the trunk of a young fir) tossed as a test of strength (in the Highlands of Scotland).
- A resource.
- A strip of land projecting into a body of water.
- A condensed but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by many people.
- Spread or daub over.
- A Mid-Atlantic state.
- (of champagne) Moderately dry.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
- Capital and largest city of Bosnia.
- (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
- (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
- Drive away by crying "shoo!"
- Cement consisting of a sticky substance that is used as an adhesive.
- A framework for holding wood that is being sawed.
- Semisolid preparation (usually containing a medicine) applied externally as a remedy or for soothing an irritation.
- A health resort near a spring or at the sea-side.
- An Indian gum from the dhawa tree.
- A small portable timepiece.
- Inquire about.
- By an unbroken line of descent.
- The quality of a color as determined by its dominant wavelength.
- An affirmative.
- A long Turkish knife with a curved blade having a single edge.
- The rate at which red blood cells settle out in a tube of blood under standardized conditions.

DOWN

- An ancient Egyptian city on the west bank of the Nile opposite Cairo.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- A seaport in northwestern Italy.
- Pasture grass of plains of South America and western North America.
- An international organization of European countries formed after World War II to reduce trade barriers and increase cooperation among its members.
- A motorized wheeled vehicle used for camping or other recreational activities.
- Flat tableland with steep edges.
- Noisy quarrel.
- Having deserted a cause or principle.
- A postulated biochemical change (presumably in neural tissue) that represents a memory.
- The capital and largest city of Japan.
- A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
- Not only so, but.
- Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- A deep pulsating type of pain.
- The syllable naming the fourth (subdominant) note of the diatonic scale in solmization.
- The capacitance of a capacitor that has an equal and opposite charge of 1 coulomb on each plate and a voltage difference of 1 volt between the plates.
- Denoting a quantity consisting of six items or units.
- Covered with paving material.
- Tested and proved useful or correct.
- Lower in esteem.
- A desert in southern Israel.
- Spanish painter (born in Greece) remembered for his religious works characterized by elongated human forms and dramatic use of color (1541-1614).
- A doctor's degree in education.
- Short and fat.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- Having undesirable or negative qualities.
- (Judaism) A Jewish festival (traditionally 8 days) celebrating the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.
- Sour or bitter in taste.
- Respiratory organ of aquatic animals that breathe oxygen dissolved in water.
- (Greek mythology) A giant Boeotian hunter who pursued the Pleiades and was eventually slain by Artemis.
- French dramatist noted for his reinterpretations of Greek myths (1910-1987).
- Tree of the West Indies and northern South America bearing succulent edible orange-sized fruit.
- New Zealand timber tree resembling the cypress.
- A mistake resulting from inattention.
- (Greek mythology) A river in Hades.
- (biology) Any hook-shaped process or part.
- A colorless volatile highly inflammable liquid used as an inhalation anesthetic.
- Displeasing to the senses and morally revolting.
- Influential German idealist philosopher (1724-1804).
- (Welsh) Underworld god.
- A beverage made by steeping tea leaves in water.
- A label made of cardboard or plastic or metal.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may feel like being different and trying something new and unusual today. This is a perfect time for new ideas, a breakthrough in thinking. Another who may not know your practical side could challenge your actions today. Harsh energies could leave you feeling emotionally blocked. You draw emotional sustenance and a sense of security from ideals, friends and social involvement. You have a great interest in matters that concern society and the environment and you may be able to help make a positive difference with an ecology project around your living area. Since you enjoy beautifying your surroundings, you might consider working in or owning a health spa or gym, selling beauty products and perhaps teaching young people's beauty care.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Check and recheck your work, including any contracts you may sign. You are full of the desire to accomplish or win in whatever you are doing at this time. If you have ever been lazy in the past, you are not today. Slowdown a little, you could forget a signature or some other minor detail that would become a problem. There may be a sense of competition in the air and whether an award is waiting at the finish line or not, you will strive to succeed. Again, allow yourself time to make sure of the results. You love the challenge of an emotional pursuit and difficult situations only spur you further. You will have the right words or action when needed. The romantic dreamer in you is in full blossom this evening. Make a wish.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

This is actually a good time to settle down to the process of work and rising above any challenges. This is also an excellent time for dealing with people in positions of power and leadership. At this time you will be inclined to dig deep into mysteries such as why the human psyche is motivated. Also, you may seek for the key that makes people want to purchase an item and what it is that catches the eye. If you are in some form of teaching or working with others, you could work up some sort of questionnaire that will give your clients or students insight into many life situations. Conversations with others have the potential to profoundly affect your own beliefs. You may look to your social connections to improve your professional standing.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You might spend a great deal of time communicating with co-workers and people outside the workplace today. You have enough enthusiasm to do your work well. There could be an air of seriousness to your business dealings or with superiors today. Give yourself time to complete projects. Say "no" if you are asked to do extra work that will cause you less sleep. You enjoy correct and neat results and you may decide to stay a little later to make sure your desk is in order before leaving work. You are good at organizing and are always improving. A list will create a plan and before you know it, you will have everything in its place. Visitors may request a pamphlet or book to show others how to organize-think this possibility over.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Work on new ideas today. It is time for enthusiasm and new beginnings. Everything points to your taking the initiative. However, you could find yourself in the midst of highly emotional individuals that slow your progress. You can be troubled by all that gets too pushy, physical and gushy. You will find ways to help others and this is comforting. This is an optimistic time; better things to come are indicated. Now is the time to consolidate your ideas. If you want a permanent home, today is a good day to deal with real estate. It is also a perfect day to become engaged. Marry a person that you love to talk with-it will be important in old age. A loving atmosphere in your home is so important to you now and you will do all you can to create tranquility.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This is a great time to clear up any unfinished business and look to the future with shrewd speculation. Take time to examine all aspects of your dealings in order to be successful. This is the best time for becoming involved with new things and for planting the seeds of your future successes. You take on a new interest toward your creative endeavors. During this period, additional responsibilities may be placed on you in the context of the home setting. Also, you should open up to relatives since it is a good time to give or receive emotional support. This could be the perfect time to indulge a little. Romance is strong and the opportunity to express affection is great. Your powers of creativity are good. Laughter fills the air this evening; enjoy.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You are career-oriented and your personal reputation and honor are of the utmost importance. You possess a natural sense of organization and practical insight and may find you are managing or supervising others. At least that opportunity will be opened to you. A career in one of the service or health occupations is where you might find yourself now. You may find yourself automatically taking care of the needs of others today. Your occupation involves health, food and all attempts to restore, salvage and make the best out of things. Be careful this afternoon as you may be under a lot of pressure to perform quickly. This is actually one of your best days this month-much can be accomplished and realized. This evening is for fun!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This seems to be a very superficial morning. It may not be possible for you to comprehend anything remotely meaningful or moving. Considering you are very seldom lazy or idle, you will probably do well to rearrange your desk or prepare for the next project. This afternoon you are better able to contend with any work issues and carry through with any responsibilities. Fortunately, this is all short lived as the energies this evening call for a pleasant evening. You may see value in or feel love for an older person or someone in authority. It is good to take the time to be helpful. Everything works together to bring out your exceptional qualities. Robust, healthy and good in sports, you may be planning your next physical challenge.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

There may be an air of seriousness with your partners or co-workers this day. People that come to know you value your ability to make practical decisions. You have a natural sense of what the public wants and can put together advertisement ideas at the drop of a hat-most of the time. If you are not in advertising, some form of advertising work is advisable. Perhaps you would be interested in a job as a manager for entertainment personalities or a casting director. You may spend a great deal of time communicating with co-workers and people apart from work this evening. You are so sensitive that you may appear psychic and tonight is a great time to tell the future of others or to learn how to develop your own psychic talents.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

There are lots of activities in the home before you even prepare for work. Perhaps young people need help or a loved one needs your emotional support. Whatever the case, there is a strong feeling that you are needed and can contribute to those around you. Work should go rather smoothly today. If you pay attention to what others are saying to you, you will probably find that you are appreciated in the workplace as well as on the home front. You are wise to remain humble and can teach others what the word "self-esteem" really means. This afternoon is a good day to purchase a new appliance, begin a new relationship, pull in a favor or obtain a loan. You may have the urge to work in the yard for a while this evening.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

There is time to reflect and understand your own job situation. Your emotions, as well as the emotions and feelings of others, may be very clear. Clear decisions affecting others could be made. Someone could challenge you, but instead of jumping to conclusions-you have learned to look at the whole picture. Given time, someone will set things right and you will not have to enter into any sort of emotional dialogue. Your inner nature seems sensitive to the outward nature today and you could find yourself benefiting from soaking up good sunshine or some good music during the noon hour break. Your purchasing power is strong and you may consider a new investment, such as a piece of art. Someone compliments your tastes this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

The type of mental stimulation from others this morning is contagious. A round table discussion or some other way to encourage participation in a conversation is strong and competitive. There is a great deal of attention to your own ideas but you also may find some interruptions. Your clear thinking is strong and anyone trying to get you to joke around or become involved in frivolous conversations will find you focused on your responsibilities. They had better watch out when break or time for going home is close. You have saved a few jokes of your own. You may be pleasantly pleased with the antics of young people this afternoon. They just want to show off and gain your attention in the process. You enjoy giving positive feedback to these little ones.

WORD SEARCH

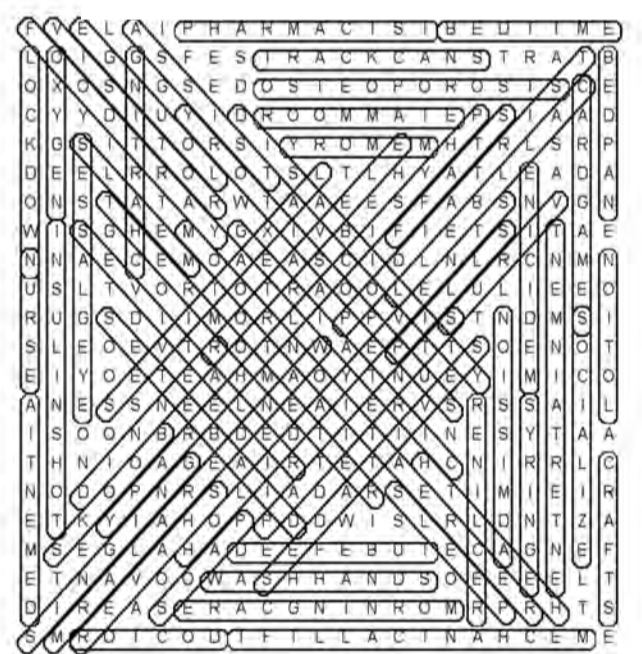
Spring

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a message about Spring.



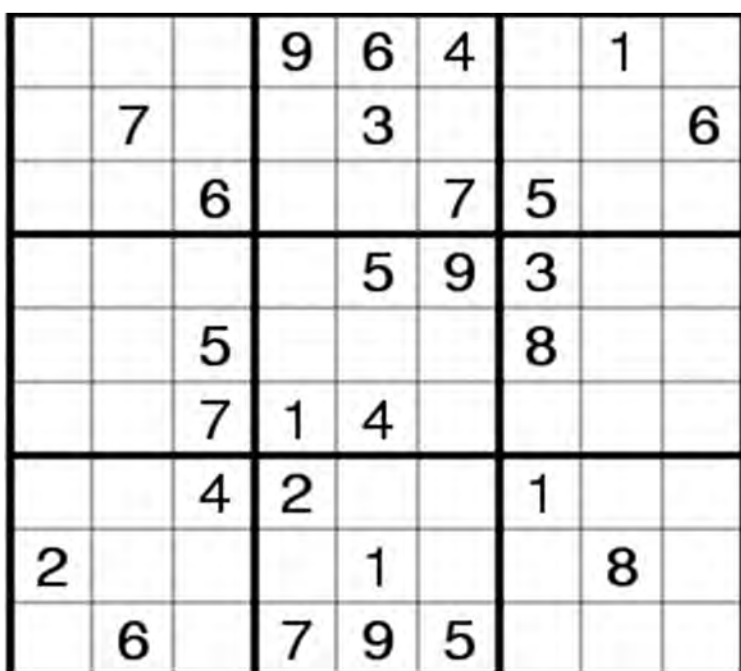
Yesterday Solution

Nursing Home 2

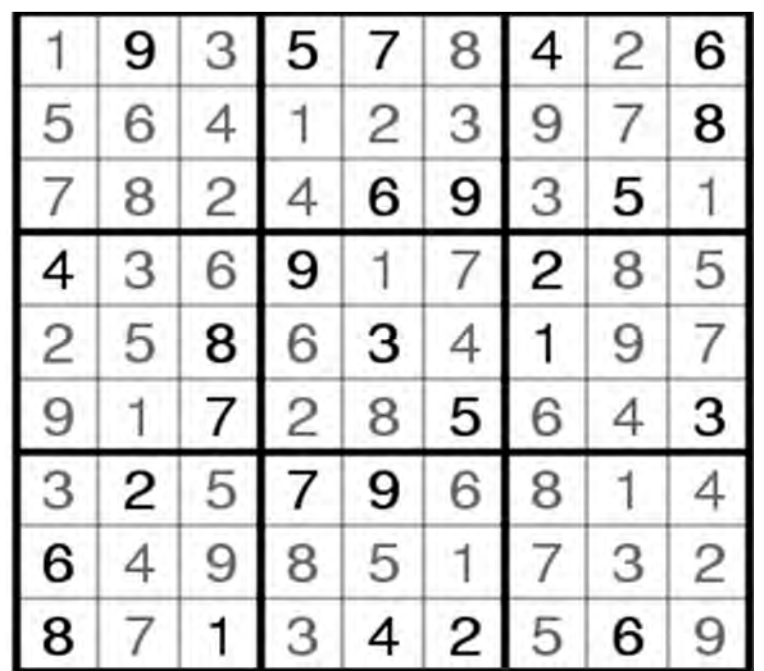


The hidden message is: LIFE'S TRAGEDY IS THAT WE GET OLD TOO SOON AND WISE TOO LATE

Daily SuDoku

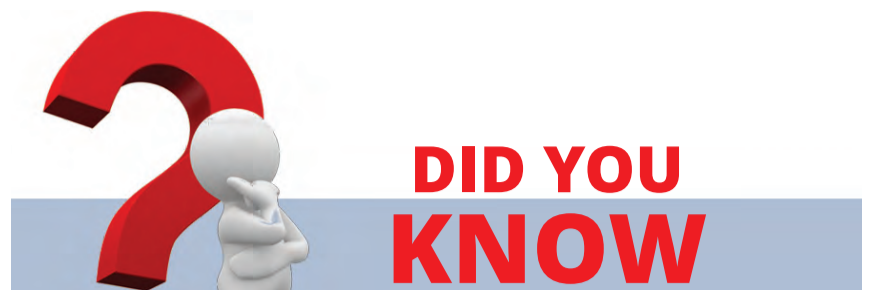
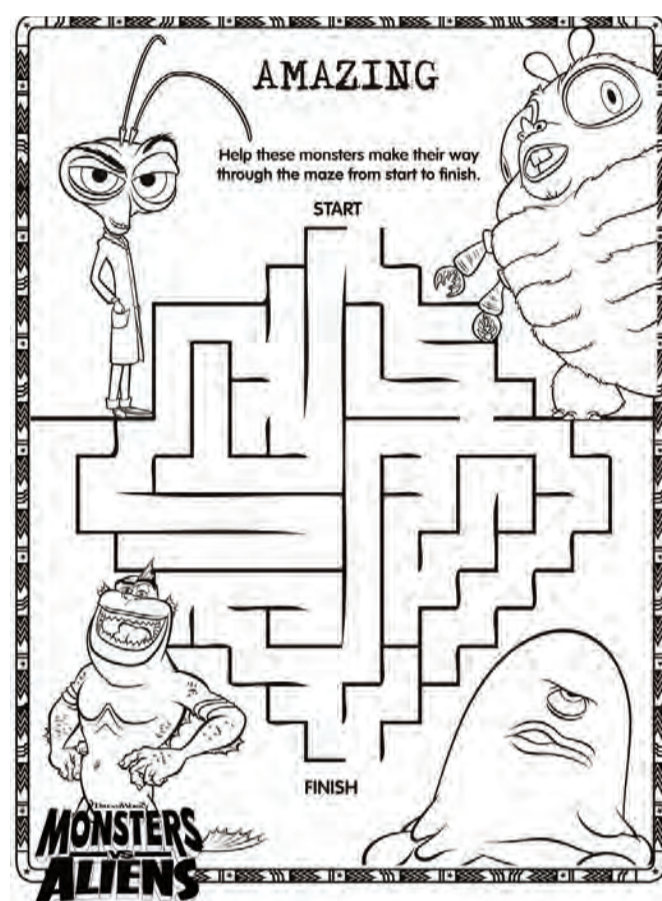
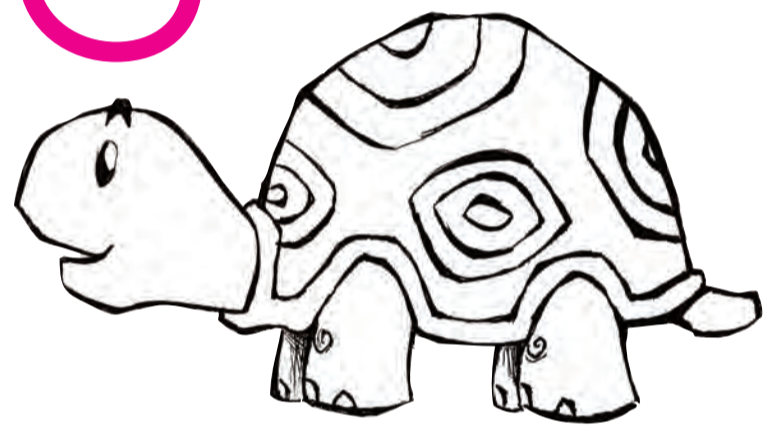


Yesterday's Solution





Color me!



DID YOU KNOW

THE EGYPTIAN PYRAMIDS are ancient pyramid-shaped masonry structures located in Egypt.

As of November 2008, there are sources citing both 118 and 138 as the number of identified Egyptian pyramids. Most were built as tombs for the country's pharaohs and their consorts during the Old and Middle Kingdom periods. The earliest known Egyptian pyramids are found at Saqqara, northwest of Memphis. The earliest among these is the Pyramid of Djoser (constructed 2630

BC-2611 BC) which was built during the third dynasty. This pyramid and its surrounding complex were designed by the architect Imhotep, and are generally considered to be the world's oldest monumental structures constructed of dressed masonry.

The most famous Egyptian pyramids are those found at Giza, on the outskirts of Cairo. Several of the Giza pyramids are counted among the largest structures ever built. The Pyramid of Khufu at Giza is the largest Egyptian pyramid. It is the only one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World still in existence.



SUMMER
SUNSHINE
SWIMMING
TRAVEL
VACATION

BEACH
CAMPFIRE
CAMPING
FAMILY
PICNIC

WORD SEARCH

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

Circle the adjective

- I like hot food
- He is my new friend
- She arrived early.
- The flowers are pretty.
- The bus is slow.

Answers → 1) Hot 2) New 3) Early 4) Pretty 5) Slow

Pick the odd one out!

Circle the odd one out from the following:

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------|-------|----------|
| 1) Boy | Female | Woman | Girl |
| 2) Eyes | Nose | Lips | Chair |
| 3) Yellow | Kiwi | Red | Pink |
| 4) Car | Bus | Paper | Airplane |
| 5) Computer | One | Ten | Twenty |

Answers → 1) Boy 2) Chair 3) Kiwi 4) Paper 5) Computer

RECIPES FOR KIDS

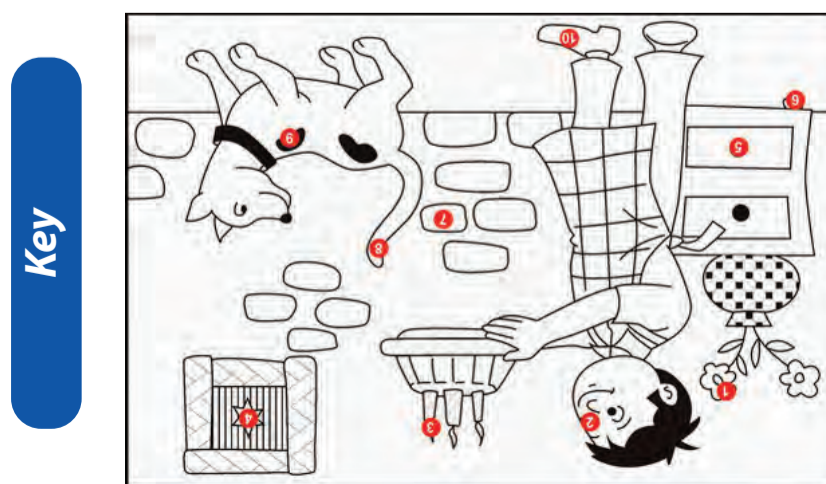
Overnight Yogurt Parfait



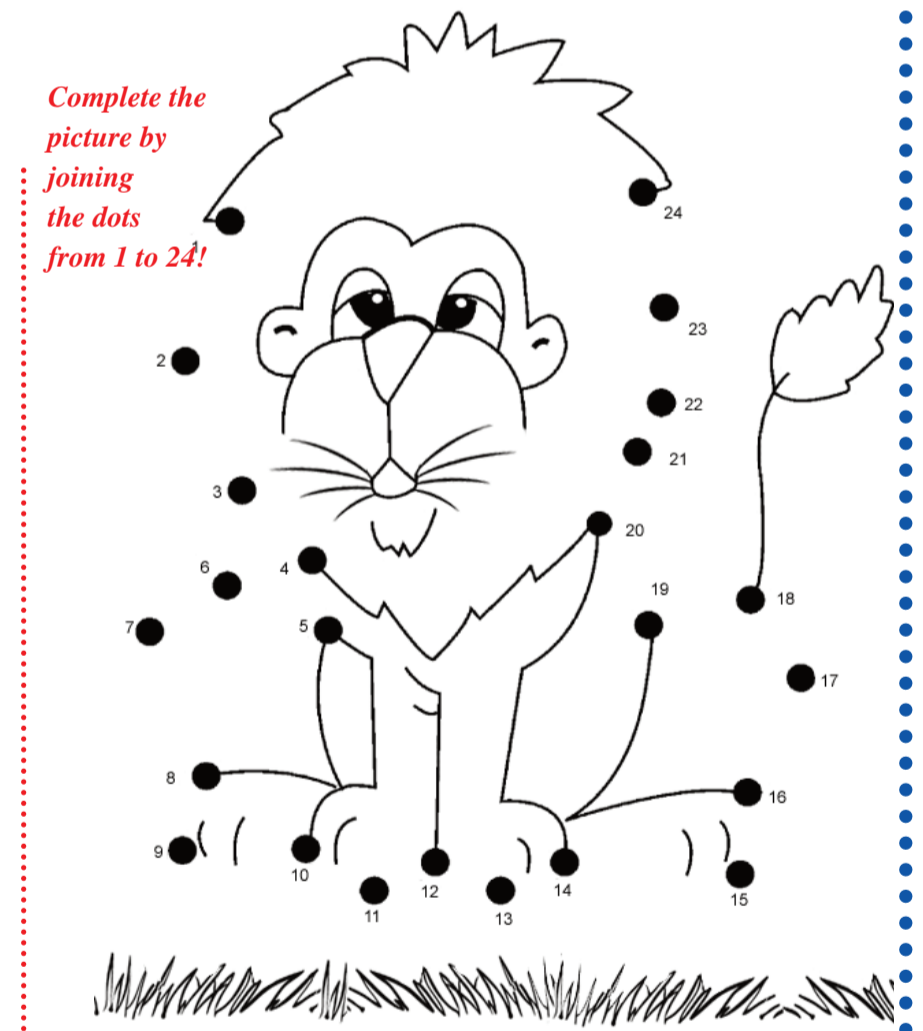
- Ingredients**
- Yogurt
 - Strawberries or other fresh fruits in season
 - Quaker Oatmeal Steel Oats (uncooked) or granola
 - Honey to taste

Instructions
Layer the yogurt and fruit one by one in a bowl. Keep in the refrigerator overnight. Once that's done top your snack with a little crunchy granola and honey. Now that you're done grab and spoon and dig in!

Spot the differences



Complete the picture by joining the dots from 1 to 24!



SUDDOKU PUZZLES 2 PRINT

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

5	9	7	6	1	8	2
2	2	6	1	8	5	9
8	1	7	9	2	5	6
9	2	5	6	7	8	1
5	7	8	2	1	9	2
1	6	1	7	8	9	2
2	8	5	6	7	1	9
7	1	2	1	9	2	6
6	9	1	8	5	2	7





An art specialist at Christie's speaks about the artwork 'Le bassin aux nymphéas' painted by artist Claude Monet during a press preview of Christie's forthcoming evening auctions of the Contemporary, Impressionist, Modern and Post-War Art in New York.



People observe the artwork 'Untitled' made by artist Jean-Michel Basquiat.— AFP photos



A man walks next to the artwork 'Untitled' (center) by artist Urs Fischer.



People stand next to the artwork 'Boneyard' made by artist Christian Marclay.

NY art auction season to kick off, break taboo

The spring art auction season kicks off Sunday in New York with paintings by Jean-Michel Basquiat and Cy Twombly and a taboo-smashing statue of Hitler. Some 1,500 artworks are to go under the gavel over the course of five days of auctions expected to fetch more than a billion dollars. The most important ones will be held in the evening, three hosted by Christie's and two by Sotheby's. First comes the Christie's thematic evening "Bound to Fail," with a selection of 39 works of Modern and Contemporary art exploring the idea of commercial failure, and that of taking risks to expand the boundaries of art.

The most troubling piece is a wax and resin statue by Italy's Maurizio Cattelan, entitled simply "Him". From behind, it looks like a boy on his knees, wearing a grey woolen suit. But walk around front and you see it is Hitler, his hands clasped together in front of him as he gazes upward. Completed in 2001, it is expected to go for \$10-15 million. "I wanted to destroy it myself. I changed my mind a thousand times, every day," said Cattelan.

He added: "Hitler is pure fear. It's an image of terrible pain. It even hurts to pronounce his name. And yet that name has conquered my memory. It lives in my head, even if it remains taboo." Loic Gouzer, deputy chairman of post-war and contemporary art with Christie's who created the theme-oriented auction evenings, called the work "extremely powerful, extremely disconcerting." Unlike in the movies, Gouzer said, "artists have hardly ever touched on the issue of Hitler." Even some years ago the statue would have been a

tough piece to sell, but now the market seems ready, he said. The piece might break the previous eight million dollar record for a Cattelan piece.

Another important work in this particular auction is "One Ball Total Equilibrium Tank" by the American Jeff Koons, who is known for toying with objects from popular culture. This one has a water-filled basketball suspended in the center of a tank of saline solution. It is expected to lure as much as \$12 million.

Big Basquiat

On May 9, French artists Maurice de Vlaminck and Andre Derain will be the main features of an auction of Impressionist and Modern art by Sotheby's. Derain's "Les voiles rouges", completed in 1906, is thought to be worth \$15-20 million, and "Sous-bois" (1905) by Vlaminck some \$12-18 million. These two painters represented Fauvism, a short-lived movement from the early 20th century that broke with Impressionism and used bold brush strokes and bright colors. These two paintings have never been auctioned before. Also available at this auction is an exceptionally rare Rodin marble sculpture of embracing lovers, valued at \$8-12 million.

Conceived in 1884 and carved in 1901-02 from one block, Sotheby's has said it expected "Eternal Printemps" to set a new record for a Rodin sculpture in marble. It also said it was the first time that a sculpture in this medium and of this subject-for which the French artist is perhaps most famous-comes under the hammer in more than

two decades. On May 10 a large painting by Basquiat will be the highlight of Christie's auction of post-war and Contemporary art. The price estimate is \$40 million, not far from the record for a Basquiat piece, which is \$48.8 million for "Dustheads" in 2013.

Standing 2.30 meters tall and 5 meters wide (seven-and-a-half-feet by 16 feet), the untitled painting's center depicts a sort of self-portrait in the form of a mask, showing the late Haitian-born artist's fascination with funerary art. Sotheby's will serve up two paintings by the Expressionist Twombly on May 11. The first of them, "Untitled" from 1968, is part of his iconic blackboard paintings series. It is valued at more than \$40 million.

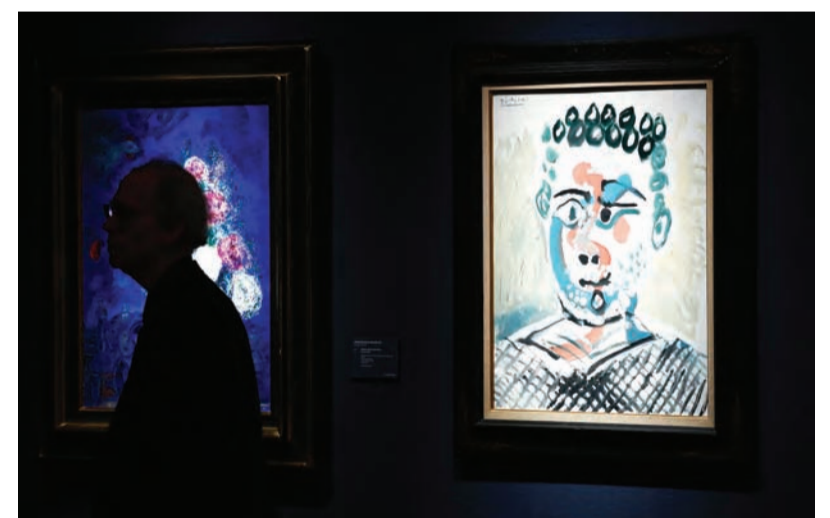
Another painting from the same series went for \$70.5 million last autumn at a Sotheby's auction. That was a record for works by Twombly, who died in 2011. The second, "Untitled (Bacchus 1st Version V)", is valued at more than \$20 million. That same evening Sotheby's will auction off "Two Studies for Self-Portrait" by Francis Bacon (1970). It has only been exhibited twice, in 1971 and 1993, and its estimated value is \$22-30 million. The last evening of Christie's auctions on May 12 will be dedicated to Impressionist and Modern art and feature some 50 works including a Modigliani valued at \$12-18 million. — AFP



The artwork 'Him' made by artist Maurizio Cattelan.



A man cleans up the artwork 'Smooth Egg with Bow' made by artist Jeff Koons.



A man walks past the artwork 'Buste d'homme' made by artist Pablo Picasso.

'Impossibly rare' violet diamond found in Australia

A rare violet diamond, the largest of its kind ever found at Australia's remote Argyle mine, will be the centrepiece of Rio Tinto's annual pink diamonds showcase, the company said Tuesday. The rough gem, discovered in August 2015 at a mine where more than 90 percent of the world's pink and red jewels are produced, originally weighed 9.17 carats and had etchings, pits and crevices.

After weeks of assessment, the Argyle Violet was polished down to a 2.83 carat, oval-shaped diamond. "Impossibly rare and limited by nature, the Argyle Violet will be highly sought after for its beauty, size and provenance," Rio Tinto Diamonds general manager of sales, Patrick Coppens, said in a statement. Rio Tinto did not put a figure on its worth, but said it had been assessed by the Gemological Institute of America as a notable diamond with the colour grade of Fancy Deep Greyish Bluish Violet.

It is not known how diamonds acquire their coloured tinge but it is thought to come from a molecular structure distortion as the jewel forms in the earth's crust or makes its way to the surface. Diamonds for sale as part of the annual Argyle pink diamonds tender can fetch US\$1-2 million a carat. As a basic rule of thumb, pink and red diamonds are worth about 50 times more than white diamonds.

Rio Tinto said violet diamonds were extremely rare with only 12 carats of polished stone produced for the tender in 32 years. "This stunning violet diamond will

capture the imagination of the world's leading collectors and connoisseurs," Argyle pink diamonds manager Josephine Johnson said. The 2016 tender will begin private trade viewings in June and travel to Copenhagen, Hong Kong and New York, Rio Tinto said. — AFP



This undated handout picture shows a rare violet uncut diamond discovered in August 2015 at Australia's remote Argyle mine. — AFP

Diamond the size of a tennis ball could fetch \$70 million

A London auctioneer says a diamond the size of a tennis ball that is the largest discovered in more than a century could sell for more than \$70 million. Sotheby's says it will offer the Lesedi la Rona diamond in London on June 29. The diamond was unearthed in November in Botswana at a mine owned by Canada's Lucara Diamond Corporation. It measured 1,109 carats, the second-largest gem-quality rough diamond ever discovered.

Its name means "our light" in the Tswana language. The auctioneer said Wednesday that the rough gemstone could yield the largest top-quality diamond ever cut and polished. The largest diamond ever found was the 3,106-carat Cullinan diamond, unearthed in South Africa in 1905. It was cut into nine pieces that form part of the UK Crown Jewels. — AP



A Sotheby's employee holds Lesedi La Rona Diamond on Tuesday 3, 2016 in New York City. — AP

China military tries musical approach to image building

China's military has a bulging arsenal of ships, warplanes and missiles, but this week, music is its weapon of choice. A new recruiting video aimed at Chinese millennials raised on pop tunes and video games features a rap-rock soundtrack with lyrics such as "just waiting for the order to kill, kill, kill" and "war can break out at any time - are you ready?" In a frantic, near seizure-inducing music-video style montage, cutting-edge fighter jets zoom and special forces troops take out bad guys. On a gentler, more traditional note, singers with a military song and dance team have been entertaining troops and construction workers stationed on China's new man-made islands in the South China Sea's Spratly Islands, underscoring Beijing's confidence in its increasingly dominant position in the disputed region.

Among the songs performed was "Ode to the South Sea Defenders," whose lyrics speak of "a troop of stout men with guns in their hands who battle the wind and fight the waves to guard the nation's door." Though very different in sensibility, the two attempts at musical outreach show how the People's Liberation Army is trying to shape its image as a modern, high-tech fighting force capable of defending Chinese interests even far from home. That's an image that had been dented in recent decades as the world's largest standing military developed a reputation for corruption and lax discipline, and amid criticism that it is ultimately loyal not to the Chinese nation but to the ruling Communist Party.

The recruiting video in particular marks a new approach by the PLA as it seeks to attract well-qualified young recruits looking for adventure, but who might otherwise be tempted by the private sector. "The mission is always on the mind. The foe is always in sight," the unknown rapper shouts at the beginning, following moody images of a serious-looking soldier in dress uniform. Available Wednesday via a link on the Defense Ministry's official website, the video appears as the 2.3 million-member PLA is downsizing in an effort to boost its war-fighting capabilities. Chief among those steps is a cut of 300,000 personnel while shifting funding and attention away from the ground forces in favor of the navy, missile corps and air force.

Media technology

Retired PLA Col. Yue Gang said the video represents a new approach, both in its visual language and in highlighting all branches of the armed forces, rather than just one or another as in past. "The style of promotion accords with the attitudes of young people toward the army and the imagery used appeals to hot-blooded young men," said Yue, a frequent commentator on military affairs. "It is also a natural step for the army to adopt modern media technology to attract young men in modern times."

For its part, the variety show-style performances in the South China Sea represent a tried-and-true approach. Entitled "The People's Navy Advances" and also featuring

skits and magic tricks, the show is part of a long tradition of People's Liberation Army performances aimed at entertaining, promoting ideological conformity and stirring pride in the military and ruling Communist Party.

Song Zuying, a famed singer of folk songs and patriotic anthems, headlined the performances, regaling crowds with lyrics such as, "On stilted platforms in the South Sea, (China's) five-starred red flag flaps in the wind, I've tasted all types of bitterness in the South Sea, (but) the people's happiness is my pride and glory." Song, who once performed with Celine Dion on state television, was a big hit with the construction workers and naval officers who attended the shows, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. The event was also recorded for broadcast by state-run CCTV. "I was so excited for... the troupe to come to the front-line islands," said Huang Tianjun, a member of the garrison atop Fiery Cross Reef, the largest of the newly minted islands constructed by heaping sand and cement atop a coral reef. "We will most definitely hold fast here and defend every inch of the reef," Huang said. — AP

In this file photo, Chinese singer Song Zuying performs during the 'Cultures of China, Festival of Spring' concert at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. — AP



Broadway musical 'Hamilton' does what it always does - stuns

The Tony Awards are being nicknamed this year the "Hamil-Tonys" in recognition that "Hamilton" is the show to beat. That was proven again Tuesday. Lin-Manuel Miranda's hip-hop-flavored biography about the first US treasury secretary earned 16 Tony Award nominations, breaking the 15-nominations record held jointly by "The Producers" and "Billy Elliot the Musical." "Hamilton" earned nods in all 13 categories it was eligible. "I feel really grateful that they kind of spread the wealth," Miranda told The Associated Press. "Theater requires collaboration and I'm lucky to be working with some of the best people in their respective fields alive right now."

The awards will be handed out June 12, with James Corden playing host from the Beacon Theatre. "Hamilton" will be hoping to break another record: The musical with the most Tonys is "The Producers" with 12. At that ceremony, "Hamilton" will compete for Broadway's biggest crown - best new musical with "Bright Star," "School of Rock," "Shuffle Along" and "Waitress." The other top nominees Tuesday were "Shuffle Along," a show that explores a groundbreaking 95-year-old musical starring, written and directed by African-Americans, which got 10 nominations, and the revival of "She Loves Me," which earned eight.

Happiest smile

"Hamilton" earned seven acting nominations - Miranda, Leslie Odum Jr., Phillipa Soo, Daveed Diggs, Jonathan Groff, Christopher Jackson and Renee Elise Goldsberry. It also earned nominations for best musical, scenic design, costumes, lighting design, direction, choreography, orchestrations, best book and best original score. The musical has already won the Pulitzer Prize for drama, a Grammy, the Edward M Kennedy Prize for Drama Inspired by American History and a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant.

The loudest screams in Miranda's house Tuesday morning were for the announcement of Jackson, who plays George Washington. Jackson was one of the first people to audition for the show in New York in 2002. "To see him get recognized got a particularly loud scream from my parents and my wife and I," Miranda said, laughing. Goldsberry earned her first Tony nomination after appearing in four previous Broadway shows and said she will go to the theater Tuesday night holding aloft the banner of "Hamilton."

"The 16 of us represent every single person that worked on this show and we're really grateful to get to do that," she said. But first, the mother of two will celebrate with a nap. "I'm going to nap with the happiest smile on my face." There were a few surprises Tuesday, including Jennifer Hudson being overlooked in "The Color Purple" and only a costume design nomination for "Tuck Everlasting," a well-received musical based on the 1975 book by Natalie Babbitt. Also, the hit show "On Your Feet," which follows the lives of Gloria and Emilio Estefan, earned just a choreography nod.

And "American Psycho," an adaptation of the novel by Bret Easton Ellis about a materialistic serial killer, only captured nominations for scenic design and lighting. Its actors and songs by Duncan Sheik were snubbed.

"Waitress," a musical with songs by singer-songwriter Sara Bareilles that is adapted from a 2007 film about a waitress trapped in a small-town diner and a loveless marriage,

earned four nominations. "I'm so grateful to have found my way back toward the theater community. I grew up doing theater. It's how I learned to listen to music," said Bareilles, who got a nod for music and lyrics. "This experience of working on 'Waitress' has so changed my life in personal ways and professional ways."

Five nominations

"School of Rock," the adaptation by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Julian Fellowes of the Jack Black-led movie about a wannabe rocker who enlists fifth-graders to form a rock group, earned four nominations, including best musical, book, original score and best leading man in Alex Brightman. "It's a funny

Zeller's "The Father," Stephen Karam's "The Humans" and Mike Bartlett's "King Charles III." Liesl Tommy, making her Broadway debut as a director, won a nomination for helming "Eclipsed," which takes place in a Liberian rebel camp where women are held as sexual captives.

Calling from a taxi on her way to her next theater assignment downtown, Tommy said her phone blew up with calls from well-wishers. The most important one she had was with her brother and parents in South Africa. "It was a very emotional phone call because it's not anything I thought, when I emigrated to this country, would ever, ever happen," she said. "There was a lot of feelings of vindication that all of that hard work and sacrifices could lead to something like this." Late

and acting turns by Adrienne Warren and Brandon Victor Dixon. (Audra McDonald, who was eligible as a lead actress in a musical, wasn't nominated and so won't be able to chase her seventh Tony.)

Dixon said he was surprised some of his co-stars - including Brian Stokes Mitchell, Billy Porter, Joshua Henry and McDonald - didn't get nods. "I was pretty shocked," he said. "But I'm honored to represent them and we're going to go into this Tony season and we're going to take a number of those awards." He added: "I'm happy to stand toe-to-toe with 'Hamilton.'" The revival of Eugene O'Neill's "Long Day's Journey Into Night," starring Jessica Lange and Gabriel Byrne, earned seven nominations, including a first for Lange for her third Broadway role.



This image released by Philip Rinaldi Publicity shows Brandon Victor Dixon, left, and Audra McDonald during a performance of "Shuffle Along, Or the Making of the Musical Sensation of 1921 and All That Followed" at The Music Box Theatre in New York.



This image released by The Public Theater shows Lin-Manuel Miranda, foreground, with the cast during a performance of 'Hamilton,' in New York.

season this one, isn't it," said Lloyd Webber from London. "As you know, it's the 'Hamil-Tonys.' We've gotten everything we could have hoped for - and that's all we'll get. But it's lovely in this season of all seasons to get score and musical and book. We're terribly pleased." "Bright Star," a complex love story set against the American South by comedy god Steve

Martin and Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Edie Brickell, earned five nominations and few were more pleased than Martin, who earned his first Tony nod.

"This is very, very exciting to me. It's almost, like your emotions betray you, you don't allow yourself to know how excited you are but then when it happens, the body just takes over and you think, 'Gee, I must have really been nervous about this!' So I am so pleased," he said. The best play category is composed of Danaï Gurira's "Eclipsed," Floria

Tuesday, the first casualty of the nomination process was revealed: "Disaster!" - a spoof of 1970s disaster movies - will close on Sunday after getting only one nomination.

'She Loves Me'

Zachary Levi, former star of NBC's "Chuck" making his second Broadway appearance, earned a leading man nomination for "She Loves Me." The one-time theater geek who was lured away by TV said it was surreal to be embraced by Broadway. "This makes me feel like Ariel in 'The Little Mermaid' - a part of their world," said Levi. "I'm gobsmacked. I never use that word but I'm gobsmacked." "Shuffle Along," which late last week was declared a new musical, earned nominations for best musical, best book, scenic design, lighting and costumes, directed by George C. Wolfe, choreography by Savion Glover, orchestra-

She played the same part - the drug-addled mother Mary - in London 16 years ago.

"This is really a thrill," she said. "It's one of those parts, if you were insane enough and had the stamina, you could continue to play for the rest of your life and never come to the end of it." The Roundabout Theatre Company earned 27 nominations for its revivals of "She Loves Me," "Thérèse Raquin," "Noises Off" and "Long Day's Journey Into Night," as well as "The Humans." The Almeida Theatre company in London got seven with its "American Psycho" and "King Charles III." — AP

Rock legends to perform at mega concert

The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan, Paul McCartney, Neil Young, Roger Waters and The Who - the most celebrated acts in rock'n roll - will perform at a mega festival in October, organizers said Tuesday. The iconic artists have been confirmed for the October 7-9 concert at the

Empire Polo field in Indio, in the California desert, an event being billed by music lovers as one of the greatest concerts ever. "I can't think of a concert as big as this one," Jim Guerinot, a talent agent and former promoter, told the Los Angeles Times. "Neil Young opening for Paul McCartney - are you kidding me?.. I think it's a stupendous achievement."

Gary Bongiovanni, editor of the concert industry site Pollstar, told AFP that the presence of the legendary rock stars at the same event was a "unique concept" that was sure to prove successful. "It is historic in that having just six headline acts over three days has never been done before and it really is a once-in-a-lifetime experience," he said.

'Oldchella'

Tickets for the event, which has been rumored for weeks, will go on sale Monday and will range from \$199 to \$1,599, concert promoter GoldenVoice said. Customers are limited to buying a maximum of eight sets of tickets for the festival, which is being called "The Desert Trip." "With performances starting after sunset, each artist will play a full set, serving up three incomparable nights of rock 'n roll," GoldenVoice said on its website. The same venue hosts the annual Coachella music

festival, one of the world's highest-grossing festival that attracts tens of thousands of fans.

Bongiovanni said given that the majority of the concert goes will likely be graying music fans, most tickets will be for reserved seats rather than general admission. All of the artists except the Stones' 68-year-old guitarist Ronnie Wood are in their 70s. The acts all remain active and pull in major audiences eager to see them for nostalgia reasons. Concert organizers said Dylan and the Stones would launch the concert October 7, Young and McCartney would perform on October 8 and the Who and Waters will close the three-day event on October 9.

The festival could mark a final appearance for The Who, whose members have hinted at imminent retirement. The group was scheduled to end their tour in May, but have already added June dates to appear at festivals in Europe. The Who frontman Roger Daltrey called the lineup for the October concert "the greatest remains of our era." "It's amazing really. It's amazing we're still here," he told the BBC last month when rumors about the concert began swirling. The megashow by the six Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees immediately created a buzz on social media, with many dubbing the concert "Oldchella." One tongue-in-cheek posting on Twitter described it as "Desert Trip and Fall: The Broken Hip Tour." Another tweet said: "Desert Trip, the classic rock festival is going to be pretty badass!" — AFP



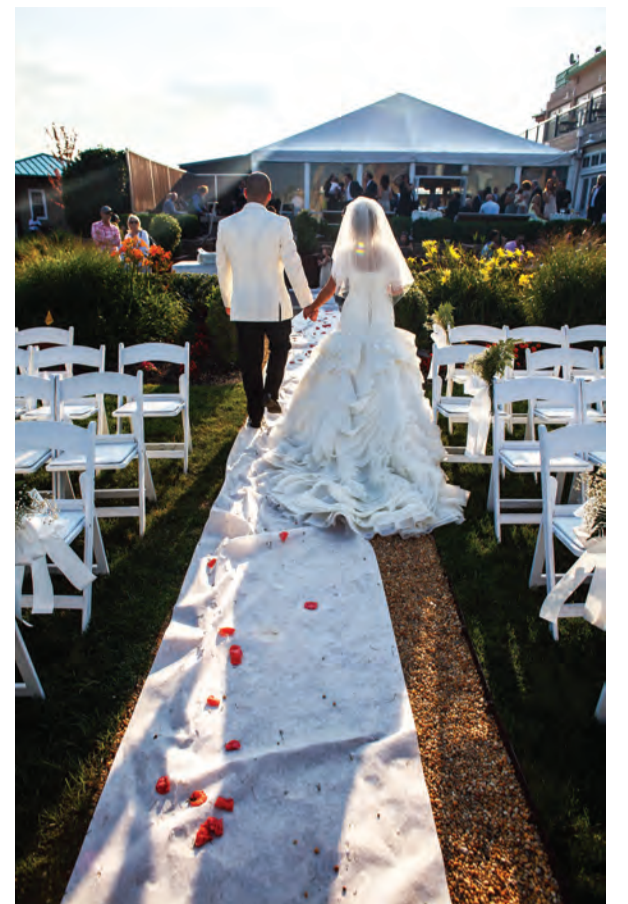
This file photo shows part of the crowd at the 2013 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival at the Empire Polo Club in Indio, Calif. — AP



In this photo provided by Jonathan Elderfield Photography, Bicia Milioto, left, and Nick Trivigno celebrate their marriage just moments after the wedding ceremony at The Liberty House in Jersey City, NJ. — AP photography



Bicia Milioto, right, and Nick Trivigno dance their first dance, shortly after their wedding ceremony.



Bicia Milioto, right, and Nick Trivigno return to the reception just moments after the wedding ceremony.



Bicia Milioto, left, and Nick Trivigno celebrate their marriage at The Liberty House.



Wedding photographer Andi Schreiber, left, documents the wedding ceremony of Jennifer Chen and Tony Tran at Wainwright House in Rye, New York.

5 tips on choosing and working with a wedding photographer

Your wedding is fast approaching and you have an un-blissfully long to-do list, from finalizing your flower selection to choosing your menu to deciding on your dress. Near the top of that list you might want to put “select photographer.” That way, one of the most important parts of your wedding - the memories - will be preserved. Think about booking your photographer soon after you have selected your venue, and make sure he or she is a good fit with your personality.

As a photographer with over 25 years of experience, including more than 50 weddings, I know the importance of selecting the right person. Not only will you be spending your entire day together, but the resulting photos will influence how you remember your wedding. Look at potential photographers’ electronic portfolios, pricing and availability, and plan to meet several candidates to gauge their sensibility. Below are five tips on choosing and working with a wedding photographer:

Look for depth

Ask to see a complete portfolio from beginning to end for at least one or two weddings. You don’t want to see only a few “best” photos. “It’s easy to show a bunch of terrific single images taken at many weddings,” says Radhika Chalasani, “but a great wedding photographer has to capture an entire wedding beautifully from start to finish.” The New York-based Chalasani has been photographing weddings since 2004. Looking at portfolios will ensure that the photographer wasn’t just an assistant or a guest with a camera. You can see how the photographer handles all parts of the wedding, including the preparations, ceremony, cocktails, portraits, speeches, dancing and cake-cutting.

Get a contract

A wedding photographer without a contract

(and without liability insurance) is likely not a professional. The contract should spell out what the photographer will provide, and whether the pictures will be on DVDs, an online gallery, a finished album, etc. It will include the hours worked, and what happens if you ask the photographer to work longer.

In addition, you want to know how things will be handled if the photographer becomes unable to work on the wedding day due to illness or injury. He or she should have a back-up. The contract also should spell out the cost, the amount of any deposit and when the balance must be paid. Small, casual weddings might not seem to require a contract, but having one will protect both you and the photographer.

Don’t be shy about what you want

“There’s no harm in being specific,” says Chicago wedding photographer Candice C Cusic, a photojournalist for 15 years and a teacher at Northwestern University. Tell the photographer what the most important aspects of the day are to you, whether it’s exchanging rings or walking down the aisle.

“Brides should be realistic about their day and make every possible effort to help their photographer capture great imagery,” Cusic says. A bride or groom getting ready inside a messy hotel room, for instance, will not make for strong pictures, she notes.

Make sure your personalities jibe

Other than your significant other, the person with whom you’ll spend the most time on your wedding day might well be your photographer. He or she will be with you as you get ready and as you go through the emotional highs of the day. The photographer might guide you and your family through a portrait session, walk backward as you

process up the aisle, and hang close by during your first dance. So this person’s personality - sense of humor, demeanor, even appearance - should be a good fit with both of you.

Craig Warga, a New York-based wedding photographer, says “good photography happens when you can get close to your subjects, and they feel completely comfortable being natural and themselves in front of your lens. If you don’t like someone, you’re not going to have that level of comfort in front of them, and it will affect the pictures.” If you like a sassy personality who will add some color to your day, then by all means hire a vibrant, outgoing photographer who exudes energy. On the other hand, if you want a subtle documentary photographer who will capture important moments without being intrusive, go for someone who won’t talk loudly over you when you first meet, and who seems cool and composed. The right photographer, says Warga, is someone who leaves you thinking, “it’d be nice to have that person as a guest at my wedding.”

Sweat some details

Ask if the photographer has a full set of equipment: Multiple bodies and lenses with back-ups. Will he or she be working with an assistant or second photographer? If so, what is the additional cost and does that person need to be there all day? If your venue will be dark, can the photographer handle it? Is the photographer able to work in adverse conditions such as rain at an outdoor ceremony? Finally, make provisions for your photographer to eat; it’s hard to be “on” for eight to 10 hours straight. A 15-minute meal break might just be the best thing you do for the photographer. — AP

Sign the surfboard? Wedding guest books now take many forms

Alexis and John Roulette don’t have to look far to remember the love that friends and relatives showered upon them on their wedding day. The 7-foot-long surfboard mounted above their living room couch says it all. In silver Sharpie, guests wrote messages of love, congratulations and advice on the board that the couple used as a guest book at their wedding in Huntington Beach, California, last summer. “It’s a constant reminder of our special day and the love we had around us,” says Alexis Roulette, 30. As weddings have become highly personalized, the guest book, too, has come a long way. What was once a traditional white bound book has become elaborate and creative, often taking the shape of something that reflects the couple’s personalities or wedding theme.

“What it’s morphed into is more of a way of delivering messages and notes and keepsakes for the bride and groom, while at the same time it’s become more interactive and creative in its display,” says Darcy Miller, editor at large of Martha Stewart Weddings. Guests might sign a giant wine bottle, a piece of sporting equipment, seashells or stones, maps, artwork, or fabric squares that get stitched together to

form a quilt. Miller has seen a vintage typewriter displayed for guests to peck out messages, a dictionary in which guests circled words relevant to the couple, and a globe on which guests signed near places they felt the couple should visit. “If you love to ski, it’s signing vintage skis,” she says. “If you’re into boating and the nautical theme, then it’s a buoy.” Guests might snap an instant photo and leave it behind with a message, to be compiled in a scrapbook. Or a couple might offer a published book for guests to sign, Miller says, such as a book on birds for a nature-inspired event.

Stamped postcards

Because guest books are so individualized, they often become part of the couple’s home. “It becomes personalized decor you live with,” Miller says. “These are no longer things getting stuck in a box and never looked at ever again.” The Roulettes’ surfboard guest book fit the laidback feeling of their beach-themed wedding at Don The Beachcomber. “It’s a really nice piece that I appreciate that we have and can admire,” Roulette says. “I like that we can see it every day rather than a book. Any guest book, you normally put it away and won’t see it.”

Jane Kernen, a wedding planner with Austin Busy Brides in Texas, specializes in events held in nontraditional venues. Most of her couples shy away from the traditional guest book, she says. And while traditional guest books were often set out in church, her couples tend to display their alternative guest books during cocktails. “Couples want something for people to talk about and an activity during the cocktail hour,” she says. The nontraditional sign-ins also help guests get to know the couple better.

Kernen once worked with a pair of pilots who were married in an airplane hangar; they asked guests to sign a propeller that was later hung over their mantel. A couple who married at a botanical garden put out self-addressed, stamped postcards featuring botanical prints, on which guests could write well wishes and marital advice. Such alternatives to guest books can become “a keepsake of something that’s personal to you, but made that much more personal because it’s been touched and signed by people you love,” Miller says.—AP



A surfboard used by a couple for their wedding guest book in Huntington Beach, Calif.



Photo provided by Alexis Roulette shows bride Alexis and groom John Roulette on their wedding day in Huntington Beach, Calif. — AP photos



A surfboard guest book that was appropriate for the couple’s beach themed wedding.



Postcards for a wedding at Desert Botanical Garden, that guests were asked to write well wishes on and return or mail back to the couple throughout the year, in Phoenix, Ariz.

Feature



Libyans eat at "Toucan" a newly opened Mediterranean "fusion" restaurant in the Libyan capital Tripoli. — AFP photos



Libyan chefs cook in the kitchen at "Toucan" a newly opened Mediterranean "fusion" restaurant.



Libyan bikers sit at the 'Harley Davidson Cafe'.



Libyan chefs cook in the kitchen at "Toucan" a newly opened Mediterranean "fusion" restaurant.



Libyan bikers sit at the 'Harley Davidson Cafe'.

Tripoli cafes offer Libyans taste of normality

Weaving between tables at a seaside restaurant in Libya's capital bearing freshly baked rosemary bread, Abdelmutaleb Twigiri shuttles between the wood-fired oven and his customers in a blur of hospitality. It's the opening night of his brainchild Toucan, a Mediterranean "fusion" eatery that Twigiri hopes will give residents of once-bustling Tripoli a rare taste of normality amid political chaos. "If I think of a government that could provide everything I need, I'd risk waiting a very long time," the 46-year-old tells AFP. "It's only thanks to the people that life goes on."

The North African nation has been mired in unrest since the 2011 NATO-backed ouster of longtime dictator Moamer Kadhafi, with militants fighting for power and a piece of Libya's vast oil reserves. A militia alliance swept into the capital in August 2014, setting up its own parliament and forcing the internationally recognized administration to flee to the remote east. Although a new, UN-backed unity government has gradually asserted its authority in the capital, Tripoli residents have grown used to fending for themselves.

It is in keeping with Tripolitans' do-it-yourself spirit that Twigiri created Toucan. "There are enough people in distress," he says. "But now we want to live." His establishment is one of several cafes and restaurants to spring up in the past three months along a 15-kilometre (nine-mile) stretch of road linking several neighborhoods in western Tripoli. They are braving an economic crisis marked by a dramatic cut in oil revenues, spiraling living costs, late wages and a recent liquidity shortage.

Entrepreneurs hope the unity government can calm some of the chaos befalling Libya, particularly security in a country that is increasingly a haven for extremists including the Islamic State group. "Once people feel safe, they invest," explains Abdelqader Al-Kanuni, president of a local charitable fund. Tripoli remains dogged by sporadic violence but even a near-total breakdown of daily routine has failed to sap one passion all of its residents agree on: a love of coffee. Libyans drink the stuff "morning, noon and night," according to Mohamad Aguilu, who two months ago opened his Harley Davidson Cafe on Tripoli's western fringe.

'You need courage'

Coffee is often imported from former colonial power Italy along with clean, modern machines with which to make it. In straitened times such as these, import costs could impair Libyans' coffee intake, but Aguilu says there are still cafes to suit every pocket. Nevertheless, he is fully aware of the economic and security risks involved in the business. "You need to have courage," he says in his coffee shop, which each afternoon is flanked by several chrome motorcycles that give the spot its name. "You have to throw yourself out there. Then it's make or break." In the family section of Cafe Veranda, a renowned patisserie which despite the odds has maintained its reputation after its Italian chef fled in 2011, immaculately manicured cousins Hind, Mira and Lamaan struggle to make themselves heard above the hubbub. "Pastimes are limited" in Tripoli, says Mira, a 23-year-old pharmacy student. "There are cafes, hours spent on Facebook, or both at the same time."

Hind, 25, says the capital's cafes and restaurants are a good way of giving them "the feeling" of a social life. "If

they are open then everything is fine. Even during bombings or economic crises, people will always drink coffee." For Twigiri, whose restaurant looks out over date palms planted to replace a wall built by Gadhafi's sons to block access to the beach, Tripoli's cafe culture is a symbol of a people unbowed by turmoil. "Tripolitans bend-they don't break," he says. — AFP



A Libyan chef cooks a pizza at "Toucan" a newly opened Mediterranean "fusion" restaurant.



Libyan bikers arrive on their Harley Davidson motorbikes to the 'Harley Davidson Cafe'.



A Libyan waiter serves food at "Toucan" a newly opened Mediterranean "fusion" restaurant.



Libyans speak with a waiter at "Toucan".



Libyans eat at "Toucan" a newly opened Mediterranean "fusion" restaurant.

Lifestyle

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US actor Vin Diesel arrives at the Prado promenade in Havana to watch the Chanel performance. — AP/ AFP



Fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld, center, attends the presentation of his 'cruise' line for fashion house Chanel, at the Paseo del Prado street in Havana, Cuba.



Drivers of vintage American cars receive their final instructions on how to bring in the fashion models that will take part in the upcoming Chanel fashion show.



Brazilian top model Gisele Bündchen, second right, attends the presentation of fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld's 'cruise'.



Anglo-Scottish actress, performance artist, model, and fashion icon Tilda Swinton arrives at the Prado promenade in Havana.

Fashionistas, celebrities jam Chanel fashion show in Havana

Wealthy fashionistas and celebrities from around the world flocked beneath klieg lights yesterday night on a grand Havana colonial avenue transformed into a private runway for French fashion house Chanel. With hundreds of security agents holding ordinary Cubans behind police lines blocks away, actors Tilda Swinton and Vin Diesel, supermodel Gisele Bündchen and Cuban music stars Gente de Zona and Omara Portuondo watched slender models sashay down Prado boulevard in casual summer clothes that seemed inspired by the Art Deco elegance of pre-revolutionary Cuba.

With the heart of the Cuban capital effectively privatized by an international corporation under the watchful eye of the Cuban state, the premiere of Chanel 2016/2017 "cruise" line offered a startling sight in a country officially dedicated to social equality and the rejection of material wealth.

Chanel welcomed the chance to show its creations in an unusual spot. "To explore new horizons is a way to fire imaginations and renew the vision of our brand while sharing the culture and heritage of the locations chosen for our fashion shows," it said in a statement.

The show was the most extreme manifestation to date of the hot new status Cuba has assumed in the international art and cultural scene since the December 2014 declaration of detente with the United States. President Barack Obama visited in March, the Rolling Stones performed in Havana the same week, the first US cruise in nearly four decades docked Monday and the latest installment of the multibillion-dollar "Fast and Furious" action movie franchise is filming here now. Many Cubans say they are delighted their country is opening itself to the world, offering ordinary people a first-hand look at celebrities and extravagant productions. But the rampant display of wealth on the streets of Havana is providing fodder for many already disenchanted by Cuba's failure to deliver on promises of socialist equality.

Mabel Fernandez, a radio announcer, arrived four hours before the start of the show eager to give her 14-year-old daughter a taste of a world of international fashion that the girl had only seen on television and in movies. "We need this type of novel event so people can know more of culture," she said. But as police swarmed the area in the hours before the show, virtually all residents of the capital were swept behind yellow barricades and unbroken lines of uniformed and plainclothes police at least a block away. Reinaldo Fonseca, a local model, stood with a group of friends similarly trying to make their careers in fashion and watched as rich foreigners with invitations arrived at the event in specially rented antique American sedans. "It's a shame they don't let us pass," he said. — AP

