

Filipinos in Kuwait elect Duterte in landslide



Impeachment drive against Rousseff tips into chaos



Indian PM releases his degrees in 'fake graduation' row



Cavs sweep into Eastern finals, Thunder pull level with Spurs



YEMEN FOES RESUME DIRECT TALKS AFTER MEDIATION: UN

SAUDI FORCES INTERCEPT BALLISTIC MISSILE FROM YEMEN



Min 25°
Max 38°
High Tide 02:50 & 13:33
Low Tide 08:16 & 21:05



150 FILS
NO: 16869
40 PAGES

TWO KILLED BY LIGHTNING STRIKE AT SEA

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: In a rare incident of its kind, a coastguard diver and a citizen were killed after they were struck by a lightning bolt off Khairan beach yesterday. The Interior Ministry said in a statement that a jet ski of citizen Saad Khaled Al-Shereeda broke down and a coastguard boat was dispatched to rescue him. The ministry added that the coastguard diver, Abdullah Othman Al-Doussary, jumped in the water to help the man, but they were both struck by lightning and were killed instantly. In October last year, an Asian was killed by lightning in northern Kuwait during a freak storm. It is estimated that 6,000 to as many as 24,000 people are killed around the world by lightning strikes every year.



SEOUL: Kuwaiti Prime Minister HH Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets South Korean President Park Geun-hye at the Blue House yesterday. — KUNA (See Page 2)

KUWAIT: Yemen's warring parties resumed face-to-face talks yesterday following a two-day interruption after mediation efforts and an appeal by the UN envoy, the United Nations said. A UN spokesman told AFP that three joint working groups formed last week met yesterday afternoon in an attempt to resume discussion of the key issues. These include the withdrawal of the Iran-backed Houthi rebels from areas they occupied in a 2014 offensive, the surrender of weapons, the release of prisoners and detainees and agreeing a political settlement.

Hours after the talks resumed, Saudi air defenses intercepted a ballistic missile fired from Yemen. The Arab coalition backing the Yemeni government made the announcement and slammed a "dangerous escalation" by the Houthis. The coalition is cooperating with the international community "to maintain calm and help the Kuwait talks to succeed", a statement said. But it also warned that the coalition "reserves the right to retaliate at the appropriate time and place" if there are further attacks.

The renewed direct talks came a day after mediation by the Kuwaiti foreign minister, ambassadors of the mostly Western 18 countries backing the peace process and UN Special envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed. Earlier yesterday, Ould Cheikh Ahmed urged the two warring parties to make concessions to save peace talks aimed at ending a devastating 13-month war in the Arabian Peninsula country. "The participants in the Kuwait negotiations must reflect the aspirations of the Yemeni people. I am confident that Yemenis want an end to the conflict," Ould Cheikh Ahmed said in a statement.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed later praised the delegations for their cooperation but warned that problems still existed. "There is no doubt that we are at a true crossroads."

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DAVAO CITY: Presidential candidate Mayor Rodrigo Duterte clenches his fist prior to voting in a polling precinct at Daniel R Aguinaldo National High School in the Matina district of his hometown yesterday. — AP

DUTERTE WINS PHILIPPINE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

MANILA: Anti-establishment firebrand Rodrigo Duterte secured a huge win in the Philippine presidential elections, according to a poll monitor, after an incendiary campaign dominated by his profanity-laced vows to kill criminals. Duterte, the longtime mayor of the southern city of Davao, hypnotized millions with his vows of brutal but quick solutions to the nation's twin plagues of crime and poverty, which many believed had worsened despite strong economic growth in recent years.

And after a record turnout of voters in yesterday's elections, Duterte scored a commanding victory, according to data released by the PPCRV, a Catholic Church-run poll monitor accredited by the government to tally the votes. With 88 percent of the vote counted early today morning, Duterte had an insurmountable lead of 5.84 million votes over his nearest rival, administration candidate Mar Roxas, according to the data. "It's with humility, extreme humility, that I accept this, the mandate of the people," Duterte told AFP as the results came in. "What I can promise you is that I will do my very best not just in my waking hours but even in my sleep."

Duterte had 38.6 percent of the vote, with Roxas on 23.12 percent and Senator Grace Poe in third with 21.76 percent, according to PPCRV. Poe, the adopted daughter of movie stars, had already conceded just after midnight today. "As a

staunch supporter of electoral reform, I have a firm belief in the voice and sentiment of our people. I honor the result of our elections," Poe told reporters in Manila. "I congratulate Mayor Rodrigo Duterte and pledge my support in working to heal our land and to unite our people toward the continued development of our country." In the Philippines, a winner is decided simply by whomever gets the most votes.

Duterte, a pugnacious 71-year-old, surged from outsider to the top of surveys with cuss-filled vows to kill tens of thousands of criminals, threats to establish one-man rule if lawmakers disobeyed him and promises to embrace communist rebels. He also boasted repeatedly about his Viagra-fuelled affairs, while promising voters his mistresses would not cost a lot because he kept them in cheap boarding houses and took them to short-stay hotels for sex.

Duterte caused further disgust in international diplomatic circles with a joke that he wanted to rape a "beautiful" Australian missionary who was killed in a 1989 Philippine prison riot, and by abusing the pope. Departing President Benigno Aquino, whose mother led the democracy movement that ousted Ferdinand Marcos three decades ago, had warned repeatedly the nation was at risk of succumbing to another dictatorship.

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NOD TO LABOR LAW AMENDMENTS

CABINET OKS LIMAK AIRPORT CONTRACT • MP THREATENS TO GRILL SALEH

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The National Assembly health and labor committee yesterday agreed to amend five articles of the 2010 labor law for the private sector to mainly stiffen penalty against visa traders, the rapporteur of the panel said. MP Saadoun Hammad said the panel agreed to amend article 138 to increase the fine against employers who recruit workers from outside the country or hire them locally and fail to provide them with the prescribed jobs.

The original article penalizes such employers for up to three years in jail and a fine of between KD 1,000 and 5,000. The amendment raised the fine to between KD 2,000 and 10,000 per worker. The fine also applies to workers who employ foreign workers not on their residency. Visa trading has been one of the most serious crimes in the labor market and for which Kuwait has been repeatedly placed on the US blacklist of trafficking in persons.

The ministry of social affairs and labor has referred a large number of companies to the public prosecution on suspicion of visa trading. The committee also agreed to amend article 140 which deals with violations against ministry inspectors who make sure private sector businesses comply with the law. It raised the fine on the violation from the current maximum of KD 1,000 and made it at least KD 500 and up to KD 1,000.

It also amended article 142 which stipulates a jail term not exceeding six months and a fine of up to KD 2,000 for those who open an establishment after the ministry inspectors have ordered its partial or total closure.

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CAIRO: Egyptian firefighters fight a fire at the popular market area of Al-Atabaa in downtown Cairo yesterday. — AFP

TWO DEAD, 88 INJURED IN DOWNTOWN CAIRO FIRE

CAIRO: Two people died and 88 others including firefighters were injured yesterday when a fire spread quickly through a commercial area in downtown Cairo, Egyptian officials said. It is not yet known what caused the blaze that erupted overnight in a small hotel in the Al-Mosky neighborhood not far from the Al-Azhar mosque, and spread rapidly to four nearby buildings, police told AFP. The buildings included warehouses containing plastic

materials which helped the fire to spread. "There are two dead and 88 injured," health ministry spokesman Khaled Megahed told AFP. "Two charred bodies were found in the rubble," he said, adding that most of the injured were suffering from smoke inhalation. By midday the fire had been brought under control. Cairo fire chief Gamal Halawa said, adding that 16 firefighters and police also suffered from smoke inhalation. — AFP

EARTHLINGS WATCH AS TINY MERCURY SAILS PAST SUN

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida: Tiny Mercury, the solar system's innermost planet, sailed across the face of the sun yesterday, a celestial dance that occurs about once every decade as Earth and its smaller neighboring planet align in space. The journey, which astronomers refer to as a "transit," began with what looked to be a small, black dot on the edge of the sun at 7:12 am EDT (1112 GMT), images relayed live on NASA TV showed. Over the next seven and a half hours, Mercury, which travels at a speed of 48 km a second, crossed the face of the sun, a spectacle last seen in 2006.

"It's all about perspective," NASA planetary sciences chief Jim Green said during a panel discussion aired on NASA TV. Mercury's orbit around the sun is more tilted than Earth's so it only rarely appears to cross the sun relative to Earth's line of sight,

Green said. About 13 times a century, Mercury and Earth line up, giving armchair stargazers and professional astronomers a chance to view Mercury as it passes between Earth and the sun.

Yesterday's transit was the first since NASA's MESSENGER mission to Mercury, which orbited the planet from 2011 to 2015. The spacecraft relayed startling details of Mercury's heavily cratered and unexpectedly diverse landscape. Though temperatures on Mercury's surface reach 427 degrees Celsius - hot enough to melt lead - the planet also has deep craters where the sun never shines. These pits, where temperatures rival the coldest places in the solar system, contain frozen water and organic materials.

During yesterday's transit, astronomers hope to build on MESSENGER's findings by

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WASHINGTON: The planet Mercury is seen in silhouette (lower left) as it transits across the face of the sun yesterday from NASA headquarters. — AFP



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday former Sudanese president Aburrahman Suwar al-Dahab on the occasion of his visit to the country. Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah attended the meeting. — KUNA

CABINET ASKS KU TO COORDINATE WITH UNDP OVER AL-SHADADIYAH UNIVERSITY

KUWAIT: The Cabinet reviewed the development of the Sabah Al-Salem Kuwait University City; a planned academic project touted as one of the largest educational campuses in the world. In its meeting yesterday, the Cabinet asked Kuwait University (KU) to coordinate with the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development (UNDP), in efforts to bring the grand project in Al-Shadadiyah, Southwest of Kuwait city, to fruition.

Letters

The Cabinet looked over a letter sent to His Highness the Amir from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz, which comes amid continued cooperation between both nations to serve common interests and uphold stability and security in the region.

Similarly, the Cabinet also reviewed a letter sent to His Highness

the Amir by Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, which extends an invitation to Kuwait to participate in the Expo Dubai exhibition.

Moreover, the Cabinet also reviewed another letter sent to His Highness the Amir by Pakistani President Mamnoon Hussain, which invites Kuwait to partake in the 15th meeting of the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMSTECH), slated for the Pakistani capital Islamabad, at the end of the month.

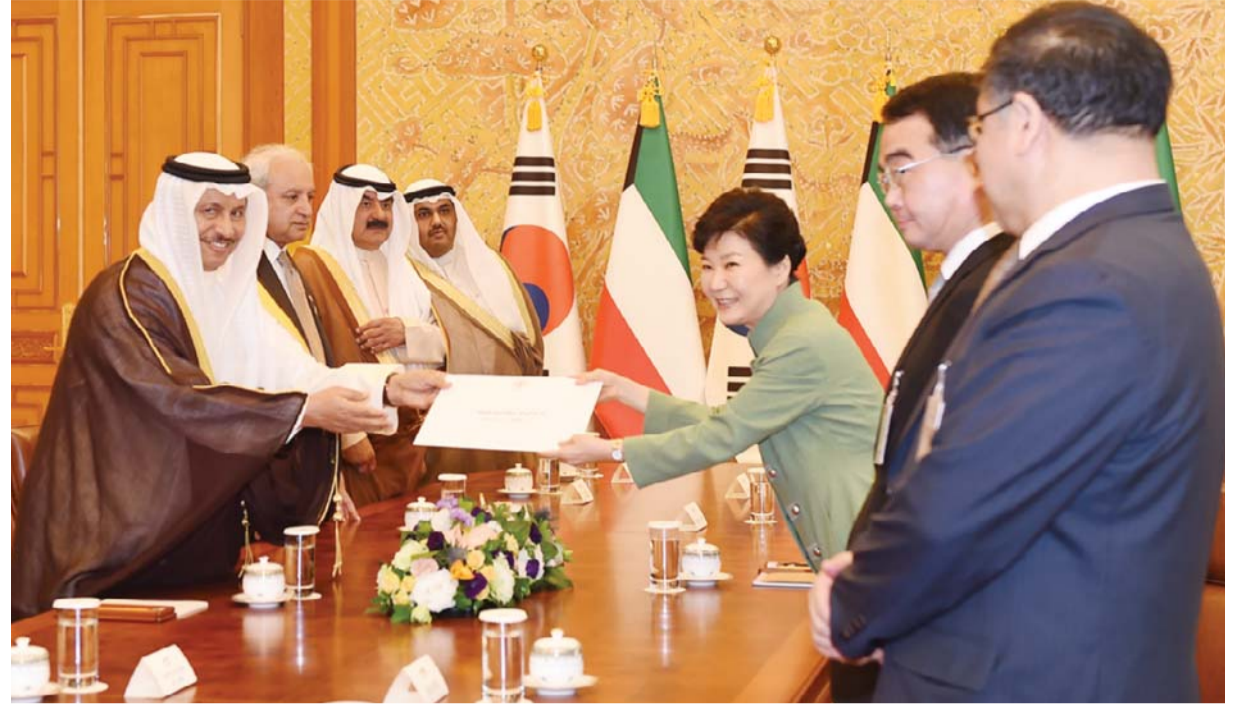
The Cabinet also looked over a letter sent to His Highness the Amir by Chairman of the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) and former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Tun Musa Hitam. The letter extends an

invitation to His Highness the Amir to participate in the 12th WIEF forum entitled, "Decentralizing Growth and Empowering Future Business," set to take place in Jakarta in August.

Officials appointed

Meanwhile, the Cabinet approved a draft decree to appoint Talal Nayef Al-Shemiri as an Assistant Secretary General of the General Secretariat of the Higher Council for Planning and Development, at rank of Assistant Undersecretary. Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah made this announcement during the meeting.

The Cabinet also approved a draft decree of appointing Humoud Al-Enezi as Assistant Secretary General of the General Secretariat Higher Council for Governorates Affairs, at the rank of Assistant Undersecretary. — KUNA



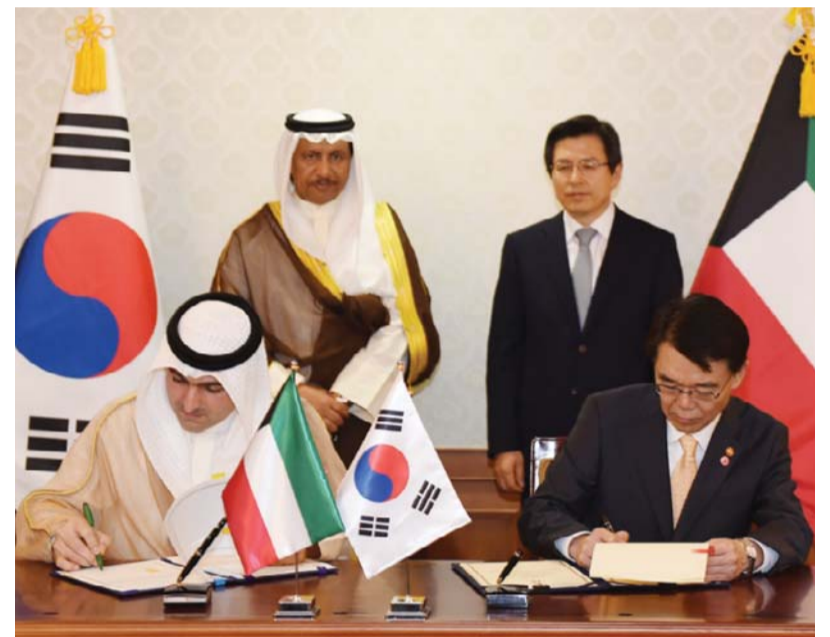
Kuwaiti Premier His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah hands over a letter from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to South Korean President Park Geun-hye.

KUWAIT, SOUTH KOREA SIGN DEAL TO BUILD SMART CITY

ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY CITY HOUSES 30,000 UNITS

SEOUL: Kuwait and South Korea signed an agreement to build an environment-friendly city in the Gulf states, Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) announced yesterday. The agreement includes the establishment of a joint company between the two countries aimed at the establishment of Saad Al-Abdullah City, which includes more than 30,000 housing units. Saad Al-Abdullah City will be the first smart and environment-friendly city in Kuwait and in line with international standards, which proves the commitment of Kuwait with international climate, which was signed at the United Nations last April, KUNA reported.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said the partnership agreement in the housing domain comes to emphasize the government's keenness to resolve the housing problems.



SEOUL: Kuwait's Minister of State for Housing Affairs Yasser Abul and Korean Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport Kang Ho-in sign an agreement to build an environment-friendly city in Kuwait. — KUNA photo

and issues of common concern, were discussed during the talks.

Official talks

Kuwait's visiting Prime Minister had earlier held official talks with his Korean counterpart Hwang Kyo-ahn. The cordial talks reflected deep-rooted bilateral relations, especially in economic, trade, investment and educational fields. Regional and international developments, mainly the situation in the Middle East and Asia, in addition to counterterrorism efforts

and issues of common concern, were discussed during the talks.

Also yesterday, His Highness the Prime Minister met with South Korean President Park Geun-hye at the Blue House. During the meeting, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak conveyed greetings on behalf of Kuwait's leadership and handed over a written letter from His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, inviting President Park to Kuwait. The meeting also highlighted bilateral relations, current developments, and issues of common concerns. The meeting was attended by His Highness the premier's accompanying delegation. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah chairs the Cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

PREMIER'S JAPAN VISIT TO BOOST TIES: AMBASSADOR

TOKYO: Kuwait's Ambassador to Japan Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi highlighted His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah's impending visit to Japan on May 11-13, saying the visit will serve to boost bilateral ties. Otaibi noted in a statement yesterday that His Highness the Prime Minister's visit to Japan, his first since ascending to the post, is the latest in an exchange of high profile visits between both nations.

Otaibi said that Japanese Prime Minister

Shinzo Abe's visit to Kuwait in August 2013 yielded positive results, as it produced increased cultural and political cooperation between both countries. "Ever since the inception of diplomatic ties between Kuwait and Tokyo, bilateral ties have come a long way," Otaibi noted.

Kuwait's Ambassador in Tokyo also said that both countries have signed a myriad of agreements in a host of realms, including political, environmental, educational and touristic ones. These agreements are a testa-

ment to Kuwait's willingness to benefit from Japan's expertise, he added.

Moreover, Otaibi revealed that the visit will also feature an economic forum organized by Kuwait, with the aim of familiarizing Japanese companies with investment opportunities available in Kuwait. "This is the dawn of a brighter future for bilateral ties," Otaibi said. His Highness the Prime Minister's anticipated visit to Japan comes as part of an extensive Asian tour that also took him to Bangladesh, Vietnam and South Korea. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with Romanian Ambassador to Kuwait Vasile Sofineti on issues of common interest. The Amiri Diwan Minister also received the Head of the Kuwaiti and Arab Tennis Federation Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. —KUNA



Al Bader Group, House of Travel, House of Travel-Cargo, Badur Travel & Badur Aviation

Deeply mourn the demise of our colleague & friend

Mr. Louis Francis Rajan



who was called to his heavenly abode on Sunday 8th May, 2016

Our prayers and thoughts are with his grieving family his wife Mrs. Dora and daughters Roshini & Ranjini

The body will be available for viewing at Al Sabah Hospital Mortuary @ 10:00 am on Wed. 11th May, 2016

May his soul Rest in Peace



KUWAIT: Consul General Raul Dado inspects the polling precincts at the embassy. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Seated with Ambassador Villa (center) are Philippine Labor Attache to Kuwait Chavez (left) and Administrative Officer Girly Caba.



The last voter being assisted by embassy's election officials.

DUTERTE WINS BY LANDSLIDE IN KUWAIT

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Rodrigo Roa Duterte, the 'Donald Trump' of the Philippines, is clearly the favorite of Filipinos not only back home, but also at the Overseas Absentee Voting (OAV) conducted in Kuwait. Based on the official result last night at the Philippine Embassy in Faiha, Duterte lead by far with 9,747 votes against his nearest rival Grace Poe, who only got 598 votes. "By definition of landslide, Rodrigo Duterte definitely won by a landslide here in Kuwait," said Philippine Consul General Raul Dado, who is overseeing the Philippine embassy election since the start of OAV on April 9 which culminated yesterday, synchronized with the Philippine elections.

Dado said the conduct of elections here was orderly, honest and Filipinos were able to select their candidates according to their conscience. "From day one, I have noticed the enthusiasm of every Filipino who participated in the election process. This is very encouraging and I have seen the favorite candidate winning. In the process of this exercise, I have also witnessed the respect and support of every Filipino to each other. Even if they have different opinions, they still respect each other," he said.

24.81 percent

Immediately after closing the precincts at noon, Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Renato Pedro Villa, who is acting as chairman of the Board of Election Canvasser, and his deputy Cesar Chavez, also the Philippine Labor Attache to Kuwait, convened the board for canvassing of

votes. "Voter turnout was 24.81 percent or 14,524 individuals. We have 58,533 registered voters in Kuwait and the result is reasonable since many of the voters could not go out and vote as the majority of household service workers have to seek permission from their employers," he added. Many Filipino household service workers here work seven days a week, and if they are not accompanied by their employers, they are not able to take a day off even once a month.

"The turnout is not so ideal but compared to the last elections, the turnout has doubled. We projected it a bit higher, but there are so many obstacles in the path of the workers," he said. The embassy synchronized closed the election precincts here exactly at noon to the closing time of elections back home.

The official OAV result in Kuwait (for president) is as follows: Rodrigo Duterte (9,747) Jejomar Binay (224), Miriam Defensor Santiago (580), Grace Poe (598) and Mar Roxas (1,021). For vice president, Bongbong Marcos was leading with 4,777 votes against his closest rival Allan Peter Cayetano with 4,666 votes. Among other vice presidential contenders, Leni Robredo got 1,999 votes, Chiz Escudero (545) Sonny Trillanes (85) and Gringo Honasan (85).

A month's period

The presidential election in the Philippines was held yesterday, but overseas Filipinos were given a month's period to cast their votes at their respective missions abroad. Many of the voters who selected Duterte want a tougher president

to replace the outgoing president Benigno Simion Aquino III. Clyn Bioco Ivilla, 32, said: "I want him to be our next president. He is the best candidate to lead the country because he has a track record in Davao City. I want my family to be safe at all times and this is what he did in Davao, which if elected, I know he could also do the same in the Philippines," he said.

Elpedio Alegado, 40, also wants Duterte: "I want his anti-criminality policy and his tough campaign to eradicate drugs in the Philippines. Drugs have already destroyed many lives and if not controlled, we'll turn into a drug addicted country. Enough of criminality, and if he wins, he promised to kill criminals and people who are not following the law," he said.

Pricilla Cruz, 59, from Zambales, voted for Grace Poe. However, she found herself in the office of Dado after her vote was not counted based on the receipt provided by the vote counting machine (VCM). "I put a dot in the oval only; I was thinking it was the safest way to avoid over-shading the oval. I was informed about the shading to be careful - perhaps I did not listen enough," she admitted. "I do not want to blame them - I thought the dot would be enough for the machine to count my vote," she lamented.

Thankful

But Pricilla was thankful she was able to participate in the national election for the first time since working in Kuwait from 1986. "I have been here in Kuwait for many years now and I am happy to be participating in the election. I am a mother of two, one is in Canada and she wants me to join her next year. I will see - I am old and I want to retire," she said. Asked why she voted for Poe, she said she liked her because she represents many Filipinos. "Grace is a founding and she was able to make it to the top; she a mother, and very soft spoken. She really has a plan for the country and she wants it done quickly. She is very focused, and I hope she will win," she said.

About 10 million Filipinos work abroad - but only 1.3 million are registered as Overseas Absentee Voters (OAVs). In Kuwait, 200,000 Filipinos are eligible to vote, but only around 58,533 are registered and could vote in this year's election. The Overseas Absentee Voting Act is a law in the Philippines passed on Feb 13, 2003 which provides for a system for citizens of the Philippines residing or working outside the Philippines to vote in an election. The process is being implemented by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) with the help of the Department of Foreign Affairs.



DELEGATION TO ATTEND FIFA GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A public delegation comprising of MP Abdullah Maayouf and some former football players like Mohammed Karam, Saad Al-Houti and Naeem Saad will head to Mexico to attend FIFA's 66th general assembly meeting due to be held on May 12 and 13. Commenting on the visit, Maayouf stressed that the delegation would meet heads of football federations to explain Kuwait's cause and try to lift the ban imposed on Kuwaiti sports.

Public beaches

MP Abdulrahman Al-Jeeran urged Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to closely watch public beaches and resorts because he had received several complaints from citizens about what he described as 'scandalous clothing,' noting that this was in violation of public etiquette and norms.

COURT ORDERS MINISTRY TO PAY STUDENT KD 10,000 FOR INJURY

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A court order yesterday mandated the Ministry of Education to compensate a citizen KD 10,000, the cost of treating an eye injury his son sustained during the school day in a public school. Notably, the father had sued the ministry providing medical reports from Spanish hospitals where he took his son for treatment for the injury that weakened his eyesight by at least five percent.

House costs

The Public Authority for Housing Welfare's official spokesperson Ibrahim Al-Nashi strongly denied social media reports claiming that a 'To Whom it May Concern' certificate was allegedly issued by the authority showing the cost of Jaber Al-Ahmad City houses. He stressed that what that paper, which was not endorsed by the authority, detailed was 'untrue'. Nashi urged the public not to believe any such reports about the authority's projects unless officially endorsed by the authority itself. "Many social media accounts have been posting

false news about the authority and its projects," he emphasized.

Multistorey parking

Municipal Council member and head of Hawally committee Yousif Al-Ghareeb said that in its meeting yesterday, the committee discussed a proposal by former MP Mukhled Al-Azmi requesting license to build a multistorey pay-and-park building outside the Hawally passport and immigration department. Ghareeb added that the committee also agreed to allocate two land pieces to build a headquarters for GCC and a training center for intellectual property rights in West Mishref.

Roadmap

Chairman of Kuwait Fishermen Union Thamer Al-Sowayyan said that the union's board met to set a roadmap for the coming period with a new vision for the fishing sector in general, concerning ways of preserving fish resources and protecting the sea from violations committed by intruders and amateur fishermen who use picnic boats and profession-

al fishing gear for unlicensed fishing. "These people destroy the marine environment and drain fish resources," he said, pointing that the union was keen on preventing over-fishing and illegal fishing during fishing ban periods. Sowayyan also urged the authorities to impose stricter penalties on the owners of picnic boats and amateurs for the serious environmental violations they commit.

Sowayyan added that union demands a 'seat' (membership/representation) in the Environment Public Authority's board for the fishermen union as well as agriculture, livestock herders and dairy products producers' unions so that they could help make the right decisions and coordinate with them. Commenting on the issue of flooding local market with imported fish, Sowayyan stressed that the union has no objections to importing fish as long as importers sold it for reasonable prices, filled the gap resulting from lack of local fish and that shipments arrive with full official documents to protect consumers' health.

KUWAITI OFFICIAL STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION IN SOFEX IN AMMAN

AMMAN: Kuwait's Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Khaled Al-Kheder has stressed the importance of participation in the Special Operations Forces Exhibition and Conference (SOFEX). Kheder made the statement yesterday on the sidelines of inaugurating the event, adding that it is the largest one in the world and the only one in its kind in the region in this field. He said it is a forum of boosting national and general security.

Kuwait is taking part in the exhibition with a high-level delegation to benefit from experts and senior military officials, and hold discussions on ways to foster security, he said. It is an opportunity to coordinate efforts and discuss axes of joint cooperation in the framework of fulfilling the "distinguished" path of Kuwaiti-Jordanian cooperation in accordance with the visions of the two leaders, he pointed out.

Meanwhile, Commander of Jordan Joint Special Operations Adnan Al-Abbadi has commended military relations with Kuwait, describing them as "distinguished and strategic." Armed forces of both Kuwait and Jordan are working together and adopting same techniques, he said, adding that this is the fruit of exchanging constantly views, expertise and drills. Kuwait's security and stability is part of Jordan's security and stability, he stressed.—KUNA

JUVENILE OFFENDERS SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH ALL MEANS OF SOCIAL CARE: MINISTER

KUWAIT: Juvenile offenders should be provided with all means of social care to rehabilitate them and make them competent members of the society, Minister of Social Affairs and State Minister for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih stressed yesterday. She made this remark at the opening of a GCC seminar on juvenile offenders. The seminar is organized by the Executive Bureau of the GCC Social Affairs and Labor Ministers Council.

Juvenile delinquency can be corrected by providing social, religious, moral and psychological guidance, the Minister said at the seminar. "Adolescents should be protected at a young age from any negative and corrupt environment." She hoped that the two-day seminar would result in applicable recommendations that could correct the behavior of delinquent juveniles. Meanwhile, Director of the GCC Executive Bureau Dr Amer Al-Hajri said that the GCC countries spared no effort in dealing with the growing juvenile misconduct by set-

ting up various programs and activities in education, health, art and vocation as well as those programs that focus on the psychological aspects of those young adults. "Taking those adolescent under our wings is the responsibility of the state, the household, and the civic community," an assisting secretary at the Ministry of Social Affairs Dr Fatima Al-Mulla pointed out. The seminar aims at putting out the right solutions for juvenile delinquencies rehabilitation, she added.—KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials attend a GCC seminar on juvenile offenders yesterday. —KUNA

In Brief

CROWN PRINCE PATRONIZES KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah will patronize the 23th Karate Championship, organized by Kuwait Karate Federation. The closing ceremony will be held on Tuesday at the Federation's headquarters at 5:00 pm. Retired Lieutenant Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Governor of Hawalli, will attend on behalf of His Highness the Crown Prince. — KUNA



RAIN FALLS IN SOUTHERN AREAS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Meteorologists' forecasts of rain fall yesterday were accurate as scattered rain, sometimes accompanied by thunder, fell on southern areas of Wafra, Um Al-Haiman, Sabah Al-Ahmed, Sabahiya and Fahad Al-Ahmed.



ACTION PLAN TO DISSOLVE CRISIS

CAIRO: Arab Parliament (AP) President Ahmad Al-Jarwan announced an action plan and a roadmap to conclude a political solution to the Syria crisis. The step aims to shift crisis-settlement efforts from the international framework to an Arab one. Meanwhile, AP Vice President, Kuwaiti MP Mohammad Al-Jabri has stressed the importance of taking "practical steps" to settle the Syrian crisis and protect civilians against "the brutal massacres committed by the Syrian regime." — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A traditional Kuwaiti ship sails during an annual event called the 'Pearl Diving Trip' held to commemorate diving and trade voyages during pre-oil Kuwait. — KUNA

KUWAITI-PALESTINIAN EXHIBITION OPENS IN RAMALLAH

RAMALLAH: Palestinian Minister of Culture Ehab Bseiso and head Kuwaiti cultural delegation to Ramallah Mansour Al-Enezi, inaugurated Sunday evening 'The Kuwaiti-Palestinian relations' photo exhibition and 'Palestinian cause' postage stamp exhibition.

The Palestinian cause was present in the Kuwaiti stamps' exhibition to the visitors of the Palestinian International Book Fair, which kicked off last Saturday in Ramallah, in the presence of Minister of Information and

Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

The exhibition included photographs by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, as well as photos of volunteers from the Kuwait Red Crescent Society, showing Kuwait's support to Palestine.

Bseiso said that the photographs reflected the political and economic relationship between Kuwait and Palestine,

and "The Kuwaiti postage stamps carried the Palestinian concern since the setback and continued during the subsequent periods, which reflected the symbolic dimension in the relationship between Kuwait and Palestine," he added.

"We tried through this simple Panorama to offer a panel that expresses Kuwait's solidarity with the Palestinian people and their right of self-determination," Enezi said. He stressed Kuwait's keenness to include publications of

the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters in Kuwait pavilion, as well as issues of Al-Arabi magazine and what has been issued by government institutions about the Palestinian cause. He pointed out that the Kuwaiti pavilion also included novels and book by Kuwaiti writers "to shed light on Kuwait's cultural scene." "Our goal is to communicate with Palestinian intellectuals and to stand by them against attempts to distort the identity and obstruct creativity," he added. — KUNA



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A FAMILY UNDER SIEGE



By Talal Al-Ghannam

Good morning my dear and honorable friends. In this article, I would like to narrate a story about a human being here in Kuwait with her son who have been living in a state of misery for the past three and half years. This poor lady came to Kuwait seven years ago and got employed in a reputed company with a very good salary, then ended up transferring to another. The poor woman got very sick and stayed home for three days as she could not move. The company filed an absconding case against her, and that coincided with the termination of her visa along with her son's. The poor duo has since been confined in a 3x3 bedroom with no single form of entertainment except for a personal computer they use to communicate with their loved ones back home. The room does not even have a TV set. They share a bathroom with others living in the same apartment. The poor lady works online to pay for her rent which is equivalent exactly to what she makes out of her job. The poor duo sometimes miss dinner and wait for the morning to eat breakfast as a sort of rationalization of commodities that they receive from good doers. The poor woman was diagnosed with cancer a few years back but has not completed the procedures, ending up taking pain killers every day in a way to soothe the terrible pain associated with this nasty disease. She can barely stand on her feet for a couple of minutes and she must sit down. And by sitting down for a long time, her spine nerve aches as well because she had undergone a spine surgery before. She also has diabetes, high blood pressure and numbness in the arm every now and then. The poor couple cannot even go out of the room and have not seen the sunlight for a few years. They have no friends except for a real Allah-fearing gentleman who helps as he could with their needs. The lady's mother has been insisting on them to come back home but the 77-year-old granny does not know anything about the fate of her loved ones here in Kuwait. She only hears promises that they are doing well and are very busy with work till Allah permits and bestows them with His mercy. The little 15-year-old boy had to quit school; he got top grades and is a genius music composer. He also has a knee problem and barely can assist his mother when she faints sometimes. The only thing they need is a true dua (prayer) from the heart that Allah may soon get them out of their ordeal and they can go home. I could not hold my tears inside my eyes every time I listen to the mother or see the poor kid awaiting a bright future like his peers. It is for real a sad story, and those with weak hearts would not tolerate seeing this small family suffer.

Till the next article Insha Allah.

MAN KILLED, THREE INJURED IN FIRE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A person was killed and three others, including two firemen, were injured when a fire broke out in a Farwaniya apartment yesterday, said security sources. On arriving at the scene, firemen found a man already dead due to smoke inhalation, they noted. An African woman suffered burn injuries while two firemen sustained various burns while trying to rescue her, they added. The fire was controlled and the three injured people were rushed to hospital for treatment.

Suicide attempt

A 20-year-old Kuwaiti citizen was arrested in Khaitan where he was trying to commit suicide, said security sources, noting that the man had climbed a building and was planning to jump because he had been having some family and financial problems.

Firemen managed to prevent him from jumping and handed him over to the police.

Traffic inspections

The Ministry of Interior's relations and security media department announced that traffic police launched sudden inspections in all six governorates last week (May 1-7) that resulted in filing 47,862 tickets, detaining one bike, locating four stolen vehicles, detaining 24 motorists for serious traffic violations they committed, referring 14 expats for deportation for driving without licenses and dealing with 1,558 accidents that caused 301 injuries.

Drug possession

An Asian man was arrested on arrival at Kuwait international Airport with possession of two kilograms of marijuana he had hidden in his luggage. He was taken to the Drug Control General Department for further action.

IRAN PROTESTS TO KUWAIT OVER 'ANTI-IRAN' RALLY

TEHRAN: Iran yesterday protested to the Kuwaiti government over authorizing what it described as 'Iranian counterrevolutionaries' to stage demonstration in Kuwait City against Iran.

Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned Kuwaiti charge d'affaires to express Iranian protest over authorizing Iranian counterrevolutionaries to stage demonstration in Kuwait City, the Iranian News Agency (IRNA) reported.

"Gathering of a group of anti-revolutionary figures in Kuwait runs counter to international norms and the spirit of the good neighborly ties between Iran and Kuwait," said an official at the Iranian foreign ministry. The Iranian Foreign Ministry official required the Kuwaiti charge d'affaires to convey the Iranian protest to Kuwait government, IRNA reported.

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UNIFIED GULF AGENCY INSTRUMENTAL TO SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH: OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: It is imperative to have a unified Gulf agency to support scientific and technological research, Assistant Undersecretary for Foreign Trade and International Organizations' Affairs Sheikh Nimr Al-Sabah said yesterday.

Speaking at a real estate exhibition put together by Eskan Global Group, which runs until May 14, with participation of around 75 local and international companies, Sheikh Nimr said that the finishing touches are being put on this planned agency, pending an imminent announcement.

Calling this initiative a monumental one, Sheikh Nimr said that it is in line with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries' aspirations, noting that it would be instrumental to increased development and growth.

Moreover, Sheikh Nimr said that he has noticed a boost in investment in the country, adding that the ministry of trade and commerce will work to eliminate any obstacles facing investors. Sheikh Nimr also noted that the ministry supports local investment, underscoring its significance in ushering in economic growth.

Moreover, Chairperson of Eskan Global Sheikhha Fatma Al-Sabah said that the agency strives to contribute to economic growth in Kuwait, through organizing such exhibitions and events which lure numerous companies and investors.

General Manager of Eskan Global Bader Al-Dabbous said that the forum would provide companies with the opportunity to interact with their clientele. More than 75 real estate companies are participating in the exhibition, where more than 200 real estate projects will be displayed, in a bid to bring diversity to the country's investment scene. — KUNA

الانباء Al-Anbaa

DANGER OF HITTING THE TABLE

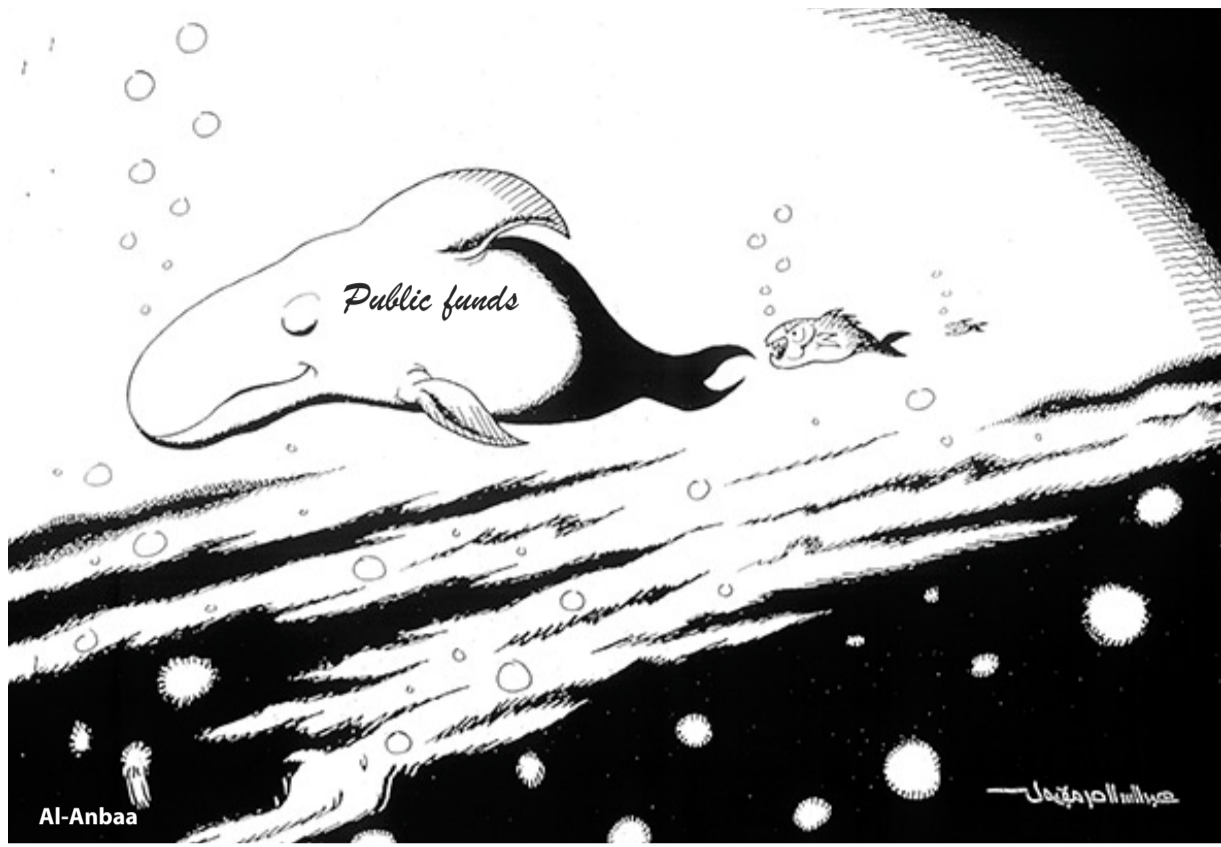
By Salah Al-Sayer

The way to hell is paved with good intentions" is a saying that is most clearly illustrated in the way some people bring up their children, where parental love turns into a reason to devastate those kids' personalities. This is very common in our Arab societies, where a couple gets married too early and children get their experiences from inexperienced parents who do not themselves fully understand life. Thus, children get all evils and damage from very loving hearts that are full of good intentions.

An inexperienced young parent believes that meeting all his kid's demands is the ideal manifestation of his parenthood. A naive inexperienced young mother who knows nothing in this life and all she cares about is posting photos of her shoes and bags on Instagram does not know the difference between her doll and her daughter. She always throws the kid to her granny, where she gets even more spoiled.

Hence, people urge Arab governments to take responsibility for teaching younger generations manners, values and sound conduct at schools. Government are also asked to enlighten families about the importance of this curriculum through seminars attended by parents so that specialized educators can tell them about the danger of 'hitting a table' whenever a child slams into it and starts crying, only to make him stop crying. This dangerous action makes kids grow up into losers who are not ready to shoulder any responsibilities.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



MINISTRY READY TO INCREASE FUEL PRICES

KUWAIT: Commerce and Industry Minister Yousef Al-Ali said the decision to raise power and water tariffs went peacefully without any effect on products in the local market, adding that the ministry is ready for the awaited fuel price rise, adding that the ministry has begun preparations to guarantee Ramadan products at controlled prices that are free from any artificial increases.

"In preparation for raising power and water tariffs as well as fuel prices, the commerce ministry has taken several measures and formed a special committee to activate supervision and follow market prices, and this was preceded with a full survey of all prices earlier in the year," he said. Ali said that the law raising power and water tariffs went by peacefully without any increase or manipulation of prices due to the



presence of supervision and awareness. He said commerce ministry went through the first stage of fear from the rise in prices, and the market was stable and did not see any artificial increases. He said the fuel price increase will be made and there is more than an opinion about its timing, adding that goods' prices will not be affected because they are transported using diesel and not gasoline. — Al-Rai

Crime

Report

Fake customs official arrested

KUWAIT: Farwaniya detectives arrested a citizen involved in several swindling cases after he posed as a customs official at the airport. A security source said the citizen was arrested after years of searching, and he was wearing a customs uniform and had a seal although he is unemployed. The source said the suspect introduced himself to businessmen and said he could bring goods into the country such as computers, mobile phones and "may be drugs", took the money and fled. The source said there are many cases against him, including 12 in Farwaniya only.

Forgery

Electronic crimes detectives arrested a citizen (an ex-soldier) for forging entry visas in exchange of money. Investigations indicated the whereabouts of a person named Hassan A, Kuwaiti, sentenced to serve 11 years in jail over several cases of armed robberies. He forged entry visas for KD 350 each. He was arrested following the legal procedures and the tools he used in the forgery were found with him. An ID in his name was also found, indicating that he is a detective with the rank of major, along with a criminal detectives' vest. He was sent to concerned authorities.

'Liquor' possession

Director of Farwaniya security Brig Saleh Al-Enezi sent four expats to the Drugs Control General Department when patrol officers found 50 bottles suspected of having liquor with them. One of them had an expired residency permit and another was wanted by detectives. Meanwhile, two Egyptians were arrested with 90 Tramadol tablets, 13 white pills thought to be drugs and KD 1,330.

Search for swindler

An Egyptian man told Maidan Hawally police he was swindled by a compatriot. He said the suspect told him he was a broker and offered him a piece of land for KD 21,000, provided the payment was in cash. The man brought all the money he had and sold his wife's jewelry and gave it to the suspect. The complainant said he asked his cousin to go and see the land, who told him the land he bought does not exist and there is no land in the area. The suspect has already left for his country.

Pedestrian mugged

Hawally detectives are searching for an unidentified suspect wearing a dishdasha who robbed a female expat and dragged her in a sandy yard. The Indian woman told Maidan Hawally police that while heading home, a man approached her and attempted to snatch her purse, but she held on it, so the thief dragged her violently. She said the purse had KD 22, a civil ID and a health card.

Smuggling foiled

Airport custom officers foiled the attempt of a Sri Lankan woman to smuggle 4,000 illicit tablets on her arrival. The drugs were found in her luggage.

Embezzlement

A citizen accused an Egyptian accountant of embezzling KD 3,500 from the company he works for. The citizen told Fahaaheel police the accountant was supposed to deposit the money in the company account, but he did not.

— Al-Anbaa, Al-Rai

الانباء Al-Anbaa

WHERE DO I GET MONEY, MINISTER?

By Nermin Al-Houti

A saw a statement by the education minister to those staging a sit-in at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), in which Badr Al-Essa said: "Where do I get money to open summer classes?" Your Excellency the minister, we wrote and lauded your stand towards those with forged degrees and sending many of them to the prosecution, and despite our lauding we said that we agreed and differ in opinions and what links us is Kuwait's interest, and here is where we start focusing on the future of the Gulf pride.

When the person who is responsible about the education of our children says that he does not have the money to educate our children, and we are considered among the donor countries to educate needy countries, here the educational pyramid of Kuwait becomes inverted.

Away from the budget, austerity and what follows in the form of decisions and procedures, what made me pause in the statement is the sentence "where do I get the money?" Here I wonder about most of our officials who squander much of public funds on their dinners, celebrations, festivals and official duties, then when it comes to Kuwait's future and working on a plan for the speedy graduation of our youth to be able to accept new batches, as we are about to get the results of the general secondary, the ministry becomes without a fiscal budget! We say... "we wonder".

Away from applied education and the dimensions of their problems, I will use an incident that proves that there is no sound financial planning at the ministry of education and that the majority of financial decisions are based on the media mood, as when some officials agree to hold an academic festival that uses public funds while we are suffering from a financial crisis according to statements of some officials, so there comes someone who for the sake of the media and photographic bonanza holds a festival that costs the country and squanders the education budget of our children - thousands of dinars. Then we get surprised by refusing to bring a foreign supervisor to discuss graduation projects. We say to our officials - enough messing up.

You call for rules and get strict with laws, and according to the rules, there must be a foreign supervisor who participates in discussing students' projects in that cultural edifice, bearing in mind that a few weeks ago, you the education officials, held parties and festivals for thousands of dinars and you did not say the budget does not allow that, but the difference is that our children are not a vehicle to have your photos and your news all over newspapers. The festival and dinners you spend much on them is for the sake of your media fabrication!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

AHLI UNITED BANK ANNOUNCES SPONSORSHIP OF KASHKA EXPO

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced yesterday that they had sponsored Kashka Expo, held at The Gate Mall in Aqilah on May 5-7, 2016. The exhibition helps support talented Kuwaiti Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs), who presented various products suiting all segments in society.

Kashka Expo helps to promote promising local small businesses through direct participation with visitors, and in turn give visitors the opportunity to discover and encourage local products.

As a proud sponsor of Kashka Expo, Ahli United Bank believes that it is important to support such initiatives that promote small businesses and encourage new talent. It also in line with their social corporate responsibility to help build a better society.

The aim is to build up communication between participants and visitors, while strengthening cooperation between participants and AUB. Through this sponsorship, AUB presented their financial products and services to highlight how they can help local entrepreneurs fulfill their needs and aspirations.



KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) sponsored a youth exhibition for video games, as part of social responsibility program.

DEPARTMENTS AUTHORIZES TO DEAL WITH SYRIANS WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES

KUWAIT: High-ranking sources said that the Cabinet has authorized the ministries of health, interior, foreign affairs and the manpower authority to make a study on legalizing the stay of Syrians infected with infectious diseases in Kuwait. The sources added that the four bodies would study the cases of Syrians who reached retirement age to allow them to transfer their residency visas to other sponsors. — Al-Anbaa

SHELTER RECEIVED 4,915 WORKERS IN ONE YEAR

KUWAIT: Director of the expatriate labor shelter at the Manpower Public Authority said the center received 4,915 laborers from March 2015 till March 2016, while 4,514 left the shelter after rehabilitating them socially and psychologically, besides resolving the material and moral damages caused by employers, while 401 workers remain.

Mutairi said their distribution by nationality is as follows: 2,103 Sri Lankan (1,972 left and 131 remain), 409 Nepalese (393 left and 16 remain), 1,599 Indians (1,562 left and 37 remain), 87 Ethiopians (80 left and 7 remain) 261 Ghanaians (203 left and 58 remain) 47 from Sierra Leone (32 left and 15 remain) 215 from Cameroon (162 left and 53 remain), 28 Nigerians (23 left and 5 remain), and 71 Filipinos (35 left and 36 remain). — Al-Jarida

MINISTRIES AUTHORIZED TO REFER STAFF WITH 30 YEARS' SERVICE TO RETIREMENT

KUWAIT: Well informed sources at the Civil Services Commission (CSC) said that following in the footsteps of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) and Ministry of Education (MoE), that had already put measures in practice, the ministries of health, awqaf and justice recently inquired about legal measures to be followed on referring employees who have been in service for over 30 years to retirement. The sources explained that according to Cabinet instructions, referral to retirement is up to each minister, who can issue administrative decisions on referring staff members to retirement. "The administrative court recently immunized ministers' right to regulate work under their jurisdiction, including referral to retirement," stressed the sources. — Al-Qabas

NEW MECHANISM TO ISSUE ARTICLE 17 PASSPORTS

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Nationality and Passports Affairs Maj Gen Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah said the nationality sector will place a new mechanism to issue article 17 passports for bedoons (stateless). "The new mechanism will allow those who have a real need to study, treatment, haj or umrah, particularly the elderly or those who run businesses, to travel after granting them a passport, but bedoons who plan to travel for tourism will not be granted such passports," he said.

He said passports already issued will not be withdrawn, but when they come for renewal, "we will make sure about their need for them, and in case it is proven they need it, it will be renewed, otherwise they will be withdrawn". About whether the procedures contradict human rights, he said: "We are committed to rights, but the bedoons who know their origins must correct their legal status and obtain passports from their original countries." — Al-Anbaa

100 FEMALE SECURITY OFFICERS AT AIRPORT



KUWAIT: Comments of a British anti-terrorism team that visited Kuwait International Airport a few days ago found their way for implementation through avoiding the mentioned drawbacks, and they started with the Interior Ministry's decision to appoint 100 Kuwaiti and Gulf women at the airport to check IDs to face the comment of the British team that said there is a shortage of women at the airport.

Interior Ministry's Acting Assistant Undersecretary for outlets security Maj Gen Faisal Al-Seneen said the ministry plans to appoint Kuwaiti and Gulf women at the airport to check and inspect women and distribute them to face shortages in three shifts. Seneen said "we deal with issues transparently and benefit from the experience of those who are ahead of us, especially a developed country like Britain".

He said facing the increased number of arrivals and departures as well as the increased number of flights and transit passengers require the increase of female workers, as "we are suffering a lot from chronic shortage in them". He said the appointees will go through a training course after the interviews. — Al-Rai



**Cameron warns
Brexit threatens
peace in Europe**

CIVIC HOPES DASHED IN LEBANON MUNICIPAL POLLS



BRASILIA: Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff is seen during a ceremony to announce the creation of new public universities at Planalto Palace in Brasilia yesterday. — AFP

ROUSSEFF IMPEACHMENT TIPS INTO CHAOS

IN STUNNING TWIST, BRAZIL SPEAKER ANNULS LOWER HOUSE VOTE

BRASILIA: The impeachment of Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff was thrown into confusion yesterday when the acting speaker of the lower house of Congress annulled an April vote by lawmakers that launched the process. Just days before the Senate seemed near-certain to suspend Rousseff for six months and open an impeachment trial, the new leader of the lower house threw a spanner in the works - the latest twist in the political crisis roiling the country.

Waldir Maranhao, the interim speaker, wrote in an order seen by AFP that a new vote in the lower house should take place on whether to impeach Rousseff in the coming days - following five official sessions in the chamber. The cancellation of the lower house vote was ordered in response to a request by Rousseff's solicitor general, who had challenged its legitimacy. However, it was not immediately clear how the chaotic new developments would play out.

The Senate had been due to start its own voting process tomorrow, with a majority expected to back suspension of Rousseff. Once suspended, she would face a trial lasting months, with a two-thirds majority needed eventually to eject her from office. It was unclear whether the Senate would recognize Maranhao's order or whether the Supreme Court would step in to decide. In the first reaction from the Senate, the head of the chamber's impeachment committee, Raimundo Lira, said that the vote would go ahead as planned,

regardless of Maranhao's intervention. However there was no immediate word from the powerful Senate president, Renan Calheiros.

A delighted-looking Rousseff interrupted a speech to supporters to say that she'd just got unconfirmed news of her impeachment hitting a roadblock. "I don't know the consequences. Please be cautious," she said, calling on her backers to "defend democracy."

Twists and Turns

The impeachment battle has taken so many unexpected twists that Brazilians refer to it as a real-life version of the Netflix political drama "House of Cards". Rousseff, from the leftist Workers' Party, is accused of illegally manipulating government budget accounts during her 2014 re-election battle to mask the seriousness of economic problems. But she says the process has been twisted into a coup by right-wingers in the second year of her second term.

Her removal had been looking increasingly certain after the lower house voted in mid-April by an overwhelming majority to send her case to the Senate for trial. In the Senate, around 50 of the 81 senators have said they planned to vote in favor of an impeachment trial, well over the simple majority needed to open the process. The vote result had been expected on Thursday, followed shortly afterwards by Rousseff's departure from the presidential offices. Ministers have reportedly already been clearing their desks.

Adding to the confusion, Maranhao, the

man at the center of the latest episode, is little-known to most Brazilians. He took the post of speaker only last week as a replacement for Eduardo Cunha, the veteran speaker and architect of the controversial impeachment drive who was forced by the Supreme Court to stand down over corruption charges.

Economic Crisis, Corruption

The political crisis comes on top of the deepest recession in decades in Latin America's biggest economy, just three months before it hosts the Olympic Games in Rio from Aug 5 to 21. The affair has heightened tensions in Brazil, which is in the midst of a giant corruption scandal involving state oil company Petrobras that has implicated numerous politicians including allies and enemies of Rousseff. Rousseff has not been formally accused of corruption like many of her rivals. But prosecutors have called for her to be investigated for allegedly trying to obstruct a probe into the Petrobras affair.

Among the high-profile suspects are Cunha and her presidential predecessor Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. If Rousseff is suspended, she would be replaced by her vice-president-turned-enemy, Michel Temer. Temer, a center-right leader, has been alleged to have been involved in the Petrobras affair but he has not been formally investigated. A Sao Paulo court has fined him for campaign financing irregularities and he could face an eight-year ban from seeking elected office. — AFP

NORTH KOREA DETAINS, EXPELS BBC REPORTER

SEOUL: A BBC reporter in North Korea was detained, interrogated for eight hours and eventually expelled over his reporting in the run-up to a rare ruling party congress, the British broadcaster said yesterday. Foreign reporters invited to cover specific events in North Korea are subjected to very tight restrictions on access and movement. Numerous journalists have been prevented from returning because their previous coverage was deemed "inaccurate" or "disrespectful" - but detaining and then expelling a reporter while still in the country is extremely rare.

The BBC journalist, Rupert Wingfield-Hayes, was about to board a plane departing from Pyongyang airport with two other BBC staff on Friday when he was stopped and taken into detention, the BBC said. He was then questioned for around eight hours, apparently over one of his reports which questioned the authenticity of a hospital his team was visiting. "He was taken to a hotel and interrogated by the security bureau here in Pyongyang before being made to sign a statement and then released" on Saturday morning, said John Sudworth, another BBC reporter covering the congress in the North Korean capital.



BEIJING: BBC's journalist Rupert Wingfield-Hayes pushes his cart past journalists as he arrives at the airport yesterday. — AP

Sudworth said the BBC had sought to keep the detention and expulsion order quiet out of concern for the safety of Wingfield-Hayes and two other members of his team, who had refused to leave on Friday after he was detained. However, an official with the North's National Peace Committee broke the news at a press conference early yesterday, when he criticized Wingfield-Hayes for "speaking very ill of the system and the leadership of the country". — AFP

FAR-RIGHT CLAIMS SCALP OF AUSTRIA CHANCELLOR



VIENNA: Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann announces his withdrawal from all his offices during a press conference yesterday. — AFP

VIENNA: Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann quit yesterday, bowing to intense pressure two weeks after the anti-immigration far-right triumphed in the first round of presidential elections. The centre-left Faymann, 56, chancellor for the past eight years, said in a surprise statement that he no longer had "strong backing" in his party, the Social Democrats (SPOe). "As a result of this insufficient support, I am accepting the consequences and resign my functions as party leader and chancellor, effective today," he said. It was unclear who would succeed him.

Heinz-Christian Strache, head of the populist Freedom Party (FPÖe), said it was "more than doubtful whether a party (the SPOe) acting as

chaotically as this is capable of governing Austria at such a time of crisis." He said Faymann's resignation "does not solve the SPOe's basic problem, which is its utterly wrong policies (decided) over the heads of people and against Austria's interests."

The SPOe and its coalition partner since 2008, the centre-right People's Party (OeVP), have dominated Austrian politics since World War II but their support has been sliding in recent years. At the last general election, in 2013, they only just scratched together a majority, and polls suggest they will struggle to do so again at the next scheduled vote in 2018. Mirroring similar trends across Europe, they have been bleeding support to fringe groups, in Austria's case in par-

ticular to the FPÖe, the former party of the controversial, late Joerg Haider.

The FPÖe has tapped into unease about immigration after Austria last year saw a record 90,000 people claim asylum, and around 10 times that number pass through at the high point of Europe's migrant crisis. The low-key Faymann, who was little known when he became chancellor, at first echoed German Chancellor Angela Merkel's welcoming stance but in recent months took a harder line. This though failed to stop the rise of the far-right. His coalition has also presided over a rise in unemployment, with Austria losing its crown as the EU member with the lowest jobless rate. The coalition has squabbled over structural reforms too. — AFP

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STUNNED TRUMP FOES FACE OPTIONS AT GOP CONVENTION

IN ORDER TO STOP TRUMP FROM CHANGING THE PARTY

WASHINGTON: Still shaken by Donald Trump's triumph, Republican and conservative foes of the billionaire can still cause headaches for the party's presumptive presidential nominee at this summer's GOP convention. But their options are shrinking by the day. With Trump's last two rivals - Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and Ohio Gov. John Kasich - abandoning their campaigns, there's no remaining talk of snatching the nomination away from him with a contested, multi-ballot battle when Republican delegates gather in Cleveland.

Instead, anti-Trump forces are trying to figure out how to use this July's GOP meetings to keep him from reshaping the party and its guiding principles, perhaps with fights over the platform or even his vice presidential pick.

Many expect Trump to build momentum as the convention nears, narrowing his opponents' options. Even so, here's what may be in store:

It's over? What now?

Trump's foes concede he's likely to arrive in Cleveland exceeding the 1,237 delegates needed to become the nominee. Yet many are still reeling from the contest's unexpected finale last week and are just starting to think about what they could do at the convention that would be productive.

"There's going to be a lot of thinking, a lot of praying and a lot talking between all of us," said Kay Godwin, a Cruz delegate from Blackshear, Georgia. "I wish I could give you an answer right now but I think if I did, it would be out of emotion." "There are probably some who hope Trump will stick his foot in his mouth or some scandal will come out and that they'll be able to rally everybody at that point, but at this point there's really nothing they can do" to block his nomination, said Jason Osborne, a GOP consultant.

Containing the damage

Many Trump opponents see the Republican platform, the party's statement of ideals and policy goals, as a place for a stand in Cleveland. The convention's 2,472 delegates must approve the platform before formally anointing the presidential nominee. All - including those chosen to support Trump - can vote however they want on the platform. Many conservatives say they will use that vote to keep Trump from reshaping GOP dogma against abortion, for free trade and on other issues. While it seems likely Trump would prevail, a show-



CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA: Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks on Thursday.—AP

down could be an embarrassment he'd seek to avoid by not pushing divisive changes.

"If the party walks away from any of its clearly cut social, family values issues, it will be an issue," said Tony Perkins, president of the conservative Family Research Council and GOP delegate from Louisiana. "We're not just going to fall in line because he's the nominee."

Trump has said he would seek to include exceptions for rape and incest to the GOP platform's opposition to abortion. He's also flouted the party platform by repeatedly criticizing trade deals and calling NATO obsolete. "We'd want to make sure the platform is protected from Donald Trump," said Rory Cooper, senior adviser for the Never Trump political committee. Trump aides did not return messages seeking comment on his views about the platform.

A running mate

Trump has said he'd like a vice presidential candidate with government experience. Yet, as with the platform, delegates can vote as they please in

choosing Trump's running mate. Some opponents suggest they may challenge his choice, either as a protest or to try forcing him to make a different selection. Recent GOP conventions have formally approved vice presidential candidates by acclamation and no roll call. But if delegates make enough of a fuss, a roll call with plenty of votes for a rival vice presidential candidate is possible.

"He'll probably pick somebody, and that person is not going to have the automatic ratification status that's been traditional," said Roger Stauter, a Cruz delegate from Madison, Wisconsin, who said he would never support Trump. Others said the convention would likely defer to Trump's thinking about a strategically smart choice. "He could pick somebody we'd all get pretty excited about," said Shane Goettle, a Cruz delegate from North Dakota.

Conservative talk show host Erick Erickson, a Trump opponent, said he expected delegates to accede to Trump's selection, saying that by July, "the phases of depression and anger" will subside as Republicans accept "their coming defeat."

Must-watch TV

Many expect Trump - star of his own TV reality shows "The Apprentice" and "Celebrity Apprentice" - to run a more watchable convention than usual. Beth Myers, GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney's campaign manager in 2012, was not a Trump supporter during the primaries. But she said Trump knows TV and expects his convention to outshine the Democrats' in stagecraft and draw millions more viewers than usual.

"My guess is that the Republican convention will not be a chaotic, contested convention," she said. "Rather, it will be a production of Trump, Inc., and it will be pretty good live television." Some of that glitz may not be by choice. Many Republican bigwigs are expected to shun the convention and avoid giving primetime speeches on Trump's behalf.—AP

TREASURY SECRETARY HEADS TO PUERTO RICO TO PRESSURE CONGRESS

WASHINGTON: Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew is calling attention to the effect Puerto Rico's \$70 billion debt crisis is having on the millions of Americans who live there and on the Republican-led Congress' struggle to come up with a solution.

Lew is making a one-day trip to Puerto Rico yesterday, part of the Obama administration's campaign to pressure Congress to act. House Republicans are expected to announce new legislation this week to create a control board to help manage the US territory's debt and oversee some debt restructuring. It will be the third draft of the House bill, which has come under fire from some conservatives who worry it would set a precedent for financially ailing states. The Treasury Department said Lew's trip would highlight how the decade-long debt crisis "has already harmed the health, safety and welfare of the 3.5 million Americans living in Puerto Rico."

Lew planned to visit an elementary school and a hospital while on the island. The territory missed a nearly \$370 million bond payment May 1. The default was the largest in a series of missed payments by the struggling US territory since last year, and Gov. Alejandro Garcia Padilla warned there would be more. Puerto Rico has payments totaling nearly \$2 billion due on July 1, including about \$700 million in general obligation bonds that are supposed to be guaranteed under the island's constitution. In an ominous warning directed at Congress and creditors that include US hedge funds, Garcia said the outlook for the next payment is bleak.

"We don't anticipate having the money," he said last week. Garcia said he had no choice but to suspend the debt payment to avoid cutting essential public services, such as schools and medical care. Natural Resources Committee Chairman Rob Bishop, R-Utah, has led negotiations in the House. In addition to disagreement among conservatives, Bishop has also

faced objections from Democrats and Puerto Rican officials who say they are concerned the oversight board would be too powerful and the restructuring plan would be too difficult. Bishop has worked closely with Lew and Treasury officials as he has rewritten the latest version of the bill over the terms of the debt restructuring. He's said the negotiations with administration officials are one of the things holding the bill up.

While in Puerto Rico, Lew will "reiterate his call for congressional action that provides Puerto Rico with access to an orderly restructuring regime and independent oversight while respecting the commonwealth's self-governance," the Treasury Department said.

The effort has been particularly complicated by disagreement among creditors. While some support the bill, others are fighting it in hopes of preserving larger payouts. Some creditors' groups lobbying against the legislation have said that it amounts to a financial bailout, even though the bill has no direct financial aid.

Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., has strongly backed the bill. He has said he is strongly opposed to a bailout but that one may become necessary if Congress doesn't pass the legislation soon and Puerto Rico's economy collapses.

Following last week's default, Lew sent a letter to Ryan in which he urged him to work quickly to resolve the "few outstanding issues" on the legislation to help Puerto Rico. He noted that hospitals have laid off workers and the island has struggled to find enough money to effectively combat the Zika virus. "Absent enactment of a workable framework for restructuring Puerto Rico's debts, bondholders will experience a lengthy, disorderly and chaotic unwinding, with nonpayment for many a real possibility," Lew wrote. "The people of Puerto Rico will be forced to endure additional suffering."—AP



WASHINGTON: US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew testifies on Capitol Hill, before the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government hearing on March 8, 2016.—AP

PALIN RAPS RYAN FOR WITHHOLDING SUPPORT FOR DONALD TRUMP

WASHINGTON: Sarah Palin, the vice presidential candidate on the Republican Party ticket in 2008, is harshly criticizing House Speaker Paul Ryan for withholding his support from likely Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump.

Palin said Sunday that Ryan's statement that he isn't ready to embrace Trump "was not a wise decision of his." Appearing on CNN's "State of the Union," the former Alaska governor charged that the Wisconsin Republican might have had his own political interests in

mind in making the statement about Trump last week in the wake of the real estate mogul's primary victory in Indiana, which led to the withdrawal of his remaining two opponents - Sen. Ted Cruz and Gov. John Kasich.

"It kind of screws his chances for the 2020 presidential bid that he's gunning for," Palin said of Ryan. Asked if she would be willing to be vetted as a possible running mate for Trump, Palin replied, "I think I'm pretty much as vetted as anybody in the country could be vetted already."—AP

IN INDIA'S QUARRIES, WORKERS DIE TO MAKE PRETTY GARDEN TILES

BUDHPURA: Amid the ancient forts and stunning palaces of India's Rajasthan state is a less alluring sight: hundreds of workers in stone quarries, many dying of silicosis from cutting and polishing the sandstone tiles that adorn gardens and patios here and abroad. Much of the sandstone used in kitchen counter tops and as cobblestones comes from the state's Kota and Bundi districts, where workers toil under extreme conditions, with hardly any protective gear and for very little money. About half the state's 2 million mine workers suffer from silicosis or other respiratory diseases, according to labor rights campaigners. Although there is no comprehensive data, hundreds, possibly thousands, have died of silicosis, an incurable lung disease caused by long-term exposure to silica dust given off in the mining and processing of sandstone and limestone. Rajasthan's human rights commission last year asked the state government to modernize mining and conduct regular medical tests to contain the disease. Activists say the state must also do more to ensure there are no child workers, whose vulnerable bodies are even more susceptible to silicosis.

"The workers have no safety, no rights. They work like slaves and they get very sick and die," said Madan Vaishnav of ActionAid, which supports a local charity helping workers get tested for silicosis. "And even if you say, the children have to work because they are poor, this is work that can kill them. These quarries are no place for children," he said.

India is one of the largest producers of raw stone, accounting for more than a quarter of stones mined worldwide. About a fifth of India's mine workers are children. Many work for more than 10 hours a day in dangerous and filthy conditions.

Alarming levels

In Bundi district, open-pit mines and quarries dot the arid landscape. Slabs of the popular peach-toned and red-brown stones are piled up, waiting to be loaded on to trucks to export firms to be cut, polished and shipped out, or to homes in the village where women chisel them into smaller pieces for tiles.

In the quarry, where chemicals are

used to pulverise the earth to reveal the stone, workers often cut and chisel without goggles, masks or other protective gear, earning as little as 150 rupees (\$2.30) a day. The industry's working conditions "fall far short" of national or international standards, and there are "alarming levels" of child labor, according to a 2013 UNICEF report. Child workers make up a fifth of Bundi district's mining workforce of more than 50,000, it said. "The industry has complex social, economic and political challenges due to the multifaceted supply chain and interwoven network of middlemen, which makes it very difficult to trace the exact source of the stones," the UNICEF report said.

Rajasthan is India's largest sandstone-producing state, and the industry is the only source of livelihood for generations of rural workers trapped in poverty and in debt bondage to the 'maliks', or owners of the quarries, many of them illegal.

Migrant workers from neighboring Madhya Pradesh and the eastern states of Bihar and Odisha, are also tricked by agents into coming to the quarries with promises of well-paying jobs. This kind of exploitation is especially common in India's construction sector, particularly in the unregulated areas of brickmaking and stone quarrying, experts say.

In Budhpura village, children as young as six or seven years work in the industry, starting with chiselling cobblestones. Boys start working in the quarries from age 12 or 13, while girls may continue making cobblestones and tiles. Cobblestone making is paid on a piece-rate basis, so the more a family makes, the higher the income. Children are often forced into work because their fathers die young from silicosis, activists say. Aravali, a public-private development agency that surveyed mine workers in the state, found that silicosis is caused by inhaling silica dust for 10 years or longer. Until recently, the workers' persistent coughs and weight loss were misdiagnosed as tuberculosis and no compensation paid for the illness. "We are poor, so our children have to work. The malik anyway doesn't ask how old they are," said Madan Lal, who said he is about 35 years old, although his hollow cheeks and sunken eyes make

him look at least a decade older. "My father also worked in the quarry; he died when I was seven, so I started working. We didn't know about silicosis then. Now I have it, too. Some days I am too sick to work."

Disease and death

Rajasthan is one of the poorest states in the country, with among the lowest literacy rates and a deeply entrenched caste system. Workers in the quarries are mostly from Dalit and other lower-caste and tribal communities.

The sandstone industry has come under attack from environmentalists as well, who say the mining and dumping of chemicals have led to significant land degradation, deforestation and contamination of groundwater.

In Budhpura, a village of about 150 families, at least 70 workers have silicosis including an 18-year old, Vaishnav said. A local charity helps them get tested at a specialist clinic in a nearby town and get a medical certificate to say they have the disease.

The certificate enables workers to apply for the 100,000-rupee medical aid given by the government after activist-led campaigns to secure better worker rights. When a worker dies of silicosis, his family gets 300,000 rupees in compensation. "The malik doesn't want us to go to the doctor. They don't want us to find out we have silicosis because it is caused by working in the mine," said Lal, who carries a photocopy of his medical certificate folded in his pocket. "We are worried that our kids will get sick. But what are we to do? We are not educated that we can get other jobs," he said.

After activists drew the attention of foreign buyers to the conditions in the industry, U.K.-based firms including Beltrami, Marshalls and Hardscape agreed with the Ethical Trading Initiative to clean up their supply chains.

Marshalls' Fairstone range ensures no child labor, and that fair wages and safe working conditions are kept in the quarries in India and China it buys from, according to its website.

The Rajasthan government is taking steps to rehabilitate child workers, said Pukhraj Bhatia, chairperson of the state-run Children's Welfare Committee in neighboring Kota district. —Reuters

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ROMANIA'S HEALTH MINISTER RESIGNS AND KAZMUNAIGAZ REFINERY SEIZED

BUCHAREST: Romania's health minister has resigned amid public outrage over the use of sub-standard disinfectants in dozens of Romanian hospitals.

Health Minister Patriciu Achimas-Cadariu resigned Monday, after authorities announced a probe into how the disinfectant was used at 50 hospitals. Authorities on Saturday conducted searches at hospitals and the offices of drug company Hexi Pharma, which

reportedly supplied dozens of hospitals with the disinfectant for use on surfaces and hands.

Police took away documents and samples from 25 hospitals, where tests revealed there were problems with the disinfectant. About 500 people protested Friday in Bucharest over the latest scandal to hit the underfunded health care system. Thousands of medics emigrate annually and bribery and informal

payments are rife in the system.

Romanian prosecutors said Monday they had seized a refinery held by Kazakhstan's KazMunaiGaz, which recently came under Chinese control, in a tax fraud probe. The seizure of the Petromidia refinery in eastern Romania is part of an investigation into tax evasion, money laundering and fraud.

KazMunaiGaz is accused of failing to settle debts contracted by former

Petromidia owners Rompetrol which KazMunaiGaz took over in 2007. "The prosecutor's work is ongoing," Mihaela Porime, a spokeswoman for Romania's anti-organised crime investigation unit, DIICOT, told AFP.

Seized assets at the refinery total 3 billion lei (660 million euros, \$752 million). Chinese group China Energy Company Ltd said last month it was acquiring 51 percent in KazMunaiGaz. KazMunaiGaz

managers are to be questioned in Bucharest on Tuesday over the debt accusations, the spokeswoman said.

KazMunaiGaz has been the target of several court actions over the Rompetrol debt dating back to 2001 and estimated at \$570 million including compound interest. KazMunaiGaz promised to pay \$200 million to settle the cases, but has not actually paid out any funds, according to the Romanian government.



DAKAR: A young Senegalese boy, locally called talibe, begs for alms in a street on April 15, 2016. — AP

SENEGAL'S CHILD BEGGARS SHOW LIMITS OF 'APPTIVISM'

DAKAR: Mamadou is a child beggar wandering the streets of Dakar, perilously darting in and out of traffic as he tries to gather enough money for his Islamic teacher to feed him. But Mamadou is different from an estimated 30,000 boys who share his plight in Senegal. He is made of pixels, a virtual urchin created for mobile screens by app developer Ousseynou Khadim Beye.

Arcade-style gaming app Cross Dakar City was launched a year ago to great fanfare at home and abroad, setting 32-year-old Beye apart as the first Senegalese software designer to make it solo onto the charts of the Apple and Android stores. And he featured a beggar boy for a reason. "I wanted to raise awareness by saying 'this is not normal, we are not talking enough about it,'" he told AFP.

His Mamadou is a "talibe", the Arabic word for student. In Senegal, boys as young as five are sent away from home to "daaras", or Koranic schools leaving them open to abuse. Some are forced by their teachers to beg on the streets to earn their board.

Child beggars remain so numerous in Senegal they pass unseen, despite government pledges to eradicate the problem by 2015. "It's a matter of being part of the decor. People are not really moved by that," Beye told AFP. "They think it's normal."

Often from poor rural families, the talibes are sent to the Senegalese capital Dakar and other cities to memorise the Koran, leaving them vulnerable to abuse and at times receiving little real education.

Apptivism

The power of tradition in this west African state, however, means few are willing to challenge the teachers, given their status and respect as Islamic scholars. Senegal has designated April 20 as the National Talibe Day but rights workers say little has changed. The International Society for Human Rights (SDIH) marked this year by deploring the system as "a breeding ground for the sexual abuse of children." In February, the Senegalese authorities found 20 boys aged between six and 14 kept in chains by their Islamic

teacher, or "marabout". So Beye decided to try a bit of "apptivism"—creating a gaming app aimed at doing good. "My goal is to implement concrete actions for child beggars," he said.

His virtual talibe is vintage Senegal: he hops onto traditional "piroque" boats to cross rivers and dodges rainbow-coloured "cars rapides" chugging along a virtual street. The game has caught on and downloads keep rolling in. The Senegalese diaspora in France and the United States, notably, got hooked on this small, however sad, reminder of home.

"A lot of people told me they were so proud to see the first Senegalese game on the Apple store, and then that it also spoke to the subject of the talibes," said Beye, who himself has set up as a software developer in the French city of Lyon. Back home, "local media were talking about the video game and they were talking about it on TV," he said.

'Promises'

Buoyed by the success, Beye, who returns home regularly, approached children's NGOs about opening a new chain of schools for talibes—but said the doors slammed in his face. He next tried UNICEF, the UN children's agency, and was met with a sympathetic but firm "no". "They say they don't have the budget... they agree it's a matter that's been around a very long time and every government that comes has their promises," Beye said.

When contacted by AFP in Dakar, UNICEF said providing education was not "the direct role" of the agency, which instead focuses on helping the government with policy change. At his next ports of call, the government and Senegal's ambassador to France, Beye said he got no response at all.

A government child protection strategy launched in 2012 aimed to eliminate child begging within three years but clearly "they are not taking effective action," said Beye. Others agree, like UNICEF child protection specialist Yves Olivier Kassoka who decried the suffering and deprivation of many talibes, amid authorities' reluctance to meddle with the powerful marabout. — AFP



MADRID: Spanish journalist Antonio Pampliega, left, arrives at the Torrejon military airbase on Sunday. — AP

SPANISH REPORTER FREED FROM SYRIA IS GRATEFUL

MADRID: One of the three Spanish freelance journalists released after nearly 10 months of captivity in Syria said yesterday he feels like he is "walking on air" after being reunited with his family in Spain.

Angel Sastre told Onda Cero radio station he is grateful for the government's efforts to secure the men's release but gave no details about their captivity or how they came home. The three went missing on July 12 near the city of Aleppo in northern Syria. They arrived in Madrid on Sunday on a Spanish military jet sent to Turkey to bring them back.

The Spanish government has not disclosed any information about how it won

the men's freedom. However, acting Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo told Antena 3 radio Monday it was "a big relief" when officials discovered that the men had been taken by the Nusra Front, al-Qaida's branch in Syria, and not the Islamic State group which commonly kills captives.

"It gave us some degree of comfort, within the anxiety of have three countrymen abducted and with some dark times when we had no news," Garcia-Margallo said. "The intelligence service did a magnificent job," he added without elaborating. Garcia-Margallo also thanked Turkey and Qatar for their help. — AP

CAMERON WARNS BREXIT THREATENS PEACE IN EUROPE

'RECKLESS AND IRRESPONSIBLE'

LONDON: Yesterday Prime Minister David Cameron warned that a British exit from the EU would threaten peace on the continent, as the campaign for next month's crucial referendum gathered steam after regional elections.

With polls showing the two campaigns are neck-and-neck, Cameron and the de-facto leader of the "Leave" movement, former London mayor Boris Johnson, were both stepping up efforts to woo undecided voters.

Leaving the 28-member bloc in the June 23 referendum would be a "reckless and irresponsible" risk to Britain's economic stability that would leave it "permanently poorer", Cameron warned. He also said a "Brexit" would threaten Britain's strength and security in the world, along with peace on the continent if "Europe's foremost military power" quit the European Union.

"Isolationism has never served this country well," he said in a speech at the British Museum in London. "Whenever we turn our back on Europe, sooner or later we come to regret it. We've always had to go back in, and always at a much higher cost." Cameron said that while Europe had largely been at peace since the end of World War II, it was barely two decades since the Bosnian war, while the continent was facing a "newly belligerent Russia", with conflicts in Georgia and Ukraine.

British war graves on the continent "stand as silent testament to the price this country has paid to help restore peace and order in Europe", he said. "Can we be so sure that peace and stability



LONDON: Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron delivers a speech on the European Union at the British Museum yesterday. — AP

on our continent are assured beyond any shadow of doubt? "Is that a risk worth taking? "I would never be so rash as to make that assumption."

Vote on a knife-edge

Leave campaigners attacked the speech with Nigel Farage, leader of the anti-EU UK Independence Party, saying the EU had increased hostility on the continent, especially in Greece. "The anti-democratic EU, far from bringing countries together, has divided Europe," he

said. "If we remain in the EU, we will be locked inside a failed project that is pushing towards closer fiscal, political and military union, no matter the pain and suffering it brings to the people of Europe." The Remain and Leave camps are neck-and-neck on 50 percent each, according to the What UK Thinks website's average of the last six opinion polls. Later Monday, Cameron's fellow Conservative Johnson was also making a speech in which he decried the EU as a "28-man pantomime horse".

The referendum campaign was picking up pace again after regional and local elections last Thursday which saw Labour's Sadiq Khan elected as London's new mayor, and pro-independence nationalists returned to power in Scotland, albeit without a majority.

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has said there would be an "almost certain" drive for another referendum on Scottish independence if the UK voted to leave the EU but Scottish voters wanted to stay. Cameron raised this prospect during his speech. "Let me just say this about Scotland: you don't renew your country by taking a decision that could ultimately lead to its disintegration. So, as we weigh up this decision, let us do so with our eyes open," he said.

Cameron's Conservative Party is deeply divided over the EU referendum with only around half of its MPs with him on the Remain side. The prime minister insisted again on Monday that the party would be able to heal its rifts following the vote. — AFP

GERMAN VILLAGE WITH BIG REFUGEE CAMP DEFIES FEARS OF TROUBLE

SUMTE, GERMANY: When state authorities called Mayor Grit Richter in October to tell her they planned to temporarily house up to 1,000 people from Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere in a former office complex in the tiny village of Sumte, she couldn't imagine how it would work. The area is short on jobs, public transport and other facilities, and residents were anxious about the new arrivals.

Six months after the first arrivals, not only have fears of violence and overtaxed utilities not materialized, but the shelter has brought benefits including dozens of jobs to the sleepy village of 102 people and the isolated rural region of northern Germany where it is located.

There are few signs of friction, and if people still have concerns, they're not willing to talk to reporters about them. Residents have better lighting and more police, and some even hope the facility will remain after its planned one-year life span ends. "What has been very positive is the jobs - that is very important - and the economic spring it has brought. That's needed here," said Richter, the mayor of the Neuhaus municipality, which includes Sumte. "It would be nice if it lasted." She wasn't always so confident.

"My first thought was, my God, so many refugees, so many people in this building - Sumte's infrastructure can't deal with that... and how are we supposed to do it?" recalled Richter, who got the call when the influx of migrants was at its peak. In all, nearly 1.1 million people were registered as asylum-seekers in Germany last year.

Germany has been the biggest destination for migrants in Europe, with several other countries reluctant to share the burden. And while Germans have generally been welcoming, that hasn't been the case everywhere: screaming anti-refugee mobs made headlines in some places, particularly in the ex-communist east.

At a sometimes heated town-hall meeting in the tiny next-door town of Neuhaus, residents raised concerns about children's safety, the prospect of many single men arriving and whether the sewage system would collapse, among other things.

"A lot of questions were asked, people were very anxious - but we saw in retrospect that these fears were unfounded," said Kim-Eileen Fischer, 20, who graduated from high school last summer and became deputy chef at the facility.

The first refugees arrived in early November, after a few frantic weeks knocking the building into shape. Jens Meier, who runs it, hired around 70 people to keep it going: security staff, people to work in the kitchen and medical center, administrators and others. He says more than 40 were local residents.

They include Sabine Schack, who landed a position running the laundry after losing her previous job of some 20 years and said it was "very nice, very important" to get the work after an 18-month sickness break. "You have to take on the challenge and not go with prejudices," she says of the task of hosting the migrants. She's still in contact with two families who moved on from the facility, where people live for the first few months before being moved to more permanent accommodation.

Drive through Sumte - essentially a single street of well-tended houses, lined with blossoming fruit trees - and you could miss the facility entirely.

The single-story complex, once home to a debt-collection company that was the biggest local employer, is hidden down a side road on the village's edge, between fields with cows and horses. There's a bus shelter and nothing else. The nearest shop and snack bar are in Neuhaus, 4 kilometers (2 1/2 miles) away. Many locals make long commutes during the week to Hamburg or the county seat, Lueneburg, but the refugee center has meant



SUMTE, GERMANY: Former resident Kardo from Iraq holds a pot with boiled eggs in the kitchen of the Sumte refugee shelter. — AP

orders for local firms and jobs nearby for some.

Before the first migrants arrived, the sewage system and pumps were upgraded and more street lamps installed. They're now kept on overnight, rather than being switched off to save money. The municipality now has four police officers rather than two, and longer police station opening hours. The state government picked up most of the costs, while a lighting manufacturer also made a donation. There have been minor problems, quickly resolved, among them a complaint about empty bottles being tossed into a field by youths gathering at the bus stop. The bottles were cleared up, camp residents told not to do it again - and another bus shelter was set up outside the refugee complex for young people to hang out in.

That apart, "everyday life has remained unchanged," Richter said. Locals have gotten used to newcomers in the local supermarket, to which the shelter runs shuttle buses. While there isn't much contact between migrants and locals, the refugees organized a Christmas concert that residents attended.

In the end, the number of refugees in Sumte peaked at 706. It's now down to 115, with no new arrivals since late February. Sumte's remoteness, along with northern Germans' traditionally calm and reserved mentality, may have helped make the project a success. "The quietness of this area may have played a certain role," said Meier, the shelter chief. "You can really wind down here, particularly if you come from turbulent circumstances." — AP

FRANCE TO CREATE REGIONAL 'DE-RADICALIZATION' CENTERS

PARIS: France will create centers in each region of the country to de-radicalize people or prevent them becoming involved in jihadist groups, the prime minister said yesterday as he laid out new anti-terror measures. "The fight against jihadism is without doubt the big challenge of our generation," Manuel Valls said, flanked by the interior and justice ministers.

The plan, which will cost an additional 40 million Euros (\$45.5 million) by 2018 on top of the current funding, aims to double existing efforts to try to help people already in jihadist networks or those likely to join such groups.

Valls said the first de-radicalization center could be set up by this summer. The measures are a response to the deaths of 147 people in jihadist attacks in France last year. Jihadist gunmen stormed the Paris offices of Charlie Hebdo satirical newspaper and a Jewish supermarket in January 2015, killing 17 people, and then 130 people were killed in coordinated attacks on the capital claimed by the Islamic State group last November. Both sets of attacks were carried out mainly by French citizens who had become



PARIS: French Prime Minister Manuel Valls (L) and French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve (R) give a press conference after an interministerial meeting on delinquency, radicalization and terrorism yesterday. — AFP

radicalized and fought abroad alongside jihadist groups. The authorities consider nearly 10,000 people in France to be radicalized and capable of violent actions, according to Le Parisien newspaper. — AFP

INDIA MODI'S EDUCATION RECORD MADE PUBLIC

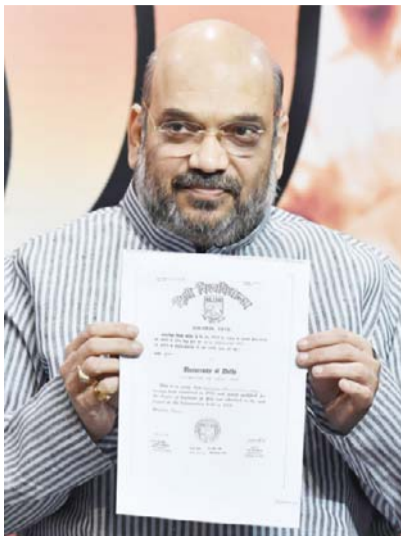
NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party yesterday made public his university degree certificates, in a bid to disprove allegations by a political opponent that he had fabricated his qualifications.

Since winning an election in the Indian capital last year, Arvind Kejriwal, the ambitious chief minister of the Delhi regional government, has stepped up his attacks on Modi. Kejriwal has not said why Modi would want to claim a fake degree but the allegations, which set off frenzied speculation on social media, struck a nerve in the prime minister's Hindu nationalist party, upset about the risk to his reputation.

Modi has often cited the journey from his humble beginnings as a tea vendor's son to national leader to win support from the country's poor. Having a degree fits the narrative of a man with the grit and determination to succeed.

Senior leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) held aloft what they said were Modi's degrees, a Bachelor of Arts from Delhi University and a Master of Arts in Political Science from Gujarat University, in his western home state. "It is very unfortunate that we have to clarify the prime minister's educational qualification," party president Amit Shah told a news conference in New Delhi at which he was flanked by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

Spokesmen for the two universities declined to comment on whether Modi's degree certificates were genuine. Kejriwal



NEW DELHI: India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah, displays the educational degree certificates of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a press conference yesterday. — AFP

says he has evidence Modi misappropriated the degrees of someone with the same name. A spokesman for Kejriwal's party stood by the accusations, saying there were inconsistencies in the dates and names on Modi's degrees. "We are happy to have an illiterate prime minister," said the spokesman, Vikas Yogi. "But not a prime minister who lies about his degrees." — Reuters

PENTAGON REPORT REVEALS CONFUSION AMONG US TROOPS OVER AFGHAN MISSION

MISSION UNDER REVIEW WITH OPERATIONS POSSIBLY MERGING

KABUL: Amid fierce fighting after the Taliban captured the northern Afghan city of Kunduz last year, US special forces advisers repeatedly asked their commanders how far they were allowed to go to help local troops retake the city. They got no answer, according to witnesses interviewed in a recently declassified, heavily redacted Pentagon report that lays bare the confusion over rules of engagement governing the mission in Afghanistan.

As the Taliban insurgency gathers strength, avoiding enemy fire has become increasingly difficult for advisers, who have been acting as consultants rather than combatants since NATO forces formally ceased fighting at the end of 2014.

In the heat of the battle, lines can be blurred, and the problem is not exclusive to Afghanistan: questions have arisen over the role of US troops in Iraq after a US Navy SEAL was killed by Islamic State this month. "How far do you want to go?" is not a proper response to "How far do you want us to go?" one special forces member told investigators in a report into the US air strikes on a hospital in Kunduz that killed 42 medical staff, patients and caretakers.

That incident was the biggest single tragedy of the brief capitulation of Kunduz to Taliban militants, and there is no suggestion that the mistake was the result of a lack of clarity over the rules of engagement. But the 700-page report, much of it blacked out for security reasons, sheds light on how the rules are not fully understood, even by some troops on the ground, compromising the mission to stabilize the nation and defeat a worsening Islamist insurgency.

The issues exposed in the report are likely to be considered by the new US commander in Afghanistan, General John Nicholson, as he prepares to make recommendations in the coming weeks that may clarify or expand the level of combat support the US-led training mission can provide. "It's not a strategy and, in fact, it's a recipe for disaster in that kind of kinetic environment," said the soldier, who, like others in the report, was not identified.

He added that his unit, whose role was to advise and assist Afghan forces without engaging in combat, asked three times for commanders to clarify the rules governing their mission. "Sadly, the only sounds audible were the sounds of crickets ... though those were hard to hear over the gunfire."

US mission under review

While acknowledging a lingering "lack of understanding in the West" about the US and NATO role in Afghanistan, US military spokesman Brigadier General Charles Cleveland denied there was confusion among troops over the broader mission.

More than 9,000 US soldiers were "retrained" on the rules of engagement following missteps in Kunduz, in an effort to reduce future misunderstandings, he said.

Critics say the confusion comes from political expediency, because US leaders are keen to portray the Afghan operation as designed mainly to help local forces fight for themselves. "The rules of engagement are trapped in the jaws of political confusion about the mission," a senior Western official told Reuters. "Nobody in Western capitals seems willing to admit that Afghanistan is a worsening war zone and ... that their troops are still battling out a combat mission on a daily basis," added the official, who declined to be named. Until

appeared less sharply defined, with some US air strikes conducted to defend partnered Afghan units. The Kunduz report indicates at least some US troops have been sent into battle with questions unanswered.

The Green Beret complained that failure to provide clear guidance represented "moral cowardice", and that political leaders intentionally keep the mission vague. That allows them to "reap the rewards of success without facing the responsibility of failure," he added.

Soldiers pleaded for "clearer guidance" and more clarification of overly complicated rules, according to investigators. The Pentagon has not fully publicized rules governing the use of force by US troops, who may be called upon to act under either type of mission, sometimes in the same battle.

In the four days leading up to the hospital attack, US special forces called in nine close air support strikes under the authority of counter-terrorism, and 13 under Resolute Support, according to the report.

As part of self-defence, coalition troops have "some latitude" in calling air strikes on militant targets that may not be directly attacking them, but could soon pose a threat, Cleveland said. Last year the Pentagon announced that Afghan forces could be helped under extreme conditions. Additionally, under a "Person with Designated Special Status" classification, Afghan units operating closely with international advisers can be protected by air strikes as if they were coalition forces, according to Cleveland.

Who is the enemy?

Further complicating matters are counter-terrorism rules that allow strikes against al Qaeda, as well as militants linked to Islamic State which did not exist when the US military intervened in Afghanistan in 2001, but not the Taliban. In recent weeks US commanders in Afghanistan have reported that al Qaeda and the Taliban are working more closely together, signaling that the dominant Taliban group could once again be attacked by more air strikes. Calling the authorities in Afghanistan "exceptionally complex," previous training had failed to prevent confusion, the Kunduz report found.

Prior to deploying to Afghanistan, commanders made clear that "combat operations was mostly a thing of the past," another special forces soldier said in the report. On the ground, however, things were more complicated. The second officer said he went into the Kunduz operation unsure of which authorities his unit would be operating under. The lack of explicit instructions led the officer to choose his "default" of Resolute Support authorities, which he described as "just the safe bet." — Reuters



Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Charles Keating IV, 31, of San Diego. The Islamic State group broke through Kurdish defenses in northern Iraq on May 3, 2016 and killed a US Navy SEAL Charles Keating IV — AFP

the end of 2014, when their combat role officially ended, NATO forces in Afghanistan peaked at more than 130,000 troops, most of them American. NATO's presence today is a fraction of the size.

Different operations can merge

Around 10,000 US troops are divided between the NATO train-and-assist mission called Resolute Support and a US-only counter-terrorism operation against militant groups that include al Qaeda and Islamic State but not the Taliban. Under publicly declared rules of engagement, US advisers in Resolute Support generally cannot attack Taliban targets except in self defence.

As government forces have struggled, however, the definition of "self defense" has

WRITER SLAMS PAKISTAN FOR CENSORING HER ARTICLE ON SEX

ISLAMABAD: A feminist author hit back yesterday at Pakistan for censoring her article on Muslim women and sex, saying the ban exposed the depth of gender discrimination in the deeply conservative Islamic country.

Egyptian-American Mona Eltahawy, an award-winning journalist who is a vocal public speaker on women's rights, penned an opinion column entitled "Sex Talk for Muslim Women" that ran in Friday's edition of the International New York Times.

The article was available online in Pakistan, but the newspaper version, published by the local Express Tribune, featured a blank spot in the opinion pages where Eltahawy's article had been. Eltahawy told AFP that the decision to ban her article exposes that authorities think a woman "who claims ownership over her body is dangerous... and must be silenced." "You can't afford to publish such controversial articles about Islam," a senior source at the Express Tribune told AFP on condition of anonymity when asked about Eltahawy's article.

In the piece, Eltahawy discussed her decision to have sex before marriage in defiance of her own upbringing and faith, and detailed her many conversations with other women of

Muslim and Arab descent suffering under the "sexual straitjacket" of virginity imposed on them by men. "Where are the stories on women's sexual frustrations and experiences?" she wrote. "My revolution has been to develop from a 29-year-old virgin to the 49-year-old woman who now declares, on any platform I get: It is I who own my body. Not the state, the mosque, the street or my family. And it is my right to have sex whenever, and with whomever, I choose."

'Taboo and shame'

Women have fought for decades to establish rights for themselves in Pakistan, where so-called honour killings and acid attacks remain commonplace. Last week a teenage girl in the country's northwest was strangled and her body set ablaze after a village council ruled she must die for helping a friend to elope. The killing sparked fresh anger from rights activists.

Eltahawy said the censorship showed "a woman who disobeys and who openly claims sexual liberation and pleasure is dangerous and must be silenced". She cited backlash in the country to Pakistani director Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy's Oscar win in February for a documentary about honour killings. — AFP

PAKISTAN'S TRIBAL COUNCILS IN SPOTLIGHT AFTER 'HONOR KILLING'

MAKOL, Pakistan: Shock across Pakistan at the murder of a 16-year-old girl accused of helping a young couple run away and elope has turned to anger over the role played by a "jirga", or tribal council, which police say ordered the punishment.

Jirgas are often convened, particularly in conservative rural areas, to settle local disputes especially between poor families, and although they operate outside the law, their decisions are often honored and ignored by authorities.

In the case of Ambreen Riasat, who was drugged, killed and burned by a group of men in a so-called "honor killing" in the village of Makol, just 50 km from the capital Islamabad, the mayor questioned whether the jirga was even genuine.

"This barbarity has never happened before," Makol mayor Zardad Khan told Reuters. Other residents confirmed the village of around 5,000 people had no history of "honor killings"; and said in other elopement cases the punishments meted out were relatively minor.

"Everyone in the village is just confused and stunned," said Sardar Naseer Ahmed, 33, a businessman. "There is a sort of fear that I have never seen before." Whoever made up the group that ordered Ambreen's death, the case has underlined how weak the tentacles of formal Pakistani justice are even close to the centre of government.

Tribal councils, called jirgas in ethnic Pashtun areas and "panchayat" across Punjab and elsewhere, can act to fill that vacuum, and their decisions are usually without controversy. But events in Makol just over a week ago have highlighted the risks they pose. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, chairman of the opposition PPP party and son of Pakistan's only female prime minister, the late Benazir Bhutto, called for a "revolt" against the jirga system after Ambreen's death. Rights groups say men who run jirgas often barter women and hand down punishments that have included rape and forced marriage of young girls.

More than 500 people are killed in Pakistan each year in so-called "honor killings", usually carried out by members of the victim's family meeting out punishment for bringing "shame" on the community. The fact that the area of Makol had no known history of such abuses, and was so close to the leafy, sophisticated capi-

tal, has added to the sense of revulsion. Most Pakistani newspapers reported Ambreen's death on their front pages, and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called for her killers to be swiftly prosecuted. "Such a barbaric act is not only un-Islamic but also inhuman," he said. "It is not honor killing, its just plain murder."

Ambreen's father called for the culprits to suffer the same gruesome fate as her. "We want the culprits to be burned alive at the local chowk [village square]," Riasat, a 52-year-old laborer, told a gathering of about 100 village elders held in a local mosque.

Initial reports said that Ambreen was burned alive, but police now believe she was drugged and suffocated before her body was placed in a van and set alight. The murder took place on April 29, but has only come to light after investigators pieced together what happened. Riasat said Ambreen had no link to Saima, the young woman who had eloped with another man from Makol. "If they had to kill someone, why didn't they kill (Saima)? Why my daughter?" he asked, welling up with anger.

The police have arrested 13 of 15 members of the alleged jirga, and paraded them blindfolded and shackled before the media. They also arrested Ambreen's mother, saying she was connected to the jirga. "How can a mother hurt her daughter? It's a lie," Riasat shouted before the elders, who gathered after Friday prayers to discuss the community's response to the killing.

Many Pakistanis are calling again for the passage of an anti-"honor killing" law, which closes a loophole that allows family members to forgive the killers of their daughter. Men are seldom convicted for their role in such murders.

Sharif has promised to speed up the passage of the proposed law after Pakistani director Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy won an Oscar in 2016 for a documentary film about "honor killings", but the law is being opposed by religious parties in parliament.

Obaid-Chinoy told Reuters the intense media coverage of Ambreen's murder "shows that the country is thinking about honor killings and realising that it is a stain on our society". In Ambreen's modest mud-and-bricks home, her aunt Shehreen struggled to comprehend the murder. She described her niece as a "quiet girl", as she showed shoes, school books and colorful clothes now stored away in a small trunk. — Reuters

SWIFT LEFT B'DESH BANK VULNERABLE

DHAKA/BOSTON: Bangladesh's central bank became more vulnerable to hackers when technicians from SWIFT, the global financial network, connected a new bank transaction system to SWIFT messaging three months before a \$81 million cyber heist, Bangladesh police and a bank official alleged.

The technicians introduced the vulnerabilities when they connected SWIFT to Bangladesh's first real-time gross settlement (RTGS) system, said Mohammad Shah Alam, the head of the criminal investigation department of the Bangladesh police who is leading the probe into one of the biggest cyber-heists in the world. "We found a lot of loopholes," Alam said in an interview in Dhaka. "The changes caused much more risk for Bangladesh Bank."

He and a senior central bank official said the SWIFT employees made missteps in connecting the RTGS to the central bank's messaging platform. The technicians did not appear to have followed their own procedures to ensure the system was secure, according to the Bangladesh Bank offi-

cial, who said he was not authorised to publicly comment because of the ongoing investigation.

Because of this, SWIFT messaging at the central bank was widely accessible, including remote access with only a simple password, police said. It had no firewalls and only a rudimentary switch. "It was the responsibility of SWIFT to check for weaknesses once they had set up the system. But it does not appear to have been done," said the bank official.

SWIFT's chief spokeswoman Natasha de Teran said she had no comment on the allegations by authorities in Bangladesh. She also declined comment on any aspect of the Bangladesh project, including whether the firm had deployed any employees or outside contractors to Bangladesh Bank.

Reuters was not able to independently verify the allegations by Bangladeshi officials about the SWIFT technicians. If they are validated, however, that could undermine confidence in the cooperative that is the backbone of global financial transactions. — Reuters

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INDONESIA FORMS TEAM TO PROBE 1960S MASSACRE THE 'GRAVES'

JAKARTA: Indonesia announced yesterday that it will form a team to investigate what activists say are mass graves from 1960s anti-communist massacres, its latest move to resolve the dark chapter. The decision came after activists handed authorities a list of sites where they say some of those killed during the massacres were buried. The purge in 1965-66 was one of the worst mass killings of the last century and saw at least 500,000 alleged communists and

sympathisers killed, but had long remained taboo in Indonesia.

However the government reopened the painful episode last month by backing a series of public discussions into the atrocity for the first time, after which President Joko Widodo ordered a senior minister to launch a probe.

Security Minister Luhut Panjaitan yesterday met with activists led by a group called the Foundation for Research into Victims of the 65-66

Killings, who handed him information about 122 sites on Java and Sumatra islands, his ministry said. After the meeting, the ministry said on Twitter it would form a team to start excavating the sites.

Panjaitan stressed that authorities would protect the safety of those involved, it said. "He sends a message for everybody to stay calm," it added.

The ministry did not say when the team would begin excavating.

Foundation head Bedjo Untung said the government's response seemed positive. "I feel the government is serious. This is a new chance," he told AFP. "There's a willingness to resolve issues from Luhut Panjaitan's side, not to burden the next generation with the past."

However, other activists have expressed scepticism about whether the government is serious about unearthing the truth. Panjaitan faced criticism after insisting at last month's

discussions that the government would not issue an official apology. The mass killings happened around the time General Suharto came to power, and during his 32-year rule the official narrative was that they were necessary to rid the country of communism. The massacres, conducted by local groups supported by the security forces, began after Suharto put down a coup on October 1, 1965, that the authorities blamed on communists.—AFP



FUJIAN, CHINA: Rescuers search for potential survivors at the site following a landslide in Taining county on Sunday.—AP

31 DEAD, 7 MISSING AFTER SOUTHERN CHINA LANDSLIDE

BEIJING: Rescue teams have recovered the bodies of 31 victims while seven people were still listed as missing yesterday following a landslide at the site of a hydropower project in southern China after days of heavy rain, authorities said.

Rescuers aided by experts sent by the central government were searching with tools and sniffer dogs for signs of life, while mechanical diggers hauled away stones and soil, part of a 100,000-cubic-meter (3.5 million-cubic-foot) mountain of rain-saturated debris that buried an office building and a living area for construction workers early Sunday.

Continuing heavy rain in the area was hampering the rescue effort and more evacuations were being organized, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. "We were asleep when the mountains began to jolt very strongly and before we knew it, sand and mud were flowing into our room," survivor Deng Chunwu told Xinhua. He and three other workers survived by huddling underneath a supporting pole.

Their room was shifted a distance of 10 meters (30 feet) by the flowing mud, Deng said. A number of other people were being treated for bone fractures and other injuries, Xinhua and state broadcaster China Central Television said.

More than 600 rescuers, including fire-

fighters and police, were searching for the missing and attempting to clear sections of roads leading to the site that had been made impassable by mudslides and flooding, hindering efforts to get heavy machinery through. The project in mountainous Taining county in Fujian province is an extension of the Chitan hydropower station, an affiliate of state-owned Huadian Fuxin Energy Ltd., and was expected to begin operations in August 2017, Xinhua reported. An official at the county department, who gave only his surname, Wei, said by phone that the cause of the landslide was still unclear, but that the area had seen rainfall in the past few days.

Severe weather, mountainous topography and high population density over much of southern and eastern China make landslides a constant threat. Overdevelopment and shoddy oversight can increase the danger, as was the case in December when 74 people were left dead or missing after a man-made mountain of construction waste collapsed onto buildings in the city of Shenzhen. Police detained 11 people following that accident on suspicion of failing to prevent the disaster.

Heavy rain has affected much of southern China since Wednesday, triggering floods and landslides, disrupting transport and destroying crops.—AP

AUSTRALIA TURNS BACK ON THREE ASYLUM-SEEKER BOATS

SYDNEY: Australia has intercepted three asylum-seeker boats so far this year, including one carrying women and children from Sri Lanka, the country's immigration minister revealed yesterday.

Under Canberra's hard-line measures, asylum-seekers trying to reach Australia by boat are either sent back to where they departed or to remote Pacific island camps, where living conditions have been criticized. The government has defended the policy as stopping deaths at sea. Since the start of its "Operation Sovereign Borders" in September 2013, it has managed to halt the flood of boats, and drowning, that characterized previous Labor administrations.

In March, Canberra hailed 600 days with no vessels arriving, with 25 boats carrying 698 people turned back and "safely returned to their country of departure". Immigration Minister Peter Dutton said three boats had been intercepted this year, including a small wooden fishing vessel from Sri Lanka last week. "I can advise that there were 12 people on that vessel," he said. "And the vessel had departed from Sri Lanka and we were able to successfully return those 12 people, which included men, women and children, back safely to Sri Lanka on May 6."

"Now, that brings to three the number of vessels that have sought to arrive and have been turned back, people returned back to their country of origin, in this calendar year." He gave no details on the other two boats. The vessel from Sri Lanka came within 500 meters (1,600 feet) of Australia's thinly-populated Cocos Islands in the Indian Ocean on Monday last week, according to reports.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation said that after being spotted, those on board were transferred from a customs ship to a smaller boat, which took them ashore. They were flown back to Colombo on a charter flight in a secretive operation under the cover of darkness on Thursday, the broadcaster said, citing witnesses who claimed there were seven children, including babies, among them. Dutton reiterated that no boatpeople, even if found to be genuine refugees, would ever be

settled in Australia. "Please don't accept the word of con agents that are masquerading as these people-smugglers, that if you pay your money will you come to Australia. You will not," he said. Fate of PNG asylum seekers could take months. The fate of nearly 900 men held in an Australian detention center in Papua New Guinea is unlikely to be determined for several months, Australian Immigration Minister Peter Dutton said yesterday.

That timetable could put the politically sensitive decision beyond a federal election on July 2, although Australia's tough immigration policy is expected to be a feature of one of the longest poll campaigns in the country's history. The PNG government said two weeks ago it planned to close the detention centre on Manus Island after the Pacific Island nation's Supreme Court ruled it was unlawful, a decision that threatens to undermine Australia's closed door asylum policy. Each country has argued that the other is responsible for the fate of the men.

While the numbers of asylum seekers trying to reach Australia are small in comparison with the floods in Europe, the issue has been a major feature of recent political campaigns with the ruling conservative government coming to power in 2013 on a promise to "stop the boats". The Manus Island detainees are a headache Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull can ill afford as opinion polls show his Liberal-led Coalition government running neck-and-neck with the centre-left Labor opposition.

Dutton described talks between the two nations in PNG last week as "constructive", but when pressed on a timetable by reporters he said a resolution would likely take "a couple of months". "We will have what I think will be detailed and long-run discussions with Papua New Guinea," he told reporters, saying that Australia had made it clear the detained men, from countries including Iran, Syria and Afghanistan, would not be settled in Australia. Legal action, however, may speed up the timetable, with lawyers for the detainees already going through the courts to seek their immediate release and transfer to Australia.—Agencies

KIM CROWNED AS PARTY LEADER AT NORTH KOREAN CONGRESS

CONGRESS SEEN AS A CORONATION FOR THE YOUNG LEADER

PYONGYANG: North Korean strongman Kim Jong-Un was named chairman of the ruling Workers' Party yesterday at a once in a generation congress seen as a coronation for the young leader.

Thousands of delegates, many in uniform, clapped and cheered enthusiastically as the country's official head of state, Kim Yong-Nam, announced the post at the first top-level meeting of the party for 36 years. The speech was the first time foreign journalists allowed into the reclusive country to cover the congress have got a glimpse of the delegate hall, festooned in red and gold banners carrying the party's logo.

Kim departed from his usual black outfit as he appeared on stage, sporting a tailored Western suit and grey tie along with large, trendy glasses. The congress, which opened on Friday, has given 33-year-old Kim a podium to secure his status as supreme leader and confirm his legacy "byungjin" doctrine of twin economic and nuclear development.

North Korea has carried out two of its four nuclear tests under Kim's leadership, most recently in January when it claimed to have tried out a powerful hydrogen bomb—a claim experts have disputed. There has been growing concern that Pyongyang may be on the verge of conducting a fifth test, with satellite imagery showing activity at the North's Punggye-ri nuclear test site.

Delegates to what is technically North Korea's top decision-making body on Sunday adopted his motion to "boost self-defensive nuclear force, both in quality and quantity". The meeting also enshrined a policy of not using nuclear weapons unless the country's sovereignty is threatened by another nuclear power, and of working towards the reunification of the divided Korean peninsula.

"But if the South Korean authorities opt for a war... we will turn out in the just war to mercilessly wipe out the anti-reunification forces," said a document published by the North's official KCNA news agency.

Reiterating the North's long-held argument that its push for a nuclear deterrent was forced by US hostility, the congress said the nuclear weapons programme would move forward "as long as the imperialists persist in their nuclear threat". Presenting his report to the congress in a marathon three-hour speech on Saturday, Kim said Pyongyang



PYONGYANG: North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un reporting works of the North Korean Workers' Party Central Committee during the third day of the 7th Workers Party Congress at the 'April 25 Palace' on Sunday.—AFP

wanted better relations with previously "hostile" nations and proposed military talks with South Korea to ease tensions on their heavily fortified border.

'Propaganda with no sincerity'

The government in Seoul dismissed his remarks, including a vow to pursue global denuclearisation, as meaningless propaganda. "There is absolutely no sincerity in talking about the necessity of military talks... while calling oneself a nuclear weapons state and launching nuclear and missile provocations," defence ministry spokesman Moon Sang-Gyun said. Moon said the party congress had only served to reaffirm North Korea's intention to develop its nuclear arsenal, and added that Seoul would continue to counter those ambitions with sanctions and pressure.

The South Korean Unification Ministry was equally dismissive, describing Kim's remarks on improving North-South ties as a "propaganda act with no sincerity." Kim was not even born when the last party congress was held in 1980 to crown his father, Kim Jong-Il, as the

heir apparent to founding leader Kim Il-Sung. When his own turn came, following the death of Kim Jong-Il in December 2011, the new young leader quickly set about cementing his power base and securing his legitimacy as the inheritor of Kim family's ruling dynasty.

One of his earliest moves was to adjust his father's "songun", or military first policy, to the "byungjin" policy of economic-nuclear development. The nuclear half of that strategy had dominated the run-up to the party congress, starting with a fourth nuclear test in January that was followed by a long-range rocket launch and a flurry of other missile and weapons tests.

Some observers had predicted that the congress might switch the focus to the economic side of the equation, and Kim did unveil a five-year economic plan — the first of its kind for decades. But his report to the congress offered few details of the plan's policies or targets beyond general ambitions to boost production across all economic sectors, with a particular focus on energy production.—AFP

N KOREA'S NUCLEAR PLAN 'HAS NOT CHANGED'

BEIJING: Chinese state-run media yesterday played down North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un's pledge not to use nuclear weapons unless his country's sovereignty is threatened, saying that his pursuit of atomic arms remained dangerous.

Beijing is Pyongyang's main diplomatic protector and source of trade and aid, but relations between them have become increasingly strained by the North's nuclear ambitions, and Kim has yet to visit his neighbor.

The North's first ruling party congress in nearly 40 years formally endorsed Kim's policy of expanding the country's nuclear arsenal, after he said it would not use the weapons unless attacked, and would work for global denuclearization. But the international community and the United Nations have long demanded an end to the North's nuclear and missile programs.

Kim's declaration "was made from the perspective that North Korea is now a nuclear state", China's Global Times newspaper, which is close to the ruling Communist party, said in an editorial. As such, it said, its "attitude has not changed, and neither has its biggest contradiction with the outside world been resolved".

"Major countries will not change their stance to recognize North Korea as a nuclear state," it added. "As long as Pyongyang resists giving up its nuclear weapons, normalizing relations with the outside world will be highly unlikely."

China's foreign ministry said that Beijing's position on the nuclear question "remains unchanged" following the weekend's events. "We maintain that all resolutions of the UN Security Council related to the issue should be applied by all the parties," spokesman Lu Kang told reporters at a regular briefing.

There were no Chinese representatives at the Workers' Party gathering, the Global Times reported last week, although a large delegation attended the previous congress in 1980 headed by Li Xiannian, later China's official head of state. Beijing has been reluctant to take measures against the North, fearing that a crisis could send floods of refugees into its territory. It also views as anathema the prospect of US troops on its border in a reunified Korea.

The North's nuclear program had been a factor in the US and South Korea "constantly upgrading their military preparation for strikes against Pyongyang", the newspaper said. "The crazy logic of contemporary international politics has become a game of who will blink first," it added.—AFP

SUSHI CHEF SAYS KIM JONG-UN HAS 'NO PLANS FOR WAR'

TOKYO: A Japanese sushi chef who served Kim Jong-Il claims North Korea's current leader has no intention of waging war with the United States.

The chef, who goes by the pseudonym Kenji Fujimoto, told a Japanese tabloid magazine he was invited to Pyongyang last month for the first time in almost four years, and that Kim Jong-Un himself picked him up at the airport. "I was surprised when I looked at the driver's seat," Fujimoto was quoted as saying in a piece written under his byline in the weekly Shukan Gendai.

"Field marshal Kim Jong-Un himself was driving, he'd come to check up on me," Fujimoto, one of the few non-Koreans to have met the young leader, said that he arrived in Pyongyang on April 12 to have dinner with Kim, who greeted him with a hug and asked about feelings in Japan towards the secretive state.

Fujimoto, who is said to carry business cards emblazoned with the words 'Kim Jong-Il's chef', reportedly replied "with blunt honesty: it's terrible. Since the start of the year there have been nuclear and missile tests."

Kim, whose plans to expand North Korea's nuclear arsenal were formally endorsed this week at Pyongyang's first ruling party congress in nearly 40 years, offered a conciliatory response. "The reason

we launch rockets and missiles is the United States," the 33-year-old 'supreme leader' said, according to the report.

"When we begin talks with the Americans, they soon make unacceptable demands with difficult conditions. Although our relations with the United States remain perilous, I have no intention of starting a war," Fujimoto claims Kim added. Fujimoto, who has a 24-year-old daughter by his Pyongyang-resident North Korean wife, also revealed that Kim had been on a recent wine binge. "I emptied 10 bottles a few days ago and my stomach feels a little bad," Kim said at a dinner attended by some 20 senior North Korean officials, according to Fujimoto.

"Although maybe one glass won't do any harm," Fujimoto, who claims to have been jet-skiing and motorbiking with Kim Jong-Il, lived in Pyongyang in the service of the first family for ten years.

He says he fled the regime during a shopping trip to Japan in 2001, and has since made his living from media appearances, lectures and writings about his days in the isolated country. Fujimoto only ever appears in public wearing aviator sunglasses and a bandana, precautions he insists are necessary to shield his identity, and says he wears a bulletproof in Japan, fearing for his safety.—AFP

MISSING MALAYSIAN BOAT LIKELY SANK

KUALA LUMPUR: A missing Malaysian boat with three foreigners aboard that disappeared in waters near the Philippines, which has seen a spate of kidnappings, is believed to have sunk, an official said yesterday.

Mohamad Zubil Mat Som, a senior coast guard official, told AFP that Malaysian fishermen over the weekend recovered an engine entangled in their net that was from the missing vessel.

The small boat is "believed" to have sunk

and divers have been deployed in the area where the boat engine was found, he said. "We will seek the assistance of the local fishermen to drag a large net across the ocean floor," the coast guard said in a statement. The foreigners went missing along with a Malaysian off the coast of Sabah state on Borneo island during bad weather last week. The missing have been identified as Spanish nationals David Hernandez Gasulla and Martha Miguel, and Hong Kong citizen Tommy Lam Wai Yin.—AFP



Two Palestinian women walk past a graffiti painted on a wall of the United Nations school of Beit Hanun in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday. — AFP

EARTHLINGS WATCH AS TINY MERCURY...

Continued from Page 1

learning more about gases vaporizing from the planet's surface. The "out-gassing" may be a factor in why Mercury is shrinking, Green said. Astronomers also used the transit to calibrate sensors on a trio of space-based solar telescopes and refine techniques to look for planets beyond

the solar system. "When a planet crosses in front of the sun, it causes the sun's brightness to dim. Scientists can measure similar brightness dips from other stars to find planets orbiting them," NASA said. Mercury will pass between the sun and Earth again in 2019. After that, the next opportunity to witness the event will not come until 2032. — Reuters

DUTERTE WINS PHILIPPINE PRESIDENTIAL...

Continued from Page 1

"I need your help to stop the return of terror in our land. I cannot do it alone," Aquino said in an appeal to voters in a final rally on Saturday in Manila for Roxas, his preferred successor and fellow Liberal Party stalwart. In his final rally on Saturday, Duterte repeated to tens of thousands of cheering fans his plans to end crime within six months of starting his presidency. "Forget the laws on human rights," said Duterte, who has been accused of running vigilante death squads in Davao. "If I make it to the presidential palace, I will do just what I did as mayor. You drug pushers, hold-up men and do-nothings, you better go out. Because as the mayor, I'd kill you."

Aquino, who is limited by the constitution to a single term of six years, had overseen average annual economic growth of six percent and won international plaudits for trying to tackle corruption. However, his critics said he had done little to change an economic model that

favors an extraordinarily small number of families that control nearly all key industries, and has led to one of Asia's biggest rich-poor divides. This criticism hurt Roxas, a member of the wealthy classes widely seen by many as lacking empathy for the poor.

Another key message of Duterte's campaign was his pledge to take on the elite, even though his vice presidential running mate was from one of the nation's richest and most powerful families. Poe had seen her popularity slide after critics pointed to her taking US citizenship then later giving it up. Vice President Jejomar Binay, the early favorite, was in a distant fourth place, according to the poll monitor, after crumbling under the weight of a barrage of corruption allegations.

In an intriguing sub-plot, former dictator Marcos's son and namesake had a slight lead in the race to be elected vice president, according to the poll monitor, which would cement a remarkable political comeback for his family. — AFP

UN WANTS TO RESETTLE 10% OF REFUGEES

UNITED NATIONS: A new UN plan to tackle the worst refugee crisis since World War II would aim to resettle at least 10 percent of refugees annually, piling pressure on countries to open up their doors to those fleeing wars and disasters. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon outlined the proposal for a new "global compact on responsibility-sharing" yesterday to address the crisis from the 60 million refugees and displaced people worldwide.

The United Nations hopes that new deal will lift some of the burden on developing countries in the refugee crisis, which has been fueled by the five-year war in Syria and other conflicts. The proposal calls for resettling at least 10 percent of the global refugee population of 19.6 million annually under a scheme that would be negotiated at the United Nations. "With equitable responsibility sharing, there would be no crisis for host countries," Ban said. "We can afford to help, and we know what we need to do," but too often fear, ignorance and xenophobia get in the way, he said.

The UN plan was put forward as the European Union has been bogged down in disputes over how to deal with its refugee crisis. An EU deal with Turkey, which has agreed to take back migrants in exchange for a string of concessions, has run into hurdles and the bloc has been haggling over how to share out the burden of resettlements. More than 184,000 migrants have arrived in Europe by sea already this year, up from nearly 49,000 for the same four-month period last year as the refugee crisis rages on.

The global compact on refugees is expected to be adopted at a UN summit on Sept 19, that will be followed on September 20 by a US pledging conference. President Barack Obama will host that conference on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting to ask countries to come forward and announce the number of refugees they are willing to take in along with any other support they can offer.

Amnesty International applauded the proposal, saying it could lay down arrangements for burden-sharing that would reduce overcrowding in refugee camps and could see fewer asylum-seekers making perilous journeys at sea. "The UN plan could be a game-changer," said Sherif Elsayed-Ali, deputy director of global issues at Amnesty International. "World leaders cannot go on lurching from crisis to crisis, haggling over numbers and fiddling while parts of the world burn, leaving developing countries to host 86 percent of the world's refugees," he said. "A comprehensive system that clearly sets out the responsibility of each country before the crisis becomes acute could fix that."

A handful of countries are currently bearing the brunt of the global refugee crisis, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Eight countries host more than half of the world's refugees: Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya and Uganda. Nine countries plus the European Union pay for 75 percent of the UN's budget to support refugees: the United States, Britain, Japan, Germany, Kuwait, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Netherlands. — AFP

YEMEN FOES RESUME DIRECT TALKS AFTER...

Continued from Page 1

We are either moving towards peace or going back to square one," he said. Ould Cheikh Ahmed also said that the gap between the two sides is large, but that the working groups are scheduled to meet again today.

Direct talks broke off on Saturday with the government delegation complaining of a lack of progress and the Houthis rebels protesting about air raids by the Saudi-led Arab coalition. A source close to the government delegation said the resumption of direct talks came as a result of international diplomatic pressure on the rebels. But the source also told AFP that no progress was made at yesterday's meetings. A source close to the rebel delegation said it was due to meet the ambassadors of the 18 countries later in the day.

Yemen's foreign minister said the talks which began on April 21 have made no headway. "For the sake of peace, we have accepted all proposals submitted to us in order to progress," said Abdulmalek Al-Mikhlafi, who

heads the government delegation. "But after three weeks, we have nothing in our hands because the other party backed down on its commitments," Mikhlafi wrote on Twitter. The rebels issued a strong protest to the UN envoy over alleged air raids Sunday that they said killed several people, according to a source close to their delegation. There was no immediate confirmation of the reported air strikes.

The rebels and their allies have demanded the formation of a consensus transitional government before forging ahead with other issues that require them to surrender arms and withdraw from territories they occupied in 2014. The talks, which come after two failed peace attempts in June and December last year in Switzerland, are based on a UN Security Council resolution which orders the rebels to withdraw and surrender heavy weaponry they had seized. There has been mounting international pressure to end the Yemen conflict that the United Nations estimates has killed more than 6,400 people and displaced 2.8 million since March last year. — AFP

NOD TO LABOR LAW AMENDMENTS

Continued from Page 1

The new penalty is a jail term of between one month and six months and a fine of between KD 500 and KD 2,000.

The panel also added a new paragraph to article 146 to give the court powers to fine an employer one percent of the value of unpaid salaries every month if the court finds that any delay in salary payment was caused by the employer. This fine does not restrict the employee's right to demand any other compensation.

Separately, the Cabinet approved a request by the Ministry of Public Works to finalize a contracting process with the Turkish Limak Construction company to build, furnish and maintain a new passenger building at Kuwait Airport. This announcement was made by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah after the Cabinet's weekly meeting yesterday. Finishing this project as soon as possible is a pressing

matter in order to smooth the flow of passengers and transportation, the minister pointed out. Limak Construction is one of the most prestigious and top-tier global contractor companies, specialized in the construction of airports, ports, highways, dams, hydroelectric power plants, treatment plants, industrial plants, pipelines and hotels.

Meanwhile, MP Abdullah Al-Turajji threatened yesterday to use constitutional tools against Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh if he continues to fail to stop the squandering of hundreds of millions of dinars of public funds. He said based on reports by the Audit Bureau, the amount of squandered money reached KD 274 million including KD 122 million at Kuwait National Petroleum Co. He said that the continuity of squandering of public funds in the oil sector and other departments confirms deliberate failure to tackle the issue and stop the losses. Head of the Priorities Committee MP Youssef Al-Zalzalah said yesterday that it has been agreed to discuss the budgets for the current fiscal year between June 13 and 16.

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Focus

SAUDI OIL POLICY
COULD BECOME
MORE TRANSPARENT

By John Kemp

The appointment of Khalid Al-Falih as Saudi Arabia's new energy minister to replace veteran oil minister Ali Al-Naimi is likely to bring a big shift in style even if the substance of policy remains largely unchanged. Naimi has served as the minister of petroleum and natural resources since 1995 and has long indicated a wish to retire. Plans to name a successor as part of a cabinet reshuffle in 2011 were postponed when unrest spread across the Arab world, including neighboring Bahrain.

Now he has been replaced as part of a wide-ranging reorganization of ministries and senior officials intended to implement Vision 2030, the kingdom's economic transformation program. Saudi Arabia has had just five ministers in charge of oil policy since 1960. In the past, changes in the ruler have normally been associated with a change in oil minister. King Faisal replaced Abdullah Tariki (1960-62) with Zaki Yamani (1962-1986). King Fahd replaced Yamani with Hisham Nazer (1986-1995). Crown Prince and de facto regent Abdullah replaced Nazer with Naimi (1995-2016).

Naimi was identified with the previous administration led by King Abdullah so it was always likely King Salman and his son Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman would want to make their own appointment to one of most important positions in the kingdom. Naimi already appeared to have lost control over policy in recent months. He was sidelined at the Doha summit in April when the royal court scuppered an international agreement on a production freeze.

Policy Continuity

For the last two decades, Naimi has led Saudi Arabia's strategy on oil prices and production in consultation with the king and royal court. The question arises whether Naimi's replacement by Falih will see a continuation of the existing policy or be used as an opportunity to adjust or evolve it. Naimi was the principal architect of the decision to maintain output, defend market share and allow prices to find their own level in the second half of 2014.

The strategy has taken longer to work and proved much more costly than Saudi Arabia's policymakers seem to have anticipated. But the strategy finally appears to be working, with production from US shale and other non-OPEC sources in steep decline and oil prices up by more than \$20 from their recent low. Even if Naimi was the principal architect of the production policy, it has been enthusiastically supported by both Falih and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

If anything, the deputy crown prince has appeared to favor an even more hawkish approach to production and price policy. In the run up to Doha, the prince appeared to want to use low oil prices as a weapon in the broader diplomatic confrontation with Iran. In an interview, the prince claimed to be unconcerned whether oil prices were at \$30 or \$70 per barrel as "they are all the same to us". Falih, too, has insisted the kingdom would defend its market share and allow prices to find their own level, a position he reiterated on Sunday. So there is no reason to expect a significant change in the substance of Saudi production policy from either the new energy minister or the deputy crown prince. But the style of policymaking seems set to change in a number of important respects.

Modern Communications

Falih is likely to enjoy far less autonomy than predecessors like Naimi and Yamani. The deputy crown prince has made clear that he has overall control of oil policy and intends to take a more active interest than previous rulers. Falih will be a respected adviser but the ultimate decisions will be taken by the royal court. In other respects, Falih is likely to usher in a more modern, technocratic and professional approach. Falih comes from a younger generation but modernization is also very much in line with the new approach being pushed by consultants from McKinsey and encapsulated in the government's Vision 2030 plan.

One of the biggest changes, and most welcome, could come in the energy ministry's communications with the media and the markets. For decades, the kingdom's price and production strategy have been communicated through non-attributable briefings given to favoured journalists and analysts by "a senior Gulf OPEC source". The result of this selective briefing system, which is unlike any practiced in other commodity and financial markets, has been confusion and a lack of clarity, with much dissatisfaction on both sides.

An entire cadre of "OPEC watchers" has grown up to help interpret Saudi policy, similar to the old "Kremlin watchers" and "Fed watchers" of the 1980s, with all the attendant uncertainty and lack of clarity. In the last two years, under Naimi and his advisers, the Saudis have already taken some tentative steps towards greater openness, for example releasing transcripts of important ministerial statements. — Reuters

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HOW TO STOP PEOPLE DYING FROM AID SHORTAGES?

By Megan Rowling

Women in Niger travel miles by donkey cart to health centres in the hope of getting food for their malnourished infants, leaving their vegetable gardens untended and chores undone, only to be turned away with nothing. Children in Somalia and Democratic Republic of Congo find their grades start to drop when they no longer receive a decent meal at school, sapping their hopes for the future. "These are people who have put their trust in the international community to at least help them through a difficult time, and then we have disappointed them," said Sheri Arnott of World Vision International, which issued a report in November on the effects of the gap between the funds sought for humanitarian work and the amount given by donor governments.

The aid group said it was contracted to provide food aid to 10.3 million people in 35 countries in the 2013/2014 financial year, but only received enough money to help 8 million. Agencies warn that they are struggling to deliver sufficient food, healthcare and other basic relief to tens of millions of people around the world who need support as the scale of natural disasters and conflicts has increased.

Syria's five-year war has forced more than 11 million people to flee their homes, for example, and an estimated 60 million in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific are now affected by droughts and floods linked to the El Niño weather phenomenon. The annual global humanitarian appeals led by the United Nations have increased six-fold in the last decade, rising to \$19.3 billion in 2015. In response, the funding provided each year by governments has risen from between \$2 billion and \$4 billion to more than \$10 billion

over the same period.

"We are now much more ambitious in delivering more and better services to many more people," said former UN aid chief Jan Egeland, who heads the Norwegian Refugee Council. But last year only 56 percent of the global appeal was funded, down from 60 percent in 2014 and 65 percent in 2013. In a Thomson Reuters Foundation poll of international aid charities, four out of 12 respondents said they had scaled back humanitarian operations due to a shortfall in funding requested through the UN joint appeal in 2014. That figure rose to seven in 2015.

While they tried to find money from other sources or ensure another organization did the work, in some cases tight budgets meant less aid for people in need. Nearly two thirds of respondents agreed that the appeals system should be reformed to help bridge the funding gap, with some suggesting less money should be channelled via UN agencies.

Invisible Deaths

While the UN-led appeal does not include all crisis response work and financial contributions, it provides a "back of the envelope" calculation of global need - and the extent to which it is being met, according to Gareth Price-Jones, senior humanitarian policy coordinator with CARE International. Today's growing funding shortages have a very real impact on people living on the edge of survival, experts say. "Those people just struggle on with dirty water, with less food than they need, and with no education," Price-Jones said.

Sometimes the lack of aid directly causes deaths - as with the Horn of Africa famine in 2011 and 2012. Drought and high food prices hit some 13 million people and more than 250,000 died in Somalia, where fighting ham-

pered the delivery of aid. But often the consequences of inadequate humanitarian funding are far less visible, said John Holmes, who served as the UN emergency relief coordinator from 2007 to 2010.

"The number of people who die who wouldn't have died otherwise is absolutely enormous because their lives have been disrupted in every possible way," said Holmes, now director of UK-based thinktank The Ditchley Foundation.

Governments attending the first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul from May 23-24 are expected to commit to reducing the funding gap for life-saving aid work, in return for promises of greater efficiency from the humanitarian sector.

A flagship report on humanitarian financing, released by a high-level panel earlier this year, put the sum needed in 2015 to help 125 million people suffering from wars, earthquakes, floods and other crises at \$40 billion. The total raised in 2015 for global humanitarian aid - including money flowing outside the U.N. appeal - was just under \$20 billion, down from around \$24 billion in 2014, pointing to an annual shortage of up to \$20 billion.

The Istanbul summit is set to endorse measures to fill that gap, including cutting out inefficiencies in response, expanding the traditional pool of donors to Gulf states and emerging economies, giving aid in the form of cash rather than supplies, and raising funds from "sukuk" bonds issued by Islamic banks. Holmes said one obvious way to source more money for emergencies would be to double the proportion of official development assistance used for that purpose, from around 10 percent to 20 percent.

Britain, for example, has established a new reserve of 500 million pounds (\$725 mil-

lion) to respond faster and more flexibly to new or worsening crises, and will allocate half of all its development spending to fragile states and regions.

Prevention is Cheaper

Most aid officials agree the best solution is to shrink the size of urgent aid needs by putting more political effort and cash into resolving conflicts and protecting people better from extreme weather, earthquakes and other natural hazards. "It is clear you have to reduce the demand as much as you have to meet the need," UN humanitarian chief Stephen O'Brien told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Efforts are underway to refine how aid agencies determine needs, to avoid duplication and more accurately assess the cost of responses - a tricky feat in volatile conditions.

But Sophia Swithern, head of analysis with UK-based research group Development Initiatives, said improving efficiency and transparency, while necessary, would not be enough. "If you're really looking to reduce the bill, we all know it's cheaper to respond to early warnings and to prevent crises," she said. Increasingly, humanitarian action plans are seeking to protect people against future shocks by building quake-resistant homes, reconciling community tensions, or helping farmers adapt to the impacts of climate change.

But when donors have a limited pot of money, these longer-term elements of aid work often fall by the wayside. "We will never get to grips with \$20 billion a year of humanitarian need if we don't tackle the underlying reasons why we have that need in the first place," said Jan Kellest, a senior adviser with the UN Development Program. "We need to shift the rhetoric away from crisis and towards development." — Reuters

CAMERON NEEDS TO WIN BIG ON EUROPE

By Elizabeth Piper

Among the ranks of campaigners to keep Britain in the European Union is a small group of Prime Minister David Cameron's closest advisers. For these aides, the scale of victory is as important as victory itself. This team is targeting close to 60 percent of the "Remain" vote in a June 23 referendum that will decide whether Britain stays in the EU or leaves, members of Cameron's inner circle told Reuters in interviews. That, they believe, is the minimum to bury the "Europe question" and ensure Cameron is able to serve out his term to 2020.

Polls suggest the vote is too close to call. Yet these advisers believe scraping through is not enough. Without a clear margin, Cameron will remain vulnerable on an issue that brought down two of his predecessors, Margaret Thatcher and John Major, and has bedevilled his Conservative Party for decades. Already some anti EU "eurosceptics" in the party are plotting to try to force Cameron aside regardless of the referendum outcome, according to two Conservative Party sources. The greater the margin of victory, the smaller their chance of success, the aides say.

The advisers' tactics include the targeted use of social media - mothers of young children are more likely to engage with the campaign in the evening, for instance. They have organized "theme weeks", such as one that draws in pro-Europeans in the opposition Labour Party, and for every new statistic rolled out in the debate there is a carefully crafted back story. A spokesman for Cameron said the prime minister was committed to winning the referendum but declined to speculate on the scale of victory he wanted.

A source close to the prime minister said he was conscious the bigger the win, the stronger his position. "And even then putting the party back together will not be easy," said the source, who like several oth-

ers interviewed for this article declined to be identified because they were not authorized to discuss the campaign publicly. Not only is the country divided over EU membership but almost half of the Conservative Party's lawmakers and some members of the cabinet are campaigning to leave the 28-member bloc. The source close to Cameron said the PM was 'edgy'. So Cameron has turned to trusted advisers and experienced election hands to make sure "things fly through properly and he has people who understand what he means and how he works". The prime minister is relying most heavily on roughly half a dozen aides who were central to the Conservatives' election victory last year and Scotland's vote against independence in 2014.

Secret Weapons

The group includes his "secret weapons" in the 2015 parliamentary election, Craig Elder and Tom Edmonds, who target swing voters with online videos and social media adverts. Elder and Edmonds, digital strategists, left their jobs at the Conservative Party after helping Cameron win the 2015 election to set up their own agency, which is retained by the Remain campaign. They declined to comment for this article but they have in the past outlined their strategy, which includes targeting different groups at the most effective times of the day - say a 40-year-old mum of two on social media in the evening, "when the kids have gone to bed".

The man behind Remain's field team, Stuart Hand, helped run the Tory ground campaign during the 2015 election. Two other advisers, Andrew Cooper and Stephen Gilbert, bring polling advice and election experience. Both have been close to Cameron for about two decades. Once a week, at least one Remain campaign adviser attends the prime minister's 8:30 am and 4 pm meetings in his Downing Street office. As June 23 draws closer, Cameron will be

briefed almost continuously. Dozens of campaigners employed by the Remain campaign will be working round the clock. One new team member says he was advised to stock up on cans of baked beans and new underwear because "there will be no time to eat or wash".

Also in Downing Street, Ameet Gill, a long-serving aide, fills in "the grid", a sort of diary, to set the prime minister's EU agenda. Downing Street coordinates with the EU referendum unit, which manages the government message, and with Remain, or The Britain Stronger in Europe campaign, run from an office five kilometers away in the City of London.

Cameron is unable to visit the Remain team's base in Cannon Street in central London often because of government business, so he relies on Gilbert, who has taken a leave of absence as deputy chairman of the Conservatives, to liaise, said a source close to the campaign. Gilbert could not be reached for comment.

Biggest Gamble

The June 23 vote will determine Cameron's political legacy and the future of Britain. He called the referendum under pressure from members of his own party and in response to a growing electoral threat from the UK Independence Party, an anti-EU force. Cameron has thrown himself into campaigning, touring the country to try to convince people to support remaining in the European Union, repeating his mantra that Britain is "stronger, safer and better off" in the bloc.

He has visited workers in finance, car manufacturing, the defence industry, shared the floor with political opponent turned EU ally Brendan Barber, a former trade union leader, and met often hostile students to try to persuade Britons to vote to stay in the EU. If securing his legacy means some opponents of EU membership decide to leave the Conservative Party, then "so be it", said one of the sources close

to the campaign. Cameron's spokesman said it was up to individuals to decide whether to remain in the party after the vote, but added that while he expected "the vast majority of the party" will respect how Britain votes, "there will be some people who continue to believe very strongly that we should leave".

For Britain Stronger in Europe, which unites pro-Europeans from several political parties, the prime minister's role is key, said James McGrory, its chief campaign spokesman. McGrory, a former adviser to Liberal Democrat deputy prime minister Nick Clegg during the 2010-2015 coalition government, underlines that the Britain Stronger in Europe is an umbrella group which allows all parties to press the campaign. Cross-party cooperation is rare in Britain, where the left-right political divide often creates a tribal atmosphere in parliament. But Cameron needs opposition Labour and Liberal Democrat to mobilize their voters.

Team Back Together

Cameron's reliance on a small circle of advisers has not been universally well received. Some eurosceptic members of the Conservative Party have accused Cameron of stacking the odds in his favor. According to aides, Cameron is willing to weather the storm and is convinced he can win. Cooper said in his personal opinion the goal was that once the referendum was over, Cameron would be able to return to the election program he set out last year - to tackle poverty, to boost home ownership and to end discrimination.

"If the Remain campaign wins by a clear margin, the Conservative Party must quickly move on from the EU issue," he said. "On the Saturday morning we should go back wholeheartedly to the agenda David Cameron set out in his speech to last year's party conference, driving the Conservative Party onto the centre ground and bolting it there." — Reuters

GUNDOGAN'S KNEE INJURY LEAVES A QUESTION MARK

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund say Ilkay Gundogan's knee injury has left a question mark over a potential transfer, with the German midfielder heavily linked to Manchester City. The 25-year-old is set to miss the rest of the season, including this June's European championships in France, after dislocating his knee cap in training with Dortmund. His current Borussia contract expires in June 2017, but he has been linked to a transfer to Manchester to work with their incoming manager Pep Guardiola, after Gundogan's agent met City's director of sport Txiki Begiristain in Amsterdam in March. But Gundogan's latest injury has now cast doubts over a possible switch. "Ilkay is currently still in shock (after getting injured). How things go with him, we will have to wait and see," Dortmund's director of sport Michael Zorc told German daily Bild. Gundogan has been capped 16 times by Germany, but already missed his country's triumph at the 2014 World Cup because of a long-term back injury. According to Bild, a year's extension to his Dortmund contract is out of the question, meaning Gundogan may have to sign a long-term deal with Borussia if a possible transfer falls through.—AFP

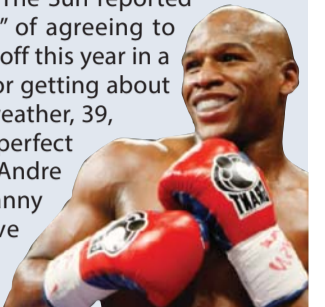


NIGERIA FINED FOR AFCON QUALIFIER OVERCROWDING

ABUJA: African football's governing body yesterday fined Nigeria \$5,000 (4,400 euros) for overcrowding and lack of security during their 2017 Africa Cup of Nations qualifier against Egypt. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) imposed the fine at a disciplinary meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa, threatening "sanctions will be applied" if there was any repeat. More than 40,000 spectators crammed into the 15,000-capacity Ahmadu Bello Stadium in the northern city of Kaduna on March 29 to watch the match, which ended in a 1-1 draw. Fans climbed onto any available space, including floodlight scaffolding, while others had to be held back from spilling onto the pitch by police mounted on horseback. The Kaduna State government had thrown open the doors of the venue to allow fans to watch the crucial qualifier for free. Nigeria's Super Eagles lost the return fixture in Alexandria 1-0, ending their hopes of qualifying for the finals in Gabon next year.—AFP

BOXING - MAYWEATHER SAYS MCGREGOR FIGHT 'POSSIBLE'

LOS ANGELES: Floyd Mayweather, already hinting at a ring return, says it's "possible" he could come out of retirement to face mixed martial arts star Conor McGregor. "It's possible," Mayweather said Saturday while in Las Vegas for the fight between Saul "Canelo" Alvarez and Amir Khan. "It was a name that was shot at me," Mayweather said in video posted by Fighthype.com. "The rumors that you all have been hearing are the rumors that I started. It may not be a rumor, so keep your fingers crossed. It may be a boxer versus an MMA fighter." Mayweather was asked about a potential McGregor matchup because British tabloid The Sun reported he and Ireland's McGregor were "on the verge" of agreeing to meet. According to the Sun the two would face off this year in a boxing ring-not an MMA octagon-with McGregor getting about \$10 million to Mayweather's \$144 million. Mayweather, 39, walked away from boxing in September with a perfect 49-0 record. That included his last victory over Andre Berto and his triumph over Filipino ring icon Manny Pacquiao in May of 2015 in the most lucrative fight in boxing history.—AFP



CUBS RECORD 7TH WIN IN A ROW

CHICAGO: The Chicago Cubs walked Washington star Bryce Harper a record-tying six times then beat the Nationals 4-3 when Javier Baez homered in the 13th inning Sunday to complete a four-game sweep. The Cubs won their seventh in a row and improved the best record in the majors to 24-6. Washington lost its fourth straight. Harper matched the major league record for walks in a game, last done by Jeff Bagwell in 1999, and walked 13 times in the series. Harper was hit by a pitch the other time he came to the plate. Baez homered with one out off Blake Treinen (2-1). Travis Wood (1-0) was the last of four Cubs relievers who combined for eight scoreless innings.

won despite giving up a seventh-inning single to Kevin Pillar that put Toronto ahead 2-1. Kenley Jansen got three outs for his major league-leading 11th save.

RANGERS 8, TIGERS 3

Bobby Wilson broke a 2-2 tie in the eighth with a grand slam against the team that just traded him, helping Texas complete a three-game sweep. After being shut out for seven innings by Justin Verlander, the Rangers broke through against relievers Justin Wilson and Mark Lowe (1-1) for seven runs in the eighth. Wilson didn't hit any home runs for the Tigers before they sent him to Texas on Tuesday. His first shot of the season sent Detroit to its sixth straight loss.

INDIANS 5, ROYALS 4

Josh Tomlin (5-0) allowed four runs and seven hits in six-plus innings and became the first Cleveland pitcher to win his first five outings since Justin Masterson in 2011. Tomlin is 12-0 in 13 starts following a loss since the beginning of last season. Carlos Santana and Mike Napoli homered off Edinson Volquez (3-3) as the Indians took two of three from the defending World Series champions while Cody Allen finished for his eighth save. Eric Hosmer homered for the Royals, just 3-9 in their last 12.

PHILLIES 6, MARLINS 5

Rookie Tyler Goeddel's first career extra-base hit drove in a run with two outs in the eighth inning, then he scored himself as Philadelphia rallied past Miami. Philadelphia's Aaron Nola allowed three runs in six innings and his scoreless streak ended at 23 innings. Hector Neris (1-1) pitched 1 2/3 scoreless innings and Jeanmar Gomez pitched around a two-out single in the ninth for his 11th save.

ORIOLES 11, ATHLETICS 3

Manny Machado hit two of Baltimore's season-high six homers, including a grand slam, and had a career-high six RBIs. Machado connected with a man on in the first inning and added his third career slam in the eighth. Machado, Pedro Alvarez, Jonathan Schoop and Mark Trumbo homered off Kendall Graveman (1-4). Joey Rickard added a solo shot off Ryan Dull before Machado capped the fence-clearing barrage against J.B. Wendelen, making his major league debut. Baltimore's Chris Tillman (4-1) gave up three first-inning runs before settling down and allowed six hits and four walks over 6 1/3 innings to send Oakland to its sixth loss in seven games.

WHITE SOX 3 TWINS 1

Jose Quintana (5-1) allowed six hits in seven innings, lowering his ERA to 1.38. David Robertson pitched a hitless ninth for his 10th save in 11 tries as the White Sox (22-10) completed a three-game sweep and moved 12 games above .500 for the first time since September 2012. Austin Jackson hit a go-ahead double in the fifth off Tyler Duffey, who struck out four batters in the seventh. Minnesota has lost five straight games and nine of 10.

DIAMONDBACKS 5, BRAVES 3

Chris Herrmann's second homer of the game and a two-run drive off Jim Johnson with two outs in the 11th inning lifted Arizona to a three-game sweep. Herrmann hit a seventh-inning homer off Mike Foltynewicz then connected off Johnson (0-4) for his first multi-homer game in the major leagues. The Braves (7-23) have lost four straight overall and are off to their worst 30-game start since at least 1900. They are 1-15 at home, including 10 straight losses. Randall Delgado (1-1), wearing pink high-top shoes for Mother's Day, pitched 1 1/3 scoreless innings and Brad Ziegler got three outs for his seventh save.

ASTROS 5, MARINERS 1

Rookie Tyler White doubled twice and drove in a run to back Collin McHugh (4-3), who allowed one run and five hits in seven innings to win his third straight start. Jose Altuve had two hits and tied a career-high with three stolen bases on a day the Astros swiped five. Robinson Cano homered in the fourth and has five homers and 17 RBIs in seven games against Houston this season. Hisashi Iwakuma (1-4) yielded three runs and seven hits in five innings.

PIRATES 10, CARDINALS 5

Gregory Polanco hit a three-run homer and John Jaso added a two-run drive. Gerrit Cole (3-3) gave up two runs and six hits in six innings, and Mark Melancon got his ninth save when Yadier Molina grounded into a game-ending double play with the bases loaded. Michael Wacha (2-3) lost his third consecutive decision



CHICAGO: Javier Baez #9 of the Chicago Cubs is doused with water by Anthony Rizzo #44 after hitting a game-winning, walk off home run against the Washington Nationals at Wrigley Field on May 8, 2016 in Chicago, Illinois. — AFP

for only the second time in his career, allowing four runs and six hits in six innings. In his last three starts against the Pirates, Wacha has given up 15 runs and 20 hits in 14 1/3 innings.

BREWERS 5, REDS 4

Jonathan Lucroy greeted Ross Ohlendorf (3-3) with a tiebreaking home run leading off the eighth inning, then caught Billy Hamilton stealing for the final out - a call upheld in a video review. Milwaukee overcame a 4-1 deficit as Ryan Braun homered for the second straight game and is 15 for 35 (.429) during an eight-game hitting streak. Chris Capuano (1-0) pitched a scoreless seventh and Jeremy Jeffress got his eighth save.

METS 4, PADRES 3

Matt Harvey (4-3) struck out a season-high 10 in six innings while Yoenis Cespedes homered off Andrew Cashner (2-3) as New York escaped a bases-loaded jam with no outs in the eighth to salvage a four-game split. The Mets moved into sole possession of first place in the NL East for the first time this season. They trailed Washington by five games in mid-April. Harvey allowed two runs and four hits. With the bases full in the eighth, Antonio Bastardo struck out pinch-hitter Derek Norris, getting Melvin Upton Jr. to pop up

to first and striking out Alexei Ramirez.

RAYS 3, ANGELS 1

Matt Andriese (1-0) pitched seven innings of four-hit ball to win his season debut while Brad Miller hit a two-run homer as Tampa Bay completed a three-game sweep. Curt Casali also homered as the Rays (15-14) won four straight games and moved above .500, accomplishing both for the first time since August. Alex Colome pitched the ninth for his ninth save. Nick Tropeano (1-2) struck out 10 while pitching into the sixth inning for Los Angeles, yielding seven hits and two walks. He is winless in five straight starts.

ROCKIES 2, GIANTS 0

Nolan Arenado had three hits while Eddie Butler (1-1) gave up four hits in six innings for his first win since being promoted from the minors. Gerardo Parra singled in a run and made a diving catch, helping the Rockies salvage a four game split. Rookie Trevor Story doubled and scored. Arenado, the majors' leading home run hitter, hit a run-scoring triple off the brick wall in right-center in his first at-bat, singled in the third and doubled in the eighth. Jeff Samardzija (4-2) gave up two runs and eight hits in 7 2/3 innings, striking out nine.—AP

MLB Results/Standings

LA Dodgers 4, Toronto 2; Texas 8, Detroit 3; Cleveland 5, Kansas City 4; Milwaukee 5, Cincinnati 4; Philadelphia 6, Miami 5; Arizona 5, Atlanta 3 (11 innings); Baltimore 11, Oakland 3; Chicago White Sox 3, Minnesota 1; Houston 5, Seattle 1; Pittsburgh 10, St. Louis 5; Chicago Cubs 4, Washington 3 (13 innings); Tampa Bay 3, LA Angels 1; Colorado 2, San Francisco 0; NY Mets 4, San Diego 3; Boston 5, NY Yankees 1.

American League Eastern Division				National League Eastern Division			
W	L	PCT	GB	NY Mets	Washington	Philadelphia	Miami
Baltimore	18	12	.600	19	11	.633	-
Boston	18	13	.581	19	12	.613	0.5
Tampa Bay	15	14	.517	18	14	.563	2
Toronto	16	17	.485	16	14	.533	3
NY Yankees	11	18	.379	7	23	.233	12
Central Division				Central Division			
Chicago White Sox	22	10	.688	Chicago Cubs	24	6	.800
Cleveland	15	13	.536	Pittsburgh	17	14	.548
Kansas City	15	15	.500	St. Louis	16	16	.500
Detroit	14	16	.467	Milwaukee	13	18	.419
Minnesota	8	23	.258	Cincinnati	13	19	.406
Western Division				Western Division			
Seattle	18	13	.581	LA Dodgers	16	15	.516
Texas	18	14	.563	San Francisco	17	16	.515
Oakland	14	18	.438	Colorado	15	16	.484
LA Angels	13	18	.419	Arizona	15	18	.455
Houston	12	20	.375	San Diego	13	19	.406



AUDI QUATTRO CUP TOURNAMENT

KUWAIT: Hosted by Audi Kuwait and represented by Fouad Alghanim and Sons Automotive Company, the 8th Audi quattro Cup golf tournament ended in style - attracting Audi and Golf enthusiasts from Kuwait and across the world. The Audi quattro Cup - amateur golf calendar's most celebrated tournament was held at Sahara Kuwait Golf Resort. The tournament finished on an exciting note with Deepak Malhotra and Manoj Jolly finishing in the first place. They now qualify for the world final to be held in Barcelona, Spain on October 6th. Cesar Gonzalez-Bueno and Vikram Issar

took the second place, while third spot went to Simon Davidson and Dave Ludkin. The 'Longest Drive' prize of the tournament went to Ahmed Deghedi for a splendid effort. In the 'Closest to the Pin' category, Kim Young Shi (Women) and Ali Al Ansari (Men) were declared winners. "We are absolutely thrilled with the level of entries and standard of performances this year. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate both the participants and winners of this year's event," said Ihab A Bou Hassan Marketing Manager at Audi Kuwait, Fouad Alghanim and Sons Automotive Company.

"I am sure you have seen our line up on the field including our latest model in the Audi range, the all-new Audi A4 and of course our flagship the Audi Q7. Both models offer the legendary quattro all-wheel drive technology that this tournament is named after," he added. The Audi quattro Cup Golf Tournament Series was established in 1991 and celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2016. Last year, around 100,000 players took part in 54 countries worldwide, with more than 800 tournaments at play. More than 1.4 million golfers have taken part in an Audi quattro Cup tournament during the last 25 years.



LIGHTNING SHUT OUT ISLANDERS TO WIN SERIES

LOS ANGELES: Ben Bishop continues to save his best for the biggest games and on Sunday the Tampa Bay Lightning goaltender's best ended the New York Islanders' season. Bishop had 28 saves and recorded his fifth career shutout in the Stanley Cup playoffs as the Lightning earned a 4-0 win against the Islanders in Game 5 of the Eastern Conference second round series on Sunday. The Lightning won the best-of-seven series 4-1 and advanced to the Eastern Conference Finals to face the winner of the series between the Washington Capitals and Pittsburgh Penguins. "I think we learned last year we had a couple series where we had chances to close them out at home and we kind of let them slip," Bishop said. "We really wanted to take pride in closing teams out this year."

Defenseman Victor Hedman scored twice while Nikita Kucherov had his ninth goal of the postseason as the Lightning advance to the conference finals for the second consecutive year. "This is a great accomplishment for this team," Hedman said. "I don't think too many people picked us to get this far, especially considering the injuries." Hedman gave the Lightning a 1-0 lead at 13:49 of the first period when he took control of a loose puck and beat Islanders goalie Thomas Greiss at the near post. Lightning center Brian Boyle scored his third goal of the postseason at 18:41 in the first period to make the score 2-0.

Defenseman Matt Carle went behind the net and passed the puck to Boyle, who snapped a shot past Greiss above his shoulder. "Start to finish, we played really well," Boyle said. "We were hard on pucks, we made sure we got the puck in deep, we didn't turn it over in the neutral zone and give them many opportunities. We played a great game." Obviously, one we needed to, and again Bishop was there for us." Hedman's second goal came on a Lightning power play at 4:22 in the second period. Jonathan Drouin made a backhand pass that banked off the boards, and Hedman scored on a one-timer from the right circle to make the score 3-0.

"(The Lightning) took advantage of their opportunities," Islanders coach Jack Capuano said. "You know we came in here (Sunday), I thought the game plan was good. We surrendered 18 shots even strength, and, I mean, if you asked me that going in we would take it." We gave up seven on our power play, but you know we just couldn't find a way here these last few games to score some goals. At the end of the day, like I said, you have to get more than one, and we didn't get any (on Sunday)."

Kucherov added a goal at 4:40 in the third period on a breakaway to give the Lightning a 4-0 lead. Greiss made 21 saves for the Islanders. "It is definitely going to sting for a while," Greiss said. "It was a tough loss and a tough loss in the series. I think it was a very tight series for a 4-1 series." "We could have easily won some games at home and came (to Tampa Bay) and have done different kind of things. It will sting for a long time, but you have to get over it." The Islanders were held to just one goal in the final two games of the series. Center John Tavares was held without a point in the final four games.—Reuters



FLORIDA: Victor Hedman #77 of the Tampa Bay Lightning turns to score against the New York Islanders during the first period of Game Five of the Eastern Conference Second Round at Amalie Arena on May 8, 2016. — AFP

PRINCE HARRY OPENS INVICTUS GAMES FOR MILITARY DISABLED

MIAMI: Britain's Prince Harry on Sunday opened the Invictus games for disabled war veterans and awarded the first gold of the 2016 event to France. Harry, fifth in line to the throne and patron of the games, welcomed sportsmen, women and supporters to the huge event in Orlando, Florida, being broadcast by sports network ESPN. "Their stories are as amazing as they are unique. They focus on what can be achieved, rather than what can't," Harry said of the ex-servicemen and women, many of whom are amputees, who suffer higher than average rates of depression as well as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury.

US First Lady Michelle Obama, who has actively promoted the event, said the Invictus games are "about shining this big, bright light on all of you ... so that we all

can be inspired to live up to your example." She also joked that the home team should take it easy on the visiting competition. "I have generously asked the US team not to win too much," Obama said at the opening festivities. Former US president George W. Bush, the Orlando event's honorary chair, and actor Morgan Freeman were also present. Singer James Blunt—a former soldier in the British army—and soprano Laura Wright performed during the ceremony. The Invictus games feature more than 500 competitors from 15 countries, facing off in 10 events including athletics, swimming, sitting volleyball, cycling and wheelchair versions of basketball, rugby and tennis. The games are aimed raising awareness of the needs of veterans—many of whom lost limbs in combat zones—to adapt to their "new normal" after life-changing experi-

ences. The prince himself served in the British army and performed tours of duty in Afghanistan.

First gold

Archery, athletics and powerlifting were among the events on Sunday's opening day. Harry also presented the first gold medal of the games to France's Rober Philippe and Rebutent Henri in the Jaguar Land Rover Driving Challenge. The French team triumphed in the test of communication, teamwork and strategic planning skills. Estonia's team of Kristjan Roivas and Ergo Mets won the silver and Denmark's team of Rasmus Moeller and Flemming J R Nielsen took bronze. During a visit by Harry to the White House in October, US President Barack Obama lauded the Invictus games as a way to make sure peo-

ple see not only the sacrifices wounded warriors have made, "but also the incredible contributions, strength and courage that they continue to display."

The Obamas and Harry traded playful taunts on social media ahead of the games. Michelle Obama told Harry in a mock-threatening video posted on Twitter that the British better watch out for the US side. Harry's response featured his grandmother Queen Elizabeth II, who scoffed at the Americans' confidence. "Really, please!" she quipped. Not to be outdone, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau posted a video featuring him doing pushups followed by a "drop the mike" moment, flanked by Canadian competitors. The Invictus games, first held in London in September 2014, continue until Thursday in Orlando.— AFP

POTENT SETS SIGHTS ON THE FIFTH SHOT AT GLORY

MELBOURNE: Having won his duels with Father Time, 54-year-old Warren Potent has little fear of competing with the young guns at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics where the silver-haired Australian will train his sights on gold in the 50 meter rifle prone. Potent clinched Australia's first Olympic medal in a rifle shooting event with bronze at the 2008 Games and embellished his 'late bloomer' status with a first individual world title in 2014, a trifling 28 years after winning the team crown in 1986.

As he prepares for a fifth Olympic campaign, Potent now sits atop a world rankings dominated by men half his age. "I'm pinching myself. I'm 54 now and I'm currently ranked number one in the world," the Sydney marksman told Reuters in an interview. "I'm still doing really well in competition where a lot of people lean towards it being a younger person's sport now. I am excited. But at the same time not too excited because I know I have a job to do." As both an elite shooter and a full-time worker for a global engine manufacturer, Potent generally has his hands full.

He enjoys sponsorship from a gun-maker, but has earned more respect than money from the sport and has only a few minutes to chat during his lunch-break before returning to his post in spare parts distribution. His company affords him the flexibility to tour, however, and his decades of experience means he has little need to spend countless hours firing away at training. "When I do train, I don't go out to the range to fire hundreds and hundreds of shots," he said. "I try to shoot as perfect a shot as I can. And I think that's what keeps me in the game. It's basically keeping the whole thing simple, literally lining up three circles and pulling the trigger."

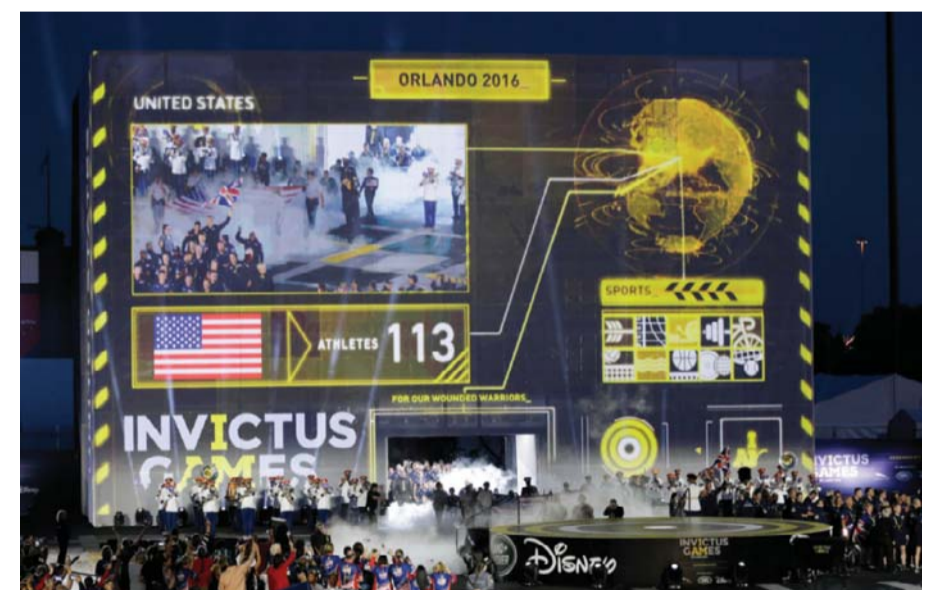
Physical toll

Potent's event may be the 'lying down' category of shooting yet it's anything but relaxed. Toting a gun weighing more than 6 kg and trying to remain dead still for 60 shots in a 75-minute match exacts a big mental and physical toll. Potent regularly does light weights to try to minimize the nagging of tired muscles but has little need to exercise his mind with mental gymnastics. Being 'in the zone' seems to come easily and naturally for Potent who first started sport shooting when a high school teenager and was immediately hooked. "Right down to the last couple of seconds of aiming, I could not tell you what I'm thinking of. No idea," he said. "I think I'm just concentrating on the actual aim, and when the aim's correct, the finger automatically fires the shots."

Australia's oldest confirmed Olympian at Rio, Potent is also on the same team as the youngest in 16-year-old Aislin Jones who has booked her ticket in the women's skeet. Jones, her country's youngest ever Olympic shooter, was born just seven months before Potent's maiden Games appearance at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Potent will inevitably be tapped for advice by rookies urged to ask questions first and shoot later. "The best advice is to tell them to try to have as much fun as they can," said Potent, who dug himself out of a crisis of confidence before and after the London Games in 2012. "I think I just got into a situation where I was just trying too hard (in 2011-12). You can try too hard in sport instead of just letting it happen. "When the fun disappears, your performance tends to follow." — Reuters



FLORIDA: F/A-18C Hornets from US Navy Strike Fighter Squadron 34 perform a fly-over during opening ceremonies for the 2016 Invictus Games in Orlando, Florida on May 8, 2016. —AFP



FLORIDA: Athletes from the United States are introduced during the opening ceremony for the Invictus Games on Sunday, May 8, 2016 in Kissimmee, Fla. — AP

WINTER GAMES CHIEF QUILTS; EX MINISTER SET TO STEP IN

SEOUL: A former South Korean government minister was nominated to take over the organizing committee of the 2018 Winter Olympics today, just hours after Cho Yang-ho quit amid escalating financial troubles at the business group his family controls. Lee Hee-beom, a former minister of industry and energy, needs to be ratified by a vote of senior committee officials to officially become president of the organizing committee for the Pyeongchang Games.

Cho's sudden resignation marked the second change in less than two years at the helm of the local organizing committee, which had struggled to get preparations back on track in the face of venue construction delays, disputes over the location of the Olympic stadium and slow pace of domestic sponsorship. The organizing committee said Lee's background in government and business filled the requirements "to lead the preparation of a complex mega sports event." The committee said it would soon convene a meeting to appoint Lee as the new president, a decision which would then need approval from the government's

culture and sports ministry. Cho is chairman of the Hanjin Group, which controls Olympic sponsor Korean Air and a major shipping company struggling with heavy debt. He said in a statement he couldn't continue with the Olympic job because he needs to focus on stabilizing Hanjin Shipping, South Korea's largest container carrier, which said last week that it will undergo a debt revamp program with creditors in its last-ditch efforts to stay in business. Cho took over as president of Pyeongchang's organizing committee in July 2014 after the sudden resignation of Kim Jin-sun, the former governor of the region that includes Pyeongchang.

"For the past two years, I have truly put forward my very best efforts to work with every member of the organizing committee to prepare a successful Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in 2018," Cho said in the statement. "I can proudly say that POCOG has become a strong team, and the challenges we have overcome have allowed us to achieve success at our first official test events this past February." Pyeongchang organizers have faced a

series of challenges in recent years, including the construction delays, local conflicts over venues and criticism about their financial planning, but preparations had seemed to turn a corner after the successful hosting of test events earlier this year in Olympic venues. Gunilla Lindberg, head of the International Olympic Committee's coordination commission for the 2018 Winter Games, said the IOC respected Cho's decision and appreciated his cooperation in recent years. "Under his leadership, the organizing committee has made great progress and has delivered very successful test events," Lindberg said. "There remain a number of important steps to be taken ahead of the games and the IOC remains confident that through our close cooperation with the Pyeongchang 2018 organizing committee these will be successfully addressed." The announcement of Cho's resignation came on the same day the Olympic flame was set to land in Brazil, where problems in preparations have sometimes overshadowed the build up to the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro in August.—AP



Cho Yang-Ho

ARIYA BECOMES FIRST THAI LPGA WINNER

LOS ANGELES: Ariya Jutanugarn fought off back nine nerves to par the 18th hole Sunday and win the Yokohama Tire Classic, becoming the first Thai player to win on the LPGA Tour. Ariya started the fourth round with a three-stroke lead and despite a roller-coaster ride she managed to close with an even-par 72 to claim her first victory. "It was so tough. I can't control anything. My legs were shaking, my hands were shaking," Ariya said. The 20-year-old from Bangkok finished at 14-under 274 to beat South Korea's Amy Yang and Americans Morgan Pressel and Stacy Lewis by one shot and finally reach the winner's circle after three top-10 finishes this year. Yang had a 67, Pressel and Lewis both shot 68 as the trio finished tied for second at 13-under. Ariya needed a par on the final hole to get the victory, and her drive on the 18th hole went into the left rough.

Her second shot fell short of the green but landed above a bunker. Ariya chipped to within five feet before sinking her par putt. It wasn't the way she drew it up, but Ariya finally broke through after a couple of

near misses. She has twice held 54-hole leads but failed to convert those to wins. Earlier this season at the ANA Inspiration, the first major of the year, she led by two shots with three to play in the final round but bogeyed her final three holes to lose to Lydia Ko. Ariya was just 17 years old when she let a two-stroke lead with one hole remaining slip through her fingers at the 2013 LPGA Thailand. Her triple bogey resulted in her finishing one shot behind.

It was also a special win for another reason as her mom was in attendance on the US Mother's Day. The Thai Mother's Day is August 12. "Thank you for my mom for being with me all the time to support me and happy Mother's Day," said Ariya. Lewis, who has won 11 times on the LPGA Tour, has now gone 49 tournaments without a win. Her runner-up finish Sunday was her 11th-second-place finish during her title drought. South Korean Ryu So-Yeon, who led after 36 holes, had a 72 and finished at 10-under 278. First round leader Laetitia Beck of Israel also shot 72 to finish with three others six shots back of Ariya. — AFP



MADRID: Serbia's Novak Djokovic poses with ball boys and girls after beating Britain's Andy Murray during the Madrid Open men's tennis final at the Caja Magica (Magic Box) sports complex in Madrid on May 8, 2016. —AFP

DJOKOVIC TARGETS ROME AFTER 29TH MASTERS TITLE

ROME: Novak Djokovic heads for Rome this week crediting an unscheduled pause in his claycourt season with helping him clinch a record 29th Masters title. The world number one defeated long-time rival Andy Murray 6-2, 3-6, 6-3 on Sunday to win the Madrid Masters for a second time. Djokovic, 28, was forced to rest after losing his first clay outing of the season, going down in Monte Carlo to Czech Jiri Vesely. But he credited the pause with actually helping his game as he decompressed after winning four early-season titles-Doha, the Australian Open and Indian Wells and Miami Masters. "I had an amazing opening four months of the season. The early exit in Monte Carlo happened for a reason-I needed some time to really recharge my batteries," said Djokovic.

The Serb called his three-week stoppage "more than enough to get some freshness and new breath, on the court and get ready for Madrid." "I came to Madrid early, got used to the conditions, and played a really fantastic tournament that will definitely serve as a great confidence boost before Rome and of course the French Open, where I want to arrive in the best possible shape." The world number one captured his fifth trophy of 2016 as he defeated defending champion Murray for the 12th time in their last 13 matches to stand at an overwhelming 23-9 in their career head-to-head.

Djokovic and Murray-born within a week of each other in May, 1987 — first met in Madrid in a 2006 round of 16 when the event was played on hardcourt. Djokovic won it in three sets and set up his longstanding rivalry with the Spanish-trained Scot. "We both strived to be at the top, we've known each other since we were 12. I think you can see already in those junior days that both of us have serious intentions to conquer the tennis world and try to make a serious mark. "I'm very pleased that I have developed a great rivalry with somebody that I've known since a very long time and somebody that I have a very good and friendly relationship with on and off the court."

Serena returns

Djokovic has defeated Murray in all four of their clay-court meetings as he added the 2016 Madrid trophy to the title he earned five years ago in the Spanish capital. He has now won 33 of the past 35 sets against top 10 opponents-a stretch of 15 matches. He's also won five of the past six and 10 of the past 14 Masters titles. The Belgrade native won 912,900 euros (\$1.04 million) on Sunday and victory in Rome will make him the first man to win \$100 million in prize money. Murray will fall to three in the world in the new rankings on Monday behind Roger Federer after failing to defend his title. "He played unbelievable at the start, sometimes that can happen," said Murray. "I don't think it came down to luck today. He was just a little bit more solid at the end of the match when he needed it." In Rome, Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Federer have been drawn in the same half. Djokovic, the 2008, 2011, 2014 and 2015 champion, and seven-time winner Nadal have shared the last 11 Rome titles between them.

In the women's event, Serena Williams plays just her fourth tournament since last year's US Open and first on clay this year as the world number one takes top seeding at an event she won in 2002, 2013 and 2014. The 34-year-old skipped Madrid with flu but hopes to be firing on all cylinders at the Foro Italico where she will also play doubles with sister Venus with one eye on the Rio Olympics. "I feel pretty good. I wasn't feeling really good for the past several weeks and even the past few days. But right now I'm better," said Williams.

Williams has a bye in the singles first round and will meet either Germany's Anna-Lena Friedsam or Anna Karolina Schmiedlova of Slovakia for a place in the last-16. Simona Halep is aiming for a clay court double after sweeping to the Madrid Open title last week, dropping just one set en route. The sixth-seeded Romanian could face Williams in the quarter-finals. In the absence of world number two Agnieszka Radwanska, Germany's Angelique Kerber takes second seeding looking to recover from her shock first round loss in Madrid to Barbora Strycova. Australian Open champion Kerber won the Stuttgart title on clay this season but faces a tricky start in Rome against either Jelena Jankovic or Eugenie Bouchard. — AFP



PRATTVILLE: Ariya Jutanugarn of Thailand poses for a simulated 'Selfie' with the trophy on the 18th hole after winning the Yokohama Tire Classic in Prattville, Alabama. — AFP

MURRAY SPLITS FROM COACH MAURESMO

LONDON: Andy Murray split with Coach Amelie Mauresmo yesterday, ending a groundbreaking two-year relationship during which the British star improved as a clay-court player but failed to add to his collection of Grand Slam titles. A statement released by Murray's management company didn't disclose the reason behind the decision, although Mauresmo said "dedicating enough time along with the travel has been a challenge for me."

The Frenchwoman gave birth to her first child in August and took six months off from coaching. "Working with Andy over the last two years has been a fantastic experience for me," said Mauresmo, a former top-ranked player who won the Australian Open and Wimbledon in 2006. "I've thoroughly enjoyed being part of the great team of people he has around him." Murray became the first high-profile tennis player to hire a woman as a coach when he brought Mauresmo on board in June 2014.

By that time, he was already a two-time Grand Slam champion - at the US Open in 2012 and Wimbledon in 2013 - and had also won a gold medal at the London Olympics in 2012.

Under Mauresmo, Murray reached the final at the Australian Open in 2015 and "16, losing both times to top-ranked Novak Djokovic. He won his first clay-court titles last year in Munich and Madrid. "I've learned a lot from Amelie over the last two years, both on and off the court," Murray said in the statement. "She's been a calming influence in the team and we will all miss having her around." Murray is heading into a busy period of the season, with the French Open, Wimbledon, Rio de Janeiro Olympics and US Open all in the next four months. "I'll take some time to consider the next steps and how we progress from here," Murray said, "but I'd like to thank her for everything she has done, she's been an invaluable member of the team." — AP



MELBOURNE: File photo shows Britain's Andy Murray (right) taking part in a training session with his coach Amelie Mauresmo in Melbourne. Andy Murray and Amelie Mauresmo announced yesterday that they had mutually agreed to end the Frenchwoman's two-year stint as coach of the two-time major champion. — AFP

AUSTRALIAN MEDIA RIPS INTO 'KING OF THE EXCUSE' TOMIC

SYDNEY: Troubled tennis star Bernard Tomic was slammed by Australia's media as "the king of the excuse" yesterday with "a heart the size of a peanut" after his latest on-court antics at the Rome Masters. Tomic, who made headlines last week when he turned his racquet the wrong way to face a match point in the Madrid Masters first round against Fabio Fognini, lasted just eight minutes in his opening clash in Rome on Sunday.

The much-criticized Aussie world number 22 retired after a medical timeout when he was leading French opponent Benoit Paire 2-1, saying he had been "feeling bad all night". The 23-year-old has a catalogue of lax commitment in matches, which has earned him the tag of "Tomic the Tank Engine," and he was savaged in the Australian press. "Desire, passion, fight and a strong work ethic-all qualities you'd like to see in your emerging and established tennis stars," the Herald Sun said in an opinion piece. "Instead, we're treated to tantrums, arrogance, moods and at times utterly shocking attempts at justifying continual brattish behavior. "Yep, we're looking at you Bernard Tomic," it added in a story headlined "King of the excuse" which scornfully list-

ed his top 10 career excuses in an "ever-expanding rap sheet". Sydney Morning Herald columnist Peter FitzSimons said Tomic was embarrassing his country. "You're a man already with a reputation for having a heart the size of a peanut, one who has been given extraordinary talent, but no gumption to go with it, no ability to guts it out," he said. "What is in it for you to carry on as you do? What is in your head? ... It embarrasses your country."

Tomic brazenly told his post-match news conference in Madrid: "I don't care about that match point. Would you care if you were 23 and worth over \$10 million?" The Herald said Tomic had made Aus\$2,570 (\$1,900) a minute in Rome based on his prize money as a first-round loser. Last weekend Tomic and fiery compatriot Nick Kyrgios were warned that their on-court behavior could threaten their places in the Australian team for the Rio Olympics in August. Australian chef de mission Kitty Chiller described Tomic's behavior in Madrid as "appalling". Tomic has won just one match on clay this season in a worrying indication of his poor form just two weeks out from the French Open, the second Grand Slam of the season. — AFP

HAHN BEATS CASTRO TO WIN WELLS FARGO TITLE

WASHINGTON: James Hahn parred the first hole of a sudden death playoff on Sunday to beat Roberto Castro for the Wells Fargo Championship title and end months of misery on the PGA Tour. America's Hahn arrived at Quail Hollow in Charlotte, North Carolina, this week having missed eight straight cuts. He hadn't produced a round in the 60s since February. He had to fight back tears after sinking a four-foot par putt at Quail Hollow's demanding 18th to seal his second career title. "Eight straight missed cuts is tough," Hahn said. "You start to question yourself-are you good enough, will it ever happen again?"

But he needed only a routine par for the victory as Castro was in trouble right away in the playoff, sending his tee shot into the stream guarding the fairway. His third shot from the bank landed in the shoe of a spectator near the green and after his chip rolled past the pin he settled for a bogey. "It's crazy to call myself a two-time PGA Tour champion," Hahn said. "To do this on the first playoff hole is amazing." Both Hahn and Castro finished 72 holes at nine-under 279, one shot in front of England's Justin Rose. Hahn, who earned his first career title via a playoff at the 2015 Northern Trust Open in Los Angeles, bogeyed the 18th in regulation to cap a 70 while Castro closed with a 71.

Rose carded a 71 for solo third place on 280. Five-time major winner Phil Mickelson and

Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy led a group on 281, both climbing up the leaderboard with 66s. They were joined by overnight leader Rickie Fowler, who carded a 74, and Andrew Loupe, who signed for a 71. Castro had seized the lead with a birdie at 15, but bogeyed 16 and 17 to let Hahn move one ahead. Hahn missed a chance to close it out in regulation when his seven-footer for par at the 72nd hole failed to drop. Castro then salvaged a par from the right rough at 18 to force the playoff, but he couldn't master the notorious hole again.

Fowler collapse

Eighteen was tough on McIlroy as well. He was four-over on the hole for the week, including a bogey there on Sunday. "Any time you walk off the golf course and shoot 66, you can't be too disappointed," said McIlroy, who nevertheless regretted that he "had a chance on the back nine to post a number for the guys to at least think about, and I didn't". Fowler had more to regret, after a round that included a double-bogey at the seventh and three bogeys. "Obviously it sucks," Fowler said of his collapse. "It's disappointing knowing where my game was at coming into today. I felt really good about being in the final group and getting the job done. But yeah, some little off swings off the tee and then catching that mud ball on seven-not exactly good fortune." — AFP



CHARLOTTE: James Hahn celebrates after defeating Roberto Castro in a playoff during the final round of the 2016 Wells Fargo Championship at Quail Hollow Club on May 8, 2016. —AFP

Euro 2016



SANTANDER: Football players vie during the 52nd Football Championship Santander beach football amateur match, on the beach of the Sardinero of Santander, northern Spain on May 8, 2016. —AFP

EURO 2016 OF 'RISK' COUNTDOWN LAUNCHED

PARIS: France is launching the final countdown to the European Championship finals where the star appeal of Cristiano Ronaldo and Zlatan Ibrahimovic risks being overshadowed by fears of a terrorist attack. Troops and extra police have been patrolling the streets of Paris and other major cities since the November 13 attacks in the French capital that left 130 dead. Chief organizer Jacques Lambert said it was inevitable that Euro 2016 would be "a target" for militants but also insisted that it must be "a breath of fresh air" for a public weary of security threats. France was chosen in 2010 to host the event, that for the first time will feature 24 teams including world champions Germany and Belgium, Spain,

Portugal and England also from the top 10 in the FIFA world rankings.

The presence of Portugal's Ronaldo, Ibrahimovic with Sweden, Thomas Mueller with Germany, Wales' Gareth Bale and Andres Iniesta with Spain has helped sell all but about 20,000 tickets of the 2.5 million tickets for the 51 games. The competition starts at the Stade de France in Paris on June 10 with a Group A game between the hosts and Romania. The final is in the same stadium on July 10 when the most expensive tickets cost 895 euros (\$1,020). But the razzmatazz has been dominated by security fears since the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris in January last year and new strikes in November which included a

failed attempt to bomb the Stade de France.

Security costs double

Organisers will take over the 10 stadiums in Paris, Lens, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Bordeaux, Nice, St Etienne and Toulouse from May 14 to carry out final technical and security work, according to Lambert. Security costs for Euro 2016 have doubled from the 12 million euros (\$13.7 million) first planned to 24 million. Some cities wanted to cancel plans for fan zones near the stadiums that would attract tens of thousands of fans. The tournament was on a list of potential targets found in raids in Brussels after attacks by Islamist militants in March. "From what we were told, the Euro

appeared on a list along with the Eiffel Tower, the La Defense business district, the department stores, the RER commuter train network and I don't know what else," Lambert said.

"It does not change anything for us. You don't need to find the Euro name written on a piece of paper to know that, because of the event's notoriety it is clearly a target. "Whatever happens in France during this month, it will be an attack on the Euro," he said. Lambert said he regretted the "extreme focus" on the security fears for the football extravaganza and insisted that it was not the only target. "I understand that security questions are a priority but this event has also got to bring a breath of fresh air. This has to be a

time when we talk about other things.

"We are putting as much energy into security as proposing a warm, fraternal festive welcome to spectators," he said. A year ahead of the International Olympic Committee decision on who hosts the 2024 Olympics, some observers see Euro 2016 as having a crucial role in deciding the chances of Paris against Budapest, Los Angeles and Rome. Lambert, who had key roles organizing the 1992 Winter Olympics at Albertville and the 1998 World Cup in France acknowledged the risks. "I don't know on what basis the IOC will decide in 2017 but if the Euro goes well it will certainly not change much for Paris' chances. But if the Euro goes badly, it can only do it harm." — AFP



PARIS: Didier Deschamps kicks the ball during an exhibition match between former players from the 1998 France's national team, and young players from a Parisian team (Pitray Olier Paris JSC) on May 8, 2016, at the Jean Bouin stadium in Paris. —AFP

DESCHAMPS SETS SIGHTS ON MORE HOST NATION'S GLORY

PARIS: Having scaled the international football heights as a player, Didier Deschamps now has his sights set on leading France to European Championship glory on home soil as coach. Deschamps was captain of the French team that won the World Cup at home in 1998 and also led Les Bleus to glory at Euro 2000, so could hardly be better placed to handle the pressure and expectation that comes with being in charge of the Euro 2016 hosts.

When asked by sports daily L'Equipe if he felt France-also winners in 1984 - could lift the Henri Delaunay trophy for a third time in July, Deschamps said: "We will go into it with that objective. We can be humble and ambitious." The 47-year-old who hails from Bayonne, the capital of the French Basque Country and very much rugby territory, has been building towards the Euro climax.

Exiting the 2014 World Cup in Brazil at the quarter-final stage was accepted, especially as some of the performances were encouraging and there was none of the off-field problems that marred previous major tournaments for the French. But an exciting young team is now expected to deliver at Euro 2016. It has not been all plain sailing for Deschamps, who has had to deal with a sex-tape blackmail affair involving Karim Benzema. "Nothing shocks me anymore," he said, but he must hope the decision to drop the Real Madrid striker from the squad does not come back to bite the national federation.

Nevertheless, public opinion appears to back the decision and Deschamps has plenty of other attack options. Unless things go badly wrong, Deschamps will be in charge

through to the 2018 World Cup in Russia, even though he has hinted at missing the day-to-day rush of club management. "I am flourishing," he told L'Equipe recently when asked if he were still enjoying himself. "I am privileged. I would like to spend more time with my players, as would all national coaches, but I live very well with my duties. My objective is the Euro and I am focused exclusively on that."

Schooled at Nantes under the legendary coach Jean-Claude Suaudeau, 'DD' was part of the France side that famously suffered a gut-wrenching last-gasp loss to Bulgaria to miss out on qualifying for the 1994 World Cup in the United States. The heartache marked a generation, with the exception of Deschamps, who recovered to lift the World Cup at the Stade de France in 1998 and then the Euro two years later. He won the last of his 103 caps in September 2000 and retired from playing a year later at the age of just 32, bringing a premature end to a glittering career as a defensive midfielder.

'Blessed'

Once described by Eric Cantona as a "water carrier", he captained Marseille to Champions League glory in 1993 and won the trophy again with Juventus in 1996. His coaching CV is remarkable too, featuring a Champions League final appearance with Monaco in 2004 and a French title triumph with Marseille in 2010. He departed OM under a cloud in 2012, though, and might have done the same from the national team until a dramatic play-off win over Ukraine saw them snatch qualification for the last World Cup. —AFP

3-PASSPORT CANA PLAYS ALBANIA'S PATRIOT CARD

TIRANA: "If I wanted to write a script I couldn't have done it better," according to Kosovo-born Lorik Cana who will lead Albania at Euro 2016, their first ever appearance at a major tournament. "My goal was always to play for Albania on the big stage," the 32-year-old defender said in an interview. "It makes it more special that it will happen in France, the country where I grew up with football, where my family lives," said Cana, who lived in France from the age of 17.

In fact, he holds three passports: Albania, Switzerland where he spent 10 childhood years, and France which he calls "my second home". But Cana, who speaks Albanian and is fiercely proud of his identity, never had any doubt that his allegiance was with the "Kuq e Zinjte" (Red and Blacks). "I had the chance to grow up in a patriotic family that always placed huge importance on preserving our language and culture," he said. One of several Kosovo-born players on the team - along with Fredrik Veseli, Berat Djimsiti, and Amir Rahmani-Cana's family moved from his birthplace Pristina, then part of Yugoslavia, now capital of Kosovo, to Switzerland in 1990 just before the Yugoslav wars broke out.

The journeys of refugees and emigrants as well as awareness of the hardships suffered by people who stayed behind gave him his desire to succeed,

he said. The team-which includes many second-generation children of migrants to Switzerland, Germany, and Austria-has a similar make-up to Albanians themselves, "who are more numerous outside the country than inside it," he told AFP. It is a symbol of "national pride," he added. Capped a record 89 times, Cana has played in France (with over 200 appearances at three different Ligue 1 clubs), England, Turkey and Italy. His experience is unparalleled in the squad.

"He is more than a player, he is the heart of the team, the boss of the dressing-room," said Albania's Italian coach Gianni de Biasi, who relies on his Italian-speaking captain to help translate team talks. "He helps me get across to the players my philosophy and my vision," said de Biasi. After Cana attracted the attention of Paris Saint-Germain as a teenager, the family moved to France, where a seven-year stint in Ligue 1 began in 2002, first with PSG, then with Olympique de Marseille who he eventually captained. He then spent a season in Sunderland - where he was the first Albanian to play in the English Premier League - and another at Galatasaray in Turkey.

Four years in Italy with Lazio followed between 2011 and 2015 before a return to France, and Nantes. Two of the Euro 2016 Group A games have particular resonance for Cana. — AFP



Lorik Cana

5 THINGS ON SWITZERLAND

GENEVA: Five things on Switzerland ahead of Euro 2016 where they start in Group E against Belgium, Italy and the Irish Republic:

Seeking scalps

Switzerland have finished bottom of the first round group at each of the three European Championship finals they have played in. Swiss fans do not fancy their country's chances at Euro 2016 either and luck is not always on their side. On their Euro debut against hosts England in 1996 they sneaked a 1-1 draw but then lost to Netherlands and Scotland. In 2004, they managed a goalless draw against Croatia and then lost to England and France. As hosts in 2008, they lost to Czech Republic and Turkey, but finally got their first win when Hakan Yakin scored both goals in a 2-0 win over Portugal, who did not use Cristiano Ronaldo.

Unwanted record

Switzerland reached the World Cup quarter finals in 1934, 1938 and 1954. But in 2006 in Germany, they set a record they will not want to be reminded of. The Swiss went out in the last 16 despite not having conceded a goal in the whole

tournament. They lost to Ukraine in a penalty shootout-the Swiss did not score any of their penalties. Their World Cup defensive shield stayed up until the second group game of the 2010 finals when Chile scored against them. Switzerland went 559 minutes in all without conceding a goal at the World Cup finals in regular play.

Passport checks needed

The Switzerland-Albania clash in Group A on June 11 stands out because it could see Swiss star Granit Xhaka playing against his brother Taulant in the Albanian side. Because of Europe's waves of migration in the 1990s to escape wars and political upheaval, each team has at least six players who are qualified to compete for the other side. Switzerland has the likes of Stoke City star Xherdan Shaqiri who was born in Albania but moved to Switzerland with his parents. Taulant Xhaka is among an opposing wave born in Switzerland but who moved back or chose to play for Albania.

Embolo under scrutiny

Breel Embolo, born in Cameroon, symbolises the multicultural side of Switzerland's national team,

that ranks some in the country. The 19-year-old will be one of the most watched players at Euro 2016 because his skills have already attracted the scouts of top clubs from across the continent. His Basel club side have reportedly already rejected a 27 million euro (\$30.5 million) offer from German club Wolfsburg. He has also been linked to Manchester United and Bayern Munich. Embolo was given Swiss citizenship in December 2014 and played the first of nine internationals for the full team just four months later. His only international goal came from the penalty spot in a 7-0 win over San Marino that secured Switzerland's place in Euro 2016.

Seferovic's precious goals

Haris Seferovic, Switzerland's current top scorer, nearly slipped through the national net. The Eintracht Frankfurt forward was born in Switzerland in 1992 after his parents moved from Bosnia. In 2013 he announced he wanted to play for the country of his parents' birth but then accepted a callup to the Swiss national side and made his debut in February that year against Greece. Seferovic, often used as a substitute, has since scored seven goals. — AFP

CHELSEA'S IMPLOSION LEAVES INCOMING CONTE WITH A TOUGH JOB

LONDON: If Leicester's rise to the top of English soccer is the most bewildering aspect of this chaotic season in the Premier League, then the implosion of Chelsea runs a close second. A 3-2 loss to Sunderland on Saturday made it official: Chelsea will end the season with the worst title defense in the 24-year history of the Premier League. The Blues can finish no higher than 11th place and could still drop as low as 11th.

That's much worse than Manchester United's seventh-place finish under David Moyes in his woeful 10 months in charge in 2013-14, which is some achievement in itself. And there's still one ignominy left in this sorry campaign for Chelsea: On Sunday, the team will give a guard of honor to Leicester manager Claudio Ranieri and his players when the new champions

come to Stamford Bridge on the final day of the season.

Ranieri was the coach fired by Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich in 2004 as he chased the signature of Jose Mourinho. Chelsea started as the runaway champions from the previous season, with a squad to envy and a manager widely regarded as one of the world's best. It's turned into an absolute mess. There's the Eva Carneiro saga from the opening day of the season that left the club in a bad light and will drag on into June in the courts; the firing of Mourinho in December; the fall from grace of top players like Eden Hazard, Nemanja Matic and sulky striker Diego Costa; relinquishing the league title with barely a whimper; and on Saturday, the sight of long-time captain John Terry trudging to the dressing

room after being sent off late against Sunderland in what likely was his 703rd and final match for Chelsea.

The 35-year-old Terry, who has been at Chelsea since he was 14, hasn't been offered a new deal. "Captain. Leader. Legend" reads the banner about Terry draped across one of the stands at Stamford Bridge. "We know what he has done for this club and what he has won," Matic said of Terry. "All of us in the team wish him all the best for the future and of course this is not a good way to finish in a club." Stamford Bridge is going to be a very different place next season.

With Terry set to leave - it's unclear whether for the United States, China or another English club - the last member of Chelsea's old guard and spine (Petr Cech, Terry, Frank Lampard, Didier Drogba) disappears. Losing all that expe-

rience and winning mentality leaves a massive hole in the team. There'll be no Champions League soccer at Chelsea for the first time since the 2002-03 season. And there'll be another new manager in situ - current Italy coach Antonio Conte.

Where to start on Conte's to-do list. Replace Terry; attempt to keep hold of Hazard; decide whether Diego Costa is worth the effort and strengthen the forward line; try to attract players to a club no longer in Europe's elite; and assess how big a role youngsters like Ruben Loftus-Cheek, Kenedy and Bertrand Traore should have next season. If Italy reaches the European Championship final on July 10, Conte will have barely a month before the new English season starts. Planning is surely underway already, but he's still got precious little time to get his feet under the table at

the club's training base at Cobham.

A huge rebuilding job appears necessary at Chelsea but will Conte get the funds from Abramovich to do so? Mourinho didn't last year, perhaps precipitating his decline. And for Chelsea to get top stars without the lure of the Champions League, it might have to spend extra for players. With Manchester City, Liverpool and Manchester United also likely to be in the market for world-class players this offseason, Conte will have to be astute and could end up turning to Italian players in the transfer market. And there's no knowing how that will turn out. The soap opera that is Chelsea Football Club has always guaranteed drama and headlines in the Abramovich era, but also a regular supply of silverware and European soccer. Maybe no more. — AP



Celtic's Erik Sviatchenko, of Denmark, celebrates scoring a goal in this file photo. — AP

CELTIC MANAGER HAILS FIVE IN ROW, BLASTS 'LITTLE LEAGUE' DISRESPECT

GLASGOW: Celtic manager Ronny Deila says his side's Scottish Premiership title is every bit as special as the rest after his side clinched their 47th top flight championship with a 3-2 win over nearest challengers Aberdeen. A double from Patrick Roberts and a Mikael Lustig strike seemingly put Celtic in an insurmountable position before goals from Jonny Hayes and Andrew Considine made for a nervy finish.

The win moves Celtic 12 points clear of the Dons with two games remaining and seals a fifth consecutive league title for only the third time in the club's history. However, Celtic have come in for criticism this season with cup semi-final defeats to rivals Rangers and Ross County, allied to poor European form, resulting in Deila announcing his decision to leave the club in the summer. However, the out-going boss says his side's title win deserves to be valued as highly as previous victories.

"Of course it should be. It is a title. You have to fight against the teams in the league and you can't say this is not more worthy than the others," the Norwegian manager said. "It is very disrespectful thing to say about the other teams as well. "Our results have been consistent but the last two months we have not had the same drive and energy in the team. There have been some bad results which make the season a bit grey, rather than white "We are the best and the biggest club and everything we achieve here is normal, other than if you go to through the Champions League and into the next round after the group games.

"So it is high demands and sometimes it is important to enjoy it. The fans showed that today and in the end they were happy to get the championship. "You see in other leagues that small teams win but now we have five in a row and should be very proud of it and hopefully it will be a lot more next season." Aberdeen have provided the main challenge in the league in recent seasons in the absence of their

Glasgow rivals Rangers. Dons boss Derek McInnes felt his side's performance in the match at Celtic Park mirrored his side's title challenge.

"The players deserve a lot of credit for not folding and giving up and coming back fighting strong," McInnes said. "I think it has parallels to our league campaign. We had to work for it in the end, we let them know we were there and weren't going anywhere but ultimately we just fell a bit short." Today is about Celtic. For all the criticism that has come the manager's way and the players' way it hasn't been through their league form. "Their points tally will be up there with any championship winning team. Ultimately we beat them twice and we probably needed someone else to lay a glove on them as well to get closer to them, but they deserve credit today."

With Rangers' return to the Scottish top flight next season, McInnes acknowledges he will face an increased challenge to repeat the feats of previous years. However, the Aberdeen boss believes his players can continue to improve. "My team deserve a lot of credit because we are the one team over the last couple of seasons who have taken the responsibility to challenge Celtic and give them something of a league title race when really we shouldn't be anywhere near it in terms of funds," McInnes said. "Hopefully next season if we can get in a similar position we can learn from this and put ourselves in a better position to challenge right to the end." — AFP

Live Match on TV
(Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE
West Ham v Man United 21:45
beIN SPORTS 2 HD

WEST HAM SELL ALL SEASON TICKETS FOR NEW STADIUM

LONDON: West Ham United have sold out of season tickets ahead of next season's move to London's Olympic Stadium, the Premier League club said yesterday. Having sold more than 50,000 tickets for the 60,000-seater stadium, West Ham can boast of having more season ticket holders than any other London club and the highest percentage of permanent ticket holders in England's top flight. "Having made the bold decision to move to the former Olympic Stadium, we are delighted to see how it has captured the imagination of the Hammers fan base," club vice-

chairman Karren Brady said. "We find ourselves going into our first season with more than 50,000 season ticket holders and tens of thousands of people on the priority list for seats in 2017-18." Slaven Bilic's men will be move to the Olympic Stadium after more than a century at the Boleyn Ground and will play their final home game in the 35,000-seater stadium against Manchester United today. The club also said that the announcement practically guaranteed that the new stadium would be sold out for every Premier League game next season. — Reuters

GALAXY SEND REVOLUTION REELING KEANE BACK WITH A BANG

LOS ANGELES: Robbie Keane was firing on all cylinders on his return from knee surgery on Sunday, the Irish international scoring twice to help lead the Los Angeles Galaxy to a 4-2 victory over New England Revolution in their Major League Soccer showdown. Two months after undergoing a right knee procedure, the 35-year-old Keane combined well with team mate Gyasi Zardes (two assists) to give the Galaxy plenty of optimism moving forward.

"It feels like at the moment that we're getting people back and then someone is missing through suspension or injury," Keane told reporters after the home victory. "Come July, hopefully we get everybody back together, everybody fit and healthy, and I think you'll see a stronger, stronger team." The Galaxy could hardly have looked any stronger early on Sunday as they stormed to a 3-0 lead in the first half. Keane kicked off the scoring in the 13th minute and added another in the 45th, while Giovanni dos Santos tallied in between in a dominant display.

The second half was a tighter affair, however, with Steven Gerrard netting in injury time to complete the scoring after New England, winless in six games, had battled back through Kelyn Rowe and Juan Agudelo goals after the break. Los Angeles (5-1-3) are now undefeated in seven games and are riding high with their veteran striker back to lead the attack. "Robbie is very important for us, for the club. He's a great player," Dos Santos said. "I think the chemistry between me and him is getting better every game and for me, it's always a pleasure to play with him." In the only other match of the day, New York City beat DC United 2-0 after an in-form David Villa scored his seventh goal of the season and Khiry Shelton added another. — Reuters



CALIFORNIA: New England Revolution midfielder JeVaughn Watson (right) kicks the ball away from Los Angeles Galaxy forward Robbie Keane during the first half of an MLS soccer game on Sunday, May 8, 2016 in Carson. — AP



LONDON: West Ham fans buy Pies and Eels ahead of the English Premier League football match at The Boleyn Ground in Upton Park, in east London. — AFP

MANCHESTER UTD OUT TO RUIN WEST HAM'S BOLEYN FAREWELL

LONDON: Manchester United have the glinting incentive of a Champions League place in their sights as they prepare for an emotion-charged Premier League contest at West Ham United today. Manchester City's 2-2 draw with Arsenal at the weekend means that United can pip their cross-town rivals to a top-four spot if they beat West Ham and then prevail at home to Bournemouth on Sunday. An FA Cup final date against Crystal Palace follows, suddenly making United manager Louis van Gaal's horizon a great deal sunnier, but with West Ham playing their last ever game at their venerable Boleyn Ground home, United can expect to face ultra-motivated opponents.

Speaking before City's draw with Arsenal, Van Gaal said: "It's still very tough. "Now we have to play away to West Ham United and we've seen already in the quarter-final of the FA Cup (when United won 2-1) that it's not so easy. So we have to repeat that win. "West Ham are a very good team-it's not for nothing they're in the top six of the table. We were lucky in the cup. I think we deserved to win, but we were lucky West Ham had a goal disallowed in the last minute."

Marcus Rashford was United's inspiration on their last trip to the Boleyn Ground in April, opening the scoring with a fine individual effort, and the 18-year-old striker is expected to return to the starting XI after being rested for Saturday's 1-0 win at Norwich City. Centre-back Daley Blind should return as well, having also been rested at Carrow Road, but forward Anthony Martial and full-back Matteo Darmian are doubts.

Martial was withdrawn from the starting XI against Norwich after complaining of muscular discomfort in the warm-up, while Darmian was stretched off with an ankle problem. United's FA Cup win ended West Ham's hopes of bowing out at the Boleyn Ground with a piece of silverware and the east London club's

chances of a top-four finish are also effectively over following Saturday's unexpected 4-1 defeat at home to Swansea City.

'Going to be special'

It was West Ham's first home defeat in the league since August—a run of 15 games—and left a Europa League berth as their only realistic target for the end of the season. West Ham slipped out of the qualifying places to seventh following Southampton's 2-1 win at Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday and Liverpool are now just a point behind them after winning 2-0 at home to Watford.

Seventh place could yield a Europa League spot at the season's end, but only if Manchester City finish in the top four and United beat Palace in the FA Cup final and finish in the top five. "I keep saying the gap between us and Southampton and Liverpool below," West Ham manager Slaven Bilic said, prior to Southampton's win at White Hart Lane. "That's the gap that worries me and that's the gap I'm still concentrating on. But we have a game today and we are still in a brilliant position. "We want to finish high. With two games to go we are talking about Europe. It's in our hands. It's there for us."

Win, lose or draw, today's game is sure to be an occasion soaked with nostalgia as West Ham bid farewell to the 35,016-seat Boleyn Ground, which has been the club's home since 1904. Exciting times lie ahead with an imminent move to the 60,000-capacity Olympic Stadium, up the road in Stratford, but for fans, local residents, staff and players, leaving the club's ancestral home will be an almighty wrench. "We're itching to get back out there and put things right, of course we are," said captain Mark Noble, whose West Ham career began in July 2003. "It's the last game ever at this place and it's going to be special." — AFP

PLATINI TO QUIT UEFA AFTER LOSING APPEAL

LAUSANNE: Suspended European soccer boss Michel Platini will resign as head of governing body UEFA after losing a top level appeal against a ban for ethics violations, but he will continue to fight to clear his name. One of the finest players of his generation who went on to become a powerful sporting official, Frenchman Platini was suspended after his dealings with fallen world soccer chief Sepp Blatter dragged him into the scandal which engulfed the sport's global governing body FIFA.

Sport's highest tribunal, The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), upheld Platini's suspension on Monday, although it reduced the term from six years to four. "The CAS Panel was of the opinion that a severe sanction could be justified in view of the superior functions carried out by Mr Platini (FIFA Vice-President and UEFA President), the absence of any repentance and the impact that this matter has had on FIFA's reputation," CAS said in a statement. The ruling means that UEFA, which has not replaced Platini since he was initially banned in October, will have to elect a new president. UEFA said its Executive Committee would meet on May 18 in Basel to discuss the next steps, adding that no stand-in President would be appointed in the meantime.

No figurehead

That decision means European soccer will almost certainly have no figurehead during the European Championship, to be held in France over June and July. Platini has pledged to continue his campaign to overturn the ban. His only remaining recourse is to appeal to the Swiss federal court, but this can only overturn the verdict if it finds procedural irregularities. "I see this (decision) as a profound injustice... As agreed with the national associations I am resigning from my functions as President of UEFA in order to pursue my fight with the Swiss courts to prove my integrity in this affair," Platini said in a statement.

A lawyer for Platini, Yves Wehrli, said the Frenchman would resign from UEFA "in the coming days". The French Football Federation (FFF) said it would respect the CAS decision. "The FFF nevertheless salutes the work of Michel Platini and the quality of a man who has always worked in the interest of football, particularly while he was UEFA president," it said. Platini was banished along with former FIFA President Blatter over a payment of two million Swiss francs (\$2.08 million) made to the Frenchman by FIFA with Blatter's approval in 2011 for work done a decade earlier.

FIFA's ethics committee said the payment, made at a time when Blatter was seeking re-election, lacked transparency and presented conflicts of interest. Both men denied wrongdoing. Platini had been favorite to replace Blatter at the time. Instead, his former general secretary at UEFA, Gianni Infantino, entered the FIFA presidential race and won the election in February. Platini and Blatter were provisionally banned in October while FIFA's ethics committee investigated the case, then suspended for eight years each in December, reduced to six years by the FIFA appeal committee in February. — Reuters

Sports

Djokovic targets
Rome after 29th
Masters titleKeane back with a
bang; Galaxy send
Revolution reeling

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ATLANTA: Paul Millsap #4 of the Atlanta Hawks shoots against LeBron James #23 and Iman Shumpert #4 of the Cleveland Cavaliers in Game Four of the Eastern Conference Semifinals during the 2016 NBA Playoffs on May 8, 2016 in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

CAVALIERS SWEEP INTO EASTERN FINALS

THUNDER PULL LEVEL WITH SPURS; CAVS DOWN HAWKS

LOS ANGELES: The Cleveland Cavaliers punched their ticket to the NBA Eastern Conference finals on Sunday, holding off a desperate Hawks team 100-99 in Atlanta to complete a sweep of their second-round playoff series. Kevin Love scored 27 points and tied his career-high with eight three-pointers to help Cleveland wrap up the 4-0 series victory. The Cavs, who fell to the Golden State Warriors in last year's NBA Finals, will play either Toronto or Miami for a chance to return to the championship series.

Kyrie Irving scored 21 points and handed out eight assists. James added 21 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists and came up big defensively on Atlanta's final possession. The Cavaliers were up 100-99 with 10 seconds to play when James tied up Atlanta's German point guard Dennis Schroder on a drive inside the paint. James won the ensuing jump ball as Cleveland held on for the win. Once again Cleveland were on fire from

three-point range. They hit 16 three-pointers on Sunday, 10 in the first half, taking their tally for the final three games of the series to 62.

"We're in a great rhythm right now," James said. "We know where everyone is on the floor and exactly where we should be." Cavaliers coach Tyronn Lue said the team was hitting its stride at the right time. "The last three or four weeks of the season we really started playing good basketball on both ends of the court, and it's carried over," he said. "Team's playing well right now." Schroder, who finished with 21 points, led a balanced Hawks attack, with five Atlanta players scoring in double figures. The Hawks led by as many as 12 in the second quarter, but they couldn't hold off the eventual onslaught and the Cavs can now catch their breath as Miami and Toronto battle on in a series in which the Raptors lead 2-1.

In Oklahoma City, Kevin Durant tied a playoff career

high with 41 points to lead the Thunder to a 111-97 victory over the San Antonio Spurs that knotted their Western Conference second-round series at two games apiece. Down by four after three quarters, Oklahoma City outscored the Spurs 34-16 in the fourth quarter. "They out-toughed us," said Spurs coach Gregg Popovich, who pointed to the Thunder's 40-34 advantage in rebounding as well as a solid contribution from the Thunder's role players in backing up Durant. "They deserve credit," Popovich said. "They out-played us in the fourth quarter."

Durant connected on 14 of 25 shots from the field and 10 of 13 from the free-throw line. "I just try to be consistent in what I do," he said. "I know that at any given moment, I can go off and hit a few shots. I just try and stay with it and play as hard as I can on both ends of the floor and leave it all out there and live with the results." Russell Westbrook added 14 points, 15 assists

and seven rebounds, while Steven Adams chipped in 16 points and 11 rebounds and Dion Waiters came off the bench to score 17 points. Oklahoma City were up by four when Durant scored four straight points to stretch the lead to 105-97 with 2:04 to play.

San Antonio's Kawhi Leonard then missed consecutive three-pointers and Durant drained a three-pointer from the corner. Back-to-back baskets from Westbrook and Durant finally put the game away. "I just tried to stay in the moment," Durant said. "We still had a couple of minutes left in the game, our crowd was phenomenal tonight. Probably the loudest I've ever heard them." Veteran French point guard Tony Parker paced the Spurs with 22 points. Leonard scored 21 and pulled down six rebounds. LaMarcus Aldridge scored 20 points and grabbed six boards in the defeat. The Spurs will host game five today. — AFP



TURIN: Hellas Verona's forward from Italy Luca Toni (left) fights for the ball with Juventus' defender from Italy Leonardo Bonucci during the Italian Serie A football match Hellas Verona vs Juventus on May 08, 2016. — AFP

RELEGATED VERONA HAND CHAMPIONS RARE DEFEAT

JUVE BEATEN AS TONI BOWS OUT IN STYLE

ROME: Luca Toni marked his final match before retirement with a goal as relegated Hellas Verona beat Juventus 2-1 on Sunday, handing the Serie A champions their first league defeat since October. Elsewhere, Francesco Totti came off the bench to make his 600th league appearance for third-placed AS Roma as they sank Chievo 3-0 to move up to 77 points, two behind Napoli in the race for second spot after Maurizio Sarri's side downed Torino 2-1.

Former Italy striker Toni reaffirmed his intention to quit after Verona's final home game of the season earlier in the week, and last term's joint top scorer marked the occasion by scoring a 43rd-minute penalty after a foul by Alex Sandro who was sent off late on. "This goodbye is one of the most fantastic and saddest moments in my life," Toni told Italian television, "because quitting football isn't easy. It's a magical night that I will remember forever. It's my

last one but this moment had to come one day."

Federico Viviani added a powerful second for bottom club Verona while Paulo Dybala converted a late penalty for Juve as the Serie B-bound side secured their fifth league victory of the season to end the champions' 26-game undefeated streak in Serie A. "Tonight wasn't acceptable," said Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri.

"We weren't intense and there was a lack of concentration and focus." The race for the final automatic Champions League berth will go to the final weekend after goals from Radja Nainggolan, Antonio Rudiger and Miralem Pjanic helped Roma defeat Chievo. "This win is for our supporters who have undeservedly had to go through a tricky campaign," midfielder Pjanic told Sky Sport Italia. Nainggolan slammed the opener before Rudiger doubled the home side's lead with a 39th-minute header.

Pjanic added a third when he was picked out by an excellent pass from the 39-year-old Totti and finished calmly past Albano Bizzarri. Totti, whose future at the club remains uncertain, was introduced as a 59th-minute substitute for Mohamed Salah and the club's beloved captain received an emotional ovation in what may be his last match at the Stadio Olimpico.

Napoli took advantage of a weakened Torino defense to seize a 2-0 lead inside 20 minutes with goals from Gonzalo Higuain and Jose Callejon. Bruno Peres pulled a goal back for the hosts, who had Giuseppe Vives sent off in stoppage time, but Napoli held on and will claim second position if they win on the final day. Frosinone's relegation to Serie B was confirmed as Matteo Politano netted an 85th-minute goal to secure a 1-0 away win for Sassuolo who will take sixth place unless AC Milan better their result on the last day of the season. — Reuters

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LOW OIL PRICES: CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND CHALLENGES

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VISAKHAPATNAM, Andhra Pradesh: Indian fishermen ride through the surf as they head out to sea on 'country boats' from Visakhapatnam yesterday. According to local news reports, authorities in the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, have imposed a 60 days ban on fishing by mechanized vessels to protect marine life with 'country boats' operating within five nautical miles of the coast exempted. — AFP

SAUDI REAL ESTATE SHARES HIT BY LAND TAX

BANKS OUTPERFORM ON HOPES LOAN DEMAND MAY RISE

DUBAI: Shares in the Middle East were mixed yesterday as some stocks advanced on positive news while Saudi Arabia's real estate companies retreated after a land tax was announced. Riyadh's index edged up 0.3 percent in modest volume. As part of the country's economic reform campaign, the Housing Ministry said on Sunday that it was imposing an annual tax on undeveloped urban land; the levy will be equivalent to 2.5 percent of the value of the land.

The announcement had been expected, and details of how the tax will be applied - crucial to assessing its impact - have not yet been revealed. But real estate-related companies with large land banks were hit by the news, with Taiba Holding and Jabal Omar Development dropping 2.3 and 1.6 percent respectively. Banks fared

better on hopes that demand for loans to finance real estate development projects could pick up as a result of the tax. Banque Saudi Fransi climbed 3.0 percent.

In Dubai, Air Arabia climbed 3.2 percent after the budget airline reported a 42.2 percent rise in first-quarter net profit to 111.1 million Dirhams (\$30.3 million); analysts polled by Reuters had on average forecast 88.8 million Dirhams. Shares in Drake & Scull, which has not yet reported quarterly results, surged 8.6 percent, recovering earlier losses.

But DAMAC Properties dropped 4.1 percent after it reported a 15 percent fall in first-quarter net profit, as revenue shrank by a third compared to a year earlier. With two-thirds of traded shares declining, the main Dubai index fell 0.3 percent.

Neighboring Abu Dhabi's stock index edged up 0.6 percent. Blue chips provided the main support, with Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank and Etisalat adding 1.3 and 0.8 percent respectively. Agthia Group rose 1.1 percent after reporting a 14 percent year-on-year rise in first-quarter net profit on a 12 percent increase in net revenue.

Qatar, Egypt

Doha's index broke a five-day losing streak and added 1.3 percent on the back of some buying interest in blue chips. Islamic bank Masraf Al Rayan and telecommunications operator Ooredoo rose 1.8 and 4.4 percent. In Cairo, Telecom Egypt failed to hold onto early gains and edged down 0.4 percent to 7.97 Egyptian

pounds. The country's state-owned landline monopoly posted an almost 116 percent jump in first-quarter net profit, citing growth in its retail business.

"The bottom line was positively impacted by gross margin improvements, resulting from a change in the revenue mix, solid contribution from Vodafone Egypt (where it has a 45 percent stake) and a transactional foreign exchange gain," said a note by Cairo's Naeem Holding, maintaining a "buy" rating on the stock with a price target of 11.0 pounds.

The main Egyptian stock index rose 1.0 percent. Orascom Construction added 0.5 percent after it said it had won two contracts worth 270 million Euros (\$308 million) for work on the third phase of Cairo's third metro rail line. — Reuters

SMALL-CAR DEALS ABOUND AS US BUYERS SHIFT TO SUVs

DETROIT: Louis Cervi was looking to buy a small car for basic transportation with a monthly payment in the mid-\$200 range. After six months of looking, Cervi, 41, drove off a dealer lot north of Pittsburgh in a Ford Focus for \$192 a month. The dealership even accepted his 2001 Chevrolet Monte Carlo with a failed transmission as a down payment on his lease. "I thought I'd probably get something in the \$240 (per month) range," Cervi says. "It was the end of the month, so I think I got kind of lucky there. They were trying to meet a quota." With many Americans rushing to buy trucks and SUVs, there are good deals to be had on cars, especially smaller models. In April, supplies of small cars on dealer lots grew to the highest level in seven years. Automakers are resorting to discounts and sweetened lease deals to move the metal - especially with models that haven't been updated in a few years.

In the 12 months ended April 30, small-car sales fell more than 6 percent, according to Ward's Automotive. At the same time, truck and SUV sales combined grew more than 10 percent. So far this year, about 54 percent of US vehicle sales have been trucks and SUVs. Just two years ago, cars ruled the market at 51 percent. While trucks and SUVs are expected to help the industry set a new annual sales record above 17.5 million vehicles this year, some experts are predicting a continued slowdown in sales of cars.

There are a number of reasons for the shift. Gas prices are low. SUVs generally are smaller, lighter and more efficient than in the past. Older people like the higher seating position an SUV offers because it's easier to get in and out, and people of all ages use the hatchback and ample storage space. Consumers also are more confident in the economy, and willing to spend on pricier SUVs, says Eric Lyman, vice president of industry insights for the TrueCar.com auto pricing site.

Cervi wouldn't have been as fortunate if he was after a hot-selling SUV. A Toyota RAV4, for instance,



PITTSBURGH: In this Tuesday, April 26, 2016, photo, Louis Cervi gets out of his leased Ford Focus after parking near his Pittsburgh home. — AP

can be leased for three years at \$199 per month, but a buyer has to put down \$1,999. That translates to another \$56 per month. RAV4 sales rose 32 percent last month. Falling car sales, along with faster updates of compact cars, will put pressure on companies with older vehicles to offer discounts, says Lyman. Some automakers have updated small cars after a year to include new features or overcome shortcomings pointed out by customers, he says. "It's going to become more cutthroat," Lyman said. "It means if you're not keeping your vehicle up, you're at a competitive disadvantage."

Ford's Focus hasn't been redesigned since the 2012 model year and has fallen behind newer products such as the Honda Civic and the redesigned Chevrolet Cruze. That means manufacturers with older cars like Ford and Fiat Chrysler can't charge as much as Honda or Chevy. Two weeks ago, Fiat Chrysler cut the price on some versions of its aging Dodge Dart, knocking \$1,400 off the SXT model to \$17,995. Dealers also are offer-

ing up to \$2,750 cash back on some models. "Every car in the industry, as it ages, seeks to provide more value," said Tom Sacoman, director of the Dodge brand. Without the all-new Civic, small car sales would have been abysmal. Through April, its sales are up 29 percent. As a result, Honda can get more for a lease than others. It's offering a 36-month Civic LX at \$179 per month - but you have to put down \$1,999 - the equivalent of \$56 per month - to get it. Richard Bazy, who owns the dealership that leased Cervi his Focus, said Ford is supporting dealers by funding lease deals. He says small cars remain a huge market for him and other dealers even though sales have fallen. So far this year, people have bought nearly 1 million small cars in the US. The 2016 Cruze is just hitting showrooms. General Motors recently held a driving session for reporters with comparable vehicles. The Cruze and Civic stood out with better handling and acceleration, quieter engines and the nicest interiors. — AP

FOREIGN DEMAND BOOSTS GERMAN FACTORY ORDERS

BERLIN: German industrial orders, a key measure of demand for goods in Europe's biggest economy, rebounded in March on the back of stronger than expected foreign demand, the economy ministry said yesterday.

Orders rose 1.9 percent for the month compared to March last year, in a recovery that outstripped the 0.7 percent growth predicted by analysts. The positive bounce came after a slump of 0.8 percent in February. The ministry noted that the rebound was based mainly on strong growth in foreign orders, which rose 4.3 percent from February - particularly from outside the eurozone where demand surged by 6.2 percent.

Domestic orders meanwhile declined by 1.2 percent on a month on month basis. The March growth is the "the biggest monthly increase in nine months and markedly above expectations," said Johannes Gareis, an analyst at Natixis bank. "Overall, today's report was strong and provided good news for Germany's manufacturing sector, following a lacklustre performance in the recent past," he added. ING's Carsten Brzeski noted that "even if monthly new orders data is too volatile to be a really reliable indicator of what is going on in the industry, today's numbers give some hope that the stagnation since last summer is gradually fading away". — AFP

UAE CABINET APPROVES CREATION OF CENTRAL ISLAMIC FINANCE AUTHORITY

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates' cabinet has approved the creation of a centralized sharia authority that will monitor and set standards for Islamic finance in the country, aiming to boost growth of the industry.

The authority, to be designed and established by the central bank, will supervise the sharia boards of individual banks and financial institutions, state news agency WAM reported late on Sunday without saying when the body would start operating.

Sharia boards are groups of scholars who rule on whether financial instruments and activities are religiously permissible. Islamic finance obeys religious principles such as bans on the payment of interest and pure monetary speculation. Gulf countries have in the past tended to follow a loose, decentralized model of Islamic

finance regulation, leaving much of it to individual boards.

But the rulings of different boards can be inconsistent or leave scholars open to suggestions of conflicts of interest, increasing uncertainty among investors and slowing growth. So the UAE and other countries, including Oman, Pakistan, Morocco and Nigeria, have in the last few years been moving towards a Malaysian-style system with a centralized authority that can impose uniform standards on the industry.

The UAE has been discussing the plan for its authority for about two years. Islamic banks accounted for 22.2 percent of domestic credit in the fourth quarter of last year, up from 20.8 percent a year earlier, according to central bank data. — Reuters

ZIMBABWE OPPN CALLS LOCAL 'US DOLLAR' PLAN 'MADNESS'

HARARE: Zimbabwe's opposition condemned the government's plan to print a local version of the US dollar as "madness" yesterday, as panic set in over a crippling cash shortage. "The printing of bond notes will be the death knell to this economy," the main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), said in a statement. "Zimbabweans have walked this road before. They have not forgotten the dark days when they were poor quintillionaires."

Zimbabwe adopted the US and South African currencies in 2009 after hyperinflation peaked at 231 million percent, rendering the national currency worthless. A recent shortage of foreign notes prompted central bank governor John Mangudya to unveil measures including limiting withdrawals to \$1,000 per day and printing a series of tokens, called bond notes, rated at par with the US dollar.

"The MDC is preparing a robust response to this

madness and the party reserves its right to mobilize the people against this ill-advised decision which is certainly not backed by economic logic," the party said. Bond notes will complement bond coins, which were introduced in 2014 to tackle a lack of small change.

The notes, which Mangudya said were "at design stage", will be in denominations of \$2, \$5, \$10 and \$20. They will be backed by a \$200-million support

facility provided by the Afrexibank (Africa Export-Import Bank). Mangudya's announcement last week prompted panic, with long queues of desperate depositors trying to withdraw their money at banks and automated teller machines. Economists blame the cash shortage on lack of investment and a trade deficit which saw the country's import bill standing at \$490 million in the first quarter against \$167 million in exports. — AFP

INDIE BOOKSTORES RISE FOR A SEVENTH STRAIGHT YEAR

NEW YORK: Independent bookselling remains on a roll. The American Booksellers Association has grown for the seventh consecutive year, the trade group's CEO, Oren Teicher, told The Associated Press during a recent interview. Core membership increased to 1,775, up by 63 over the previous year and by more than 300 since 2009. And with many stores opening additional outlets, the number of individual locations rose to 2,311, compared with 2,227 at this time in 2015 and just 1,651 in 2009.

With membership once well exceeding 3,000, independent sellers had been shutting down for decades, largely because of competition from Amazon.com and from the superstore chains Barnes & Noble and Borders. But Borders has gone out of business and Barnes & Noble is struggling. Independent booksellers also have benefited from the leveling of e-book sales and resilience of paper editions. According to Teicher, unit sales from some 580 stores reporting numbers are up 5 percent in the first four months of 2016 compared with the same period in 2015. "I am thrilled and delighted to be able to tell you that our trend has continued and we had another really strong year," Teicher said.

'Low-margin business'

Optimism has become self-fulfilling. A decade ago, longtime store owners struggled to find successors because independent bookselling seemed so risky. Now, transitions happen routinely, with recent examples including Dudley's Bookshop Cafe in Bend, Oregon, and Women & Children First in Chicago. While for years new stores rarely opened, they now do so frequently, with some of the owners including such writers as Judy Blume and Jeff Kinney.

Teicher did mention a couple of potential "clouds" in the future. With the economy recovering, real estate prices in many areas are going up and booksellers could face punishing increases in rent when their leases run out. Teicher also cited the initiatives nationwide to raise the minimum wage to as high as \$15. Many booksellers are political liberals who favor the increases in principle, but in practice they will end up paying more. Teicher says a significant hike in salaries could mean the difference between a store making money or at best breaking even.

"We're in a low-margin business, and that upward pressure on wages is a big deal," says Teicher, adding that a traditional solution for retailers is complicated for bookstores. "Someone might tell you, 'Well, you know, do what the supermarket does and charge a quarter more for milk. Pass on the increases to the consumer.' But as long as publishers continue to print the suggested retail price on the product, it's hard to put a surcharge on it. It puts us in a peculiar position," Teicher specu-

lated on a variety of options: "Increase efficiencies" in the supply chain, tax breaks to offset wage hikes, the removal of price stickers from books and deeper discounts from publishers. And maybe, he says, publishers will raise the cost. "It would not surprise me if there's some upward pressure on prices," Teicher said.

E-book prices

Publishers have advocated higher e-book prices as a way of helping printed books and physical stores remain viable, a stance that has led to fierce clashes with Amazon.com and an antitrust suit filed in 2012 by the federal government that led to multimillion dollar settlements. Understandably, they are at most non-committal about making traditional books more expensive.

"The truth is how much books cost is not specific to the minimum wage," said Heather Fain, senior vice president and director of marketing strategy at Hachette Book Group. "It's something we talk about all the time, especially in relation to print versus electronic prices."

The latest ABA numbers arrive on the eve of BookExpo America, the industry's annual trade show, which takes place this week in Chicago after being in New York since 2009. For the third straight year, BookExpo will be immediately followed by the fan-oriented BookCon. Featured authors at Chicago's McCormick Place will include Veronica Roth, Sebastian Junger and Dav Pilkey of "Captain Underpants" fame, while panel discussions will range from the role of public libraries in the book industry to marketing through Facebook and other social media.

BookExpo America once routinely changed locations, but major publishers have grown used to the New York setting and the savings of not having to travel. Brien McDonald, the event director for BookExpo and BookCon, said BookExpo's floor space at McCormick Place will be 126,284 square feet, a drop of nearly 20 percent from last year. (BookCon, meanwhile, is expanding from 41,756 square feet in 2015 to 61,496 square feet.)

Hachette, Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins and others based in Manhattan are sending fewer people than in previous years and none of the featured authors approach the star power of such past convention speakers as former President Bill Clinton, former Secretary of State Colin Powell and Barbra Streisand.

"We will have a smaller contingent and a smaller booth, which is a reflection of looking at the show and what's important about it," Fain said. "You want to have a place to meet with the booksellers and you want to have a way to elevate the titles you're focused on. But you don't have to have a lot of people to do it." — AP



ATHENS: A customer looks at items in an antique shop. — AP

EUROZONE FINANCE MINISTERS WRANGLE OVER GREECE DEBT

LONG-DELAYED BAILOUT REVIEW STILL IN LIMBO

BRUSSELS: Eurozone finance ministers yesterday tackled crucial talks on unlocking vital cash and debt relief for Greece just hours after Greek lawmakers adopted unpopular reforms demanded as part of the country's bailout. The 19 ministers, meeting in Brussels, are aiming to finally sign off on the long-delayed first review of Greece's massive EU-IMF bailout—the country's third in five years—and begin talks on reducing Athens's mountain of debt.

But a deal yesterday remains in doubt amid divisions between the eurozone and the International Monetary Fund on both the measures the cash-strapped Greek government must take, and the need for debt relief.

In Athens rioters hurled petrol bombs and police fired tear gas Sunday as tens of thousands of Greeks took to the streets in protest at the tax hikes and pension reforms approved by parliament. Greece "has met its commitments" made last July to secure the next tranche of its 86-billion-euro (\$95 billion) rescue package, government spokeswoman Olga Gerovassili said.

"Now it is important that the debt question be discussed for the first time at the Eurogroup." Completing the first review would unblock around 5.4 billion euros that Greece needs to meet huge payments to the European Central Bank (ECB) and IMF in July, as well as to pay for everyday government duties. French finance minister Michel Sapin said he was hoping for "the best" from the talks of the Eurogroup, the finance

ministers from the 19 countries that use the euro single currency. In its official agenda the Eurogroup said it would discuss the "progress achieved" by Greece in satisfying its commitments.

It added that it would "also discuss possible debt relief", despite the opposition of German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaueble, the Eurogroup's most influential member. But in Germany, vice chancellor Sigmar Gabriel said the time had come to take on Greece's public debt, which stands at roughly double what the economy produces in a year. "Everyone knows that the Greek people cannot carry this debt load," said Gabriel, who is also leader of the Social Democrats, a coalition partner to Schaueble's Christian Democrats.

'Not dared'

Also on the table in Brussels will be a demand to Athens for extra reforms in case it misses its spending targets in 2018, but these are fiercely opposed by Greece. These so-called "contingency measures" are a key requirement of the IMF, as the Fund is skeptical Athens will meet the targets. IMF chief Christine Lagarde has warned that there were "significant gaps" in Greece's reform offers, while also accusing the Europeans of demanding unrealistic targets from Athens. But the IMF also strongly supports debt relief for Greece, seeing it as a key condition for the wrecked Greek economy to get back on its feet.

Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos has

called on the eurozone to drop its extra reform demands, warning of a "failed state" if the Brussels talks run aground. The meeting follows days of protests in Greece, where tens of thousands took to the streets to slam the unpopular reforms adopted late Sunday.

The measures were passed thanks to the government's slim majority in the 300-seat parliament, with the government's far-left Syriza voting in favour of the measures despite fears of dissensions. All the opposition parties voted against the bill, which will reduce Greece's highest pensions and raise taxes. In the run-up to the vote, angry unions staged a general strike that paralysed public transport, while some 26,000 people took to the streets of Athens and Greece's second city Thessaloniki. These numbers were, however, significantly down on February protests when 40,000 people marched in Athens alone.

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who has said reform is needed to prevent the pension system collapsing, defended the changes in parliament earlier Sunday. They are part of the government's bailout pledge to achieve 5.4 billion euros in spending cuts by 2018. "The system requires root-and-branch reform that previous governments have not dared to undertake," he told lawmakers. He also promised the Eurogroup meeting yesterday would tackle Greece's crippling debt burden, one of the only concessions granted to Tsipras when he secured the bailout. — AFP



NEW YORK: Specialist Meric Greenbaum works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. — AP

WALL ST TO OPEN HIGHER, INTEREST RATES IN FOCUS

NEW YORK: Wall Street was set to open slightly higher yesterday after Friday's lackluster US jobs report suggested the Federal Reserve will raise rates just once this year. The market was also underpinned by crude prices, which held on to last week's gains after wildfires in Canada hit supplies.

US stocks broke a three-day losing streak and closed higher on Friday after investors focused on the positive aspects of the April jobs report. Still, a bigger-than-expected drop in China's imports and exports in April pointed to weak demand and raised concerns about the ability of the world's second-largest economy to sustain its recent recovery.

In the two weeks to Friday, mixed economic data and uncertainty about the path of future interest rate hikes had put a dampener on a stock market rally that had seen the S&P gain about 15 percent from its February lows. "I'm looking for a steady to choppy market with an upward bias," said Peter Cardillo Chief Market Economist at First Standard Financial in New York. Investors are being comforted by a recovery in oil prices and as the overall trend in the labor market remains strong, he said. A Reuters survey following the jobs report showed that Wall Street's top banks have all but written off the chance of a June rate increase. Most now see the rate hike coming

in September. "While the fundamentals for US growth continue to be good, uncertainty and risks remain," Charles Evans, president of the Bank of Chicago told a conference in London yesterday. "In my opinion, the continuation of 'wait and see' monetary policy response is appropriate to ensure that economic growth continues," he said.

S&P 500 e-minis were up 2.5 points, or 0.12 percent, at 8:25 a.m. ET (1225 GMT) with 194,844 contracts traded. Nasdaq 100 e-minis were up 9.25 points, or 0.21 percent, on volume of 27,314 contracts while Dow e-minis were up 26 points, or 0.15 percent, with 26,996 contracts exchanged.

Bank of Minneapolis Fed President Neel Kashkari will speak at 1:00 p.m. ET in Minnesota. Shares of Lending Club, operator of the world's biggest online lending platform, fell 23.9 percent to \$5.40 in premarket trading after Renaud Laplanche resigned as CEO and chairman following a board review.

Krispy Kreme jumped 23.5 percent to \$20.83 after agreeing to be taken private for \$1.35 billion. Baidu shares were down 5.3 percent at \$164.64 trading after regulators in China asked the company to rein in paid-for ads following the death of a student who had sought treatment for cancer through the company's search engine. — Reuters

OIL RISES AFTER CANADA FIRE HALTS PRODUCTION

LONDON: Oil rose yesterday after Canada's most destructive wildfire in recent memory knocked out over a million barrels in daily production capacity, but caution among investors prevented a return to late April's 2016 price highs. The lost capacity is equivalent to well over a third of the country's typical daily production, and almost all of Canada's crude from oil sands is exported to the United States.

US crude futures rose 65 cents to \$45.31 a barrel by 11:18 GMT, having risen earlier by as much as \$1.28, while Brent crude futures gained 40 cents to trade at \$45.77 a barrel. The fire, which broke out on May 1, has forced three major oil firms to warn they will be unable to deliver on some contracts for Canadian crude.

The impact of the production loss has been far more marked in the US crude market, where prices for West Texas Intermediate oil for delivery in July are now above those for Brent. Investors now hold near-record high bets on a rising oil price, which analysts say might mean there is less scope for Brent to rally after having gained 25 percent in a month.

"Positioning has been already very stretched in the oil market. Some must have taken the opportunity to exit, so that's one angle that momentum is slowing down," Barclays Capital commodities strategist Miswin Mahesh said. "There is a slight fear that prices have recovered too quickly, and we risk repeating the same price trajectory seen around Q2 2015, where the rally slowed down the market balancing process," he added.

Canadian officials on Sunday showed some optimism as favorable weather helped fire fighters, driving the flames away from the oil sands town Fort McMurray, but there was no timeline for a restart of operations at evacuated sites. "The market is close to balanced ... when we consider the large amount of supply offline in



CANADA: Flames flare up from hotspots along a highway to Fort McMurray. — AP

Canada and elsewhere, which could last for months," Morgan Stanley said. US shale oil output is in decline and production is also falling in Latin America, Asia and Nigeria, eroding a 1-2 million barrels per day supply overhang that pulled down oil prices by 70 percent between 2014 and early 2016.

Markets were also watching Saudi Arabia, the

world's biggest oil exporter, where a government shake-up over the weekend included the appointment of Khalid Al-Falih as head of the new Ministry of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources. "Changes in Saudi Arabia oil leadership only underscore the shift in strategy to one focused on market share over price," Morgan Stanley said. — Reuters

CHINA STOCKS HIT BY TRADE DATA, YEN LIFTS TOKYO

HONG KONG: Shanghai stocks tumbled almost three percent yesterday on another disappointing Chinese trade report, but Tokyo was boosted by a weaker yen after US jobs data reinforced expectations for more interest rate hikes this year.

Beijing at the weekend released figures showing exports fell almost two percent last

month while imports plunged nearly 11 percent, stoking fresh fears about the state of the world's number two economy. The figures were a disappointment after a March report showing a surge in overseas shipments had raised hopes that a growth slowdown in China was finally bottoming out.

Shanghai closed 2.8 percent down, extending a similar loss Friday. Fears about China's growing debt bubble were back on the agenda, as the leadership's official mouthpiece newspaper said yesterday the country must bring an end to credit-driven growth to avoid a financial crisis. The People's Daily article, which comes as leaders struggle to cap rising bad loans and other risks, could be a signal

that Beijing is to rein in monetary stimulus efforts, analysts said. Among other markets, Seoul was 0.5 percent lower, but Sydney reversed early losses to gain 0.5 percent. Hong Kong ended up 0.2 percent. Tokyo closed 0.7 percent higher as exporters were boosted by a dip in the yen against the dollar. Japanese officials yesterday kept up their war of words in the hope of taming the surging currency, with Finance Minister Taro Aso telling parliament that "wide fluctuations and rapid movements are not desirable".

The greenback built on last week's gains after the US Labor Department said fewer jobs were created last month than were forecast but that wages grew a healthy 2.5 percent on-year. Analysts also said the headline jobs figure was skewed by weakness in the construction and retail sectors, which had enjoyed strong gains earlier in the year. While a weak jobs reading would usually lower expectations for another rate hike, analysts said the readings suggested another rise could come but would be small and gradual.

The dollar rose to 107.59 yen in Asia from 107.14 yen in New York at the end of last week. "The yen has more scope for losses against the dollar if Fed officials keep their hawkish tone," Masafumi Yamamoto, chief currency strategist in Tokyo at Mizuho Securities, wrote in a note to clients, according to Bloomberg News.

"Against the dollar, the yen seems to have priced in both positive and negative aspects of the jobs report." Last week two regional Fed presidents suggested another increase could come as soon as June. The dollar also edged up against the euro, despite news that Greece had adopted a package of strict pension cuts and tax hikes to qualify for its next tranche of EU-IMF bailout cash. Dealers are now awaiting a meeting of eurozone finance ministers to review the country's progress before deciding whether to release the cash.

On crude markets both key contracts rose after Canadian oil sands producers cut back output as huge wildfires continue to spread in Alberta, the centre of the country's huge deposits and the world's third largest. While the blaze has not directly damaged mining sites, the evacuation of more than 100,000 people has forced companies to slash production.

Dealers are also keeping tabs on Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest producer, which at the weekend sacked its long-serving oil minister in a major government overhaul. West Texas Intermediate climbed two percent while Brent was up 1.5 percent. In early European trade London rose 0.4 percent, Frankfurt added 0.6 percent and Paris gained 0.5 percent. — AFP

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Summary table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low, Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades.

Trades table with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change.

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Large table of individual stock prices and changes for various companies like KARUS, IPG, NAFESCO, etc.

Table titled 'Global Stock Indices' showing indices like Dow Jones, NASDAQ, S&P 500, etc.

Table titled 'MENA Stock Indices' showing regional indices for various countries like Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, etc.

Table titled 'Global Currencies Exchange Rate' showing rates for Kuwaiti Dinar, Saudi Riyal, US Dollar, Euro, etc.

Table titled 'MENA Currencies Exchange Rate' showing rates for Kuwaiti Dinar, Saudi Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, etc.

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Table titled 'Global Bond Yields' showing yields for US, Europe, United Kingdom.

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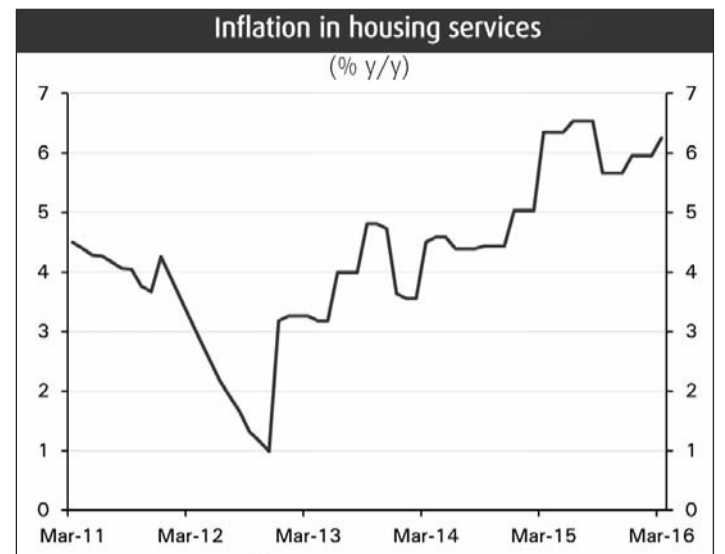
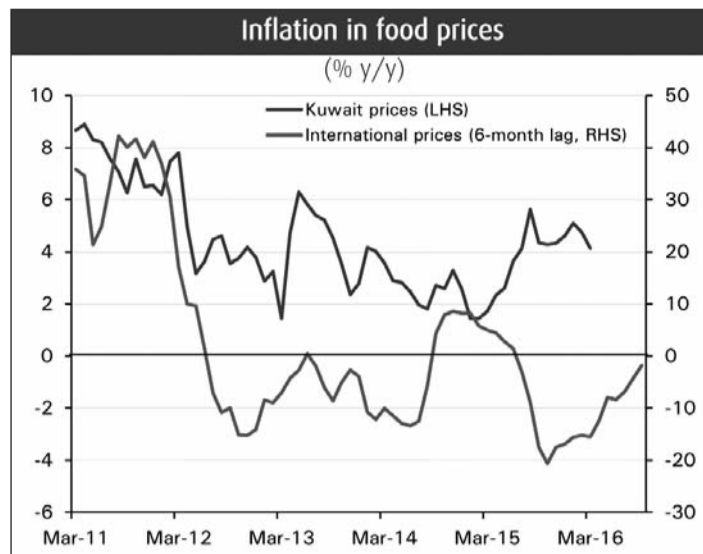
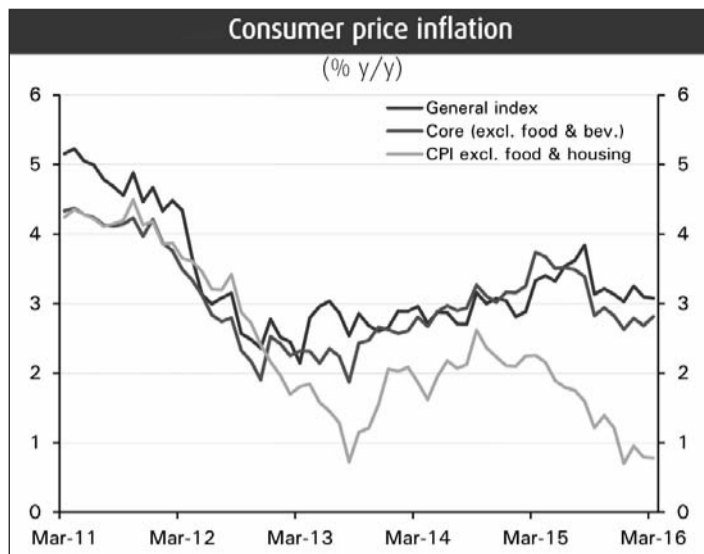
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KUWAIT INFLATION STEADY AT 3.1% IN MARCH; CORE RATE AT 2.8%

NBK ECONOMY UPDATE



KUWAIT: Inflation in consumer prices steadied at 3.1% in March, as a pickup in housing inflation was offset by a slowdown across most other components. Core inflation (which excludes food prices) edged marginally higher from 2.7% year-on-year (y/y) in February to 2.8% y/y in March, on the back of inflationary gains in the housing services and furnishings components. Inflation is forecast to remain subdued in the near-to-medium term, against a backdrop of low global commodity prices and a stronger dinar. Subsequently, we expect annual average inflation to post a moderately lower rate of 3.0% in 2016.

Inflation in local food prices eased in March as global food prices continued to decline (Chart 2.) Food inflation slowed from 4.8% y/y in February to 4.1% in March as inflation in most of its subcomponents continued to recede. Meanwhile, global food prices continued to decrease, though the pace of decline is moderating. According to the Commodity Research Bureau's global commodity index, international food prices fell by 1.8% y/y in March versus a 4.3% y/y decline in February. Inflation in housing services picked up slightly in 1Q16 even as expectations were for a slowing pace. Inflation in this segment (primarily comprised of housing

rents) firmed somewhat in 1Q16, rising from 6.0% y/y in 4Q15 to 6.3% y/y. This was despite expectations that a cooling real estate market could be putting a damper on growth in housing rent. Inflation in furnishings & household maintenance rose to a seven-month high in March; clothing & footwear costs continued to fall. Inflation in furnishings climbed from 2.1% y/y in February to 2.9% in March. Clothing & footwear prices continued to witness declines in March, after falling by 0.5% y/y. The stronger dinar and more extensive seasonal promotions may be limiting price gains in this segment. Inflation in the 'other goods & services'

segment maintained its softness in March. Inflation in this component, which mostly represents the prices of imported goods such as personal care products and jewelry, has also remained subdued as continued strength in the local currency (except against the US dollar) is capping imported inflation. Inflation in wholesale prices decelerated sharply in the first quarter of 2016, amid weaker inflation in agriculture, livestock & fishing, mining & quarrying and in particular, manufacturing (oil related). Wholesale price inflation fell from 2.2% y/y in 4Q15 to a mere -0.2% y/y in the first quarter, predominantly due to a decline in local manufacturing costs. The

fall in manufacturing costs may be due to softer global commodity prices as well as some base effect. Inflation in manufacturing (which has the largest weight in the wholesale price index) is expected to see some correction in the months ahead, but any significant upward pressure from this segment is unlikely. Inflation across the major components of the wholesale price index is projected to remain moderate in at least the near-to-medium term against a backdrop of softer global oil prices and a stronger local currency. This will help keep inflation in the consumer price index at a steady and reasonable pace in 2016.



PANAMA CITY: View of the facade of the building where Panama-based Mossack Fonseca law firm has offices. — AFP

PANAMA LAW FIRM APOLOGIZES TO CHINESE BANK OVER LEAK

HONG KONG/BEIJING: The law firm at the centre of the "Panama Papers" offshore tax haven controversy has written an apology to a Chinese banking client as it seeks to shore up its Asian business following a massive leak of financial data last month, according to a copy of the letter seen by Reuters. The letter was written by Mossack Fonseca in response to queries from the Chinese bank about compliance with global financial standards. It is not known whether there were similar communications with other financial institutions, but the letter shows at least one bank client in the firm's biggest market was concerned by issues raised in the publicity surrounding the leak. In the undated letter to the mid-tier Shanghai-based lender, signed by Mossack Fonseca's regional general manager, the shell company specialist said it "deeply regrets" any misuse of its services or the companies it set up. "If the unauthorized illegal leaks from Mossack Fonseca company servers have created any inconvenience for (the bank) and your clients, we wish to once again apologize," it added. A Mossack Fonseca spokesperson said reporting of the leak had "deepened confusion" about the nature of its business. "As

such, we are routinely speaking to our clients and other related parties that have questions to explain that ... nothing in the illegally obtained cache of documents suggests we have done anything wrong or illegal," the spokesperson said in an emailed statement. Leaks from the Panama Papers, named after the law firm's central American home base, have embarrassed some leading politicians around the world with their chronicling of a shadowy world of offshore holdings and hidden wealth. The source who provided the letter requested that the state-owned bank not be named to protect their identity due to the sensitivity of the subject in China. A former Mossack Fonseca employee in China said the bank was a major client. Mossack Fonseca has also replaced several key staff in a shake-up of its operations in China, according to a person familiar with the matter and a second former employee. Relatives and business associates of eight senior Chinese Communist Party figures - including President Xi Jinping's brother-in-law - are named as beneficiaries of offshore holding companies in the leaked documents. None have made any comment and it was not clear if any were clients of the Shanghai bank. — Reuters

EU ENVOY CALLS FOR IMPROVED CHINA ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP

BEIJING: The European Union's ambassador to China said yesterday the bloc wants a more level playing field in its trade relations with China, insisting that Beijing was not doing enough to address overcapacity in its steel industry that has hit European manufacturers hard. Hans Dietmar Schweisgut called on Beijing to urgently address overcapacity and the "market distortions" it is causing globally. "According to many estimates, the overcapacity in the steel sector in China alone is more than double the total productive capacity in the second largest steel producer, which is the European Union," said Schweisgut. "We very much need to urgently address the short-term market distortion issues which we currently see." Beijing is trying to shrink bloated companies in industries including steel and coal in which supply exceeds demand, leading to price-cutting wars and heavy losses. The EU and the United States complain that China is trying to clear away the backlog of steel by exporting at unfairly low prices. Earlier this year, thousands of European steelworkers protested in Brussels against the import of cheap Chinese steel. Tata Steel cited low-cost Chinese competition when it announced plans in April to sell money-losing operations in Britain that employ 20,000 people. Schweisgut also said that while European companies were willing in decades past to put up with restrictions on doing business in China, especially when they had other advantages like



BEIJING: Hans Dietmar Schweisgut, EU ambassador to China, toasts after delivering the opening speech at an event to mark Europe Day. — AP

cheap labor, now the EU wants a relationship that is much more based on "fair exchange." He said European businesses are growing more urgent with "questions like 'why is it possible that last year a Chinese institution

bought a European bank but it's not possible for a European bank to buy a Chinese one.'" Chinese regulations forbid or limit foreign investment in certain sectors, including banking and automobiles. — AP

TAIWAN'S HTC BANKS ON PHONE, VIRTUAL REALITY AS SALES PLUNGE

TAIPEI: Taiwanese smartphone maker HTC said yesterday its first-quarter revenue plunged by more than half, but that losses in its struggling business should end later this year as it banks on a new flagship product. Revenue from January to March was down 64 percent year-on-year to Tw\$14.8 billion (\$456 million), while net loss in the period was Tw\$2.6 billion, the company said in a statement. The loss - compared with profit of Tw\$360 million a year earlier - marked the fourth consecutive quarter of declines for HTC, once the star of the intensely competitive smartphone sector. Results were much worse than expected, according to Yunta Securities, despite booking gains from selling some properties in the quarter. But chief financial officer Chialin Chang was hopeful the recent launch of the HTC 10 in April would boost fortunes.

"We are actually quite hopeful that the HTC 10 will bring back the momentum," he said. "From the internal management perspective, we are hoping the third quarter in the smartphone business we will be able to achieve a breakeven," Chang added. The homegrown Taiwanese brand has struggled to maintain its edge as Samsung, Apple and strong Chinese brands like Huawei expand their market share. But the company touts its new HTC 10 to have the best smartphone camera on the market. It carries a new feature that gives users more options to personalize home screens than many Android phones. HTC has also been cost-cutting to turn the ailing business around, slashing headcount and streamlining its product offerings to focus on high-end phones. But analysts are still skeptical, with some observers saying the focus on cost-cutting may

deter innovation. First-quarter results did not yet reflect the launch of its new virtual reality product HTC Vive, which also went on sale in April. HTC has been pouring resources into virtual reality, as have its rivals including Samsung and LG. The company is one of the early players to venture into virtual reality and has spearheaded an informal alliance to develop the sector - including Warner Brothers, Alibaba, and Valve. Chang declined to comment on reports that HTC is looking to spin off its virtual reality business, only emphasizing that it is a "very high potential market." "We're going to put in resources to make sure we have long-term success in this sector," he said. Research firm CCS Insight predicts the number of virtual reality devices sold will grow from 2.2 million last year to 20 million in 2018, with smartphone-based devices representing the vast majority. — AFP

TAKATA EXPECTING TO SINK INTO LOSS

TOKYO: Japanese auto parts maker Takata Corp is expecting a loss instead of a profit for the fiscal year that ended in March because of ballooning costs from a massive global air-bag recall. Tokyo-based Takata, which is set to give its earnings report Wednesday, said yesterday it is projecting an annual net loss of 13 billion Yen (\$120 million). The Japanese manufacturer, which also makes seat belts, had earlier forecast a profit of 5 billion Yen (\$46 million). It had racked up a loss of 29.6 billion yen the previous fiscal year. The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said last week that it's adding up to 40 million Takata air bags to the ongoing recall of 28.8 million air bags. Inflators inside the air bags can explode with too much force and spew shrapnel into the vehicle. The inflators are responsible for at least 11 deaths worldwide and more than 100 injuries. It is still unknown exactly how many air bag inflators have to be recalled globally as each automaker must deal with the latest NHTSA decision. The global recall previously totaled about 50 million inflators, but it's likely to expand to more than 100 million, adding to the already biggest recall in US history. Because of the sheer numbers involved, it will take years to manufacture replacement parts. Takata also lowered its annual sales pro-

jection to 718 billion Yen (\$6.6 billion) from the previous 720 billion Yen (\$6.7 billion). Many automakers, including Toyota Motor Corp of Japan and US automaker Ford Motor Co, have said they will stop using Takata inflators in future models. Honda Motor Co, Takata's biggest customer, said Monday it does not know yet how many more recalls will be added globally because of the latest NHTSA decision. Honda President Takahiro Hachigo has ruled out any independent financial bailout, despite speculation over a rescue package for Takata due to the mounting recall, liability expenses and other costs. Unlike most air-bag makers, Takata's inflators use the chemical ammonium nitrate. But what exactly causes the explosions is still unknown. NHTSA says it takes a minimum of six years for the chemical to become unstable in high humidity regions. As cars age, the risk grows, especially in areas where temperatures frequently cycle from cool to hot, according to NHTSA. Authorities in Malaysia have begun an investigation into two more recent deaths in cars with Takata air bags that ruptured. Takata shares dipped early yesterday on speculation over the growing recalls but finished little changed, down 0.3 percent in Tokyo. — AP

FRENCH OIL FIRM TOTAL TO BUY SAFT BATTERY MAKER

PARIS: French oil giant Total announced yesterday a 950-million-Euro (\$1.1-billion) friendly takeover bid for high technology battery maker Saft as it seeks to expand its electricity and renewable energy business. The agreed bid targets all of Saft's shares at a price of 36.50 Euros per share, representing a premium of 38.3 percent compared to Friday's closing price, the oil company said in a statement. Total, which like other oil majors has been battling with persistently weak oil prices, said last month it would set up a new branch for gas, renewable energy and electricity. The company already has a more than 57-percent stake in US solar panel and power station maker SunPower. "The combination of Saft and Total will enable Saft to become the group's spearhead in electricity storage," chairman and chief executive Patrick Pouyanne said in a statement. "Saft's renowned technological know-how and unique expertise have allowed it to develop innovative and competitive solutions for its clients. "It will notably allow us to complement our portfolio with electricity storage solutions, a key component of the future growth of renewable energy," he added. The offer is due to be launched at the beginning of June and needs approval by the financial markets regulator. Saft employs more than 4,100 staff in 19 countries and posted net profits in 2015 of 13.6 million Euros. — AFP

OOREDOO ANNOUNCES FIRST WEEKLY WINNERS OF ITS PREPAID CAMPAIGN



KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, announced the first weekly winners of its all new prepaid campaign "Every Recharge Wins", where seven of the winners were presented with the Samsung Galaxy mobile and one winner with the iPad Mini 3.

The winners for this week were:
 Jamu Lukoss Samsung Galaxy
 Aimahli Mazeal AlSahid Samsung Galaxy
 Maha Abd Kalef AlAneez Samsung Galaxy
 Fatma Akash Soltan Samsung Galaxy
 Abdullallah Ail Samsung Galaxy
 Abdulllah AlKaldy Samsung Galaxy
 Essam El-din Abdalal Ahmad Samsung Galaxy

Shafumon Makara iPad Mini 3
 Ooredoo's "Every Recharge Wins" campaign provides customers with chances to enter daily, weekly, and monthly draws, in addition to a grand draw for each 1 KD recharge, to win smart phones, tablets, cash prizes and a grand prize, which is the 2016 Toyota Prado V6. The more customers recharge their lines the more chances they get to win. In addition to the draws, customers will also be entitled to get free SMS's, MBs, Nojoom points or minutes, instantly upon every recharge. To take part in these draws and win one of the great prizes, customers merely need to recharge their prepaid lines. All winners will be contacted directly and an announcement with the winners' names will be made.



SAMBA: Indian village women carry plastic containers on their head to collect drinking water from an almost dried up well at Talad village in Samba district, some 40 kilometers from Jammu, India. Much of India is reeling under a weekslong heat wave and severe drought conditions that have decimated crops, killed livestock and left at least 330 million Indians without enough water for their daily needs. — AP

ARMED GUARDS PROTECT LAST WATER IN A DROUGHT-PARCHED INDIAN CITY

TIKAMGARH: Authorities in this drought-parched city in central India have deployed round-the-clock armed guards at a river-fed community reservoir to prevent farmers from siphoning the remaining water for irrigation. With rainfall in Tikamgarh district this year 52 percent below average - the second dry year for the area - water is now available to city residents only sporadically, with fears even that may run out during the peak heat months of May and June, authorities say.

Forty-seven-year-old Suryakant Tiwari, one city resident, said his family and many others now have drinking and household water supplied only once every five days. "I have not seen such a condition in my lifetime. Almost every water source in the area has dried up. We don't know how we will survive," Tiwari he said. Farmers have been prohibited from drawing water from reservoirs to irrigate their crops. But Tikamgarh Municipal Corporation officials fear farmers from adjoining Uttar Pradesh state - whose farms border the Bari Ghat dam, fed by the Jumuniya River - are poaching water to try to keep their crops alive.

"If crops continue to be irrigated using the river water, it is not going to last long and there will be severe crisis during the summer season," warned Laxmi Giri, the Tikamgarh municipal corporation president. "Our priority is to supply drinking water to the people." The Jumuniya River is the only source of drinking water for over 100,000 people in Tikamgarh, she said. But "farmers of the neighboring state try to open the gates of the dam and draw water illegally using pipelines. We're therefore compelled to deploy guards," Giri said.

'Never been so bad'

Tikamgarh is hardly alone. The drought-ravaged Bundelkhand, a region in central India spread over the states of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, is suffering some of the worst drought in memory. Crops in the area have been badly hit, cattle are dying of thirst and lack of grazing, and there are growing fears that even drinking water could run dry before the monsoon is expected to begin in June.

"All the ponds, reservoirs and water bodies which earlier supplied water in areas of Tikamgarh have dried up. With no water available for irrigation, farmers have abandoned their crops and are migrating to nearby urban areas in search of livelihood and for sustenance. Life is really hard for them," said Rajendra Adhivrayu, a local journalist who writes on water issues in the region. "The situation has never been so bad," he added. "This is for the first time that the tussle over water has degenerated into a battle of sorts." We fear the situation will

be grave during the coming months." The Jumuniya River separates Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh states along some of its length. A 1974 water sharing pact gives Madhya Pradesh 17 percent of the water stored in the Jamuniya Dam in Uttar Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh stores its share in five dams, including the Bari Ghat. But this year, water is available only in Bari Ghat dam. Water in the four other dams - Harpura, Charpuva, Madiya and Sudan - has run out. Giri said authorities in Tikamgarh had shut off the electrical supply to farmers in neighboring Uttar Pradesh to try to prevent pumping of water from the dam for irrigation.

Farmers have instead turned to using diesel pumps to pull water from the reservoir, he said. "The administration has failed to convince them not to draw water illegally from the dam," she said. Meanwhile, the Indian Met Department's prediction that the entire country could be abnormally hot in May and June, with longer and more severe heat waves, has unnerved many people in the Bundelkhand. India's weather office has predicted that monsoon rains are likely to be above average this year, a potential source of relief. But the rains, normally due the second week of June, have been regularly delayed in recent years.

Jayant Verma, a resident of Tikamgarh, said moving elsewhere to find water, even temporarily, is not an option for many families. "My children attend the school here. I have a job here. I can't go to any other place along with my family. I don't know what we shall do. The government has failed to provide any relief so far," he said. The search for water has become so intense that in many places - including Madhya Pradesh's Dindori district - children are descending into deep, almost-dry wells to try to fetch what little water is available, residents said.

In some areas of the Bundelkhand, farmers have been unable to sow any crops this year, they said, and animals are at risk. "Animals are dying without water. We can't do anything," said Kanta Prasad, a resident of the Jatara sub-district of Tikamgarh. "If we give water to animals, there'll be none left for us. We're feeling so helpless. Every drop of water counts." The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shivraj Singh Chouhan has promised that drinking water will be made available to those who need it. He said the government has prepared a contingency plan to address the worsening drought, and announced a high-level review of the situation in the region. Residents, meanwhile, can do little but wait for rain, and worry. "What will happen if the monsoon is delayed?" asked Adhivrayu. "Or it plays truant, as in previous years?" — Reuters

UPS-BACKED RWANDAN BLOOD DELIVERIES SHOW DRONES' PROMISE AND THE HURDLES

DRONES MAKE DELIVERIES 20 TIMES FASTER THAN BY LAND

CALIFORNIA: International delivery company UPS is backing a start-up using drones in Rwanda to transport life-saving blood supplies and vaccines, underlining the wide potential for the unmanned aircraft and helping bring package delivery by drone to US consumers a step closer. US companies are keen to use drones to cut delivery times and costs but hurdles range from smoothing communication between the autonomous robots and airplanes in America's crowded airspace to ensuring battery safety and longevity.

As far back as 2013, online retailer Amazon said it was testing delivery using drones and Alphabet Inc's Google has promised such a service by 2017. Leading retailer Walmart is also testing drones. But UPS, Walmart, legal experts and consultants say overcoming US regulatory hurdles and concerns over drone safety will require vast amounts of data from real-time use - with testing in the near-term limited to remote areas of the United States or in other countries.

UPS will provide a grant of \$800,000 plus logistical support through the UPS Foundation to a partnership including Gavi, a group providing vaccines to poor countries, and robotics company Zipline International Inc for drone flights in Rwanda starting in August. The drones will deliver blood and vaccines to half the transfusion centers in the country of 11 million people, making deliveries 20 times faster than by land. "Tens of thousands of hours of flight logged in an environment where it's much easier

to operate will help make package delivery a reality in the United States, Zipline chief executive Keller Rinaudo told reporters at a presentation late last week.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which has adopted a step-by-step approach to drones, will soon release finalized rules for small drone use that will most likely limit their use to within the "visual line-of-sight" of an operator or observer. "If you're looking for an economically-efficient way to deliver packages, you'd be better off using a bicycle," said Ryan Calo, an assistant law professor at the University of Washington specializing in robotics.

Nightmare scenario

The hurdles to using drones to deliver packages to consumers include technology, communication, insurance and privacy. Questions remain about battery life and safety, especially after lithium-ion battery problems resulted in a fire on board a parked Boeing 787 in Boston in 2013. Safe communication between drones and with airplanes in America's busy airspace is years away. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has been working on a drone traffic management system and will pass its research to the FAA in 2019 for further testing.

In the push for autonomous cars and trucks, companies like Google and Daimler have turned to individual states such as Nevada, which has issued licenses for testing on its roads. But the FAA controls all US airspace, so

permits on a state-by-state basis will not suffice for drone testing. "You really do have to make sure the FAA is in the boat and we are really focused on that piece of it more than anything," said Mark Wallace, UPS' senior vice president for global engineering.

As part of its strategy, UPS has invested in Boston-based drone manufacturer CyPhy Works Inc. UPS will focus on projects like Rwanda and testing drones in remote US areas in the near-term, he added. Walmart said last year it plans to test drones for package delivery. The retailer is "more likely to start with short hops" in rural areas, spokesman Dan Toporek said. "It has to happen a step at a time, which will teach us, and will provide insights to the FAA and the public on 'this is how it could work.'"

Amazon did not respond to a request for comment. Google referred Reuters to previous statements that the company hopes to operate a delivery service by 2017. Data from companies like No 2 US railroad BNSF, owned by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc, could also prove valuable, said Logan Campbell, chief executive of drone consulting firm Aerotas. BNSF has an exemption from the FAA to operate drones out of the line of sight along its rail network. Campbell said while drone manufacturers would like to see the FAA move faster, the "nightmare scenario" would be if a drone crashed into a manned aircraft. "We have to get this right," he said. "If we move too fast and there's an accident, it could ruin the entire industry." — Reuters

'BABY BOX' IN PHILADELPHIA ENCOURAGES SAFE SLEEPING



PHILADELPHIA: Keyshia Rivera smiles at her newborn son Jesus as registered nurse Christine Weick demonstrates a baby box before her discharge from Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia. In an effort to reduce infant mortality the boxes which are functioning bassinets complete with a sheet and mattress as well as essential baby supplies will be given free-of-charge to all mothers who deliver at the hospital. (Right) A baby box is displayed at Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia. — AP photos



PHILADELPHIA: Doctors and nurses hope to lower the city's high infant mortality rate by distributing baby boxes that encourage safe sleeping habits for newborns and their caregivers. Temple University Hospital this week began giving out the cardboard boxes that are lined with a mattress and function like a bassinet. They're meant to discourage parents from sleeping with their babies, which could lead to accidental suffocation.

The program is the largest effort of its kind by an academic health system in the US, hospital officials said, though that could not immediately be confirmed. It's based on a successful baby box initiative in Finland that began in the 1930s and lowered that country's infant mortality rate. At Temple, Brianna Devero received the first box a few days ago after her son, Steven Tonzelli Jr, was

born. The boy arrived two weeks early - before her house was ready for the new arrival. "He loved it because it was like sleeping in the bassinet from the hospital," Devero said Friday. "And it was really just good because it was something that I could use just right then and there, and didn't have to worry about assembling anything."

Philadelphia, which has one of the nation's highest poverty rates, has an infant mortality rate nearly double the US average - 11.2 deaths per 1,000 births compared with six per 1,000 nationwide, according to the city Health Department. The rate is even higher in some low-income neighborhoods that Temple serves. Poor families sometimes don't have the resources or education to properly care for newborns. Temple's box initiative aims to reduce

risky behavior associated with infant deaths, such as sharing beds or using unsafe bedding.

The hospital plans to give out 3,000 boxes for free over the next year - one for each woman who gives birth there, regardless of need. The boxes, which include clothing, diapers and educational materials, are worth \$80 to \$100 and were partly paid for with grants and crowdfunding, officials said. "We have every hope that our patients will find this a useful tool in caring for their newborns," said Dr Gail Herrine, medical director of the postpartum unit. Temple patient Victoria Mack received a box Friday for her son Reign - who also arrived unexpectedly early. "It's nice to know that you have something that you can go home with ... until when you finally have everything ready to go," she said. — AP

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Kuwait Times
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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
فهد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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



Faisal Al-Matrouk, Program Manager of Enterprise Development, Innovation and Enterprise Directorate of KFAS



Professor Moudhi Al-Humoud, AOU President



Dr Nagwa Ibrahim, Associate Professor from The American University in Cairo (AUC) speaks during a seminar at Arab Open University (AOU).

AOU, KFAS ORGANIZE SEMINAR ON ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION

The Arab Open University (AOU) in collaboration with Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) organized a seminar, entitled 'Entrepreneurial Education,' delivered by Dr Nagwa Ibrahim, Associate Professor from The American University in Cairo (AUC). The seminar was attended by Professor Moudhi Al-Humoud, AOU President, and Faisal Al-Matrouk, Program Manager of Enterprise Development, Innovation and Enterprise Directorate of KFAS, in addition to presence of many academics and faculty members of several private universities in Kuwait.

Humoud expressed her thanks to all participants of the seminar as well as her praise to the effective cooperation between AOU and KFAS in nurturing the initiatives that strengthen the partnership responsibility and contribute to developing education and development of all Arab countries. She affirmed that AOU is keen on offering high quality education and building up capabilities and skills of students and faculty members as well as activating the necessary training and development programs that meet the needs of labour markets in addition to support entrepreneurs.

She said that one of the objectives of this seminar is to introduce the principles of entrepreneurship education and its ways to faculty in order to empower students with how to start up their projects. Meanwhile, Matrouk praised the cooperation with AOU and its role in contributing to developing the education process and community development programs. He said, "KFAS pays a special concern towards a number of issues and programs relevant to scientific, educational and developmental areas that benefit Kuwait and all Arab countries. KFAS, in cooperation with various academic and economic

Kuwaiti institutions and bodies, effectively contributes to funding and sponsoring several initiatives and projects in the sake of society development, performance enhancement and keeping abreast of the latest scientific and technological developments." He also added that KFAS works on strengthening the culture of comprehensive quality and supporting entrepreneurs. During the seminar, Dr Nagwa addressed several topics such as the difference between the traditional education and the entrepreneurial education and the ways of motivating students, in addition to means of find-

ing resources and financing for start-ups. In addition, she looked at the relationship between leadership, management and entrepreneurship. "An entrepreneur must be a leader but a leader doesn't necessarily have to be an entrepreneur," said Dr Nagwa. At the end of the seminar, Humoud presented certificates to the participants. The seminar came to activate partnership programs, develop education and foster initiatives and entrepreneurs.



ABK'S SUMMER MADE SWEETER WITH BASKIN ROBBINS

Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced the conclusion of its Baskin Robbins roadshow that kicked off at the Bank's Head Office on May 1, 2016. For the second consecutive year, ABK customers and staff were treated to free scoops of Baskin Robbins' ice cream, adding a sweeter flavor to their day. The roadshow covered all of ABK's 31 branches across Kuwait, finishing off at the Bank's Sulaiyah Branch. For more information on Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait please visit www.eahli.com or contact a customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.



SANSKRUTI PRESENTS SAREE SAGA

On May 5, 2016, Gopa Chaudhuri and Alpana Kundu inaugurated the Saree Saga event at Sanskruti Kuwait. Through Saree Saga, Sanskruti brings to Kuwait rich and exquisite sarees from all over India, skillfully created by weavers and craftsmen in a variety of textures, fabrics, motifs and experiences.

The collection of sarees includes very reputed craft forms such as Banarasi, Maheshwari, Chanderi, Jamdani, Tussars, Gicha, Ikkat, Pure Silk, Kancheepuram, Uppada, Kuppadam, Kalamkari, Kanchi blends, Tanchoi, Organza, Kora Silk and Brasso.

Techniques such as block printing or silk weaving are traditions that started many centuries ago. These skills have been honed to a fine art by the expert craftsmen of India and their communities are highly accredited for their expertise. Block printing takes care of fine miniature which other forms of printing cannot. Whereas, silk sarees are known for their golden border, rich waves and heavy patterns. Sharp and detailed designs combined with richness of the handwoven style lend a magnificent look at any festive occasion.



BURGAN BANK, ALTA FITNESS OFFER FEMALE PREMIER CUSTOMERS 20 PERCENT DISCOUNT

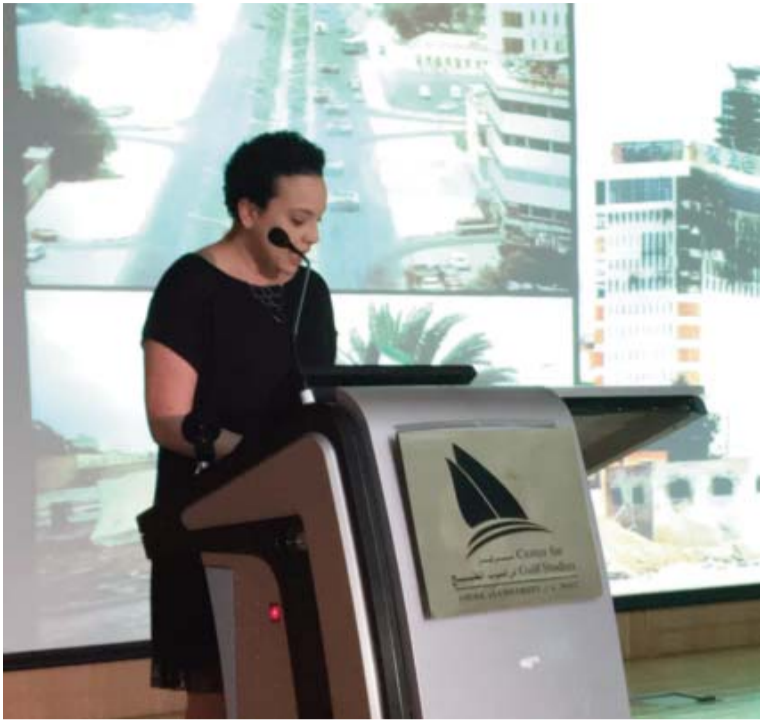
Burgan Bank announced its latest promotion with Alta Fitness, offering its female Premier Banking customers a 20 percent discount at the fitness center.

Upon using their Platinum debit or credit card, Premier Female Cardholders will avail a 20 percent discount as well as enjoy six complementary assessments per year, five complementary personal training sessions, six complementary day guest passes, the opportunity to freeze membership for two months, and a complementary room rental for up to 10 guests for one hour.

The fitness center has a modern-futuristic environment for members to inspire and uplift their moods, Alta Fitness is located in Al-Tijaria Tower on the 26th floor.

Designed to suit the lifestyle of its distinguished customers, the exclusive discounts have been introduced as part of the bank's wide range of valuable privileges and benefits created and tailored to suit Premier banking customers' lifestyle needs.

To find out more about Burgan Bank's Premier Banking benefits and latest promotions, customers can visit any of the bank's branches, or contact the call center on 1804080. For more information, customers can also log onto the bank's website on www.burgan.com.



Dr Farah Al-Nakib speaks during a lecture in which she introduced her book titled 'Kuwait Transformed - A History Of Oil And Urban Life.'



DR FARAH AL-NAKIB INTRODUCES HER 'KUWAIT TRANSFORMED' BOOK AT AUK

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

After receiving her PhD in history from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London in 2011, Assistant Professor Dr Farah Al-Nakib joined the academic staff of the American University of Kuwait (AUK), and has been serving as the director of the Center for Gulf Studies of AUK since then. Two days ago at the AUK Auditorium, Dr Nakib gave a pre-lecture about her first book: 'Kuwait

Transformed - A History Of Oil And Urban Life.'

The book launch opened by Dr Roman Kulchitsky, the Department Chair/Assistant Professor of Public Policy and International Relations, who said that Dr Nakib deserved more specialized intro because she's doing a research on Kuwait today in order to show that the country, not only has a past, but also a future just as Doha and Dubai. "I see tonight's speaker as an arising Kuwaiti historian whose dedicating her career to offering narratives on Kuwait, its past and present, providing a way

to imagine the future of Kuwait from a Kuwaiti point of view," He said.

Urban history

Assistant Professor Dr Farah Al-Nakib said: "This book is a combination of nearly ten years of research on Kuwait urban social history. But in many ways, I have been thinking about the urban and social transformations that I address in this book for much longer; ever since I was a teenager. Kuwait in the 1990s when I was in high school was different from

the time in which I spent my childhood in the 1980s." She continued: "The Iraqi invasion in 1990 is the most obvious culprit. Our lives are now neatly bifurcated between before the invasion and after the invasion, and the changes were poignant." Dr Nakib also talks in her book about the importance of shared and opened public spaces which allow interaction between Kuwaiti citizens and non-Kuwaitis, and how the architectural plan of the cities contributes to the expansion of the gap between the communities of Kuwait. She also

stressed to think of the city planning from the perspective of all grounds and needs in the future to bring the communities together.

The hall was filled with attendees who asked a lot of questions at the end of the lecture, where some of them expressed concern about the future of Kuwait. Dr Nakib objectively responded, saying in general that the crisis experienced in Kuwait can be preventable or solved. "If we all first know the seed of all these problems, then we will find a way to do it," she said.



JAPANESE ART EXHIBITION AT DAR AL-ATHAR AL-ISLAMIYYAH

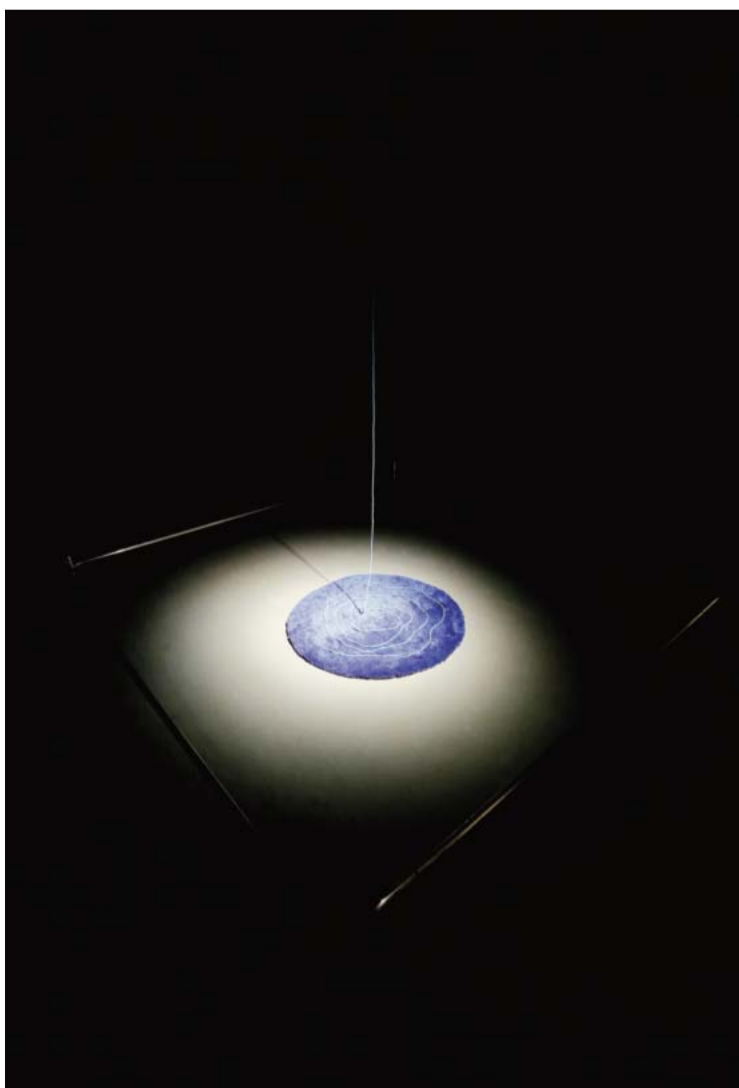
The opening of the exhibition 'Passage to the future: Art from a new generation in Japan' opened recently at Dar al-Athar

al-Islamiyyah, with the sponsorship and cooperation of the Japan Institute, an institute which is of great importance in Japan in

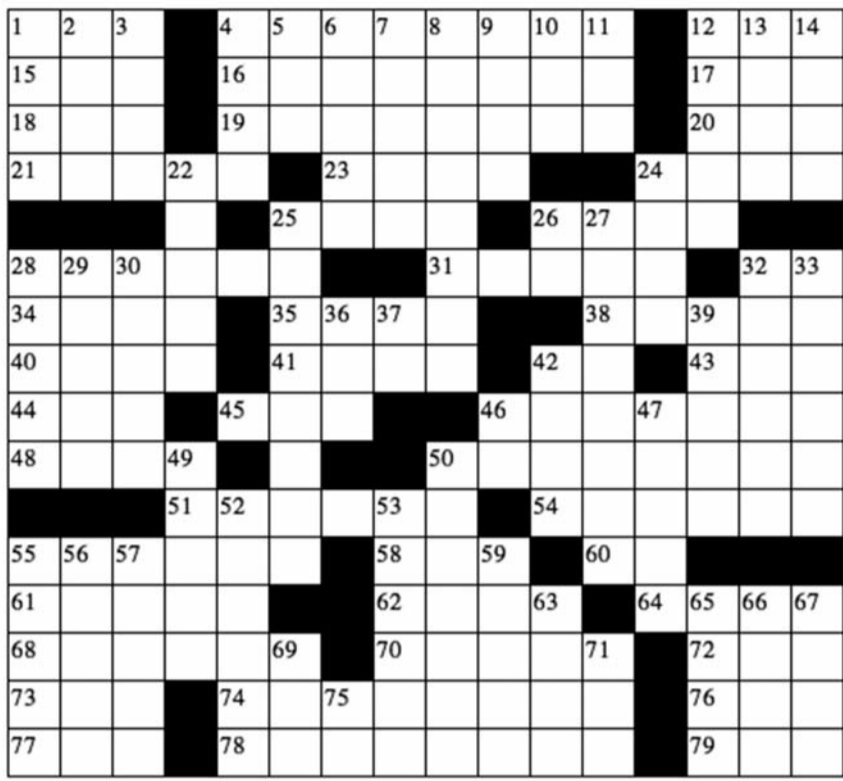
regards to cultural exchange. AbdelKarim Al-Ghathban, assistant secretary-general of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, represented DAI and

from the Embassy of Japan in Kuwait Cultural Attaché Fuji Wara presented a word before the exhibition opening. Amongst the atten-

dees was Christian Nakhle, Ambassador of France to the State of Kuwait.



CROSSWORD 1249



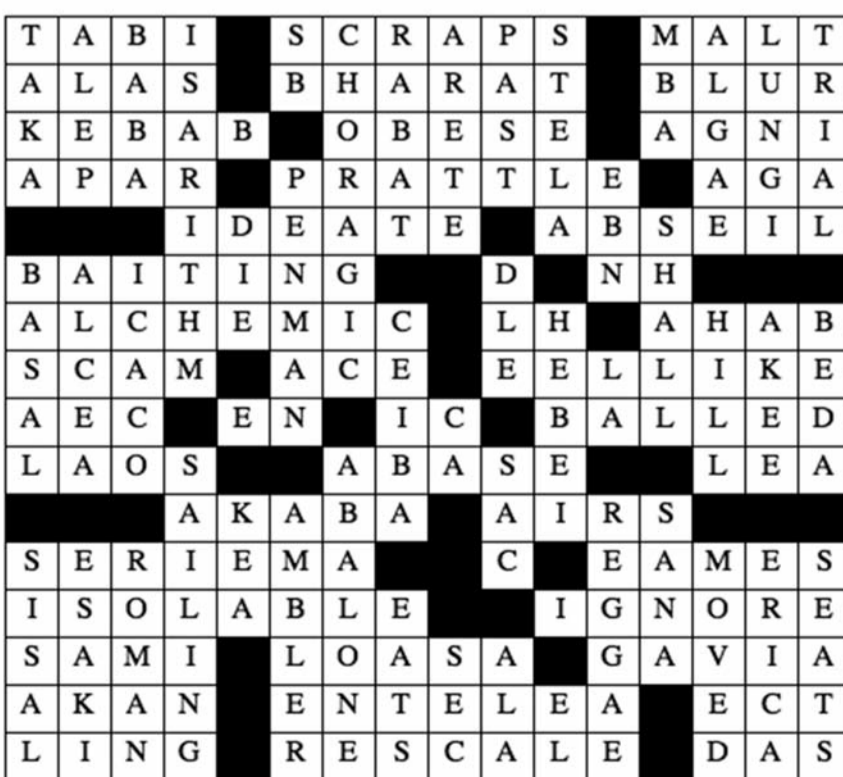
ACROSS

- 1. A hormone produced by the anterior pituitary gland.
4. (biology) Being abruptly enlarged and globose at the tip n.
12. (usually followed by 'to') Naturally disposed toward.
15. Feline mammal usually having thick soft fur and being unable to roar.
16. Lacking gonads.
17. The basic unit of money in Romania.
18. A defensive missile designed to shoot down incoming intercontinental ballistic missiles.
19. A female bound to serve without wages.
20. Light informal conversation for social occasions.
21. A Russian prison camp for political prisoners.
23. Crowd or pack to capacity.
28. Paralysis of the vocal cords resulting in an inability to speak.
31. The brightest star in Cygnus.
34. A city in northwest Indiana on Lake Michigan.
35. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
38. The smallest detectable sensation.
40. Norwegian mathematician (1802-1829).
41. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
43. 30 to 300 gigahertz.
44. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
45. A room or establishment where alcoholic drinks are served over a counter.
48. Type genus of the Anatidae.
51. Agile long-legged rabbit-sized rodent of Central and South America and West Indies.
54. (biology) Of unlike parts or organs.
55. Notably out of the ordinary.
58. A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
60. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
61. An association of nations dedicated to economic and political cooperation in southeastern Asia.
62. Round object that is hit or thrown or kicked in games.
64. An informal term for a father.
68. Fairly small terrestrial ferns of tropical America.
70. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
72. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
73. 10 hao equal 1 dong.
74. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
76. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
77. Fiddler crabs.
78. A blood disorder characterized by an increased concentration of hydrogen ions in the blood (which falls below 7 on the pH scale).
79. An associate degree in applied science.

DOWN

- 1. A narcotic that is considered a hard drug.
2. Forbidden to profane use especially in South Pacific islands.
3. A set of tags and rules (conforming to SGML) for using them in developing hypertext documents.
4. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
5. Gone by.
6. Someone who procures customers for whores (in England they call a pimp a ponce).
7. Chief god of the Rig-Veda.
8. Small toothless ant eater with prehensile tale and four-clawed forelimbs.
9. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
10. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
11. Late time of life.
12. Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
13. Small beads made from polished shells and formerly used as money by native Americans.
14. The lowest brass wind instrument.
22. The univalent unsaturated organic radical C3H5.
24. A desert in central Asia.
25. A sulfonamide (trade name Gantanol) used to treat infections (especially infections of the urinary tract).
26. In operation or operational.
27. Capital and largest city of Yugoslavia.
29. Hungarian choreographer who developed Labanotation (1879-1958).
30. Any of several tall tropical palms native to southeastern Asia having egg-shaped nuts.
32. Heat again.
33. Hampered and not free.
36. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
37. A radioactive transuranic element.
39. (Greek mythology) A princess of Colchis who aided Jason in taking the Golden Fleece from her father.
42. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
46. An informal term for a father.
47. (of complexion) Blemished by imperfections of the skin.
49. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
50. European weed naturalized in southwestern United States and Mexico having reddish decumbent stems with small fernlike leaves and small deep reddish-lavender flowers followed by slender fruits that stick straight up.
52. God of wisdom or prophesy.
53. A short sleeveless outer tunic emblazoned with a coat of arms.
56. (Old Testament) The second patriarch.
57. A seaport in northwestern Italy.
59. Fear resulting from the awareness of danger.
63. Being seven more than fifty.
65. Largest known toad species.
66. Fallow deer.
67. By bad luck.
69. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
71. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
75. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your emotions and the feelings of those around you may be very clear. This is a good time to write and communicate with real originality. Inventions and breakthroughs are possible. Take time to evaluate your needs. Easygoing pursuits are fun and attract friends. Innocent flirtation, a movie or theater matinee, and a stroll through an art gallery are all favorably indicated. This is a time of good fortune when things open up in a very natural way. Watch your budget, but have fun. Chances are also good that you and your partner may be able to air some things that have been going on under the surface. Avoid dreaming about inequalities between partners. The mellow feeling of this period will ease your relationship.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Trust in your own instincts instead of questioning lots of people to get your answer. This birth year opens up with your interest in family background, herbal medicine and natural living. Do not expect results overnight; yet, by this time next year, you will celebrate and know a deeper, more enlightened you. At work you may discover that your ideas are just as good as, if not better than, someone else's ideas. The secret is in the presentation. Always think through your presentation and make your suggestions in humble ways. Love is high on the list of interests this afternoon and you will be pleased to set aside some time with that special someone. You can expect a whirlwind of fun this evening. Fun people help you celebrate!



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may find that people are so busy these days that you may not be able to finish a sentence. Others may challenge your authority or the direction you are taking. Events could make it difficult for you to act. Whew! Sometimes you might wish people would just stop to take a breath. View yourself during these busy occasions as others would see you. You may be the grounding that the frustrated around you need to become better focused. Take several slow, deep breaths and you will see the room become quiet. This afternoon points to your taking the initiative in making positive changes. Your secret is that all this time you have had the opportunity to focus your recommendations for presentation in clear and positive ways.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

An irresistible force meets an immovable object. Be wise with your time and your involvement with a subject of conversation about which you may not know as much as you think. Proceed with caution! There is a lot of passion available for work projects. You add your own special qualities to any job you undertake. After a little nourishment in the afternoon, you are ready to conquer new projects and you are better able to relate to others with clear meaning. By learning to set and stay with your goals, you can find success at every turn in the road. You radiate your most positive energies this afternoon. Later, there is a chance to communicate and enjoy friends that you have not seen in some time. General good feelings make this a happy time.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You understand and perform well with all people. You know what it takes to create a supportive environment. You are likely to feel restless and bored with normal routine matters-you will probably introduce some new elements into your activities. This time will induce you to break out of any rut you may have made for yourself. Your thinking will be more original. Things may even seem almost magical in the way they work out for you. This is a great time to organize and get things accomplished. A greater appreciation for things of value is in order now. This could be a period of great material gain; it is certainly a time when you find the right price while shopping. Many things catch your eye but you are good to stay with a list; this is a good day.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

It is important to make yourself understood at this time. You could be working in a place where the acoustics are poor or there are interruptions or noises that seep into the background. Ask for feedback when you think it is necessary. There may be some disputes today, but nothing you can't handle. Learn or teach ways in which to turn ridicule or sarcasm into gentle laughter. Your work is where your main attention is most of this day. Take an opportunity later today to teach kids coping or problem-solving skills. If you have children, you will be setting the example. If you are teaching, you have techniques to share. By this afternoon, any of the confusing energies of the day will be gone. You may find a new friend or friends this evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

A low-cycle day may find you daydreaming or fantasizing about your future. A sibling may try your patience at this time. Do not take irrational behavior personally-this will pass. You could act impulsively yourself if you do not take some time to think before you act. It takes good character and some self-control to be understanding and forgiving. Your creative thinking gains a boost after the noon meal and you create some promising ideas for all sorts of professional projects. There is an opportunity to attend a small social gathering this evening that will be important to your future professional life-be a good listener and encourage others to talk about successes and goals. A deepening of a love relationship gives you comfort tonight.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a great time for discovery. If an unusual opportunity presents itself, go for it right away, as these positive energies do not wait around for those who ponder. Patience in seeing a project through to the end has its rewards; you are successful. An early break would be a good thing. Young people copy your activities and find creative things to do while you work. This afternoon would be the perfect time to read, go to a movie, pull weeds or perhaps bicycle ride through the park with a friend. If there are young people in your family, allocate a special area for them to garden. This is great therapy for everyone. You encourage and enjoy joint participation in a game or fun activity with your loved one or family members tonight.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Outer circumstances and the flow of events make it easy for you to make clear decisions. In a team meeting, it would be a good idea to share ideas. You and your co-workers are intuitive, resourceful, cerebral and inventive. They have a lot to offer in the planning phase of this meeting. Pace yourself, take notes and enjoy the ride; many things gain your attention at this time. After the workday is over you may be ready for a complete change of attention and might enjoy stopping off at a music store or a pet store or even meet the family at the aquarium or a park in your town. This sort of transition helps to ground you, refresh and renew your energies. Later, family members will love the opportunity to gain your attention-which you love.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

There is much effort now with plenty of chances to apply your eagerness into constructive purposes. You believe in eight hours of good rest each night in order to perform your best. Today is a good example of how successful you can be. This afternoon, you are in a mood of self-enjoyment and can appreciate your own better qualities. You will see value in or feel love for an older person. You may be teaching or helping in a volunteer program with retired people. There is a chance you will feel that you learn more than you teach or help. Your faith in a higher power, as well as other people, will be most meaningful. Also, you might feel lady luck is smiling on you. Be careful gambling; it could become excessive!



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

This may be a time during which you can get ahead by finding your limits and establishing some goals. Travel in the professional realm is in the future for you. Your activities are frequently spread too thin, allowing your emotions to seem shallow. Be wise in balancing your activities so that you are better able to emotionally deal with fussy customers, pushy co-workers and a busy family life. Be careful not to make too many promises that you cannot keep. Trust in your own advice and work on your self-confidence. You may want to take advantage of a quiet afternoon-some serious thinking. Your ideas of where you want to go and your life choices are good; perhaps a bit more education for fun or professional advancement would be good.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Circumstances today may require the use of your persuasive powers. An attitude coach might be fun. There are styles of behavior to learn if you want to fit into a different scene. This may mean you could be traveling to a foreign country. You have an opportunity to exercise your own personal power. Concentrate on ways in which to bring about a balance between your responsibilities and your recreation. There could be a window in time that opens now, making insights possible; take a look. As you move through your day, heads turn in your direction. There will be increased opportunities to reach out to others. A relationship may become more meaningful this evening. Romance is very possible.

WORD SEARCH

Physics 2

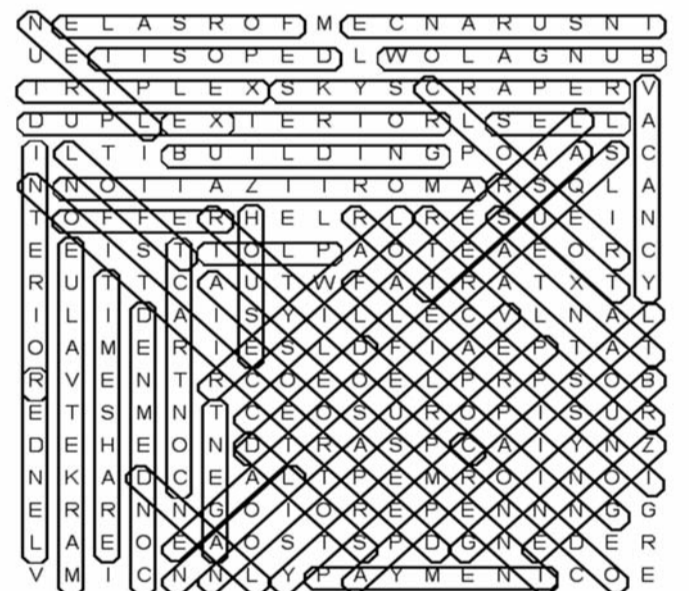
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 58 letters spell a Bruce Feirstein quotation.



- ABSOLUTE ZERO, ADHESION, AERODYNAMICS, AIR MASS, AMPLIFIER, BIG BANG, BOILING POINT, CENTRIFUGAL, CHAIN REACTION, DECIBEL, DIFFRACTION, DISTANCE, DRAG, ELASTICITY, ELECTRONICS, ENTROPY, FARADAY, FORCE, FRICTION, FUNCTION, GALILEO, HALF LIFE, HEAT, INERTIA, IONIZATION, JOULE, KINETICS, LIGHT, MATTER, MOLECULE, MOTION, NEUTRON, NIELS BOHR, PARTICLE, PHOTON, PRESSURE, PROTON, PULLEY, REFLECTION, SCIENCE, SPEED, TEMPERATURE, TORQUE, VACUUM, VELOCITY, VOLUME, WAVELENGTH, WEIGHT.

Yesterday Solution

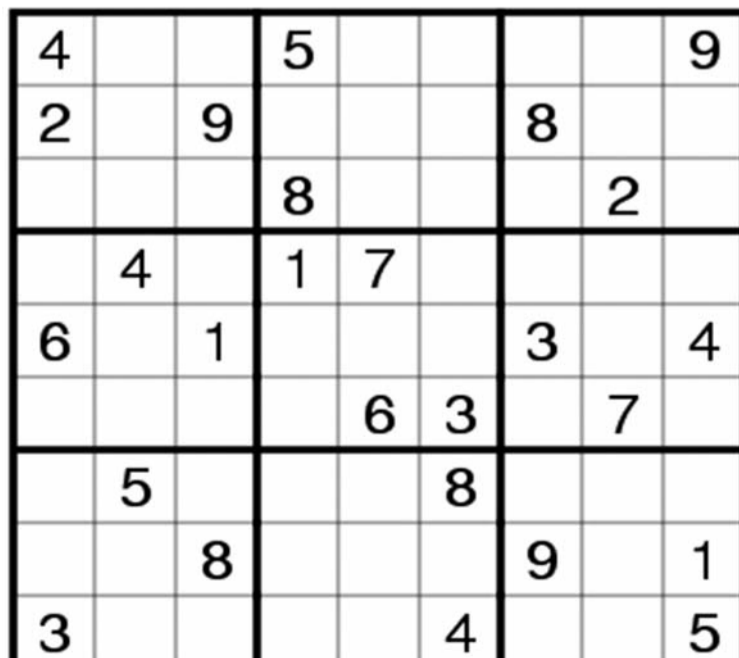
Real Estate 1



- AGENT, AMORTIZATION, APPRAISAL, ASSESSMENT, ASSET, BUILDING, BUNGALOW, BUYING, CLOSER, COLLATERAL, CONDEMNED, CONDO, CONTRACT, CREDITOR, DEED, DEPOSIT, DEPRECIATION, DUPEX, EXTERIOR, FLIPPING, FOR SALE, HOUSE, INSPECTOR, INSURANCE, INTERIOR, LAND, LAWYER, LIEN, LOAN, LOFT, MARKET VALUE, OFFER, PAYMENT, PLOT, PROPERTY, REALTOR, SELL, SKYSCRAPER, SOLD, SQUARE FOOTAGE, TAXES, TIMESHARE, TOUR, TRIPLEX, VACANCY, VALUATION, ZONE.

The hidden message is: MULTIPLE LISTING SERVICE

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





Color me!



Taj Mahal



The Taj Mahal, more often Persian for Crown of Palaces is an ivory-white marble mausoleum on the south bank of the Yamuna river in the Indian city of Agra. It was commissioned in 1632 by the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan (reigned 1628-1658), to house the tomb of his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. The tomb is the centrepiece of a 42-acre complex, which includes a mosque and a guest house, and is set in formal gardens bounded on three sides by a crenellated wall.

Construction of the mausoleum was essentially completed in 1643 but work continued on other phases of the project for another 10 years. The Taj Mahal complex is believed to have been completed in its entirety in 1653 at a cost estimated at the time to be around 32 million rupees, which in 2015 would

be approximately 52.8 billion rupees (US\$827 million). The construction project employed some 20,000 artisans under the guidance of a board of architects led by the court architect to the emperor, Ustad Ahmad Lahauri.

The Taj Mahal was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 for being "the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage". Described by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore as "the tear-drop on the cheek of time", it is regarded by many as the best example of Mughal architecture and a symbol of India's rich history. The Taj Mahal attracts 7-8 million visitors a year. In 2007, it was declared a winner of the New 7 Wonders of the World (2000-2007) initiative.

Riddles

- 1) What comes down but never goes up?
- 2) Mary's father has 5 daughters - Nana, Nene, Nini, Nono. What is the fifth daughters name?
- 3) In a one-story pink house, there was a pink person, a pink cat, a pink fish, a pink computer, a pink chair, a pink table, a pink telephone, a pink shower- everything was pink! What color were the stairs?
- 4) What is the longest word in the dictionary?
- 5) What travels around the world but stays in one spot?
- 6) What has hands but can not clap?
- 7) You draw a line. Without touching it, how do you make the line longer?

Solutions:
1) Rain
2) If you answered Nunu, you are wrong. It's Mary!
3) There weren't any stairs, it was a one story house!
4) Smiles, because there is a mile between each 's'
5) A stamp!
6) A clock
7) You draw a shorter line next to it, and it becomes the longer line.

Draw 6 different types of emotions on these faces!



WORD SEARCH

Herbivores

Find and circle all of the herbivores that are hidden in the grid. The words may be hidden in any direction.

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S Y E K N O D D S P B O R
G O G S W O C E R U S P E
B I S O N C F R F A O S S
B H S S P F S F E R B A T
E R I L A H A A C E R R N
A O S R E L E U L S D B A
V E I H O R P R E A G E H
E G S R E I R S S P O Z P
R A R O N E R I E E A K E
S O A E O O P A U E T S L
H S S B H M A O R Q S R E
O L W R A B B I T S S S E
L S O R E C O N I H R V S
    
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- | | | |
|-----------|----------|------------|
| BEAVERS | GIRAFFES | PORCUPINES |
| BISON | GOATS | RABBITS |
| BUFFALO | GOPHERS | RHINOCEROS |
| COWS | HORSES | SHEEP |
| DEER | KOALAS | SQUIRRELS |
| DONKEYS | MOOSE | ZEBRAS |
| ELEPHANTS | | |

SUDOKU 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	

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

Spot the differences

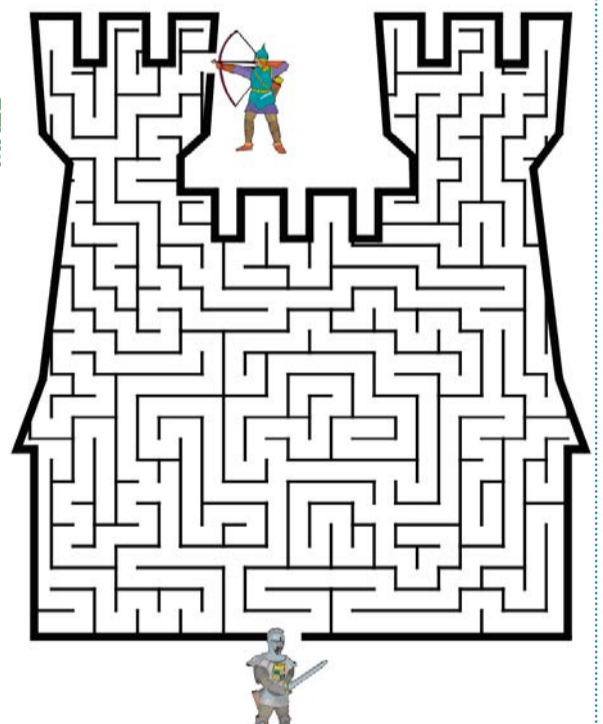


Pop Quiz!

- 1) Who is the fourth musketeer besides D Artagnan, Athos and Porthos?
- 2) Who killed the Minotaur?
- 3) Who is the giant with 100 eyes according to the Greek mythology?
- 4) Whose box did Epimetheus open?
- 5) What is the name of the winged horse in Greek mythology?
- 6) In which two languages did the Irish writer Samuel Beckett write?
- 7) In which country did Shakespeare's Hamlet live?

- 1) Aramis
2) Thebes
3) Argus
4) Pandora's box
5) Pegasus
6) English and French
7) Denmark

MAZE

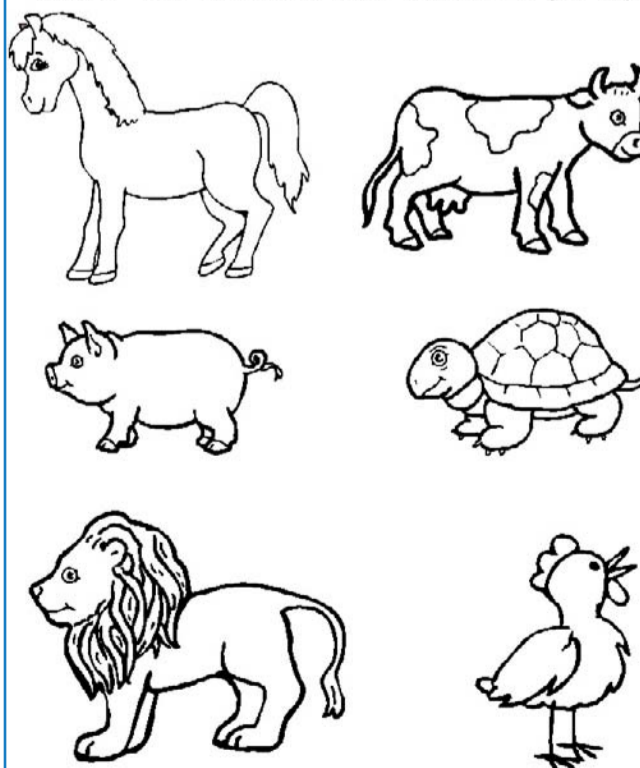


Subtractions

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

Who lives on a farm

Color the animals that live on a farm.



RECIPES FOR KIDS



Peanut butter cinnamon roll

In just 5 easy steps you can make your 5 o'clock snack with just 5 ingredients.

You'll need:

- * Piece of toasted bread
- * Peanut butter
- * Chocolate chips
- * Sugar
- * Cinnamon

Instructions:

1. Spread some peanut butter on your piece of toast.
2. Sprinkle some sugar on the peanut butter.
3. Sprinkle some cinnamon on top of the sugar.
4. Drop a couple chocolate chips and warm your toast up for 10 to 15 seconds.
5. Roll up the piece of toast once it's out of the microwave.

Happy Cooking!

DID YOU KNOW...

- On Jupiter and Saturn it rains diamonds.
- Armadillos almost always give birth to quadruplets.
- Scotland's national animal is the unicorn.
- There are more fake flamingos in the world than real ones.
- A strawberry is not a berry.
- A banana is a berry.
- There is enough water in Lake Superior to cover all of North and South America in one foot of liquid.
- An octopus has three hearts.
- There are 10 times more bacteria in your body than actual body cells.
- If you lift a kangaroo's tail off the ground, it can't hop.



Prince Harry already feels like a 'dad'

The 31-year-old royal would love to have children of his own one day but for the time being, his focus is on his Invictus Games - a sporting contest for injured service personnel which is currently taking place in Florida - and he admitted he has paternal pride towards all the competitors. Asked by 'Good Morning Britain' presenter Susanna Reid if he wants to have children, he said: "Me and being a dad? God, you know, one thing at a time Susanna, one thing at a time. I look forward to the time when it comes but at the moment I'm dad to 110 of these competitors, and well actually probably more like 500, but you

know I feel incredibly proud. "It's not pride for the games, it's pride for them, military or nonmilitary, these games have somehow managed to create this amazing inspiration, to encourage anybody from any walks of life to get up and smash it and make the most of your second chance I guess." The former Army officer is also a devoted uncle to his brother Prince William and sister-in-law Duchess Catherine's children, two-year-old Prince George and 12-month-old Princess Charlotte, and wishes he'd been able to take them out to the US to watch the Games and meet the military veterans. He said: "It's a shame that they're not old

enough to come out here but hopefully whether it's the next games or the ones after that, get them down there and give them an opportunity to come and enjoy it and see some remarkable people doing some amazing things. "I think George is almost at that age where he would completely get it, completely understand and probably be one of those kids going up going, 'You've got no legs, why's that?' And the guys would be more than happy to tell the kids that."



Kim Kardashian West wants normal life

Kim Kardashian West would "love" to "live a normal life". The 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star - who has children North, two, and Saint, five months, with husband Kanye West - is one of the most famous women in the world, but she dreams of being anonymous and helping to solve crimes. She said: "I would love to be a forensic investigator and live a normal life." The 35-year-old beauty also spoke of her admiration for her mother Kris Jenner and hopes she can be a role model of a working parent just like her. Asked her heroines, she told Australia's Vogue magazine: "Obviously, my mum. Once you become a mother, you have a new-found respect for people who have gone through it-especially knowing my mum has had six [children]; that's so intense for me. I want to live her life and be successful, work hard and still have so many kids-and still take care of everyone else." And the reality TV star also admires the strong sense of family her late father Robert Kardashian had. She said: "My dad was [my hero], for sure. I love that he was always so honest about family. You know, that's something I really looked up to." Kim appears to be having an easy time with her second child as she admits he "lives up to his name". Asked her favorite names, she said: "North and Saint.. He lives up to his name like you would not believe. [Is she true North?] She totally is." Kim - who married Kanye in May 2014 - fell for the 'All day' rapper because he makes her laugh. Discussing the qualities she looks for in a man, she said: "Hm, there are so many ... I really think having a sense of humor is important." And in her friendships, Kim wants people to be "kind" and not trying to compete with her all the time. She said: "Someone who is, just, who is ... how do I explain it? You can tell when someone is kind, and not competing with you."

Sir Mick Jagger is a wonderful dad

Sir Mick Jagger's former lover thinks he is a "wonderful" father. The Rolling Stones frontman is "really close" to his youngest son, 17-year-old Lucas, and Luciana Gimenez - who he had a brief fling with which ended his 22-year relationship with Jerry Hall - is thankful she can always call on him for advice and support on raising their teenager. Luciana said: "Lucas and Mick are really close and Mick is a wonderful dad. "I like to raise my child with his dad, with his help and advice. He's a very wise man and he is passionate about his kids. He's always been there and that has been a really great experience." Luciana has since married Marcelo de Carvalho and she is thankful her spouse gets along well with the 72-year-old rocker - who has seven children with four women - because it is important to Lucas. She told Britain's HELLO! magazine: "When we had the World Cup in Brazil my husband, who I love very much, and who is a big part of Lucas's life, invited Mick to stay because we're friends and it's possible to be friends

with your ex-boyfriend. "That was such a big thing for Lucas. That's something people don't understand but I always think that's the norm; that people are friendly with each other and why not? If you thought that someone was important enough for you to have a relationship and have a child with, then why not have a great relationship? My husband is totally up for that." Even though they don't always see one another, the 'Brown Sugar' singer is in almost daily communication with Lucas. Luciana said: "It's a normal situation - they really get along and they speak on the phone and on Skype. They talk almost every day." And the 46-year-old former model - who also has a five-year-old son, Lorenzo, and three stepchildren with her spouse - thinks Lucas has inherited some of his dad's famous features. She said: "He's very handsome. He's going to be a heartbreaker. He's got the lips, the wonderful part that has passed on through generations, but I think he looks like me."

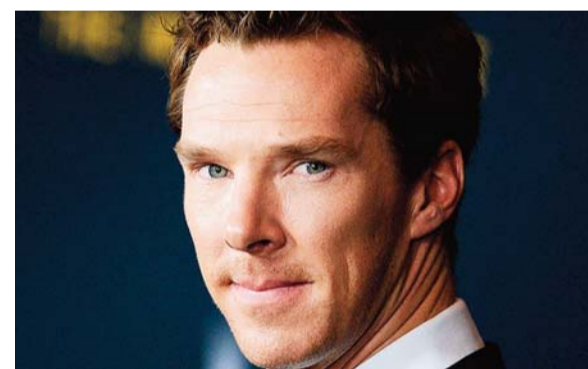


Legend's mother's day tribute to Teigen

John Legend hopes his daughter grows up to be "half as awesome" as Chrissy Teigen. The 'All of Me' singer penned a loving tribute to his spouse - who gave birth to their first child, daughter Luna Simone, on April 14 - on her first Mother's Day on Sunday, while also sharing some sweet new photos of his little girl. Alongside a photo of the 'Lip Sync Battle' star stroking the foot of the dozing baby, he simply wrote: "Happy Mother's Day!! (sic)" And he posted another picture, featuring Luna in a white vest bearing the slogan 'Happy 1st Mother's Day' with a big red heart, he wrote: "To my wonderful wife, @chrissyteigen. Luna and I are so lucky to have you in our lives. If our daughter can be even half as awesome as you, I will be so happy and proud. Happy 1st Mother's Day! (sic)" Chrissy, 30, has spoken of her love of food on numerous occasions and has even released her own cook books and it seems her Mother's Day was going to involve a lot of eating. John, 37, posted a photo of her getting busy in the kitchen and wrote: "Making brunch with my favorite mama (sic)" Chrissy then shared the same photo on her own Instagram page and wrote: "Mother's Day Brunch - low and slow scrambled eggs, chicken and waffles and roasted bacon, oh my! (sic)" The 'Ordinary People' hitmaker also shared an image of him carrying a huge platter of fried chicken outside and wrote: "Mother's Day chicken (sic)" Chrissy previously vowed not to keep her daughter off her social media pages because she knows people are interested in her family life. She said: "I am conscious of what people want to see and what they don't want to see, or what they see through completely. "We're not going to go out of our way to hide because obviously it's such a big part of our lives to show everything: the inside of our homes, my parents living with us, our animals, everything. I'm not going to do sneaky back shots of her or anything."

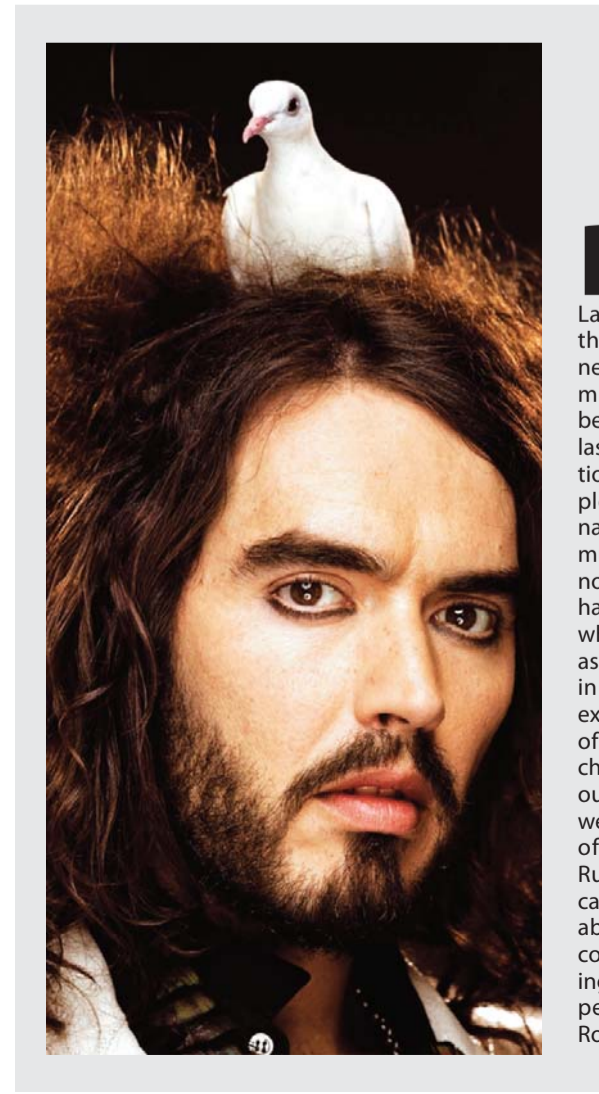
Cumberbatch embarrassed by his own fame

Benedict Cumberbatch feels embarrassed by the attention he receives. The British actor is among the most in-demand stars on the Hollywood scene, but has revealed he does not consider himself to be good-looking and cannot understand why people are so interested in him, citing US president Barack Obama's recent visit to the UK as an instance when he surprisingly became the focus of attention. Recalling a particular talk by the President during his visit, Cumberbatch said: "We were right beside the press pack, and there were people there with telephoto lenses. When they realized that Barack was going to be another five minutes, the whole lot just went wump, onto me, onto the side of my face. "I was just like, "How many times can you take a photo of a not particularly attractive profile - again and again! I mean, thank God [Benefit's wife] Sophie was there, so that kind of drew the eye of the photographers, as it always should. But it was just embarrassing." Meanwhile, Benedict's 'Sherlock' co-star Martin Freeman previously acknowledged he is as popular as he is unpopular among fans. Martin, who plays Dr Watson alongside Benedict on the acclaimed show, said he tries not to get too caught up in the trappings of fame, but he appreciates those people who support the drama series. He explained: "It's nice that people like things. I'd rather be liked than hated - and of course, I am also hated. "But it's good to work on things that people watch. I try not to take too much notice of that side of things. If you start playing the result before you've done the game ... you have to get your head down and do the work first."



Elba and Garth rekindled romance

Idris Elba is back together with his long-term girlfriend. The 'Luther' star sparked rumors he'd called time on his three-year relationship with Naiyana Garth, with whom he has 23-month-old son Winston, in February but the loved-up couple appeared to pour cold water on any split speculation at the British Academy Television Awards (BAFTA TV) at the Royal Festival Hall in London on Sunday night. The pair were all smiles as they strutted down the red carpet hand-in-hand, before putting on an affectionate display as they proudly posed for photographs ahead of the event. The 43-year-old star placed a protective arm around the brunette beauty, 28, as they gazed into each other's eyes and fell into a fit of giggles in front of adoring fans, in what is believed to be their first public event together this year. The couple first sparked speculation they had ended their romance when Idris attended the British Film Awards in February on his own and failed to mention his lover in his acceptance speech when he scooped the Best Actor accolade for the war-based film 'Beasts of No Nation'. A source said at the time: "It ended very recently and it's too soon for her to talk about it. They've kept it very quiet so she's surprised people know already. "It's very sad that this has happened while Idris is experiencing the highest points of his professional career and they can't celebrate it with each other." Idris also has 13-year-old daughter Isan from his former marriage to Hanne "Kim" Norgaard and recently admitted he gets on great with his kids, despite not being at home a lot. He said: "My relationship with my children is very, very strong, considering I'm never home."



Brand to become a first time father

Russell Brand is reportedly set to become a father. The 40-year-old comedian - who has gained a reputation as a womanizer over the years - and his on/off girlfriend Laura Gallacher, 28, are set to welcome their first child into the world in just four months' time. A source told The Sun newspaper: "Russell might have bedded many of the world's most stunning women but now it's all about Laura and becoming a dad. "They have been living as a couple for the last six months and are determined to make a go of their relationship. It feels like a new chapter in their lives and the couple are enjoying every moment, including discussing baby names." And the funnyman's happy news didn't come as too much of a shock to his friends and family as Russell has made no secret of the fact he wants to start his own little brood. He had initially hoped to do it with his now-ex-wife Katy Perry - whom he divorced in 2012 following two years of marriage - as well as his former flame Jemima Khan, whom he split from in 2014, but things didn't go according to plan. The insider explained: "Russell is absolutely made up [about the prospect of becoming to be a dad]. Most of his closest friends have children and he was desperate to start a family. "It didn't work out with Katy, who felt she was too young for kids-and there were conversations with Jemima." Laura - the younger sister of TV presenter Kirsty Gallacher - first began romancing Russell in 2006 but their relationship was short-lived and it came crashing down in 2007. They then set tongues wagging about a possible reunion when they were spotted looking cosy again in public in 2009. However, their chemistry seemingly fizzled out and they've lived separate lives - dating new people - until they rekindled their relationship last year in Rome.



Jason Sudeikis educated son with movie

Jason Sudeikis uses the 'Angry Birds' movie to explain "everything" to his son. The 40-year-old actor voices a bird named Red in the 3-D animated comedy and as his young son Otis, two, is already a big fan of the movie, it came in useful when he and fiancée Olivia Wilde wanted to tell the youngster they were expecting another baby. Jason told 'Entertainment Tonight': "He knows that it's something in an egg. "We just used metaphors in the movie [to explain it to him]. That's all. We explain everything through the movie. "He has [seen it]. "This is the first movie that we've sat through the whole time together. He liked it a lot. I mean, he was riveted, which is pretty impressive to me. As I've told it to other parents, they were pretty shocked as well. But now he knows all the birds' names and everything. It's pretty adorable!" Jason also joked about the similarities between himself and his angry animated alter ego. He said: "We're both animated. I grit my teeth. I think I inherited that from my

father. When I get mad, it kind of manifests itself in my jaw." While Jason and his 32-year-old partner are excited about having their second child, they don't know yet if they want to have any more afterwards. He said: "Oh, God, I don't know. I haven't even thought about it. I'll say two until three becomes the number. Then four, and etcetera, etcetera." The 'Mother's Day' actor recently admitted he hopes the new baby will be just as "fun and smart" as Otis. He said: "I think a lot of it has to do with being with the right person, but also I think we did a humdinger of a job on the one we got. He is very cute and he's very, very fun and smart. It's been fun getting to know him." He jokingly added: "I assume that'll keep up for at least another-we'll check in every five years."

Beyonce's mother confirmed 'Lemonade' is about cheating

Beyonce's mother has confirmed 'Lemonade' is about "cheating and betrayal". The 'Formation' singer's new visual LP fuelled speculation her husband Jay Z - with whom she has four-year-old daughter Blue Ivy - had been unfaithful and though Tina Lawson didn't confirm the record is autobiographical, she thinks many people will be able to relate to the themes on the record. Speaking to ABC13, she said: "People make it all about the cheating and betrayal and, yes, that's a part of it because that is something you have to heal from." Tina - whose marriage to the 34-year-old superstar's father Mathew Knowles ended in 2011 after he fathered a child with another woman - thinks people can relate to the record because everyone has been "betrayed and lied to". She added: "And it's about the pain. And it's about the healing process. "It's about how do you get past that and move on." But Tina hopes the album can be "healing" for victims of infidelity because its overriding theme is of "hope and redemption". She added: "If you really listen to the poetry it is one of hope and redemption and hopefully that can be healing for people." Tina is now happily married to actor Richard Lawson but recalled how she turned to Beyonce and her sister Solange in the wake of her problems with Mathew. She said: "I remember my first little pity party and I called them crying and you know, they all came. "We had a slumber party, we watched old movies all night and ate ice cream-it was very healing. "My children are my rock and they are. It's just been the best gift God could have given me." Beyonce's father, who was previously her manager, recently refused to speculate on the subject of his daughter's new album. He said: "There's no way we can get into the mind of Beyoncé. Only Beyonce can answer specifically who she was talking to ... I would rather not get into speculation. My answer is I don't know."



PAMELA ANDERSON sells selfies

Pamela Anderson sold selfies for \$500 at an event last week. The former 'Baywatch' actress attended the Champions of Jewish Values International Awards Gala on Thursday with 19-year-old son Brandon and reportedly made the affair, which was held in New York, a profitable one as she auctioned off the chance to have pictures with her for the three-figure sum. The 48-year-old star - who has previously visited Tel Aviv and Jerusalem - praised Israel's efforts on "conservation" and then made a speech about ecology. However, according to the New York Post newspaper's Page Six column, some attendees were unimpressed by the serious tone of the evening. One guest reportedly said: "This feels like a climate-change conference." Meanwhile, the blonde beauty - who also has 18-year-old son Dylan with ex-husband Tommy Lee - has donated \$50,000 to The National Domestic Violence Hotline (The Hotline) on behalf of the Pamela Anderson Foundation. The money will be used by the organization to support their work in educating and providing resources to parents who are experiencing abuse, as well expanding the online resources available for parents in abusive relationships, and Pamela is "delighted" to help. She said in a statement: "I've had an opportunity to meet the men and women who, day in and day out, offer compassion and information to anyone who needs help with domestic violence. As the mother of two children, I am delighted to know that our donation will help ensure that other parents seeking help and information will continue to find that trusted resource at The Hotline." The 'Barb Wire' actress previously donated \$60,000 to The Hotline when she visited their headquarters last year.

Kerr and Spiegel buy \$12 million home

Miranda Kerr and Evan Spiegel have bought a house together for \$12 million. The 33-year-old model - who has five-year-old son Flynn with ex-husband Orlando Bloom - has been dating the Snapchat founder since June 2015 and now they have taken the next step in their romance by splashing out on the four-bedroom property, which is situated in the Brentwood area of Los Angeles. According to TMZ, the 7,100 sq ft gated building is situated on almost an acre of land and boasts six bathrooms, a pool and a home gym and features "spectacular" architecture as it was designed by famous Californian architect Gerard Colcord. The couple got a bargain on the abode as it sold for \$500,000 less than the asking price. Miranda recently insisted she and the 25-year-old entrepreneur lead a quiet and sedate life together, despite the tech mogul's young age, but she has the "best of both worlds" with him. She said: "He's 25, but he acts like he's 50. He's not out partying. He goes to work in Venice [Beach], he comes home. "We don't go out. We'd rather be at home and have dinner, go to bed early. [But] in some ways he does [feel like a younger man]. I'm telling you, I've got the best of both worlds." And the Australian star feels lucky she and her ex-husband - who is now romancing pop star Katy Perry - have worked hard with their "modern family" in raising their son together. She said: "Flynn was two [when we split], so it was really hard to make the decision, but our son is our priority so you have to come from love. You have to be kind. [Orlando and I decided] that we had to know the person for six months and feel good about them [before introducing them to Flynn]. Evan met Flynn, so yeah, things are going well. Orlando thinks he's great. We're just a modern family now!"



Blac Chyna cancels appearances

Blac Chyna was forced to cancel two public appearances due to morning sickness. The 27-year-old star - who already has three-year-old son King Cairo with ex-boyfriend Tyga - announced last week she and fiancé Rob Kardashian are expecting a baby together and it seems pregnancy has begun taking its toll on her as the couple pulled out of a scheduled event in Atlantic City, as well as another in Los Angeles. In an Instagram post he has since deleted, Rob wrote early on Sunday: "Chyna really wasn't feeling well last night, which fell over to this morning." And Chyna apologised for missing the events and promised to reschedule. In a message which she has also deleted, she wrote: "Sorry LA & Atlantic City. "I really wasn't feeling well LAST night which fell over to this MORNING causing us to miss our flight. Rob and I want to apologize for missing these events for we were looking forward to them as well but new dates are coming soon! (sic)" Atlantic City club Pool After Park complained about a "no show" from the 29-year-old sock designer and his partner. An Instagram post read: "Uh Oh a ChyRo No Show!" And Rob's former stepbrother, Brody Jenner, slammed the couple for failing to honor their commitment. He posted: "That's what you guys get for hiring those 2... Sorry not sorry. (sic)" He later deleted the comment. The loved-up couple - who got engaged last month following a four-month whirlwind romance - announced their happy news on Friday, despite initially planning to do it on Mother's Day on Sunday, because they were worried a member of Rob's family would leak the secret. A source said recently: "The family found out in the last couple weeks. Rob told everyone separately. They didn't have a big family meeting or anything like that." However, the showbiz clan - including Kim Kardashian West, Khloe Kardashian and Kris Jenner - weren't overly thrilled when they were told the news as they were hoping the pair's relationship would crumble before long. The source said: "When Rob started dating [Chyna], it was like, 'Okay, this is a phase.' And when they were talking about the engagement, it's like, 'But it won't last.' But now that there's a baby coming, everyone in the family knows that this relationship has permanence. Even if it doesn't work out, they're going to be co-parents of this child forever."



Chris Hemsworth made his daughter's birthday cake himself

The 'Avengers: Age of Ultron' actor and wife Elsa Pataky were let down by a local bakery who they had hoped could make a sweet treat to mark India Rose's special day, so he rolled up his sleeves and got stuck in in the kitchen himself. Sharing a picture of the dinosaur-shaped cake he'd crafted to mark the youngster turning four, Chris wrote on Instagram: "What happens when the bakery says they don't have time to make your daughter a birthday cake? You get involved and smash one out yourself! I call it 'La TRex al la chocolate (sic)" And it seems the 32-year-old hunk - who also has twin sons Sasha and Tristan, two, with his spouse - is a regular in the kitchen as Elsa recently shared a picture of him and India cooking up some treats after the premiere of his latest movie 'The Huntsman: Winter's War'. Captioning the image in both Spanish and English, she wrote: Papa making some late snack after premiere @thehunstan #jetlag #bestglamour #yummy #papachef #bestmoments #latrip (sic)" Chris and 39-year-old Elsa - who married in 2010 - recently sold their Malibu and Santa Monica properties after relocating to the actor's native Australia and he previously admitted he never felt at "home" in Los Angeles. He explained: "LA, I loved it, it was great being there with the opportunities with work, [but] it didn't feel like home. "Instantly, when I get off the plane, I'm back. Which is I think is essential to what we want to give [the children]." Chris and Elsa tied the knot just a few months after they started dating and he revealed he knew straight away that she was the one for him. He said: "It just made sense to both of us. There was an ease to it neither of us had had before."



Jonas like 'twin brother' to Lovato

Demi Lovato thinks Nick Jonas is like her "twin brother". The 'Cool For The Summer' hitmaker is preparing to go on tour with the 'Jealous' singer later this year and can't wait to get on the road with her close friend. She said: "We hang out. I always joke that he is like my twin brother, but not crazy. "We just have so much fun together, so going on the road is gonna be a lot of fun." But the pair won't just be having

fun as Demi, 23, is also expecting to write new songs with her friend, who is also 23. She added in an interview with 'Extra': "We write really well together so we'll probably be writing a lot as well, I was just in the studio with him a few days ago writing stuff for my new album." One person likely to be joining Demi on the road during her tour is her boyfriend Wilmer Valderrama as the former 'X Factor' judge always finds the 36-year-old actor incredibly supportive of her career. She said: "It's amazing having him support me. I'm also really supportive of him and everything that he's doing. "He's shooting so many things right now, a pilot called 'Four Stars' and 'Grey's Anatomy'... he's doing great-I'm really proud of him." Nick recently admitted he can't wait to get on tour with Demi because the show will be so much fun and very different to other concerts as they'll be doing some performing together, as well as their own sets. He said: "I think that the thing that makes touring with Demi so exciting is: We're friends, obviously, but also our partnership with the record label we started and the ability to build a night of music and have it not feel like a festival line-up but a full show, with intertwined sets that'll keep it interesting for us and the fans."





This file photo shows the artwork 'Him', depicting Hitler on his knees in prayer by artist Maurizio Cattelan displayed during a press preview in New York. — AFP

Statue of Hitler goes for \$17.2 mn at NY auction

A statue of Hitler on his knees was auctioned Sunday for \$17.2 million, a record for a work by the Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan. The wax and resin statue entitled simply "Him" had been expected to fetch between \$10 million and \$15 million at the auction by Christie's. The previous record for a work by Cattelan, who is 55, was \$7.9 million. In the statue, Hitler is depicted as being the size of boy, on his knees in a gray woolen suit, with his hands clasped together as he gazes upward. The work was completed in 2001.

The sale came as part of a themed auction called "Bound to Fail," a selection of 39 works of modern and contemporary art exploring the idea of commercial failure and risk-taking to expand the boundaries of art. Loic Gouzer, deputy chairman of post-war and contemporary art with Christie's who created the theme-oriented auction evenings, called this particular sale "difficult."

But "it came off well" and this shows the strength of the art market, he said. Unlike in the movies, Gouzer said last week, "artists have hardly ever touched on the issue of Hitler." "I wanted

to destroy it myself. I changed my mind a thousand times, every day," Cattelan has said. 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."

Another important work featured at the auction was "One Ball Total Equilibrium Tank" by American artist 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 had been expected to sell for up to \$12 million. Spring art auctions in New York began Sunday evening and last through Thursday. All but one of the 39 pieces up for grabs Sunday found a buyer. The total sales volume was \$78.1 million, compared to their combined estimated pre-sale value of \$59.4 million. The 1,500-odd pieces up for auction this week are expected to bring in more than a billion dollars. — AFP

Bosch paintings draw record crowds, 500 years on

An unprecedented exhibition of bizarre and nightmarish works by Dutch master Hieronymus Bosch has drawn record crowds, organizers said yesterday, half a millennium after they were painted. "Hieronymus Bosch-Visions of Genius" wrapped up Sunday in the southern Dutch town of Den Bosch with more than 421,000 people visiting over the last three months. "It was easily the best visited exhibition in the almost 180-year history of the Noordbrabants Museum," the museum said in a statement.

A feature-length film about the event is set to screen next year in more than 2,000 cinemas in 42 countries across the world. Seventeen of the

artist's surviving 24 paintings and 19 of his 20 drawings were gathered in a major coup for the tiny museum in the town where Bosch lived. "Never before had so many works of Hieronymus Bosch come back to 'his' city, Den Bosch, the place where the paintings were created more than 500 years ago," the museum said.

The exhibition's opening kicked off a year of events in the medieval town to honor its most famous son, who was born Hieronymus van Aken in around 1450 and died in 1516, 500 years ago this year. Bosch's most famous work, a triptych called "The Garden of Earthly Delights" which journeys from a scene of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to descend into a terrifying

vision of hell-was, however, not on display. It hangs in the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, and the Noordbrabants Museum knew Spain would never let it travel abroad.

But in a major victory for the museum, the Prado did agree to allow Bosch's "The Haywain" to leave Spain for the first time in 450 years. It was on display among other important works such as "Death and the Miser" currently owned by the National Gallery in Washington, and "The Ship of Fools" from the Louvre in Paris. — AFP



This file photo shows people visiting the 'Hieronymus Bosch, Visions of a Genius' exhibition during a press preview at the Noordbrabants Museum in Den Bosch. — AFP photos



This file photo shows a statue of Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch in front of his workshop in Den Bosch.



A model poses for pictures during a fashion photo-shoot for a leading online website that offers conservative fashion items, in Istanbul, yesterday. Istanbul is hosting Turkey's first Modest Fashion Week, a two-day event that kicks off on May 13th and brings together designers of conservative wear from around the world. — AP photos



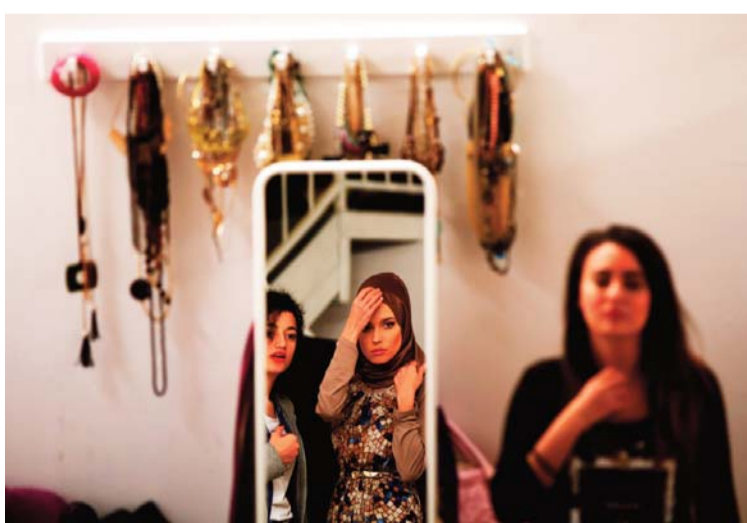
A stylist, right, helps a model to get ready for a fashion photo-shoot for a leading online website that offers conservative fashion items, in Istanbul.



Stylists help models to get ready for a fashion photo-shoot for a leading online website that offers conservative fashion items.



A model gets ready for a fashion photo-shoot.



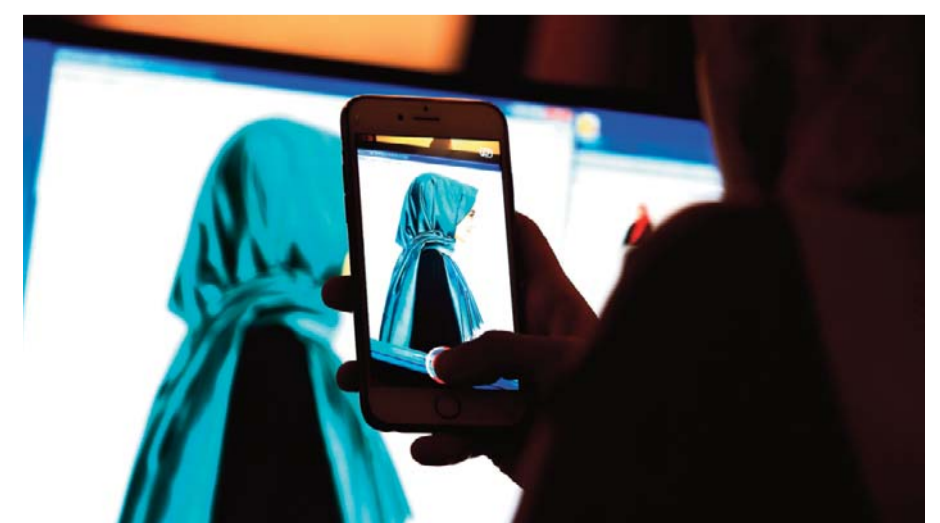
Stylists help a model to get ready for a fashion photo-shoot.



A model gets ready for a fashion photo-shoot.



A stylist, right, helps a model to get ready for a fashion photo-shoot.



A photographer's assistant uses her mobile phone to take a picture of a computer screen showing the results of a fashion photo-shoot for a leading online website.

Istanbul 'Modest Fashion Week', a first in Turkey

It is no secret that the modest fashion market is growing by the day, with even world-renowned designers starting to present their designs at the runway shows during fashion weeks. Authorities in this rising sector, along with prominent "hijab fashion" designers and bloggers from around the world, will meet at Haydarpasa Station in Istanbul on May 13-14 for the Istanbul Modest Fashion Week (IMFW) event organized by Modanisa.com, a multibrand online retailer offering tens of thousands of items catering for the modest fashion consumer, in collaboration with the Islamic Fashion and Design Council (IFDC), whose country representative for Turkey is Franka Soeria. The aim of the premiere two-day event in Turkey, is to be the world's leading prestigious fashion event, while promoting Turkish modest fashion and shaping new modest fashion trends.

Stating that they provide Modanisa.com customers over 30,000 items and work with 300 brands and 30 designers, the company's board Chairman Kerim Ture said, "We are integrating our international experience with the Istanbul Modest Fashion Week event and supporting the organization as its main sponsor." Ture added: "We as Modanisa.com, give an opportunity for all modern modest women to form their own style. Until this moment, we have cooperated with globally known designers and initiated the world's first online hijab

fashion show. And now, we took another big step with the IMFW committee for another as our innovative vision requires us to do so. We are also the main sponsor of the event."

The event will bring together globally-known designers, most-followed influencers, fashionistas and famous trendsetters to evaluate modest fashion styles from around the world. UK-based social media wonder and trendsetter Dina Tokio, famous model for global modest brands Mariah Idrissi, Kuwaiti influencer Fatema Al-Awadhi,

Melanie Elturk, Ruba Zai, among others are some of the major influencers that will be attending the event.

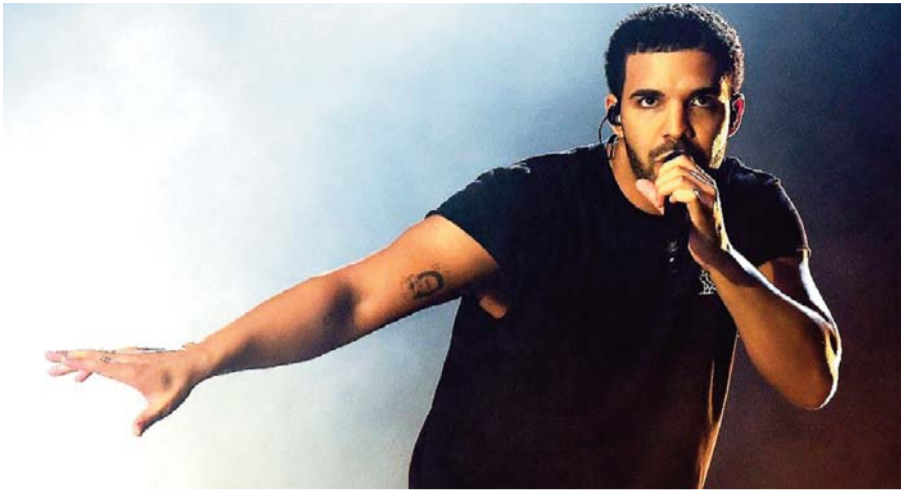
Popular designers such as Rabia Z and Annah Hariri from the United Arab Emirates, Hannie Hananto and Irna La Perle from Indonesia, Iman Aldebe from Sweden and Aidijuma from Malaysia, who will be showcasing their collections at the event will discuss what is required to become a global modest brand.

Soeria, the head of IFDC Turkey, who is also on the advisory council of the IMFW, said in relation to the event: "Istanbul is one of the perfect bridge to connect modest fashion professionals from different area. Modest fashion style is really diverse. We are going to open the gate of Turkey to international modest fashion market. It is about time to gather together, collaborate and connect to each other." Ozlem Zahirin, who is also on the IMFW advisory council, echoing Soeria's sentiments said: "Turkey is the biggest modest fashion market in the world. We welcome other countries to explore the Turkish market through Istanbul Modest Fashion Week." — www.dailysabah.com



A model gets ready for a fashion photo-shoot.

Drake breaks streaming record with blockbuster album



Drake performs on March 5, 2012 in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

Drake smashed a streaming record Sunday as the Apple-backed Canadian rapper's latest album scored the biggest debut on the US charts this year. The songs on "Views," which came out on April 29, were streamed 245.1 million times in the United States in the week through Thursday, according to tracking service Nielsen Music. The figure far outpaces the previous record-holding album, "Purpose" by fellow Canadian star Justin Bieber, whose songs were streamed around 100 million times in the week after its release in November.

"Views" sold more than one million copies either in direct sales or the equivalent in streaming, making it the best-selling album in the United States in its first week since Adele's massive "25"—which she kept off streaming services—in November, Nielsen Music said. Drake's success marks a victory for Apple as he released "Views"

exclusively through the tech giant's Apple Music streaming service and iTunes store. Several tracks, such as the hit "Hotline Bling," were available on rival services such as streaming leader Spotify but not the album as a whole.

"Views" nonetheless earned most of its sales through iTunes purchases, indicating that despite rapid market changes—many Apple customers still preferred downloads when the only other choice was Apple Music streaming. Spotify has recently faced a number of artists staying away. Radiohead on Sunday released its latest album on major streaming sites except Spotify after criticizing the Swedish company's compensation to artists. Pop superstar Beyonce on April 23 put out her latest album, "Lemonade," solely on the Tidal streaming service led by her husband Jay Z, although she soon also sold it on iTunes.

"Views"—which initially featured an appearance by Jay Z, which was removed—pushed "Lemonade" to second place on the weekly chart. Prince's classic album "Purple Rain" was number three amid an outpouring after the pop icon's unexpected death. "Views" also opened at number one in Britain where it was the second fastest-selling album of the year after David Bowie's "Blackstar," another work that found growing interest after a music legend suddenly died. Drake conceived the 20-song, 90-minute "Views" as an ode to his hometown Toronto and had been discussing the album for two years before its release. He nonetheless was one of the most successful artists of 2015 when put out two works which he described as mixtapes rather than full-fledged albums. — AFP

Cannes: Chinese animation 'Foodiverse' sought out by Odin's Eye

Chinese animation film "Foodiverse" will get an international launch this week in Cannes through Australia-based sales agent Odin's Eye Entertainment. The 3D film, which is currently in production, is set in the world of foodies. It pits traditional foods against those elements intent on eliminating flavour and fun from the kitchen, and results in a madcap interplanetary chase.

"Foodiverse" is written and directed by animation veteran Liaoyu Chen and produced by Chinese-based Beijing Phenom Films, The Gate Studio, United Entertainment Partners, Exchange and Joyspoon. Sydney-based Odin's Eye will handle all rights outside mainland China and screen footage in the

Cannes Market. It has pre-sold rights in the Philippines to Captive Entertainment and in ex-Yugoslavia to Dixin Film. "Foodiverse" is a compelling and exciting concept to add to our growing animation lineup. The license and merchandise potential is particularly exciting" said OEE's founder and CEO Michael Favelle. While a Chinese release date is yet to be announced, Foodiverse is set for completion in the second quarter of 2017. Odin's Eye is also handling sales for the animated titles "Bad Cat," "Kikoriki: Legend Of The Golden Dragon," and "Throne of Elves." — Reuters



Workers set up a banner of the official poster of the 69th Cannes Film Festival yesterday on the facade of the Palais des Festivals in Cannes, southeastern France. — AFP

Youth orchestra plucks oasis out of gangland El Salvador

The sweet sounds of classical music float across a sunny courtyard as a group of teenagers pluck the strings of violins and cellos. But beyond the high gates enclosing the courtyard of the Don Bosco Industrial Polygon Centre, home to El Salvador's first and only youth orchestra, the sounds most likely to be heard are of gunshots. The center on the eastern side of the capital San Salvador is surrounded by gang-infested areas where daily turf wars have made the small Central American nation among the world's most deadliest.

On the road leading to the center stands a teenage girl with red hair, a sign she is a gang member, a mobile phone glued to her ear, checking every person and car that enters. But inside the building, there are no such controls. The orchestra has become a safe haven from the surrounding violence for hundreds of children who live in gang-controlled neighborhoods. The Don Bosco Youth Symphony Orchestra and Chorus aims to keep teenagers off the streets and away from the gangs by offering them an alternative to gang life and culture.

Through music and being part of an orchestra, teenagers find a sense of identity and purpose, countering some of the push factors that cause young people to join gangs. "There are few spaces and options for children in poor neighborhoods dominated by gangs," music coordinator Daniel Ayala told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "The levels of violence we have reached is absurd. It's senseless. For me violence is also about having a child stuck at home because it's too dangerous for them to be on the street. And the street means gangs."

Being in paradise

Five years ago, Ayala and other musicians went to perform at 60 schools in deprived areas across San Salvador, hoping to spark interest among budding musicians and form an ensemble. Schoolgirl Maria Elena Cruz remembers being instantly hooked. She had never seen or heard a classical instrument. "As soon as they took the violin out of its case, I loved it. It has such a lovely melody," the 14-year-old said. Cruz said she and her younger brother have hidden under their beds several times during the last year to escape gang crossfire,

with bullets whizzing past the windows of their home. Playing the violin takes her away from the violent reality of daily life, Cruz said, and she is determined to become a professional musician.

"When I play the violin I'm not here. I go to a different world, a different place. It's like being in paradise," said Cruz with a beaming smile. The many hours of practice over the past five years, two hours every day after school, is paying off. Last year the teenager was one of 130 orchestra members who went on a concert tour in Washington, performing a repertoire from Bach and Mozart to jazz and salsa. "I never thought a person like me, coming from where I do, would have been given the opportunity to play in the United States in front of so many people. People applauded and congratulated me. It felt so good," she said.

Marked territory

Growing up in gang-ridden neighborhoods, the 350 members of the orchestra and choir aged from 9 to 21 know only too well how gangs lure young people into their ranks. It often starts with a gang member asking something like: "Have you eaten today? Would you like a donut? Would you like to earn 25 cents by going to the shop to buy me a cigarette?" Children usually start working for gangs as watchmen, then they become drug dealers, arms couriers and collect extortion payments. As they move up the ranks they get involved in more violent crime, including murder and armed robbery.

Surviving in El Salvador, one of the world's most violent countries outside a war zone, means following certain rules. It is dangerous, even fatal, to venture into another neighborhood controlled by a rival gang, even to see a friend or relative. The letters "MS" of the Mara Salvatrucha gang, and graffiti of its bitterest rival Calle 18, are scrawled on buildings, marking gang territory. "We all know exactly where we can and cannot walk," said one cellist. "When taking the bus to get to rehearsals, I have to go through neighborhoods controlled by different gangs. I always panic when the bus stops and someone gets on." — Reuters

Carell's mom dies one day before Mother's Day

Steve Carell has announced that his mother died a day before Mother's Day. The 53-year-old actor has posted on Twitter that Harriett Carell died Saturday at the age of 90, adding a simple note, "Love You Mom." Carell's publicist confirmed the death.

Kathleen Doran Boyle, who's the director of Acton Funeral Home in Massachusetts, says Harriett Carell died at her Acton home surrounded by family. Aside from Steve, an online obituary says she has three other children and is survived by six grandchildren. — AP



File photo shows Steve Carell arrives at the 27th annual Palm Springs International Film Festival Awards Gala in Palm Springs, Calif. — AP

Singer on Deadpool in the 'X-Men' universe, competing with Marvel and DC

The X-Men can compete with the cinematic universes being assembled by franchise factories like Marvel Studios and DC Entertainment, director Bryan Singer told Variety. "It's every bit as large," Singer said of the world, which has so far encompassed nine films, while doing the press rounds for "X-Men: Apocalypse" in London. "And now that we've altered the timeline [with 2014's "X-Men: Days of Future Past"], there are endless possibilities." One of those possibilities is bringing the wisecracking Deadpool into the fold after the character proved popular enough to top \$760 million in global box office receipts, with a domestic take (\$362 million) that shockingly topped DC's "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" stateside. But as much of a no-brainer as that would appear to be, it's not a simple equation. Related Jennifer Lawrence Tries to Save Nightcrawler in New "X-Men: Apocalypse" Clip "If you take a character as irreverent and meta as Deadpool and connect him to something as grounded and serious as X-Men, you have to do it carefully and gently," Singer said. "When you drop them all in together it can be a disaster. That has to be done delicately, but there's plenty of room to do it."

One of the ways in could be through an "X-Force" movie—the paramilitary superhero spinoff group that Deadpool has called home over the years. Singer very specifically brought the title up to his Fox bosses once upon a time, and "Deadpool" star Ryan Reynolds has said a project centered on the group is a priority. But beyond that, the X-franchise has already begun to creep out into the world of television with series like "Hellfire" and "Legion" (which are being produced with Marvel). Singer serves as executive producer on both shows, and said there's plenty of room to grow the brands on the small screen. "I think the underbelly [could be explored]," Singer said. "There's always something interesting about a school that's got a military aspect beneath its classrooms."

Is there another layer to all of that? Is there another layer to the Hellfire Club? The idea of "Who's running the world?"—that's something that was touched upon in "First Class" but has yet to be fully explored. It just has to be explored in a very gentle, methodical way. And I've seen it go haywire. I'm not going to be specific where I believe it has. The audience will tell you. But when it's done right, it all can connect." It's unclear as to whether Singer will be directly involved going forward, however. There have been rumors that he's planning to leave the world he created way back in 2000, particularly as star Hugh Jackman has said he's finished with the Wolverine character after one more film. But the director seems too invested still to fully let it go. "When you spend nearly two decades in a universe, to simply say, 'I'm done,' or, 'I'm going to abandon it,' just wouldn't make sense to me," he said. "I'm very connected to this universe and a lot of these actors, and also the characters, whomever plays them. So never say never." — Reuters



Bryan Singer



In this file photo Thom Yorke, left, and Jonny Greenwood of Radiohead perform during the band's headlining set at the 2012 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in Indio, Calif. — AP

Radiohead inches back to rock roots on bleak new album

Radiohead, the band for two decades synonymous with experimentation, has inched back to its rock roots on a long-awaited album that seizes on space as a symbol of individual darkness. "A Moon Shaped Pool," the ninth album by the Oxford, England-based group, came out Sunday with two days prior notice and, in an affirmation of its principles, Radiohead boycotted leading streaming service Spotify. Radiohead had heralded a new chapter in music culture in the mid-1990s by moving away from the jamming guitars that characterized alternative rock and heading full-speed into synthesized innovation on now seminal albums such as "OK Computer" and "Kid A."

"A Moon Shaped Pool" does not come full circle, with Radiohead little interested in simply revisiting the past. But the album nonetheless offers some of the band's most accessible music since its transition. "Burn the Witch," the first single off the album, is built off strings played by the London Contemporary Orchestra but comes together as a tightly written rock song with a hard-driving bassline, as frontman Thom Yorke sings of mass hysteria with lines such as, "This is a low-flying panic attack." Radiohead returns even more to a rock base on "Desert Island Disk," built off a minimalist acoustic guitar, and the gloomy "Decks Dark."

Yorke expands on the space imagery on "Decks Dark," singing, "In your life, there comes a darkness / This spacecraft blocking out the sky / And there's nowhere to hide." The idea of an individual alone in the universe is also apparent on "Daydreaming," a melancholy piano track accompanied by a video in which Yorke strolls alone through stages of life from a delivery room to snowy mountains. Yorke is a famously abstract lyricist, but "A Moon Shaped Pool" comes a

year after his separation from his longtime partner, printmaker Rachel Owen, and amid the rocker's intense environmental activism. Yorke turns the space imagery into a message of resilience in "The Numbers" as he sings, "We are the earth / To her we do return / And the future is inside us / It's not somewhere else."

Long wait for 'True Love Waits'

Yet Radiohead would never be so straightforward as to switch direction completely. "A Moon Shaped Pool" ends with "True Love Waits," one of Radiohead's concert favorites that had never appeared on a studio album. On the version on the 2001 live album "I Might Be Wrong," Yorke sings of fears of an irreversible separation—"True love waits in haunted attacks"—to the strumming of an acoustic guitar. But the song that had come close, by the band's standards, to a clear-cut ballad takes on the latter-day Radiohead sound on "A Moon Shaped Pool." The guitar is gone and instead "True Love Waits" turns deliberately challenging, with a surprise piano progression that could have come from Satie.

Elsewhere on the album Radiohead brings soaring strings into "The Numbers," which is led by tight guitar licks, and incorporates an ominous choral backdrop on "Identikit." "A Moon Shaped Pool" is the first Radiohead album since 2011's "The King of Limbs," on which the group shook up traditional song structure by playing off a repeated loop of previously recorded music. A touch of "The King of Limbs" returns on "Ful Stop," with a fast-paced synthesized bass line descending into an electronic haze. — AFP



Executive producer Tim Burton, from left to right, producer Suzanne Todd, actors Johnny Depp, Mia Wasikowska, and Sacha Baron Cohen alongside director James Bobin, pose for photographers at the photo call of Alice Through the Looking Glass, at a central London hotel, Sunday. — AP

Johnny Depp mocks his 'war on terrier' apology

Actor Johnny Depp has mocked the video apology over the international dog smuggling scandal that ensued after he and his wife illegally brought their Yorkshire Terriers into Australia. Depp and actor and his wife, Amber Heard, avoided jail time in the so-called "war on terrier" incident with their wooden apology for bringing Pistol and Boo into Australia.

The actor, who was in London promoting the film "Alice Through the Looking Glass," deadpanned that he "would really

like to apologize for not smuggling my dogs into England because it would've been a bad thing to do." The dog debacle ended with a decidedly low-budget video in which Depp and Heard sit stone-faced in front of the camera, delivering stilted lines about the importance of protecting Australia's biodiversity. — AP

Lifestyle

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Drake breaks streaming record with blockbuster album

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A general view of sculptures standing in The Rock Garden in Chandigarh. The Rock Garden of Chandigarh was built by self-taught Indian artist Nek Chand Saini over the course of 18 years, where each of the featured artworks have been made using recycled industrial and urban waste. — AFP

Disney's 'Beauty and the Beast' celebrating 25th anniversary



In this Feb 7, 2011 file photo, songwriter Alan Menken, poses for a portrait before the Academy Award Nominees Luncheon in Beverly Hills, Calif.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science is commemorating the 25th anniversary of Disney's animated classic "Beauty and the Beast" with a cast-and-crew reunion at its Beverly Hills headquarters that will include lead voice actors Paige O'Hara, Robby Benson and Angela Lansbury. But there'll be one notable absence at the Monday night celebration - the film's Oscar-winning composer, Alan Menken. He's got a "Beauty" of an excuse, though: He's stuck in New York working on the new live-action version of the timeless tale.

"I would love to be there," explained the 66-year-old Menken in a weekend phone interview. "But I don't know how I get there and back without essentially losing two days of working on the 'Beauty and the Beast' movie."

That film, expected in theaters next year, casts Emma Watson (the Harry Potter series) and Dan Stevens ("Downton Abbey") in a musical version of the timeless tale, with Bill Condon ("Dreamgirls") directing. Menken is incorporating the 1991 film's songs, which he co-wrote with the late Howard Ashman, as well as composing new material with his "Aladdin" lyricist, Tim Rice. Reflecting on the original "Beauty" - the first animated feature to be nominated for a best-picture Oscar and the first to gross more than \$100 million in North America - Menken humbly credited Ashman, who worked on the film even as he was critically ill.

Ashman died in March 1991 at age 40 from complications of AIDS, eight months before the film's premiere. "This, of all the projects, was the one that was infused with sort of that last flame of his talent and creativity and heart," Menken said. "And, I think, at some interesting level, that comes through in 'Beauty and the Beast.' It comes through in these tender moments."



In this image released by Disney, characters Belle, voiced by Paige O'Hara, left, and the Beast, voiced by Robby Benson appear in a scene from the animated classic, "Beauty and the Beast," which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. — AP photos

Menken recalled how he and his wife "just wept" when they got to the film's closing credits and saw the dedication to Ashman: "It was just an incredibly intense, sad and beautiful time, and the film is a result of that." — AP



The characters Lumiere, voiced by Jerry Orbach, and Cogsworth, voiced by David Ogden Stiers, appear in a scene from the animated classic, "Beauty and the Beast."



In this image released by Disney, the characters Chip, voiced by Bradley Pierce, left, and Mrs. Potts, voiced by Angela Lansbury, appear in a scene from the animated classic, "Beauty and the Beast."



The character Lumiere, voiced by Jerry Orbach, appears in a scene from the animated classic, "Beauty and the Beast."



In this image released by Disney, characters Belle, voiced by Paige O'Hara, left, and the Beast, voiced by Robby Benson appear in a scene from the animated classic, "Beauty and the Beast."